Tense/aspect variation and the Present Perfect in Australian English narratives: Sociolinguistic constraints and discourse-pragmatic functions

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Thesis Declaration

I, Sophie Lucie Raymonde Richard, certify that:

This thesis has been substantially accomplished during enrolment in the degree.

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Written participant consent has been received and archived for the research involving participant data reported in this thesis.

This thesis does not contain work that I have published, nor work under review for publication.

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Publications

The following works have been published and/or prepared for publication during the course of candidature. These publications are not, however, included in this thesis. They are simply referred to as I have referred to other work.

Co-authored publications


Rodríguez Louro, Celeste, Richard, Sophie & Bharadwaj, Sana (in prep.) Another story: The impact of narrative and non-narrative discourse on be like.

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Sole author publication

Dedication

À mes parents, Christine et Pascal, et à ma sœur, Cécile, pour leur soutien indéfectible et amour inconditionnel.

To my parents, Christine and Pascal, and my sister, Cécile, for their infallible support and unconditional love.
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_Maman, Papa, Cilou, je vous aime._
Abstract

This thesis is a variationist sociolinguistic study of tense/aspect variation in mainstream Australian English (AusE). The focus is on the Narrative Present Perfect (NPP): the use of the Present Perfect (PP) to refer to past events in narrative. The study seeks to determine whether the NPP represents a linguistic change in progress (Ritz 2010: 3412; 2012: 899) as well as to analyse the functions of the NPP in relation to the Simple Past (SP) and the Conversational Historical Present (CHP) in AusE narratives.

Although this is a widely attested path of development for perfects cross-linguistically (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994), the Standard English PP is not assumed to be grammaticalising into a past or a perfective. Instead, it remains restricted to establishing a link between a past situation and a current state, but is not “about the situation in itself” (Comrie 1976: 52). The perfect is thus incompatible with definite past temporal adverbials (Comrie 1976: 54), and unable to express narrative progression (Dahl 1985: 139; Lindstedt 2000: 366). Despite these constraints, non-standard PP uses have been documented in AusE radio narratives and police media reports (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz 2007; Ritz & Engel 2008; Ritz 2010). Such uses question the degree of grammaticalisation of the PP in AusE. Narrative uses of the PP (i.e. the NPP) suggest that the AusE PP has ceased to be a canonical perfect since it can serve as a narrative tense (Lindstedt 2000: 371). However, little is known about how tense, and the NPP in particular, vary when performed narratives by AusE speakers across genders, generations and socio-economic backgrounds are considered.

The study dataset consists of 331 performed narratives (146,340 words) displaying tense variation across the narrative clause sequence (see Labov & Waletzky 1967) and stemming from three corpora: the *UWA Narrative Corpus* – built specifically for the present study, the *UWA Corpus of English in Australia* and the *Radio Narrative Corpus*. It comprises production by 99 native speakers of mainstream AusE. Multivariate statistical analysis is used to establish the sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP and the CHP, and to assess the hypothesis that NPP usage represents a change in progress. A discourse-analytic approach complements the quantitative analysis and aims to uncover the functions of tense/aspect variation, and the role of the NPP.

Study results show that the NPP is socially conditioned by speaker socio-economic status and gender, but not age: it is a hallmark of non-professional speakers’
vernacular language and is favoured by males. There is thus no empirical evidence of a linguistic change in progress in the speech community. Rather, the NPP indexes working-class masculinity. It is constitutive of a sociolect that possibly affords covert prestige to its users. The NPP is favoured when used in the preceding narrative clause and in the middle of the narrative clause sequence. The results also reveal distinctive constraints in quotative contexts; in particular, strong lexical effects: the NPP is significantly favoured by quotative go (cf. Engel & Ritz 2000: 136).

Crucially, tense/aspect switching serves as a discourse-structuring and evaluation device. The NPP is comparable to the CHP: it serves as a ‘pragmatic’ tense rather than a grammaticalised substitute for the SP (cf. Levey 2006: 148). While the SP is used for its temporal meaning, the NPP is used for expressive purposes. The NPP does not denote past time: the interpretation is inferred in context. Undertones of its present time reference create rhetorical effects and provide a temporal anchor at ‘story-now’ (Fleischman 1990: 167).

In addition to its pragmatically marked and socially constrained usage in narrative, the PP largely remains a canonical perfect in AusE. However, the way could be paved for grammaticalisation if the NPP becomes disassociated from non-professional speakers, progressively loses the stigma of its non-standard status, and semantically acquires past/perfective or mirative meaning such that its usage spreads from its narrative niche to other contexts (cf. Schwenter 1994a, 1994b; Squartini & Bertinetto 2000; Howe & Schwenter 2003; De Wit 2017).
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Conventions

Typesetting

Lower case: For cross-linguistic tense/aspect categories (e.g. perfect)
Initial Caps: For language-specific tense/aspect categories (e.g. Simple Past, Present Perfect, Passé Composé)

*Italic*: For names of corpora (e.g. *UWA Narrative Corpus*)
For examples quoted in the running text
For foreign terms (e.g. Passé Composé, raison d’être)

*Small caps*: For narrative sections (e.g. ORIENTATION)
For factor groups (e.g. TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE)

*Bold face*: To highlight relevant elements in the examples

*Underscore*: To highlight relevant elements in the examples

I use the following font modifiers to highlight tense variation in narratives:

*Italic*: Simple Past

*Underscore*: Conversational Historical Present

*Bold face*: Narrative Present Perfect

*Italic & bold face*: Forms ambiguous between the Simple Past and the past participial form (i.e. the elided Narrative Present Perfect)

**Abbreviations**

AmE American English
AusE Australian English
AAVE African-American Vernacular English
BrE British English
CHP Conversational Historical Present
E Event Time
HP Historical Present
LVC Language Variation and Change
NPP Narrative Present Perfect
NZE New Zealand English
PC  Passé Composé
PP  Present Perfect
PS  Passé Simple
R   Reference Time
S   Speech Time
SES Socio-economic Status
SP  Simple Past
TSit Situation Time
TT  Topic Time
TU  Utterance Time
WA  Western Australia

**Transcription conventions**

Transcriptions are verbatim from audio recordings. Names are pseudonyms and all identifiable information has been anonymised.

Participant stretch of talk from participant
[Interviewer] stretch of talk from interviewer
[Third party] stretch of talk from third party present during the interview
‘’ question/prompt read out by participant
“ ” quotation, including reported speech, internal thought, expressive sounds and gestures
… long pause (not timed)
- false start
-- word truncated
<> paralinguistic features (e.g. <LAUGHTER>) and transcriber comments (e.g. <affecting Jamaican accent>, <whispering>)
(() possible but uncertain transcription
((INAUDIBLE)) unintelligible speech
? end of stretch of talk interpreted as question
! end of stretch of talk spoken emphatically
[snip] cut – when radio presenters digress before resuming the story

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When only narrative excerpts are presented in the thesis, truncated passages are indicated by bracketed ellipses: […].

Audio recordings

Audio recordings and transcripts of selected narratives are provided in Appendix E. Examples for which the corresponding audio recording is available are signalled as follows:

![Audio Icon]

STORY TITLE

The reader can locate the audio file and transcript in Appendix E using the letter given to the audio recording.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis is a variationist study of tense/aspect usage in contemporary mainstream Australian English (AusE) narratives. It focuses on the use of the Present Perfect (PP) to refer to past situations in narrative, a non-standard usage referred to as the Narrative Present Perfect (NPP). The NPP is investigated with respect to its linguistic variants, the Simple Past (SP) and the Conversational Historical Present (CHP). The SP, CHP and NPP are illustrated in (1), respectively appearing italicised, underlined, and bolded.

(1) [...] And then like Ryan came out and worked. And then Cooper’s like walked up to the bar and in like the quietest voice ever but with the most pissed off tone to his voice, he’s like, “You can fucking go home now.” [...] (Male, 27, duty manager)

I refer to the NPP as a ‘tense’ for ease of expression, though I treat it as a tense/aspect form following Smith (1997: 186) (see §2.2.1). I engage with the interaction between tense and aspect (both grammatical and lexical) where relevant.

Cross-linguistically, perfects have been shown to grammaticalise along a cline from anterior to resultative, and from resultative to past/perfective meaning or evidential/mirative meaning (Bybee et al. 1994) (see §2.3.2). The evolution of the English perfect into a past tense is therefore linguistically plausible and theoretically grounded. Yet, its purported inability to move narrative time and function as a past

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1 Following Leitner (2004: 1), mainstream AusE is defined as the dominant variety of English spoken in Australia and based on Anglo-Celtic heritage, as opposed to Aboriginal English, English ‘ethnic’ varieties spoken by migrant groups, English used as a lingua franca, and English-based pidgins and creoles.
2 The term ‘non-standard’ refers to linguistic forms and uses that do not conform to the norms officially prescribed, i.e. the ‘standard’. The ‘standard’ is the codified variety of a language in ‘standard language cultures’ (Milroy 2001: 530). Standard language varieties are taken to represent an ideal of uniformity and stability, However, as Milroy (2001: 543) points out: “they are not vernaculars, and no one speaks them exactly” (emphasis in original). The standard is articulated in contemporary language books and grammars.
3 Following Wolfson (1979) and Levey (2006) I use the term ‘Conversational Historical Present’ (CHP) to refer to the use of the present tense to refer to past situations specifically in oral narratives of personal experience.
4 Unless otherwise indicated, all examples stem from my dataset. To protect speaker anonymity, all names used in transcripts are pseudonyms. Other identifiable information has also been replaced. Transcription conventions are listed under ‘Conventions’ (pp. xiv-xvi).
tense in English narratives pervades the literature (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 29; Dahl 1985: 113; Katz 2003: 212). In light of empirical evidence, the existence of the PP as a narrative tense for some cohorts of speakers cannot be contested (see Engel & Ritz 2000; Levey 2006; Ritz & Engel 2008). The extent to which it occurs in AusE narration and the social characteristics of the NPP users are, however, unknown.

The goal of the present research is to provide a large, in-depth analysis of tense/aspect variation in AusE performed narratives and, in particular, to unveil the sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP. Quantitative variationist and qualitative discourse-analytic methods are combined to offer a better understanding of tense switching in storytelling and to assess the status of the PP in AusE narratives.

1.1 Background and rationale

The perfect is multifaceted and encompasses different functions in different languages and language varieties. In Standard English, the PP is used to establish a link between a past situation and a current state. The form does not appear to be following a path of development similar to that reported for other languages such as French where the formal equivalent of the PP has grammaticalised into a past/perfective marker (Bybee et al. 1994: 85). However, Engel and Ritz (2000), Ritz (2007, 2010) and Ritz and Engel (2008) report non-standard PP uses in AusE radio chat-show programmes and in police media reports where the PP is used to express temporal progression in past contexts and collocates with definite past temporal adverbials. Analogous non-standard PP uses have been documented in a corpus of British English (BrE) preadolescent narratives (Levey 2006), in BrE footballers’ narratives (Walker 2008b, 2008a), in various other narratives produced by BrE speakers (Walker 2011), and in a corpus of New Zealand English (NZE) narratives stemming from a police reality television show (Police Ten 7) (Cox 2005). These studies provide evidence that the English PP is sometimes used as a narrative tense in AusE, BrE and NZE. Such a phenomenon is suggestive of a change in progress (Ritz 2010: 3412; 2012: 899) but empirical evidence is yet to support this claim.

Corpus-based studies of the PP in AusE have measured the frequency of PP tokens per million words, calculated the ratio of PP tokens to SP tokens, compared the functions of the PP across different text types, and analysed various linguistic factors affecting PP usage such as collocation with various temporal adverbials, the Aktionsart of the verbs in the PP or the type of sentence in which the form occurs (positive,
negative, interrogative) (Elsness 2009; Yao & Collins 2012; Werner 2013a; Collins & Yao 2014; Werner 2014: 170–186; Yao 2014, 2015). The general conclusion is that AusE is a ‘PP-friendly’ variety in comparison to other English varieties (Elsness 2009: 112; Werner 2014: 184). On the one hand, the AmE trend whereby the SP has virtually supplanted the PP is not observed in AusE. On the other hand, the use of the PP as a past tense – evaluated based on its collocation with definite past temporal adverbials – appears to be rare (Werner 2013a: 229), although Elness (2009: 101–102), in his comparative study of the PP in BrE, AmE, AusE and NZE, finds that most instances of the PP with definite past temporal adverbials (N=14/22) stem from the AusE corpora (the Australian Corpus of English, the Australian section of the International Corpus of English [ICE-AUS] and the Australian Radio Talkback Corpus). The use of the PP as a past tense in narrative contexts is also found to be rare: Yao (2014: 199) observes a near-categorical effect of the SP, by contrast to the PP, in the narrative passages from fictional conversations in the ICE-AUS corpus, suggesting that the SP is the narrative tense par excellence in written fictional narratives. For the most part, these corpus linguistic studies offer distributional analyses of overall textual frequencies. Though they inform us about global usage trends between the PP and the SP, they do not specify the variable patterns that govern the choice of the PP over its competing variants (Tagliamonte 2000: 340).

The use of the NPP in AusE has been described and analysed in terms of its semantics and pragmatics (e.g. Engel & Ritz 2000; Caudal & Ritz 2012). No study has yet examined the NPP using a sociolinguistic approach and established the sociolinguistic constraints conditioning its use – a gap the present thesis seeks to fill. Rodriguez Louro and Ritz (2014) have explored the sociolinguistic constraints operating on tense variation in naturally occurring AusE narratives, but the NPP represents a mere 1% (9/678) of the variation in their corpus and could not be further investigated. Moreover, their participant sample was not stratified according to speaker socio-economic status (SES), a social factor which – as discussed later – will prove crucial to NPP usage.

The present study is motivated by the relative dearth of research into social class and language use in Australia beyond the phonological level. Prior research on AusE considering the impact of speaker SES on language use has largely focused on phonetic/phonological and prosodic variation (see Horvath 1985; Guy, Horvath,

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5 Yao’s (2014) diachronic study of the variation between SP and PP usage in AusE fictional conversations is an exception (see Chapter 2, §2.4.3).
Various studies have investigated morphosyntactic features in AusE, though not from a social perspective (e.g. Eisikovits 1989 on the perfective; Collins 2005 on modals and quasi-modals expressing necessity and obligation; Rodríguez Louro & Harris 2013 on epistemic and evidential verbs). To date, studies adopting a sociolinguistic approach to morphosyntactic variation in AusE are relatively few, and such studies do not always consider speaker SES as a social variable (e.g. Eisikovits 1981, 1987; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014; Penry Williams & Korhonen 2016).

Previous studies have shown that tense/aspect usage differs in narrative contexts compared to non-narrative contexts (Dahl 1985: 113; Fleischman 1990: 3–4). In narrative contexts, tense/aspect forms may serve a variety of functions that go beyond their pure referential (temporal/aspectual) meaning and pertain to the discourse-pragmatic level (Fleischman 1991: 75; Fludernik 2003: 117).

The functions of the NPP have been the object of analysis in AusE radio narratives (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz 2007; Ritz & Engel 2008) and BrE oral narratives produced in face-to-face interaction (Levey 2006). The role of non-standard PP uses in AusE police media statements has also been investigated (Ritz 2010). The functions of the NPP in AusE oral narratives produced in face-to-face interaction have yet to be established and compared to those previously reported non-standard PP uses. Similarities and differences in discourse-pragmatic use between the NPP and the CHP also remain to be addressed, especially when contrasting cases of independent and concurrent use of the two forms.

1.2 Research questions

The present research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What are the sociolinguistic constraints on the use of the NPP in AusE performed narratives?

2. Are uses of the NPP and uses of the CHP constrained by similar linguistic and social factors in performed narratives?

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6 However, see Travis’ (2014–2021) ‘Sydney Speaks’ project which analyses language variation and change in AusE and considers social class. See http://www.dynamicsoflanguage.edu.au/sydney-speaks/.
3. What are the discourse-pragmatic functions underlying tense variation in AusE performed narratives?

1.3 Methodology

Due to the nature of the datasets and the various methodological approaches used in prior research, the proportion of use of the NPP in AusE has yet to be established accountably.

The present analysis rests on an assembled dataset of 331 narratives stemming from three corpora:

(i) The UWA Narrative Corpus (Richard 2013–2016);
(ii) The UWA Corpus of English in Australia (Rodríguez Louro under construction);

A refined and systematic process of narrative selection was consistently applied to the corpora to warrant inclusion in the dataset (see §4.3.1): all the narratives included had to be Labovian (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1997) (see §3.1), and performed (Wolfson 1978) (see §3.2), with tense switching across the narrative clause sequence as an obligatory feature of performance.

The elaboration of the UWA Narrative Corpus is a major contribution of this thesis. It was specifically built for the present study. It comprises 210 performed Labovian narratives displaying tense variation across the narrative clause sequence and arising in innovative storytelling sessions (see §4.3.2) with 58 native speakers of AusE. To expand the participant sample, data from 41 native speakers of AusE from the UWA Corpus of English in Australia were added to the dataset (77 narratives). The total participant sample comprises 99 speakers stratified according to age, sex/gender and socio-economic status (SES), and strives towards representativeness of the speech community. The focus is on West AusE; in particular, the Perth metropolitan area where the data were collected. The compiled dataset was supplemented with 44 radio narratives from the Radio Narrative Corpus to secure enough NPP tokens for the statistical analysis. Only the first two corpora are used to assess the social constraints on the NPP and the frequency of the phenomenon since (i) socio-demographic information

7 ‘UWA’ stands for ‘University of Western Australia’ where the data are currently housed.
is not available for speakers of the *Radio Narrative Corpus* and (ii) the collection of the *Radio Narrative Corpus* specifically targeted NPP usage.

The current study employs the methods of variationist sociolinguistics. Based on previous sociolinguistic research on tense variation in narrative, a number of linguistic and social hypotheses on NPP usage are empirically investigated. I use multivariate analysis to measure the significance, strength and ranking of the sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP in the narratives of the sample. These constraints are compared to those governing the CHP in the data for which a similar analysis is run. This study is the first to analyse the impact of linguistic factors on the NPP and the CHP considering quotative and non-quotative contexts separately. In addition to statistical analysis, the present study also uses original discourse-analytic methods to uncover the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense switching between the three competing variants – SP, CHP and NPP – in performed narratives.

The three tense forms are established as variants of the same linguistic variable for the quantitative analysis since they all refer to past/perfective events in narrative clauses: at the referential level, they ‘say the same thing’. However, their functions differ at the discourse-pragmatic level. This is related to the status of the SP as the unmarked tense in English oral narratives of personal experience, while the CHP and the NPP are marked forms.

The concept of markedness was introduced as a means of characterising binary phonological oppositions (Trubetzkoy 1931) and has been extended to characterise morphosyntactic and semantic oppositions as well (Jakobson [1932] 1984). Markedness values are assigned based on a number of criteria (morphological, semantic, statistical) (Comrie 1976: 11). Morphologically, the unmarked member of a phonological or grammatical opposition is the zero-marked member or the member with less morphological material (Comrie 1976: 114; Dahl 1985: 19). Semantically, the unmarked member has a less specific meaning and can possibly encompass the meaning of its marked counterpart (Comrie 1976: 112; Dahl 1985: 19). Comrie (1976: 118) points out the possibility of a reversal of markedness properties in different contexts. With respect to tense/aspect categories, I follow Fleischman’s (1990: 5; 1991: 77) proposition that in languages with a basic past/non-past opposition, the past is the

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8 The issue of whether the CHP and the NPP actually express past/perfective meaning, or whether they ‘allow’ a past/perfective interpretation in context, is discussed in Chapter 7.

9 Oral narratives of personal experience, by contrast to other types of stories, are introduced in Chapter 3, §3.1.
unmarked tense in narrative contexts; tense/aspect categories other than the past are marked. In English, the use of the SP to indicate past time reference is the unmarked case – or ‘default’ in Dahl’s (1985: 14) terminology – because it is the expected tense form for reporting past events (Fleischman 1991: 75, 79–80). The term ‘unmarked’ thus pertains here to the use of the form rather than its morphological make-up. The unmarked form is defined as the variant that, intuitively, “is felt to be more usual, more normal, less specific than the other” (Comrie 1976: 111). Tense/aspect forms are considered ‘marked’ when they are not used in their original temporal/aspectual referential sense (Fleischman 1990: 168).

Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos (2008) propose an empirical characterisation of the ‘default’ (i.e. ‘unmarked’ tense form) as the most frequent expression in “the most frequent and least specified contexts in actual language use” (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008: 30). Narrative clauses, with their indeterminate reference, represent a ‘least specified context’ temporally speaking. In the current AusE narrative dataset, the SP will be shown to represent 64% of the variation across the narrative clause sequence. Hence, the SP counts as the unmarked form.

1.4 Aims and significance of the research

The aim of this thesis is to provide an extensive and systematic investigation of tense/aspect variation in AusE performed narratives from both a sociolinguistic and discourse-pragmatic perspective. In particular, this study seeks to fill a gap in the literature with regard to the treatment of the NPP: it sets out to empirically establish the sociolinguistic conditioning and discourse-pragmatic functions of the NPP in AusE performed narratives.

The present research asks whether NPP usage represents a change in progress in the AusE speech community. Analysing how the form is deployed in narrative across speakers of different generations, sexes/genders, and socio-economic backgrounds, provides evidence to assess the linguistic-change-in-progress hypothesis. As noted by Guy (1988b: 56), “innovations are not adopted uniformly and simultaneously across society; rather, some groups are innovators or early adopters, while others lag behind”. This study will unveil correlations between linguistic variation (in this case, tense/aspect variation) and social variation in AusE storytelling.

Understanding whether we are indeed in the presence of a change in progress is important. The expansion of the PP currently observed in contemporary spoken AusE
seems to parallel the development of the French perfect into an aorist. Caudal and Roussarie (2006) explain how the *Passé Composé*, initially a ‘resultative perfect’, became compatible with temporal succession in discourse as early as the eleventh century. NPP usage in synchrony could thus reflect grammaticalisation of the PP in AusE and offer a window into language change. Alternatively, sociolinguistic patterns might reveal a stable usage of the form.

The current study also seeks to offer a comprehensive look into the inner workings of tense/aspect variation for discourse-pragmatic purposes. In particular, it aims to shed light on the discourse-pragmatic functions of the NPP, by contrast to the SP and the CHP, in AusE performed narratives.

1.5 Contribution

This thesis contributes to a better understanding of tense/aspect variation in AusE performed narratives. Most crucially, it provides a synchronic snapshot of the use of the NPP and sheds light on the sociolinguistic constraints governing its occurrence. Its strength lies in the combination of a sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic approach, offering complementary perspectives on the original narrative data.

This thesis engages with the relationship between social stratification and language use in Australia, a research area which – as hinted to above – remains largely unexplored with respect to morphosyntactic variation. The results of the multivariate statistical analysis show that the NPP is highly constrained by speaker SES. Sex/gender is also a key social factor. The NPP is favoured by non-professional males. This suggests the existence of an indexical link between the NPP and working-class masculinity. Age does not constrain the form – non-professional speakers, regardless of generation, use the NPP. This finding does not support the linguistic-change-in-progress hypothesis. NPP usage is niched in the linguistic repertoire of speakers with specific social characteristics. It could be considered the feature of a sociolect. By contrast, the CHP is only constrained by speaker age: the form is slightly favoured by the 16–29 year olds in the sample.

As mentioned later in the methodology section, this is the first study to model quotative and non-quotative contexts separately to analyse the linguistic constraints operating on tense variation. Considering quotative and non-quotative contexts separately – rather than collapsing the two contexts together – yields different results. This underlines the existence of a grammar of quotation and the necessity to assess the
impact of linguistic predictors on tense/aspect usage for quotative contexts independently from non-quotative contexts. In quotative contexts, the NPP is disfavoured overall, while the CHP is favoured. Both forms are highly constrained by the choice of quotative verb (go for the NPP; be like and go for the CHP). In non-quotative contexts, the strongest predictors of both NPP and CHP usage are the tense used in the preceding narrative clause and the position of the form in the narrative clause sequence.

The present research is unique in providing the first analysis of the sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP in AusE narratives and comparing them to the CHP.

This thesis also contributes to the discussion of the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense/aspect variation in narrative, unveiling the role of the NPP and its interaction with other forms in AusE performed narratives. Several prototypical patterns of tense/aspect variation across the narrative clause sequence are uncovered. Switches between the SP, CHP and NPP are shown to fulfil a range of discourse-structuring functions. This study demonstrates how the CHP and the NPP, but not the SP, also function as evaluation devices, reinforcing narrative reportability. The NPP is a feature of performance in storytelling. It serves as a marked, ‘pragmatic’ tense and does not constitute, at this point, a grammaticalised substitute for the SP. I challenge the view that the CHP is meaningless in narrative, and that only the switch between different forms, rather than the selection of a specific form itself, brings vividness to storytelling (see Wolfson 1978: 217–220). I claim that both the choice of tense/aspect forms and their alternations play a role.

This thesis offers the first analysis of NPP usage in AusE oral narratives of personal experience produced in face-to-face interaction. Such usage is compared to the use of the NPP in AusE radio narratives, and to the use of non-standard PP tokens in police media reports. This study stresses the importance of delimiting the type of data under investigation as precisely and narrowly as possible for comparative purposes. It also underlines the importance of striving for representativeness in the participant sample, balancing speakers in terms of age, sex/gender and SES. A dataset devoid of performed narratives and a sample biased towards high-SES speakers would severely under-report NPP usage. The specifically compiled dataset in the present study enables a fair assessment of the frequency of NPP usage within the confines of performed narratives by a socially diverse speaker population.
1.6 Thesis overview

The thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 introduces seminal research in the area of tense, aspect and the perfect. It deals with the English PP and situates the form in the literature on temporality and grammaticalisation. Non-standard instances of the PP documented in narrative lead to a focus on this specific genre. Chapter 3 introduces the definition of narrative adopted in the current study – the Labovian narrative (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1997) – and the type of narratives of interest – performed narratives (see Wolfson 1978). It also reviews prior research on tense/aspect variation in narrative, focusing on patterns of variation and their discourse-pragmatic functions. Chapter 4 presents the research design and outlines the research questions posed. It covers matters of data collection. It introduces the variationist methodology and details the linguistic and social variables to be modelled in the quantitative analysis. It also presents the discourse-analytic approach used to uncover the discourse-pragmatic functions of the NPP and its variants in performed narratives. Chapter 5 presents the results of the distributional and multivariate analysis. Chapter 6 offers additional quantitative insights into the dataset and presents the results of the qualitative analysis of tense variation. The implications of the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 summarises the main results and ensuing claims, acknowledging the limitations of the study and offering suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 2

The perfect

The aim of this chapter is to locate the study of the NPP in relation to the linguistic expression of temporality, and in relation to the meaning and development of perfects across languages and English varieties. Presenting general and language-specific features of the perfect offers the necessary background information to establish which features the AusE NPP shares with other perfects, identify where the form is currently located on the cline of grammaticalisation and in which direction it might be heading.

This chapter thus provides the theoretical foundations for the exploration of the NPP. It begins with a general presentation on the encoding of temporality (§2.1) before focusing on the perfect. It offers an account of the perfect as a cross-linguistic grammatical category (§2.2). It introduces grammaticalisation and attempts to summarise the literature on the paths of development of perfects (§2.3). It ends with a section dealing specifically with the English PP (§2.4).

2.1 The linguistic expression of temporality

This section situates the analysis of the perfect within the broader theoretical framework of temporality. Temporality is defined as “the expression of the location of events on the time line, temporal relations between events, and temporal constituency of events” (Berman & Slobin 1994: 19). It is encoded via different means in natural languages – grammatical, lexical or discursive. Klein and Li (2009: 40–41) list the following:

- Tense
- Aspect (‘grammatical aspect’, ‘viewpoint aspect’)
- Aktionsart (‘lexical aspect’, ‘situation aspect’)
- Temporal adverbials

1 In line with Comrie (1976, 1985) and Bybee (1985), tense/aspect labels that apply cross-linguistically appear non-capitalised (e.g. ‘perfect’), whereas language-specific tense/aspect categories are written with initial caps (e.g. ‘Simple Past’, ‘Narrative Present Perfect’) and referred to by their name in the language in question (e.g. the French Passé Composé, the Dutch Perfekt). This convention is used throughout the thesis.
Both tense and aspect are concerned with (notional) time, albeit differently. Comrie (1976: 4) refers to tense as ‘situation-external time’, while he refers to aspect as ‘situation-internal time’. In other words, the linguistic categories of tense and aspect respectively refer to the representation of the time that contains the event and the representation of the time contained in the event (Guillaume 1964: 47–48; Hewson 2012: 511). Though tense and aspect are closely related and interact quite extensively (Hornstein 1991: 9; Smith 1997: 14), the notions are conceptually separable (Comrie 1985: 6–7). The confusion between the two categories commonly encountered in the literature (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 54) stems from the fact that some grammatical forms actually encode both tense and grammatical aspect in numerous languages (Comrie 1985: 7; Smith 1997: 97). Tense, aspect (both grammatical and lexical aspect), and temporal adverbials are introduced in the following sections.

2.1.1 Tense

Comrie (1985: 9) defines tense as the “grammaticalised expression of location in time”. Tenses in a language constitute a grammatical category (either in the form of inflections or as fixed periphrastic constructions) (Smith 1997: 98). The function of tense forms is to locate situations in time. Arbitrary reference points are used as temporal anchors since “time itself does not provide any landmarks in terms of which one can locate situations” (Comrie 1985: 13). Typically, the moment of speech (i.e. the here and now of the speaker) is used as the ‘point of reference’ (Reichenbach 1947: 288) or ‘deictic centre’ (Comrie 1985: 9). Tense is considered a deictic category since it depends on context – viz. the time of utterance – for interpretation (Lyons 1977: 682).

When the reference point is the moment of speech, the anchoring between the time of the situation and the moment of speech is direct. Such tenses are called absolute tenses. On the other hand, the anchoring is indirect with relative tenses where the relationship between the time of the situation and the moment of speech is mediated by

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2 Some languages lack grammatical tenses. This is the case of Chinese, for instance, where temporality is expressed via lexical means such as the use of aspectual particles (e.g. le).
3 In line with Comrie (1976: 13), I use the term ‘situation’ as a cover term for events, states, and processes denoted by the verb.
a reference point which is itself located relative to the moment of speech. So relative tenses are non-deictic. However, both absolute and relative tenses can be described as anaphoric since they require a previously established temporal reference point.\footnote{Declerck (1991: 250) and Rothstein (2008: 6) underline the ambiguity of the term ‘reference point’ or ‘reference time’ which may either refer to “some arbitrary reference point with reference to which we can then locate situations in time” (Comrie 1985: 14) – generally the moment of speech – or “the point of perspective from which an event is viewed” (Guenthner 1977: 83).}

Many accounts of the anaphoric nature of tense use the temporal framework developed by Reichenbach (1947). This framework is based on three key notions: ‘Speech Time’ (S), the moment of speech; ‘Event Time’ (E), the time (or interval of time) at which some situation occurs; and ‘Reference Time’ (or ‘point of reference’) (R). R is vaguely defined as a time provided by temporal adverbials or retrieved from the (linguistic or non-linguistic) context (Declerck 1991: 254).\footnote{Reichenbach (2005: 75) argues that temporal adverbials always denote R, not E.} Reichenbach (1947) develops the view that tenses do not simply indicate the relationship between two points in time, the moment of speech and the time of some situation. Rather, they indicate the relationship between three points in time: S, E and R. The relative organisation of these three temporal points provides a representation of tenses, as shown in Table 2.1 for English. The comma signals simultaneity; the dash, anteriority.

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<tr>
<td>Simple Past</td>
<td>E,R – S</td>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>E – R – S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 A Reichenbachian representation of tenses, using English tenses for illustration purposes (Reichenbach 2005: 73)

Since E and R are co-temporal for absolute (simple) tenses, only two points in time seem to be involved, and often such tenses are described using the time of the event E relative to the time of speech S. However, such descriptions could not account for relative tenses where R and E are not simultaneous – R follows E.

Reichenbach’s (1947) scheme is not without failings. For example, R is described as static (Moens & Steedman 1988: 22). Reichenbach (1947: 293) argues that the events reported in a narrative share a common reference point. This proposal is difficult to maintain: there is temporal progression as narrative events unfold (Michaelis 2006: 228). The time point R cannot possibly be the same for all the situations reported. To account for this, the concept of reference time has been redefined. In subsequent research, reference times are described as intervals rather than points (Klein 1992: 534).
They are not conceived of as static. On the contrary, they “can be ‘constructed’ and shifted in the course of interpretation” (Partee 1984: 264–265). Another issue with the Reichenbachian approach is that it does not account for states, i.e. extended, durative situations (see the LEXICAL ASPECT section in §2.1.2). This leads Michaelis (2006: 221) to question the adequacy of the statement “tenses locate situations” since such a statement is appropriate for events but not for states. She concludes that this is a misconception and that tenses actually locate the reference time, not the time of some situation (Michaelis 2006: 240).

Klein (1992, 1994) offers a reanalysis of the Reichenbachian approach, modifying the concept of reference time and re-examining the role of tense. He relies on three key notions: Utterance Time (TU), Situation Time (TSit) and Topic Time (TT). While TU and TSit respectively correspond to Speech Time and Event Time in the Reichenbachian model, TT differs from Reference Time. Topic Time is defined as “the time span to which the claim made on a given occasion is constrained” (Klein 1992: 535). Tense is described as the relation between TT and TU. The three possible tense relations in Klein’s model are summarised in Table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TT &lt; TU</th>
<th>TT ⊃ TU</th>
<th>TT &gt; TU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Klein’s (1992: 536) tense relations

I return to Reichenbach’s and Klein’s frameworks in §2.2.1. I also discuss Klein’s framework in the following section where I introduce the category of aspect.

2.1.2 Aspect

Unlike tense, aspect is not concerned with location in time, but contributes temporal information about the internal constituency of a situation (Comrie 1976: 5). While (absolute) tense has been described as deictic since it relies on a reference point for interpretation, aspect is non-deictic because the internal temporal constituency of a situation is described irrespective of any other temporal anchor (Comrie 1985: 14).

So tenses establish temporal locations, whereas the role of aspect is to establish

---

6 The symbols are interpreted as follows: < ‘before’, > ‘after’, ⊃ ‘fully includes’.
7 Comrie’s (1976: 3) general definition of aspect – “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation” – is based on Holt’s definition of aspect as “the various ways of conceptualizing the progress of the event” (Holt 1943: 6, my translation).
the way in which a situation relates to reference time. In other words, aspect provides temporal information. There are two main types of aspectual information: information regarding the temporal organisation of a situation (situation aspect, i.e. lexical aspect), and information which has to do with the temporal perspective adopted towards the situation (viewpoint aspect, i.e. grammatical aspect) (Smith 1997: xiv, 123). Both interact in contributing to the aspecual meaning of a sentence. Figure 2.1 summarises these distinctions.

![Figure 2.1 Contrast between tense and aspect, and between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect in the expression of temporality](image)

The importance of maintaining the distinction between grammatical and lexical aspect lies in the nature of the specification and their contribution to the aspecual system (see Kortmann 1991: 13; Smith 1997: xiv, 83; Bertinetto & Delfitto 2000: 190). Grammatical aspect, like tense, is a grammatical category encoded in the system of the language. It is marked syntactically or inflectionally (i.e. by obligatory and bounded items). On the other hand, lexical aspect is “essentially rooted in the lexicon” (Bertinetto & Delfitto 2000: 190). Distinguishing between grammatical and lexical aspect is also important as they actually appear together in a sentence but contribute different temporal information (organisation vs. perspective). The two types of aspect are further detailed in subsequent paragraphs.

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8 There is a third type of aspect, phasic aspect, which is not dealt with in this thesis. Phasic aspect relates to the phasic structure of situations, i.e. the sequences of parts or phases that situations consist of such as initial, medial and final phases.
Grammatical aspect involves the “grammaticalization of expression of internal temporal constituency” (Comrie 1985: 5). It provides a temporal perspective or viewpoint on situations. The speaker (or writer) decides between a range of aspectual meanings how they want to present a particular situation, hence a certain degree of subjectivity (Brinton 1988: 3; Moens & Steedman 1988: 16; Smith 1997: xiii, 6–7). Though this is a widespread grammatical category, Dahl (2001) remarks that it may not be found across all languages.

The most common distinction made in terms of grammatical aspect is the opposition between perfective and imperfective aspect (Comrie 1976: 16). A sentence in the perfective typically denotes a single situation and presents it as a single, bounded, indivisible whole; no attention is paid to the internal make-up of that situation and its duration is also disregarded (Comrie 1976: 3; Dahl 1985: 78; Bache 1995: 278; Smith 1997: 66). As opposed to perfectivity, imperfectivity makes “explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, viewing a situation from within” (Comrie 1976: 24). The imperfective viewpoint presents only part of a situation and does not provide information about its endpoints/boundaries (Smith 1997: 73): it is unbounded. The focus is on the medial phases of the situation. Therefore, the imperfective cannot be used to refer to situations lacking internal structure (Bache 1995: 278). Within the imperfective aspectual viewpoint, there is an opposition between habitual and continuous aspect (Comrie 1976: 25). Habitual aspect refers to situations which are repeated at intervals over a period of time, while continuous aspect refers to situations which are extending over time and exist continuously over that period. The progressive and non-progressive aspects are subtypes of the continuous aspect. The progressive aspect is formally marked in English by the use of the *be + V-ing* form.

In Klein’s framework, introduced in §2.1.1, grammatical aspect is the relation between TT and TSit (Klein 1992: 537–538). Both tense and aspect are conceived of as temporal relations between time spans (Klein 1992: 538; 2000: 365). This is schematised in Figure 2.2.

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9 Comrie (1976: 35) defines progressiveness as “the combination of progressive meaning and nonstative meaning”.
The perfective and imperfective aspects are described in terms of the relation between TT and TSit, and so is the perfect. This is represented in Table 2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>$\subseteq$ TSit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>$\subset$ TSit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>$&gt;$ TSit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 Klein’s (1992: 537) aspectual relations\(^{10}\)

When the perfective aspect is used, TT comprises the end of TSit and the beginning of the post-time of TSit; when the imperfective aspect is used, TT is fully included in TSit; and when the perfect aspect is used, TT is in the post-time of TSit (Klein 1992: 542). I return to the categorisation of the perfect as a tense or an aspect in §2.2.1.

**LEXICAL ASPECT**

Grammatical aspect is only one of the two types of aspectual meaning conveyed by a sentence. The other type of aspect, lexical aspect, provides information regarding the situation itself: its unique aspectual features or internal semantic structure. Specifically, it provides information over the situation’s indirect classification as a state or an event of a certain type (Smith 1997: xiii). Thus, lexical aspect, also known as Aktionsart, concerns the classification of situations (Mourelatos 1978; Bach 1981, 1986).\(^{11}\) It is conveyed by the verb but also its arguments – what Smith (1997: xiv) calls the ‘verb constellation’ (see also Verkuyl 1972). Unlike grammatical aspect, it is not

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\(^{10}\) The symbols are interpreted as follows: $\supseteq$ ‘partly or fully includes’, $\subset$ ‘is fully included in’, $>$ ‘after’.

\(^{11}\) The term Aktionsart is German for ‘kind of action’. The expressions ‘aspectual character’ (Lyons 1977), and ‘situation aspect’ (Smith 1997), are also used in the literature.
The most influential work in this area is Vendler’s (1957) scheme which offers a classification of verbal predicates according to their inherent temporal properties. This classification relies on three main criteria: telicity (from Ancient Greek *telos*, ‘purpose’ or ‘end’), stativity and duration. Verbs that have natural endpoints are called telic; those without are called atelic. The term ‘event’ is used to refer to telic situations. The state following the culmination of an event is referred to as the ‘consequent state’ (Moens & Steedman 1988: 16) or ‘result state’ (Pancheva 2003: 278). Vendler (1957) distinguishes four types of verbs: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements. States are temporally homogeneous (i.e. they display no internal change) and denote durative, yet atelic, events (i.e. they occupy time but induce no change of state; they have no *telos*). Examples of states are *be French, have blue eyes* or *know the truth*. Activities (also known as processes) are extended in time and have no clear endpoints. Unlike states, they display internal change over time – they are not uniform. For instance, *run in the park, read or dance* are durative processes. However, at different points along the process, the runner is at a different location in the park, the reader is at a different line/page/chapter of the book and the dancer is doing a different move; activities are thus dynamic. Accomplishments are also extended in time but aim at the attainment of a certain state – there is an endpoint in sight. Reaching that *telos* implies a process with internal change leading gradually to that endpoint. For example, *run to the park* and *read a book* are accomplishments. Without their respective complements, these would be understood as activities.12 Achievements denote the instant at which a *telos* is achieved. They are therefore similar to accomplishments in having an endpoint, but differ from them since they denote an instantaneous moment – not a stretch of time. Examples of achievement predicates are *reach the summit* or *recognise the offender*. Talmy (1985) adds ‘semelfactives’ to aspectual classification. These are brief in duration and may be cyclic or repetitive. They do not lead to an endpoint, and they do not describe an instantaneous moment at which a change of state occurs, which explains why they differ from accomplishments and achievements. They consist of the event only, neither a *telos* nor a change of state. Examples of semelfactive predicates are *cough, sneeze or flash*. Table 2.4 summarises the aspectual classification of predicates based on the aforementioned three binary features: (1) stativity/dynamism; (2)

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12 Dowty (1979) remarks that Vendler’s accomplishments are composite events: they include a process and a particular culmination point, hence the term ‘culminated processes’ used by Moens and Steedman (1988).
durativity/instantaneity; (3) telicity/atelicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>static</th>
<th>durative</th>
<th>telic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>states</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accomplishments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievements</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semelfactives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 Aspectual classification of verbs based on the criteria of stativity, duration, and telicity (adapted from Smith 1997: 20)

Vendler’s classification has often been criticised for not stressing the fact that “situation aspect holds of sentences” (Smith 1997: xv, my emphasis). Lexical aspect is compositional (Verkuyl 1972; Declerck 1979: 764; Brinton 1988: 31; Smith 1997: 4). It is not only the verb but also its accompanying arguments – both subject and object and their properties (see Verkuyl 1972; Dowty 1979; Carlson 1981) – as well as the choice of grammatical aspect and the use of temporal adverbials (if any) which contribute to the aspectual meaning of a sentence.

2.1.3 Temporal adverbials

Temporal adverbials encode both temporal and aspectual meaning (Smith 1997: 112). Vlach (1993: 232) attributes a central role to temporal adverbials claiming that “temporal semantics is the semantics of temporal adverbials”. He classifies temporal adverbials into four categories: punctual (e.g. at), inclusive (e.g. in), durative (e.g. for), and frequency (e.g. often) adverbials (Vlach 1993: 250). Some temporal adverbials specifically locate situations in time. These are classified according to the period of time to which they refer: hodiernal temporal adverbials refer to today, while pre-hodiernal temporal adverbials refer to any time before today, and hesternal temporal adverbials refer specifically to yesterday (see, for e.g., Schwenter 1994a). Other temporal adverbials serve to explicitly indicate temporal progression (e.g. sentence-initial then).

The use of temporal adverbials interacts with the lexical aspect of predicates. For instance, if a semelfactive-type predicate is combined with a durative adverbial, the process will be interpreted as iterative, i.e. it will be understood as a multiple-event

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13 Smith (1997: 112) offers a similar classification of temporal adverbials differentiating between locating (e.g. at noon), completive (e.g. in an hour), durative (e.g. for an hour) and frequency (e.g. never) adverbials.
process (e.g. *I sneezed for an hour*). Constraints operate on the occurrence of certain tenses and temporal adverbials with aspectual categories (Smith 1997: 14). I discuss the use of temporal adverbials with the perfect in §2.2, and the use of temporal adverbials with the English PP in §2.4.

Temporal meaning is thus determined by the composition of meaning of the lexical predicate, its surrounding elements such as complements or temporal adverbials, and the choice of tense and grammatical aspect. Interpretation also depends on pragmatic knowledge. As Hickmann and Robert (2006: 7) explain, “meaning in general, is compositional and distributed, because language inherently involves linearization and sequencing”. The meaning of a sentence is built out of the individual word meanings as well as the ‘stage directions’ from the syntax which inform the language speakers how to paste the meanings together.

### 2.2 The perfect

Scholars attempting to capture the meaning(s) of the perfect have had to contend with the extent of variation found in the use of this form between languages as well as within a single language variety. Their attempt at defining the temporal properties of the perfect – at a crossroads between tense and aspect – is developed in §2.2.1. The broad range of functions that have been reported for the perfect, such as the expression of result, continuity, experience, and recency, are dealt with in §2.2.2. Several general theories of the perfect have been offered to encompass this variety of meanings. These are outlined in §2.2.3.

#### 2.2.1 The perfect: Tense or aspect?

The perfect, also known as ‘anterior’ in the literature (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 55), “signals that the situation occurs prior to reference time and is relevant to the situation at reference time” (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 54). The reference time may be the moment of speech, or another reference point (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 55). Examples (1) and (2) from Bybee *et al.* (1994: 61) illustrate the English Present Perfect.

1. Carol has taken statistics. (So she can help us).
2. I’ve just eaten dinner. (So I don’t want any more food).
Linguists disagree on which treatment to adopt to characterise this analytical form. It has been analysed as a tense (e.g. Reichenbach 1947; Declerck 1991) or as an aspect (e.g. Comrie 1976; Katz 2003; Binnick 2006; Michaelis 2006). A number of scholars propose to treat the perfect as an aspectuo-temporal category (see Smith 1997; Bohnemeyer 2003), while others (e.g. Bybee 1985; Dahl 1985; Bybee & Dahl 1989; Kortmann 1991) argue that it should be treated as a separate grammatical category (see also Bauer 1970; McCoard 1978; Fenn 1987 on English).

According to Reichenbach’s (1947) framework, introduced in §2.1.1, the perfect indicates anteriority by relating some previous situation (E) to the Reference Time (R), and R is necessarily detached from E. Accordingly, perfects are relative tenses. In English, the Present Perfect is a relative tense, while the Simple Past is an absolute tense. The Simple Past locates R at E, distinguishing the form from the Present Perfect for which R and E are not identical. With the Present Perfect, R is located at S. This is schematised in Figure 2.3.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E,R</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

*Simple Past*

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>S,R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
```

*Present Perfect*

Figure 2.3 Representation of the Simple Past and Present Perfect tenses in English following the Reichenbachian model (adapted from Reichenbach 2005: 72)

There are two main arguments towards an analysis of the perfect as a tense. First, the perfect is temporal to the extent that it is retrospective. It relates the time of a prior situation to some other time and can be said to be anaphoric like a tense. The second argument for an analysis of the perfect as a tense is that the perfect itself can combine with a marker of imperfective aspect (the progressive) without contradiction (Fenn 1987: 247).

However, the perfect differs from (absolute) tenses. One of the arguments towards a non-temporal analysis of the perfect includes the fact that it combines with different tenses (the present, the past, and the future). Another argument relates to the fact that only past and future perfects allow temporal specification of the situation; present perfects are incompatible with definite past temporals adverbials. This

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14 Though the present perfect shares several properties with the past and future perfects, it also has some special uses and characteristics (Lindstedt 2000: 366) (see §2.4 on the English PP for more details).
asymmetry is known as the ‘present perfect puzzle’ (Klein 1992). Contrary to the preterite, the present perfect is not used to locate R at some definite point in the past but to locate it as S; that is, it offers a prior situation “as relevant to the current moment” (Bybee et al. 1994: 61–62).

A number of scholars have described the perfect as an aspect. In Klein’s (1992, 1994) scheme, introduced in §2.1.2, the perfect is described as an aspectual relation that positions TT after TS_i. The English Past Perfect, Present Perfect and Future Perfect are so-called relative tenses with a temporal component (past, present or future respectively) and an aspectual component (perfect) (Klein 1994: 131). The relation between TU and TS_i remains unspecified, hence the different readings of the perfect (Hübler 1998: 99) (see §2.2.2). The perfect is analysed as an aspect by scholars who view the form as a stativizer, i.e. as a form that introduces a consequent state (Moens 1987; Moens & Steedman 1988; Kamp & Reyle 1993; De Swart 1998; Nishiyama & Koenig 2010). I return to the description of the perfect as a stativizer in §2.2.3.

If the perfect is considered a grammatical aspect, it is however “an aspect in a rather different sense from the other aspects” (Comrie 1976: 52); unlike the perfective or imperfective aspect, it is not concerned with the internal temporal structure of a situation (Comrie 1976: 5). Moser (2003: 239) thus argues that having the perfect as an aspect would ‘destroy’ the binary aspectual distinction of perfective/imperfective (see the grammatical aspect section in §2.1.2).

The complex classification of the perfect as either a tense or an aspect has led some researchers to analyse the form as an independent cross-linguistic category (Bauer 1970; Dahl 1985: 129; Fenn 1987: 249; Kortmann 1991). Bybee and Dahl (1989) find the classification issue irrelevant given their gram-type approach. They argue that tense and aspect are only useful as notional, not grammatical, domains (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 97).

Other researchers have concluded that the perfect is an aspectuo-temporal category (Smith 1997: 186). As Smith (1997: 124) points out, “only as a situation unfolds in time is its aspectual character made manifest”. This explains the intertwinment between the expression of temporal location (tense) and temporal information (aspect). Though Michaelis (2006) analyses the perfect as a stativizer, she

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15 The term ‘gram’ is a shortening for ‘grammatical morpheme’ to refer to cross-linguistic categories with a certain meaning and a certain form (Bybee & Dahl 1989; Bybee et al. 1994). In Bybee and Dahl’s (1989: 7) gram-type approach “the relevant entity for the study of grammatical meaning is the individual gram, which must be viewed as having inherent semantic substance reflecting the history of its development as much as the place it occupies in a synchronic system”.

22
recognises that the form also functions like a tense to the extent that the consequent state necessarily obtains after the occurrence of a prior situation: “while perfect predications […] are state predications, they also count as event reports, since they assert a past event by means of asserting its resultant state” (Michaelis 2006: 238).

In the present thesis, I adopt the position that the perfect has both temporal and aspectual characteristics and do not engage further with this debate.

### 2.2.2 The ‘meanings’ of the perfect

The present perfect has a number of canonical functions, including result, continuity, experience, and recency (McCawley 1971; Comrie 1976). There is a certain degree of fluidity between these perfect types due to the influence exerted by other temporality-encoding categories on the perfect aspect (see §2.1.2-§2.1.3). Different languages also resort to the perfect in different cases (see De Swart 2016). Such cross-linguistic variation is explained by the various degrees of grammaticalisation of the form in any one language (see §2.3). The four main perfect types are presented in turn.

The resultative perfect, also called ‘perfect of result’ or ‘stative perfect’, indicates that the results or consequences of a past situation hold at the moment of speech (Comrie 1976: 56). Consider (3).

(3) (The baby starts crying) Evelyn (furious): You’ve woken him up now (he’s awake). (Fenn 1987: 100)

The resultative use of the perfect is considered by Comrie (1976: 56) as the prototypical illustration of the current relevance of a past event, the perfect’s crucial semantic feature. Current relevance is discussed at length in §2.2.3. This feature distinguishes the perfect from the preterite. Comrie (1976: 56) contrasts John has arrived and John arrived explaining that “the former indicates persistence of the result of John’s arrival, i.e. that he is still here, whereas the second does not”. Similarly, Pancheva (2003: 278)

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16 I focus on the present perfect, the centre of interest of the current study. However, all canonical functions – with the exception of recency – are also found with the past and future tenses (see Binnick 2006: 251).

17 Some scholars classify both entailed and implicated resultant state as resultative perfect predicates (see Michaelis 1998), while others only classify the first kind as resultative and treat the latter as existential (see McCawley 1971).
notes that “the result state of the underlying eventuality [i.e. situation] must hold at the reference time” in order to pose a resultative reading of the perfect in *I have built a sandcastle*. Another distinguishing feature of the resultative perfect is that the perfect sentence can only be true if its present-tense counterpart is also true (Fenn 1987: 102). In (3), *You’ve woken him up now* can only be true if *He [the baby] is awake now*. The negation of that state, *He is not awake now*, renders the resultative interpretation impossible. All resultative perfects necessarily include a *telos*, a result(ant) state (Pancheva 2003: 278). Since an endpoint is required, this type of perfect can only occur with telic predicates, never atelic ones. Brugger (1997: 59) explains that with resultative perfects, once the *telos* of the bounded predicate is reached, “the action exhausts itself and passes into a state that is the result of the action”. Finally, resultative perfects usually co-occur with temporal adverbials such as *still* and *already* which express a time span of limited duration.

The continuative perfect, also known as ‘universal perfect’ or ‘perfect of persistent situation’, indicates that a state holds throughout an interval, as shown in (4).

(4) *We’ve lived* here for ten years. (Comrie 1976: 60)

The situation described in (4) began in the past – more precisely ten years ago, as indicated by the temporal adverbial *for ten years* – but could be seen as extending until the present time. It could also be interpreted as an experiential perfect: ‘I have had the experience of living here for ten years, but now, I no longer live here.’ (The experiential function of the perfect is described in the following paragraph.) The ambiguity of sentence (4) could be solved by context – whether people still live here (continuative) or not (experiential). The use of the progressive would also trigger a continuative interpretation. The focus with continuative perfects is not on the ‘past-ness’ but on the ‘present-ness’ of the situation which persists until speech time (and potentially even after). The continuative perfect makes an explicit link to the present which leads Brugger (1997: 53ff.) to state that it behaves like a present tense. In languages such as French, German, Polish, Russian, or Spanish, the simple present, rather than the present perfect, would be used to encode continuity (Klein & Vater 1998: 219; Tommola 2000: 447). Mittwoch (1988: 209) notes that continuative perfects commonly occur with durative or iterative predicates (i.e. they are often used with state verbs which are atelic and durative, or with telic predicates, usually in the progressive form, if they denote an
iterative process or make explicit the relation to the present moment). Temporal adverbials frequently co-occur with continuative perfects, to the extent that Fenn (1987: 8) states that continuatives are the “sum of two factors: the temporal meaning of the perfect and the temporal meanings of accompanying adverbials”. They most often co-occur with temporal adverbials of duration such as ‘for t amount of time’, since structure, all along structure, and ‘for t amount of time at interval P’, i.e. adverbials that establish a time interval which extends up to the present moment (Fenn 1987: 10–17). Continuative perfects are also found in collocation with proximate and frequency temporal adverbials (e.g. lately and always) (Brugger 1997: 62). The temporal adverbial still cannot be used in the continuative context.

The experiential or existential perfect presents an event as having occurred at least once at some indefinite point in an interval starting in the past and lasting up to the present (Comrie 1976: 58; Dahl 1985: 143). The experiential perfect is exemplified in (5).

(5) Questions you could ask yourself include: “Have I seen a vehicle matching the description provided by the boy?” “Have I seen any men, associated with a light coloured dual cab utility, who may match the description supplied of the suspects?” (Kirsten Roos, Queensland Police Media, 25.11.2005) (Ritz 2010: 5)

The two crucial features of this type of perfect are indefiniteness and subjectivity. The experiential perfect is indefinite because it implies that the situation denoted by the predicate occurred at some time within an interval starting in the past and going up to speech time, but without specifying a definite time throughout this interval. It is subjective because it usually corresponds to someone’s personal experience. This explains why the agent of the predicate tends to be animate (Bybee et al. 1994: 62). Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski (2001: 191) state that these perfects can often be paraphrased as ‘I have had the experience of doing X’. Dahl (1985: 141, 143) shows that experiential perfects occur more frequently in interrogative and negative polarity contexts. They usually co-occur with temporal adverbials of frequency such as never or sometimes.

The last function of the perfect is the ‘perfect of recent past’, also known as ‘hot news’ perfect. It is characterised by two main features: recency (Comrie 1976: 60) and, more importantly, newsworthiness, as illustrated in (6).

Scholars have argued that the concept of ‘recency’ cannot be the defining factor of the ‘hot news’ perfect since the form could be used years after the event, as long as the information provided is new to the listener (McCawley 1971: 109). McCawley (1971: 109) suggests that the hot news perfect is a subtype of the experiential perfect, with the specificity that “the status as news of the thing being reported is essential to the acceptability of the sentence”. Other scholars argue that the hot news perfect is merely a variation of the resultative perfect (Fenn 1987: 131; Kiparsky 2002: 120). Schwenter (1994b: 1001) justifies the existence of the hot news perfect by arguing that the emphasis is on the immediacy and perceived significance of the past event itself rather than on its present consequences (Schwenter 1994b: 997, 1001). He adds that the function of the hot news perfect, based on pragmatics rather than semantics, is to focus the listener’s attention on the event. After having established the newsworthiness of the event for the listener, the speaker uses the hot news perfect to present the situation as new information because they believe that it is, whether recent or not, unknown to the listener and therefore novel. This resonates with the definition of ‘recency’ given by Rett and Murray (2013: 464): recency is not simply defined in terms of immediate temporal precedence, but rather in terms of relevance at the time of utterance. Schwenter (1994b: 995) notes that ‘hot news’ uses arise later than other perfect functions. Diachronically, this function develops as the perfect construction gradually loses its connection to the present, and switches its focus from the present to the past (Schwenter 1994b: 1024) (see §2.3.2-§2.3.3). The hot news perfect readily combines with events that have a natural endpoint, i.e. events that are telic such as accomplishments and achievements. Another characteristic of ‘hot news’ perfects is that they tend to collocate with temporal adverbials such as recently or just.

2.2.3 General theories of the present perfect

Five theoretical strands underpin the description of the present perfect cross-linguistically. These theories and the linguistic domain to which they pertain are presented in Table 2.5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Type of approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Indefinite Past</td>
<td>Semantic (temporal meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Extended-Now</td>
<td>Semantic (temporal meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Result State</td>
<td>Semantic (stavizer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Embedded Past</td>
<td>Syntactic (derived structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Current Relevance</td>
<td>Pragmatic (concept of relevance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5 Present perfect theories

All five theories are briefly discussed in what follows (see McCoard 1978 for a detailed review of the Current Relevance, Indefinite Past, Extended-Now and Embedded Past theories; and see Portner 2003: 466–476 on the Indefinite Past, Result State and Extended-Now theories).\(^{18}\)

Indefinite Past theory contends that the perfect expresses a past event which is unanchored, i.e. whose temporal location is unidentified (Binnick 1991: 98; Giorgi & Pianesi 1997). As a consequence, adverbials such as *yesterday* or *at 10 o’clock*, which are temporally definite, are prohibited (Inoue 1979).\(^{19}\) Dahl and Hedin (2000: 386–389) use a general theory of event reference to explain this constraint. They oppose ‘token-focusing’ with ‘type-focusing’ event reference. The sentence *John has winked*, like the sentence *There are lions in the garden*, exemplify type-focusing event reference, i.e. reference is non-specific. Similarly, Smith (1997: 108) remarks that sentences in the perfect refer to the occurrence or experience of a prior situation, rather than the situation itself. The absence of precise time specification of the situation that previously took place reflects the fact that it is not the focus of the sentence. On the other hand, sentences such as *John winked* and *There is a lion in the garden* exemplify token-focusing event reference, i.e. reference is specific. The lack of anchor point in past sentences is usually felt to be anomalous (Dahl & Hedin 2000: 389). Besides type- and token-focusing event reference, Dahl and Hedin (2000: 396) mention a third way to present an event: a current relevance interpretation. This approach will be taken up below. The Indefinite Past theory has been critiqued for relying on ‘definiteness’ to distinguish the present perfect from the preterite. There are counterexamples to the

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\(^{18}\) Another temporal approach to the perfect (but not a semantic treatment per se) is the Anteriority theory (Reichenbach 1947) presented in §2.1.1. Semantically, Reichenbach’s framework does not distinguish between the preterite and the present perfect (McCoard 1978; Dowty 1979): in both cases E precedes S. The difference is rather at the discourse-pragmatic level, where R is located.

\(^{19}\) The purported incompatibility of the English PP with definite past temporal adverbials may be, to some extent, the artefact of prescriptive ideologies. Drawing on actual usage data, further research should establish whether evidence supports the claim of incompatibility.
claim that the preterite refers to a ‘definite’ past time (token-focusing event reference), while the present perfect refers to a ‘non-definite’ time (type-focusing event reference). For example, the time reference expressed in (7) is indefinite though the verb is conjugated in the SP. Conversely, the time reference is definite in (8) where the definite time adverbial today co-occurs with the PP.

(7) With unlimited access to food resources Aboriginal communities lived healthy lives. (https://torquayhistory.com/wathaurong-and-land/)

(8) We’re happy to say a new order of Eco Nappies has arrived today. (http://vallapharmacy.com.au/eco-nappies-have-arrived/)

Moreover, if the English PP construction is described as incompatible with definite past temporal adverbials, such incompatibility is not sustained across languages (Smith 1997: 108).

McCoard (1978) proposes the semantic Extended-Now theory, in which the present perfect must refer to an interval that extends from the past to the moment of speech (Dowty 1979: 341; Mittwoch 1988: 203). This semantic approach puts emphasis on the lack of distinction between then and now: the present perfect expresses a “past event within a time span that is continuous with the present, not differentiated in then versus now” (McCoad 1978: 18). The notion of an ‘Extended-Now’ has been replaced by the broader notion of a ‘Perfect Time Span’ by Iatridou et al. (2001) since the interval may extend to any reference time (R), not only the ‘Now’ of speech time (S) (see also Pancheva 2003: 385; Rothstein 2008: 54). The theory accounts for the acceptability of definite temporal adverbials with the present perfect when those adverbials refer to intervals containing the reference time itself (Binnick 2006: 252–253). This explains the incompatibility of the English PP with definite past temporal adverbials, but its compatibility with adverbials such as today or this week which include the present moment. However, the unacceptability of the present perfect with definite past temporal adverbials does not apply cross-linguistically (cf. for e.g. the German Perfekt). The main pitfall of the Extended-Now theory is that it fails to distinguish the present perfect from the preterite as “there is ALWAYS a time span which begins in the past, includes the event, and ends with TU”, whichever form is used (Klein 1992: 532, emphasis in original). The notion of an Extended-Now or Perfect
Time Span is unable to semantically differentiate between the two forms.

Result State theory is a third semantic approach to the perfect. As discussed in §2.2.1, the perfect has been described as a stativizer (Inoue 1979; Moens & Steedman 1988; Kamp & Reyle 1993; De Swart 1998; Nishiyama & Koenig 2010). Perfect predicates do resemble stative predicates according to different tests for stativity (Katz 2003). Result State theory proposes that the perfect transforms the expression of situations into those for their ‘consequent states’ (Moens & Steedman 1988: 19). The perfect therefore appears incompatible with states and activities that lack a telos. However, the perfect may still coerce an inchoative interpretation with such lexical predicates, though the interpretation is pragmatically constrained (Moens & Steedman 1988: 19). Nishiyama and Koenig (2010) argue that the perfect state is semantically underspecified. The perfect is pragmatically ambiguous because the precise nature of the consequent state it introduces is pragmatically inferred, rather than being part of its semantics (Nishiyama & Koenig 2010: 615).

Another theory of the perfect is the Embedded Past theory, “a purely syntactic approach” (Binnick 1991: 103) developed in the field of transformational generative grammar. It describes the present perfect as a preterite embedded within the scope of a present (McCoard 1978: 165). Under this analysis, the present perfect is not the present of a past but a derived structure (Brinton 1988: 14). The perfect could be glossed as ‘it is the case that X happened’.

Finally, the present perfect has been explained by Current Relevance theory as expressing “the continuing present relevance of a past situation” (Comrie 1976: 52). This theory revolves around the pragmatic concept of ‘current relevance’ to explain the distinction between present perfect and preterite usage. McCoard (1978: 64–65) provides an inventory of the various properties which have been attached to the notion of current relevance (cited in Binnick 1991: 102):

- recency
- present existence
  - of the surface-subject referent
  - of the deep-subject referent
  - of a certain state of the subject referent
  - of a “posthumous personage”
  - of a belief in the subject referent or in some kind of validity
- of the object referent
  • ‘connection with the present’
  • continuance of a state into the present
  • iterativity
  • experientiality
  • present possibility

Current relevance is not a semantic trait of the perfect per se but a pragmatic implication of the predicate in context (McCoard 1978: 65; Dahl & Hedin 2000; Nishiyama & Koenig 2010). The issue of establishing a rigorous definition for the concept has been hailed as a major problem of the analysis (McCoard 1978: 32). Current relevance is a subjective notion, “expressing some kind of psychological feeling of the speaker for what is currently relevant” (Squartini & Bertinetto 2000: 414). However, empirically measuring current relevance is problematic. Klein (1992: 531) remarks that it is always possible to find “a reason why the event is still of particular relevance to the present”, regardless of tense/aspect usage. In a similar vein, Engel and Ritz (2000: 120) contend that a sentence, whether in the present perfect or preterite, must necessarily be relevant to the speaker otherwise it would not be worth uttering. Schaden (2013), following Merin (1999), proposes a formalisation of current relevance based on conditional probabilities. The present perfect is required beyond a certain ‘current relevance’ threshold, a threshold which differs across linguistic varieties (Schaden 2012).

In summary, most general theories of the perfect only partially succeed in explaining the variety of meanings that the form expresses (see §2.2.2), and the different constraints that apply on its usage cross-linguistically. Besides, most of these theories have not been empirically tested.

2.3 Grammaticalisation of perfects

In this section I introduce grammaticalisation theory (§2.3.1). I explore the developmental path followed by the perfect cross-linguistically (§2.3.2), and I mention some factors which can explain the changes undertaken by this category (§2.3.4). In §2.3.3 I present the different synchronic stages at which the perfect can be located. I contrast the English, Dutch and French perfects for illustration purposes. The semantic evolution of the French perfect – Passé Composé (PC) – is analysed in more detail in
§2.3.5. This evolution, whereby the PC has turned into a past tense and overtaken the *Passé Simple* in spoken French, is presented as a potential road for the PP in AusE.

### 2.3.1 Introducing grammaticalisation

Grammaticalisation theory is part of the study of language change and grammatical change. It studies the diachronic paths of similar source constructions cross-linguistically (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 4). The process of grammaticalisation, also known as ‘grammaticization’ (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 4), has been defined as “the change whereby lexical terms and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalised, continue to develop new grammatical functions” (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 1). The term was first coined by Meillet ([1912] 1965) in “L’évolution des formes grammaticales”. In his seminal article, Meillet distinguishes between three categories of words: ‘mots principaux’ (‘main words’), ‘mots accessoires’ (‘tool words’) and ‘mots grammaticaux’ (‘grammatical words’). He assumes that some words can gradually transit from one category to the next, evolving from ‘mots principaux’ into ‘mots accessoires’, and potentially developing further into ‘mots grammaticaux’. This analysis is echoed in Hopper and Traugott (2003) and their grammaticalisation cline provided in Figure 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content word</th>
<th>grammatical word</th>
<th>clitic</th>
<th>inflectional affix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 2.4 Various stages of a form undergoing grammaticalisation (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 7)

This cline is a metaphorical representation of the typical steps followed by linguistic forms across languages as they become more grammaticalised. Empirical observation has shown that some uninflected lexical words (or content words) gradually transform into grammatical words (or function words), and potentially further grammaticalise into clitics or inflectional affixes. When an item is grammaticalised, it leaves the lexical domain which is specific and referential. It progressively develops “grammatical meaning [which] is highly general and relational in quality, serving to relate parts of clauses or parts of discourse to one another” (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 63).

Grammaticalisation is not only defined as a process whereby a form shifts from lexical to grammatical meaning, but also “from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status” (Kuryłowicz 1965: 69). Further grammaticalisation of already
grammaticalised sources has been referred to as ‘secondary grammaticalisation’ (Traugott 2002: 26–27; Traugott & Dasher 2002: 81), in opposition to ‘primary grammaticalisation’ which involves lexical sources (Nicolle 2012: 379).

The cline of grammaticalisation represented in Figure 2.4 is not necessarily a continuum. There are frequent overlaps between stages. A form may also stop at a certain stage and not grammaticalise any further. By studying recurrent clines of grammaticalisation, linguists are able to determine general paths of change across languages. The path for the perfect is presented in §2.3.2. Hopper and Traugott (2003) explain that the cline of grammaticalisation has a diachronic implication since such a path may help predict the lines along which a language is likely to develop.

Heine (2003: 579) describes the grammaticalisation of linguistic expressions in terms of four interrelated mechanisms of change:

1. Desemanticisation (also called ‘semantic bleaching’) – loss in meaning content.
2. Extension or generalisation – use in new contexts.
3. Decategorialisation – loss of morphosyntactic properties characteristic of the source forms, including loss of independent word status.

Semantically, grammaticalisation is characterised by the gradual loss of specific components of lexical meaning (Givón 1973). This phenomenon has been labelled ‘bleaching’, and is summarised by Matisoff (1991: 384) as “the partial effacement of a morpheme’s semantic features, the stripping away of some of its precise content so it can be used in an abstracter, grammatical-hardware-like way”. Desemanticisation is usually associated with a generalisation of meaning (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 62). Another concomitant of grammaticalisation is decategorialisation. Decategorialisation corresponds to the loss of morphosyntactic properties of the construction. The process of grammaticalisation also often involves phonological attrition, i.e. erosion of some phonetic components of the form. This sometimes leads the form to become a bounded affix. The shift usually operates from less to more bounded.

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20 Not all of these processes are necessary for grammaticalisation to take place.
21 Meillet ([1912] 1965: 139) had already reported semantic bleaching and phonological erosion, as well as boundedness, as signs of grammaticalisation.
Grammaticalisation is also associated with layering and persistence (Hopper 1991: 22). Layering is the co-occurrence of older and newer layers of meanings (Hopper 1991: 22–23; Hopper & Traugott 2003: 124; Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 21). When a grammaticalised item acquires a new function, it does not necessarily discard older ones, hence the coexistence of several layers (Hopper 1991: 22). Persistence, also known as ‘(semantic) retention’ refers to traces of the original lexical meanings of the construction in its current uses (Hopper 1991: 28; Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 15–18). The original lexical meanings, but also previous constraints on the item, may pervade through the grammaticalised item (Hopper 1991: 22). Layering and persistence are echoed in the ‘panchronic’ view of language defended by Svorou (1994). Change is seen as an ongoing process, breaking the discreteness between synchrony and diachrony. At any given stage, earlier and later forms coexist, and constraints on current forms may result from their earlier meaning. Bybee and Dahl (1989: 59) state that “the development of grams out of lexical material is a gradual process, which means that in any particular languages at any particular time we will find grams in various stages of development”.

2.3.2 Grammaticalisation cline of perfects

It is a well-established trend that perfects (i.e. anteriors) often originate in resultative constructions (the source gram), and tend to grammaticalise into past/perfective markers (see Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 68–69, 81–87). Also attested is the development of perfects into hodiernal pasts (i.e. the perfect is used to express temporal remoteness distinctions) (Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 101; Bybee & Dahl 1989: 73). In other languages, perfects develop evidential uses (Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 95–97), or mirative uses (DeLancey 2001: 378–379; De Wit 2017; Peterson 2017: 85). Figure 2.5 represents the prototypical perfect grammaticalisation path.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resultative construction</th>
<th>perfect</th>
<th>past/perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 2.5 Cross-linguistic perfect grammaticalisation cline (adapted from Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 105)

Resultative constructions become perfect constructions via a shift in meaning, specifically a change in emphasis: resultatives emphasise the state that results from a prior event, whereas perfects focus on the past event that triggers a current state (Dahl
In a number of languages, the perfect has undergone anterior-to-past/perfective grammaticalisation: the form has developed into a past tense – referring to a situation which occurred squarely in the past (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 63) – or into a perfective – presenting the situation as a single whole, ignoring its internal temporal make-up (Comrie 1976: 16). This is the next step on the grammaticalisation cline for perfects. In languages where the perfect has grammaticalised into a past/perfective, the form can be used in narrative to express temporal progression.

Schwenter (1994b: 1024) claims that the hot news function of perfects (see §2.2.2) constitutes an important ‘stepping stone’ towards further grammaticalisation of the form into a perfective. Hot news perfects refer to discrete past situations with only a tenuous link to the present discourse situation. As such, they approximate the functions
of past or perfective forms (Schwenter 1994b: 1003, 1024). The tenuous link with the present is the speaker’s subjective evaluation: they consider that the event reported in the perfect is of relevance to the hearers because it is ‘hot’ news or particularly newsworthy (Schwenter 1994b: 1004). No heuristic methods have however been elaborated to assess speakers’ subjective evaluation of events, and to evaluate the degree of ‘newsworthiness’ that can be attributed to those events. Perfects are claimed to expand their functions into past or perfective domains as the meanings of immediacy and/or significance gradually erode (Schwenter 1994b: 1003). In other words, the gradual relaxation of the condition of current relevance (see §2.2.3) leads to the grammaticalisation of perfects into past/perfective forms. The form first generalises to refer to hodiernal perfective uses, and later expands its meaning to refer to more remote past situations (Bybee et al. 1994: 101–102). However, Schwenter and Torres Cacoullos (2008) reach a different conclusion: they find that the meaning shift of the PP towards a perfective in Peninsular Spanish occurs as the form becomes increasingly used in “temporally indeterminate (lacking specific temporal reference) past contexts” (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008: 31).

In some languages, the perfect becomes a marker of recent past. For example, Schwenter (1994a) discusses the grammaticalisation of the perfect into a hodiernal past in the dialect of Alicante (see Dahl 1985: 125 on the hodiernal/non-hodiernal distinction). The grammaticalisation of the form has led to the introduction of a remoteness distinction between ‘all same-day/today events’ (introduced with the perfect), and ‘before-today’ events (introduced with the past).

Cross-linguistically, perfect forms are also prone to developing into miratives (see DeLancey 2001: 378–379; De Wit 2017), or evidentials (see Slobin & Aksu 1982; Friedman 1986; Lindstedt 2000; Lazard 2001; Tatevosov 2001). While mirativity is sometimes considered a sub-category of evidentiality (Lazard 1999; Hill 2012), DeLancey (2001: 379–380) argues for a treatment of mirativity and evidentiality as distinct categories. Following this latter approach, evidentiality is defined as a grammatical category that indicates the (non-)existence, nature and source of evidence for a given statement (Aikhenvald & Dixon 2003: 1; Aikhenvald 2004: 3). On the other hand, mirativity is a grammatical category that encodes the speaker’s expression of wonderment about unusual or unpredictable events (DeLancey 1997; 2001: 369–370). Miratives can indicate that the information presented is new, either to the speaker or the hearer, and usually salient or surprising (Aikhenvald 2004: 197). In narratives, mirative
forms may indicate that a particular situation is surprising to one of the protagonists (Aikhenvald 2012: 442).

The expression of mirativity logically ensues from the hot news uses of the perfect since hot news perfects often refer to unexpected, out-of-the ordinary situations; that is, mirative situations (De Haan 2011: 457). Perfects also easily develop into evidential markers since their use serves to describe past situations with present results. The present results are connected to the past situation, and can be interpreted as a source of evidence for the existence of the past situation (DeLancey 2001: 378). As noted by Bybee and Dahl (1989: 73–74), “the notion of an action known by its results can be extended to actions known by other indirect means, such as by inference and by reports from other parties”.

2.3.3 Stages of development of the perfect across languages

Bybee et al. (1994) analysed 76 different languages to determine the origins and developmental path of the perfect cross-linguistically (see §2.3.2.). From their results, they established five synchronic stages or ‘semantic ages’ in the development of perfect forms. These ‘perfages’ (Bybee et al. 1994: 105) comprise of:

- Perfage 1: completives.
- Perfage 2: young anteriors, i.e. past situations with current relevance.
- Perfage 3: old anteriors.
- Perfage 4: perfectives.
- Perfage 5: pasts.

Completives are defined as grams that express that “something is done thoroughly and completely” (Bybee et al. 1994: 34). They often derive from lexical constructions involving verbs like ‘finish’ (e.g. in Tok Pisin) or ‘be complete’ (e.g. in Lao). Young anteriors (i.e. perfects, see §2.2.1) only express past situations with current relevance. By contrast, old anteriors have developed uses other than purely perfect ones. They express perfect but also past/perfective meaning. Finally, perfectives and pasts are grams no longer expressing anterior functions. They correspond to perfage 4 and perfage 5 respectively. Bybee et al. (1994: 51–52) hypothesise that completives and young anteriors correspond to the earliest stages of semantic development, that old anteriors represent an intermediate stage, and that perfectives and pasts feature at the
end of the diachronic cline. This is reflected phonologically and morphologically, with reduced grams for later perfages. Young anteriors are often free morphemes, whereas old anteriors are more likely to be bound morphemes; perfectives and pasts tend to be bound morphemes (Bybee et al. 1994: 81).

Harris (1982: 49–50) identifies four stages in the development of the perfect in Romance languages. In his description, stage (i) is the expression of a present state as the result of a past action (resultative meaning). At stage (ii), the form is developing PP values with durative or repetitive aspect. Stage (iii) is the expression of a past action with current relevance (perfect meaning). Finally, at stage (iv), the form not only expresses all PP functions, it also assumes preterite functions. Harris (1982: 50) classifies Castilian Spanish at stage (iii), and Standard French, Northern Italian and Standard Romanian at stage (iv). Similarly, Elsness (1997: 347) distinguishes three stages in the development of the PP (see Elsness 1997: 346 for a full list). At stage 1, the focus is on the present state or result of a past action. At stage 2, the emphasis is on the past action which brought about a certain state at speech time. The PP is then characterised by its indefinite past time reference. Finally, at stage 3, the PP becomes the exponent of a past action. There are no restrictions on temporal specification. Table 2.6 offers a summary of these cross-linguistic stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Meaning of present perfect</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present states resulting from past situations</td>
<td>Calabrian, Sicilian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Past situations (durative or repetitive) extending up to the present time</td>
<td>Galician, Portuguese, Mexican Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Past situations with current relevance</td>
<td>Castilian Spanish, Catalan, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Past situations with current relevance, but past temporal specification allowed</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All past situations</td>
<td>French, Northern Italian, Romanian, Russian, German</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 Stages of perfect grammaticalisation across languages (adapted from Fleischman 1983: 195 and Engel & Ritz 2000: 125)

What this table illustrates is that the present perfect, in any language, should not be viewed as a static construction but as “simply one stage in a long series of developments” (Bybee et al. 1994: 4).

Synchronically, perfects are at different stages of development and cannot be used in the same contexts in all languages. For example, the English, Dutch and French
perfect forms (see De Swart 2007) can all be used to express canonical resultative and experiential functions, as illustrated by Vet (1992: 53).22

(9)  a. The taxi has arrived.
     b. De taxi is gearriveerd.
     c. Le taxi est arrivé (‘il est là’).

(10)  a. Have you (ever) been to Florence?
      b. Ben je (ooit) in Florence geweest?
      c. As-tu (jamais) été à Florence?

However, when the focus switches from the present state of a past situation to the past situation itself (which is in turn temporally located), the perfect can only be used in French and Dutch (see De Vuyst 1985 on the Dutch Voltooid Tegenwoordige Tijd). This use is disallowed in English (Vet 1992: 54).

(11)  a. *The book that I have bought yesterday is on the table.
      b. Het boek dat ik gisteren gekocht heb ligt op de tafel.
      c. Le livre que j’ai acheté hier est sur la table.

Finally, only in French can the perfect be used as a narrative past tense. These facts are summarised in Table 2.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resultative &amp; experiential</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Antérieur du présent’ 23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Narrative past’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.7 Perfect functions in English, Dutch and French (adapted from Vet 1992: 54)

In languages where the perfect has further advanced along the anterior-to-past/perfective grammaticalisation path, there is no restriction on its combination with

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22 On the Dutch perfect, see also De Vuyst (1985), Korrel (1993) and De Swart (2007).
23 Vet’s (1992: 51) definition of the ‘Antérieur du présent’ is highly ambiguous: “The focus is not on the resultant state of a situation, but on a portion of the situation itself. However, […] the main perspective of the whole segment remains anchored at speech time” (my translation). This illustrates the complexity of defining the semantics of the perfect in languages where the form cannot be used as a narrative past, yet can be modified by definite past temporal adverbials (see De Swart 2007 for an explanation of this constraint differential between perfects).
definite past temporal adverbials, or on its usage as a narrative tense.

### 2.3.4 Factors impacting perfect grammaticalisation

Several factors have been put forth to explain the multiple changes affecting the present perfect cross-linguistically. According to Harris (1982: 45), “it is the inherent instability of the present perfect category which everywhere underlies the evolution of this small part of the past tense system”. Binnick (1991: 100) also identifies the semantic complexity of the perfect category, its ambiguity, and its general instability as the causes of change.

Hopper and Traugott (2003) view grammaticalisation as the result of a negotiation between speakers and hearers as to the meaning of certain constructions in a communicative system. On the one hand, speakers imply more than they assert; on the other hand, hearers infer more than is asserted (Bybee et al. 1994: 285). Traugott and Dasher (2002), with their ‘Invited Inferencing’ Theory of Semantic Change, insist on speaker’s innovative language use in the creation of new meanings. Schwenter and Waltereit (2010) also stress the pivotal role of hearers in semantic change: (i) how they recognise innovations and contribute (or not) to their propagation, and (ii) how they assign interpretation to forms – as intended or not by the speaker (Schwenter & Waltereit 2010: 76). Since tense categories are anaphoric in nature, the speaker’s point of view and interpretation of the situation is highly contextual. Different speakers may arrive at different pragmatic inferences based on the same situation. Over time, a new meaning may become fixed into the semantics of the form (i.e. it may be semanticised). The persistence/retention of previous meanings (see §2.3.1) explains the multiplicity of functions which the PP form can have in languages that are further advanced along the anterior-to-past/perfective grammaticalisation cline.

(Inter)subjectification is used to explain the diachronic change in perfect meaning in some, but not all, languages. Subjectification describes the diachronic, pragmatic-semantic process whereby “meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition” (Traugott 1989: 35). Intersubjectification, on the other hand, involves increased attention to the addressee. As noted in §2.1.2, the choice of grammatical aspect is to some extent subjective and involves speaker perspective. Resultative-to-anterior grammaticalisation has been argued to be an instantiation of subjectification (see Carey 1995 on English; Detges 2000 on English and Spanish): the past event that brings about a result state
becomes the object of focus over the result state itself (see §2.3.2). Anterior-to-past/perfective grammaticalisation has also been viewed as subjectification. In particular, Hernández (2013) analyses oral Salvadoran data and written Mexican data – two Spanish varieties that seem to display early phases of present perfect grammaticalisation into a past/perfective form (Hernández 2013: 263). He argues that the *Pretérito Perfecto [Compuesto]* enters narrative discourse via subjectification. It expresses affective closeness, while the use of the *Pretérito* signals detachment. The *Pretérito Perfecto [Compuesto]* is also used to “make certain events stand out to the interlocutor” (Hernández 2013: 261). I will argue that a similar process is at play in contemporary AusE narratives. Already in Middle English the shift between the SP and the CHP, as well as the shift between the SP and the NPP, served to emphasise particular events in narrative (Mustanoja 1960: 506–507). Specifically, the use of the SP indicated objective facts, whereas the CHP or the NPP introduced subjective (emotional) evaluation. As noted by Detges (2000: 346), “basic rhetorical strategies […] are strong motives for repeated meaning change in the same direction”. The process of (inter)subjectification does not, however, necessarily result in grammaticalisation, though the two phenomena are strongly correlated (Traugott 2010: 38, 40).

An indirect factor leading towards the expansion of the present perfect from a perfect to a perfective is semantic generalisation. As the form advances along the grammaticalisation cline, its meaning becomes more general, and the range of contexts in which it can be used consequently expands (Bybee & Pagliuca 1985; Hopper & Traugott 2003: 101–103).

### 2.3.5 Evolution of the French perfect (*Passé Composé*)

The evolution of the *Passé Composé* (PC) is a pertinent example to assess the plausible evolution of the English PP into a general past tense (see §2.4.4). Indeed, Bybee *et al.* (1994: 14) claim that any ‘grammaticizations’ that begin with the same or similar source meaning can be expected to follow the same course of change (however, see Poplack 2011: 220 for evidence to the contrary). The path followed by the AusE PP might therefore be identical to the one described here for the French PC (cf. Ritz 2007).

It has been established that the PC has expanded its range from a present perfect to a perfective past, encroaching on the territory of the *Passé Simple* (PS) (Engel 1998: 130). Foulet (1920) dates the overtaking of the PC as early as the twelfth century, finding evidence of uses of the PC as a preterite in poetic and literary language of that
period. Caudal and Roussarie (2006: 15) also note that the PC was used as a pure resultative perfect until the eleventh century before it began to be used to express temporal succession in discourse, though without definite past temporal adverbials. The first uses of the PC as a preterite seemed to occur in storytelling to bring about vividness. Foulet (1920: 273) explains that a poet strives to make his story more vivid by presenting events as though they have just happened, and as though the narrator is still in a state of emotional shock after these events. The PC, due to the link it establishes between a past situation and the time of speech, is apt at fulfilling this function. Preterite uses of perfect forms originate in this context. I will later show that the NPP occurs with a similar function in AusE narratives (see Chapter 6). Foulet (1920: 274) contends that the phenomenon began in colloquial French – the speech style which is less subject to scrutiny. He does not, however, provide evidence of the vernacular origin of the PC in his paper. He argues that by the mid-sixteenth century the PC had gained preterite uses while retaining its perfect functions (Foulet 1920: 291). The PC and PS were two competing forms to express past/perfective meaning. According to the ‘twenty-four hour rule’, a prescriptive rule formulated by grammarians in the sixteenth century, one should draw on the PC for situations occurring within the same day. Beyond twenty-four hours, the PS should be used (Revaz 1996: 183). In actual usage, the PC was developing a past/perfective function similar to that of the PS. The increase of the PC and the decrease of the PS became more pronounced in the eighteenth century. The PC became acceptable both in narrative discourse and with definite past temporal adverbials from the late seventeenth century onwards (Caudal & Roussarie 2006: 15). Foulet (1920: 308) concludes that the perfect had entirely replaced the preterite in eighteenth-century speech, and that, at the time he wrote, “the preterite [was] no longer heard in Paris”.

To sum up, the PC’s connection to speech time became more and more abstract as it grammaticalised. At first, with the resultative interpretation, there had to be some consequences at speech time. Then, the emphasis shifted from the result of a past event at speech time to the past event itself (which in turn may or may not bring about a current result). Finally, the link with the present situation was relegated to discourse and pragmatic context (Cotte 1987: 105). The PC no longer differentiated between past events with and past events without current relevance. Accompanying the weakening and loss of current relevance meaning was the strengthening of the meaning of anteriority (Waugh 1987: 20). The PC is now used to encode perfective situations in the
past (whether recent or distant), and represents, in Howe’s (2006: 198) words, the “endpoint of the attrition of the contribution of the present tense to a present perfect”.

Van Vliet (1983) advances two main linguistic reasons for the replacement of the PS by the PC:

(i) The complex morphology of the PS, which leads to its avoidance (this point was already advanced and defended by Foulet 1920: 302–303);

(ii) The preference of French morphology for prefixed tense/aspect markers rather than suffix endings.

These two facts meant that verbs in the PS were “felt to be out of the ordinary” (Van Vliet 1983: 96). The switch from PS to PC follows the general diachronic shift in Romance languages from synthetic towards analytic forms (Engel 1999: 6–7). The maintenance of the PS as a literary or formal tense is given a social explanation: the form is used as a marker of social status and education. As Van Vliet (1983: 108) puts it: “The French intellectual can indeed separate himself from the simple folk by manipulating difficult-to-form tenses in a sort of linguistic algebra.” The PS serves as a linguistic and social barrier. In the end, the PC, ‘tense of the classless society’, has overtaken the PS, ‘tense of the bourgeoisie’ (Cohen 1956).

The grammaticalisation of the French PC nicely illustrates the reorganisation of the tense system that occurs concurrent to the grammaticalisation process. As the French PC gradually overtook the domain of the PS, the latter became restricted to specific discourse functions (formal, written literary genres). When a particular tense changes its meaning – either gaining new functions (and encroaching onto the functions of another form), or losing functions (and potentially slowly disappearing altogether), a reorganisation of the system of which it is a part will necessarily ensue.

2.4 The English Present Perfect

This section presents a brief history of the origin and evolution of the English perfect (§2.4.1). It takes a closer look at the constraints and rules of usage applying to

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24 Harris (1982: 62–63) objects to this position, arguing that there is no plausible reason why French speakers would have been able to handle the morphological complexity of the PS only until the sixteenth century. Besides, the PS still survives in enclave varieties (for e.g. in Acadian French, see Comeau, King & Butler 2012).
the PP in contemporary Standard English (§2.4.2). It contrasts the use of the PP and the SP in several native varieties of English from a synchronic and diachronic perspective (§2.4.3). Finally, it reviews non-standard uses of the PP that have been documented in mainstream varieties of AusE, BrE and NZE (§2.4.4).

2.4.1 Origin and evolution of the English Present Perfect

The English PP has evolved along the resultative-to-anterior grammaticalisation cline (see §2.3.2). The form finds its origin in the Old English resultative construction. Resultative constructions were either formed by ‘be’ auxiliary, *beo-* , with an adjectival participle that agreed with the subject for intransitive verbs, or by ‘have’ auxiliary, *habb-* , with an adjectival participle that agreed with the object for transitive verbs. The evolution from resultative to perfect, developing in the Middle English period, was marked by three morphosyntactic changes (Bybee & Dahl 1989: 72):

(i) the loss of agreement between the past participle of the perfect construction and the object of the sentence;
(ii) a change in word order – the past participle moved from post-object to pre-object position (e.g. *He has the letter written* → *He has written the letter*);
(iii) generalisation to all verbs (including intransitive predicates).

The change in word order was also accompanied by a change in subject agentivity: subjects necessarily play an agentive role in perfect constructions (e.g. *I have bound him*) by contrast with resultatives (e.g. *I have him bound*) (Parsons 1990: 245). The *have* and *be* perfect auxiliaries initially competed, each being used with different verb types (*have* with transitive verbs; *be* with mutative verbs), but *have* gradually spread to all verbs at the expense of *be* (Denison 1993: 344, 358).

Elsness (1997: 340) analyses the evolution of the English perfect using the *Historical Corpus of English* texts (HISTCORP). While in Old English the PP represented less than 1% of all perfect and preterite forms, in the period 1550-1600 it had reached 13%. The gradual increase of the PP continued up until the period 1750-

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26 Variation between the *be*, *have*, as well as *done*, perfect auxiliaries persists in certain non-standard varieties of English in North America, the Caribbean and the UK (Tagliamonte 2012: 301).
1800. Before the development of the perfect, the SP often stood to express perfect meaning (Mitchell 1985: 246). Researchers acknowledge the interchangeability between the SP and the PP in the course of the Middle English period (Tagliamonte 2012: 301). The SP was used where the PP would be expected in contemporary Standard English; conversely, the PP was also found where the SP would now be used (Hübler 1998: 114–115). Based on a 100,000 word corpus of letters dated from the period 1386-1700, Rainer (1989) also finds that the PP occurred with a definite temporal adverbial in 5% of cases before 1550, and in 16% of cases after 1550 (for further discussion of the origin and development of the perfect in English, see Fridén 1948: 38–117; Mustanoja 1960: 499–509; Traugott 1972: 91–94, 144–146; Visser 1973: 2189–2192).

In contemporary Standard English, the PP is not assumed to be undergoing anterior-to-perfective grammaticalisation (see §2.3.2). It has so far been located at stage (iii) in Harris (1982), perfage 2 in Bybee et al. (1994), and stage 2 in Elness (1997) (see §2.3.3).

2.4.2 Canonical features of the Standard English Present Perfect

As described in §2.2.2-§2.2.3, the perfect fulfils a number of canonical functions that various theories have sought to explain. Key to the definition of the perfect is the notion of present relevance of a past situation (Lindstedt 2000: 366). This implies (i) that a predicate in the PP refers to the post-time of the situation denoted by the predicate, rather than the situation itself; and (ii) that the post-time includes speech time (Ritz 2007: 135).

Two core constraints on PP usage in contemporary Standard English ensue from this central point. First, known in the literature as the ‘past adverb constraint’ (e.g. Klein 1992: 526), the PP does not felicitously combine with definite past temporal adverbials since emphasis is on the present, not the past (Comrie 1976: 54; 1985: 32; Dahl 1985: 137; Klein 1992: 525–526; Smith 1997: 108; Iatridou et al. 2001: 190; Portner 2003: 465). Neither “adverbials that refer to a specific moment or stretch of time located wholly in the past” (Comrie 1976: 32), nor sequential adverbs such as then, or relational adverbs such as when and while, are permitted with the Standard English PP, hence the unacceptability of (12).

(12) *John has been to Melbourne a week ago.
The past adverb constraint is taken as evidence that the PP does not locate a situation at some definite point in the past (Bybee et al. 1994: 61–62). The second constraint on PP usage is that it cannot appear in sequences of clauses expressing temporal progression (Dahl 1985: 139; Bybee et al. 1994: 54–55), as in (13).

(13) I had dinner. *Then I’ve finished my assignment and went to bed at 10pm.

The PP is unacceptable because it “blocks all temporal and rhetorical relations” (De Swart 2007: 1). It prevents a sequenced interpretation of events. It is unable to ‘move’ narrative time forward (Katz 2003: 212). It is also inappropriate in narrative contexts because it focuses on the time of speech, while narrative contexts focus on the past time of events (Dahl 1985: 138–139; Lindstedt 2000: 366; De Swart 2007: 2274). The SP is the tense of choice when narrating sequences of discrete past events (Givón 1982; Hopper 1982; Bybee et al. 1994: 55).

There are some differences in PP usage across varieties of English (for instance, with respect to the range and type of temporal adverbials collocating with the PP). As Levey (2006: 135) points out, “there is no reason to assume that the PP has evolved in the same way, or grammaticalised to the same extent, in all varieties of contemporary English”.

2.4.3 Present Perfect versus Simple Past

A large number of corpus linguistic studies contrasting SP and PP usage in English have relied mostly on BrE and AmE data (e.g. Elsness 1997; Schlüter 2000; Hundt & Smith 2009; Žetko 2010). The analysis of SP-PP variation has, however, been expanded to consider other English varieties (e.g. Hundt & Biewer 2007; Elsness 2009; Van Rooy 2009; Davydova 2011; Seoane & Suárez-Gómez 2013; Werner 2014). I will review some of the main findings of these studies, focusing on mainstream BrE, AmE and AusE.

Synchronic Studies

Synchronically, Elsness (2009) compares the use of the PP and the SP across BrE, AmE, AusE and NZE using data from ten corpora (Elsness 2009: 96–97). His

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27 In languages where the perfect is undergoing anterior to past/perfective grammaticalisation (see §2.3.2–§2.3.3), the form becomes acceptable with past temporal specification. However, the perfect form is arguably no longer a true perfect in such languages (see the case of French in §2.3.5).
analysis is confined to 16 verbs. The PP/SP ratios indicate that the PP is more frequent in the antipodean varieties of English – and in AusE in particular – than in BrE and AmE (Elsness 2009: 97–98).

Comparing various morphosyntactic features in 46 non-standard English varieties, Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2004: 1174) observe a levelling of the difference between the SP and the PP for ‘colloquial AusE’ and ‘vernacular AusE’.

Based on the International Corpus of English (ICE), Yao and Collins (2012) study the PP in 10 world Englishes varieties. The frequency of PP tokens per million words (pmw) is the lowest for AmE. The AusE data show a lower frequency of PP tokens pmw than the BrE data (3517 < 4597) and the NZE data (3517 < 4082), but a higher frequency than the AmE data (3517 > 2871) (Yao & Collins 2012: 391). Similarly, the ratios of PP to SP tokens in the AusE and NZE data (0.09) lie between the ratios found for the AmE data (0.07) – where the PP is declining at the expense of the SP – and the BrE data (0.12) – where the PP is still preferred over the SP (Yao & Collins 2012: 396).

Yao (2014: 149–150) considers the spoken sections of the BrE, AmE, and AusE components of the ICE, and observes that the frequency of PP pmw in BrE exceeds that of AusE by about 500 tokens pmw. However, she finds disparities across text categories, with the PP more frequently used in the AusE than in the BrE data in broadcast discussions, broadcast interviews, legal cross-examinations, unscripted speeches and legal presentations. This signals differences in PP usage across text types. Yao (2014: 165) also presents the distribution of functions of the PP tokens extracted in three text categories (face-to-face conversations, press news reports and academic writing), and shows that usage proportions of continuative, experiential and resultative meanings are roughly similar across BrE, AmE and AusE. This suggests a common ‘core’ in PP usage. However, the proportion of continuative PPs in the AmE data is larger than that noted in BrE and AusE, while the proportion of resultative PPs is smaller (Yao 2014: 166).

With respect to collocation with temporal adverbials, AmE speakers use the SP where BrE speakers would use the PP, especially in collocation with adverbs such as yet, just, recently or already (Vanneck 1958: 236; Dušková 1976; Schwenter 1994b; Elness 1997; Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan 1999). Elness (2009: 107) and Werner (2014: 172) find that the AusE PP is preferred with ever and yet, suggesting

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28 Four text types are considered: conversation, news, academic writing and fictional writing.
that the form often expresses continuative or experiential meanings. The preference for the PP with ever and yet in AusE places this variety on a par with BrE, and at odds with AmE where the SP is preferred with ever and yet. The adverb just co-occurs about as frequently with the PP and the SP in AusE (Elsness 2009: 107), and the proportion of the PP with recently in AusE is the lowest among other L1 English varieties in Werner (2013b: 225–226). This suggests that the AusE PP is less commonly used to express recency.

To test the possible grammaticalisation of the AusE PP into a past tense, several corpus linguistic studies have investigated collocation patterns of the AusE PP with definite past temporal adverbials. Overall, this appears to be a marginalised phenomenon (Werner 2014: 346; Yao 2014: 186). Comparing BrE, AmE, AusE and NZE datasets, Elsness (2009: 101–102) observes that the majority of instances of the PP with definite past temporal adverbials (N=14/22) stem from the AusE corpora, suggesting that this variety is more prone to combinations of the PP with definite past temporal adverbial. However, such instances represent only 2% (14/658) of all PP forms. Only in the specific context of police media reports is the use of the PP with definite past temporal adverbials particularly striking: it represents 17% (N=38/218) of all non-standard PP clauses in Ritz’s Police Corpus (Ritz 2010: 3406).

**Diachronic studies**

A number of studies have investigated PP versus SP usage across Englishes from a diachronic perspective. Elsness (1997: 340–341, 358) establishes that there has been an overall decline of the PP in both AmE and BrE since the late 1700s, though the decrease started later for BrE. Collins and Yao (2014) compare the ratio of PP to the SP to assess the direction in which the PP has evolved between the nineteenth and twentieth century in AusE, in comparison to its evolution in AmE and BrE. In line with Elsness’s (1997) results, they find a sharp decline in the proportion of PPs in AmE (from 40% to 11%), and a milder decline in BrE (from 32% to 17%); AusE only shows a slight decrease (from 29% to 24%) (Collins & Yao 2014: 13–14).

Such trends only provide a broad indication of the status of the PP with respect to the SP. As acknowledged by Collins and Yao (2014: 13), a functional analysis of the form is needed to understand its evolution across Englishes. Yao (2014) considers variation in the meanings of PP tokens in BrE, AmE and AusE across three time periods
(1750-99, 1850-99, 1950-99). In all three varieties, the proportion of continuative perfects relative to that of non-continuative perfects has been increasing, though the rise is more remarkable for AmE than BrE and AusE. The proportion of resultative perfects with respect to non-resultative perfects has remained relatively stable in BrE and AusE, whereas it has been declining in AmE (Yao 2014: 204). The comparison assumes that the proportion of experiential, resultative and continuative contexts has remained constant throughout the periods and across varieties, which is problematic. The datasets may contain different proportions of experiential, resultative and continuative contexts. If so, the apparent evolutionary trends of the various perfect types could arise from such disparities.

As part of her historical investigation, Yao (2014: 209–226) also measures the influence of five linguistic factors on PP (vs. SP) selection to further explore the evolution of functions of PP uses. The linguistic factors are TEMPORAL SPECIFICATION, SITUATION TYPE (i.e. Aktionsart), TRANSITIVITY, NEGATION, and INTERROGATION. Her findings indicate that the SITUATION TYPE constraint has strengthened over time in BrE and AusE: telic predicates favour PP usage, whereas atelic predicates disfavour it. By contrast, in AmE, SITUATION TYPE had lost its significance by the twentieth century (Yao 2014: 214–215). This demonstrates that the PP in both BrE and AusE is favoured to express resultative meaning, and ‘result’ is the less grammaticalised perfect meaning in the anterior-to-past/perfective grammaticalisation cline (see §2.3.2). With regard to TEMPORAL SPECIFICATION, the temporal adverbs always, never and ever have become increasingly favourable to PP usage over the past two and a half centuries in all three varieties (Yao 2014: 209–210). These adverbs “quantify over a contextually determined up-to-now time span”. Their favouring effect indicates that the PP is increasingly used to express continuative or experiential meaning (Yao 2014: 211). The TRANSITIVITY factor is never selected as significant for AusE. It used to be significant for AmE in the periods 1750-99 and 1855-99, with transitive verbs favouring PP usage. However, in 1950-99, the factor no longer constrains the PP. BrE is the only variety for which TRANSITIVITY has remained a significant factor on PP usage, with transitive verbs favouring the form (Yao 2014: 217–218). NEGATION is never a significant constraint on PP usage, except for AmE in the 1950-99 period when negative polarity favours the PP (Yao 2014: 221). Similarly, INTERROGATION only exerts a significant constraint on PP

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29 There are no data for AusE for the 1750-99 period.
30 Yao (2014: 164) does not consider hot news uses of the perfect: “whether a situation is interpreted as newsworthy or not could not be reliably operationalised”.

All these results suggest that AusE patterns with BrE with respect to PP usage. There is no evidence of erosion of current relevance for the PP in AusE and BrE. In both varieties, the PP remains largely used to express resultative meanings. In all three varieties, the PP has become increasingly associated with the notion of an ‘up-to-now’ time span, but especially so in AmE (Yao 2014: 234). Yao (2015: 262) hypothesises that the AmE PP will not grammaticalise into a past tense or perfective, and will not encroach on SP territory. Rather, as the AmE PP loses its resultative meaning, it is likely to become exclusively used to express an extended-now interval. At some point, the context might be sufficient to reach this interpretation, and the SP could become used instead of the PP.

As shown in this section, the general tendency is towards a decrease in frequency of PP usage, though PP frequency remains high in AusE in comparison to BrE and especially AmE. AusE has been found to be a “PP-friendly” variety (Elsness 2009: 112; Werner 2014:184): the PP does not appear to be losing the meaning of current relevance, nor does it appear to be grammaticalising into a past or perfective. However, specific uses of the PP in preterite contexts have been documented in AusE, as well as in BrE and NZE. These are detailed next (§2.4.4).

2.4.4 Non-standard uses of the English Present Perfect

Non-standard uses of the PP have been documented in AusE in a corpus of radio narratives (Radio Narrative Corpus, see Chapter 4, §4.3.3), and in a corpus of police media reports (Police Corpus).31 Analysed in depth in Engel and Ritz (2000), Ritz and Engel (2008), and Ritz (2007, 2010, 2012), these uses are considered non-standard as they defy the general theories of the perfect introduced in §2.2.3, and depart from canonical uses of the Standard English PP outlined in §2.4.2.

Firstly, non-standard PPs appear in sequences indicating narrative progression (Engel & Ritz 2000: 119), exemplified in (14).

(14) [...] He just jumped the fence, went into the lion enclosure to get his phone. He’s walked up to his phone and the phone has started ringing. It’s set the

31 The Police Corpus consists of 83 police written media releases posted on the Western Australia and Queensland Police Media sites (see Ritz 2010: 3404 for further detail).
Ritz (2007: 142) remarks that the AusE PP is “clearly not a barrier to narration”. Non-standard PPs are also found with temporal adverbials expressing past location, as in (15) where the adverbial is underlined for illustrative purposes.

(15) A male person aged between 25 and 30 years **has entered** the bank at about 12:45pm on Friday 29th April 2005 and approached staff and made demands. (Brian Cowie, WA police media, 02.05.2005) (Ritz 2010: 3401)

According to Ritz (2010: 38), these uses attest to an extension of the meaning of the PP in AusE, though no diachronic evidence is available to support this claim.

Similar non-standard uses of the PP have been reported for other varieties of English. In BrE, Osselton (1982) analyses non-standard PP uses occurring in alternation with the Historical Present (HP) in English novelist David Storey’s *A Temporary Life*. Levey (2006) documents non-standard PP uses in a corpus of preadolescents’ (7 to 11 year-olds) recordings from Redbridge, Southeast of England. The corpus consists of oral narratives of personal experience. Focus is on highly emotional situations (e.g. fights, accidents) (Levey 2006: 129). Levey (2006: 140) finds that the PP represents 9% of the tense variation, a low percentage which is still significant since the PP was noted as absent in previous research on narrative. Walker (2008a, 2008b) documents non-standard PP uses in English footballers’ narratives. Walker (2011) finds additional non-standard uses of the PP in BrE narratives beyond footballers’ language. Such usage, he believes, represents a new type of perfect (see §2.2.2), the ‘narrative perfect’, defined as “the use of the present perfect form of the verb to recount past events, without supporting past time adverbials, in contexts where most accounts of Standard English would predict a simple past form” (2011: 74).

Finally, Cox (2005) reports analogous non-standard uses of the PP in her NZE data stemming from a police reality television show (*Police Ten 7*) and consisting mainly of narratives and interviews (Cox 2005: 66). She lists four characteristics of the non-standard PP (Cox 2005: 111):

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32 I use the term ‘Historical Present’ (HP) to refer to the use of present tense morphology to refer to past events in various genres. The term ‘Conversational Historical Present’ (CHP) is reserved for oral narratives of personal experience.
1. It refers to a definite time (demonstrated by the fact that it can co-occur with definite past time adverbials and can be used in narratives).

2. It can reset the reference time of a narrative. This is supported by the results of a multivariate analysis which shows that stative verbs disfavour the non-standard PP, while eventive verbs favour it.

3. Its behaviour regarding verb aspect is between that of the present perfect and the preterite. It can be used with a wider range of aspectual classes than the present perfect to give an event report reading, but is not completely free of constraints like the preterite.

4. It does not yield a resultative, experiential, continuity or hot news reading like the present perfect; on the contrary, it describes an event which is completed before the present time.

These studies provide evidence that the English PP is sometimes used as a preterite in AusE, BrE and NZE.\(^{33}\) Crucially, these uses are largely documented in narrative data. This common denominator explains my focus on oral narratives of personal experience (see Chapter 3), and the adoption of the term ‘Narrative Present Perfect’ (NPP).\(^{34}\) I discuss the functions that have been attributed to the NPP, and tense/aspect variation in narrative more generally, in Chapter 3 (§3.3).

2.5 Conclusion

After an overview of the expression of temporality (§2.1), this chapter has introduced the general category of the perfect, paying attention to its nature and meanings, and outlining the theories that have been offered to describe it (§2.2). The cross-linguistic grammaticalisation path of the form from a resultative and into a past, perfective, mirative or evidential has been presented in §2.3. The last section (§2.4) has focused on the English PP. Though the form is not assumed to be undergoing

\(^{33}\) Wolfson (1979: 171) mentions the use – albeit rare – of the PP in AmE narratives, and provides the following example: and I said, “That’s perfectly all right. I told you I drink it from the bottle at home.” And John has backed this up and Helen is laughing. And so, um, then he proceeds to pour it till it’s filled to the top so it’s about four ounces of brandy.

\(^{34}\) Non-standard usage of the PP in AusE has also been referred to as the ‘vivid narrative present perfect’ (Ritz & Engel 2008), and ‘Historical Present Perfect’ (Rodriguez Louro & Ritz 2014). For NZE, Cox (2005) talks about the ‘preterite perfect’ phenomenon. For BrE, Walker (2008b) coins the term ‘footballer’s perfect’, but Walker (2011: 71) uses the broader term ‘narrative perfect’. I use the term ‘Narrative Present Perfect’ when dealing with non-standard PP usage in Labovian narratives specifically (see Chapter 3). In other genres (for e.g. police media reports), I simply use the expression ‘non-standard PP’.

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grammaticalisation into a past/perfective, its usage and development has been shown to vary across native English varieties. In particular, occurrences of the PP with preterite function have been documented in AusE, BrE and NZE.

The rise of the NPP can only be understood vis-à-vis literature on narrative. To this end, Chapter 3 introduces seminal research in the area, paving the way for Chapter 4 where the data and methods used in the current study are presented.
CHAPTER 3
The narrative genre

Chapter 3 introduces the definition of narrative adopted in the present study. The focus on the narrative genre stems from the observation that non-standard PP tokens frequently occur in narrative data (see Chapter 2, §2.4.4). Special attention is paid to a particular type of narrative – performed narratives – since these are likely to feature tense switching.

I begin by defining the Labovian narrative, presenting its functions and its global structure (§3.1). In §3.2, I describe the features of performed narratives and briefly outline the factors that purportedly favour a ‘breakthrough into performance’ (Hymes 1975). Finally, I survey previous research on tense/aspect variation in narrative (§3.3).

3.1 Introduction to the narrative genre

The term ‘narrative’ encompasses a variety of discourse forms (Fleischman 1986: 228). The structure of narrative has been the object of analysis in literary works, philosophy and linguistics (Maranhão 1984: 235). In the present thesis, I draw on linguistic research on narrative and adopt the Labovian definition of ‘oral narratives of personal experience’ (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1997), “the bedrock for sociolinguistic narrative analysis” (Smith 2005: 473).¹ Observations and findings discussed in the present thesis therefore pertain to spontaneous, oral narrative productions.

3.1.1 Definition

A narrative is defined by its two functions: (i) referential – it reports a sequence of past events, and (ii) evaluative – it provides comments on, and attaches value to, those events (Maranhão 1984: 237). These are detailed in turn.

¹ The original Labovian narrative analysis was based on AmE narratives. The universality and generalisability of the framework to narratives of other cultures and geographical areas, even to different social groups (e.g. ethnicity), has been questioned (see Johnstone 1990; Lambrou 2005).
REFERENTIAL FUNCTION

Labov (1972d: 359–360) defines a narrative as “one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred”. iconicity between the chronological sequence of events and the order of clauses relating such events is the narrative norm (Fleischman 1990: 133). In other words, the basic narrative units recapitulate experience in the same order as the original events, as shown in the following adult narrative (Labov 1972d: 360):

(1) Well this person had a little too much to drink,
    and he attacked me,
    and the friend came in,
    and she stopped it.

The fundamental concept distinguishing narrative from other ways of reporting the past is temporal juncture. Temporal juncture implies an ‘a-then-b relationship’ between clauses (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 25, 30; Labov 2006a: 37). Two clauses are separated by a temporal juncture if they cannot be interchanged without triggering a change in the temporal sequence of the original semantic interpretation. In (1), reversing the order of the clauses and he attacked me and and the friend came in modifies the interpretation of events: the friend’s entrance either follows or precedes the attack depending on the order of clauses. Any two clauses organised around temporal junctures as in (1) are narrative clauses. Narrative clauses form the skeletal structure of a narrative (Labov 1972a: 361). They are all independent clauses; subordinate clauses are not considered relevant to temporal sequence (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 21).2 The finite verb which bears the tense marker of a narrative clause is called the narrative head (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 28). In English, the narrative head is usually in the SP. Modals, futures and negatives are disallowed (Labov 1997: 400). I return to the use of tense/aspect in narrative in §3.3. Two other types of clauses occur alongside narrative clauses: free and restricted clauses. A free clause can be placed anywhere in the narrative because it refers to a situation that holds true throughout the entire story (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 22). A restricted clause is not entirely free, neither is it locked in position in the narrative like a narrative clause: it can be displaced within a subpart of the narrative (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 23).

2 See, however, Couper-Kuhlen (1989a) for a critique of this analysis; see also Couper-Kuhlen (1989b) on ‘narrative’ temporal clauses in written English texts.
Labov (1972d: 376–378) points to the fundamental simplicity of narrative syntax related to the chronological presentation of events. Labovian narratives do, however, include non-narrative passages, i.e. passages not organised around temporal junctures, as shown in bold in (2) and (3). Speakers might partially use complex syntactic structures (example (2)) or operate flashbacks using the Past Perfect (example (3)) to retell some parts of their story (see Richard & Rodríguez Louro 2016: 123–124).

(2) But she landed face down in water um and luckily came to quick enough to-sorta get out of the water, and not drown herself um but the first thing that she- 'cause it was just a puddle- the first thing that she called up when the teachers were like, “Maxine, are you ok?” was “My jumper’s wet.”

(Female, 18, university student)

(3) So we were sitting there, watching Desperate Housewives, and he’d actually not been at work. He’d gone down to Nice and picked up my mum from the airport and driven back up with her. And so when he walked through the door, turned around, I was like, “Oh, hey Florian.” Then I was like, “Why’s he got a lady with him? What the-” And I was like, “Hold on a second. That’s my mum!” <LAUGHTER> (Female, 18, university student)

A Labovian narrative is built around a unique event called ‘the most reportable event’ (Labov 1997: 405). The concept of ‘most reportable event’ is addressed in detail as part of the evaluative function of narratives. Narrative construction, as Labov (1997: 408) explains, “requires a personal theory of causality”. Via a recursive process, the narrator consciously or unconsciously reconstructs the chain of events that led to the most reportable event and answers the question “How did that happen?” (see Labov 2003: 67). The chain of causality ends when the latter question is nonsensical for the situation in question.

Labov’s theory of causality in narrative construction resonates with theories of discourse structure based on rhetorical relations such as Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) (Mann & Thompson 1988), Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) (Kamp & Reyle 1993) and Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT) (Asher &

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3 As pointed out by Dahl (1985: 112), “the main story-line is continuously interrupted by various kinds of flashbacks and points of background information. This fact does not diminish the value of the concept of narrative discourse though”.

4 As mentioned in Chapter 1, names are pseudonyms.
Lascarides 2003). In the SDRT framework, narrative clauses are linked by ‘NARRATION relations’ (Lascarides & Asher 1993: 440): the event depicted by each new clause progresses the storyline and moves time forward. Events linked by the rhetorical relation of NARRATION happen in close temporal sequence; they cannot be separated by significant spatio-temporal gaps (Asher & Lascarides 2003: 162). There is ample use of temporal connectors (and, so, then) (see Halliday & Hasan 1976: 226–273; Schiffrin 1987: 128–152, 191–227, 228–266; Peterson & McCabe 1988, 1991; Ritz & Engel 2008: 145–146). The events depicted across narrative clauses are connected via “some contingent relation” (Moens & Steedman 1988: 16). ⁵ For example, Asher and Lascarides (2003: 164) contrast the following:

a. My car broke down. Then the sun set.

b. My car broke down. Then the sun set and I knew I was in trouble.

Only the sequence in (b) counts as NARRATION where the event ‘the sun set’ is interpreted as related to the breaking down of the car and the realisation that one is in trouble. The last two events depicted are causally related. The cause temporally precedes the result so it advances the story. By contrast, the events depicted in the first sequence in (a) bear no discourse relationship to each other though they are temporally organised. A common topic is thus a requirement for NARRATION to be inferred (Asher & Lascarides 2003: 164; Borillo, Bras, Le Draoulec, Vieu, Molendijk, De Swart, Verkuyl, Vet & Veters 2004: 319). This is along the lines of Labov’s theory of causality.

**EVALUATIVE FUNCTION**

From a structural point of view, a story counts as a Labovian narrative if and only if it contains narrative clauses. In other words, a narrative consists of at least one temporal juncture (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 28). This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Labov and Waletzky (1967: 33–35) state that a narrative must also include evaluation clauses which emphasise the significance of the story. That is, a narrative not only has a plot but also makes a point (Wolfson 1978: 216). It bears the burden of

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⁵ The notion of ‘contingency’ is related but not identical to the notion of causality and indicates more than mere temporal sequentiality (Moens & Steedman 1988: 16). It is a logical dependency that holds between two situations (Spejewski 1997: 181). In the words of Androutsopoulos (2002: 268), “it may denote a consequence relation […] or it may refer to events that constitute preparatory steps towards the satisfaction of a common goal”.

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relevance. There is a clear communicative goal to storytelling: the narrator not only aims to convey the facts, but also what makes them remarkable. If the evaluative component is absent, then the narrative is not a ‘well formed’ narrative in the Labovian sense. The evaluation clauses give to the story its reportability or tellability status; that is, they provide a response to the potentially face-threatening question ‘So what?’ by indicating the narrative’s raison d’être (Labov 1972d: 366).

Crucially, a narrative is about a ‘most reportable event’, defined as “the event that is less common than any other in the narrative and has the greatest effect upon the needs and desires of the participants in the narrative [is evaluated most strongly]” (Labov 1997: 406). According to Labov (1997: 406), a reportable event is an event remarkable enough in the present social context that it is acceptable for the narrator to hold the floor. The ensuing implication is that a narrative of personal experience has to contain at least one reportable event to be deemed an acceptable social act. What makes a story worth telling and worth listening to resides in the criterion of reportability or tellability. Norrick (2005: 339) insists on the two-sided notion of tellability: there is both a lower boundary which narratives must reach to be tellable (i.e. newsworthy), and an upper threshold beyond which narratives become transgressive. The key, according to Norrick (2005: 328), is to find the right balance between “telling enough to interest listeners while avoiding telling so much that we transgress normal boundaries of propriety and intimacy”. In fact, tellability is a matter of negotiation. The concept is relative to the context of situation, the participants involved, and the relation between narrator and audience (Labov 1997: 406; Norrick 2005: 328). The narrator must also balance out the need for the story to be tellable, yet credible, what Labov (1997: 407) refers to as the ‘Reportability Paradox’.

A narrative should be more than a mere reporting of events. Because of this, stories of ‘vicarious experience’ (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 34; Labov 1972d: 367), and stories consisting of a list of chronological events, but not building to a remarkable event or climax, do not count as narrative in the Labovian sense. Such stories only comprise non-climactic sequences of events (Buchstaller 2014: 192). Consider (4) where the speaker reports what he and his friends did when they arrived in Kraków for their holiday.

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6 Tannen (1982: 4) describes storytelling as the art of internal evaluation, being moved rather than convinced. In a similar vein, Greenhalgh, Russell and Swinglehurst (2005: 443) suggest that the emotional impact of a story on readers matters more than the raw facts that it conveys.
Yeah we- so Hannah, Rebecca and I rocked into um Kraków like first thing in the morning <CLAPS HANDS> and found the hostel, dropped our bags off. Walked into the um big square which is the biggest market square in Europe. [mm] Took some photos, and had a look around. It was awful weather. A downpour. Then I think we went back to the hostel and slept for the rest of the day. We were that knackered. er But yeah we did- we did some other- other nice stuff there. Went and looked at the Castle Wawel. Went to Auschwitz. Which wasn’t nice but, you know, very moving [Yeah.] experience. [Oh yeah.] And then I- I made my way back to Prague. (Male, 35, lawyer)

The speaker simply lists events chronologically. Though these are temporally ordered, there is no causal relationship between them and they do not lead to a ‘most reportable event’. This story is a form of historical narrative: it amounts to relating a series of facts/events as they unfolded in time but without any of those events standing out as remarkable. There is no resolution (see §3.1.2) to conclude the reporting of the events, and no specific point is made.

Another characteristic of narrative is that it refers to a specific (as opposed to generic) past time (Polanyi 1986; cited in Fleischman 1990: 102). Stories which report habitual events, i.e. what the narrator would or used to do, are not Labovian narratives because they refer to repeated instances/habits and do not focus on a specific event. This is the case in (5) where the speaker explains how he used to mischievously put his glasses on the back of his head while in class, making his peers laugh.

I guess I was a bit of a- attention- Well mo-- I- I don’t know, children are attention seekers er and um and er also um I remember when I was little er I used to wear glasses um a bit- a bit like yours. [<CHUCKLE>] And um so ... um ... And I think perhaps er I- I was a little bit um mischievous er i-- i-- i-- in one stage um and so I used to be required to sit down the front er in the front row. Now I’m not sure whether that was because of my eyes. I think it was because I was a little bit um hyperactive [<CHUCKLE>] and um and mischievous. Anyway so I used to sit down the front row but sometimes the teacher didn’t notice, I used to put the glasses on the back of my head. [<LAUGHTER>] Like that, you see. And she wouldn’t notice. And all the kids behind were just cacking themselves <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] I
used to do that. [Ah kids at school <LAUGHTER>] Little- little acts of rebellion. (Male, 63, psychologist)

Thus, not all reports of past experience count as narrative in this framework.⁷

The evaluative component of the narrative introduces “the affective, emotive, subjective and experiential aspects of narrative” (Georgakopoulou 2011: 397). Smith (1980: 232) defines the act of narration as “someone telling someone else that something happened”. This simple characterisation emphasises the function of the narrative “as part of a social transaction” (ibidem), and brings to the fore its function of personal interest.

A narrative is both a sociolinguistic construction of the self and of the relationship of that self with others within a definite social and cultural world (Bruner 1986; Schiffrin 1996). Personal-experience stories mirror and create social relationships and cultural ideologies (Schiffrin 1981; Wolfson 1982; Polanyi 1989). The way we recount events and express what we think of those events reflects how we construct social relationships (Schiffrin 1996: 196). Schiffrin (1996: 170) stresses that the telling reveals in which “cultural matrix of meanings, beliefs, and normative practices” the teller (i.e. the self) operates.

Aspects of our identities become salient in the way we transform experiences into stories (Schiffrin 1996: 199). Indeed, the process of narrativisation is an “individual, subjective act whereby experience is passed through the filter of a focalizing consciousness whose point of view the story will reflect” (Fleischman 1990: 96). The term subjectivity concerns here a speaker’s perspective (attitudes and beliefs) on situations as well as their expression of affect towards those situations (Lyons 1982: 102; Finegan 1995: 4). The evaluation component of narrative is eminently subjective.

3.1.2 The global structure of narrative: The Labovian framework

Labov and Waletzky (1967: 12) and Labov (1972d) offer a description of the macro-organisation of oral narratives of personal experience.⁸ They identify six basic sections – that is, groups of clauses fulfilling a common function (Labov 1997: 403) – which form part of the fundamental structure of the majority of narratives:

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⁷ This has been the object of critique by researchers who propose a model of narrative as talk-in-interaction (see, for e.g., Georgakopoulou 2011).

⁸ The description is based on English narratives.
1. **Abstract**  
   *Summary of the story*

2. **Orientation**  
   *Setting the scene*

3. **Complicating Action**  
   *Then, what happened?*

4. **Evaluation**  
   *So what?*

5. **Resolution**  
   *What finally happened?*

6. **Coda**  
   *Moral of the story, return to present*

The global structure of narrative is represented in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1 Prototypical internal structure of an oral narrative of personal experience (from Labov & Waletzky 1967: 41)](image)

A narrative may begin with an **abstract**, “an initial clause that reports the entire sequence of events of the narrative” (Labov 1997: 402). It succinctly presents the story about to be told. It offers a transition from conversational turn-taking into the narrative itself. Following the **abstract** is the **orientation** (represented as starting at the base of the diamond in Figure 3.1 and proceeding to the left). The **orientation** provides the setting for the narrative, “a set of propositions referring to [a] (backgrounded) spatio-temporal complex” (Prince 1982: 73). It contextualises the story by orienting the listeners with details about the time, place and participants (Labov 1972a: 364). It is an essential component of the narrative: it informs the listeners of the where and when of the story since they are being transported out of the here-and-now of speech time. Though orientation clauses may all appear at the beginning of the narrative, in practice

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9 The ‘complicating action’ is also referred to as the ‘complication’ elsewhere in this thesis.

10 The abstract – which would be located at the bottom of the diamond – is not represented in Figure 3.1.
they tend to occur at strategic points in the course of the retelling; that is, they are embedded clauses (Labov 1972a: 364–365; Romaine 1985: 92). The next section, termed COMPLICATING ACTION, constitutes the backbone of the story. According to Fleishman (1990: 140), as a rule, this is the longest section of a narrative. It contains the core narrative events (those reported in narrative clauses) which advance the story. It leads to and includes the most reportable event. Simply, without a complication section (i.e. a series of narrative clauses), there is no narrative. There is no narrative either in the absence of evaluation clauses. An EVALUATION section (see the circle on Figure 3.1) frequently suspends the narration before the RESOLUTION. Labov (1972a: 369) points out that, although concentrated in the EVALUATION section, evaluation as such actually permeates the entire narrative forming a ‘secondary structure’. This is represented by the downward arrow and ‘waves’ in Figure 3.1. With the EVALUATION, narrators reveal their attitudes towards events in the story, and stress the relative importance of situations (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 37). The EVALUATION answers the question of why the story was told in the first place and what makes it reportable (Labov 1972d: 370–371) (see §3.1.1). Specifically, it signals to hearers the “strange, uncommon, or unusual” character of the story events, whether they are particularly “terrifying, dangerous, weird, wild, crazy; or amusing, hilarious, wonderful” (Labov 1972d: 371). This justifies the narrator’s holding of the floor for a large portion of the conversational time. A distinction is made between external evaluation clauses that comment on the narrative line of events taking an outsider’s perspective (Schiffrin 1981: 49; Tannen 1982: 4), and internal evaluation clauses that present the narrator’s interpretation of events as they unfold at story-now (Fleischman 1990: 167).11 This is illustrated in (6) in the contrast between but I suppose this is- this is, you know, cou-- could have been worse (external evaluation), and and at that point I was like, “Well, I gotta probably fight back here” (internal evaluation). Narrators use a large range of other evaluative strategies to convey the point of their narratives (Labov 1972d: 370; Polanyi-Bowditch 1976: 62; Tannen 1982: 4).12 Departures from basic narrative syntax are rare, and therefore marked, in narrative retelling. They frequently serve evaluative

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11 Narratives involve two different time orientations: “the time of telling the story and the time during which the events of the story occurred (cf. Jakobson 1957, ‘procès d’énonciation’ vs. ‘procès d’énoncé’)” (Wolfson 1978: 219). This distinction between the speech-event time and the narrated-event time has been referred to as the ‘speaker-now’ and the ‘story-now’ by Fleischman (1990: 167) whose terminology I adopt here.

12 Labov (1972d) classifies evaluative elements into four categories: intensifiers (e.g. quantifiers, expressive phonology, repetition), comparators (e.g. negatives, modals), correlatives (e.g. progressives), and explicatives (appended clauses).
purposes (Labov 1972d: 378). Marked tense forms like the CHP and the NPP will be considered evaluation devices (see Chapter 6). Embedded orientation clauses themselves may have an evaluative function if the information they provide at a particular point in the narrative emphasises the reportability of events (Schiffrin 1981: 48–49). After the evaluation section comes the resolution. It comprises the series of narrative clauses that follows the most reportable event in the story (Labov 2004a: 38). If the evaluation is the last portion of the narrative, then the resolution and evaluation sections are fused together: “a single narrative clause both emphasizes the importance of the result and states it” (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 35). Finally, a narrative may end with a coda. The coda is a statement that returns the temporal setting to the present time (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 39). It generally provides a moral to the story. Coda are not part of the narrative chain (Labov 2004a: 38) but a means to indicate the end of a conversational turn (Labov 1972d: 366). The different narrative sections are illustrated in (6).

(6) **Abstract**
I can- Oh, I got in a fight one time um <LAUGHTER> Like exactly once.

**Evaluation**
And for anyone that- that knows me, you know, like the- the standard reaction to that when I told people was like, “Really? You? Like, [<LAUGHTER>] in a fight? What?!” <LAUGHTER> um

**Abstract**
And, you know, I’ve got the scars to prove it [Oh!] um <LAUGHTER>

**Orientation**
So, basically I- I don’t even know what happened but are you- are you familiar with Club Baywatch? Do you know [No. I don’t know it.] about this? Ok.

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13 Labov (2004a: 38) describes the resolution section as the series of ‘complicating action clauses’ that follows the most reportable event in the story. In this thesis, the term ‘narrative clauses’ is preferred to avoid referring to clauses that form part of the resolution of narratives as ‘complicating action clauses’. Moreover, not all clauses in the complicating action or resolution sections are narrative clauses. There are also restricted clauses.
This- this is a really bad nightclub down in Nedlands. [Ok.] It’s terrible and this is sort of during uni days um <LIP SMACK>

**COMPPLICATING ACTION**
And I went down there with some friends

**ORIENTATION**
and, you know, it was getting pretty boozed er but I was just having a great time. er And then there was a guy that, you know, thought I was- I think he thought I was looking at his girlfriend or something er which I wasn’t. I was just drunk and, you know, having a good time.

**COMPPLICATING ACTION**
And so he starts sort of coming in, like, he- you know, getting up in my face a bit.

**EVALUATION**
And I just thought the whole situation was really ridiculous

**ORIENTATION**
so I was kind of laughing,

**EVALUATION**
which probably wasn’t helping things um.

**COMPPLICATING ACTION**
And eventually what ends up happening is he shirtfronted me um inside the club and the bouncer sees this and kicks both of us out er.

**EVALUATION**
And of course that was my fault um according to him so.

**ORIENTATION**
Then we’re at this point downstairs like outside of the club where, you know,
with- there’s him and his mate and they’re just sort of snarking up at me and I’m just there by myself.

**Evaluation**
So I was going, “Ah, this isn’t so good.” Like, you know, “I don’t wanna get beat up.” um

**Complicating Action**
And then as it happens

**Evaluation**
it was very lucky

**Orientation**
'cause my friend’s girlfriend was just literally driving around the corner um to pick him up.

**Complicating Action**
And um she sort of saw me and was like, “Oh”, you know, “get in the car. I could give you a lift home.” And I’m like, “Yeah, awesome.” So I go to get in the car and then basically get the hand on my shoulder, like, from this guy. He’s like, “Oh I’m not finished with you yet.” um And he turns me around on the car just like starts basically trying to tackle me and-

**Evaluation**
and at that point I was like, “Well, I gotta probably fight back here.” ‘Cause, you know, I realises (sic) that I’m gonna get into trouble so,

**Complicating Action**
I had to- Took a couple of swings um I connected with one um and like othe--, you know, managed to dodge, you know, what he was doing and then by that point there’s a bunch of people now just pulling us apart and- and I got in the car and went home.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And then the next day my hand is about three times the normal size 'cause I’d broken my um &lt;LIP SMACK&gt; er the er metacarpal um [Oh, ok.] on my little finger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which apparently when I went to the doctor is extremely common in people that get in fights that aren’t used to getting in fights um &lt;LAUGHTER&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOLUTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And- and so um yeah I broke my hand um</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>but I suppose this is- this is, you know, cou-- could have been worse um but [mm] Yeah. [&lt;LAUGHTER&gt;]</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So that was- that was my one and hopefully only fight [Only fight, yeah.] um &lt;LAUGHTER&gt; [&lt;LAUGHTER&gt;]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Male, 27, consulting manager)

The narrative presented in (6) counts as a Labovian narrative since both the structural prerequisite of what constitutes a narrative – a series of narrative clauses organised around temporal junctures – and the functional criterion which defines a narrative – evaluation – are fulfilled. The story is built around a remarkable event (a fight) and reflects ‘the narrator’s theory of causality’ (Labov 2003: 67). Though all the basic units of the narrative are represented in (6), not all of them will feature in every story. ABSTRACTS and CODAS are always optional. Some narratives may also lack an explicit RESOLUTION. EVALUATION is imperative. Labov and Waletzky (1967: 33) argue that a narrative with an ORIENTATION, COMPLICATING ACTION and RESOLUTION but no EVALUATION does not form a complete narrative: while it carries out the referential function, it “lacks significance; it has no point”.

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3.1.3 Foreground versus background distinction

Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) basic narrative structure can also be understood in terms of Hopper’s (1979a) and Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) binary distinction between foregrounded and backgrounded situations. The foreground conveys the actual storyline (Hopper 1979a: 213). It forms the ‘backbone’, ‘skeleton’ or ‘basic structure’ of the narrative (Hopper 1979b: 38; Hopper & Thompson 1980: 281). It consists of the most important and central events, those that are “indispensable to the narrative” (Hopper 1979b: 61; 1979a: 216). It is characterised by iconicity between the ordering of clauses and the chronological sequence of events which actually occurred (Hopper 1979a: 214; Hopper & Thompson 1980: 286). Foregrounded clauses thus correspond to narrative clauses in Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) framework. A foregrounded event cannot be removed from the narrative without impacting the storyline. By contrast, the background is “the language of supportive material which does not itself narrate the main events” (Hopper 1979a: 213). It consists of clauses whose information provides the backdrop for the main storyline “but are extraneous to its structural coherence” (Hopper & Thompson 1980: 281). In that sense, they are not indispensible to the narrative. Their role is to “amplify or comment on the events of the main narrative” (Hopper 1979a: 214).

Backgrounded (non-narrative) clauses do play an important role in storytelling. Backgrounded information (such as orientation and evaluation clauses) can be crucial to make the point of the story. Consider (7) where the male narrator explains how he mistakenly walked into the ladies’ toilet on his first day at a new job.

**EMBARRASSING MOMENT**

(7) […] And um I remember walking into this very very large mess hall. Um, must have been a common room where people can have a cup of coffee or whatever and just like er [mm] a very very large room with jus-- just a series of tables and at the end of the room was the toilets. Right? Facing into this room. And in my haste of running in there- And this room was packed because everyone was getting ready to go to work. It might have been two hundred people in there. <LIP SMACK> I’ve walked in. And it’s the usual thing. Everyone’s sort of staring at you ’cause you’re the new guy. You could feel it. And because I was busting I didn’t actually look at the symbol above
the door and I’ve walked into the ladies’ toilet. [...] (Male, 46, process operator)

When the narrator is about to reveal the fact that he stepped into the wrong toilet (And in my haste of running in there-), he interrupts his retelling to add background information. The details he provides (And this room was packed, It might have been two hundred people in there) not only offer a clearer depiction of the scene but also fulfil an evaluative function: they emphasise the all-the-more embarrassing situation for the narrator when he eventually came back out of the ladies’ toilet. Unfortunately for him, many workers were there to witness the incident. The backgrounded clauses highlight the reportability of the story (see §3.1.1). In fact, crucial situations or details in both the foreground and background can be emphasised by the narrator (Polanyi 1979: 62) (see Chapter 6).

Foregrounding and backgrounding in discourse have been related to the use of aspect (see §2.1.2). Hopper (1979a) and Hopper and Thompson (1980) associate the narrative foreground with perfectivity and punctual events, whereas the background is linked to imperfectivity and stativity. Imperfective sentences lack endpoints (Smith 1997: 73), and states are not temporally ordered (Grisot & Moeschler 2014: 25). Because of this, backgrounded clauses do not generally trigger narrative progression (Dry 1983: 20–21). Binnick (2006: 260) illustrates the distinction between backgrounded and foregrounded clauses in English with the following sequences:

a. Tom came in. Sue held up the newspaper.

b. Tom came in. Sue was holding up the newspaper.

In (b), the second clause reports on an extended (atelic) situation (Cukor-Avila & Bailey 1995: 406). This is formally marked by the use of the progressive (imperfective) aspect. The activity of holding the newspaper stretches over an interval that begins before Tom’s arrival and continues (at least) up to his arrival. This second clause forms the background of the narrative. It does not advance narrative time. By contrast, in (a), the second clause is understood to refer to a perfective event. Unlike imperfective sentences, perfective ones move narrative time (Dry 1983: 30).
3.2 Performed narratives

A specific subtype of narrative has been discerned in the literature and described as ‘performed’ (Wolfson 1978: 216), ‘vivid’ (Ritz & Engel 2008: 132) or ‘reportive’ (Maranhão 1984: 235). Performed narratives are the target of data collection in the present research since they are prone to tense variation. Section 3.2.1 lists the common features of performed narratives while Section 3.2.2 presents the conditions that may favour the production of performed narratives.

3.2.1 Features of performance

Wolfson (1978: 216) defines performed narratives in terms of a number of performance features: (1) Direct Speech, (2) Asides, (3) Repetition, (4) Expressive Sounds, (5) Sound Effects, and (6) Motions and Gestures (‘kinesic markers’ in Birdwhistell 1970). Some of these performance features are “means of acting out details of the story instead of describing them” (Wolfson 1978: 222; 1982: 29), as is the case with direct speech, shown in (8).

(8) [...] And these two er Jamaican girls- They were from Miami but they were Jamaican. They’re like, “Oh excuse me. Do you mind taking us a photo-taking a photo of us.” I said, “Oh yeah, sure, no worries.”, you know. I said, “As long as you take one of me.” [LAUGHTER] And um they’re like, “Yeah, no worries.” So, I took one of them and I said, “Ok. Can you take one of me?” And they took one of me and then they said, “Who are you here with?” And I said, “Oh I’m actually just travelling on my own.” And they’re like, “Yeah.” And they looked at me and they’re like, “Really?” And I said, “Yeah.” And they’re, <affecting Jamaican accent> “Girlfriend, you can’t hang out on your own.” [LAUGHTER] And they’re like, <affecting Jamaican accent> “Girlfriend, uh-uh, you can’t hang out on your own sister.” [LAUGHTER] She goes- she goes, “Where are you staying?” And I just went, “um I’m staying at the Las Vegas.” And they’re like, “<EXPRESSIVE SOUND>” <affecting Jamaican accent>
“Girlfriend we’re staying there too. You can come out and hang out with us.”

[…] (Female, 34, senior investigator)

The narrator performs the parts of the different protagonists in the story and repeats what are purportedly the protagonists’ own words for authenticity (Wolfson 1978: 220; Li 1986: 38). Some narrators, as is the case in (8), even use animated voice to more accurately embody the protagonists (e.g. affecting an accent, speaking in a deeper tone of voice), or the way they uttered their original words (e.g. whispering or yelling). This is known as mimesis (Buchstaller 2014: 60, 101). The content of quotes, rather than strictly verbatim, is more often an approximation of the speech actually uttered, hence Tannen’s (1986) ‘constructed dialogue’ label (D’Arcy 2004: 341). Crucially, the use of direct speech increases the immediacy of a quote. The effect of immediacy is produced by a number of deictic and structural changes that place the narrative events at speech time (Schiffrin 1981: 58). The action and dialogues are portrayed as though they were occurring live in front of the audience. Constructed dialogue thus brings vividness to the narrative (Larson 1978: 59; Schiffrin 1981: 58). It also creates involvement (see Chafe 1982; Tannen 1986: 324). The audience is directly presented with the verbal exchanges and “can interpret for itself the significance of those events for the experience” (Schiffrin 1981: 59). The narrator remains in the background (Maranhão 1984: 255) such that events are left to “speak for themselves” (Fleischman 1990: 149), thereby increasing the credibility of the story. Constructed dialogue is one of several internal evaluation devices used in narrative (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Polanyi 1979; Schiffrin 1984). It combines evaluation with action (Maranhão 1984: 256). The content of quotes narrates events, offers protagonists’ evaluation of events and conveys the point of the story (Schiffrin 1981: 60).

Occasionally, the narrator makes an aside that momentarily halts the unfolding of the plotline. The aside is used to explain to the audience what is happening behind the scene (Wolfson 1978: 220) or in the protagonist’s mind. In (9), for instance, the narrator ‘steps out’ of the main storyline to provide background information and share his feelings at the time of events.

(9) I’m not scared of spiders by the way. It’s just that I was in absolute fear this thing was gonna bite me under my shirt and- and they do have a nasty bite.

(Male, 46, process operator)
The aside provides us with the narrator’s interpretation and evaluation of the situation. Narrators also use ‘checking’ asides such as you know (cf. Leith 1995: 65 on the use of ‘you ken?’ in a Scottish folktale) to ensure that the audience understands the situation and can relate to it, as is shown in (10).

(10) It’s like, you know, line up for the Eiffel Tower. (Female, 34, senior investigator)

Another feature of performance is repetition. Repetition is used for emphasis (Wolfson 1978: 221), as in (11) where the narrator stresses his partner’s reaction after he pranked her with a spider.

(11) And- She’s seen this spider and freaked out, like freaked. I mean I feel terrible now thinking about it. She’s just freaked out and pulled so hard on that um bed head. She actually broke- she actually broke the bed um. (Male, 46, process operator)

Via repetition, the narrator not only insists on his partner’s reaction, but also on his own surprise at the extent of fear she showed. Repetition thus serves as an internal evaluation device. Other frequent features of performance include expressive sounds, sound effects, and motions and gestures. Expressive sounds are used in (12) where the narrator warns her interlocutor about her reaction if the spider in her car was to crawl on her leg.

(12) I’d have an accident. I’d chuck an absolute mental and just go, “<SCREAMING> <HISSING>” (Female, 53, medical receptionist)

Rather than describing her behaviour with verbal expressions such as I would just scream and hiss, she actually performs her hypothetical reaction with expressive sounds. Performance is also achieved with sound effects, as shown in (13) where the narrator imitates the noise of an airplane engine.

(13) <SIGH> But after thirty seconds you started hearing this hum <IMITATES NOISE ENGINE> (Male, 32, minerals chemist)
Mimetic gesture performed by narrators is not recorded in audio-only data. However, the use of certain deictic markers can point to motions and gestures (Wolfson 1978: 222). In (14), the narrator acts out how he was headbutted by a man while he was trying to rescue him from drowning.

(14) So I’m slapping the guy, slapping the back of his head. Fucking “Wake up!” I’m screaming at him. And he has a seizure. And I’ve gone behind, and then he headbutts me like that. (Male, 32, seafarer)

The deictic expression like that indicates that he accompanies his verbal description with a physical demonstration of the scene. In other words, he performs a mimetic re-enactment “understood as direct representation, the total imitation of the event” (Buchstaller 2003: 3).

Some, but not all, of the aforementioned features are expected for a narrative to be performed. However, the more features of performance employed, the livelier the narrative. Maranhão (1984: 253) comments that “the best narrators are those who possess histrionic gifts” and who imitate the tone of voice, body positions and facial expressions of the characters they impersonate. Those performance features confer a theatrical aspect to the narrative retelling (Wolfson 1982: 25). They allow listeners to learn about events as though they were witnessing them first hand, rather than through the filter of the narrator’s eyes. They provide authenticity to the retelling and thereby support the evaluation of the situation given by the narrator (Wolfson 1978: 222).

Another central feature of performance in storytelling is tense/aspect switching (Wolfson 1978: 217; Fleischman 1990: 8). Wolfson (1982: 29) argues that the more fully a story is performed, the more likely it is to exhibit tense switching into the CHP. In fact, Wolfson (1978: 222–223) observes that tense switching only occurs in narratives characterised by a ‘breakthrough into performance’ of the narrator (see Hymes 1975), evidence that tense switching itself is a performance feature.14 Similarly, Fleischman (1990: 92) argues that the triggering factor for tense switching is that the narrative be an ‘act of performance’, rather than spontaneous and improvisational. The alternation between tense/aspect forms fulfills a theatrical function, modifying the

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14 Wolfson (1979: 169) notes that the use of the CHP is considered both as a cause and an effect of performance: a narrative is more likely to contain the CHP if it is performed, but the CHP itself confers a sense of performativity to the narrative. Though a narrative may be performed without containing tense variation, the presence of tense switches into marked tense forms is a clear indication of performativity.
‘lighting or scenery upon a stage’ (Wolfson 1978: 220). Tense/aspect variation and its function in narrative is analysed in detail in §3.3.

### 3.2.2 What triggers performed narratives

Wolfson (1978: 223) identifies a number of variables which contribute to the likelihood of conversational narratives to be performed:

- interaction
- topic in relation to audience
- audience similarity of attitude
- time between event and story
- speech situation in which story is told
- occupation
- age
- sex
- ethnicity
- friendship
- relative status

It appears that features of performance are more likely to occur between speakers of the same age group, between intimates (including family and close friends), between speakers of a similar ethnic background (shared ethnic membership actually overrides close friendship as a factor favouring performance (Wolfson 1982: 84)), as well as between people of similar occupation and equal status. Thus, for instance, “the person in the lower position may well tell a story but except under very unusual circumstances it is not appropriate for him to perform it” (Wolfson 1978: 232). Other important factors include the relative status of the audience as these relate to the same attributes of the speaker, the speech situation in which the story is told, the amount of time elapsed between the event and the telling (the more recent the past events, the more likely they are to be performed), and whether or not the story contains details of interaction. Interestingly, Wolfson (1978) points out that there is nothing intrinsic to the topic of narrative which would trigger a performance. Her hypothesis is that “a performance is only given when norms for evaluative interpretation are presumed to be shared” (Wolfson 1978: 225). So narrators need to assess their addressee(s) on two levels to establish whether they can perform the story: firstly, they need to establish the degree of similarity in terms of shared background and experience; secondly, to establish whether they share similar norms for evaluative interpretation (i.e. their level of empathy and attitude) (Wolfson 1982: 88).
Though a number of factors may favour or disfavour a breakthrough into performance, it is important to recognise that there is a large amount of individual variation in narrative retelling (Wolfson 1982: 72).

3.3 Tense/aspect in narrative

The use of tense/aspect forms in narrative contexts diverges from that in non-narrative contexts since the relation between time and tense in narrative differs from ordinary language (Dahl 1985: 113; Fleischman 1990: 3–4; Binnick 2006: 259). A narrative recapitulates past experience (Labov 1972d: 359–360). Moreover, narrative events are perfective in nature and occur in temporal sequence. As a consequence, only a limited number of tense/aspect forms can be used for narrative heads (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 28–29). Cross-linguistically, the tense/aspect forms used for narration tend to be those expressing past and/or perfectivity (Dahl 1985: 139; Fleischman 1990: 24; Bybee et al. 1994: 54–55).

In English, the SP is the narrative tense par excellence since it locates events squarely in the past (Dahl 1985: 14). The PP, as explained in §2.4.2, does not canonically function as a narrative head in (Standard) English (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 29). However, the NPP (see §2.4.4) and other marked tense/aspect forms also feature in narrative clauses in English, including the CHP (Wolfson 1978; Schiffrin 1981).15 The variation between these tense/aspect forms is the object of investigation of the present thesis.

The NPP and the CHP are enabled in narrative clauses where they are ‘freed’ from the constraint of having to establish temporal referentiality (Schiffrin 1981: 51). The role of the SP for temporal interpretation in narrative is minimal (Couper-Kuhlen 1987: 24). By definition, narrative clauses refer to narrative events that are sequentially ordered (see §3.1.1), and understood to be anchored in the past regardless of the use or non-use of explicit past tense morphology (Schiffrin 1981: 50–51). This leads to a ‘neutralisation’ of the distinction between tense/aspect forms (Couper-Kuhlen 1987: 24).

15 The use of the HP in English narratives has long been documented (for overviews of the literature on the HP, see Schiffrin 1981: 46; Wolfson 1982: 11–22; Fleischman 1986: 203; see Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 112 on the origins and evolution of the grammatical notion of ‘historical’ present’). Mitchell (1985: 243) argues that the HP appears in English at the beginning of the thirteenth century and is “used with the greatest freedom” by the end of the fourteenth century. In contemporary English, the HP is a stylistically marked but well-accepted usage in narrative as indicated by the fact that it is listed in grammars of English (see Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 129–131; Leech & Svartvik 2002: 74; Kearns 2011: 180).
25): all refer to the same past time (event time) in narrative clauses, while they usually contrast (temporally-speaking) when used conjointly in other linguistic contexts.

The time of narrative events is often established in the ABSTRACT or the ORIENTATION via the use of a temporal adverbial (Schiffrin 1981: 49–50). Temporal reference is also established by the use of the past tense in the ORIENTATION (see Ritz 2007: 140). It is commonly asserted in the first narrative clause which provides the temporal anchoring for the rest of the story (Dahl 1985: 113). As Couper-Kuhlen (1987: 25) explains, the first tense used in narrative discourse is ‘maximally informative’, while following tenses have little informational (temporal referential) value.

3.3.1 Patterns of variation

Several patterns of tense/aspect variation have been reported in previous research on narrative. First, the distinction between foregrounded and backgrounded situations is often realised by the use of different morphosyntactic forms in languages (Hopper 1979a: 216) (see §3.1.3). While foregrounded situations are usually related in the perfective, which in English tends to be encoded in the simple form, backgrounded situations are usually expressed in the imperfective aspect (see §2.1.2). The progressive’s primary function in English is to signal an on-going process (Dahl 1985: 28). Comrie (1976: 25) views the progressive aspect as a subcategory of the imperfective. Therefore, the progressive is usually restricted to clauses referring to the background. Schiffrin (1981) tackles the use of the progressive aspect in her AmE narratives and observes that verbs in the progressive are frequent in restricted clauses (i.e. backgrounded clauses) (Schiffrin 1981: 57). Though the progressive is unexpected in narrative clauses (i.e. foregrounded clauses), it does appear occasionally (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 28). Couper-Kuhlen (1989a, 1989b, 1995) in particular has analysed examples of the ‘foregrounded progressive’ in English narrative discourse, illustrated in (1).

(1) Anyway, got the Cadillac. And I’m standing in line for like two and a half hours to get gas, and I get up there […]. (Wolfson 1982: 38)
Mesthrie (2013) also identifies the Conversational Historical be + V-ing Present in the narratives of South African Indian English speakers. Others (Levey 2006; Rodriguez Louro & Ritz 2014; Richard 2015) do not deal with the progressive aspect, although they acknowledge its occurrence in narrative clauses (Richard 2015: 41) and invite future researchers to distinguish between simple and progressive CHP tokens (Rodriguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 562). I briefly address the use of the progressive aspect in narrative clauses in §5.1.1.

Tense switching away from the unmarked SP in English (and into marked tense forms) is most frequently reported in the sequence of narrative clauses. For example, Schiffirin (1981) analyses tense variation in AmE narratives, and specifically the use of the CHP. Following Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) model of narratives of personal experience outlined in §3.1.2, and considering narratives in their entirety, she observes that the CHP occurs almost exclusively in complicating action clauses – 30% (381/1288) of the verbs in this portion of the narrative are in the CHP, while it only occurs in 3% (9/268) of the verbs in orientation clauses, and does not feature at all in external evaluation clauses, abstracts or codas (Schiffrin 1981: 51). In Tagliamonte and Poplack’s (1988: 520) study of Samaná English narratives, the CHP also represents close to one-third of all verbs in the complicating action. In Chilean and Mexican Spanish narratives, Silva-Corvalán (1983: 767) observes that 33% (156/476) of the verbs heading narrative clauses are in the present tense (Presente Histórico) rather than the past tense (Pretérito). In Rickford and Théberge Rafal’s (1996) study of ‘preterite had + V-ed’ predicates in the narratives of African-American preadolescents, the large majority of non-standard had + V-ed tokens (94% [49/52 tokens]) is found in the complicating action section (Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 234). Similarly, in the narratives of 40 children speaking African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), Ross, Oetting and Stapleton (2004: 176) find that 79% (53/67) of the non-standard had + V-ed tokens occur in the complicating action. In AusE narratives, Engel and Ritz (2000: 133) and Ritz and Engel (2008) observe that the NPP is used frequently in the complication; hence the methodological decision to focus the present analysis on narrative clauses (see Chapter 4, §4.3.1).

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16 See also the use of the ‘narrative imperfect’ in French (Caudal & Veters 2005; Labeau 2005) and Italian (Bertinetto 1987).

17 Here is an example of preterite had + V-ed from Rickford and Théberge Rafal (1996: 237): Corey walked up to him and decked him in the eye, I mean in the jaw. And then he said, “I’ma bring my people.” And then and um, we had came around a corner. And then we had came around a corner. We had went home. And then Gerald mother and him come up, and Gerald was crying. [Tabitha, 12, East Palo Alto, California]
Another pattern of variation noted is the use of the SP to open and close the narration of events. In BrE narratives, Levey (2006: 146–147) finds that the SP is favoured in initial clauses (factor weight of .61) and final clauses (.68) over medial clauses (.47). By contrast, the CHP is favoured in medial clauses (.54) over initial (.43) and final (.26) clauses in his dataset. In Samaná English, the SP also frequently occurs in initial and final positions, while the CHP is more frequent in medial position (Tagliamonte & Poplack 1988: 520–521). In AmE narratives, Schiffrin (1981: 51) finds that the SP usually initiates and ends the narrative clause sequence, while switches to the CHP tend to occur at the heart of the sequence. Wolfson (1982) notably observes a switch from the CHP into the SP for the climax of stories. Fludernik (1991: 374–375) finds a similar correlation where the end of episodes and resolution are often marked by a switch into the SP. Another observation is that narratives told entirely in the CHP are rare; SP usage is pervasive (Schiffrin 1981: 60; Wolfson 1982: 31). This suggests that there might be a limit to the lack of overt past time marking in narrative (Schiffrin 1981: 51–52).

Prior research has shown a tendency for similar tense forms to cluster together in narrative. In Samaná English narratives, Tagliamonte and Poplack (1988: 520) find that the SP and the CHP are more frequent when the prior verb is in the same tense. In AmE narratives, Schiffrin (1981: 51) finds that 62% of the verbs in the CHP and 82% of the verbs in the SP are followed by a verb of the same tense. Schiffrin (1981: 51) concludes that sequences rapidly alternating between CHP and SP are not typical. In AusE narratives, Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014: 558–559) also observe that the SP and the CHP are more likely to occur if respectively preceded by a verb in the SP or the CHP. In their study, TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE was selected as a significant factor group (range = 36) on both SP and CHP usage – it “places the heaviest constraint on their occurrence” (Rodriguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 558). In (2), a cluster of narrative clauses headed by the CHP forms the heart of the complication.

(2) And then one day I heard somebody knock on my door. And she’s just like standing there with this bird in her hand, like a wattlebird. And she’s like, “I catch you bird!” And I’m like, “What?” She’s like, “I got you a pet, it’s a bird.” I’m like, “Um, Mum, Maria caught us a pet bird.” And I was like, “<facial expression>.” Mum explained to Maria why it’s not okay to like catch birds

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18 The probabilities in parentheses are factor weights (see §5.2.2). The factor group POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES was not selected as significant on NPP usage in Levey’s (2006) data.
with your hands and give them to people. (PMGDM21) (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 555)

Looking at SP-CHP-NPP variation in BrE narratives, Levey’s (2006: 146–147) results show that TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE exerts the strongest constraint on all three forms: the SP is favoured when the SP is used in the preceding narrative clause (.68), the CHP is favoured when the CHP is used in the preceding narrative clause (.78), and the NPP is favoured when the NPP is used in the preceding narrative clause (.94). Cox (2005: 89–90) similarly finds that the tense of the narrative head is a good predictor of tense usage in NZE narratives, with the NPP most likely to occur after another NPP.

A final pattern of variation concerns the relation between tense and quotative contexts. Performed narratives (see §3.2) are often replete with ‘constructed dialogue’, and empirical studies have revealed that quotative verb usage is influenced by a number of sociolinguistic factors, including tense. In particular, prior research on quotation in various English varieties has shown that the SP usually dominates with quotative say, whereas quotatives be like and go are more frequent in the CHP (Blyth, Recktenwald & Wang 1990: 219; Ferrara & Bell 1995: 274; Winter 2002: 11; D’Arcy 2004: 335–336; Barbieri 2005: 249; Rodríguez Louro 2013: 68). Quotative go is also frequently used in the NPP in BrE (Levey 2006: 140) and AusE (Engel & Ritz 2000: 136; Richard & Rodríguez Louro 2016: 136). In BrE and AusE narratives respectively, Levey (2006: 146) and Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014: 559) also show that quotative contexts are conducive to CHP usage, while non-quotative contexts favour the SP. Example (3) illustrates tense usage in quotative and non-quotative contexts, and the lexical effects of quotative verbs.

(3) We all went out in the morning and goes, “Oooh, it’s a bomb, it’s a bomb!” And then my brother run downstairs and he said, “Oh…” No, he went in his bedroom and he said, “Oh, look, I’ve got some matches, I’ll put it alight shall I?” and he put it on… and it went right… it went right to the bottom and then it just floated up in the air cos it was a balloon and we all went, “Who was it?” and he goes, “I dunno.” (Levey 2006: 144)
3.3.2 Functions

Two main discourse-pragmatic functions have been attributed to tense/aspect variation in narrative: a discourse-structuring and an evaluative function. These are detailed in turn.

DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING FUNCTION

Tense/aspect switching serves the purpose of structuring the narrative discourse and organising the information presented (Fleischman 1990: 168–169, 214). Prior research has shown that the alternation between various tense/aspect forms has a foregrounding function – it is used to dissociate the main narrative line of events from background information (Hopper 1979a: 216; Fleischman 1990: 168–169; Fludernik 1991: 373). As a discourse-structuring device, tense switching is used to form a ‘macro-structural narrative frame’ (Fludernik 1991: 373). The characteristic distributional pattern of the SP in initial and final narrative clauses reflects the marking of the boundaries of the narrative clause sequence. Clusters of verbs in the same tense are said to group events into scenes or episodes (Wolfson 1979: 174, 178; Schiffrin 1981: 55). Conversely, tense switching serves to partition the narrative into sub-episodes, following topic shifts (Wolfson 1979: 178; Silva-Corvalán 1983: 778; Fleischman 1990: 166, 201; Levey 2006: 148). Fludernik (1991: 374–375) observes that a switch into the CHP in AmE narratives frequently correlates with a ‘turn’ of events. Tense switching is used to establish ‘landmarks’ or ‘reorientation points’ in the story (Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 237); that is, “locations that the speaker uses as a base from which to orient the next action” (Schiffrin 1992: 763). Another discourse-structuring function of tense variation is that of participant tracking (Fleischman 1990: 8, 81). The alternation of forms aligns with the alternation of protagonists in the story, thus facilitating comprehension. In quotative contexts in particular, this helps controlling reference (Maranhão 1984: 251). So tense switching is used to structure the narrative discourse. It is also used to “give […] drama to the story being performed” (Wolfson 1978: 217).

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19 Fleischman (1990: 11) notes that the discourse-pragmatic usage of tense/aspect forms in narrative is “widely attested across languages” but cautions against claims of universality.
EVALUATIVE FUNCTION

The evaluative component of tense/aspect switching pertains to the personal attitude and point of view of the narrator towards the situations related in the narrative.

However, such psychological intents “lend themselves with difficulty to empirical test” (Poplack & Turpin: 1999: 145). Instead, the analyst relies on speakers’ selection between competing variants as an insight into speakers’ intents. In a linguistic context where a particular variant is the default, the use of marked variants underlie the speakers’ discourse-pragmatic motivations. In this sense, tense/aspect alternation functions as an internal evaluation device (Schiffrin 1981; Silva-Corvalán 1983). A change of tense form often highlights climactic moments, that is, events judged remarkable or unexpected (Mustanoja 1960: 506–507; Longacre 1976: 219ff.; Silva-Corvalán 1983: 774; Fleischman 1990: 184; Fludernik 1991: 374).

Mustanoja (1960) argues that the shift between the SP and the CHP (or the NPP) in Middle English enabled the narrator to highlight some events at the expense of others. Specifically, events introduced in the CHP or the NPP reflected the emotional subjective evaluation of the narrator, whereas events introduced in the SP were presented as objective facts (Fryd 2015: 192). However, researchers tend to omit how they have measured the supposed subjectivity vs. objectivity of speakers vis-à-vis the events related. Investigating an oral corpus of Salvadoran Spanish data, and a written corpus of Mexican Spanish colonial data, Hernández (2013) measures the varying degrees of subjectivity of tense/aspect forms according to the linguistic features with which they co-occur: grammatical person, subject expression versus omission, direct versus indirect reported speech, and verb semantics. The quantification of these linguistic features offers empirical support for Hernández’s (2013) claim that there is an opposition between Pretérito and Pretérito Perfecto [Compuesto] usage in terms of the degree of subjectivity expressed: “Pret[érito] P[erfecto] draws attention to greater speaker’s affective closeness to the event, while Pret[érito] enhances detachment and dissociation” (Hernández 2013: 261). In the same vein, Maranhão (1984: 251), who analyses Brazilian Portuguese narratives, ascribes to the present tense a “character of proximity” with respect to the narrator while the past marks “distance”. This relates to the deictic properties of the two tenses: the here and now of the present versus the there and then of the past. Fleischman (1990: 256–257) comparing the use of the Passé Simple and Passé Composé in French narratives at a time when the Passé Simple was considered the default narrative tense explains that the Passé Composé “reduce[s] the
distance between the narrator and entities in the story world” and imbues the narrative with a sense of subjectivity. The Présent Historique also functions to reduce the distance between the speaker-now and the story-now since, in a narrative in the present tense, “seeing and speaking ostensibly take place simultaneously” (Fleischman 1990: 253).

Because of its ‘present-ness’, the CHP imbues the situations described with vividness. This argument has however been criticised (see §3.3.3). The NPP has also been argued to afford vividness by placing the listener in the middle of the situation (see Engel & Ritz 2000: 137). Indeed, the moment of speech is ‘reset’, as is the case with CHP usage. Hearers can imagine that they are in the ‘here’ and ‘now’ of the story. The narrative effect achieved is a foregrounding of the past situation to the moment of speech. Claims that the NPP expresses vividness are supported by Ellis’s (2012) analysis of speakers’ attitudes towards NPP usage in narrative. Respondents report that the form gives the impression that the speaker is “reliving events” (Ellis: 2012: 54). They suggest that the use of the NPP makes the story “more immediate”, “more interesting” and “more like it’s happening, suspenseful” (Ellis: 2012: 52). An additional function attributed to non-standard PP usage in narratives and other genres is mirativity (Ritz 2010: 3409; Walker 2011: 77). The narrator expresses their surprise towards the events related.

Tense/aspect alternation enables a mise en relief (Fleischman 1990: 200). Narrators can signal (what they evaluate as) salient situations in the story (Wolfson 1978: 222; 1982: 48; Levey 2006: 148). In AusE narratives, the NPP has been said to foreground pivotal events in the story (Engel & Ritz 2000: 133, 135). In AAVE, preterite had + V-ed “marks a highly unpredictable, or innovative, topic” (Ross et al. 2004: 177). In general, marked tense forms have been documented most frequently in the narrative complication, the section containing the most reportable event. Their use correlates with foregrounded situations. Tense switching into a marked tense form can foreshadow highlights in the story, notably the climax or evaluative point of the narrative (Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 238). It can also be used to indicate the dramatic peaks themselves. For instance, Anthony Kroch’s students (“members of the 1979 Linguistics 560 class”) observe more occurrences of the CHP in the climax and build-up to climax in AmE narratives (Schiffrin 1981: 60). A similar observation is offered by Rickford and Théberge Rafal (1996: 240–241) for preterite had + V-ed forms in AAVE narratives.
3.3.3 Form versus switch debate

Traditional analyses have considered that the use of the HP in narrative serves to emphasise certain situations by presenting them as though they were occurring in front of our eyes.\textsuperscript{20} This is known as the “past-more-vivid” hypothesis (Fleischman 1990: 75; Brinton 1996: 19). A sense of ‘immediacy’ or ‘vividness’ is achieved via the use of the HP, either by bringing narrative events to the speaker-now (Jespersen 1933: 238–239; Fleischman 1990: 75–76), or by transporting listeners back to the time of events (i.e. the story-now) (Palmer 1965: 39; Leech 2004: 5–6). These explanations rest on an analysis of the present tense as a semantically meaningful form whose reference time includes speech time (see Jespersen 1931; Palmer 1965; Comrie 1985: 37–38). The use of the NPP in narrative is similarly ascribed a sense of ‘present-ness’ by virtue of locating hearers in “a virtual present” (Ritz & Engel 2008: 132).

Other researchers have proposed that it is not the inherent semantic properties of the present but the alternation between tense/aspect forms itself that bears significance (Wolfson 1978: 219; 1979: 180–181; 1982: 52–53, 116; Fludernik 1991: 390). Indeed, some linguists maintain that the present tense is timeless (Twaddell 1960; Fleischman 1991: 94) and “carries no explicit meaning at all” (Bybee \textit{et al.} 1994: 152) given the variety of reference times it can indicate (e.g. general truths, habits). If the (C)HP has no intrinsic value (Wolfson 1979: 168; Fludernik 1991: 392), its use cannot render the past more vivid. Wolfson (1978: 217–220; 1979: 174; 1982: 116) thus claims that it is the switch between the SP and the CHP that serves to sequence stories into episodes, detaching important events. Wolfson’s argument that the CHP cannot be attributed dramatic significance rests on two further observations: (i) what she qualifies as the “important action” of the story is, for the most part, reported in the SP, not the CHP (Wolfson 1978: 219; 1979: 172; 1982: 34); (ii) both switches into the SP and switches into the CHP occur at crucial points in the story (Wolfson 1982: 36). Similarly, Visser (1973: 710) criticises analyses that consider that the HP brings vividness in storytelling on the grounds that many “realistic and lively” passages are told in the SP. Brinton (2001: 143) argues that “vividness and excitement are a consequence of the text-organizing function of the historical present, not the primary function of the form.”

\textsuperscript{20} As noted in Chapter 2, I make a distinction between the ‘Historical Present’ (HP) – the use of the present tense to refer to past events in various genres (e.g. descriptive historical accounts) – and the ‘Conversational Historical Present’ (CHP) – the use of the present tense to refer to past events specifically in oral narratives of personal experience.
Wolfson (1978: 220) maintains that the direction of the switch (whether from the SP into the CHP, or from the CHP into the SP) is irrelevant. Schiffrin (1981: 56), on the other hand, contends that the direction of the tense switch does matter since only a switch from the CHP into the SP separates events in narratives under her analysis. However, she acknowledges that a switch from the CHP into the SP implies an initial switch into the CHP that needs to be accounted for.

The use of marked tense/aspect forms in narratives can be interpreted within the broader discourse unit of the narrative (Smith 2005: 475). Since those linguistic forms depart from the default/unmarked form, they draw attention to themselves and thus can function as evaluation devices (Polanyi 1979: 209). In the words of Fryd (2015: 192), tense/aspect switching can act as a “pragmatic beacon signalling narrative turbulence”. I will return to the debate about the importance of the inherent semantic properties of tense forms, their alternation and the direction of the switch with respect to my own findings in Chapter 7 (§7.3.3).

3.4 Conclusion

The overarching aim of the present chapter was to provide the theoretical framework on which the analysis rests. To this end, the first section (§3.1) defined the Labovian narrative of personal experience and introduced its global structure. The following section (§3.2) focused on performed narratives; that is, narratives that are likely to display tense/aspect switching as a feature of performance. Finally, the last section (§3.3) offered a review of prior findings concerning tense/aspect variation in narrative in terms of patterns and functions.

The theoretical background outlined in this chapter has ramifications for the type of data collected for analysis – namely performed Labovian narratives. Previous research findings detailed in this literature review also explain two central methodological decisions: (i) the decision to focus on the narrative clause sequence for the quantitative analysis (see Chapter 5); (ii) the decision to operate a thorough investigation of tense/aspect variation at the discourse-pragmatic level (see Chapter 6). Chapter 4 presents the empirical data on which this research is based and the methods employed to analyse them.
CHAPTER 4
Data and Methods

Chapter 4 presents the research questions posed in this study and the research design developed and implemented to answer them. Specifically, it describes the narrative data, the participants in the sample, and the elicitation procedure for the construction of the *UWA Narrative Corpus* (Richard 2013–2016). It outlines the main principles of variationism, the quantitative approach adopted to assess the sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP. It also introduces multivariate analysis, the statistical technique employed in analysing the data, and the linguistic and social factors included in the modelling.

Previous studies have documented and analysed non-standard uses of the PP in AusE narratives (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz & Engel 2008; Ritz 2010) (see §2.4.4). Engel and Ritz’s original research focused on the semantics and pragmatics of the phenomenon but a sociolinguistic approach remained to be offered. Moreover, the data analysed comprised police media statements (*Police Corpus*, Ritz 2005) – i.e. a written, formal genre –, and stories produced on the radio (*Radio Narrative Corpus*, Engel & Ritz 2000–2004). Non-standard uses of the PP in spontaneous face-to-face communication had yet to be investigated, and compared to the findings for these two corpora. While Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014) investigated tense variation in AusE oral narratives using the variationist approach, the lack of NPP tokens in their sample (1% [9/678]) precluded inclusion of the form in the quantitative analysis. The only variationist study of the NPP was offered by Levey (2006) on a corpus of BrE working-class preadolescent narratives. The present thesis offers a similar variationist analysis on a corpus of AusE narratives based on a more diverse sample of speakers.

The variationist approach adopted in the current study is explained in §4.1; the research questions are presented in §4.2. The data on which the analysis rests are detailed in §4.3. The statistical technique used to account for the data – multivariate analysis – is described in §4.4. In §4.5 and §4.6, I present the linguistic and social variables entered into the statistical modelling (and the relevant hypotheses to be empirically tested). In §4.7 I explain the discourse-analytic approach to the data. I conclude the chapter in §4.8 with a summary of the research design and the central research questions the current study seeks to answer.
4.1 The variationist paradigm

I applied variationist methodology to the analysis of tense variation in a large corpus of performed narratives evidencing contemporary AusE (331 narratives). The research tradition of variationist sociolinguistics, also known as language variation and change (LVC), emerged in the 1960s and was pioneered by Labov (1963, 1966b, 1969, 1972c, 1982, 1984). Its proponents advocate for linguistic analysis that is strongly empirically grounded and defend investigation of language use in its social context. In particular, they examine the interaction between “variation, social meaning and the evolution and development of the linguistic system itself” (Tagliamonte 2006: 5). There are three key tenets in variationist research:

1. The principle of ‘orderly heterogeneity’ (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog 1968: 100), also referred to by Labov (1982: 17) as ‘normal’ heterogeneity, i.e. the notion that variation is inherent in language, yet regular and quantifiable.
2. The fact that language changes constantly.
3. The fact that language has pervasive social meaning, i.e. it conveys linguistic (language-related) as well as non-linguistic (social and cultural) information (Tagliamonte 2006: 7).

Applying variationist methodology to tense variation in narrative, this study aimed to uncover the systematic patterns underlying the ‘orderly heterogeneity’ observed in AusE performed narratives, and the social significance of that variation.

The theoretical model of variationism rests on a number of key concepts and methodological principles, including the vernacular, the speech community, the linguistic variable, the variable context and the principle of accountability. These guided the research design adopted in the current study and are discussed in what follows.

The speaker’s vernacular has remained the ‘gold standard’ in variationist sociolinguistic research (Tagliamonte 2012: 106). The vernacular is usually understood as the linguistic variety acquired during a person’s preadolescent years (Labov 1984: 29) and the casual style adopted by a speaker where “minimum attention is paid to
speech” (Labov 1972a: 112).\(^1\) The vernacular lies at the antipode of the standard and is considered the most natural, spontaneous, and unmonitored type of speech (see Coupland 2016 for further discussion of the concept of vernacularity). Crucially, it is the ideal locus to observe language variation and innovation since its highly regular structure “provides the most systematic data for linguistic analysis” (Labov 1972a: 112; 1984: 29), and because there is a tendency for innovative variants to arise in casual speech (Milroy 1987). Given the nature of the NPP, targeting the vernacular was essential.

Beyond an individual speaker’s vernacular, the variationist linguist is interested in the broader pattern of the speech community (Labov 1972c: 112). Labov conceptualises the speech community as an “overarching social reality” (Labov interviewed on July 19, 2006 and cited in Gordon 2006: 350), characterised by the participation of speakers in a unified set of shared sociolinguistic norms (Labov 1972b: 120–121; 2007: 347).\(^2\) In a similar vein, Hymes (2005: 6) defines the speech community as “a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety”. Linguistic uniformity (understood as structured variation) is a defining feature of the speech community (Patrick 2002: 584). In the present study, I focus on the (mainstream) AusE speech community, specifically speakers from Perth, Western Australia.

Another central concept of variationism is that of the linguistic variable (Labov 1966a) based on the observation of form/function asymmetry (Weiner & Labov 1983: 4; Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001). The linguistic variable is defined as “two or more ways of saying the same thing” (Labov 1972b: 188; Sankoff 1980: 55). The alternatives or variants of the variable are functionally equivalent though they have divergent social significance (Fasold 1990: 224). The assumption that multiple forms may fulfil the same linguistic function was initially established for phonological variables and its extension to grammatical variables was debated (Lavandera 1978). However, multiple studies have shown that the linguistic variable need not be limited to phonology (see Schwenter 2011 on variationist approaches to morphosyntax), and that the relationship of variants to a variable could appropriately be redefined as weak complementarity (see...

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\(^1\) The style as attention to speech model has been criticised on the grounds that (i) it is difficult to measure attention to speech; (ii) it is a one-dimensional approach to style; and (iii) speakers always tailor their speech to the situational context, even if they do so unconsciously (Eckert 2000; Milroy & Gordon 2003: 49–51). Bell (1984, 2001) describes stylistic variation as ‘audience design’, that is speakers tailor their language use according to their listeners. As for Eckert (2001), stylistic variation is conceived of as a resource for the construction of identity in communities of practice.

\(^2\) On the problems related to the concept of the speech community, see Patrick (2002).
Sankoff 1973; Sankoff & Thibault 1981; Weiner & Labov 1983). Variationist methodology has successfully been applied to the study of tense variation in previous research (e.g. Sankoff & Thibault 1981; Schwenter 1994b; Torres Cacoullos 1999; Poplack & Tagliamonte 2000; Tagliamonte 2000; Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014). It is used in the present study where the linguistic variable under scrutiny is narrative tense.

A key methodological decision in variationism involves ‘circumscribing the variable context’ (Poplack & Tagliamonte 1989: 60) or ‘envelope of variation’ (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 180); that is, determining where the linguistic variable actually varies (Tagliamonte 2012: 10). All variants of the variable occurring within the defined envelope of variation then need to be reported following the principle of accountability (Labov 1972b: 72). The most recent research continues to re-work the concept of ‘envelope of variation’ and suggests that functional equivalence need not be a necessary requirement (e.g. Torres Cacoullos 2001; Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008; Aaron 2010; Van Herk, Thorburn & Buchstaller 2015). In this thesis, the envelope of variation is defined functionally and comprises all the narrative heads of narrative clauses in performed narratives. Narrative clauses constitute a well-defined envelope of variation since all the tense forms occurring in such a context necessarily refer to past/perfective events and express temporal progression. At face value, NPP tokens are therefore functionally equivalent to SP and CHP tokens – though they will be shown to fulfil different discourse-pragmatic functions in narratives (see Chapter 6).

Variationist methodology incorporates techniques from several disciplines, notably linguistics, sociology, and statistics (Poplack 1993: 251). Crucially, it offers a quantitative treatment of the data. This approach aims to shed light on the constraints – both linguistic and social – operating on the linguistic variation in probabilistic terms (see Sankoff & Labov 1979; Sankoff 1988b on variable rule analysis). Statistical tools can be used to analyse the conditioning of the variants of a variable and uncover the patterns and regularities in speakers’ grammar. The statistical technique of multivariate analysis used in the current study is presented in §4.4 and implemented via two different statistical programmes for maximum comparability with previous studies: GoldVarb X and Rbrul. It enables the identification of the factors conditioning narrative tense variation in AusE.
4.2 General and specific research questions

As introduced in §1.2, this research revolves around three central questions:

1. **What are the sociolinguistic constraints on the use of the NPP in AusE performed narratives?**
2. **Are uses of the NPP and uses of the CHP constrained by similar linguistic and social factors in performed narratives?**
3. **What are the discourse-pragmatic functions underlying tense variation in AusE performed narratives?**

More specifically, this research aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. **What are the sociolinguistic constraints on the use of the NPP in AusE performed narratives?**
   i. *How do specific linguistic factors affect the use of the NPP?*
      a) Is there a priming effect in place such that the NPP is more likely to occur when the preceding narrative clause is headed by a verb in the NPP? Or is the NPP more frequently used after a SP form signalling a ‘breakthrough into performance’ in the narrative?
      b) How frequent is temporal disambiguation in narrative clauses? Which temporal adverbials commonly occur with the NPP?
      c) Does the NPP occur more frequently with first or third person subjects?
      d) Do specific lexical heads, such as quotative verbs, favour or disfavour NPP usage? Does the type of quotative verb (e.g. *say* vs. *go*) play a role in the occurrence of the NPP?
      e) Is the NPP preferred at the beginning, the middle or the end of the sequence of narrative clauses?
   ii. *Is the occurrence of the form impacted by social factors?*
      a) Does the frequency of use of the NPP differ across age cohorts? In other words, is there empirical evidence of a change in progress, or do the regular patterns observed for the NPP suggest that this a case of stable variation?
b) Are there any noticeable differences between male and female speakers?

c) Does the analysis of the data reveal differences according to the socio-economic status (SES) of speakers? Are some indicators of SES better predictors of NPP usage?

2. **Are uses of the NPP and uses of the CHP constrained by similar linguistic and social factors in performed narratives?**

3. **What are the discourse-pragmatic functions underlying tense variation in AusE performed narratives?**
   
   i. *What are the discourse-pragmatic functions fulfilled by the NPP in comparison to the CHP and the SP in AusE performed narratives?*
   
   ii. *Can the CHP and the NPP co-occur across the sequences of narrative clauses?*
       
       a) If so, how frequently are the forms used conjointly and how do they articulate together?
       
       b) Do they undergo specialisation towards a set of specific functions?

4.3 **Data**

In order to address the research questions presented in §4.2 above, I assembled a dataset of performed narratives displaying tense variation. The rationale and methodological considerations relevant to assembling the dataset are described in §4.3.1. In particular, I introduce the narrative selection protocol which – in a move previously undocumented in the existing literature – was systematically applied to all three corpora used in this study. In §4.3.2 I describe in detail the data collection procedure used for the construction of the *UWA Narrative Corpus* – a unique corpus of performed narratives produced by native speakers of mainstream AusE, and built specifically for the purposes of this research. In §4.3.3 I present the dataset and the participant sample.
4.3.1 Methodological considerations

The tense variant at stake here – the NPP in AusE – is contextually embedded and has been documented in the narrative genre (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz & Engel 2008). Oral narratives, with their regular internal structure (see Labov & Waletzky 1967), and as clearly bounded units of discourse, provide an ideal constrained environment for systematic and controlled variation analysis (Schiffrin 1981: 45). They also provide an exacting means to view tense features since they display an array of forms to relate events that occurred prior to the time of speech (Tagliamonte & Poplack 1988: 518). Narratives, as defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1997), were therefore the most suitable targets for data collection in the present research.

I focus on tense variation within narrative, and the use of the NPP in particular. In line with Schiffrin (1981: 47) and her treatment of the CHP, my interest lies in the presence of the NPP in AusE narratives rather than the reasons why the form features in some narratives and not others. The reasons behind the presence or absence of tense variation in narrative, and the use or non-use of the NPP, are left for further research. Wolfson (1978: 223), for example, finds that speakers’ use of the CHP in AmE narratives is affected by a range of social factors such as the degree of similarity of backgrounds and attitudes between co-conversationalists (see §3.2.2).

In the present work, I exclusively analyse narratives that display tense variation across the sequence of narrative clauses. The quantitative investigation presented in Chapter 5 is limited to narrative clauses for three reasons:

(i) The sequence of narrative clauses forms a well-defined envelope of tense variation (see §3.1).

(ii) The complication, which consists largely of narrative clauses, is the portion of the narrative where the NPP has been documented as most prevalent (see §3.3).3 Engel and Ritz (2000: 133, 134) find that the PP is “often used at the heart of the narrative, i.e. the complication” and observe “a clear preference for PP in the complication rather than the orientation and resolution”.

(iii) The decision is grounded in previous studies which have restricted their focus to narrative clauses (see Levey 2006; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014).

3 Restricted clauses in the complication are not considered for the quantitative analysis of variation since they are not as strictly constrained as narrative clauses (see §3.1.1). In fact, the progressive aspect is frequently used with restricted clauses (cf. Schiffrin 1981: 57) while it is rare with narrative clauses (see §3.3.1). Since the envelope of tense/aspect variation differs for these two types of clauses, they are kept separate in the current study.
To be able to gain an in-depth understanding of where the AusE NPP is likely to occur, I also extracted all NPP tokens occurring outside the sequence of narrative clauses. However, these tokens occur in narrative sections with different envelopes of variation and cannot accountably be included in the quantitative study of the NPP in narrative clauses (Chapter 5). Uses of the NPP outside the sequence of narrative clauses are discussed in Chapter 6 (§6.1.3).

For the NPP to occur, the narratives in the corpus needed to display tense variation. As described in §3.2.1, tense variation is a hallmark of performed narratives (see Wolfson 1978; Schiffrin 1981; Silva-Corvalán 1983). Data collection therefore focused on eliciting this specific subtype of narratives where narrators are more likely to tense switch. Since narratives can be performed without tense switching, at least one additional feature of performance had to be used by speakers for a narrative to be considered ‘performed’. I turn to the data elicitation procedure in §4.3.2. Crucially, all the narratives eventually selected and included in the dataset had to display tense switching across the sequence of narrative clauses. This was imperative to allow for the modelling of tense variability in narrative progression since “categorical contexts cannot be part of an analysis of variation” (Tagliamonte 2012: 11). Following this key methodological decision, only speakers evidencing variability in their use of tense forms across narrative clauses were considered in the statistical analysis presented in Chapter 5. Speakers’ performed accounts that did not contain tense variation in narrative progression could not be included in the dataset.

Also noteworthy was Engel and Ritz’s (2008) finding that many uses of the NPP are attested on the radio, where speakers share their stories with limited interruption. The exceptions are backchannels that do not constitute turns or attempts to take the floor (see Sacks 1992; Macaulay 2006: 109), and interventions from the radio presenters either to obtain clarification or to request elaboration on parts of the caller’s story. It is the narrative performance itself that is “a claim to return the assignment of speakership to the narrator until the narrative is completed” (Labov 2003: 66). Storytelling is enabled when speakers are allowed longer turns (Jefferson 1978).

To sum up, assembling a corpus of well-defined narratives was a necessary step to be able to investigate the NPP. All the narratives included in the dataset needed to be:
a. **Labovian** (see Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1997). Here, the focus is on narrative clauses where the NPP takes on perfective aspect (see §3.1).

b. **PERFORMED, with tense switching across the narrative clause sequence as an obligatory feature** (see §3.2).

c. **MONOLOGIC**; that is, the speaker delivers the narrative almost uninterruptedly. This is the type of narrative in which the NPP has previously been documented.

Narrative length was irrelevant. The presence of only a few narrative clauses in a narrative does not necessarily imply that the story was short. The narrator might have used other clause types (orientation clauses, embedded orientation clauses, clauses introduced by the epistemic phrase *I think* and followed by embedded clauses, etc.). In the end, very few stories in the dataset (N=6) contain less than four narrative clauses. Such stories still had to be performed and respond to the criterion of tense variation across the sequence of narrative clauses. A short sequence of narrative clauses does not preclude tense variation, as exemplified in (1).

(1) I was told that when I was young um I was playing in a pool and I was struggling a bit with something. And um my sister *said* to my mum, “Oh Caleb’s struggling in the pool.” So she puts down her glass of wine, throws me a floatie <LAUGHTER> Yep. [<LAUGHTER> “Oh, he’ll manage!” <LAUGHTER>] Good times. Learned the hard way. (Male, 25, TAFE student)

The number of narratives extracted per speaker varied greatly, from one to 13. However, it is the number of narrative clauses per speaker – rather than the number of narratives itself – which could pose a problem for subsequent analysis by over-representing some speakers. For example, while only one performed narrative from Juliet Dobson, a 51-year-old female, was included in the dataset, this narrative was exceedingly long containing 64 narrative clauses. In the majority of cases, more than one performed narrative was included per speaker, though these differed greatly in terms of the number of narrative clauses they contained. It would be problematic to select only a number of narrative clauses per narrative, compromising the internal structure and cohesive links

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4 Narratives with few narrative clauses do explain the less typical cases of CHP-NPP variation, or all-CHP or all-NPP observed, as discussed in Chapter 6.
that characterise this genre. Potential skewing was resolved by including individual speakers as random effects in the statistical modelling (see §4.4.1), thus accounting for the differing number of narrative clauses produced by each individual.

4.3.2 Elicitation procedure for the UWA Narrative Corpus

Recording the vernacular (see §4.1) was crucial since innovative variants – such as the NPP in AusE – usually feature in the most casual speech styles (see Labov 1966b; Milroy 1987: 59). Moreover, NPP uses have been shown to attract negative attitudes (Ellis 2012: 91), and stigmatised variants are unlikely to be used by speakers in a formal setting. The interaction therefore needed to be as relaxed and informal as possible. However, gaining access to a speaker’s vernacular requires the linguist to observe and record the speaker as if they are not being observed, also known as the ‘Observer’s Paradox’ (Labov 1972b: 209; 1972c: 113). The first strategy adopted to mitigate this effect was the recruitment of participants via the ‘friend of a friend’ technique (Milroy 1980: 47). I entered the community through my own social networks, and was introduced as the ‘friend of a friend’ (Milroy 1987: 66). Interviewees adopted a more relaxed and informal attitude than if I had been introduced as a postgraduate student or an academic. The second strategy was to elicit narratives of personal experience. When speakers are engaged in storytelling, they shift towards the ‘vernacular’ (Labov 1984: 32).

The data collection methodology for the UWA Narrative Corpus was designed as ‘storytelling sessions’ and slightly revisited the traditional sociolinguistic interview (Labov 1984: 32) customarily used by variationists. The original Labovian sociolinguistic interview was designed to obtain various styles ranging from careful to more casual speech. Finding the ‘conversational modules’ that stimulate the participant’s interest (see Labov 1973), the interviewer should manage to elicit narratives of personal experience; that is, stories that people tell about their lives, and which represent a casual speech style (see Labov 2001a: 94 who presents a decision tree for stylistic variation in the sociolinguistic interview). Narratives of personal experience epitomise the vernacular and reflect community norms (Labov 1984: 32). The aim of

\[^{5}\text{However, Schilling-Estes (2008: 976) argues that “narratives are often highly performative and hence self-conscious”. Performed narratives may yield vernacular speech but also “performed nonstandard speech, or hyper-performance” (Schilling-Estes 2008: 978).}\]
the present research was to maximise the elicitation of performed narratives most likely to feature tense switching, and thereby the NPP. Participants were engaged in storytelling so that the elicitation of narratives could be maximised in the allotted time. Socio-demographic information was collected via a written questionnaire rather than during the actual recording (see Appendix A). The sessions lasted between 30 and 120 minutes. Narratives were obtained in semi-naturalistic face-to-face interaction with the researcher. Participants were provided with a list of topics/questions (e.g. *Did you ever get caught sneaking out?*) (see Appendices B and C), and explicitly invited to share personal stories and anecdotes of their choice. The prompts were purposely written in a colloquial style (Labov 1984: 34) to keep the interaction as casual as possible. They were based on (1) Labov’s (1984: 34–36) conversational modules within the sociolinguistic interview – especially those which have been highlighted as effective triggers of narratives of personal experience in previous research (see Tagliamonte 2006: online Appendix B), and (2) a selection of questions successfully used on interactive radio programmes (e.g. *Craziest person to knock on your door*). They were adapted to the age of participants, with a different set submitted to speakers under 18 years of age (see Appendix C). They covered a broad range of topics to be able to tap into speakers’ personal interests and unique life experiences. Because those experiences are unique, it was impossible for the interviewer to predict which prompts would turn out to be most relevant. The objective was to be inclusive when it came to the list of themes presented to participants and to leave them in control of the session. They were encouraged to ignore topics that were irrelevant to them or that they did not want to talk about. They could select the topics that resonated with them and share those stories they judged ‘reportable’.

During the storytelling sessions the floor was left entirely open to participants. They ended up leading the interaction, breaking down the interviewer/interviewee power relationship (see Schilling 2013: 204). The aim was to obtain narratives that were delivered with almost no interruption – that is, monologically rather than conversationally (Romano, Porto & Molina 2013: 73–74). To that end, the interviewer merely facilitated the interaction by engaging speakers in storytelling, guiding them, volunteering personal examples and asking for extra details or clarifications on the stories being told. The interviewer’s reactions are important and invite participants to pursue their retellings (see Tolins & Fox Tree 2014).

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6 Two out of the 58 sessions were conducted via Skype. These are still considered face-to-face interactions since webcams were used. The two participants were close friends of the interviewer.
Despite the researcher’s best attempts to build close rapport with the participant, and despite all the strategies devised to obtain performed narratives, the unfolding of sessions inevitably depended largely on participant personality and variability was inevitable (Wolfson 1982: 72; Tagliamonte 2006: 48). Some participants barely relied on the prompts, volunteering their own stories, while others struggled to recall specific events to share.

Shortcomings are inevitable but the storytelling sessions proved effective in yielding a large number of stories. Every single narrative produced during the participant-researcher exchange was initially extracted. Only narratives displaying tense variation across the sequence of narrative clauses were then included in the UWA Narrative Corpus (see §4.3.3).

Investigating a variant such as the NPP, the researcher is faced with the “residual and almost insoluble problem” of the rarity of many grammatical forms (Labov 1972c: 117). Larger volumes of data than would be needed for phonological variables need to be gathered (Cheshire 1982: 7–8). To address this concern, I expanded the dataset by selecting narratives from two other pre-existing corpora (the UWA Corpus of English in Australia and the Radio Narrative Corpus, see §4.3.3). All additional narratives follow the requirements a-c listed in §4.3.1 (that is, they are Labovian, performed – including tense variation across the narrative clause sequence – and monologic).

### 4.3.3 Corpora and participants

This study is based on the analysis of 331 performed narratives stemming from three corpora:

1. Richard’s (2013–2016) *UWA Narrative Corpus*;
2. Rodríguez Louro’s (under construction) *UWA Corpus of English in Australia*;

For consistency, I only extracted the narratives which most closely fitted the framework of the Labovian narrative (in terms of structure and in terms of the criterion of reportability). All the narratives extracted show some level of performativity as conferred by at least one other feature of performance besides tense switching.
Crucially, they all contain tense variation in narrative progression (see §4.3.1). Details of the compiled dataset, including number of narratives, number of speakers and number of words per corpus, are summarised in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Narratives</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UWA Narrative Corpus</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>87,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UWA Corpus of English in Australia</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio Narrative Corpus</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>331</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>146,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 The dataset used in the current study

**THE UWA NARRATIVE CORPUS**

As explained in §4.3.2, the data for Richard’s (2013–2016) *UWA Narrative Corpus* were collected specifically for the purposes of this study. The traditional sociolinguistic interview was adapted to maximise the elicitation of narratives. Data collection took place in Perth between 2013 and 2016. The final corpus consists of 210 performed narratives (7.5 hours of recorded speech – exclusively narrative discourse) produced by 58 native speakers of AusE (29 males, 29 females), engaged in various occupations, and aged 16 to 69 at the time of recording. The large majority (55/58) were born and raised in Western Australia, specifically in the Perth metropolitan area (47/55). 8

**THE UWA CORPUS OF ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA**

Rodríguez Louro’s (under construction) *UWA Corpus of English in Australia* is a collection of over 300 casual conversations and sociolinguistic interviews recorded with Perth-based speakers between 2011 and 2016. Data were collected for the most part by University of Western Australia (UWA) students, aged 17 to 26, in interaction

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8 The *Radio Narrative Corpus* consists of narratives from anonymous callers as well as various radio presenters. Given the possibility that the same caller/presenter produced more than one radio narrative in the sample, the exact number of speakers involved remains uncertain. Radio presenter Timothy Jonathan Ross (his real name) could be identified as the speaker in three radio narratives. Radio presenter Merrick Watts (his real name) could be identified as the speaker for another three radio narratives. In fact, quite a few other radio narratives (N=18) are clearly produced by some radio presenters, though their identity is unknown. Comedian Judith Lucy (her real name), and TV and radio sports presenter Adrian Barich (his real name), also each produced one narrative.

8 All participants were either born in Australia or arrived in the country before the age of 4. This ensured that all speakers had done their entire schooling in Australia, and could therefore be considered native speakers of AusE. Three speakers spent part of their childhood outside the state of Western Australia. Eight speakers in the sample are originally from Western Australia, but not from metropolitan Perth. These speakers are from Buntine, Dunsborough, Cunderdin, Northam, Busselton, Collie, Albany and Kalgoorlie.
with their friends and family (see Rodríguez Louro 2013: 56–57 for further details). A total of 41 speakers (23 males, 18 females), aged 16 to 81 (born between 1932 and 1996), and from various socio-economic backgrounds were selected. These 41 speakers produced 77 performed narratives that were added to the dataset.

THE RADIO NARRATIVE CORPUS

Engel and Ritz’s (2000–2004) *Radio Narrative Corpus* consists of 86 stories collected between 2000 and 2004 from phone-in talk shows on five Australian radio stations (see Ritz & Engel 2008: 140 for further description). The stories, told by radio presenters and callers alike, encompass ‘danger of death’ stories (see Labov 1972c) and amusing tales. They were originally selected for featuring the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 129) although they naturally include tense variation with the SP and the CHP. Forty-four radio narratives were included in the current dataset, guaranteeing a sufficient number of NPP tokens for the statistical analysis.

The compiled dataset had to be divided into two datasets. The first dataset was used to run multivariate analyses of the social variables constraining the variation. The data were drawn from Richard’s (2013–2016) *UWA Narrative Corpus* and from Rodriguez Louro’s (under construction) *UWA Corpus of English in Australia*. They comprise a total of 287 performed narratives produced by 99 native speakers of AusE (52 males, 47 females), aged 16 to 81 (born between 1932 and 1998), and of various socio-economic backgrounds. All speakers in the sample speak mainstream AusE as their first language. Table 4.2 summarises the participant sample. In this table, individuals are classified into the broad SES categories of ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ based on occupation. The stratification of the sample according to speaker AGE, SEX/GENDER and SES is addressed in detail in §4.6.

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9 One of the radio stations (Triple J) is alternative, aimed at younger people (15–30 years old) from middle class backgrounds, and favours an informal style; the other four radio stations (96FM, 92.9FM, 94.5FM, and Nova) target both working- and middle-class listeners of all ages (Ritz & Engel 2008: 140). The radio programmes from which the data were gathered are informal chat shows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-professional</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Participant sample

The second dataset includes the additional 44 narratives stemming from Engel and Ritz’s (2000–2004) *Radio Narrative Corpus*. It was used to run multivariate analyses of the linguistic variables. As mentioned earlier, the lack of socio-demographic information about the radio speakers precluded the inclusion of the *Radio Narrative Corpus* narratives in the first dataset. Because of this, the data stemming from the *Radio Narrative Corpus* were only used for the analysis of the linguistic constraints operating on the NPP. The source corpora for the two datasets are summarised in Figure 4.1.

![Figure 4.1 Source corpora for the two datasets](image)

The following sections (§4.4 to §4.6) introduce the details of how multivariate analysis was conducted, including relevant exclusions and coding protocols for the linguistic and social variables included in the modelling.

### 4.4 Multivariate analysis

The main goal of this study was to explore the linguistic and social factors that constrain speaker’s choice of tense variants in narrative clauses, specifically those
constraining the use of the NPP. In variationist sociolinguistic studies, quantitative methods are employed to unveil the “detailed correlations” between the variants of a linguistic variable and a number of sociolinguistic factors (Schneider 2007: 10). The best tool to analyse variance across a range of naturalistic data types is multivariate analysis (Sankoff 1988a). This statistical tool assesses the relative strength and significance of independent variables when these are all considered simultaneously. An independent variable (or factor group) is “some aspect of the context (either internal linguistic or external social) which affects whether or not a variant occurs” (Tagliamonte 2006: 104). The use of multivariate analysis prevents a common type of error stemming from univariate analysis where an apparent difference is in fact the result of the uneven distribution of a third variable (Labov 2004b: 7).

In the present research, occurrences of the NPP and occurrences of the CHP are analysed with respect to a set of linguistic factors (§4.5) and social factors (§4.6). Following Poplack and Tagliamonte (2001: 92–93) and Tagliamonte (2002: 731), “three lines of evidence” are used to allow the researcher to arrive at an interpretation of their data:

1. Statistical significance, i.e. which factor groups are statistically significant at the $p=0.05$ level (and at the $p=0.01$ level), and which are not;
2. Magnitude of effect (strength of predictor), i.e. which factor group is most significant (largest range) or least (smallest range);
3. Hierarchy of constraint or direction of effect, i.e. the order (from more to less) of factors within a factor group (Tagliamonte 2012: 122).

### 4.4.1 Fixed-effects and mixed-effects modelling

The data were first subject to fixed-effects logistic regression analysis using GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte & Smith 2005). A mixed-effects model was also fitted to the data using Rbrul (Johnson 2009), an application set within the software environment R (R Development Core Team 2015) and with a Shiny graphical user interface. GoldVarb X and Rbrul identify the predictors that have a significant impact on the use of the variable in question. They also assess the strength of the factor groups selected as significant and the direction of effect. In what follows I explain the differences between the two programmes and reasons for comparing their output.

The Variable Rule (Varbrul) programme (Cedergren & Sankoff 1974; Rousseau
& Sankoff 1978), also known as *GoldVarb* (Rand & Sankoff 1990; Robinson, Lawrence & Tagliamonte 2001) and *GoldVarb X* (Sankoff *et al.* 2005) in its most recent versions, has been the standard statistical toolkit of variationist sociolinguistics. However, it can only implement fixed-effects models. It treats all tokens as if they were independent when in reality groups of tokens are produced by the same individual speaker in the sample. Speakers have idiosyncratic uses and may favour or disfavour a particular linguistic variant “over and above (or ‘under and below’) what their gender, age, social class, etc. would predict” (Johnson 2009: 365). As a result, there is a risk that the statistical significance of social and linguistic factors be overestimated (a Type I error) (Tagliamonte 2012: 141).

One of the advantages of *Rbrul* over *GoldVarb X* is that it allows the computation of mixed-effects models; that is, the concurrent modelling of fixed effects and random effects (Baayen 2008: 241; Johnson 2009: 365). *Rbrul* thereby allows the researcher to gauge how individual speakers contribute to the variation as well as how specific lexical items might impact the results. The researcher can include as many tokens as possible per individual speaker, thus increasing statistical power (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012: 158). Since they account for random effects, mixed-effects models are more statistically robust. The factor groups that get selected as significant are significant beyond the effect of individual speakers or specific lexemes. With the inclusion of speaker as a random effect, mixed-effects models enable variation analysis both at the level of the individual and at the level of the speech community (Drager & Hay 2012: 60). 10

Another advantage of *Rbrul* is that it offers the flexibility to adjust the threshold for factor group significance. In *GoldVarb X*, the threshold is established at the $p=0.05$ level and cannot be modified. Yet, an adjustment is recommended in situations where many predictors are included in the model and the risk of Type I error is greater. With *Rbrul*, the analyst can use the Bonferroni correction – an adjustment of the $p$ values when several statistical tests are run concurrently on a dataset. For example, lowering the threshold down to the $p=0.01$ level for each of five predictors tested maintains the overall error rate at 0.05 (Johnson 2009: 363). The risk of obtaining false-positive results (Type I errors) is thus reduced.

One last advantage of *Rbrul* over *GoldVarb X* is that it can handle continuous

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10 See, however, Tagliamonte and D’Arcy (2017) who argue that a random effect for speaker need not be included provided that “judicious prestatistical foundations (sample design, Ns per speaker, representativeness of the community, etc.)” are in place.
variables (Johnson 2009: 362). The analyst is not compelled to convert continuous variables into categorical ones and impose pre-established categories on the data. For instance, speakers need not be categorised into discrete age cohorts. Instead, speaker year of birth can be included in the model directly. The programme then reports the effects of the continuous variable in log-odds units. It determines, for each ‘additional’ year, the increase or decrease in likelihood of the response.

Despite its advantages, the Rbrul programme has two main pitfalls. First, it is a much more conservative programme than GoldVarb X, to the point that it is more subject to Type II errors: it might fail to identify a statistically significant effect which does operate on the variable (Johnson 2009: 365). Johnson (2009: 369) argues that Rbrul’s p values are nonetheless more accurate than those obtained with GoldVarb X and that the higher rate of Type II errors ensues “from the more realistic Type I rate”. The second drawback with Rbrul is that the analyst cannot exclude a token from the analysis of a specific factor group while still including it in the analysis of all other factor groups tested. For example, each token in the present study is coded for the factor group TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE. When a token is the first in the sequence of narrative clauses, it cannot be coded for this particular factor group. However, it can still be coded for all other predictors (POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES, QUOTATIVE CONTEXT, GRAMMATICAL PERSON, TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION). GoldVarb X is able to exclude the tokens for which tense in the preceding narrative clause is not applicable, while keeping those tokens in for the other factor groups tested. This cannot be implemented in Rbrul. Such tokens are either excluded from the entire analysis (at the risk of dramatically reducing the token count and affecting the results), or they must be left in (the statistical model computed then being more complex).

The two programmes are used in tandem in the current study to obtain the most accurate results. Rbrul is preferred as it allows mixed-effects modelling with the inclusion of individual speaker as a random effect and because it reduces the risk of Type I errors. It is also useful to include speaker AGE as a continuous rather than a categorical variable. GoldVarb X is used to enable comparison with previous research on tense variation in narrative. It allows the analyst to ensure that significant effects have not been ‘missed’ by Rbrul (Type II errors). It affords comparison with Rbrul runs for which all tokens need to be included (even non-applicable ones), while GoldVarb X can exclude those tokens from individual factor groups.
4.4.2 Data extraction and exclusions

All narrative clauses in the dataset were manually extracted. The narrative head of each narrative clause was coded for tense. In (1), for instance, the narrative clause *And um my sister said to my mum, “Oh Caleb’s struggling in the pool.”* was extracted and its narrative head (*said*) was coded as SP. In line with Labov’s principle of accountability (Labov 1972c: 72), I also initially extracted all narrative clauses whose verbal predicate was elided, as shown in the bolded elements in (2). In this example, the narrator – a nurse – calls the hospital where she works.

CRAZY NIGHT OUT

(2)  
[…] I called them up at about eleven o’clock or so and said, “Look I really am feeling much better, and if you’re short-staffed, would you like me to come in now?” Ø “No no, no, no. Don’t worry about it. You can do the evening shift.” <SOUND OF DESPAIR> <CLAPS HANDS> I was so mad with myself for doing that. Ø “Just come in at one o’clock and you can work ‘til nine thirty.” Well you know how badly you feel come evening again when you haven’t had a good night the night before. […] (Female, 53, registered nurse)

The *zero* quotative (Mathis & Yule 1994) represents all examples of elided predicates to the exception of one, reproduced in (3).

(3)  
[…] So I bought a cake the other day and he says, “Oh if you’d like, if there’s any muffins left over, I’ll bring them over.” [mm] <LIP SMACK> I went, “Oh, that’s very nice.” So over he comes at about three o’clock and brings them. [mm] <LIP SMACK> And he came into the house and he’s nice enough. [mm] And off he went. And then next day, again, Ø the muffins. […] (Female, 50, piano teacher)

In (3), the predicate is retrievable from context (*he brought* the muffins *over*). However, the absence of an explicit verbal predicate precluded the inclusion of all those narrative clauses in the statistical analyses (see Chapter 5).

A number of other forms were excluded from the modelling. Singletons, such as a unique token of the future in the data (example (4)) had to be excluded.
(4) And they’re like- then they had- then they’ll say, “Oh what are you gonna do with this stuff?” (Male, 27, consulting manager)

Non-standard forms, as in (5) which exemplifies non-standard agreement between the grammatical subject and the verb, were excluded.

(5) I says, “There’s no key here I think.” (Female, 51, homemaker)

Excluded from analysis due to their structural ambiguity were non-canonical forms, as in examples (6) to (8).

(6) And I’ve ran inside to get away from everyone. (Male, 33, glazier)

(7) And he going, “Yeah, yeah. It’s all turned off. There’s nothing turned on.” (Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)

(8) And the car done like a five-forty spin. (Male, 33, chef)

Also excluded were instances where the verb form was ambiguous between a SP and a past participle (see Ritz & Richard forthcoming), as shown in (9).

(9) And I was like, “I- I like this shower bit. But I like the fact that there’s a party on. And I wanna be part of the party as well as ((staying here)).” So I’ve just opened up the door and tried to get people to come in and talk to me. (Male, 27, electrician)

In (9), the form tried could be analysed as the past participle of the verb try with elision of the perfect auxiliary (’ve) or as the SP of the verb try – in which case the auxiliary does not have scope over the coordinated conjunct.

False starts, as in (10), were excluded from the analysis.

(10) Took my friend- dropped my friend off at her house which was just a few
hundred meters down the road. (Female, 49, teacher)

Also excluded were clauses headed by epistemic/evidential phrases such as *I think* or *I remember*, as shown in (11). These phrases refer to the speaker-now (not the story-now) (Fleischman 1990: 167). They express speaker stance on the narrative events (Rodriguez Louro & Harris 2013; Rodriguez Louro 2015), but do not constitute the narrative line of events per se. Semantically, only the events embedded within the clause belong in the narrative line.

(11) *I remember* seeing him through the screen door, throwing axes and shovels at the snake. (Male, 35, environmental scientist consultant)

All modal verbs, as in example (12), were excluded since they can only inflect in the Present or SP.

(12) And then you **could see** she was getting a bit teary about it. (Female, 34, senior investigator)

Tokens of the semi-modal *have to* were also excluded since the lexeme is near-categorically encoded in the SP (94% [83/88]). This is exemplified in (13).

(13) And mum **had to** drive me three hours to the hospital. (Female, 25, dental assistant)

Impersonal constructions – appearing with or without an expletive subject – were excluded. Example (14) illustrates the case of impersonal constructions with the verb *turn out*.

(14) **Turned out** he had a Spiderman outfit underneath his pants. (Female, 39, retail manager/proprietor)

Subordinate clauses were excluded following Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) and Labov’s (1997) contention that subordinate clauses are not relevant to the temporal progression of the narrative: “One can quote any number of examples to show that any subordinate clause is removed from the temporal sequence of narrative, even if it retains
its own temporal reference” (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 21). Moreover, subordinate clauses are not considered narrative clauses since they do not enter into temporal juncture (Schiffrin 1981: 52).\(^{11}\) Consider (15):

(15) So I’ve gone in, **come back** out the door, and as I’ve **come back** out the door I’ve done this Oscar-winning fake, “Oh, I’ve tripped” as I’ve opened the thing.

(Male, 36, chef)

In (15), the event of ‘coming back’ is first encoded in the main conjoined clause *come back out the door* (with subject-auxiliary ellipsis) and introduces temporal progression. It is then reintroduced in the subordinate clause as *I’ve come back out the door*, but here it does not move the narrative forward. It is old information at that point in the story. It serves as background information and provides a landmark (see §6.3.2) for the subsequent event: *I’ve done this Oscar-winning fake [...]*. Non-standard uses of the PP occurring outside the sequence of narrative clauses are dealt with in §6.1.3.

In quotative contexts, speakers may report “outwardly realized verbal action, speech” or “inward, mental activity, such as thoughts, attitudes, or points of view” (Buchstaller 2008: 24). While clauses introducing reported speech are a part of the primary sequence of narrative (Labov & Waletzky 1967: 31), in this thesis, clauses encoding speaker thought or attitude are not considered narrative clauses. They arguably do not move the narrative forward. They are evaluation clauses that permeate the telling of the actual main storyline, as illustrated in (16). Thought-encoding quotatives such as *think* and *be like* were therefore excluded.\(^{12}\)

(16) […] So then I’m **thinking**, “Ok. The only chance is, I’ve gotta get it out the back door.” [mm] 'Cause I can’t stay with this rat in the house. [Yeah no. <LAUGHTER>] Oh god it was terrifying. It wasn’t terrifying. I’ve done scarier things than had a rat in the house. So anyhow, I went and open the blind to the back door. It went running for the back door but I couldn’t get it open in time 'cause it got near me and then I had to run away again 'cause I thought it was gonna crawl up my leg or something <LAUGHTER>[…] And

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\(^{11}\) See, however, Couper-Kuhlen (1989a: 9) on situations related in subordinate temporal clauses that do move the story forward in time.

\(^{12}\) Speech-encoding quotative *be like* tokens (see example (8) in Chapter 3, The Grand Canyons story) were, however, included in the analysis.
in the end I **thought**, “I can’t stay up all night. I need some sleep.” […] (Female, 54, remedial massage and stretch therapist)

In (16), the narrator shares with the listener what she contemplated doing to deal with the situation, namely *get it out the back door*. However, there is a discrepancy between her idea and what ends up happening. As she continues to narrate the events, she explains that she did not in fact manage to open the back door in time. While I agree that there is progression in the evaluation of events by the narrator, this progression occurs in parallel to the progression of the events that constitute the main storyline. The narrator’s thinking, reflection, and reactions evolve as events unfold. However, these could be removed from the story without affecting the referential function of the narrative. Moreover, the tense/aspect variants in evaluation clauses differ from those found in narrative clauses (especially with regard to the simple vs. progressive aspect distinction). The envelope of variation would comprise different forms. In narrative, the lexical verb *think* used in the Simple Present necessarily refers to speech time. It will automatically be interpreted as epistemic *think*. Only if used in the CHP progressive can the verb *think* be understood as referring to the story-now. There is no such constraint when *think* is used in the past – it may appear in the SP (*and I thought*) or the past progressive (*I was thinking*). The envelope of variation for evaluation clauses differs from that delimited for narrative clauses, with the progressive aspect featuring more frequently. Finally, not all quotative verbs are able to encode the speaker’s internal thought. Quotative *say*, for example, can only be used as a *verbum dicendi* for reported speech. All quotative *think* tokens were therefore excluded since they head evaluation clauses rather than narrative clauses. All quotative *be like* tokens introducing internal thought rather than speech in constructed dialogue (see Romaine & Lange 1991: 227) were excluded, as in (17) and (18).

(17) **I’m like**, you know, “This is starting to get scary you folks!” (Female, 66, clerk)

(18) And it **was like**, “Oh my god, do I sound like that?!?” <LAUGHTER> (Female, 52, accountant)
In line with Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999: 156–157), Tagliamonte and D’Arcy (2004: 499) and Buchstaller (2011: 76), I relied on the broader narrative context in which the quote appeared and on intonational cues to evaluate the content of the quote. Thoughts, attitudes and general feelings referring to mental activities constitute internal dialogue and were excluded from the analysis. On the other hand, I included quotes that introduce direct speech; that is, quotes that advance the storyline or are followed by a response from another protagonist (D’Arcy 2004: 330). In some contexts, distinguishing reported speech from reported thought/attitude is difficult, if not impossible (Ferrara & Bell 1995: 279). This is especially the case with quotative be like which functions both as a speech and thought introducer (Romaine & Lange 1991: 263). Ambiguous examples where content of the quote could not clearly be established as either speech or thought were excluded, as in (19).

(19) It was so sweet he- the [<LAUGHTER>] guy came over with a- e- a tall glass of iced water and a single cigarette [Aw!] and a box of matches. And I was like, “Dude! You’re a legend.” (Male, 30, university student)

Each token retained for analysis was coded for a number of independent variables posited to affect tense choice. The linguistic variables are presented in §4.5; the social variables in §4.6. Multivariate analysis was then used to measure the significance, strength and ranking of the social and linguistic factors on the different tense variants appearing in narrative clauses, and the constraints operating on the NPP in particular (see Chapter 5).

4.5 Linguistic variables

Following Levey (2006) and Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014), each token was coded for a number of linguistic factors that have been found to impact tense variation in narrative. These include:

- The position of the form in the sequence of narrative clauses.
- The tense used in the preceding narrative clause.
- The grammatical person of each verb form.
- The presence or absence of temporal disambiguation.
• The occurrence of the form in quotative versus non-quotative contexts, and, in the case of quotative context, the quotative verb used (e.g. say, be like).\textsuperscript{13}

4.5.1 Position in sequence of narrative clauses

First, I coded for the position of the tense form in the sequence of narrative clauses. If a tense form heads the first narrative clause in a narrative it is coded as sequence initial; if it heads the last narrative clause of the sequence it is coded as final. The tense forms heading all other narrative clauses are coded as medial. Coding for the position of the form in the sequence of narrative clauses will reveal interactions between tense switching and discourse structure. Previous studies have shown that tense variation can serve as a text-marking device in narratives (see Wolfson 1979: 178; Ritz 2010: 3410), and that there are some specific patterns to tense switching – the SP usually initiates and ends the sequence of narrative clauses, while the CHP and the NPP are concentrated at the heart of the sequence, in medial position (see Levey 2006: 141).

4.5.2 Tense in preceding narrative clause

I coded for the tense form of the verb used in the preceding narrative clause. This is to account for the priming or clustering effect, also referred to as ‘persistence’, reported for different linguistic variants (see Sankoff & Laberge 1978 on the tu/vous alternation in French; Weiner & Labov 1983 on the passive in English; Scherre & Naro 1991 on plural marking on verbs or predicate adjectives in Brazilian Portuguese; Tamminga & Ecay 2013 on Middle English negation). In particular, previous research has reported a priming effect with tense forms in narrative (see §3.3.1). Priming implies that the choice of tense is impacted by the tense used in a prior narrative clause. The effect results in a clustering of verbs in the same tense in successive clauses (see Tagliamonte & Poplack 1988: 521). If speakers have a preference for constructions recently used in the discourse, then tense variation across the sequence of narrative clauses is unexpected. A switch from one tense variant to another suggests a break in the sequence. The narrator is marking the new event in the sequence by departing from the ‘tense-used-so-far’ and signals to the hearer that it is of particular importance. The

\textsuperscript{13} I use the distinction between ‘quotative contexts’ and ‘non-quotative contexts’ following Levey (2006) where the term ‘quotative contexts’ refers to the quotative frames or verba dicendi, not the content of the quotes. Tense variation within quotes falls outside the envelope of variation defined in the present study.
effect of continued versus discontinued use of tense forms is analysed further in Chapter 6 (§6.5.2) and Chapter 7 (§7.3.4).

Each verb form in non-initial position was coded with regard to the tense form used in the previous narrative clause. It was not possible to code for TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE in the following cases:

1. There was no preceding narrative clause since the narrative clause at stake was the first in the sequence.
2. The preceding narrative clause was headed by the zero quotative (see example (2)).
3. The preceding narrative clause was headed by a form ambiguous between a SP and a past participle form (see tried in example (9)).
4. The preceding narrative clause was headed by a non-canonical form (see I’ve ran in example (5)).

These were excluded altogether in GoldVarb X while they were labelled ‘not applicable’ in Rbrul.

4.5.3 Grammatical person

I coded for the grammatical person of the subject associated with each verb form to assess its potential impact on tense variation. A tendency has been reported for the (standard) PP to collocate with first person subjects, while the SP tends to appear with third person subjects (Elsness 1997: 342). Tense switching has also been shown to help ‘track’ protagonists in narratives (Fleischman 1990: 81). A tense contrast is expected between the forms used with the first person (and referring to the narrator), and the forms used with the third person (and referring to third parties in the story). Rodriguez Louro and Ritz (2014: 559–560) attribute the person-tense switch to discourse organisation principles: first person subjects introduce what is deemed known information, whereas third person subjects introduce new information (see Chafe 1994).

4.5.4 Temporal disambiguation

The next linguistic factor coded for was temporal disambiguation; that is, the presence or absence of temporal adverbials in the narrative clause, and the type of
temporal adverbials found. When the narrative clause was modified by a temporal adverbial, I distinguished between:

- Temporal adverb *then* expressing progression
- Temporal adverbials expressing progression (e.g. *about ten minutes later*) or past temporal location (e.g. *last night*)
- Combinations of *then* with another temporal adverbial (e.g. *then later on, then in the morning*)

It is hypothesised that the presence of a definite past temporal adverbial is more likely to inhibit the use of the PP given the constraint that the English PP cannot be modified by such temporal adverbials (see Comrie 1976: 54; Klein 1992: 526; Bybee et al. 1994: 61–62). Moreover, the PP is unexpected with adverbials expressing temporal progression since the form is purportedly unable to occur in narrative sequencing. The PP is canonically viewed as incapable of encoding discrete past events (Bybee et al. 1994: 54).

### 4.5.6 Quotative context

Finally, the verb heading the narrative clause was coded as occurring in quotative or non-quotative contexts. This coding decision was motivated by the lexical effect of quotative verbs on tense usage noted in previous research: quotative *go* has been shown to attract the use of the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 136; Levey 2006: 140); quotative *be like* is strongly associated with the CHP (Blyth et al. 1990; Ferrara & Bell 1995; Singler 2001; Winter 2002; Tagliamonte & D’Arcy 2007: 209; Rodríguez Louro 2013; Buchstaller 2014).

I first distinguished between quotative and non-quotative contexts, and further coded for lexical verb type. As there is a limited set of verb types in quotative contexts, QUOTATIVE VERB was included in the statistical analysis. The multiplicity of lexical heads in non-quotative contexts precluded their inclusion as individual factors. However, given the nature of narrative clauses, these predicates are for the most part activities or accomplishments (see Ritz & Engel 2008: 132).

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14 Lexical verbs in non-quotative contexts could be included as random effects in future statistical analyses in order to assess potential lexical effects.
Linguistic factors only account for part of the linguistic variation observed. I now turn to the social factors that reflect the significance of the variation within the speech community.

4.6 Social variables

Language is “quintessentially a social product and a social tool” (Guy 2011: 160) and, because of this, linguistic variation and change can only be fully understood if one observes and accounts for the social backdrop in which the variation occurs (Labov 2010: 293). In this study, attention was paid to the structure of the AusE speech community. The speech community is, in Labov’s terms, “a highly structured object” (Labov 2006b: 130). Three social variables – AGE, SEX/GENDER and SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) – were investigated to reflect the structure of the community. The social meaning of the variation was measured by correlations with those three indicators (Chambers 2009: 7). The factors of AGE, SEX/GENDER and SES have proved relevant in explaining language variation and change in canonical sociolinguistic studies (Labov 1963, 1966b; Trudgill 1974, *inter alia*), and have been modelled in previous LVC research on tense variation and narratives (e.g. Levey 2006; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014) thus affording comparability of results.

4.6.1 Age

AGE is central to variationist sociolinguistic studies: the way a (dependent) variable patterns according to speaker AGE is symptomatic of four possible scenarios in the community (see Table 4.3), including change in progress.

The results obtained after running a variationist analysis of a sociolinguistic variable across speaker AGE produce two possible curves: either a ‘flat’ pattern, i.e. there is no age differentiation; or a monotonic slope which displays a rise in occurrence of the incoming variable from older to younger speakers. For each of these two curves, there are two possible interpretations (Sankoff 2005: 1004). These are summarised in Table 4.3.
111

A lack of age differentiation may signal that there is no undergoing change: both the individual speakers and the community at large are stable with regard to the sociolinguistic variable. A ‘flat’ pattern, however, may also result from communal change, i.e. all the speakers in the community are changing together and at the same rate. A monotonic slope across speaker age may be representative of two different situations. Firstly, it may mean that the community as a whole remains stable over time but that individual cohorts of speakers, as they get older, display a steadily increasing (or decreasing) use of one variant of the variable. This layering of forms associated with different stages of a speaker’s life has been called age-grading. These are “stable patterns that are repeated in each generation; speakers begin to use the form around a certain age and eventually abandon it as they grow older” (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 36). Alternatively, the monotonic slope with age may be signalling a generational change or ‘change in progress’. Younger generations in the community display an increasing use of the innovative variant while older speakers use it less.

The AusE NPP as used in storytelling may constitute an instance of change in progress. To test this hypothesis empirically, speakers of different generations need to be considered. In the absence of real time (i.e. diachronic) data, investigators can rely on the apparent-time construct.15 Apparent time is defined as the measurement of the apparent passage of time “by studying the differences between the linguistic behavior of successive age levels” (Labov 2006b: 200); that is, by comparing speakers of different ages within a single speech community at a single point in time. A linguistic change can

---

15 The apparent-time construct is built on the assumption that the vernacular of an individual reaches “a critical threshold of constancy” (Tagliamonte & D’Arcy 2009: 63) after which it remains relatively stable across the individual’s lifespan (Bailey 2002: 320). Though relying on synchronic rather than diachronic data, the apparent-time construct has been established as a fairly accurate tool to model linguistic change (Bailey, Wikle & Sand 1991; Tillery & Bailey 2003; Sankoff 2004: 137).
be inferred if there is a difference in linguistic behaviour between younger and older
speakers, though “the study of apparent time must be refined to distinguish the effects
of linguistic change from the invariant effects of ageing [age-grading] and from the
modifying effects of the present situation upon older speakers (Labov 2006b: 201). As
advised by Labov (1972b: 275), it is preferable to use real time data whenever possible
or to obtain “at least one measurement at some contrasting point in real time” because
age stratification is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for change in progress
(Guy et al. 1986: 30). One of the risks of the apparent-time approach is to misconceive
age-grading for a change in progress or to miss out on communal change. The difficulty
lies in distinguishing variable data of suspected change in progress from stable
sociolinguistic variables (Labov 1994: 74).

In the present research, three age cohorts were considered: 16–29 year olds, 30–
49 year olds, and ≥ 50 year olds. The cohorts were established based on Labov (2001b:
101) and roughly represent life stages in modern Australian society:

1. Orientation to the wider world of work and/or college/university; beginning of
regular employment and family life (16–29 year olds).
2. Full engagement in the work force and family responsibilities (30–49 year olds).
3. End of career and retirement (≥ 50 year olds).

Table 4.4 presents the stratification of the 99 speakers in the sample according to AGE
and SEX/GENDER. The social factor of SEX/GENDER is discussed in the following section
(§4.6.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Sample stratification by AGE and SEX/GENDER

Ash (2002: 414) argues that age cohorts are more significant “to the determination of
linguistic behavior” than chronological age since they are based on “a composite of
factors relating to the life stage and social identity of an individual”. However, this is
problematic to the extent that the researcher imposes their analysis of generations on a
given society. To ensure the reliability of findings, the current research treats AGE as a categorical variable (establishing three age cohorts), but also models this social factor as a continuous variable, relying on speaker year of birth. Results will shed light on the nature of the NPP in AusE, suggesting whether the form reflects a change in progress (its usage increases among younger generations of speakers) or stable sociolinguistic variation (its usage is stable across age cohorts).

4.6.2 Sex/gender

A second social factor relevant to LVC studies is SEX/GENDER. This factor has been shown to differentiate language use in both cases of stable social stratification and change in progress (Labov 2001b: 262).

Labov (1990) contends that three general principles govern the role of sex/gender in language change. The first principle, Principle I, states that men show a higher frequency of non-standard forms than women regarding stable sociolinguistic variables (i.e. those not involved in change) (Labov 2001b: 266). Women prefer standard language in the case of stable variables. This tendency on the part of women has received several interpretations, notably “the idea that women are more aware of what is proscribed and therefore avoid it more than men” (Meyerhoff 2011: 219). In a similar vein, Principle Ia states that, in change from above (i.e. change which takes place above the level of consciousness), women adopt the incoming prestige form more than men (Labov 2001b: 274). However, the role of women differs in changes below the level of conscious awareness. This is Labov’s (1990: 93) Principle II: in change in progress from below, women are most often the innovators, i.e. they statistically use more of the incoming variant than men. In other words, they lead linguistic change. This gives rise to a ‘Gender Paradox’ (Labov 2001b: 292) whereby “women conform more closely than men to sociolinguistic norms that are overtly prescribed, but conform less than men when they are not” (Labov 2001b: 293). However, women are not always in the vanguard of linguistic change; cases of male-led innovations have been documented (Nevalainen 2000: 50; Conn 2002). In her study of the quotative system of AusE, Rodríguez Louro (2013: 66) finds a favouring effect of males on be like usage in the 18–26 age group and notes a constant increase in be like usage by Australian male speakers across age cohorts, from 22% to 50% to 89.7% (Rodríguez Louro 2013: 70). Rodríguez Louro’s findings show that young males are crucially also implicated in language change, and support Tagliamonte and D’Arcy’s (2009: 98) contention that
“men are full participants in incrementation; they simply do so, all other things being equal, at a slower rate than women do”.

The NPP is a non-standard feature in AusE narratives, stigmatised by some speakers (see Ellis 2012). It is hypothesised that, if the NPP is a case of stable variation in the speech community, then male speakers will use the form more frequently than their female counterparts (see Principle I). However, if the NPP constitutes an example of change in progress from below, then women are expected to use the incoming variant more than men (see Principle II).

4.6.3 Socio-economic status

The third social variable investigated is speakers’ SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES).

Bankers clearly do not talk the same as busboys, and professors don’t sound like plumbers. They signal the social differences between them by features of their phonology, grammar, and lexical choice, just as they do extralinguistically by their choices in clothing, cars, and so on. (Guy 2011: 159)

The impact of SES on linguistic variation has been demonstrated in numerous LVC studies (Labov 1966b; Cedergren 1973; Trudgill 1974; Labov 2001b). Specifically, previous research has uncovered the role of the ‘interior’ social groups (the lower middle and upper working classes) as linguistic innovators (Labov 2006b: 129–170). When plotted on a graph (see Figure 4.2), this creates a ‘curvilinear pattern’ (Labov 1980: 254; 2006b: 142) with speakers from the ‘exterior’ classes displaying a low frequency of use of the innovative form, and members of the ‘interior’ classes favouring incoming variants at a markedly higher rate.
This observation differs for stable sociolinguistic variables. These display a monotonic alignment with social classes such that the frequency of use of prestige variants increases the higher the status of a speaker is on the socio-economic hierarchy. On the other hand, the frequency of use of stigmatised variants increases as the SES of speakers ranks lower on the social scale (Labov 1990: 220).16

The potential effect of SES on linguistic variation and its inclusion in a quantitative analysis therefore “goes unchallenged” (Dodsworth 2009: 1314). However, establishing speaker SES is a complex matter. There is no ‘natural’ way to do so (Kerswill 2009: 362), and various treatments of this social variable have been offered. Canonical research has often modelled social class based on a combination of parameters, with occupation at the core. In the Philadelphia study, Labov (2001b) creates a socio-economic index based on education, occupation, and residence value, as well as house upkeep and social mobility. Speakers are then grouped into six distinct social classes: Lower Working Class, Middle Working Class, Upper Working Class, Lower Middle Class, Upper Middle Class, and Upper Class (Labov 2001b: 166). Lennig (1978) uses occupation alone in his study of variation and change in the vowel system in Parisian French. For their quantitative study of Australian Questioning Intonation (AQI) in Sydney, Guy et al. (1986: 33) also operationalise social class based on occupation. They follow Congalton’s (1963, 1969) classification of occupational status in Australia and establish a lower working, upper working, and middle class.

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16 Labov (2001b: 460) revises the curvilinear hypothesis specifying that the observation applies to adult speakers only. Adolescent speakers show higher rates of stigmatised variants both in situations of stable variation and change in progress.
Reliance on occupation alone to conceptualise social class is based on the finding that “If social class is determined by a combination of features, the single indicator that accounts for by far the greatest portion of the variance is occupation” (Ash 2002: 419). However, Labov (2001b: 58–66) compares the combined socio-economic index used in his Philadelphia study with the individual components of occupation, education, and house value, and finds that the combined index outperforms any of the individual class indicators – though occupation alone is indeed the best predictor of linguistic variation when indicators are investigated separately.

Following Guy et al. (1986), the present study relies on speaker occupation as a proxy for speaker SES. Five occupational categories are established based on previous research. Speakers are then grouped into the broad categories of professional and non-professional (see Docherty, Hay & Walker 2006: 378) for the statistical analysis. Given the complexity of establishing speaker SES, the individual components of speaker occupation, parental occupation, and education, as well as a combined SES index based on speaker occupation and education are modelled and compared (see §5.3.2). The socio-economic indicators of occupation (including speaker occupation and parental occupation) and educational level are described in what follows.

**SPEAKER OCCUPATION**

Previous studies have offered classifications of occupations in Australia based on social standing. In a study conducted at the University of Western Australia, Taft (1953) establishes the social standing of twenty occupations as evaluated by members of the Australian community. In a questionnaire, participants were asked to rank occupations on a five-point scale: ‘very high social standing’, ‘high social standing’, ‘neither high nor low social standing’, ‘low social standing’, and ‘very low social standing’. The results are presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5 Ranking of 20 occupations according to social standing in Australia, minimum value is 1; maximum value is 5 (reproduced from Taft 1953: 183)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Average Rating by Total Sample</th>
<th>Rank Order for Total Sample (N=277)</th>
<th>Rank Order for Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mining Youth (48)</td>
<td>Urban Youth (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineer</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Announcer</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policeman</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Foreman</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitter and Turner</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postman</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Assistant</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Miner</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Worker</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Worker</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Conductor</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Sweeper</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congalton (1962) investigates the ranking of occupations in Australia in terms of their social standing, surveying a random sample of 303 Sydney citizens. In a follow-up nationwide study, Congalton (1963) surveys 1,189 university students across Australia, including 324 participants from Perth (27% of the entire Australian sample). Participants ranked 134 occupations according to the social standing they conferred to these. Participants were asked to use a seven-point ranking; a score of 1 was attributed to occupations with the highest social status, and a score of 7 to occupations with the lowest social status. The seven groups compiled by Congalton (1963) are labelled as follows:

1. Professionals;
2. Proprietors and managers;
3. Office and sales workers;
4. Farmers;
5. Skilled workers;
6. Semi-skilled workers;
7. Unskilled workers.
Results align with Taft’s (1953) previous findings, and the rank order of occupations holds across Australian states (Congalton 1963: 41). Both a seven-point scale of occupational status, and a four-point scale (graded from A to D and computed from the seven-point scale), are presented in Congalton (1969: 143–158). Daniel (1983: 196–206) offers a prestige scale of 1100 occupations in Australia, updating and expanding Congalton’s research. McGregor (1997: 247–248) offers a simplified version of the occupational prestige scale and stresses the “fair amount of consensus among the people surveyed about the prestige which they believe attached to particular occupations”. Based on occupation, he distinguishes three class groups:

*upper class*, made up largely of owners, employing groups, large landholders, financiers, entrepreneurs, and some self-employed people, managers and professionals; *middle class*, largely white-collar workers, typical members being clerks, salespeople, teachers, bank tellers, affluent tradespeople; *working class*, made up largely of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled blue-collars, labourers, bush workers, factory hands, and those in manual work. (McGregor 1997: 26–27)

These studies are based on Parkin’s (1972: 18) axiom that “the backbone of the class structure and indeed of the entire reward system of modern western society is the occupational order”. They offer a useful starting point to operate a classification of occupations in Australia but they are out of date. Structural changes have affected the Australian labour market, notably “widespread industry and award restructuring, technological change and competency-based approaches to career entry and progression” (McLennan 1997: v). Crucially, there has been a shift from production industries to service industries resulting in an increase of ‘white-collar’ jobs and a decrease in ‘blue-collar’ occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012: 5). The most recent classification of occupations in Australia is McLennan’s (1997) Second Edition of the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO)*. Nine major groups are established based on the skill level (formal education and/or training as well as previous experience) required for each set of occupations (McLennan 1997: 8):

1. Managers and Administrators;
2. Professionals;
3. Associate Professionals;
4. Tradespersons and Related Workers;
5. Advanced Clerical and Service Workers;
6. Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers;
7. Intermediate Production and Transport Workers;
8. Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers;
9. Labourers and Related Workers.

For the purposes of sociolinguistic analysis, various researchers have adopted different classifications. Mitchell and Delbridge (1965) rely on the following occupational categories:

1. Professionals;
2. Proprietors, managers, administrators and executives;
3. Owners of small businesses;
4. Rural workers;
5. Other white-collar workers;
6. Skilled manual workers;
7. Semi-skilled manual workers;
8. Unskilled workers.

Horvath (1985) and Guy et al. (1986) use occupation alone as an indicator of socio-economic status and, based on Congalton (1969), categorise speakers into one of three classes: Middle Class (i.e. professionals and skilled workers such as accountants, real estate agents and pharmacists), Upper Working Class (i.e. less skilled workers such as flight attendants, builders, chefs and salespersons), and Lower Working Class (i.e. unskilled workers such as truck drivers and factory workers) (Ash 2002: 411).

Based on the various classifications offered above, five occupational categories were established in the present study, as follows:
A. Managers, proprietors & professionals
   (e.g. engineer, school principal, psychologist, lawyer)

B. Associate professionals
   (e.g. nurse, teacher, accountant, small business owner)

C. Other white-collar workers
   (e.g. learning skills adviser, finance broker, sports officer)

D. Skilled manual, clerical & service workers
   (e.g. electrician, clerk, salesperson, sports instructor)

E. Semi-skilled/unskilled manual, clerical & service workers
   (e.g. truck driver, factory worker, wait staff, teacher aide)

In line with Mitchell and Delbridge (1965), Congalton (1963), and McLennan’s (1997) ASCO classification, the first occupational category consists of ‘professionals’, ‘proprietors, managers, administrators and executives’. It corresponds to McGregor’s (1997) ‘upper class’. Occupational categories B and C regroup mostly white-collar workers and approximate McGregor’s (1997: 26–27) ‘middle class’. Following Mitchell and Delbridge (1965), and McLennan’s (1997) ASCO classification, I distinguish ‘associate professionals’, including ‘owners of small businesses’ [Category B] from ‘other white-collar workers’ [Category C]. Associate professionals are closer to professionals, engaged in occupations that require a varied skillset and that are considered more prestigious than those of other white-collar workers. The last two occupational categories, D and E, consist of ‘working class’ individuals – for the most part, blue-collar workers (McGregor 1997: 26–27). The distinction between categories D and E is based on the distinction established by Congalton (1963) and Mitchell and Delbridge (1965) between skilled manual workers on the one hand, and semi-skilled or unskilled workers on the other.

Speakers in the sample were given a score according to their occupational category. These scores were used to establish each speaker’s SES index (see §5.3.2). Speakers engaged in category A occupations were given a score of 4. Those engaged in category B occupations were given a score of 3, while those engaged in category C occupations were given a score of 2. Finally, speakers engaged in category D and category E occupations were given a score of 1 and 0 respectively. A summary is offered in Table 4.6.
Occupational category & Score
A. Managers, proprietors & professionals & 4
B. Associate professionals & 3
C. Other white-collar workers & 2
D. Skilled manual, clerical & service workers & 1
E. Semi-skilled/unskilled manual, clerical & service workers & 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational category</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Managers, proprietors &amp; professionals</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Associate professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Other white-collar workers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Skilled manual, clerical &amp; service workers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Semi-skilled/unskilled manual, clerical &amp; service workers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Occupational category score

Parental occupation was used as a proxy for secondary school students (see, for e.g., Maclagan, Gordon & Lewis 1999: 22). University students were given a score of 4 because of their occupational aspirations and the type of occupations they eventually tend to work in (see Carroll 2015: 5), while TAFE students were given a score of 1 (see Marks 2008: ix, 28). It is difficult to ascertain whether home duties can be considered an occupation, given its unpaid nature. Some research on occupational status and prestige in Australia has included it but ratings differ: ‘house parent’ scores 5.3/7 in Daniel (1983: 200), whereas ‘housewife’ scores 4.6/7 in McGregor (1997: 248). In this study, managing a household was not considered an occupation. For the three homemakers in the sample, either parental or partner’s occupation (as available to the researcher) was used as a proxy.

Speakers engaged in occupations of the categories A, B and C (score ≥ 2) were collapsed into a single category labelled ‘professionals’ (encompassing roughly upper and middle class individuals), while speakers engaged in occupations of the categories D and E (score ≤ 1) were collapsed into the category ‘non-professionals’.

Parental occupation
The classification and score systems outlined above for speaker occupation were similarly applied to parental occupation.

Education
Besides speaker occupation, previous sociolinguistic research has often included education as an indicator of social status (see, for e.g., Maclagan & Gordon 1999: 52; Labov 2006b: 136). In devising an educational level scale, the researcher must consider the school system at hand and its “natural breaking points” (Ash 2002: 409). A four-

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17 TAFE stands for ‘Technical and Further Education’. These are vocational (as opposed to academic) courses such as courses on aircraft maintenance, beauty therapy, bookkeeping, or hospitality management (http://www.fulltimecourses.tafe.wa.edu.au/).
point education scale is used to calculate a speaker’s education level score in this study, as shown in Table 4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education – TAFE (vocational)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education – University</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Level of education score

Speakers under the age of 18 and currently completing secondary education at the time of recording were not given a score since this level of schooling is compulsory in the state of Western Australia. As per the WA Department of Education, the compulsory education period is defined as the period “until the end of the year in which the child reaches the age of 17 years and 6 months; or the child satisfies the minimum requirements for graduation from secondary school established under the Curriculum Council Act 1997; or the child reaches the age of 18, whichever happens first” (Government of Western Australia 2017). Attributing those speakers a score of 2 would be misleading as it is impossible to predict whether or not they will go on to complete tertiary education.

I return, in Chapter 5 (§5.3.2), to the operationalisation of SES based on the aforementioned individual indicators and a combination of those indicators. For the most part, the present research relies on occupation as a proxy for SES.

The series of independent factors posited to have an impact on tense usage in narrative and their levels are summarised in Table 4.8.
### Linguistic variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in Sequence of Narrative Clauses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense in Preceding Narrative Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Historical Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Present Perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Person</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First (singular and plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third (singular and plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal Disambiguation</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotative Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotative verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (e.g. ask, yell)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–29 year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49 year olds</td>
</tr>
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<td>≥ 50 year olds</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex/Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Summary of independent factors considered in the analysis of tense variation in narrative clauses in this study

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Chapter 5.

### 4.7 Discourse-pragmatic analysis

The data were also analysed qualitatively to address the research question pertaining to the discourse-pragmatic functions underlying tense/aspect variation, and
the use of the NPP in particular, in storytelling. The approach adopted was inductive: discourse-pragmatic functions were established based on empirical observations. The core of the analysis was based on the 287 performed narratives produced in face-to-face interaction (see Table 4.1). The 44 radio narratives were analysed separately due to the specificity of the medium of communication.

Following the approach used for the quantitative analysis, I first focused on tense variation in narrative clauses. Narratives were organised according to the type of variation they display across the narrative clause sequence (SP-CHP, SP-NPP, SP-CHP-NPP, CHP-NPP). Each individual token of the CHP in narratives displaying SP-CHP variation across the narrative clause sequence was analysed and attributed a discourse-pragmatic function. The same systematic process was repeated for each individual token of the NPP in narratives displaying SP-NPP variation across the narrative clause sequence. To facilitate the analysis, narratives were grouped according to the proportion of CHP and NPP tokens: (a) narratives whose narrative clause sequences contain more than 60% of CHP/NPP tokens, (b) those that contain less than 40% of CHP/NPP tokens, and (c) those that contain between 40% and 60% of CHP/NPP tokens (in other words, the ratio of SP to CHP/NPP tokens is close to 1). SP tokens were also analysed in their alternation with the CHP and the NPP. Finally, the roles of the CHP and the NPP were considered when the forms are used concurrently across the narrative clause sequence.

The analysis was subsequently extended to consider narratives in their entirety. Though more frequently reported in the complication, the CHP and the NPP have also been documented in other sections of the narrative. All NPP tokens extracted outside the narrative clause sequence were the object of a brief quantitative and qualitative investigation (see §6.1.3). It was important to consider tense switching across sections as well as within a single section to unveil broader organisational patterns of variation. The results of the qualitative analysis are presented in Chapter 6.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the research questions posed in the current study, and the data and methods employed to tackle them. In particular, I have described

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18 If no specific discourse-pragmatic function could be identified for a token, it was coded as ‘none’. Such tokens could usually be explained by linguistic constraints instead.

19 The quantitative analysis had to be limited to narrative clauses since they form a well-defined envelope of variation. Each narrative section allows different tense/aspect forms. Different variationist analyses would have to be run separately for each section, and the proportionately low number of CHP and NPP tokens in some of these would be an issue for statistical analysis.
the narrative data on which the analysis rests, the principles of the variationist methodology, the linguistic and social factors to be tested, and the discourse-analytic approach that complements the quantitative analysis of the data.

Two central questions surrounding the use of the NPP emerge from the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, namely (i) which sociolinguistic factors constrain the use of the form, and (ii) which discourse-pragmatic functions account for the tense variation observed in performed narratives. In the ensuing chapters, I set out to empirically answer these questions through statistical analysis (Chapter 5), and qualitative analysis (Chapter 6), of the narrative data.
CHAPTER 5

Results

Chapter 5 offers a quantitative analysis of the data, combining distributional and multivariate analysis. It uncovers the sociolinguistic correlates of narrative tense variation and, in particular, the sociolinguistic pressures operating on the NPP in performed narratives.

As explained in Chapter 4 (§4.3.3), this study draws on two datasets (see Figure 4.1). The first dataset is used to analyse the linguistic variables and consists of 331 narratives stemming from three corpora: the UWA Narrative Corpus, the UWA Corpus of English in Australia and the Radio Narrative Corpus. The second dataset is used to analyse the social variables. Given the lack of socio-demographic information about the speakers in the Radio Narrative Corpus, only data from the UWA Narrative Corpus and the UWA Corpus of English in Australia are included in this set. Totalling 287 narratives, it comprises the speech production of 99 native speakers of AusE who represent diverse socio-demographic backgrounds (taking into consideration age, sex/gender and SES).

The present chapter begins with a quantitative overview of tense variation in the narrative dataset (§5.1). The next two sections present the results of the distributional and multivariate analysis used to identify the linguistic (§5.2) and social (§5.3) factors constraining NPP and CHP usage respectively. The main findings are summarised in §5.4 and further discussed in Chapter 7.

5.1 Quantitative overview

Following the methodological protocol detailed in Chapter 4, a total of 4260 narrative clauses were extracted from the entire dataset. Table 5.1 presents the findings after exclusions (see §4.4.2 for details of all exclusions).
Table 5.1 Extracted tokens from the various corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N of narratives</th>
<th>Tokens extracted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA Narrative Corpus</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA Corpus of English in Australia</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>287</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Narrative Corpus</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>331</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general distribution of tense forms offered in §5.1.1 below is based on the smaller dataset consisting of materials from the *UWA Narrative Corpus* and the *UWA Corpus of English in Australia*. I set aside the data from the *Radio Narrative Corpus* for two main reasons:

(i) Narratives were originally specifically selected for featuring the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 129) – there is a risk of misrepresenting tense variation in storytelling with an over-representation of the NPP (and an under-representation of the CHP).^2^  

(ii) Narratives were produced in the context of radio shows. To ensure comparability with previous research, only stories produced in face-to-face interaction are considered for the general distribution.

5.1.1 General distribution

A total of 3896 tokens were extracted from the 287 narratives of the *UWA Narrative Corpus* (210 narratives) and the *UWA Corpus of English in Australia* (77 narratives). As mentioned in §4.4.2, zero quotatives (see example (2) in §4.4.2) were initially extracted in line with the principle of accountability (Labov 1972b: 72). As

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1 This is the number of performed narratives selected from each corpus and included in the dataset (see §4.3.3).

2 In the 287 narratives selected from the *UWA Narrative Corpus* and the *UWA Corpus of English in Australia*, the tense distribution is as follows: SP 64% (2499/3896), CHP 30% (1168/3896), and NPP 6% (229/3896). By contrast, in the 44 narratives selected from the *Radio Narrative Corpus*, the SP represents 50% (182/364) of the variation, the CHP 10% (38/364), and the NPP 40% (144/364).
zero forms cannot be coded for tense, they are excluded from the distributional and statistical analyses offered here. Nonetheless, the zero quotative accounts for 7% (308/4204) of the overall variability found in AusE narratives.\footnote{The total of 4204 narrative clauses for the 287 narratives stemming from the UWA Narrative Corpus and the UWA Corpus of English in Australia corresponds to the total of narrative clauses headed by the SP, CHP or NPP (N=3896), plus those headed by the zero quotative (N=308). Narrative clauses headed by the zero quotatives were excluded in Table 5.1.} Specifically, the zero quotative represents 17% (308/1796) of the variability found in quotative contexts (alongside quotative be like 36%, quotative say 29%, quotative go 16% and other miscellaneous quotatives 2%). As argued in Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016: 128), the frequency of use of the zero quotative reflects the performed nature of the narratives comprising the dataset. Narrators are more likely to use the zero form as they get more involved in their story and make their retelling more dramatic (Palacios-Martínez 2013: 457). In a similar fashion, tense switching is more likely to occur when narrators perform their story (Schiffrin 1981: 47; Wolfson 1982: 53). Figure 5.1 presents the overall tense distribution in the current dataset. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

![Figure 5.1 Tense distribution in narrative clauses in the dataset](image-url)

\footnote{The distribution presented in Figure 5.1 is for the 287 narratives stemming from the UWA Narrative Corpus and the UWA Corpus of English in Australia. As previously mentioned, the narratives in the Radio Narrative Corpus were specifically selected because they featured the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 129). Their inclusion would artificially boost the frequency of occurrence of the NPP in AusE narratives (SP 63% [2681/4260], CHP 28% [1206/4260], NPP 9% [373/4260]). For this reason, they are left out of the overall distributional analysis.}
There is a marked propensity for tense variation. The SP features in 64% (2499/3896) of narrative clauses, making it the narrative tense *par excellence*. The CHP is used in 30% (1168/3896) of clauses. The NPP follows suit, representing a relatively low proportion of the variation (6% [229/3896]).

The large proportion of SP tokens in narrative is in line with prior research on AmE, BrE and AusE narratives (Schiffrin 1981; Levey 2006; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014; Richard 2015; Richard & Rodríguez Louro 2016). However, the CHP and the NPP occur at different rates across studies. Figure 5.2, adapted from Richard (2015: 39), plots the tense distribution in narratives as reported for three native English varieties (BrE, AmE and AusE). The four series of results presented for AusE are based on different samples.5

![Tense variation across samples of American, British and Australian English narratives (adapted from Richard 2015: 39)](image)

Schiffrin (1981: 51) analyses a sample of 73 AmE performed narratives: 30% (381/1288) of narrative clauses are in the CHP; 70% (907/1288) are in the SP. No

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5 Results from Ritz and Engel (2008: 141) based on the AusE *Radio Narrative Corpus* could not be included since they report the frequency of use of the CHP (12.6%) and the NPP (21.7%) out of all the tenses used to relate past situations in narratives. That is, they consider variation outside the narrative clause sequence. All the studies reported in Figure 5.2 consider tense variation in narrative clauses exclusively.
tokens of the NPP are reported. Levey (2006) uses a corpus of 56 BrE narratives produced by 28 preadolescent speakers (ages 7–11) from a working-class neighbourhood. The SP represents 60% of narrative clauses (340/571), the CHP 32% (181/571), and the NPP 9% (50/571) (Levey 2006: 140). Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014), the first study of tense variation in AusE narratives, is based on 100 narratives of personal experience from speakers aged 12 to 62. They report a high rate of SP in complicating action clauses (87% [571/654]), while the CHP occurs at 12% (76/654) and the NPP is negligible (1% [9/654]) (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 556). Richard (2015), analysing a small sample of 24 performed narratives from eight speakers, reports that the SP is used in 68% (227/335) of narrative clauses, the CHP occurs at 20% (67/335), and the NPP features at 12% (41/335) (Richard 2015: 38). Richard and Rodríguez Louro’s (2016) study comprises 220 performed Labovian narratives produced by 57 AusE speakers. The SP occurs in 74% (2046/2767) of narrative clauses, the CHP in 21% (595/2767), and the NPP in 5% (126/2767) (Richard & Rodríguez Louro 2016: 132).6

The results of these studies suggest that the NPP does not occur in the narrative clauses of AmE narratives, while it features in both BrE and AusE narratives. The proportion of NPP reported for AusE varies from 1% to 12%, while it is reported at 9% for BrE. The proportion of CHP is similar in Schiffrin (1981), Levey (2006), and in this study where it features at about 30%. It is lowest in Rodríguez Louro and Ritz’s (2014) study, where it only represents 12% of the variation.

The disparities in tense variation across AusE studies, and with regard to the NPP, can be explained in terms of three factors: the sample sizes, the sociodemographic characteristics of the speakers considered, and possibly the degree of performativity of the narratives included in the samples. Rodríguez Louro and Ritz’s (2014) overall dataset contains little tense variation in comparison to the other studies presented here. A lack of performance in the narratives of the sample is a plausible explanation, though it must be acknowledged that performance does not guarantee tense switching. The very low proportion of NPP (1%) is possibly related to a bias in their sample towards high SES speakers, given that the data were collected by sociolinguistics students at the University of Western Australia (UWA) interacting with their friends and family (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 553). UWA is located among the socio-economically advantaged Western suburbs of Perth and mostly attracts

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6 Richard and Rodríguez Louro (2016: 132) include elided verbs in the tense distribution of their narrative corpus. I have recalculated the distribution excluding zero forms (N=187) for comparison purposes.
students from the area. The under-representation of low SES speakers in the sample would impact the proportion of NPP usage (see §5.3.2). The tense distribution observed in Richard (2015), with a high proportion of NPP (12%), is related to the small sample size: eight participants (four males, four females), aged 36 to 56, and of professional and non-professional backgrounds. In this study, three performed narratives containing tense switching were selected for each speaker. The non-professional speakers contributed all NPP tokens, and male speakers produced the large majority of these tokens (85% [35/41]) (Richard 2015: 40). In Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016), the speaker sample is diversified so as to include individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds (36 professional speakers; 21 non-professional speakers), and the narratives in the corpus are performed. Similarly, the current study strives for representativeness in terms of SES, with a larger speaker sample (49 professional speakers; 50 non-professional speakers). Performed narratives are specifically targeted for their potential to feature tense switching. These methodological differences most likely explain the higher rates of CHP and NPP in comparison to previous studies.

Thus far in the distributional analysis, I have focused on the variation between the SP, CHP and NPP without differentiating between the simple and progressive aspect. In the current dataset (consisting of narratives from the UWA Narrative Corpus and the UWA Corpus of English in Australia), only 2% (82/3896) of narrative clauses are in the progressive aspect. This result is expected, given that tokens in the progressive usually occur in orientation or evaluation clauses; that is, backgrounded information. The progressive aspect is rare in narrative clauses since narrative clauses relate perfective events (see §3.3.1). The progressive aspect is most frequent with the CHP (88% [72/82]), as in example (1) where temporal progression is explicitly signalled by the use of the temporal adverb then. (In (1), the narrator is talking about a time when he set a frying pan on fire and his friend took it outside.)

(1) And he’s ditching it onto the front lawn, and then getting a hose onto it.
   (Male, 46, process operator)

There are 72 tokens of the CHP progressive out of 3896 narrative clauses. Out of the 1168 tokens in the CHP, 6% (72/1168) occur in the progressive. Such examples are similar to Couper-Kuhlen’s (1995) ‘foregrounded progressive’ uses (see §3.3.1). There

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7 Rodriguez Louro and Ritz (2014) do not model speaker SES.
are a few rare cases of the past progressive (9/3896) in narrative clauses. These occur when the situation described refers to a repeated activity. The progressive then signals iterativity, as in example (2).

(2) And apparently she came in and was shaking me trying to wake me up and I just didn’t wake up. (Male, 22, electrician)

There is one exceptional token of the NPP in the progressive (example (3)), in which the narrator is talking about a cockroach that got caught in his hair. The NPP progressive occurs in the resolution to the story. It provides a final image of the scene.

(3) […] And it’s got straight into my hair. And there it’s got caught entangled. So I could hear it fluttering in there, moving about. And I’ve started to go, <screaming> “Ahhh”, jumping around, trying to flick it out of my hair. The towel’s dropped. And I’ve been standing there in the backyard, naked, jumping around <screaming> “Ahhh!” If any of the neighbours looked over the fence they thought- they would have thought I was mental. (Male, 36, chef)

The low number of tokens in the progressive aspect precluded its inclusion in the statistical modelling presented in §5.2 and §5.3.

### 5.1.2 Distribution per individual speaker and per radio narrative

Table 5.2 presents the proportion of SP, CHP and NPP in the narratives of each of the 99 individual speakers in the sample, listed by their pseudonyms. It provides information about their year of birth (YOB), age, sex/gender and SES. Greyed out areas indicate speakers displaying variation between all three tense forms – SP, CHP and NPP.

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8 SES is here modelled based on occupation alone and opposes ‘professionals’ (P) to ‘non-professionals’ (N).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>YOB</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>SP %</th>
<th>CHP %</th>
<th>NPP %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nellie Wyatts</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renay Trebee</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giselle Smith</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Craft</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Farrant</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misty Reynolds</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna Killian</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillian Davidson</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassandra Wayne</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lara Madison</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Stratford</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eileen Kurtis</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cate Jones</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francesca Liberman</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
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<td>Lorianne Thorney</td>
<td>1955</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Wiler</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Morrison</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catriona Jay</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon Scarpuzzi</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Manning</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie Stuart</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch Hill</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Wallace</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Bailey</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Bailey</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethan Wren</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>1952</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>1964</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Michael Keaton</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mitch Walters</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Arthur Grey</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>Kadir Sachi</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Lawrence</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timothy Wanberg</td>
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<td>P</td>
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<td>61.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Finns</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>30</td>
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Table 5.2 The 99 speakers in the sample and their tense distribution across narrative clauses

Table 5.3 similarly presents the proportion of SP, CHP and NPP for the 44 radio narratives in the dataset. Greyed out areas indicate radio narratives displaying variation between the SP, CHP and NPP.
Variability is evident throughout the dataset. As shown in Table 5.2, the 99 individual speakers in the sample use the NPP to various extents. Figure 5.3 shows the proportion of NPP usage, in relation to the other tense variants (SP and CHP), for the 99 speakers in the sample, indicating speaker age cohort, sex/gender and SES.
Figure 5.3 Overall NPP frequency by individual speaker

Figure 5.3 shows that 75 speakers are located on the 0% line (i.e. they never use the NPP). The remaining 24 speakers use the NPP to varying degrees. Categorical and near-categorical contexts must be excluded from multivariate analysis (Guy 1988a: 130–131; Tagliamonte 2006). Guy (1988a: 132) recommends that researchers “don’t push [the
variation] past 95%”. Speakers whose use of the NPP represents less than 5% of the variation are thus excluded from the statistical modelling. Twenty-one speakers are above the 5% threshold. These consistent NPP users and their year of birth, age, sex/gender, SES and SP, CHP and NPP relative usage frequency are listed in Table 5.4.9

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Table 5.4 Details of the 21 consistent NPP users

Two consistent NPP users (Charles Spencer and Matt Dawson) produced no CHP tokens in their narrative clauses. They are thus excluded from the statistical modelling presented in §5.2 and §5.3 where variability between the SP, CHP and NPP is considered.

Figure 5.4 presents the tense distribution for the 19 consistent NPP users displaying variability between the SP, CHP and NPP.

---

9 Here, again, SES is modelled based on occupation alone and opposes ‘professionals’ (P) to ‘non-professionals’ (N).
The SP is used in 55% of narrative clauses, less frequently than the 64% shown in Figure 5.1 for the 99 speakers. The CHP features in 27% of narrative clauses – a finding relatively similar to the average of 30% found for the entire sample – while the NPP represents 18% of the variation.

Only data from these 19 consistent NPP users are considered for the analysis of the social constraints on NPP usage (see §5.3.2). For the analysis of the linguistic constraints (see §5.2.2), an additional 15 radio narratives – those displaying variability between the SP, CHP and NPP (see Table 5.3) – are also included in the statistical modelling. In the same vein, speakers who never (or rarely) use the CHP are excluded from the statistical analyses assessing the linguistic constraints (§5.2.3) and social constraints (§5.3.3) operating on the CHP, with respect to the SP. Data from 97 speakers – that is, all but two participants in the sample – are considered (see Table 5.2).10

In what follows I present distributional and multivariate analyses of the data to assess the impact of a host of linguistic (§5.2) and social (§5.3) factors on the use of the NPP and its variants in narrative clauses. Several independent multivariate analyses on NPP and CHP usage were performed with \textit{GoldVarb X} and \textit{Rbrul} (see §4.4.1). To

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{tense_distribution.png}
\caption{Figure 5.4 Tense distribution in the narratives of the 19 consistent NPP users in the sample}
\end{figure}

\footnotesize{10 As previously mentioned, two speakers (Charles Spencer and Matt Dawson) produced no CHP tokens. They thus need to be excluded from the statistical analysis considering variation between the SP, CHP and NPP, and from the statistical analysis considering variation between the SP and the CHP.}
control for potential interactions, linguistic and social factors were modelled separately, as is standard practice in language variation and change research (Tagliamonte 2012: 129). The variable rule analyses performed by GoldVarb X produced relatively similar results to those obtained with Rbrul and are not reported in this chapter (but appear in Appendix D).

5.2 The linguistic factors

5.2.1 Distributional analysis

A number of linguistic factors shape tense variation in narrative (see §4.5). To analyse the distribution of tense forms in various linguistic environments, I drew on data from all three corpora, as summarised in Table 5.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UWA Narrative Corpus</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>2672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA Corpus of English in Australia</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Narrative Corpus</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>4260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5 Dataset for the analysis of linguistic variables

I investigated tense variation in relation to the position of the form in the sequence of narrative clauses, the tense used in the preceding narrative clause, grammatical person, type of temporal disambiguation (if any), and quotative versus non-quotative contexts (see §4.5.1-§4.5.6).

Table 5.6 presents the distribution of the SP, CHP and NPP according to the position of the relevant tense form in the sequence of narrative clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in sequence</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial clause</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial clauses</td>
<td>2208</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final clause</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 Position of tense forms in the sequence of narrative clauses
The SP dominates the distribution in initial and final positions: 77% of initial clauses and 71% of final clauses are in the SP. However, the CHP and – to a lesser extent – the NPP compete with the SP in medial clauses. In fact, CHP tokens are most frequent in medial position (30%) followed by final position (23%). They are least frequent in initial position (14%). With regard to the NPP, the form is as common in medial as in initial position (9%). It is least frequent in final position (7%). This is illustrated in (4) where verbs in the SP begin and end the sequence of narrative clauses, while a few verbs in the CHP and the NPP occur in medial clauses.\footnote{As detailed in the Conventions (p. xiv), SP tokens are italicised, CHP tokens are underlined and NPP tokens are bolded. Forms which are analytically ambiguous between a SP and a past participle (i.e. an elided NPP) are both italicised and bolded.}

Queue cutting, ah! Do I have a story about queue cutting?! [<CHUCKLE>]

When I was in Rome ... We had to wait- I think we got there at- We went to the Vatican. [Yeah.] And we had to queue. So we got told you have to get there at about four thirty-five in the morning just to start queueing because it only opens at nine o’clock in the morning. Ah and the queues go right around like they queue for hours. [Oh my god.] So we managed to hit right at the front. Right. So we’re right at the front. All ready. Because the queues <in exasperated tone of voice> just take hours to get in. It’s like, you know, line up for the Eiffel Tower. Through- so- so we’re there. We’re all excited, you know. We reach the front. <LIP SMACK> We’re- we’re at the front. And we got there earl-- We had our little breakfast packs and everything else. And the next minute, we’ve turned around and there’s five nuns that’ve jumped the queue in front of us. And we all looked at each other. We didn’t know- What do you say when nuns like jump in front of you? <LAUGHTER> You go- What do you say? “Excuse me”, you know, “we know this is the <CLAPS HANDS> Holy Grail for you guys but could you not jump the queue like.” We’re just like- And we all looked at each other and shrugged. And we were like, “We can’t really kick them out. They’re all nuns like”, you know. [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> It was like- I feel like tapping them on the shoulder and go, “<MOUTH CLICKS>” [<LAUGHTER>] Back of the queues
ladies. Back of the queue. Been queueing for four hours.” But we let them in. We were nice. (Female, 34, senior investigator)

These findings are globally in line with previous research (see §3.3.1). Figure 5.5 shows three graphs plotting tense variation according to the position of the form in the sequence of narrative clauses for three English varieties: AusE (this study), BrE (Levey 2006), and AmE (Schiffrin 1981).

![Figure 5.5 Comparison of tense variation according to the position of the form in three varieties of English: AusE (this study), BrE (Levey 2006), and AmE (Schiffrin 1981)](image)

The variation observed between the SP and the CHP across narrative clauses is in line with Levey’s (2006) findings on BrE preadolescent narratives. In his study, the SP is most prevalent in initial and final clauses, where it represents 73% and 75% of the variation (Levey 2006: 141). Conversely, it only represents 56% of the variation in medial clauses where the CHP features at 35% (Levey 2006: 141). For AmE, Schiffrin (1981) also finds that the SP commonly opens and ends the sequence of narrative clauses and that the CHP is most frequent in medial clauses (32%) (Schiffrin 1981: 51). There is a clear pattern whereby the SP is used to open and close the sequence of narrative clauses, thus setting an unambiguous past time frame. The medial clauses, however, feature a lot more tense variation, highlighting the core events of the narrative and moments of heightened intensity.

**TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE**

Figure 5.6 shows the distribution of the tense forms according to the tense used in the preceding narrative clause, namely the SP, CHP or NPP.
There is a tendency for each tense variant to be preceded by the same tense form. This is especially the case for the SP, where 74% of the verbs in a narrative clause preceding a clause in the SP are also in the SP. This clustering effect of tenses has been reported in prior research (see §3.3.1). My findings align with Levey (2006), though the priming effect of CHP on CHP seems more marked in his study (see Figure 5.7).

I return to clustering effects when I discuss interactions between linguistic factors, in particular the interaction between TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE and QUOTATIVE CONTEXT.
**Grammatical Person**

Table 5.7 shows the distribution of tense forms according to grammatical person (including unexpressed subjects; see example (5) below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Person</th>
<th>SP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CHP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NPP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>1270</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 1st person reference</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 3rd person reference</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7 Distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by grammatical person

There is approximately as much reference to the first person (48% [2055/4252]) as there is to the third person (52% [2197/4252]) in the narratives analysed. Since zero quotative tokens were excluded from the analysis, the absence of overt grammatical subject (N=596) corresponds to subject omission. Unexpressed subjects occur both in coordinated clauses and independent clauses, as in (5).

(5) He then went and Ø called over his associate- colleague from the other room. Ø Said, “Look, look, the Australians, it’s the woman who pays.” (Male, 27, doctoral student)

Omitted subjects refer to first person referents 54% (320/596) of the times (example (6)) and to third person referents 46% (276/596) of the times (example (5) above). (In (6) the narrator is talking about a spider.)

(6) And when I got to work, I didn’t even look for it. I just went quickly out. Ø Just shut the door. (Female, 45, finance officer)

Second person pronouns are negligible (N=8), as expected in the narrative genre (cf. Rodriguez Louro, Richard & Bharadwaj in prep.) and in data stemming from interviews.

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12 The percentages are calculated based on all tokens except the second person pronouns (N=8), hence the total of 4252 tokens.
(7) And I learned later that these planes can go out a fair way, you know, so. And actually safer with no engines than engines going crazy, because they can still use the or the rotors at the back. [Ok.] <SIGH> But after thirty seconds you started hearing this hum <IMITATES NOISE ENGINE>. And the next then one engine starts up. And then the next engine starts up. (Male, 32, chemist)

The CHP is more frequent with third person than first person subjects (39% vs. 19%). On the contrary, the SP is more frequent with the first person (73% vs. 49%). The NPP is about as frequent with the first and the third person (8% and 11%).

**TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION**

Table 5.8 presents the distribution of tense forms according to the presence or absence of temporal disambiguation in narrative clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temporal disambiguation</th>
<th>SP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CHP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>NPP N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2375</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3777</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2681</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8 Presence or absence of temporal disambiguation according to tense variants

The use of the SP, CHP or NPP does not appear to be impacted by the presence or absence of temporal disambiguation. The proportion of SP is the same (63%) with or without temporal disambiguation. The proportion of CHP is 31% with temporal disambiguation and 28% without. Conversely, the proportion of NPP is 6% with temporal disambiguation and 9% without.

Out of the 4260 tokens extracted, 3777 tokens (89%) occur without temporal disambiguation. Only 11% (483/4260) of narrative clauses are modified by a temporal adverbial. There are two types of temporal adverbials attested in the data: those expressing temporal progression and those expressing temporal location. The distribution of the temporal adverbials in the dataset according to the tense form with which they co-occur is presented in Table 5.9.

---

13 Though formally a second person pronoun, you is used as a generic pronoun in (7).
Globally, 94% (453/483) of the adverbials used in narrative clauses express temporal progression, and the temporal adverb *then* represents the large majority of cases (89% [405/453]). There are 376 tokens with the temporal connective *then*, and another 29 tokens combining *then* followed by another temporal adverbial.14 There are also 48 other temporal adverbials that express forward movement in time, locating a posterior time. These are expressions such as *(the) next day/morning/minute/night, after (about) X amount of time*, and *(about) X amount of time later*. The remaining 6% (30/483) of temporal adverbials express temporal location, as in *at about eleven o’clock or in the morning*. The majority refers to a definite past time. There are also four indefinite past expressions *(one day, at some point)*. One narrative clause is modified by the adverb *now* referring not to the ‘speaker-now’ but the ‘story-now’ (see Fleischman 1990: 167). Finally there is one hodiernal adverb *(today)*.

In their analysis of AusE radio narratives, Ritz and Engel (2008: 146) also find that temporal progression is rarely explicit, but that temporal adverb *then* is the most common temporal adverbial used with the NPP. *Then* and the other temporal adverbials expressing temporal progression are, in Thompson’s (1999: 139) terminology, “overt markers of time linking in tense structure”: they clarify the underlying rhetorical relation of narration. Most of the temporal adverbials are turned towards the future (e.g. *ten minutes later, the next day*) or the present (*now, today*), rather than the past.

The distribution of tense forms with adverbials expressing temporal progression is similar to the general distribution presented in Figure 5.1: the SP represents 62% (281/453) of the variation, the CHP 32% (147/453), and the NPP 6% (25/453). With adverbials expressing temporal location, the SP is much more frequent (83% [25/30]). The CHP and the NPP respectively represent 7% (2/30) and 10% (3/30) of the variation.

---

14 Among the combinations of ‘*then* + another temporal adverbial’ (N=29), 22 of the adverbials following *then* also express temporal progression (e.g. *then later on*), and seven adverbials express temporal location (e.g. *and then, maybe about four o’clock that afternoon; then in the morning*).
This suggests that the SP might be preferred with adverbials expressing temporal location.

**QUOTATIVE CONTEXT**

Quotation is key to the narrative genre, and particularly to performed narratives (see §3.2.1). The performed narratives in the dataset frequently contain quotation: 37% (1589/4260) of narrative clauses are headed by a quotative verb; considering zero quotatives, that proportion rises to 42% (1907/4578).

Quotation is highly intertwined with tense variation (see §3.3.1). Quotative environments have been shown to favour the CHP (Wolfson 1982: 52; Stenström, Andersen & Hasund 2002: 122). Levey (2006: 143) examines the use of the SP, CHP and NPP in quotative versus non-quotative contexts in the narratives of BrE preadolescent speakers. He finds that quotative contexts favour the CHP (61% [92/151]), while they strongly disfavour the SP (33% [50/151]). By contrast, he finds that the SP dominates non-quotative contexts (69% [290/420]), and that the NPP is slightly more frequent in non-quotative (10%) than in quotative (6%) contexts.

Figure 5.8 plots the distribution of the various tense forms in non-quotative versus quotative contexts across narrative clauses in the current dataset.

Figure 5.8 Distribution of tense forms in non-quotative and quotative contexts
In line with previous research, the CHP is more frequent in quotative contexts (41% [649/1589]) than non-quotative contexts (21% [557/2671]). Conversely, the SP is more prevalent in non-quotative (68% [1802/2671]) than in quotative (55% [879/1589]) contexts. In quotative contexts, tense alternation mainly involves the use of the SP (55%) and the CHP (41%). The proportion of NPP usage is small (4% [61/1589]), with quotative *go* representing the majority of tokens (85% [52/61]). In fact, the NPP is more prevalent in non-quotative contexts (12% [312/2671]).

In quotative contexts, quotative verbs often occur in a particular tense form. Quotative *be like* is strongly associated with the CHP in AusE (Winter 2002; Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014), while quotative *go* has been found to favour the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 136). Levey (2006: 140) similarly observes a frequent co-occurrence of the quotatives *say* and *go* with the CHP, while he notes that quotative *go* also patterns with the NPP. The impact of quotative verbs on the selection of tense forms is illustrated in Figure 5.9.\(^{15}\)

![Figure 5.9 Distribution of tense forms in quotative contexts according to lexical type](image)

As shown in Figure 5.9, quotative *say* is most frequently encoded in the SP (87%), whereas quotatives *be like* and *go* are frequent with the CHP (56% and 60%). Quotative *go* also patterns with the NPP (16%). Quotative *be like*, on the contrary, never appears

\(^{15}\)Quotative *think* was excluded as it heads clauses that belong to the narrative evaluation; that is, clauses that are not narrative clauses (see §4.4.2).
with the NPP. The type of quotative verb used therefore clearly affects tense variation. Figure 5.10 shows the proportion of use of the different quotative verbs in the data.

![Figure 5.10 Proportion of use of the quotative verbs in the dataset](image)

The most frequent quotative in the data is *be like* (41% [654/1589]), followed by *say* (36% [565/1589]) and *go* (21% [335/1589]). Because *be like* is the most frequent quotative verb, but it never appears with the NPP, the frequency of use of the NPP in quotative contexts and beyond is impacted.

Complex interactions are at play with respect to QUOTATIVE CONTEXT and the choice of QUOTATIVE VERB, pointing to a specific grammar of quotation. There is interaction between QUOTATIVE CONTEXT and TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE. Figure 5.11 shows the distribution of SP, CHP and NPP tokens according to the tense form used in the preceding narrative clause in quotative contexts versus non-quotative contexts.
In non-quotative contexts, SP tokens are largely preceded by clauses headed by the SP (81%). This is still the case in quotative contexts, but to a lesser extent (63%). More than a third of clauses (35%) preceding SP tokens occur in the CHP. In both quotative and non-quotative contexts, CHP tokens are preceded by a narrative clause headed by the CHP about half of the time (50-51%). The SP also frequently precedes a clause in the CHP (44% in non-quotative contexts and 47% in quotative contexts). In non-quotative contexts, the NPP represents 6% of clauses preceding the CHP, but it is negligible in quotative contexts (2%). The priming effect of the NPP on NPP usage is stronger in non-quotative contexts: 55% of clauses headed by the NPP are preceded by a clause in the NPP. In quotative contexts, the NPP is more frequently preceded by a clause headed by the CHP (37%), although clauses headed by the SP (33%) or the NPP (30%) are just about as frequent. Figure 5.11 indicates that there is more tense switching from one narrative clause to the next in quotative contexts, providing nuance to Schiffrin’s (1981: 51) claim that rapid tense alternation between the SP and the CHP is not typical. I return to this finding in §6.5.2 and further discuss the question of tense maintenance versus tense switching in Chapter 7 (§7.3.4).

Another interaction is observed between QUOTATIVE CONTEXT and GRAMMATICAL PERSON. First person tokens always occur more frequently with the SP than third person tokens, no matter whether they appear in quotative (78%) or non-quotative (70%) contexts. Third person tokens, on the other hand, occur more frequently
with the SP in non-quotative contexts (61%), though the proportion of CHP (23%) and NPP (16%) is non-negligible. In quotative contexts, they occur more frequently with the CHP (62%).

In quotative contexts, the choice of QUOTATIVE VERB interacts with GRAMMATICAL PERSON. Quotative say is almost categorically encoded in the SP when the subject of the clause is first person (97%). With third person subjects, the CHP is the most frequent tense form with quotatives go (75%) and be like (76%). Quotative say remains largely encoded in the SP (74%), even with third person subjects. Quotative say is more frequent with first person subjects (59% [304/517]), while quotative go is much more frequent with third person subjects (73% [233/320]). Quotative be like is equally frequent with third and first person subjects.

In the following two sections (§5.2.2 and §5.2.3), I use multivariate analysis to assess the impact of linguistic factors on NPP usage and CHP usage when these factors are considered simultaneously. The analyses computed with GoldVarb X – reported in Appendix D – modelled the linguistic factors as fixed effects. The analyses computed with Rbrul – reproduced below – allowed for mixed-effects modelling: the linguistic factors were treated as fixed effects, while SPEAKER was included as a random effect to account for individual variation.

### 5.2.2 Multivariate analysis on NPP usage

To assess the linguistic constraints on the NPP (see §4.5), I modelled the data from the 19 consistent NPP users and the 15 radio narratives that display variability between the SP, CHP and NPP, and where the proportion of NPP is at or above 5% (see Table 5.2 and Table 5.3). The NPP is set as the application value. Table 5.10 and Table 5.12 report the results of multivariate analyses on the contribution of linguistic factors on the use of the NPP (relative to the SP and the CHP).

Details provided in the tables reporting the multivariate analysis results are as follows. The input probability (input) indicates the overall probability of occurrence of the application value “averaged over all factor combinations (or cells)” (Johnson 2009: 379). The total number of tokens included in the statistical analysis is shown below the input probability. The total number of contexts for each factor in a factor group is indicated in the column headed ‘N’. The percentages recorded indicate the percentage that the variant of interest (i.e. the application value) represents in a given context.
Factor weights (FWs) and log-odds are measures of the effect size. Factor weights are probabilities ranging from 0 to 1. They provide a “numerical measure of the strength or influence of each factor, relative to other factors in the same group, on the linguistic variable under investigation” (Bayley 2002: 126). Figures above .50 are said to favour the occurrence of the variant while figures below .50 disfavour it. More accurately, it is the relative position of factor weights that is crucial to arrive at an interpretation of the results (Tagliamonte 2006: 146). The ranking of factor weights from highest to lowest within a factor group shows the hierarchy of constraint (or direction of effect) operating on the dependent variable (see §4.4). It uncovers the grammar underlying the variation (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 94). Unlike factor weights, log-odds range from positive infinity to negative infinity. Negative log-odds indicate a negative correlation between a factor and the dependent variable; positive log-odds indicate a positive correlation. The range is a non-statistical measure that provides information about the relative strength of a factor group. It is obtained by subtracting the smallest factor weight to the highest factor weight value in each factor group. Factor groups with larger ranges exert a stronger constraint on the probability of the outcome (Tagliamonte 2006: 242). With mixed-effects models that control for SPEAKER as a random effect (and are computed with Rbrul), the standard deviation (std. dev.) provides a measure of the spread of results in the participant sample. The intercept indicates the extent to which each individual speaker contributes to the variation with respect to the variant of interest. The highest factor weights in factor groups selected as significant appear in bold. As best practice requires, the researcher reports predictors not selected as significant since they are also relevant to the interpretation of results (Tagliamonte 2012: 127). These non-significant factor groups appear within brackets and show the hierarchy of constraints (see Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 93–94).

Table 5.10 presents the results of two independent multivariate analyses. The first analysis comprised all narrative clauses, while the second was limited to narrative clauses headed by non-quotative verbs. Narrative clauses headed by quotative verbs

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16 I will only discuss factor weights in the output but follow Johnson’s recommendation (2009: 362) in reporting log-odds coefficients that are mainstream in other fields such as psycholinguistics and statistics.

17 The factor weights of non-significant factor groups can be found in the first step of the ‘step-down’ run when all predictors are included in the regression.

18 All percentages are calculated using the data from the 19 consistent NPP users and 15 radio narratives that display variability between the SP, CHP and NPP. They therefore differ from the percentages presented in the distributional analysis in §5.2.1 where data from all 99 participants and 44 radio narratives were considered.
were analysed separately given the known interaction between tense and quotation in narratives. The results of multivariate analysis focusing on quotative contexts are presented later in this section. Results of the runs based on all narrative clauses and non-quotative contexts only are presented together as they are closely similar: the results of the multivariate analysis where non-quotative and quotative verbs are collapsed in fact reflect the constraints on NPP usage operating in non-quotative contexts. This is because the number of non-quotative verbs (N=907) outweighs the number of quotative verbs (N=413) in the data analysed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All narrative clauses</th>
<th>Non-quotative contexts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>0.0467</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW % N Log-odds</td>
<td>FW % N Log-odds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>.63  23  569  0.552</td>
<td>.64  31  364  0.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>.60  19  546  0.420</td>
<td>.61  24  360  0.466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
<td>.27  9  205  -0.972</td>
<td>.25  9  183  -1.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TENSE IN PRECEDING</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>.71  46  196  0.938</td>
<td>.73  53  149  0.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>.52  21  213  0.113</td>
<td>.54  25  159  0.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>.37  14  300  -0.499</td>
<td>.36  17  176  -0.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>.36  13  611  -0.552</td>
<td>.35  16  423  -0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUOTATIVE CONTEXT</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.65  24  907  0.637</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.34  10  413  -0.637</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITION IN SEQUENCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>.65  21  1118  0.644</td>
<td>.68  26  755  0.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>.42  16  108  -0.343</td>
<td>.42  17  92  -0.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>.41  10  94  -0.302</td>
<td>.39  10  60  -0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.59  20  1183  0.39</td>
<td>.64  26  790  0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.40  12  137  -0.39</td>
<td>.35  9  117  -0.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKER</strong></td>
<td>std. dev. (intercept) 0.557</td>
<td>std. dev. (intercept) 0.553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10 Two independent Rbrul analyses of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of NPP usage in all narrative clauses and non-quotative contexts

All factor groups were selected as significant in the two independent Rbrul analyses.\(^{20}\)

In the run considering all narrative clauses, QUOTATIVE CONTEXT was selected as significant with a large magnitude of effect (range = 31): non-quotative contexts show a favouring effect on NPP usage (.65), while quotative contexts have a disfavouring effect (.34). Twenty-four percent of non-quotative verbs occur in the NPP as opposed to 10%...\(^{19}\)

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\(^{19}\) These represent cases where there is no preceding narrative clause, the preceding narrative clause is headed by the zero quotative, or the preceding narrative clause is headed by an ambiguous or non-canonical form (see §4.5.2).

\(^{20}\) All factor groups were also selected as significant with GoldVarb X (see Table A.1 in Appendix D). However, the factor group GRAMMATICAL PERSON has the smallest – rather than the largest – magnitude of effect (range = 5) because unexpressed subject pronouns were excluded from the GoldVarb X analysis. The ordering of factor groups according to their range is otherwise identical.
of quotative verbs. This is illustrated in (8) where all the verbs in the NPP occur in non-quotative contexts.

(8) [...] And this guy um David who was playing my husband, I'll always remember him sitting in the chair. Well he's gone puce in the face. His eyes are popping out like organ stops. And I said to him, “I think we have a bit of bother here.” And he goes, <yelling> “Bother! Bother! I’ll give you bother!” So <LAUGHTER> with that I’ve walked behind him and I’ve put my hands on his shoulders and I said, “There, there dear. Nah nah nah.” [...] (Female, 67, medical liaison officer)

In Levey’s (2006: 146) study of BrE preadolescent narratives, QUOTATIVE CONTEXT is not selected as a significant constraint on NPP usage. However, the NPP represents 10% of the narrative clauses headed by non-quotative verbs and 6% of the narrative clauses headed by quotative verbs in his data. With respective probabilities of .55 and .37 in his multivariate analysis, there appears to be no favouring or disfavouring effect of non-quotative contexts on NPP usage, but a disfavouring effect of quotative contexts, similar to the results obtained in the current study.

In the run considering non-quotative contexts, GRAMMATICAL PERSON has the largest magnitude of effect (range = 39). However, this factor group was only selected as significant because unexpressed subjects disfavour the NPP (.25). This finding is similar to Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016), where GRAMMATICAL PERSON is also selected as significant because unexpressed subjects have a disfavouring effect on NPP usage (.33). The small proportion of narrative clauses in the NPP without an overt grammatical subject is related to the periphrastic nature of the NPP and the coding adopted here. There are no examples in the corpus where the subject has been elided but the have auxiliary retained: *have grabbed my bag. In casual speech, the auxiliary is usually cliticised to the subject pronoun. In case of ellipsis, both subject and auxiliary get elided. As mentioned in §4.4.2, if the past participle form that remains after elision is indistinguishable from the SP form (grabbed my bag), the form was coded as ambiguous and excluded from the statistical analysis. Setting aside unexpressed subjects, factor weights indicate no preference for first person (.61) or third person (.64)
subjects on NPP usage. This was verified by running reference to the third person versus reference to the first person: the factor group reference was not selected as significant and the factor weights for first person (.48) and third person (.51) reference show a lack of impact of these factors on NPP usage. Grammatical person did not get selected as significant either in Levey’s (2006) study.

Setting aside grammatical person, the factor group with the largest magnitude of effect in non-quotative contexts is tense in preceding narrative clause (range = 38). The occurrence of an NPP in the preceding narrative clause significantly favours the NPP in the following clause with a probability of .73. Almost half of the verbs in the NPP (46%) are preceded by a clause headed by a verb in the NPP. This is illustrated in (9), where after an initial narrative clause in the NPP followed by a narrative clause in the SP, the narrator uses the NPP in the following five narrative clauses successively (underlined for illustrative purposes).

(9) Well I just got back from holidays <chuckle> er going ballistic <laughter> I had a moment [Yeah.] of about a minute, where my dad ... We had three bags when we got off the plane. [Ok.] And when we got off the bus we had two. And I’ve turned around. And I looked at him. And he’s looked at me. And I’ve looked forward again. I’ve looked back again with this look and he’s gone, “Where’s the other bag?” And I’ve gone, “<Takes big breath in> You’re kidding! Are you kidding?! Oh my g--” And I’d lost my shit for just that moment. […] (Male, 33, glazier)

This tendency for similar tense forms to cluster together has been noted in previous studies analysing tense variation in narrative (see §3.3.1). Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016) find that tense in preceding narrative clause significantly constrains the use of the NPP (range = 54), with a previous NPP overwhelmingly favouring the occurrence of the NPP again (.95). Analysing a corpus of NZE, Cox (2005: 89) establishes that nearly three quarters of the verbs in the NPP are preceded by a verb in the NPP. She finds the same priming effect for the CHP and the SP: 63% of the verbs in the CHP occur following a verb in the CHP, while 88% of the verbs in the SP occur following a

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21 The factor group tense in preceding narrative clause was also selected as significant when modelling the SP (range = 36) and the CHP (range = 33): the occurrence of the SP in the preceding narrative clause favours the use of the SP in the following clause (.64); similarly, the occurrence of the CHP in the preceding narrative clause favours the use of the CHP in the following clause (.72).
verb in the SP (Cox 2005: 89). For BrE, Levey (2006: 146) finds that tense in preceding narrative clause is always selected as significant, with each tense variant favoured in the presence of the similar variant in the preceding narrative clause (a probability of .94 for the NPP, .78 for the CHP and .68 for the SP) (Levey 2006: 146). Tense in preceding narrative clause is the only factor group selected as significant in his multivariate analysis of the constraints operating on the NPP, with a strong effect size (range = 54). He estimates that 52% of the verbs in the NPP are preceded by a clause headed by a verb in the NPP (see Figure 5.7).

The next factor group selected as significant in the current study was position in sequence of narrative clauses (range = 29). Medial clauses favour the NPP (.68) over initial (.42) and final (.39) clauses. Similar findings were obtained when modelling the CHP in lieu of the NPP based on the same data: position in sequence of narrative clauses was selected as a significant predictor of CHP usage (range = 17) with the form favoured in medial clauses (.52) over initial (.35) and final (.35) clauses. The factor group position in sequence of narrative clauses was also selected as significant when modelling the SP (range = 24), but the direction of effect is different: the SP is favoured in both initial (.70) and final (.69) clauses, and slightly disfavoured in medial clauses (.46). This is in line with what Schiffrin (1981: 51) observes in her corpus of AmE narratives: “The most typical pattern is one in which the complicating action begins with past-tense verbs, switches after a few clauses to the [C]HP, possibly switches between the [C]HP and the [S]P a few more times, and then concludes with past-tense verbs”. It is also in line with Fludernik’s (1991: 373) analysis that the initial and final clauses of the narrative clause sequence, which create a macro-structural narrative frame, are usually marked with overt past-tense morphology. The constraint on NPP usage confirms the results in Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016), where position in sequence of narrative clauses was also selected as significant (range = 21): the middle position favours the NPP (.53), while the initial and final positions disfavour the form with respective probabilities of .33 and .32. For his BrE data, Levey (2006) finds that the probability of occurrence of the NPP is higher in medial (.51) and final (.52) clauses than in initial clauses (.38), but position in sequence of narrative clauses is not selected as significant (Levey 2006: 146–147). The probability of NPP usage is equally low in initial and final clauses in the current study.

Regarding temporal disambiguation (range = 29), the absence of temporal adverbials has a favouring effect on the occurrence of the NPP in non-quotative
contexts (.64). The NPP is frequent in sequences of rapidly unfolding events, as illustrated in (10).

(10) And I’ve walked into the ladies’ toilet. And er I’ve gone in, sat down to do my business, and looked to my left and seen one of those sanitary bins and thought, “Mm it’s a bit weird for a boys’ toilet.” (Male, 46, process operator)

The events in question are in close temporal proximity and understood to quickly succeed each other. No adverbial expressing temporal progression is required to disambiguate the temporal make-up of the passage. The forms sat down and looked are ambiguous in that they could be SP or past participle forms and were not included in the statistical analysis. However, the use of the past participle seen at the end of the sequence of narrative clauses suggests that these forms are past participles as well and that the auxiliary have has scope over the sequence (cf. Ritz & Richard forthcoming). (The form thought is not considered in the statistical analysis as it heads an internal evaluation clause.) The series of narrative events form one sequence under the scope of I’ve in the first conjunct and none of the following events feature temporal disambiguation.

Table 5.11 summarises the linguistic constraints on NPP usage in the narratives by the 19 consistent NPP users in the sample and the 15 radio narratives that display variability between the SP, CHP and NPP. The same constraints apply when considering all narrative clauses or non-quotative contexts only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Narrative Present Perfect favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE</td>
<td>NPP is used in preceding narrative clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUOTATIVE CONTEXT</td>
<td>Narrative clause is headed by a non-quotative verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES</td>
<td>Narrative clause is in medial position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</td>
<td>There is no temporal disambiguation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11 Linguistic constraints on NPP usage in the current study

I now turn to the linguistic constraints operating on the NPP in quotative contexts. I ran separate multivariate analyses, investigating only clauses headed by
quotative verbs, to account for the potential effect of quotative verb on the use of the NPP. As mentioned earlier, quotative be like (N=111) never occurs with the NPP.

Table 5.12 presents the results of the Rbrul analysis for quotative contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Total N</th>
<th>0.143</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FW % N Log-odds</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUOTATIVE VERB</strong></td>
<td>p = 4.18e-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (e.g. yell)</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Say</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</strong></td>
<td>p = 1.95e-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE</strong></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Present Perfect</td>
<td>[.72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>[.48]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Historical Present</td>
<td>[.40]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past</td>
<td>[.37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES</strong></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>[.60]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>[.53]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>[.37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</strong></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>[.62]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>[.44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
<td>[.42]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPEAKER</strong></td>
<td>std. dev. (intercept) 0.819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12 Rbrul analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of NPP usage in quotative contexts

Two factor groups were selected as significant: QUOTATIVE VERB and TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION.\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) These represent cases where there is no preceding narrative clause, the preceding narrative clause is headed by the zero quotative, or the preceding narrative clause is headed by an ambiguous or non-canonical form (see §4.5.2).
The analysis reveals strong lexical effects. QUOTATIVE VERB is the strongest predictor of NPP usage (range = 60), with quotative go highly favouring the NPP (.79) over other quotative verbs. Example (11) illustrates the use of quotative go with the NPP.

(11) And he picked me up from the airport one time. He’s gone, “Oh. Can you hear that? Can you hear that noise?” “What? What is it?” “Oh, your bloody iPod’s on shuffle again.” And he just pretend-- like pulls his pants up and playing around his leg. And then he- [What? His leg has an iPod on?] He tattooed an iPod on his leg whilst I was at work, just, just for that joke. (Male, 27 electrician)

This echoes the statistically significant favouring effect of quotative go on the NPP (.60) established in Richard and Rodriguez Louro’s (2016: 135–136) study. Quotative go has also been shown to attract the NPP in Levey’s (2006: 140) study of BrE preadolescent narratives, although quotative verb was not modelled in his study. The lexical effect at play between quotative go and the NPP is in line with the effect noted for quotative be like and the CHP in AusE narratives (Rodríguez Louro 2013; Rodriguez Louro & Ritz 2014). I analyse the linguistic constraints operating on the CHP in §5.2.3.

The factor group TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was selected as significant (range = 47). However, this predictor was only just significant at the $p=0.01$ level. Also, the low number of tokens in the cell for narrative clauses featuring temporal disambiguation (N=13) invites caution. The direction of effect in this factor group is opposite to the direction of effect noted for the same factor group in non-quotative contexts: the presence of a temporal adverbial highly favours the NPP (.73) in quotative contexts, exemplified in (12).

(12) And we’re going out of our tents and then one of my mates’s gone, “Guys, you have to come and see this.” (Male, 36, chef)

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23 Three factor groups were selected as significant with GoldVarb X (see Table A.2 in Appendix D): QUOTATIVE VERB (range = 56), TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE (range = 35) and TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION (range = 33).
At first glance, the finding that the presence of temporal disambiguation could favour the NPP might seem contradictory since there is a supposed incompatibility of the (standard) PP with definite past temporal adverbials and adverbials expressing temporal progression (see §2.4.2). In (12), the preceding embedded orientation clause is in the CHP progressive. In the absence of then, we would understand the situation And we’re going out of our tents to be co-temporal with the event one of my mates’s gone. The adverb then specifies that the event one of my mates’s gone temporally follows the situation we’re going out of our tents, clarifying the temporal relations between the situations. I return to the question of the favouring versus disfavouring effect of the presence of temporal adverbials on tense usage in Chapter 6 (§6.5.4).

TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE was not selected as a significant predictor of NPP usage in quotative contexts. Results do show that the occurrence of the NPP in the preceding narrative clause favours its use in the following clause with a probability of .72, whereas the occurrence of the CHP or the SP in the preceding narrative clause disfavours the NPP with probabilities of .40 and .37 respectively. However, as shown in Figure 5.11, the priming effect of a preceding NPP is lessened in quotative contexts in comparison to non-quotative contexts. The lexical constraints at work as well as discourse-pragmatic considerations (see Chapter 6, §6.3.3 and §6.5.2) explain this result.

The predictors POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES and GRAMMATICAL PERSON were not selected as significant in quotative contexts. Nonetheless, the direction of effect for POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES shows that the NPP is preferred in medial position (.60), dispreferred in initial position (.37), and neither preferred nor dispreferred in final position (.53). By comparison, in non-quotative contexts, the NPP was favoured in medial position (.68), but disfavoured in initial (.42), and especially final (.39), positions. For GRAMMATICAL PERSON, the direction of effect reveals that the NPP is favoured with first person subjects (.62), but disfavoured with third person subjects (.44). There was no preference for the NPP with first or third person subjects in non-quotative contexts.

The linguistic constraints operating on NPP usage in quotative contexts are summarised in Table 5.13.

---

24 TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE was selected as a significant predictor of NPP usage with GoldVarb X (range = 35): the NPP is favoured after the NPP (.79), and disfavoured after the SP (.44); there is no effect from a preceding CHP (.47) (see Table A.2 in Appendix D). GoldVarb X might have overestimated the significance of this predictor.
Table 5.13 Linguistic constraints on NPP usage in quotative contexts in the current study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Narrative Present Perfect favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QUOTATIVE VERB</td>
<td>Quotative verb is go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</td>
<td>There is temporal disambiguation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13 Linguistic constraints on NPP usage in quotative contexts in the current study

5.2.3 Multivariate analysis on CHP usage

To establish the linguistic constraints operating on the CHP, and to obtain a clear picture of the variability surrounding NPP competitors, I modelled data from the 97 speakers in the sample who use the CHP in performed narratives (see Table 5.2).\textsuperscript{25}

Table 5.14 presents the results of a mixed-effects analysis computed with \textit{Rbrul} and evaluating the significance of five linguistic factors on CHP usage.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Charles Spencer and Matt Dawson were excluded from the analysis given the absence of CHPs in their narratives.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} The percentages are calculated using the data from the 97 speakers who use the CHP in their narratives. They therefore differ from the percentages presented in the distributional analysis in §5.2.1 where data from all 99 participants are considered.
\end{itemize}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>0.237</th>
<th>3879</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FW</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Person²⁷</td>
<td>p = 6.61e-52</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense in preceding narrative clause</td>
<td>p = 5.71e-38</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Historical Present</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable²⁸</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Present Perfect</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in sequence of narrative clauses</td>
<td>p = 1.31e-08</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotative context</td>
<td>p = 6.95e-28</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>.38</td>
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<td>2393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal disambiguation</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td>[0.52]</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>[0.52]</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>[.47]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>std. dev. (intercept) 0.614</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.14 Rbrul analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in narrative clauses.

Four factor groups were selected as significant.²⁹ From the largest to the smallest ranges, these were GRAMMATICAL PERSON (range = 32), TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE (range = 29), POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES (range = 29) and QUOTATIVE CONTEXT (range = 23). TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was not selected as significant. As indicated by the highest factor weights, the CHP is favoured when the

²⁷ Modelling REFERENCE to first vs. third person instead of GRAMMATICAL PERSON (first vs. third person expressed subjects), the factor group was still selected as significant (p=1.46e-52). The factor weights for first person reference (.35) and third person reference (.65) are closely similar to those obtained for first person subject (.35) and third person subject (.67).

²⁸ These represent cases where there is no preceding narrative clause, the preceding narrative clause is headed by the zero quotative, or the preceding narrative clause is headed by an ambiguous or non-canonical form (see §4.5.2).

²⁹ The same factor groups were selected as significant with GoldVarb X (see Table A.3 in Appendix D).
subject of the narrative clause is third person (.67), the tense in the preceding narrative clause is the CHP (.64), the narrative clause is in medial position (.63), and the verb heading the narrative clause is a quotative (.61).

These results are in line with previous research. The three factor groups **TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE**, **GRAMMATICAL PERSON** and **QUOTATIVE CONTEXT** were selected as significant in Rodríguez Louro and Ritz’s (2014) variable rule analysis based on AusE narrative data from speakers aged 12 to 28. The use of the CHP in the preceding narrative clause (.79), third person subjects (.64), and clauses headed by a quotative verb (.66) were all found to favour the CHP (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 558). **TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION** was also not selected as significant in their study. (They did not test **POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES** as a predictor.)

**QUOTATIVE CONTEXT** has been shown to exert a statistically significant influence on SP and CHP usage (see Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014; Levey 2006, *inter alia*). While non-quotative contexts significantly favour the SP (probability of .60 in Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014) and probability of .61 in Levey (2006)), quotative contexts are conducive to the CHP (probability of .66 in Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014) and probability of .80 in Levey (2006)). Investigating AusE, Winter (2002: 11) also finds that the CHP dominates in quotative contexts, accounting for 62% of all discourse quotatives. In the present study, quotative contexts similarly favour the occurrence of the CHP.

Table 5.15 summarises the influence of **QUOTATIVE CONTEXT** on SP, CHP and NPP usage in three studies: Levey (2006) on BrE, Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014) and the current study on AusE. I use the results of the analysis computed with *GoldVarb X* for comparability.
Table 5.15 Results of three independent multivariate analyses (GoldVarb X) measuring the probability of NPP, SP and CHP usage for the factor group QUOTATIVE CONTEXT across three studies of tense variation.

The same directions of effect are observed across the three studies. Table 5.16 summarises the linguistic constraints operating on the CHP in the current study, considering all narrative clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Conversational Historical Present favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Person</td>
<td>Subject of narrative clause is third person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense in preceding narrative clause</td>
<td>CHP is used in preceding narrative clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in sequence of narrative clauses</td>
<td>Narrative clause is in medial position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotative context</td>
<td>Narrative clause is headed by a quotative verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal disambiguation</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16 Linguistic constraints on CHP usage in the current study

30 The data modelled here consist of the data from the 19 consistent NPP users and 15 radio narratives that display variation between the SP, CHP and NPP. If data from the 97 speakers who use the CHP were considered, then QUOTATIVE CONTEXT would be selected as significant on both CHP (range = 20) and SP usage (range = 12): the CHP is favoured in quotative contexts (.62) and disfavoured in non-quotative contexts (.42); conversely, the SP is disfavoured in quotative contexts (.42) and slightly favoured in non-quotative contexts (.54).
Constraints on tense variation tend to operate differently in quotative and non-quotative contexts. Additional multivariate analyses were therefore performed separating the two contexts.

Table 5.17 displays the results of a mixed-effects analysis measuring the impact of linguistic factors on CHP usage in non-quotative contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>0.172</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>2393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE</th>
<th>p = 5.08e-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Historical Present</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable³¹</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Present Perfect</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES</th>
<th>p = 9.38e-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medial</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</th>
<th>p = 2.56e-03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</th>
<th>p = 4.21e-02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpressed</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEAKER</th>
<th>std. dev. (intercept) 0.833</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 5.17 Rbrul analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in non-quotative contexts.

The four factor groups included in the modelling were selected as significant, though reducing the significance level to p=0.01 (as per the Bonferroni correction) excludes GRAMMATICAL PERSON as a significant factor.³² TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE has the largest effect on CHP usage (range = 40): the use of the CHP in the preceding narrative clause strongly favours the CHP (.70). This effect on CHP usage is

³¹ These represent cases where there is no preceding narrative clause, the preceding narrative clause is headed by the zero quotative, or the preceding narrative clause is headed by an ambiguous or non-canonical form (see §4.5.2).
³² The four factor groups were selected as significant with GoldVarb X (see Table A.4 in Appendix D).
stronger when only non-quotative contexts are considered. The next factor group with a large effect on CHP usage is POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES (range = 25), with the CHP still favoured in medial position (.62). TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was selected as significant in non-quotative contexts, albeit with a relatively small range (range = 11). The CHP is favoured when there is temporal disambiguation (.55).

Table 5.18 summarises the linguistic constraints operating on CHP usage in non-quotative contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Conversational Historical Present favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TENSE IN PRECEDING</td>
<td>CHP is used in preceding narrative clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARRATIVE CLAUSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF</td>
<td>Narrative clause is in medial position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARRATIVE CLAUSES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION</td>
<td>There is temporal disambiguation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMATICAL PERSON</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.18 Linguistic constraints on CHP usage in non-quotative contexts in the current study

I now consider the linguistic constraints operating on CHP usage in quotative contexts. Table 5.19 presents the results of a mixed-effects analysis computed with Rbrul to unveil the linguistic constraints on CHP usage in quotative contexts.
Table 5.19 *Rbrul* analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in quotative contexts

Four out of five factor groups were selected as significant – TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was not selected as significant at the $p=0.05$ level in the mixed-effects model. Quotative Verb is the factor group with the largest magnitude of effect.

---

33 These represent cases where there is no preceding narrative clause, the preceding narrative clause is headed by the zero quotative, or the preceding narrative clause is headed by an ambiguous or non-canonical form (see §4.5.2).

34 All five predictors were selected as significant with *GoldVarb X* (see Table A.5 in Appendix D). TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was selected as significant in the *GoldVarb X* run (range = 16), with the presence of temporal disambiguation disfavouring CHP usage in quotative contexts (.35), while it was shown to favour CHP usage in non-quotative contexts. In the *Rbrul* run, the factor group was not selected as significant, but the direction of effect is similar: the presence of temporal disambiguation disfavs CHP usage in quotative contexts (.43).
Quotative *be like* (.73) and quotative *go* (.72) strongly favour the CHP. The use of *be like* in the CHP is exemplified in (13).

(13) So I was coming back from my boyfriend’s house at the time. And then, on the way home, I got a phone call from my housemate. And she was like balling her eyes out going, “Kim, Kim, guess what’s happened?” And I’m like, “What? What’s happened?” She’s like, um “My boyfriend’s car’s rolled down into the front of our house and smashed the whole front of the house down.”

(Female, 25, dental assistant)

**Grammatical Person** also has a large magnitude of effect on CHP usage (range = 57): narrative clauses with third person subjects highly favour CHP usage in quotative contexts (.79). By comparison, the impact of **Grammatical Person** was negligible in non-quotative contexts. The factor group **Position in Sequence of Narrative Clauses** was again selected as significant and has a significant effect on CHP usage (range = 40). The CHP is favoured in medial narrative clauses (.67), while initial narrative clauses disfavour its use (.27). The last significant predictor of CHP usage is **Tense in Preceding Narrative Clause**. As in non-quotative contexts, the use of the CHP in the preceding narrative clause favours the CHP (.63).

Table 5.20 summarises the linguistic constraints operating on CHP usage in quotative contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Conversational Historical Present favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotative Verb</strong></td>
<td>Quotative verb is <em>be like</em> or <em>go</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammatical Person</strong></td>
<td>Subject of narrative clause is third person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position in Sequence of Narrative Clauses</strong></td>
<td>Narrative clause is in medial position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tense in Preceding Narrative Clause</strong></td>
<td>CHP is used in preceding narrative clause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporal Disambiguation</strong></td>
<td><em>Not significant</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.20 Linguistic constraints on CHP usage in quotative contexts in the current study

In addition to the linguistic constraints, social constraints are operative. These are discussed in what follows.
5.3 The social factors

5.3.1 Distributional analysis

The distributional analysis of tense forms according to social factors is based on data from the *UWA Narrative Corpus* and the *UWA Corpus of English in Australia*, as shown in Table 5.21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>NPP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UWA Narrative Corpus</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>2672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWA Corpus of English in Australia</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2499</td>
<td>1168</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>3896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.21 Dataset for the analysis of social variables

SEX/GENDER

Table 5.22 shows the distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by speaker SEX/GENDER for the 99 participants in the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1251</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2096</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\chi^2 = 84.3; p = 0.000\]

Table 5.22 Distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by speaker SEX/GENDER

The SP is predominant for both male (60%) and female (70%) speakers. The CHP is the second most widely used tense in narrative for both sexes/genders (32% for male speakers; 28% for female speakers). The NPP represents the smallest proportion of the variation observed. It is used more frequently by male than female speakers (9% [184/2096] vs. 3% [45/1800]). A chi-square test of independence (Eddington 2015: 47) shows that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the use of tense variants and SEX/GENDER, \[\chi^2 (2) = 84.3, p = 0.000\].

AGE

Tense variation also differs across AGE, as shown in Table 5.23.
### Table 5.23 Distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16–29 yr. olds</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1334</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1036</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 56.7; p = 0.000$

The SP is dominant across the three age cohorts representing between 60% and 70% of the variation. The proportion of CHP slightly increases from the oldest to the youngest age cohort, featuring most prominently in the narratives of the 16–29 year olds (33%). Conversely, narratives produced by the 16–29 year olds rarely feature the NPP (3%). The 30–49 year olds have the largest proportion of NPP usage (9%). The ≥ 50 year olds also non-negligibly use the NPP – it represents 6% of the variation in their narratives. A chi-square test of independence shows a statistically significant relationship between tense and AGE, $\chi^2 (4) = 56.7, p = 0.000$.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Table 5.24 shows a fine-grained distribution of tense forms according to the five occupational categories established in §4.6.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>NPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Managers, proprietors &amp; professionals</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Associate professionals</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Other white-collar workers</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Skilled manual, clerical &amp; service workers</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Semi-skilled/unskilled manual, clerical &amp; service workers</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.24 Distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

The proportion of NPP is strictly above 5% for two occupational categories: category D (skilled manual, clerical and service workers) and category E (semi-skilled/unskilled
manual, clerical and service workers). These speakers are collapsed into ‘non-professionals’. All other speakers are ‘professionals’. Table 5.25 displays the proportion of the different tense forms among professional and non-professional speakers separately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Non-professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 121.0; p=0.000 \]

Table 5.25 Distribution of tense forms in narrative clauses by speaker SES

A chi-square test of independence shows that there exists a statistically significant relationship between tense and speaker SES, \( \chi^2 (2)= 121, p=0.000 \). Importantly, professional speakers evince a binary variable system including the SP (66%) and the CHP (33%). Their use of the NPP is negligible. Non-professional speakers, on the other hand, show a tripartite variable system: they favour the SP (63%) but also use the CHP (28%) and the NPP (10%).

Considering the interaction between the three main social factors is especially important regarding NPP usage. Table 5.26 presents the percentage of narrative clauses headed by the NPP according to speaker AGE, SEX/GENDER and SES. The percentage is calculated as the proportion of narrative clauses headed by the NPP out of the total of narrative clauses produced by members of each social group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Non-professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–29</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4/467)</td>
<td>(1/236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11/490)</td>
<td>(3/270)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \geq 50 )</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7/175)</td>
<td>(2/195)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.26 Proportion of NPP usage across social groups in the participant sample (N=99)
The NPP is close to negligible (less than 5%) in the narratives of professional speakers of all ages and sexes/genders. It is most prevalent in the narratives of non-professional male speakers, representing 12-13% of the variation for the 16–29 year olds and the ≥50 year olds, and 21% of the variation for the 30–49 year olds. Whereas ≥50 year-old non-professional females use the form 7% of the time, their younger counterparts barely use the NPP at all (4% for the 30–49 year olds and less than 1% for the 16–29 year olds). Though the NPP is clearly more prevalent in the narratives of non-professional male speakers, caution must be exercised with regard to the cohort of non-professional female speakers aged 30 to 49, as they produced the smallest number of tokens. However, younger (16–29) and older (≥50) non-professional females do show a lower proportion of NPP usage compared to the non-professional males of the same age cohort.

The situation is different for CHP usage, with all social groups largely using the form (≥20%). Table 5.27 shows all percentages corresponding to the proportion of narrative clauses headed by the CHP out of the total of narrative clauses produced per social group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Non-professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–29</td>
<td>44% (207/467)</td>
<td>31% (74/236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>32% (159/490)</td>
<td>31% (83/270)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥50</td>
<td>20% (35/175)</td>
<td>21% (41/195)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.27 Proportion of CHP usage across social groups in the participant sample (N=99)

The slightly larger proportion of CHP in the data from the 16–29 year olds is in line with Rodriguez Louro and Ritz’s (2014: 562) observation that the CHP is mostly a feature of youth speech (age 12–28) in their AusE corpus. They call for a larger scale study to be undertaken to confirm this trend. I engage with this call in §5.3.3.

Further cross-tabulations between social and linguistic factors reveal interactions between AGE and QUOTATIVE CONTEXT/QUOTATIVE VERB. In non-quotative contexts, the 16–29 year olds show less tense variability than the other two age cohorts, largely using the SP (73%). In quotative contexts, they do not use the NPP, instead alternating
between the SP and the CHP (50%-50%). This is related to their preference for quotative *be like*, which never appears in the NPP. Conversely, the ≥ 50 year olds show less variability than the other two age cohorts in quotative contexts. They still largely use the SP (68%). This is due in part to their preference for quotative *say*, which commonly appears in the SP.

To further understand the role of age in the use of the NPP, Figure 5.12 presents a conditional inference tree (see Strobl, Malley & Tutz 2009; Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012) of the probability of quotative verb usage according to speaker age cohort for the 99 participants in the sample. The three age cohorts comprise the 16–29 year olds (y), the 30–49 year olds (a), and the ≥ 50 year olds (s). The quotative verbs considered are *be like* (b), *go* (g), *say* (s), and a miscellaneous category containing various other quotatives (o).35

![Figure 5.12 Probability of quotative verb usage according to speaker AGE](image)

The 16–29 year olds overwhelmingly use quotative *be like* (72%) over quotative *go* and *say*. Conversely, the ≥ 50 year olds barely use quotative *be like* and largely use

35 The quotative verbs in the miscellaneous category are: *reply, tell, be, hear, whisper, yell (out), realise, decide, ask* and *scream out.*
quotative *say* (67%). The 30–49 year olds also prefer quotative *say* (42%) over other quotatives. However, these speakers also frequently introduce quotes with *be like* (33%). Both the 30–49 year olds and the ≥ 50 year olds use quotative *go* over 20% of the time, whereas the 16–29 year olds only use it about 12% of the time. Since the different quotative verbs attract different tense forms (see Figure 5.9), the preference for certain quotatives by certain age groups overall impacts tense variation.

The following sections present the results of multivariate analyses used to assess the contribution of the social factors of *AGE*, *SEX/GENDER* and *SES* on NPP usage (§5.3.2) and CHP usage (§5.3.3). The three social factors were modelled as fixed effects in the *GoldVarb X* analyses reported in Appendix D. In the *Rbrul* analyses presented below, the three social factors were treated as fixed effects, while *SPEAKER* was included as a random effect to account for individual variation.

### 5.3.2 Multivariate analysis on NPP usage

To investigate the influence of social factors on NPP usage (see §4.6), I modelled the 19 speakers in the sample who display variability between the three tense variants (SP, CHP and NPP) and who are considered consistent users of the NPP, i.e. whose NPP usage is at or above 5% (see Table 5.4). The results of the multivariate analysis on NPP usage (relative to the SP and the CHP) are presented in Table 5.28.

---

36 The percentages are calculated using the data from the 19 consistent NPP users who display variability between the SP, CHP and NPP. They therefore differ from the percentages presented in the distributional analysis in §5.3.1 where data from all 99 participants are considered.
Table 5.28 *Rbrul* analysis of the contribution of social factors to the probability of NPP usage in narrative clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>0.0783</th>
<th>1168</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FW</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professional</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEX/GENDER</strong></td>
<td>p = 0.01740</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–49</td>
<td>[.56]</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 50</td>
<td>[.55]</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–29</td>
<td>[.37]</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SES and SEX/GENDER were selected as significant at the p=0.05 level. SES has the largest magnitude of effect (range = 30), followed by SEX/GENDER (range = 27).³⁷ The factor weight for non-professional speakers is .65, indicating a favouring effect of this cohort on NPP usage. Conversely, the factor weight of .35 shows that professional speakers disfavour the use of the NPP. For SEX/GENDER, the factor weights indicate that the NPP is favoured by male speakers (.63) and disfavoured by female speakers (.36). AGE, modelled as a categorical variable, was not selected as significant. To ensure that the classification of speakers into the three age cohorts was not unduly influencing the results, I also ran the multivariate analysis modelling speaker year of birth as a continuous variable. The factor group was not selected as significant either. NPP usage is thus clearly not constrained by AGE.

These results are in line with Richard (2015) and Richard and Rodríguez Louro (2016). Richard (2015) analyses a small corpus of 24 narratives produced by eight participants (four females, four males), aged 36 to 56, and standing at strictly opposite ends of the SES scale: half the speakers are professionals with university degrees (a clinical psychologist, an accountant, a sustainability officer, and a registered nurse); half are non-professionals (a process operator, a chef, a medical receptionist, and a remedial massage and stretch therapist) (Richard 2015: 36). Though the size of the sample

³⁷ The same factor groups were selected as significant with *GoldVarb X* (see Table A.6 in Appendix D); however, the effect sizes reported for SES (range = 23) and SEX/GENDER (range = 18) are smaller.
precluded multivariate analysis, chi-square tests of independence show that there exists a statistically significant relationship between tense and OCCUPATION, \( \chi^2 (2) = 103.0, p=0.000 \) (Richard 2015: 40), and between tense and sex/gender, \( \chi^2 (2) = 51.9, p=0.000 \) (Richard 2015: 43), as also shown in the current study (see §5.3.1). In Richard (2015: 40), the NPP does not occur at all in the narratives produced by the professional speakers, but features at 24% in the narratives of the non-professional speakers. Moreover, the large majority of those tokens (85% [35/41]) are found in the narratives of male participants (Richard 2015: 43).

Similarly, Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016) find that the NPP is significantly constrained by SES (range = 73): speakers of a non-professional background overwhelmingly prefer the NPP (.92), in stark contrast to professionals (.19). In their study, sex is the second most influential social constraint on NPP usage (range = 26), with males markedly preferring the NPP (.63) over their female counterparts (.37). Contrary to the present study, age/decade of birth is selected as significant (range = 23) in Richard and Rodriguez Louro (2016). The difference in findings is likely the result of the binary age classification of speakers and the lack of inclusion of speaker as a random effect in their statistical modelling. It is also potentially due to a smaller sample of speakers (N=57) in comparison to the current sample (N=99). Although age is not a statistically significant constraint on NPP usage in the current study, results do show that the 16–29 year olds disfavour the NPP (.37), while the 30–49 year olds (.55) and the \( \geq 50 \) year olds (.56) slightly prefer the form. This social difference correlates with a linguistic difference (see Figure 5.12). The 16–29 year olds largely use quotative be like (72%), which never appears in the NPP. Conversely, they only use quotative go about 12% of the time – and this is the only quotative that attracts the NPP. By comparison, quotative go represents 20% of the quotatives used by the 30–49 year olds and the \( \geq 50 \) year olds. The probability of NPP usage is therefore low in quotative contexts for the 16–29 year olds, and quotative contexts represent a sizeable portion of the data (37% of narrative clauses, excluding the zero quotative).

Interestingly, the present findings are in line with Levey’s (2006) results for BrE preadolescent narratives. Constraints might differ across varieties of English, so one must be cautious when comparing results. However, the NPP features in 9% of the complicating action clauses of the BrE narratives analysed by Levey (2006: 140), a relatively high percentage when compared across studies (see Figure 5.2). Probably not coincidentally, the data were collected in a predominantly working-class area (Levey
Investigating NPP usage further, Levey (2006) observes that the form is more prevalent in the stories of male (12%) than female (6%) speakers (though SEX/GENDER is not selected as a statistically significant factor group in his multivariate analysis). NPP usage seems to correlate with working-class background and male speakers in his study as well.

As previously explained, there is a clear social differentiation in the occurrence of the NPP, with most tokens produced by non-professional speakers. Given the complexity of establishing speaker SES, multiple Rbrul analyses were run in this study modelling SES either on speaker occupation, education, or parental occupation alone. SES was also modelled as an index based on both speaker occupation and education. Occupation is scored on a scale from 0 to 4; education is scored from 1 to 4 (see §4.6.3). The index is based on the addition of the two scores. Speakers whose score is strictly above 6 are classified as high SES speakers; speakers whose score is equal to or below 6 are classified as low SES speakers. To assess the fit of the various statistical models to the data, I used the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). The AIC measures the fit of the statistical model to a given set of data, taking into account the accuracy of the model but also its complexity. The lower the AIC value, the better the fit of the model (Baayen 2013: 347). If a difference between two AIC values is smaller than two, then improvement to the model is not significant. Table 5.29 presents the AIC values of five Rbrul analyses on NPP usage modelling speaker SES differently. In the runs, SEX/GENDER and AGE were always included as fixed effects, while SPEAKER was always included as a random effect.

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38 It was part of the recruitment criteria that speakers “should have been resident in the locality where the recordings were made since early childhood” (Levey 2006: 128).
Table 5.29 Various modellings of speaker SES and their impact on the statistical output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker SES modelled as…</th>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>Factor selected as significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (5 categories)</td>
<td>1059.349</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (professional vs. non-professional)</td>
<td>1057.625</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1058.269</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental occupation</td>
<td>1064.391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index (occupation &amp; education)</td>
<td>1056.843</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with previous research, occupation alone – based on a binary distinction between professional and non-professional speakers – is an accurate predictor of the variation observed (Ash 2002: 419): it has the second lowest AIC value (1057.625). The index combining speaker occupation and level of education slightly outperforms the individual class indicator of occupation (Labov 2001b: 58–66). It displays the lowest AIC value (1056.843). However, the difference between these two lowest AIC values is less than two, indicating that it is not significant. In practical terms, this means that modelling SES on speaker occupation alone (opposing professional and non-professional speakers) is as reliable as a more complex modelling of speaker SES. Thus, the current study uses speaker occupation as a proxy for SES.

Table 5.30 summarises the social constraints on NPP usage in the narratives by the 19 consistent NPP users in the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Narrative Present Perfect favoured when…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Speaker is non-professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX/GENDER</td>
<td>Speaker is male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.30 Social constraints on NPP usage in the current study

5.3.3 Multivariate analysis on CHP usage

To compare the social constraints operating on the CHP as opposed to those relevant to the NPP, I modelled the impact of SEX/GENDER, AGE and SES on data from the 97 speakers in the sample who use the CHP.

Table 5.31 presents the results of a mixed-effects analysis with Rbrul.40

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40 The SES index was also modelled as a continuous variable. SES is still selected as significant. The AIC value of the model is 1056.519, close to the AIC value (1056.843) obtained when modelling the index as a categorical variable opposing low and high SES speakers.
Table 5.31 *Rbrul* analysis of the contribution of social factors to the probability of CHP usage in narrative clauses

**AGE** was the only factor group selected as significant at the \( p = 0.05 \) level \((p = 0.0287)\) by the *Rbrul* programme.⁴¹ The magnitude of effect of the **AGE** predictor is not distinctively large \((\text{range} = 12)\). The factor weights indicate that the 16–29 year olds favour the CHP \((.57)\), while the 30–49 year olds and the \(\geq 50\) year olds slightly disfavour it. The results of the statistical analyses show that no strong social constraints operate on CHP usage. The only social factor with a small impact on CHP usage is speaker **AGE**, as shown in Table 5.32.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AGE</strong></th>
<th>Conversational Historical Present favoured when...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker is aged 16 to 29.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.32 Social constraints on CHP usage in the current study

---

⁴¹ The percentages are calculated using the data from the 97 speakers who use the CHP in their narratives. They therefore differ from the percentages presented in the distributional analysis in §5.3.1 where data from all 99 participants are considered.

⁴¹ All factor groups were selected as significant with *GoldVarb X* (see Table A.7 in Appendix D). However, the small range values \((\text{SES}, \text{range} = 5; \text{SEX/GENDER}, \text{range} = 4)\) suggest that the effect size is small, if not null. The *GoldVarb X* analysis might have overestimated the significance of **SES** and **SEX/GENDER**.
All native speakers of AusE use the CHP in performed narratives. The form is not constrained by speaker SES or SEX/GENDER, as is the case with the NPP. The non-significance of SEX/GENDER is in line with previous research by Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014), where SEX is not selected as a significant predictor of CHP usage in AusE narratives produced by 12- to 28-year-old speakers (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 558). In the current study, speaker AGE has a small effect on CHP usage: the 16–29 year olds favour the form over their older counterparts (over 30 years of age). Conversely, Table 5.28 showed that the 16–29 year olds disfavour the NPP with a factor weight of .37, though AGE was not selected as a statistically significant predictor of NPP usage. In Rodríguez Louro and Ritz (2014), data from the older cohort (36–62 years old) are largely invariable, with the SP representing almost 90% of the variation. This meant that multivariate analysis could not be performed (Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 556). However, the CHP represents 16% of the variation in their younger age cohort (12–28 years old), suggesting age-related trends similar to those found in the current study.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have offered a general overview of the distribution of the SP, CHP and NPP in narrative clauses in the dataset. I have also presented the results of a series of multivariate analyses testing for the effect of various sociolinguistic factors on NPP and CHP usage.

This is the first study to model narrative tense variability while dealing with quotative and non-quotative contexts separately. The results suggest that several linguistic factors constrain the use of the NPP and the CHP in narrative, and that these constraints differ across contexts. Considering all narrative clauses, the NPP is favoured in non-quotative contexts, whereas the CHP is favoured in quotative contexts. In non-quotative contexts, the NPP is favoured when (i) the NPP is used in the preceding narrative clause, (ii) there is no temporal disambiguation, and (iii) the narrative clause is in medial position. Similarly, the CHP is favoured when (i) the CHP is used in the preceding narrative clause, and (ii) the narrative clause is in medial position. TEMPORAL DISAMBIGUATION was also selected as a significant factor group on CHP usage, but it is the presence of a temporal adverbial which favours the CHP. GRAMMATICAL PERSON was not selected as significant on either NPP or CHP usage in non-quotative contexts. In quotative contexts, there is a strong lexical effect in place from QUOTATIVE VERB: the NPP is favoured by quotative go, whereas quotative be like precludes its use (it is a
knockout); the CHP is favoured by quotative *be like* and quotative *go*. **Temporal disambiguation** is also a significant predictor of NPP usage, though it is the presence of a temporal adverbial, rather than its absence, that favours the use of the NPP. **Tense in preceding narrative clause** and **position in sequence of narrative clauses** were no longer selected as significant, though the direction of effects is similar to that found in non-quotative contexts. Whether in quotative or non-quotative contexts, **grammatical person** has no impact on the use of the NPP. The CHP is no longer constrained by **temporal disambiguation** in quotative contexts but it is constrained by **grammatical person**, **position in sequence of narrative clauses** and **tense in preceding narrative clause**: it is favoured when the narrative clause’s subject is in the third person, and it is favoured – as in non-quotative contexts – when the clause is located in medial position and preceded by a narrative clause headed by the CHP.

The results of the multivariate analyses also indicate that different social constraints operate on the two forms. The NPP is constrained by speaker **SES** and **SEX/GENDER**: non-professional males favour the form. **Age** is not selected as significant, though the direction of effect shows that the youngest age cohort (the 16–29 year olds) disfavour it. For CHP usage, however, the only significant social predictor is **age**, with the 16–29 year olds favouring the form. I discuss these findings further in Chapter 7 (§7.4).

Though the present chapter has identified a range of sociolinguistic constraints operating on the NPP and the CHP, two crucial tenses in narrative performance, it leaves unanswered questions related to the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense variation in performed narratives. I examine these functions in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6

The discourse-pragmatics of tense/aspect variation

This chapter presents the results of a comprehensive discourse-level analysis of the narrative data to elucidate the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense/aspect variation in performed narratives. It specifically addresses the role of the NPP, in comparison to the CHP. Some usage frequencies are provided to help the reader locate the findings vis à vis the dataset.

As established in Chapter 4, the SP, CHP and NPP are considered variants of the same variable since they have the same referential function in narrative clauses – they all refer to past/perfective events. How, then, can speakers’ selection (whether conscious or subconscious) between these “seemingly indistinguishable alternatives” (Polanyi-Bowditch 1976: 62) be explained? A number of sociolinguistic constraints are operative (see Chapter 5), but these do not fully account for the tense variation observed in performed narratives. Discourse-pragmatic considerations help shed additional light on the phenomenon.

Cross-linguistically, tense/aspect categories are often used for pragmatic purposes in narrative (see Chapter 3, §3.3.2). In English, past temporal reference is typically signalled with the SP (Dahl 1985: 14). The SP yields a past/perfective reading with eventive predicates. It is therefore considered the default/unmarked form in narrative discourse (Fleischman 1990: 5), while the CHP and the NPP are viewed as marked options (see Chapter 1). The CHP and the NPP “take on a perfective aspect” in narrative clauses (Silva-Corvalán 1983: 768).

To uncover the discourse-pragmatic functions that these two marked forms perform in narratives, and how they interact with the SP, I carried out a qualitative analysis of the performed narratives in the dataset (see Chapter 4, §4.7). I adopted an inductive approach, establishing functions empirically based on my observations. Similarly to the quantitative analysis (see Chapter 5), I initially focused on tense switching across the narrative clause sequence. The analysis was then expanded to whole narratives to consider how tense/aspect variation operates within, but also beyond, the narrative clause sequence. All the narratives in the sample were systematically analysed. The discourse-pragmatic patterns described are recurrent patterns in the entire dataset.
I make the following central claims:

- Tense/aspect variation serves as a **discourse-structuring device** (Fleischman 1990: 168), helping listeners navigate through the story.

- Tense switching into the CHP or the NPP (but not the SP) functions as an **evaluation device**. The switch allows narrators to foreshadow highlights in the narrative (Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 238), and to signal which events they evaluate as remarkable or unexpected (Mustanoja 1960: 506–507; Longacre 1976: 219ff.; Silva-Corvalán 1983: 774; Fludernik 1991: 374).¹

- Notwithstanding disparate sociolinguistic constraints, the **CHP and the NPP fulfil similar discourse-pragmatic functions in narrative**, whether they are used independently or jointly.² In the latter case, a division of labour operates between the forms.

- Due to their semantics, the use of the CHP and the NPP yield different **rhetorical effects**.

The chapter is organised as follows. I begin in §6.1 with additional quantitative information over tense variation in performed narratives, providing useful background data to the qualitative analysis. In §6.2 I raise the question of speaker subjectivity. In §6.3 I focus on the discourse-structuring functions of tense/aspect variation in narrative, while in §6.4 I explore the various evaluative functions fulfilled by the CHP and the NPP. In §6.5 I investigate how the CHP and the NPP interact – taking into account the constraints that operate on each form – and what rhetorical effects their use brings about in performed narratives.

¹ There is arguably a methodological caveat in order to independently assess narrators’ evaluation of events. However, it is no coincidence that the CHP and the NPP are essentially used at the heart of the complication and always related to the remarkable event.

² The assumption in defining the envelope of variation was that the SP, CHP and NPP fulfill the same **referential** function (see Chapter 4). However, the forms are not assumed to fulfill similar **discourse-pragmatic** functions.
6.1 Further quantitative exploration

Though the main goal of this chapter is to present the discourse-pragmatic functions of tense/aspect variation in performed narratives – and that of the NPP in particular – further quantitative investigation, not addressed in Chapter 5, helps shed additional light on the variation. In §6.1.1, I present the types of variation across the sequence of narrative clauses which are actually realised and most common. In §6.1.2, I focus on tense variation in the Radio Narrative Corpus where tense switching as a feature of performance is more prevalent. In §6.1.3, I consider the NPP tokens which were extracted outside the sequence of narrative clauses, and therefore not included in the distributional and statistical analyses offered in Chapter 5.

6.1.1 Combinations of tense forms in narrative clause sequences

The 287 performed narratives produced by the 99 native speakers of AusE in the sample all display tense variation across the narrative clause sequence. However, if all types of variation are theoretically possible (SP-CHP, SP-NPP, SP-CHP-NPP and CHP-NPP), only some are actually realised. Table 6.1 shows the different variation types in narrative clauses and their usage frequency considering the 99 participants in the sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense forms in narrative clauses</th>
<th>Performed narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-CHP</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-CHP-NPP</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-NPP</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP-NPP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 Types of tense variation displayed in narrative clauses for the 99 participants in the sample

Since some speakers never use the NPP (or their use of the form is near-negligible – representing less than 5% of the variation), Table 6.1 must be analysed with caution.

---

3 The SP, unmarked narrative tense, only represents 50% of the variation in the 44 radio narratives, while it represents 64% of the variation in the 287 oral narratives produced in face-to-face interaction.

4 Here, I leave aside the 44 radio narratives since they were originally selected for their use of the NPP (Engel & Ritz 2000: 129). In fact, narratives displaying SP-CHP variation are absent in the Radio Narrative Corpus.
It appears that AusE speakers most commonly switch between the SP and the CHP (69%) in narrative clauses. This result is expected: a significant number of speakers (78% [78/99]) use the CHP but rarely use the NPP. Still, the CHP is prevalent even for consistent NPP users. Table 6.2 presents the types of tense variation displayed in narrative clauses for the 21 consistent NPP users only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense forms in narrative clauses</th>
<th>Performed narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-CHP</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-CHP-NPP</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP-NPP</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP-NPP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Types of tense variation displayed in narrative clauses for the 21 consistent NPP users

Table 6.2 shows that the proportion of narratives displaying SP-CHP variation (25%), and SP-NPP variation (21%), is roughly similar for this sub-group of speakers, while SP-CHP-NPP variation is the most frequent type (53%). The CHP is thus only absent in 21% of the consistent NPP users’ narratives. In fact, out of the 99 participants in the sample, 90 produced at least one narrative with variation between the SP and the CHP across the narrative clause sequence. The CHP, then, is the narrative ‘pragmatic’ tense *par excellence.*

Considering all speakers in the sample, variation between the SP, CHP and NPP represents 22% of the types of tense variation displayed in narrative clauses, while variation between the SP and the NPP represents 9% of the variation. In line with Ritz and Engel (2008: 131), the NPP is used as a narrative tense both with and without the CHP. The fact that the CHP and the NPP are more likely to co-occur in sequences of narrative clauses suggests that the NPP cannot simply be said to replace the CHP (see §6.5). Different cross-tabulations show no strict correlation between an increase in NPP usage and a decrease in CHP usage. Sometimes an increase in the proportion of NPP seems to affect the proportion of use of the SP, rather than that of the CHP. Sometimes it seems to affect both the proportion of use of the SP and that of the CHP. Based on the results from the multivariate analyses in §5.2.2 and §5.2.3, it is possible to suggest some explanations. The lexical effects operating in quotative contexts constrain the variation: though the NPP is generally disfavoured in quotative contexts, it is strongly favoured by quotative *go.* On the other hand, quotative *be like* never appears in the NPP, it only occurs in the SP or the CHP (cf. Richard & Rodriguez Louro 2016).
An additional six narratives were set apart in the selection process. These were ultimately excluded because they lack tense variation in the sequence of narrative clauses, but they have the particularity of having an all-CHP (four narratives) or an all-NPP (two narratives) sequence of narrative clauses, rather than an all-SP sequence – the SP being the default narrative tense in English.\(^5\) The use of the CHP or the NPP entirely isolates the narrative clause sequence (see §6.3.4). Such examples are, however, rare. This parallels Schiffrin’s (1981: 51) observation that narratives with a complication related exclusively in the CHP are exceptional in AmE. Similarly, variation between the CHP and the NPP – in the absence of the SP – is almost non-existent. A single such narrative is apparent in my corpus, out of a total of 287.

6.1.2 Radio narratives

I treated the 44 radio narratives differently for three reasons. (i) The Radio Narrative Corpus was compiled specifically to include narratives featuring non-standard PP tokens (Engel & Ritz 2000: 129). Radio narratives displaying SP-CHP variation are therefore absent in the corpus, though they can frequently be heard on the radio. (ii) These narratives were produced via a different medium. Unlike sociolinguistic interviews where interaction is face-to-face, radio callers and presenters have a large audience of invisible listeners, as opposed to a single interlocutor (the interviewer). (iii) Not all radio narratives are narratives of personal experience. Some narratives produced by the radio presenters are retellings of callers’ personal experiences or pieces of news that the presenters turn into a story. Those differences matter in terms of tense switching. The radio medium is highly conducive to tense switching as a feature of performance, and radio presenters’ vivid narrative style largely makes use of the NPP.

Among the 44 radio narratives in the dataset, 21 are straightforward narratives of personal experience produced by callers (including a few celebrities) and the radio presenters themselves. In 12 radio narratives, rather than allow callers to directly report their story on air, the radio presenters give a rendering of the story told to the call centre. This is signalled at the beginning of narratives with abstracts/orientations such as: *Steven from Coburg in Victoria, he’s got a bit of a story about- He went to*

\(^5\) Two radio narratives (not included in the dataset) also featured all-NPP sequences of narrative clauses.
Dreamworld [...] Joanne in Adelaide has got a story about her dad [...]. Finally, four radio narratives are based on news stories, as the start of (1) suggests.6

(1) There’s been a bit of controversy around the palace because somebody has been sacked from the royal employment list because she’s been a little bit naughty. [Just a little bit.] Just slightly upset the queen. It’s been right across the papers today [snip]. A young woman called Monica [...] (Triple J radio, Sydney, 22.02.2000)

In terms of the types of variation displayed across the 44 radio narratives, 15 radio narratives show SP-CHP-NPP variation, 27 show SP-NPP variation, and two show CHP-NPP variation across the sequence of narrative clauses.

Examining variation between the SP and the NPP in the radio narratives produced by presenters, the NPP is found to represent 48% (71/147) of the variation. However, an interesting contrast appears between the proportion of NPP used in their own personal stories shared on air (31% [16/52]), and the proportion of NPP in their retellings of callers’ stories or retellings of events which they have heard about in the news (58% [55/95]). Considering the radio narratives displaying SP-CHP-NPP variation produced by the radio presenters, the same distinction between their stories of personal experience and others is reflected in the proportion of the tense variants. The CHP and the NPP respectively represent 22% and 20% of the variation when they report their narratives of personal experience. The proportion of CHP slightly increases to 24% and the proportion of NPP jumps to 34% when they tell other people’s stories and news stories. (The percentage of NPP is lower than in SP-NPP radio narratives because of the presence of a third variant, the CHP.) Example (2) illustrates the use of the NPP in a story about a caller’s personal experience reported by a radio presenter.

(2) He’s got a story about his dad. He ((wa))’s working in South Australia, just out on an opal mine, outback. And having nothing much to do on some of the hotter days he and a few of the boys used to have a few cold stubbies.7 After a while, they accumulated a lot of empty stubbies. And they’re sitting around

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6 There are seven radio narratives that are ambiguous in terms of who is reporting the story. It is unclear whether the story is reported by a caller or a radio presenter, and if reported by a radio presenter, whether the story told is the radio presenter’s personal story, a story from a caller, or a story based on a piece of news.

7 Stubbies are beer bottles.
and thinking, “What are we going to do with all these empty stubbies? We could recycle them, or we could get a few bags of cement and make ourselves a pool. We’ll make ourselves a pool.” Now, I’ve seen wine bottles turned into rather an ornate Australian brick fence, right. I’ve seen that done before. I’ve never seen a pool done before. So they’ve got some cement, put all the stubbies into- obviously, I can’t even think, I’ve been trying to figure it out all day actually, how the hell they made a pool out of stubbies. And then they’ve got this, once they’ve put some water in like that, Gough’s old man’s gone, “Mmm, this is a good pool, we really should have a first class diving board.” So they got a plank of wood and Gough’s old man’s had a little bit of a shot. Hasn’t quite worked out with the diving board. Hasn’t quite worked out with the pool. The water’s kinda run out ’cause it wasn’t kinda really a pool, and he’s broken his ankle, and wondered why. (Triple J radio, Sydney, 02.03.2000)

For such stories, radio presenters reconstruct and partially imagine the series of events that must have unfolded based on the information at hand. Example (2) shows the strategies typically adopted by the radio presenters in those cases. In particular, they tend to imagine protagonists’ thoughts and conversational exchanges, as in:

- And they’re sitting around and thinking, “What are we going to do with all these empty stubbies? We could recycle them, or we could get a few bags of cement and make ourselves a pool. We’ll make ourselves a pool.”
- Gough’s old man’s gone, “Mmm, this is a good pool, we really should have a first class diving board.”

The quotes do not seem to report actual words uttered (the radio presenters were not present at the time of the events), nor do they seem to report actual thoughts given that the narrator can only access his/her own thoughts (Romaine & Lange 1991: 243). Therefore, other protagonists’ thoughts are necessarily speculative, and often figments of the narrator’s imagination, unless the protagonists have shared what they thought under the circumstances with the narrator. So the radio presenters ‘put words into the mouth’ of protagonists and ‘thoughts into their mind’. They act the scene out to make it more vivid. They literally put on a show. The presenters largely evaluate the events to
insist on the reportability of the story (I’ve never seen a pool done before; I can’t even think, I’ve been trying to figure it out all day actually, how the hell they made a pool out of stubbies). They also cast judgment on the protagonists. In (2), and wondered why at the end of the narrative suggests that the radio presenter considers Gough to be an idiot.

Though narrators are more prone to using the CHP or the NPP in complicating action clauses (see Schifffrin 1981: 51; Engel & Ritz 2000: 133–134), background information (orientation, evaluation) deemed important to the story can also be introduced by the CHP or the NPP rather than the SP. NPP tokens found outside the sequence of narrative clauses – i.e. outside the envelope of variation defined for the statistical analysis (see Chapter 5) – are considered next.

6.1.3 The NPP outside the narrative clause sequence

The results of the statistical analyses presented in §5.2–§5.3, and the types of variation presented in §6.1.1, were based exclusively on the narrative clauses extracted from the dataset. The variable context so defined featured 373 NPP tokens. However, NPP tokens are also attested outside narrative clauses, as in (3).

(3) And he said, “There was a gas leak somewhere.” So he went to the back to try and tighten it up. Tighten up. Still was coming out. So he’s going around the front. And luckily he’d got up from the back of the car ’cause otherwise he would have been dead I reckon. And as he’s gone around the side, this has just gone, “Bang!” like this. (Female, 53, medical receptionist)

In (3), the NPP token (’s gone) occurs in a subordinate clause providing background information. Since subordinate clauses are not narrative clauses (see §3.1.1), this token fell outside the envelope of variation (see §4.4.2) and was not counted for the statistical analyses presented in §5.2–§5.3. It was nonetheless extracted separately – as were all such non-standard PP forms.8

8 A total of 56 NPP tokens were found in the data outside the envelope of variation applied in Chapter 5. Sixteen NPP tokens stem from the Radio Narrative Corpus for which speaker information is largely unknown. The other 40 NPP tokens were produced by 24 different participants in the sample, including 11 consistent NPP users. The majority of these speakers are non-professionals (17/24) and produced most of the NPP tokens (31/40). In terms of speaker sex/gender, 14 male speakers produced 25 NPP tokens and 10 female speakers produced 15 NPP tokens. The profile of the speakers (mainly non-professional males) is expected given the results of the distributional and statistical analyses presented in Chapter 5.
In total, 429 NPP tokens (both within and outside the envelope of variation) were extracted from the 331 narratives in the sample. Table 6.3 presents the distribution of those tokens according to narrative sections. For the most part, the NPP tokens are located in narrative clauses (87%). This observation is in line with previous research where the NPP was found to be preferred in the complication (Engel & Ritz 2000: 133). This motivated the methodological decision to focus on narrative clauses for the quantitative analysis (see Chapter 4, §4.3.1).

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<tr>
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*These narrative clauses fell outside the envelope of variation per se as they were embedded in a quote. Only the quotative verb reporting the quote was counted.

Table 6.3 NPP tokens in narratives

In the rest of this section, I briefly explore the use of the NPP outside narrative clause sequences.

Forty-one NPP tokens are used in embedded orientation clauses. Considering the NPP’s overall usage frequency, this is the second most frequent context for the NPP (10%), though far behind narrative clauses (87%). Consider (4), an excerpt from a story in which the narrator relates a set up by his then-girlfriend.

(4) [...] So she’s come in, and she’s gone, “Oh I need to fill out this form. Can you like get me a pen and like sort me out a spot on the table?” I was like, “Yeah, yeah, no problem.” So I moved all this stuff out of the way, and I’ve set this chair up, and it’s a nice, clean table, but she goes and sits on the side that was all dirty. And I’m like, “Ah, whatever.” Anyway I had some photos on the table. And it was of a trip about five or six years ago. No, no, it would be eight years ago. So, and she’s obviously gone through them while I wasn’t there, that morning. Because she stayed that night. And then, she’s goes (sic), “Ah, photos.” So she had been going through my stuff, and she’d found those
photos, saw that beanie in that photo, saw the beanie in a cupboard, put it somewhere where she could see it, and it was a full set up. […] (Male, 33, glazier)

The main clause and she’s obviously gone through them while I wasn’t there, that morning is not a narrative clause. The event of going through the photos is anterior to the sequence of narrative clauses related by the narrator up to that point in the story – it happened that morning. There is no temporal juncture. The narrator operates a flashback to provide background information – how he interprets the fact that she sits on the dirty side of the table where the photos are (including the photo with the incriminating beanie). So the NPP could be replaced by the Past Perfect. The narrator does use the Past Perfect in two other embedded orientation clauses repeating this important information: So she had been going through my stuff, and she’d found those photos. The NPP emphasises that the consequence of her action (‘going through the photos’) holds at story-now.

Other examples of the NPP in embedded orientation are introduced by the discourse marker so. In such cases, the clause headed by an NPP repeats one (or some) of the last narrative events. It reminds the listener of the situation at that particular point in the story. The clause offers a landmark in the story (see §6.3.2). For instance, in (5), the narrator’s friend forgot her smartphone on the London Tube.

(5) […] She came back from work absolutely balling her eyes out. She’d just realised that she’d left her iPhone on one of the Tubes. All her photos from travelling, everything and didn’t back it up on the cloud. Or on a laptop or anything like that. <LIP SMACK> And yeah so we checked. “It’s definitely not in your bag.” “Not in there.” So she’s left it on the Tube. Next day we ring TFL and reported it. […] (Female, 24, university student)

The clause So she’s left it on the Tube does not introduce new information in the story, nor does it chronologically follow the checking of the bag. The information ‘leaving the iPhone on the Tube’ was previously provided in an embedded orientation clause in the Past Perfect (She’d just realised that she’d left her iPhone on one of the

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9 TFL stands for ‘Transport for London’.
The clause therefore serves as a landmark, re-establishing the situation before introducing the narrative events that follow.

The embedded orientation clauses in which the NPP occurs are either independent clauses, as in examples (4) and (5), or subordinate clauses (N=23/41). Once again, these subordinate clauses function as landmarks, as in (6), re-establishing the situation at that particular point in the story (story-now) before continuing on with the narrative events that follow. In (6), the subordinate clause introduced by *once* temporally precedes the event related in the main clause. However, it does not move the story forward but repeats the prior event(s).

(6) *once he’s done* that, y’know it’s all settled down a little bit, and he’s come out and said, “I tell you who’d really love it” – talking about the hat – “my children.” (Triple J radio, Sydney, 02.03.2000)

The anaphoric *that* signals a look back on a prior event. The clause thus provides an anchor for the events that follow. In contrast to *once*, the subordinator *because* (or its contracted form *’cause*) (N=6) introduces a clause that provides a justification for the event presented in the main clause. In (7), something that happened earlier on in the story and has already been related (being headbutted in the face) explains the speaker’s current state.

(7) And he headbutted me in the m-- like in the mid-- on the bridge of my nose. And, like- And so I s--, you know, stopped obviously dancing. I’m standing in the middle of the dancefloor just holding my nose *’cause* I’ve just been hit in the face. (Female, 39, retail manager)

Finally, the subordinators *as* (N=7) and *when* (N=2) indicate simultaneity, and provide a backdrop for the event related in the main clause, as in (8) and (9).

(8) And *as I’ve gone* to duck dive, the wave has come down on the front of my board (Male, 36, chef)

(9) *it was my son in the shopping centre, he wanted lollies.* [Of course.] And I said no, and then he’s just gone ahead and grabbed something and *when I’ve*
grabbed him, he’s turned around and said, “No mummy don’t break my arm, don’t do it!” (Nova 93.7 FM radio, Perth, 19.02.2004)

A few NPP tokens were found in the other sections of the narrative. Out of all NPP uses, only 2% (N=8) occur in evaluation clauses, as in (10).

(10) and then I’ve realised- I’ve thought, “Oh dear, oh dear, oh Rosso, you’re gonna have to get- you’ve got no underpants on.” (Triple J radio, Sydney, 16.02.2000)

The form then emphasises the narrator’s mental reaction (see §6.4.3). In the data, only 1% (N=3) of NPP tokens occur in the orientation section, as in (11) and (12).

(11) So I’ve been out on a first date, with a lady. (Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)

(12) And we’ve been throwing- we’ve been doing a bit of ball-throwing around, which Champ has been enjoying. (Triple J radio, Sydney, 22.02.2000)

In both examples (11) and (12), the narrator immerses the listener in the story-now. In (11), ‘having been out on a first date’ is a result state that holds at story-now. It is the departure point – i.e. the orientation – for the rest of the narrative in which the narrator relates what happened after the date. In (12), the narrator sets the scene with an NPP token in the progressive. Taking the story-now as the reference point, he presents the situation of playing with his dog (doing a bit of ball-throwing around) as having started some time prior to that story-now and extending up to it. This then constitutes the background for the events that follow.

In a couple of examples, the NPP occurs in what may be considered a coda to the narrative, or a summary at the end of the story. Consider (13). The narrator was working for a paint company at the time and a celebrity was going to visit their factory. He explains how they cleaned up everything (Our factory was spotless. You could have a four-course meal off the floor!), and wore brand-new overalls on the day for the occasion. After all their effort, the celebrity arrived, walked straight past them, and immediately walked out. The narrator comments: It took him ninety seconds to do that.
(13) And we’ve been ten blokes, three days and that- So that’s my- and he walked right past me <LAUGHTER> I was so di-- I was so disappointed. (Male, 69, laboratory assistant)

The NPP offers a summary of the first part of the narrative (the preparation), from the perspective of the story-now. The amount of effort and preparation the workers put in to welcome the celebrity contrasts with the ninety seconds the latter ended up spending in the factory (see §6.4.4).

Finally, two NPP tokens are apparent within a quote – example (14).

(14) And I was like, “Oh that’s kind of a bit weird. I’ve seen him and he’s liked my Facebook.” (Female, 24, teacher aide)

In this example, the NPP does head two narrative clauses that together form a minimal narrative. However, the minimal narrative constitutes the content of a quote.\textsuperscript{10}

Narrative abstracts feature no NPPs. When the PP is used in this section of the narrative, it is frequently an experiential PP – rather than a narrative tense.

\textbf{6.2 Speaker choice (viewpoint and subjective evaluation)}

As explained in §3.2.1, tense switching is one of several performance features in narratives. A story that the narrator performs is more likely to contain tense switching but this is not a necessary condition. There is ample variation in narrative production in terms of tense switching. Some speakers will not use this feature in some of their performed narratives. Consider (15) where the narrator only uses the SP. The retelling is arguably still ‘vivid’ as it features the use of quotation and gesture (signalled by the deictic marker this in I could see my legs, going like this). However, it does not contain tense switching. This narrative was therefore not included in the dataset.

(15) Alright well um heading down to Busselton one time. And my mate said, “How fast can you go on your skateboard?” And I was like, “I don’t know. You’re gonna have to clock me.” So I jumped out and started going down this hill and he was following me. [Ok.] And I got up to seventy Ks an hour <LIP

\textsuperscript{10} As previously mentioned, these minimal narratives within content of the quote were not considered to belong to the envelope of variation applied in Chapter 5.
SMACK> [Oh wow] And the skateboard didn’t want to do seventy Ks an hour. So I got speed wobbles and fell off and I ran. I could see my legs, going like this. And I tripped and flipped and slid and I turned around and my mate’s car was right there in my face. [Oh dear.] He almost hit me. Ran my skateboard over. And then almost hit me. [<SIGH>] I got up and I was missing bark from everywhere. All down my left hand side. And everyone was like, “Wow dude, we gotta get you to a hospital.” I said, “No, I’ll be alright.” [Yeah.] Just take me home, put some Savlon cream on. [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> (Male, 33, glazier)

By contrast, in other performed narratives, the same narrator alternates between the SP and the CHP, the SP and the NPP, and even between all three variants in the narrative clause sequence. A narrator’s use of tense switching (or lack thereof), and the tense forms used to operate the switch, therefore varies across performed narratives.\(^{11}\) This observation also applies to multiple retellings of the same story. Fleischman (1990: 76) contends that a narrator’s use of tenses will vary across various retellings of the same events.\(^{12}\) For example, Leith (1995: 53) compares two versions of a long Scottish folktale, *The Green Man of Knowledge*, told by the same narrator in two different settings: (i) during a *ceilidh*, defined as “an informal gathering of kin and friends in which conversation, songs, stories, and alcohol circulate freely” (Leith 1995: 56); and (ii) during an interview. He observes that the HP constitutes the norm in one version, while it reflects a breakthrough into performance in the other rendering, clustering in certain parts of the tale. Though the folktale is a specific genre, his study illustrates that variation in tense usage across performed narratives depends on the situational context in which the story is told, including the audience. In a similar vein, Wolfson (1979: 181) explains that “there is always more than one way to organize a story” and that “the same story may be organized in different ways to suit different audiences or to make different points”.

Tense switching in performed narratives ultimately varies according to individual speaker choice. These choices are affected by the situational context (the

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\(^{11}\) The factors that condition the presence versus absence of tense variation and the amount of tense variation are not the object of the present study. The reader is referred to Wolfson (1978, 1982) for factors favouring the use of the CHP in AmE narratives (see also §3.2.2).

\(^{12}\) Richard (in prep.) compares tense variation across five retellings of the same story told by a working-class Australian male. Interviewed on television, the narrator recounts how – wearing just his underwear – he infamously chased a man who had crashed into his friend’s shop.
medium of communication, the audience, *inter alia*) and the purpose of the storyteller in telling the tale. In the end, narrators will not necessarily use tense switching as a performance device, nor will they use it to the same extent. Analysts can only access speaker intentions and (un)conscious linguistic choices through their speech (Torres Cacoullos & Walker 2009: 10). Measuring speaker subjective involvement is otherwise a complex task. Hernández (2013: 264) explains that, “from a variationist perspective, subjectivity may be explained in terms of speaker’s choice of the competing variants”.

Beyond the sociolinguistic constraints established in Chapter 5 on the use of the NPP and the CHP, there remains a level of choice for narrators when they select tense forms for specific clauses in their narratives. The forms selected partly reflect their stance; that is, their relation to the protagonists and story message (Lanser 1981: 202; Jaffe 2009). The experience reported in a narrative is filtered through an individual’s subjectivity (Fleischman 1990: 215), and this subjectivity is manifested in the reliance on linguistic strategies such as the use of marked tense forms (Fleischman 1990: 183, 260).

The discourse-pragmatic analysis first focused on the NPP and the CHP when they occur independently from each other in narrative clauses. Both forms were found to act as discourse-structuring and evaluation devices in storytelling (see §6.3 and §6.4). Though similar discourse-pragmatic functions were identified for the NPP and the CHP, the forms do co-occur in narrative clause sequences (see §6.1.1). The NPP cannot be said to entirely replace the CHP. When the forms co-occur across narrative clause sequences, they still serve similar evaluative and discourse-structuring purposes. They work in tandem to operate fine-grained discourse-pragmatic distinctions (see §6.5.1). The NPP and the CHP do differ regarding the rhetorical effects they produce, a difference related to their semantics (see §6.5.3).

### 6.3 Tense switching as a discourse-structuring device

Tense switching operates as a discourse-structuring device in performed narratives, guiding listeners through the story (Fleischman 1990: 168). Certain tense forms are used for particular portions of the narrative. The SP typically frames the sequence of narrative clauses. In initial clauses, it anchors the complication in the past, whereas in final clauses, it marks the end of episodes. The SP occurs in 84% of the narrative clauses providing the resolution to the story. Tense switching between the SP, CHP and/or NPP can establish a landmark (Schiffrin 1992: 763). Tense switching can
be used to separate events into sub-episodes (Wolfson 1979: 178; Schiffrin 1981: 55; Silva-Corvalán 1983: 778; Fleischman 1990: 200). The variation between tense forms also serves to differentiate between sections of the narrative, in particular the plotline (complication/resolution) from the off-plotline levels (orientation, evaluation) (Fludernik 1991: 373). The plotline is highlighted by the use of the CHP or the NPP. Tense switching can facilitate participant tracking (Fleischman 1990: 81). Each clause referring to a specific participant is consistently narrated with the same tense form. This is most frequent in quotative contexts with the alternation between the SP and the CHP. Finally, the CHP or the NPP can be used to signpost crucial story details. These discourse-structuring functions are discussed in §6.3.1-§6.3.5.

6.3.1 Framing the narrative clause sequence

The SP operates as a discourse-structuring device, but crucially not as an evaluation device (see §6.4) in performed narratives. In Chapter 5, I showed that the SP is most frequently used in narrative clauses in initial and final positions, while the CHP and the NPP are most frequent in medial position (see §5.2.1). Results of the multivariate analyses have also shown that the CHP and the NPP are favoured in medial clauses (see §5.2.3 and §5.2.2). The framing of the narrative clause sequence by the SP is a pattern generally observed in narratives displaying tense variation across narrative clauses. This pattern is schematised in Figure 6.1.

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Figure 6.1 Common pattern of tense variation across the narrative clause sequence
The first narrative clause(s) starting the causal chain of events that eventually leads to the remarkable event tend to be introduced in the SP.\textsuperscript{13} This is especially the case in long complication sections where the narrative events related in the first few clauses tend to be distantly related to the remarkable event. The use of the SP in the first narrative clause(s) also enables the narrator to (unambiguously) anchor the action in the past – though the temporality of events may have already been established in the orientation (or may be implicit in the question asked or the topic proposed for discussion). The switch to the CHP or the NPP most frequently occurs in the core narrative clauses, those that relate the narrative events directly foreshadowing the climax and the climax itself. In some cases, only the build-up to the climax occurs in the CHP or the NPP, while the climax occurs in the SP; in some other cases, the build-up to the climax is in the SP, and only the climax is in the CHP or the NPP (see §6.4.1 and §6.4.2). The last narrative clause(s) concluding the sequence tend to occur in the SP, especially so when the narrative events following the peak of the story are unremarkable. The narrator does not seek to highlight such events with marked tense forms. The return to the SP also signals the end of the sequence.\textsuperscript{14} This global pattern is illustrated in (16) where the CHP is used in the build-up to the climax.

\textit{THE DARE}

(16) ‘Bad employment’. I’ll tell you about bad employment. My first job was um KFC. [Oh yeah.] So bad um <LIP SMACK> I er ’cause the food there is really disgusting, right? So we dare- dare each others to do just really disgusting stuff for like ten bucks or twenty bucks <LAUGHTER> [Like <LAUGHTER> I’m waiting.] Yeah. And one of the guys was like, “I’ll give you- it’s fifty bucks.” I was like, “Fifty bucks!” That’s like the highest we’ve ever gone. Right. This must be good. He goes- he looks at me. ‘Cause I used to work the fries. The fr-- the chips. And um and like all the salt that doesn’t get put on the chips filters down into like this oily sludge underneath the fry rack. [I see.] Right? And he lifts it up and he goes, “Handful of that.”

\textsuperscript{13} Narrators may open the sequence of narrative clauses directly with the CHP or the NPP, especially in the case of short complication sections, or if they isolate the plotline from the off-plotline levels of the story via tense switching (see §6.3.4).

\textsuperscript{14} The CHP and the NPP potentially end the sequence of narrative clauses when the resolution of the story is introduced in a clause that is \textit{not} a narrative clause (typically a stative predicate). The return to the SP then usually occurs outside the sequence of narrative clauses.
<LAUGHTER> [Oh <LAUGHTER>] For fifty bucks. And I did it. [Oh, no. <LAUGHTER> How bad was it?] It’s disgusting. <LAUGHTER> I had to spit it out but he still gave me the fifty bucks which was pretty good, so. [<LAUGHTER>] (Male, 25, music teacher)

In (16), the narrator uses the SP to begin the sequence of narrative clauses and introduce the amount of the bet. The narrator switches to the CHP to announce what the bet actually involves – eating a handful of ‘oily sludge’ – as this is the core of the story. The climax is reached when the narrator actually complies with the request: And I did it. The SP rather than the CHP is used with the use of do substitution, which stands for ‘I grabbed a handful of the oily sludge and put it in my mouth’. The resolution (I had to spit it out) is expressed in the SP. Figure 6.2 represents the tense variation observed across narrative clauses in (16).  

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<tr>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
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<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
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Figure 6.2 Tense variation across the narrative clause sequence in (16)

There is a clear preference for the resolution of narratives to be expressed in the SP: 84% on average, no matter whether the SP, CHP or NPP dominates in narrative clauses. This finding is in line with previous research. Analysing AmE narratives, Schiffrin (1981: 51) observes a return to the past tense when narrators provide the conclusion to their story. Similarly, Fludernik (1991: 374–375) finds a correlation between a shift into the SP and a shift into the result/closing section of a narrative episode in AmE oral and quasi-oral storytelling. In their work on AusE narratives, Engel and Ritz (2000: 134) find that the NPP occurs much more frequently in the narrative complication than in the resolution. Narrative clauses forming the complication are more likely to occur in the NPP, while narrative clauses forming the resolution are more likely to occur in the SP. It is no coincidence, then, that in the present dataset the verb phrase end up occurs mostly in the SP (84% [21/25]). The semantics of end up signals a conclusion/resolution, and narrators tend to use the SP for this section of the narrative, as in (17).

15 The figures schematising tense/aspect alternation in narrative find inspiration in Wolfson (1979).
16 Fludernik (1991: 366) uses the term ‘quasi-oral’ to refer to “literary, written narratives which adapt the oral model”.

200
(17) So- so she ended up blocking like deleting her entire profile so that her boss wouldn’t realise that she’d been matched. (Female, 29, doctoral student)

In the few cases where the verb end up occurs in the CHP (it never occurs in the NPP in the data analysed), it is because it features in the middle of the complication – and the story continues towards the remarkable event afterwards – or because it coincides with the peak of the complication – climax and resolution are combined, as in (18).

(18) And I end up smashing the whole back of his car. Really bad. (Male, 46, process operator)

In narratives with only a few SP tokens in the sequence of narrative clauses, the SP is largely used to frame the sequence. In the dataset, 15 narratives display SP-CHP variation but only contain one SP token – all other narrative clauses feature the CHP. In 11 out of 15 cases, the single SP token occurs either at the opening (5/15) or closing (6/15) of the sequence of narrative clauses, thus framing its boundaries. In the remaining cases, the use of the SP is linked to linguistic constraints such as lexical effects or information structure. For instance, in (19), the narrator talks about the Meckering earthquake in Western Australia. He immediately begins the complication with the CHP and continues to use this tense form throughout the sequence of narrative clauses. There is one exception where he uses the SP (then I looked down) for an event that is repeated.

THE EARTHQUAKE

(19) […] Anyway so one Sunday morning my brothers and sisters and my mother were sitting in the lounge room playing Scrabble. On the- the Scrabble board’s on- on- on- on the floor. And then the sis-- the vibration starts happening. I look up the venetians. “Oh whoa!” [<CHUCKLE>] “That’s cool.” And then I look down. I thought, “I got the flu.”, you know. And then- but then, then I looked down and the- the Scrabble chips are bouncing up and down, [<CHUCKLE>] on the board. And then I thought, “Whoa, look at that!” And I- I stand up, and you can feel the floor vibrating. [Yeah.] And I- “Oh, great!”
I go running up a passage <MIMICS HOW HE IS RUNNING> [<LAUGHTER>] like that. Yeah <LAUGHTER> It was kind of- <LAUGHTER> I enjoyed it! [You did, yeah.] So, yeah, so er ((And then it’s)), “Oh, it’s over.” [mm] “What was that mum?” “That was an earthquake, Daniel. An earthquake.” (Male, 63, psychologist)

### 6.3.2 Providing a landmark

Tense/aspect switching has been shown to enable the provision of landmarks (see §3.3.2). Any tense form contrasting with the tense forms used in the preceding narrative clauses can signal a landmark (Schiffrin 1992: 763). In (19), the landmark is introduced in the SP, while all other narrative clauses are headed by the CHP. The landmark re-establishes the situation after the narrator branched out of the plotline with an evaluation clause.

Example (20) illustrates the use of the CHP to establish a landmark.

(20) When we were in Amsterdam, <LAUGHTER> um we were staying at this hotel and it was next to one of the- they call them a coffee shop but you can go in there and buy marijuana and stuff <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] and all things. So he wanted to have a look inside one. So I said, “I’ll just go down here and I’ll look at the postcards.” Which was about two shops down. So thinking, “Where is he? He’s been so long.” He took the camera with him to take photos and stuff. “He’s been so long.” And then about, I don’t know, must have been twenty minutes later, he comes down the street. “Where have you been?” Said, “I’ve been here all the time looking at these things.” “No you haven’t. I searched the street. I s-- went back to the hotel. I was getting really worried. Where were you?” <LAUGHTER> “W-- I was here.” “No you weren’t.” So we’re looking through our photos that night and he’d taken one looking down the street, and there I was, looking at the postcards. <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] <CLEARS THROAT> So he wasn’t very happy about that. <LAUGHTER> (Female, 70, company director and secretary)

In (20), the motion verb come down in the CHP marks the start of a new episode, when the man meets up again with the woman. The start of this new episode is
also indicated by the use of the temporal adverb then and the temporal expression must have been twenty minutes later. The use of the CHP for the landmark delimits the two episodes in the story: before the two protagonists go their separate ways and afterwards when they gather again.

The NPP can also be used to signal a landmark, as shown in (21). The narrator is responding to the prompt ‘Did dad get you into trouble?’ and explains how his father had been trying to fix the vacuum cleaner before he came to ask for his help.

(21) […] So it’d stopped working. So dad being the um mister-fix-it had it all pulled apart, out, out in the carport. <LIP SMACK> And um he dropped a nut off one part of it inside it and he couldn’t get his hand in it to get it. So he’s gone to me. He said um, “Can you come in and reach in and get this nut out.” And I looked at it and he had it all plugged in. I said, “Yep, but have you got the power turned off? I’m not sticking my hand in there if the power’s on.” And he going, “Yeah, yeah. It’s all turned off. There’s nothing turned on.” So I went, “Alright.” So I stuck my hand in to get this nut, and yeah, the met-- the vacuum was turned off but the power cords were all still turned on. And I got zapped. […] (Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)

The NPP marks the start of a new episode, involving the narrator in the story. It acts as a discourse-structuring device. It is also evaluative to the extent that, had his father not asked for his help, the narrator wouldn’t have been zapped. The narrator announces that this part of the story is relevant in the sense that it answers the interviewer’s prompt. (All other narrative clauses in the story, apart from the non-standard he going, are headed by verbs in the SP.) The NPP is infrequently used outside the sequence of narrative clauses, but it does appear in embedded orientation clauses where it often establishes a landmark as well (see §6.3.2). As shown in (20) and (21), landmark narrative clauses are often headed by motion verbs and introduced by the discourse marker so. This is similar to Rickford and Théberge Rafal’s (1996) observations for the non-standard had + V-ed tokens in AAVE narratives (see §3.3.2). The form is used in clauses that act as landmarks and that are often headed by motion verbs informing listeners of the location of protagonist(s) from one episode to the next (Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 237).
6.3.3 Tracking participant

Tense switching in the data serves to distinguish different protagonists in the story. This function is referred to as ‘participant tracking’ by Fleischman (1990: 81, 200) in her work on early Romance. For example, consider (22). After relating the first half of a flight to Dubai where she had to sit next to a dad and his two children (not reproduced here), the narrator gets to the core of her story.

(22) [...] So it must have been like f-- well it’s a ten-hour flight to Dubai. Five hours later, after I had to deal with these kids, which I didn’t mind because they used their manners, so, you know. And the dad was really good as well. This woman rocks up and she’s like, “Oh hi, kids. How you going?” And I just went, “Who are you?” And she goes, “I’m their mum.” She goes, “They’ve mixed up our seats. So I’m flying business class.” I looked at her and I was so angry. I said, “So, you should be sitting here. And they’ve actually literally stuffed up my seat and so I should be sitting in business class, while I’m looking after your kids.” And she’s just like, “Oh yes, sorry about that.” I was s-- And they’re hippie. They were really really hippie like with the dreadies and everything else. And I went, “Oh whatever let it go, just, you know, let it go.” (Female, 34, senior investigator)

In this episode, a new participant is introduced: the children’s mother. Her arrival and the conversation that ensues with the narrator constitute the build-up to climax and climax of the narrative. The alternation between the SP and the CHP aligns with the two protagonists of the episode. It offers a contrast between the actions and quotes referring to the children’s mother and those referring to the narrator, as shown in Table 6.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SP = The narrator</th>
<th>CHP = The children’s mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This woman rocks up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she’s like, “Oh hi, kids. How you going?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I just went, “Who are you?”</td>
<td>And she goes, “I’m their mum.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She goes, “They’ve mixed up our seats. So I’m flying business class.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I looked at her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I said, “So, you should be sitting here. […]”</td>
<td>And she’s just like, “Oh yes, sorry about that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I went, “Oh whatever let it go, just, you know, let it go.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 SP-CHP alternation acting as participant tracking

As expected, the use of the CHP coincides with the introduction of a new protagonist and marks a new episode in the story. Its use also coincides with the revelation of the climax (*And she goes, “I’m their mum.” She goes, “They’ve mixed up our seats. So I’m flying business class.”*).

Participant tracking is especially operative in quotative contexts where strong interactional effects are in place between grammatical person, quotative verb and tense. Rapid tense switching rather than tense maintenance is the norm in quotative contexts (see §5.2.1). The variation between quotative verbs (Romaine & Lange 1991), in parallel with the variation between tense forms (Levey 2006: 144), is used to distinguish participants in the story.

As shown in Chapter 5 (§5.2.3), the CHP is favoured in quotative contexts with quotatives *be like* (FW .73) and *go* (FW .72), and with third person subjects (FW .79). The NPP is disfavoured in quotative contexts (FW .34), but strongly favoured with quotative *go* (FW .79) (see §5.2.2) where it competes with the CHP on its territory. However, the NPP is never used with quotative *be like*. Moreover, grammatical person is not selected as a significant constraint on NPP usage in quotative contexts. Participant tracking is therefore mainly operated by an alternation between the SP and the CHP in quotative contexts.

Consider (23), excerpt in which the narrator reports the conversational exchange he had with the veterinarian where he took his sick dog. The narrator, Ed Walker, is a consistent NPP user.

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17 This is an evaluation clause. In (22), participant tracking operates beyond the sequence of narrative clauses.
(23) […] 
And the vet’s like, “Oh ... so I’m gonna say put him down, [Yeah.] because he looks really bad.”
And I said, “Yeah. I was kinda expecting that [mm] but, is there anything you can do?”
And he goes, “Mate, how old is he?”
And I said, “He’s fourteen.”
And he just- his jaw hit the floor.
So like, “Fourteen. Are you kidding me?! Rottweilers don’t normally live past eight, [Ok.] ten max.”
And I said, “Yeah, Max is his name.” <LAUGHTER>
And he goes, “Yeah, whatever you do with your pets man, just keep doing it ay, because he should not be alive.” [mm]
And I remember he went and got the stuff.
Put him down.
[...] (Male, 33, glazier)

The narrator introduces the first quote from the veterinary with the verb be like in the CHP. As previously explained, the CHP is highly favoured with quotative be like (FW .87), especially so for speakers varying between the SP, CHP and NPP. To maintain participant tracking throughout the exchange, when quotative go introduces the veterinary’s reported speech, it continues to appear in the CHP (rather than becoming used in the NPP). On the other hand, quotative say in the SP is used for all of the narrator’s quotes. The SP-CHP alternation thus serves to distinguish the two protagonists (the narrator and the veterinary), and facilitates participant tracking. It also distinguishes new from old information from the narrator’s point of view (that is what he says versus what the third party in the story says).

In (24), the same speaker discusses a time when he got pulled over by the police. After the interviewer invites him to elaborate on his arrest by asking So did he chase you? the narrator provides details about the end of the story.

BEING PULLED OVER

(24) […] Yeah he chased me. He goes, “Look mate, I’m not gonna do you for the
red light because you’d already gone through just as it turned red.” [mm] “So technically it’s an orange. I’ll let you off on that.” ... “Not the train line. <SIGH> What were you thinking?” And I’ve gone, <LIP SMACK> “Dude, I wasn’t, because I really need to go to the toilet, and if you don’t mind I need to go to the toilet like right now. You don’t mind if I go over there?” […] (Male, 33, glazier)

In (24), the narrator offers a rendition of his conversational exchange with the police officer. He uses the same quotative verb, go, to introduce his and the police officer’s reported speech. However, he employs the CHP for the police officer (he goes), while he uses the NPP for himself (I’ve gone). The NPP is highly favoured with quotative go, but not constrained by grammatical person. Since the CHP is favoured with third person subjects (FW .79), the use of the CHP to refer to the police officer rather than the narrator is expected. Rather than using quotative go in the same tense form to introduce the two different protagonists’ quotes, the narrator switches between the CHP and the NPP. It is the tense contrast between the CHP and the NPP that facilitates participant tracking.

All three tense forms (SP, CHP, NPP) can be called upon to operate participant tracking, notwithstanding sociolinguistic constraints. The switch between any two of these forms can be used to distinguish protagonists in the story.

### 6.3.4 Isolating sections of the narrative

Tense variation serves as a discourse-structuring device beyond the sequence of narrative clauses. Considering narratives in their entirety, tense switching is used to separate the different sections of the narrative as defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967). In particular, it serves to distinguish between plotline (i.e. the narrative clause sequence) and off-plotline levels (Fludernik 1991: 373).

Some narrators entirely isolate the sequence of narrative clauses by using one (and only one) tense form throughout the sequence – this tense form differs from the tense forms used elsewhere in the story. Given the absence of tense variation across the narrative clause sequence, such narratives were not included in the dataset (see Chapter 4). For the most part, these narratives only feature the SP in narrative clauses. Since the SP is the default tense form in narratives, and since it is also used in the other sections of the narrative, its use does not isolate the plotline. A few narratives, however, stand...
out for featuring either only the CHP or only the NPP over the narrative clause sequence. The choice of the CHP or the NPP, marked tense forms, contrasts with the forms used in the other sections of the narrative. Such a switch is used as a discourse-structuring device: it highlights the sequence of narrative clauses and clarifies when the narrator is branching out of the narrative clause sequence, typically to add material (embedded orientation) or comment on the situation (evaluation).

In example (25), variation between the SP and the CHP is used to divide sections of the story: the complication/resolution (narrative clause sequence) is presented entirely in the CHP, while the abstract (we locked ((ourself)) out once), orientation (there was three of us and we didn’t have a key to the house), and evaluation – whether internal or external (so my mum thought it would be a good idea to try and crawl through the roof; I was really worried; It was just really bad but) – are in the SP, the default narrative tense in English.

(25) ‘What happened when you locked yourself out of your house?’ um we locked ((ourself)) out once. And we um there was three of us and we didn’t have a key to the house so my mum thought it would be a good idea to try and crawl through the roof. So <LAUGHTER> she gets a ladder. And she gets up there. And she takes the tiles out. And she gets into the roof. And she falls through the roof in my sister’s room. And <LAUGHTER> I was really worried but my mum comes to the front door and she unlocks it and she looks so hurt. I’m like, “Mum, are you ok?” But the first thing my sister does is um she ((’s)) just goes, “Is my room ok?” , [<CHUCKLE>] you know. It was just really bad but. Yeah it was fine, you know. […] (Female, 16, secondary school student)

The narrator is highlighting the key narrative events with the CHP and assigning them to the same ‘level’, in opposition to the background information. The NPP as well can be used for all the narrative clauses of a narrative, as in (26).

(26) But we were sitting there in his house one day. And I was upset about something, or just whinging away to him. And he’s just gone, “I know what’ll
cheer you up.” And he’s put his pant leg up.\(^{18}\) And as soon as he did it, “Oh I’m happy again!” \(<\text{LAUGHTER}>\) Life could be worse. I could be Dereck. \(<\text{LAUGHTER}>\) (Male, 27, electrician)

Example (26) is a short story, but all the verbs heading narrative clauses occur in the NPP. The NPP highlights the complication in contrast to the background information (orientation) where the past form is used (SP and past progressive). The subordinate clause \textit{and as soon as he did it} features the SP since this is known information at that point in the story – it only repeats the immediately preceding \textit{he’s put his pant leg up} event and provides the backdrop for the narrator’s reaction (\textit{Oh I’m happy again!}) introduced by the zero quotative. (The absence of overt quotative verb is testimony to the performed nature of this short narrative.)

Narrators can set aside the narrative clause sequence (complication/resolution) via tense switching. They can also set aside other sections of the narrative by the same means. In (27), the narrator relates her experience dealing with a hotel customer. Example (27) is a narrative that was not included in the dataset because it does not display tense switching \textit{within} the sequence of narrative clauses. It does, however, feature tense variation beyond its all-SP sequence of narrative clauses.

(27) Once, I had- a lady came up in the morning like um at- ah I don’t know probably about eight thirty in the morning. And the front desk that I worked at was open twenty-four hours so people could call or whatever. um They’d be always someone there manning it. And um I, you know, was on a- on a morning shift and this lady \textit{came in} and she looked really tired and frazzled and \textit{said, \textit{in exasperated tone of voice}} “Oh, the smoke alarm in my room has been going off all night.” And I \textit{said}, “Oh, my gosh”, like “I’m so sorry. Did you call the front desk and- and nobody came?” She \textit{said, \textit{with an angered tone}} “No.” I \textit{said}, “Oh well, you know, we’re twenty-four hours someone- we could have sent someone to fix it immediately. It’s probably just the battery.” She \textit{said, \textit{with an angered tone}} “Oh, oh, it’s just been going off. We haven’t been able to sleep. It’s been going off since about eight o’clock last night.” I’m \textit{thinking}, “Why didn’t you just call?” Like, \(<\text{LAUGHTER}>\) We could have fixed it in thirty seconds. Just put a new

\(^{18}\) The protagonist has tattooed his friend’s face on his leg.
battery in, and it’s fine. Or if that wasn’t the case we could have found them like another room. But no she waited until it’d been going for like twelve hours before coming to complain. And then like she’s- hasn’t been able to sleep and <LAUGHTER>. She was so angry and I’m just like, “You’re crazy.” <LAUGHTER> (Female, 26, faculty development officer)

The CHP (simple and progressive) is used to indicate the narrator’s evaluation of the situation (I’m thinking, “Why didn’t you just call? […]”; I’m just like, “You’re crazy.”). The use of the CHP contrasts with the use of the SP in narrative clauses. It enables the narrator to separate her evaluation of the situation from the narrative events. The use of the CHP also heightens her thoughts.19 Note that the NPP is used in embedded orientation (And then like she’s- hasn’t been able to sleep) to highlight the woman’s physical state at story-now – she is completely sleep deprived (see §6.4.3).

### 6.3.5 Signposting

Tense switching can function as a narrative device to signpost important descriptive elements in (embedded) orientation. These states are highlighted with marked tense forms not because narrators evaluate them as unexpected or out of the ordinary, but because they are crucial to, or have an impact on, the development of their story. Consider (28) where the narrator is retelling a gruesome work story. In the orientation, she uses the CHP to explain that her department was located in the same building as the pathology department. This information is essential to the unfolding of the narrative: this is why she eventually ends in a room full of cadavers. The use of the CHP signals the importance of that background information.

(28) […] So I worked at Macquarie uni in the physiology department. But we’re in a building that had the pathology department in the basement. So the pathology department is where they receive cadavers and um <LIP SMACK> the medical students work on them. And on the top storey was another

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19 Besides the favouring effect of quotative be like on CHP usage, discourse-pragmatic motivations for CHP usage can reasonably be asserted given that: (a) The first quotative verb introducing speaker thought in the CHP is think, not be like; (b) Quotative be like does not automatically appear in the CHP. The narrator could have said: I was like, “You’re crazy.” There is tense variation with be like (otherwise it would have had to be excluded from the statistical analysis); (c) Speakers’ selection of a tense/aspect form depends not only on the quotative verb selected, but also on the grammatical person (first versus third person), and on the importance of the event related with respect to the climax of the story.
department that I can’t remember but they had a freezer that we used to put things in for sort of storage <LIP SMACK>. So I’d gone up one day to put something in the freezer upstairs, and the freezer was broken. So they said to me, “You’ll have to use the freezer in the basement.” Now at this point I didn’t know what was in the basement. I just knew it was the anatomy department in the basement. And that’s all I knew. So I went downstairs to the basement with my bag that had to go in the freezer. And one of my friends who I was studying with worked in the anatomy department. So I went and asked him where I should put this bag. And he said, “Oh, that’s ok. You can put it in here.” So he took me down this corridor to this room that had a door and he opened the door, he turned the light on, and he kind of pushed me into the room with the bag. And I op-- sort of well not opened my eyes ’cause my eyes were opened but I kind of in the- Turning on lights realised that I was in a room where all the cadavers were stored. And I had never seen a dead body in my life <CHUCKLE> So I was very, very frightened <LAUGHTER> and quite upset. […] (Female, 54, scientific officer)

Another example where a tense switch signposts a key element in the story is presented in (29).

(29) I was living with my mate in The Rivergums before I moved back to mum’s to start to build my house. And um he works in the navy so he’s never home but his- his girlfriend was there. [Cool yeah.] And like two o’clock in the morning this motorbike come down the street. And it’s been raining. And a cat ran out in front of him so he like fell off his bike […] (Male, 22, electrician)

The clause And it’s been raining provides additional background information. The use of the NPP progressive for this embedded orientation clause indicates that it had started raining prior to this moment, and that either it was still raining at story-now or that the consequences of the process were still in force (i.e. the roads were wet). The rain is understood as having an impact on the development of the story: it creates a hazardous situation, likely to cause an accident on the road. The NPP is used to signpost this crucial information.
6.4 Tense switching as an evaluation device

Tense switching serves an evaluative function in performed narratives. As Wolfson (1982: 23) writes, “stories are told for the purposes of presenting an individual’s experience and a judgment on that experience” (my emphasis). Via tense switching, narrators can draw listeners’ attention to what they deem particularly worthy of attention; that is, emotional, unexpected, out of the ordinary events (Mustanoja 1960: 506–507; Longacre 1976: 219ff.; Silva-Corvalán 1983: 774; Fludernik 1991: 374). The CHP and the NPP are used to highlight salient events, notably the events foreshadowing the climax (see Rickford & Théberge Rafal 1996: 238 for the same function attributed to preterite had + V-ed in AAVE narratives), the peak of the story itself, protagonists’ emphatic reactions and other salient events. By calling upon these marked tense forms, narrators point their listeners towards the noteworthy events of the narrative. Thus they indicate the story’s relevance, clarifying what makes it reportable (see §3.1.1). Outside the sequence of narrative clauses, narrators also use the CHP or the NPP to highlight important aspects of the situation. The SP, as the unmarked tense form in narratives, cannot be used to highlight salient events. This does not imply that the SP never introduces such events. When it does, it does not emphasise the narrative events referred to. Uses of the CHP and the NPP as evaluation devices are examined in §6.4.1–§6.4.6.

6.4.1 Highlighting the peak of the story

The climax of the story corresponds to ‘the most reportable event’ (Labov 1997: 404) around which the story is structured. It is often referred to in the abstract of the story when there is one. In an interview setting, it usually matches the interviewer’s question/prompt – i.e. attempts to answer the question. Identified and evaluated by the narrator as worth telling, it is the least expected event of all in the story, and it “has the greatest effect upon the needs and desires of the participants in the narrative” (Labov 1997: 406). The narrator rarely begins the sequence of narrative clauses with this ‘most reportable event’ (Labov 2003: 67), instead building the sequence of causally related events that lead to this culminating point. Given the centrality of the climax, it is understandable that narrators would want to highlight it.

A storyteller’s strategy consists in telling one’s narrative with the default SP and to isolate the peak of the story with the CHP or the NPP. Using a different tense form
for the climax makes it stand out. The use of the CHP to highlight the climax of the story is shown in (30).

**IT'S THE WOMAN WHO PAYS**

(30) um ‘Hotels?’ <LAUGHTER> Lille was funny. um We stayed in Lille for one night. We were in between staying in Arras and we were going up to Calais to see Jane’s great uncle. And we were wearing nice things, you know, just going something gastronomic and whatever, you know, walk up the river and- that sort of stuff. But it was really funny 'cause I’d- 'cause I sometimes do quite stupid things and ’d left my credit card at home. [Ah] And so we had an international cr-- travel credit card which is great unless it’s um [<LAUGHTER>] Happily Jade had one as well but it meant that she paid for everything which across, particularly France, but Europe generally. You’d get the bill. And I get the bill ’cause we’re a couple, dining together. And then I’d hand the bill to Jade. And we’d go pay. But the- the guy in Lille he was-Lovely guy. Really friendly, really helpful. Really appreciative that we both spoke French 'cause we’re Australians and he said, “Australians”, like. “But it’s ok, you know, we can speak French.” um Yeah so he- he gave us the bill whatever. And so he handed me the bill and I handed it to Jade and he just burst out laughing. Anyway, “What’s up?” And he’s like, “Ha, c’est la dame qui paye!” <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] He then went and called over his associate- colleague from the other room. Said, “Look, look, the Australians, it’s the woman who pays.” And then he called out someone from the kitchen to again laugh at us in terms of “Oh, look, it’s the girl who pays- the lady who pays.” And apparently this is very culturally interesting. <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] And I think that we now represent over about twenty-two million people. This is the done thing in Australia. So I don’t [Yeah. <LAUGHTER>] quite like that. (Male, 27, doctoral student)

The background of the story is largely told in the past: the narrator uses the SP (stayed, were), past progressive (were going up, were wearing), Past Perfect ('d left) and past conditional ('d get, 'd hand). There are also a few instances of the Present to refer to habits or generalities (I sometimes do quite stupid things; And I get the bill 'cause we’re a couple). These are not CHP uses since the present tense refers to the
speaker-now, not the story-now. The first narrative clauses are related in the SP (*said, gave, handed, handed, burst out*). The peak of the story – the waiter’s reaction – is introduced by quotative *be like* in the CHP. The following narrative clauses are all encoded in the SP (*went and called over, said, called out*). A coda returns the listener to the present moment and provides a general conclusion to the interaction. The story finishes with the narrator’s evaluation. Figure 6.3 schematises tense switching across the narrative clause sequence in (30).

Figure 6.3 Tense variation across the narrative clause sequence in (30)

The switch into the CHP to report the waiter’s quote highlights the peak of the story amidst the sequence of narrative clauses.

The same process with the use of the NPP (rather than the CHP) is exemplified in (31). The narrator explains how he once chased a bird that flew in his shop.

(31) […] I was chasing him around and he eventually got so tired that I got right up to him. He was on the fridge. And I put my hand there. And he’s jumped on. [Aw] And I went, “Holy fucking shit.” […] (Male, 32, seafarer)

In this excerpt, and in the rest of the narrative, all narrative clauses but one are in the SP. This is represented in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Tense variation across the narrative clause sequence in (31)

The NPP is used as an internal evaluation device to highlight the remarkable event (the fact that the bird jumped on his hand). This is the story’s key event. The NPP also highlights the narrator’s surprise. It is unexpected that a wild bird (a willie wagtail) would jump on someone’s hand. The narrator stresses this fact later in the story (*that’s one of those beautiful moments where, you know. The typical pet, [Yeah.] well they’re*
always gonna do that. But the wild animal that sits there and goes, “I’m gonna just- I’m gonna hang around to see how this plays out.” It just has a bit more to it.). The NPP has a mirative effect in this example, expressing the narrator’s surprise in the face of an unpredictable and unusual situation (see §2.3.2 on mirativity).

In some cases, the climax of the story is not expressed in a narrative clause. Consider (32), a narrative not included in the dataset as it does not display tense variation within the sequence of narrative clauses. Crucially, though, there is tense variation elsewhere, with the climax highlighted via the CHP in a non-narrative clause.

(32) […] And this drunk guy ... came up to us and started, sort of- He was really drunk, like slurring. But he kept looking down at his crotch. And then we finally looked down. He’s got his dick like up above the waistband of his pants, like poking out. [<LAUGHTER>] And we just thought it was the funniest thing. And we didn’t know what to do, like. ‘Cause we were just so shocked and, I think we just all sort of looked at it and went, “Ahhh!” like screamed until he- you know sort of shooed him away. […] (Female, 31, teacher)

All the narrative clauses in the story are headed by verbs in the SP. The unexpected, remarkable event is related in an embedded orientation clause. It is headed by a stative verb (have got). The CHP is used as an evaluation device to express the narrator’s shock. The stative verb have got precludes the use of the NPP (see §6.5.3).

Whether the climax is expressed within or outside the sequence of narrative clauses, it may be highlighted by the narrator via the use of the CHP or the NPP. However, in quite a few narratives displaying tense variation, the climax itself is related in the SP. This is in line with Wolfson’s (1982) observation that the climax of the story is unusually marked by a switch from the CHP into the SP. This scenario is common when the climax coincides with the resolution, as in (33) which exemplifies a switch from the NPP into the SP.

(33) […] So he’s following me around and I’ve taken him straight over the stinging nettle trap. And he fell in there. […] (Male, 33, glazier)
In (33), the story reaches its peak with the fall of the protagonist into the stinging nettle trap. The falling event is also the result of the sequence of narrative events. It is reported in the SP, while the narrative clause immediately preceding the fall is headed by the NPP. Since the SP is largely used to relate the resolution of stories and to mark the end of the sequence of narrative clauses, if the climax and resolution of the story are clumped together, then the SP is likely to be used. Another explanation for the use of the SP at the climactic point of the story lies in the expected or known character of the climax. At the point where the complicating action reaches its peak, the resolution is often inevitable and can be deduced from the sequence of events. In (33), the protagonist’s fall is no longer unexpected and need not be introduced with a marked tense form for emphasis. Sometimes the climax has even already been announced by the narrator in an abstract at the beginning of the narrative. Otherwise, it might have been unveiled as an answer to the interviewer’s question. For example, if the interviewer asks ‘Have you ever had a car accident?’ and the participant responds ‘Yes’, then when the participant engages in storytelling they know that their listener is already aware of the final outcome/peak – the car crash. In such circumstances, the narrator has the choice to either emphasise the peak of the story when they reach it, or not do so. Considering that the peak is known information to the listener, the narrator might use the default SP. On the other hand, the narrator might still want to use a marked tense form (either the CHP or the NPP) to signal that they have reached the remarkable event introduced at the start of the story – a way to emphasise the relevance of their retelling.

In (30), (31) and (32), the climax is not announced at the start of the narrative. Before the revelation of the peak, the listener does not know what remarkable event happened. The use of the CHP and the NPP highlights the unexpected and unknown outcome. It contrasts with the use of the SP in all the other narrative clauses. When the climax is already known or deductible, as in (33), the unknown information consists of the series of complicating actions leading to the remarkable event. Narrators emphasise the build-up to the climax (rather than the climax itself). This is discussed next (§6.4.2).

### 6.4.2 Foreshadowing the climax

The CHP and the NPP are frequently used in the build-up to the climax to create suspense. The build-up to the climax comprises the narrative clause(s) that precede the climax and foreshadow the remarkable event. In (33), the clause immediately preceding the climax is headed by a verb in the NPP: *and I’ve taken him straight over the stinging*
**Online Dating**

(34) [...] One of my friends signed up to eHarmony. [Ok.] um And apparently, like, I don’t know the- the technicalities of it, but they send you kind of twenty matches and [Ok.] you go with something. And then- And you kind of review those. And the first twenty matches she got um one of her friends was in it. [<Chuckle>] And- and they had a good laugh about it. They were kind of like, “Hahaha, maybe we should go on a date, hahaha.” like this. Pretty funny. um And then the second lot arrived. um And she was on the phone with a client at work and she just, “I- I’m sorry. I’m- I’m really sorry. I’ll- I’ll call you right back.” And hangs up. 'Cause the matches had just come up on her phone, and one of them was her boss. <Laughter> [<Laughter>] So she immediately logged on and just deleted her profile. [...] (Female, 29, doctoral student)

The use of the zero quotative (and she just, “I- I’m sorry. I’m- I’m really sorry. I’ll- I’ll call you right back.”), followed by the CHP (And hangs up), builds suspense. The listener is expecting the climax. Why did her friend suddenly seem so uneasy on the phone with a client? Why did she bring the conversation to an end? The narrator then reveals that one of the matches her friend received was her boss. The climax is presented in an embedded orientation clause with the stative verb *be* conjugated in the SP (one of them [matches] was her boss). The follow-up resolution – what the narrator’s friend did afterwards (logged on, deleted)— is entirely in the SP. The use of the CHP immediately preceding the climax thus stands out and creates suspense.

In other narratives, the use of a marked tense form spreads over the series of narrative clauses that builds up to the climax. The climax itself might be reported in this marked tense form as well. Consider (35) where the narrator is telling a story about a huntsman spider and uses the CHP to narrate all events leading to the climax, including the climax.
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THE HUGE HUNTSMAN SPIDER

(35) […] about the evening time I said to my husband, “We’d better bring my jeans in and got- I don’t want any spiders getting into them.” ‘Cause we’d already had an experience with a <LIP SMACK> What do you call them? Those big hairy ones that walk up the wall. They ((trap--)) The big hairy ones that we get. Have you seen them? Huntsmans. [Oh the huntsmans. Ok.] Yeah, we’d already had an experience with one of those and at this time I was really really scared of spiders. [mm] And I- I’m not that scared of them now but I take them outside, even the big hairy ones, with a- a container or anything. [Yeah, yeah.] I don’t kill anything <LIP SMACK>. But anyhow I go out and I get my jeans and I tiptoe back into the room 'cause my daughter’s still asleep. And I flick my jeans out. You know how you do this <MIMICS FLICKING CLOTHES> [Yeah.] to straighten the legs. And as I flick the jeans – and I hope it doesn’t make a really loud noise <the participant gets ready to slap her hand on the table> – I seriously hear a noise this loud <BANG> on the floor. And I’m going. [Oh dear.] “What the hell was that that’s just dropped out of it? That was really big. Just dropped down in my pants.” And as I’m standing there, and my eyes are adjusting to the dark floorboards, I see the biggest spider I’ve ever seen in my life. It had the- its body was the size of a mouse. [Oh my god.] It was absolutely enormous and it’s right near my feet. So I scream and go running around the other side of the bed. My husband’s sitting on the bed going, “What is it? What is it?” I can’t speak. I go running around the other side of the bed. It goes under the bed, and comes out <LAUGHTER> this side at me <LAUGHTER> I’m screaming and then I’m jumping on the bed and it runs up the door. So we’re stuck in this room with a spider that size of my hand easily but the body was the size of a mouse. It was enormous. Now today I wouldn’t kill it. But I was only nineteen or something back then and, my husband killed it and seriously it splattered for probably a meter of-around. It was that big. [Oh] It was a big, big spider. (Female, 54, remedial massage and stretch therapist)
In (35), the core series of narrative events leading to the climax is related in the CHP, thus building suspense. Once the peak of the story has been reached (*I see the biggest spider I've ever seen in my life*), the events leading to the resolution are still related in the CHP – the narrator maintains suspense.\(^{20}\) As in the large majority of cases – especially when the resolution is distinguished from the climax of the story – the resolution is expressed in the SP (*my husband killed it; it splattered*). The sequence of narrative clauses is thus framed with an initial narrative clause in the SP (*I said to my husband*), and a final resolution in the SP as well (see §6.3.1).

### 6.4.3 Signalling salient events or states (other than the climax)

The functions of the CHP and the NPP as evaluation devices may serve to emphasise situations or protagonists’ reactions that do not constitute the climax of the story but are nonetheless presented as salient. For instance, the NPP is used in (36) to signal a highly emotional event for the narrator, the moment when her sick dog seemed to feel better and looked at her *with a big smile*. This moment briefly contrasts with the veterinary’s earlier recommendation that the dog be put to sleep (see §6.4.4).

(36) [...] “We think the best thing would be to put him to sleep, you know.” And I was so distraught. I said, “I can’t make that decision right now. I really can’t.” I said, “I’ve gotta go home. I gotta take him home. I gotta talk to my kids. I can’t do this!” um. And they said, “Yeah, ok.” And um just laid him on a blanket in the lounge all day. And then, maybe about four o’clock that afternoon, he put his head up and went, “<IMITATES DOG NOISE>”. And I was like, “Oh you’re alright! You’re alright!”, you know. And- and he’s **looked** at me with a big smile. And I got him some water and he had a little bit of water. Then he put his head down. [...] (Female, 57, unemployed/accounts clerk)

Crucially, this moment touched the narrator and was emotionally salient for her. This is emphasised at the end of her story where she explains that they did have to put

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\(^{20}\) The clauses in the CHP progressive *I’m screaming and then I’m jumping on the bed* are ambiguous between embedded orientation clauses and narrative clauses. The use of the sequential temporal adverb *then* supports the interpretation of *and then I’m jumping on the bed* as a narrative clause. The ‘jumping on the bed’ event occurs after the spider came out of the other side of the bed and before it runs up the door. The screaming event temporally overlaps the sequence and the clause *I’m screaming* is analysed as an embedded orientation clause.
the dog to sleep and reminisces: I think (that back) to when he put his head up and that was like- It was a sign to say, “It’s ok. You can let me go.” [mm] “I’ve had a good life. I’ve been loved. You’ve looked after me and I’ve loved you. And it’s alright to let me go now.” [mm] The narrator interprets this special moment of her dog looking and smiling at her as a thank you and a goodbye.

Using a marked tense form also allows narrators to highlight what they deem important aspects of their story, besides the climax and build-up to climax. In (37), the narrator talks about a car accident he had the first time he was driving with his mother. She had refused to let him reverse out of the driveway. When a truck stopped in front of their car and started reversing towards them, he was unable to find reverse on the car.

**CAR ACCIDENT**

(37) […] And of course, you know, in every car, reverse is in a different place and if you’ve never been on that car before. So I’m stru-- ((like and)) we can see the car coming but I’m putting it into the wrong place for reverse. And like- and the truck just smashes into the front of the car. And my mum’s really annoyed at me. She never drove in a car with me again, you know, until like I was much older. [<CHUCKLE>] But it was, you know, her fault. If she’d let me drove (sic) out of the- [Yeah.] out of the driveway, I would have known ((how to reverse.)) [You would have known the reverse on that car. Yeah.] Yeah, yeah. (Male, 41, learning skills advisor)

Besides the car accident, the emphasis of the narrative is on what the narrator perceives as his mother’s responsibility in the matter. He actually begins his story with the following abstract: *I totalled my mum’s car. And, it was her fault.* When his mother then seems to blame him for the accident (*And my mum’s really annoyed at me*), he introduces her reaction with the CHP (see also §6.4.3). To his opinion, her reaction is unexpected, unjustified, and out of place. She blames him, whereas the narrator assigns the blame to her (*Labov 1997: 409–410; Labov 2004a: 35): But it was, you know, her fault. If she’d let me drove out of the- [Yeah.] out of the driveway, I would have known ((how to reverse)).*
Background information, if making the story more tellable, may be highlighted via the use of a marked tense form. In (38), for instance, the narrator explains that he locked himself out of his cousin’s house on the very first evening that he stayed there.

(38) ‘Locked myself out of the house’. I have- I have done so um <LIP SMACK> I was actually house-sitting my cousin’s house. Him and his wife had gone down South um to Esperance I think for a- for a weekend. um And this is the first night that they’d actually left. […] (Male, 28, health administration manager)

This piece of background information is reported in the CHP (And this is the first night that they’d actually left) because it stresses the unluckiness of the situation. It also emphasises the embarrassment and stress associated with the situation: the narrator would not want for his cousin to have to come back with his wife before their holiday even started. He insists on this aspect with the following evaluation clauses at the end of his story: But just- just a nightmare situation. I was thinking my cousins are gonna have to come back on their very very um long awaited trip away. Which er yeah not so good.

The CHP and the NPP also notably occur in clauses highlighting the protagonists’ strong (verbal and/or physical) reaction. This is exemplified in (39) where the narrator calls her car company to have a new set of keys made after losing theirs.

(39) […] So I rang the um <LIP SMACK> Toyota company and I said, “We need to have some keys made.” “Six hundred dollars Madam.” “Six hundred dollars”, I’ve said. “Well”, he said, “they’re connect, not just keys. They’re connected to the um security system in the car.” […] (Female, 63, teacher aide)

The narrator’s astonished reaction to the cost of having the set of keys replaced is reported by the quotative say in the NPP. By repeating the exorbitant price – the climax and most reportable event of the story – (see also §6.4.5), and by the tone of her voice, she provides her evaluation of the event.

A similar example with the use of the CHP to emphasise a protagonist’s emphatic reaction to a remarkable situation is given in (40). The narrator explains that he and his wife had a problem at the hotel where they had booked a room for their
honeymoon: there were twin beds in the room rather than a double bed. The CHP progressive introduces his wife’s anxious and annoyed reaction.

(40) [...] And the hotel, we’ve booked a double bed, quite obviously, being a honeymoon. er And we got to our room and there were [Oh twins.] Twin-Yeah, two twins (sic) beds. And we thought, “That’s not right. We- we booked with a travel agent.” So we went down to the- to the- the reception desk and to the service desk and, and um... And my wife’s going, “But it’s our honeymoon, we- we wanted a double bed when- why have we got single beds?” [...] (Male, 56, accountant)

6.4.4 Drawing attention to a contrast

A marked tense form is often used as an evaluation device to highlight a contrast between the narrator’s or some protagonist’s expectation and the actual series of events that ensues. It signals a conflict or mismatch between expectation and reality. In (41), the narrator explains that he found a dead baby tiger snake and decided to play a trick on his friend Ron. He put the snake in a box and offered it to his friend. There is a stark contrast between Ron’s reaction on receiving the box and following its opening.

BABY TIGER SNAKE

(41) [...] So I went inside and put it in a lunchbox. [<LAUGHTER>] And we had two beers and I went, “Oh Ron, that’s it, I’ve got something for you.” And he’s- he’s perked up thinking, “Yes!”, you know. He’s more than happy to receive presents. So I’ve gone in, come back out the door, and as I’ve come back out the door I’ve done this Oscar-winning fake, “Oh, I’ve tripped.” as I’ve opened the thing. And this baby tiger snake has landed directly in his lap. He’s jumped up screaming, while me and my mate are screaming laughing. ’Cause my mate got there early and I told him what I was gonna do. Yeah, Ron did not think it was nearly <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] as funny as we did. [...] (Male, 36, chef)

The first narrative clause in the NPP corresponds to Ron’s expectation: he is excited at the idea of receiving a gift (he’s perked up). This positive feeling vanishes
when he discovers the tiger snake. The protagonist’s emphatic reaction is then emphasised in the NPP: *he’s jumped up screaming* (see §6.4.3).

A similar contrastive use is exemplified in (42) where the narrator gets stung by a bee, contrary to what her friend assured her.

(42) [...] we were inside this restaurant, like a fancy restaurant. And we’re having dinner there. And I *said* to Chad- I *said*, “I can hear a bzzzz. So it’s just gotta hit me.” “I bet you anyone you like that thing’s gonna get me, on my head.” 'Cause you can see my head- my skin was showing. “So I bet anything you like, it’s gonna hit me.” And he *goes*, “No, no. You- you’ll be alright, Stephie.” He’s like- “Bzzzzz… Donk!” … “Arghhhhh!” [<LAUGHTER>] [<LAUGHTER> You d*#*ckhead.] It *got* me and I had a big lump on my head [...] (Female, 34, homemaker)

The narrator emphasises her friend’s comment by reporting it with a verb in the CHP: *And he goes*, “No, no. You- you’ll be alright, Stephie.” This is followed by a false start in the CHP as well (*He’s like*). Contrary to her friend’s optimistic outlook, and as she predicted, the narrator did get stung by that bee. He claimed she would be fine but she knew she wouldn’t and she was right. The CHP highlights her friend’s mistake. She dismisses the content of his quote.

6.4.5 Emphasising situations via repetition/elaboration

The repetition of a narrative event is a strategy employed by narrators to insist on the remarkability of that event. In some examples, the repetition is accompanied by a tense switch into the NPP between the first and second retelling. In (43), for example, the narrator remembers a test during which the teacher ended up giving all the answers away. He uses repetition in the NPP to insist on the most unexpected event in the story (see §6.4.1).

(43) [...] He’s just- he just really wanted us to know the information. So he *was* just *like*, “Yeah it’s done like this.” And he’s just *walked* us through it. It was the most bizarre test I’ve ever had. (Male, 25, music teacher)
The narrator first presents the teacher’s surprising behaviour with a quote introduced in the SP: *So he was just like, “Yeah it’s done like this.”* The NPP then reintroduces the most unexpected event in an exam situation – the teacher providing students with the solutions to the problems (see §6.4.1). The focalisation via repetition and tense switching is a foregrounding technique to mark the peak of the story (Fleishman 1990: 213). The clause in the NPP also stresses the narrator’s reaction – his disbelief in the face of the teacher’s behaviour and this absurd situation. This interpretation is supported by the external evaluation clause *It was the most bizarre test I’ve ever had.*

In (44), the narrator talks about one of her theatrical performances in high school. She had to wear a fake moustache, but its hairs went into her throat and she choked just before she had to utter her first line.

**HIGH-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

(44) […] I go to say my first line and it’s like the opening night. ’Cause I went to privates it’s not like a crazy private school but sort of the big yearly production sort of thing. And I breathed in to take my first line and of course all my moustache- the hair went <MIMICS SWALLOWING HAIR> like into my throat and I just started choking and I couldn’t- <LAUGHTER> So [...] the whole- everything’s silent waiting for me to say this line and I’ve like breathed in and I, yeah, just literally choked. […] (Female, 31, teacher)

The ‘breathing in’ and ‘choking’ sequence of events is told twice. In the second retelling, the repetition of the event immediately preceding the climax in the NPP (*I’ve like breathed in*) creates a sense of suspense (see §6.4.2). Rather than the climax itself, as in (43) above, it is the event in the build-up to the climax that is repeated with a marked tense form. The peak of the story, which also coincides with the result, is simply re-announced in the SP (*choked*). The emphasis is on the pivotal moment preceding her first line during which she took a deep breath. It is at that point that the hair from her moustache went into her mouth, ultimately causing her to choke.

This type of repetition/elaboration can slow down the pace of narration since the introduction of new events is suspended while the narrator lingers on a specific part of
the story (Fleischman 1990: 213). Metaphorically, the ‘camera zooms in’ on a particular moment of the narrative. The narrator can pick a ‘different angle’, or viewpoint, to present events. Consider (45) where the narrator relates how he got run over by a motorbike in Indonesia.

(45) [...] they kind of pulled in in between the two lanes of traffic, and just, sort of sped up and like zoomed off and basically ran me over <LAUGHTER>. 
[<LAUGHTER> And you’re twelve?] Yeah. So I’ve just gone like fucking bang! Like just… straight rolled over with the motorbike. [Right.] And then the dude is like, “Oh shit!” So he pulls up the bike. […] (Male, 30, university student)

In (45), the narrative clauses leading to the climax and the climax itself are in the SP. The narrator then describes the climax again from his perspective, using the NPP. So the scene is first described with a third person subject ([they] ran me over), and then from the narrator’s point of view, in the first person (So I’ve just gone like fuckin bang!). Using the NPP, he operates a flashback from the perspective of the story-now. The latter clause, introduced by so, serves as a landmark for the ensuing sub-episode (see §6.3.2). It also allows the narrator to insist on this dramatic part of the story by presenting the event again from his stance (see §6.4.1). His evaluation of the situation is evident through the use of the expletive and expressive sound (fuckin bang!).

6.4.6 Tense switching as ‘a change of lighting or scenery upon a stage’

In the words of Wolfson (1978: 220), tense switching can serve as ‘a change of lighting or scenery upon a stage’. In (46), for example, the narrator talks about a time when, while on a date, he got attacked by a man. The orientation (not reproduced below) is presented in the SP and the Present (speaker-now present/general truth present). The narrator also uses the SP to relate the core of his story. All the narrative clauses therefore feature the SP and this narrative was not included in the dataset.

21 The form rolled over is analytically ambiguous between a SP and a past participle form. The discourse marker like signals elaboration on I’ve just gone like fuckin bang. The form rolled over is analysed as a past participle if the have auxiliary is considered to have scope over the elaboration.
However, the CHP (simple and progressive) is used in embedded orientation to depict the situation resulting from the climactic series of events.

(46) […] And some guy just ran across the street and punched me in the face and then kind of ran off. And it was in front of two police officers and they did absolutely nothing. And so I’m with this girl and it’s just- blood is just pissing everywhere and blah blah blah. And she’s like screaming at this guy <LAUGHTER> […] (Male, 41, learning skills advisor)

The switch into the CHP operates a ‘change of lighting’ (Wolfson 1978: 220) and brings the listener’s attention to the scene.

Similarly, in (47), a switch into the CHP and the NPP offers a vivid portrayal of the narrator’s situation: after a delayed flight, he has landed in Kuala Lumpur and is waiting for his suitcase. It will only arrive several days later.

(47) […] and finally we took off like an hour later. <LIP SMACK> Got to KL and um the airport is about- the airport for the budget airline is two hours out of the city. um So I’m waiting there, you know, a lot of flights have landed and suitcases are coming here and there. And um I’m waiting, waiting. My suitcase hasn’t come. […] (Male, 28, health administration manager)

The orientation and start of the complication are presented in the SP. The narrator then switches to the CHP and the NPP to describe his wait. The story-now serves as the temporal anchor for the two forms. This passage is vividly depicted.

In (48), the narrator discusses an encounter with a flying cockroach. The NPP in the progressive offers a final image to the scene ending the series of narrative clauses headed by the NPP.

(48) […] And it’s got straight into my hair. And there it’s got caught and tangled. So I could hear it fluttering in there, moving about. And I’ve started to go, <screaming> “Ahhh”, jumping around, trying to flick it out of my hair. The towel’s dropped. And I’ve been standing there in the backyard, naked, jump--jumping around <screaming> “Ahhh!” If any of the neighbours looked over over
the fence they thought- they would have thought I was mental. (Male, 36, chef)

The use of the predicate *stand* in the progressive gives it a dynamic interpretation. There is insistence on the length of the embarrassing situation. Listeners are ‘thrown’ into the middle of the scene and left with a focus on this final image.

There is a point of contention as to whether the tense form itself, or the contrast it creates with another form, serves the dramatizing effect. I return to this debate in Chapter 7 (§7.3.3) where I argue that these two factors are operative.

### 6.5 Comparing CHP and NPP usage

#### 6.5.1 Cooperation between the CHP and the NPP

Similar discourse-pragmatic functions have been identified for the CHP and the NPP in performed narratives. This finding is in line with Mustanoja’s (1960: 506) observation for Middle English narrative style that “the cases where the historical perfect occurs are strikingly parallel to those where the historical present is used”.

While the NPP supplants the CHP in narratives displaying SP-NPP variation across the sequence of narrative clauses, it also frequently co-occurs with the CHP (see §6.1.1). When speakers switch between the SP, CHP and NPP, both the CHP and the NPP continue to be used as evaluation and discourse-structuring devices. Using the three tense forms, narrators can establish fine-grained divisions in the story. For instance, the CHP can be used in the build-up to the climax while the NPP introduces the climax. This is exemplified in (49).

(49) […] And he gets to the top and he just stops. And he’s just like, holds me back and he like, “Wait, wait.” And he’s wait (sic) for like- there was like four people going on the escalator. And he’s just waiting until they’re like midway. And he's just hit the emergency stop. […] (Male, 27, electrician)

In narratives featuring SP-CHP variation or SP-NPP variation, speakers can only use the same marked tense form to simultaneously highlight the clauses preceding the climax and the climax itself.
Speakers can operate more subtle distinctions with an additional marked tense form in their repertoire. Consider (50) where, amidst a discussion about airports and luggage, the participant tells a story about his boss.

(50) [...] it’s quite funny 'cause he’s- he’s stuffed up as well.²² Like he said he’s been driving around the ring road, and he’s just kind of looked in the mirror on the tug. And he’s noticed this thing just kind of sliding across the back of a tray about to fall off. And so he’s hit the brakes. And it’s slid off and into the dirt and mud and that sort of thing. And he’s just like, “Oh, no.” So he picks it up and he’s like dusting it off <LAUGHTER>. And there’s like grass stains on it and <LAUGHTER> he’s putting it back on. He’s like, “Oh, no one will notice. No one will notice.” [<LAUGHTER>] And it’s just like- that’s probably some poor little old lady’s suitcase that <LAUGHTER> Oh, no! [<LAUGHTER>] But yeah. It’s amazing how many of those things happen and you just never hear about them or never think about it but it happens no matter what you do, in every business so. (Male, 26, auto electrician)

The tense switch in (50) delimits the complication (in the NPP) from the resolution (in the CHP) (see §6.3.4).²³ The use of the CHP, rather than a return to the SP, signals that the resolution is also a highlight of the story – it is just as remarkable and unexpected as the climax. Since the narrator deploys both the CHP and the NPP, he is able to differentiate the complication from the resolution, while still signalling each section as salient. I address the potential differences in rhetorical effects between the CHP and the NPP in §6.5.3.

Since there is an overlap of discourse-pragmatic functions between the CHP and the NPP, the two forms interact and cooperate in a single narrative to serve evaluative and discourse-structuring functions. However, there is no specialisation of the CHP for one function and of the NPP for another that applies across all narratives for all

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²² The PP at the beginning of the extract (he’s stuffed up as well) is ambiguous between a standard experiential PP and the NPP. The narrator elaborates on the nature of the ‘stuff-up’ by telling the actual story, suggesting that he’s stuffed up could be referring to a specific, dated event, rather than a sum of potential, experienced ‘stuff-ups’.

²³ Embedded in a clause headed by quotative say (he said) is an orientation clause in the NPP progressive (he’s been driving around the ring road) (see §6.1.3).
speakers. The SP, by contrast, is consistently used to frame the narrative clause sequence (see §6.3.1), and to signal the resolution/conclusion either of a sub-episode or of the whole story in the large majority of narratives. For example, in (51), the narrator uses the SP for the orientation, the opening and closing narrative clauses, and for the quotative say used with a first person pronoun. The NPP is used as a landmark in the sequence of narrative clauses (see §6.3.2), while the CHP is used to emphasise a protagonist’s (the mother’s) panic reaction (see §6.4.3). The CHP also brings a ‘change of lighting’ (see §6.4.6) in the embedded orientation, thereby stressing the comic of the situation.

PLAYING A TRICK ON MUM

(51) […] And it came up to April Fools’ Day. [Oh yeah. <CHUCKLE>] Alright?
So mum being a little bit naive about things, I um got up in the morning. And I- And I wal-- walked out and I- I started talking to mums. “What do you want for breakfast?” <SNIFFLING> And I just sat down and I went, “<SNIFFLING> I can smell gas. That’s terrible.” So anyway, again, mum’s going. “Where? What?” I said, “It might be in- in the lounge-room.” So she’s gone in there. I’ve got mum down on her hands and knees <LAUGHTER> with her nose right up to the- the gas bayonet <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>], sniffing to see if she can smell gas. <LAUGHTER> And then I had to f-- I couldn’t hold it together. I had to finally start laughing and “Hey mum, April Fool.” [<LAUGHTER>] She- she got very upset. [Oh. <LAUGHTER>] I think she saw the funny side of it eventually. (Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)

So in (51) the narrator offers an orientation to his story in the SP (not reproduced here but see Appendix E), and then begins the narrative complication with verbs in the SP (got up; walked out; started talking; sat down; went). The use of the CHP in the progressive aspect occurs in quotative context, with a third person subject (mum), and indicates the reaction of panic of the protagonist – the narrator’s mother. The narrator’s answer, headed by quotative say and with a first person subject, occurs in the SP (I said). At that point in the story the narrator provides a landmark in the NPP (so she’s gone in there). As is often the case, the landmark is introduced by the
discourse marker so and contains a motion verb (go). The landmark in the NPP establishes a story-now located after the event time of ‘she go in there’. The focal point is not the event itself but its aftermath. The aftermath is presented in an embedded orientation clause in the CHP (I’ve got mum down on her hands and knees <LAUGHTER> with her nose right up to the- the gas bayonet <LAUGHTER>, sniffing to see if she can smell gas). The CHP uses the previously established story-now as its reference time to offer a vivid depiction of the comical situation. The resolution, signalled by the adverb finally, is provided in the SP (I had to finally start laughing) (see §6.3.1).

6.5.2 The CHP and the NPP in quotative contexts

The results of the distributional and statistical analyses presented in Chapter 5 unequivocally showed that quotative contexts are significant to CHP and NPP usage: the NPP is favoured when the narrative clause is headed by a non-quotative verb (FW .65), whereas the CHP is favoured when the narrative clause is headed by a quotative verb (FW .61). Moreover, strong lexical constraints were shown to operate in quotative contexts: the CHP is favoured with quotatives be like (.73) and go (.72); the NPP is favoured with quotative go (.79); and quotative say is almost categorically encoded in the SP.

In AmE narratives, Schiffrin (1981: 51) observes a clustering effect of similar tense forms across the sequence of narrative clauses and therefore concludes that rapid alternation between the SP and the CHP in narrative clause sequences is not typical. While this is true for non-quotative contexts in the present data, rapid switches between tense forms are frequent in quotative contexts (see Figure 5.11). The rapid switches in quotative contexts are partly the results of the lexical effects noted earlier. Example (52) illustrates rapid tense switching in a sub-episode of a narrative told by a 30-year-old university student. The start of the sub-episode is indicated by an arrow (→).

(52) […] So then <LIP SMACK> I did actually buy a ghutra in the end um Because the guy just put it on my head and he was like, “Ay look it suits you, right?” And I looked in the mirror, I was like, “Mm yeah it actually does.” [“Oh yeah, I’m pretty great.” <LAUGHTER>] Pretty damn rad <LAUGHTER> So er so I did buy it but I- like he wanted um <LIP SMACK> → Oh er oh he said, um, “Twenty.” He said er “Twenty dirham.” And I said,
“Oh no I can’t mate, I’ll give you ten.” And he goes, “Oh no it’s a fixed price. We can only do twenty.” And I said, “Well, you know, I’ve only got ten.” And he goes, “Ok, fifteen.” And I said, “Well, I’ve only got ten.” And he goes, “Ok, I’ll take ten.” [<LAUGHTER>] That fixed price just flew out the window pretty quickly ’cause I only had ten. Like, you know [Yeah. <LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> So yeah. So I got it. Bargain. Half price. Profit on that. <LAUGHTER> (Male, 30, university student)

The narrator first tells the story in its entirety using the SP. He then returns to the middle of his story to tell the episode where he bargained with the vendor. The interaction begins with three narrative clauses in the SP. This is followed by a rapid alternation between the SP and the CHP. The CHP is used for the quotative verb introducing the vendor’s quotes (he goes), whereas the SP is used for the quotative verb introducing the narrator’s quotes (I said). This holds true throughout the passage, except in the first exchange, before the actual negotiation begins, where both quotative verbs are in the SP (he said and I said). The resolution/conclusion is repeated in the SP (So I got it) (see §6.3.1). Tense alternation in the sub-episode of (52) is schematised in Figure 6.5.

```
SP ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------>
CHP ✓ ✓ ✓
```

Figure 6.5 Tense variation across the narrative clause sequence in the sub-episode of (52)

The alternation between the SP and the CHP is conditioned by the lexical verbs used (say and go). It is also motivated by information structure. The SP is more frequent with first person subjects, while the CHP is more frequent with third person subjects. The switch thus aligns with the introduction of old versus new information (from the narrator’s viewpoint) (cf. Rodríguez Louro & Ritz 2014: 559), and also facilitates participant tracking (see §6.3.3).

Despite the constraints outlined above, the use of a quotative verb in the CHP or the NPP may serve a discourse-pragmatic function. It can indicate the importance of the content of the quote. For example, when the vendor first announces the price of the ghutra in (52), there is nothing unexpected/out of the ordinary in the story. The
unmarked SP is used for both the narrator and the vendor’s quote. The crux of the story is the negotiation and its outcome: the CHP is then used to introduce the vendor’s quotes that lead to the climax (see §6.4.2) as well as the final quote that constitutes the climax (And he goes, “Ok, I’ll take ten.”) (see §6.4.1).

While the narrator’s quotes (reported by first person subjects) are usually introduced in the SP, quotes introducing their emphatic reaction to the climax may be introduced in the CHP or the NPP. In the midst of a series of verbs (quotative or not) all in the SP, a unique CHP or NPP token can make a specific quote stand out (see the use of the NPP in (39) in §6.4.3, “Six hundred dollars”, I’ve said.). When several protagonists are involved alongside the narrator, their respective reactions can also be emphasised with different tense forms. Consider (53), already partly introduced as example (8) in Chapter 5. The narrator is acting in a play. She is on stage with the actor who plays her husband. They have reached that moment in the play when their daughter is supposed to join them on stage. She does not appear.

THE NO-SHOW STAGE DAUGHTER

(53) [...] Anyway we get to this point, and there’s no daughter. And <LAUGHTER> So the-- it- probably- it was probably about a minute but it seemed like an hour. And this guy um David who was playing my husband, I’ll always remember him sitting in the chair. Well he’s gone puce in the face. His eyes are popping out like organ stops. And I said to him, “I think we have a bit of bother here.” And he goes, <yelling> “Bother! Bother! I’ll give you bother!” So <LAUGHTER> with that I’ve walked behind him and I’ve put my hands on his shoulders and I said, “There, there dear. Nah nah nah.” And somehow or other, I don’t know what kicks in but something kicks in <LIP SMACK> and you manage to pick up the play. [Yeah.] So- which we did. And so we’ve carried on. And then in the middle of this the daughter walks in and goes <LAUGHTER> “Would you like coffee?” <LAUGHTER> whereby again he’s gone, <yelling> “Coffee! Coffee!” <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> And I’m trying to keep a straight face. […]

(Female, 67, medical liaison officer)
Table 6.5 summarises the tense alternations in quotative contexts observed between the SP and the CHP, and the CHP and the NPP, in (53).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td><em>And I said</em> to him, “I think we have a bit of bother here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>*And he goes, <em>&lt;yelling&gt;</em> “Bother! Bother! I’ll give you bother!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>1st pers.</td>
<td><em>and I said,</em> “There, there dear. Nah nah nah.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td><em>the daughter walks in and goes</em> &lt;LAUGHTER&gt; “Would you like coffee?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>3rd pers.</td>
<td>*whereby again he’s gone, <em>&lt;yelling&gt;</em> “Coffee! Coffee!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 Tense switching in quotative contexts as shown in (53)

The first interaction occurs between the narrator and her stage husband. The narrator’s quotes are reported in the SP. Three factors impact the choice of this tense form: (i) the subject is first person (see Table 5.7), (ii) the quotative verb used is *say* (see Figure 5.8), and (iii) the information contained in the quote is unremarkable. By contrast, the husband’s quote is reported in the CHP. The following factors favour the use of the CHP: (i) the subject is third person (see §5.2.3), (ii) quotative *go* is used (see also §5.2.3), and (iii) the quote is evaluated as salient – the protagonist has a strong reaction (see §6.4.3). The second interaction occurs between the daughter that has just stepped on stage and the husband. The two quotes have a third person subject, are headed by quotative *go*, and are evaluated as salient. On the one hand, the daughter’s arrival on stage is the key narrative turn of events (see §6.4.1) – she steps in visibly unaware that she had missed her cue. On the other hand, the husband’s reaction to her arrival on stage is emphatic (see §6.4.3). Both clauses could feature the CHP. However, to differentiate between the daughter’s line and the husband’s reaction, the narrator uses the CHP in the former and the NPP in the latter. Though rare in quotative contexts, the NPP is strongly favoured with quotative *go* (see §5.2.2) and springs here to operate a distinction between the two protagonists.

As there is no statistical effect of grammatical person on the use of the NPP in quotative contexts (see Table 5.12), quotes from the narrator or third parties are just as likely to feature this tense form. In cases where the narrator seeks to highlight respectively a quote headed by a first person and a quote headed by a third person subject, the CHP is more likely to be used with the third person subject (see example (24) in §6.3.3 where the CHP is used for the police officer’s quote (*he goes*), and the NPP is used for the narrator’s quote (*I’ve gone*).
The strength of a lexical effect might override any discourse-pragmatic considerations. For instance, quotative *be like* attracts the CHP to the extent that its use cannot always be explained by discourse-structuring or evaluative purposes. Rather, the lexical effect seems to prime and *be like* in the CHP might be analysed as a chunk (Bybee 2010: 35), as argued by Rodríguez Louro and Richard (in prep.). Indeed, in close to half of the narratives where only one narrative clause occurs in the CHP, the clause in question is headed by quotative *be like*, and in only a handful of cases does a discourse-pragmatic reason justify the use of the CHP. In (54), for example, the CHP is used for all quotative *be like* tokens within and outside the complication, illustrating the strong lexical effect of this quotative on tense variation.

(54) um Yeah but <LAUGHTER> I heard this story about this guy in Germany um ... He was an Australian guy <COUGH> And they rented a car to go to a festival. And they’re like, “Yeah, cool.” So they parked up um just down some street ‘cause it was pretty busy. And like, “Oh cool.” Parked down this street. And they took a photo of the signs so they took the photo of a sign so in case they got lost. And ((they)) went to the festival and then a couple of days later or whenever it was um came back and sure enough they couldn’t find their car. And they’re like, “Fuck. Where’s- where’s my car?” And they’re like, “Oh shit. Lucky I took that photo.” So they got the photo out <SNIFFLING> and went and asked some people. And they’re like, “Oh can you tell me where this street is?” And um they’re like, “Oh that says one-way street.”<LAUGHTER> They’d taken a photo of like a one-way- or, or no through road or something like that. It was one of those signs. And they’re like, “Fuck!” [<LAUGHTER> ((could be anywhere))] Yeah, yeah, yeah. That’s pretty bad. [<LAUGHTER>] So silly. (Male, 27, sports officer)

Besides quotative *be like*, no other verbs in the narrative, whether within or outside the complication, appear in the CHP. All the verbs heading narrative clauses are in the SP (*rented a car, parked up, parked, took a photo, went to the festival, came back, got the photo out, went and asked some people*).
6.5.3 The CHP and the NPP: Semantics and rhetorical effects

In performed narratives, the CHP and the NPP fulfil comparable discourse-pragmatic functions but they are subject to different sociolinguistic constraints (see Chapter 5). One linguistic constraint not considered in the quantitative analysis was lexical aspect. The quantitative analysis focused on narrative clauses, and narrative clauses are almost categorically headed by eventive predicates. Since both the CHP and the NPP license narrative progression with eventive predicates, the forms are interchangeable. Outside the sequence of narrative clauses, however, predicates are not necessarily eventive and lexical aspect governs the use of the CHP and the NPP. This constraint relates to the semantics of the two forms. The NPP cannot encode a single stative meaning; it requires a change of state. Stative predicates do not have resultant states because they do not have a natural endpoint. This is why quotative be like, one of the rare cases of stative predicates in narrative clauses, never appears in the NPP (see §5.2.1). The lexical aspect constraint on NPP usage is also shown in (55).

(55) Remember last year we were giving out – they were abject failures of course – the ‘I hate redman’ and ‘I love redman’ stickers? [Yeah, they were.] Well, there was a guy [snip] there was a guy, he’s used his initiative... Anyway he’s obviously got a handful of these stickers and he’s cut them all up a la y’know stalker-letter type stuff, and he’s made a new sticker and it says ‘I tolerate Redman’. (96 FM radio, Perth, 10.03.2000)

In (55), the orientation is in the past (we were giving out; there was a guy). The switch into the complication of the story is signalled by a switch into the NPP. This new form is maintained throughout the complication where only eventive predicates are used. The NPP thus heightens the lead to the remarkable event. The peak of the story is introduced in an embedded orientation clause in the CHP. The narrator could have used the SP (‘it said’) rather than the CHP (‘it says’). By choosing the CHP, the narrator both isolates the peak/resolution from the other sections of the story and emphasises its remarkability (see §6.4.1), while a return to the SP would have put this information on the same level as the orientation/background (i.e. unremarkable) information. However, the narrator could not have used the NPP (*‘it’s said’) to emphasise the peak/resolution

24 With stative predicates, the (standard) PP typically has an experiential or continuative reading (Novakov 2009: 287).
because of what is being dealt with: a property of the sticker. The variation is therefore constrained for this clause between the SP and the CHP. The choice of CHP over the SP signals that the narrator wishes to emphasise the climax, but the NPP is not an available option. The NPP could be used in the build-up to the climax as it features eventive predicates, but it could not be used for the climax itself which features a stative predicate. The use of the NPP with eventive predicates is noted by Ritz and Engel (2008: 132) who find that verbs occurring in the NPP tend to be durative and with a process part. In other words, they are either activities (42.9%) or accomplishments (30.9%) according to Vendler’s (1967) classification (see LEXICAL ASPECT in §2.1.2).

While close to all of the predicates in narrative clauses are eventive (except for quotative be like), predicates in (embedded) orientation and evaluation clauses feature both stative and eventive predicates. The NPP is found outside the sequence of narrative clauses in clauses usually headed by eventive predicates (see §6.1.3). The NPP notably occurs in embedded orientation clauses that signal a landmark. In these (often subordinate) clauses, the NPP usually introduces a change of state, often a change of location. It provides the backdrop for the following events. The NPP rarely appears in (internal) evaluation clauses since it never features with the evaluative quotative be like and is rare with quotative think because there is no clear, natural endpoint to the thinking process. The NPP may be used with stative predicates in orientation clauses when understood as continuative up to the story-now or if the state is presented as a resultant backdrop at story-now (see example (11), So I’ve been out on a first date). The NPP is also possible with a stative predicate in codas, as shown in (13) (And we’ve been ten blokes), where the narrator establishes a summary of events with the story-now as a reference point (see §6.1.3). In codas, the use of the Present tense refers to the speaker-now rather than the story-now. The CHP is unwarranted.

In narrative clauses headed by eventive predicates, both the CHP and the NPP are warranted. Though their discourse-pragmatic functions overlap, the rhetorical effects they produce are subtly different because of their semantics. The CHP asserts and highlights the inner phase of the event. The inner phase is temporally anchored at story-now. However, given that the event is known to have happened in the past, listeners infer its completion. The subsequent event is understood to take place in the result stage of that preceding event. Reconsider example (25) presented in §6.3.4 and partially reproduced here as (56).

25 External evaluation clauses are temporally anchored at the speaker-now. The (standard) Present and PP tenses occur in such clauses.
um we locked ((ourself)) out once. And we um there was three of us and we didn’t have a key to the house so my mum thought it would be a good idea to try and crawl through the roof. So <LAUGHTER> she gets a ladder. And she gets up there. And she takes the tiles out. And she gets into the roof. And she falls through the roof in my sister’s room. […] (Female, 16, secondary school student)

The CHP used with eventive predicates in narratives resembles the use of the ‘play-by-play present’ (as called by Anand & Toosarvandani 2016) for sports commentaries and demonstrations where events are reported as they unfold (Palmer 1965: 58; Leech 2004: 7). With the CHP, narrative events that are temporally anchored in the past are presented as if they were happening before our eyes. Listeners follow the progression of the story step by step. The result phase of each event is inferred.

Unlike the CHP, the NPP places the focus on the result phase of each event while the inner phase is implied (Caudal & Roussarie 2006: 22). This relates to the resultative beginnings of the perfect (see §2.3.2). The listener is led to anticipate the following event. The jump from one post-phase to the next gives the impression that events are unfolding in rapid sequence (Ritz 2007: 139; Ritz & Engel 2008: 156). The result phase is temporally located at story-now. In this respect, the NPP also evokes a present time sphere. Listeners sense the consequences of events from the perspective of the story-now. This produces a “more vivid representation of what happened” (Engel & Ritz 2000: 131). Consider (57) where the radio presenter relates the series of events which led to Kenny Rogers being sued.

(57) Kenny Rogers, big fan we all are, he’s actually ((been)) sued by one of his fans in America [snip]. He’s actually being sued for US two million by one of his fans. What happened was, at a show late last year in America he was up on stage and he was being a little bit, y’know, frisky, and for – god knows why – he’s thrown a frisbee off the stage while he’s performing in Dallas Texas. [Fair enough.] Okay. Well what happened was, it was inside a big hotel and there’s a lot of chandeliers kinda hanging around on the roof, the frisbee’s hit a chandelier, broken part of it, and it’s landed down on a guy who’s sitting in the audience. (Triple J radio, Sydney, 28.02.2000)
After a brief orientation in the past (*he was up on stage, he was being a little bit, y’know, frisky*), the narrator switches to the NPP for the first narrative clause (*he’s thrown a Frisbee off the stage*). The embedded orientation that accompanies this first narrative clause is in the CHP progressive (*while he’s performing*), confirming that the NPP also participates in the creation of a present time sphere. The use of the NPP in the following narrative clauses creates the impression of an acceleration of events leading up to the climax. The narrator can announce the resolution using the NPP since it presents a post-state: now the frisbee is in the state of having landed (*and it’s landed down on a guy*). The NPP is warranted because this is an eventive predicate discussing a change of state, contrary to example (55). The use of the CHP progressive in the relative clause referring to the victim (*a guy who’s sitting in the audience*) suggests that listeners can sense the consequence of the event at story-now.

Alternation between the NPP and the CHP can offer different perspectives on events. For example, in (12) (presented in §6.1.3), the orientation clause *And we’ve been throwing- we’ve been doing a bit of ball-throwing around* takes a retrospective look at the situation, even if it is still ongoing at story-now. If the CHP progressive had been used (*And we’re throwing- we’re doing a bit of ball-throwing around*), the situation would have been presented as concurrent with the story-now, and listeners would have been projected into the middle of the scene. In (50) (presented in §6.5.1), the sequence of eventive predicates in the NPP gives an impression of rapid succession between events since the focus is on the post-phases of those events and their completion is inferred (*he’s just kind of looked; he’s noticed this thing; he’s hit the brakes; it’s slid off*). By contrast, with the CHP progressive, the narrator then describes each situation from the inside (*he’s like dusting it off; he’s putting it back on*). The switch from the NPP into the CHP progressive changes the outlook on the situations related, in addition to separating the complication from the resolution. Different rhetorical effects ensue.

### 6.5.4 Temporal disambiguation with the CHP and the NPP

Constraints regarding temporal disambiguation differ between the CHP and the NPP. In the narrative dataset, temporal disambiguation is overall rare (11% [483/4260]), and largely achieved by adverbials expressing temporal progression – these represent 94% of all temporal adverbials in narrative clauses. The presence of an adverbial
expressing temporal progression might help disambiguate sequences where temporal progression is unclear.

In non-quotative contexts, the NPP is favoured in the absence of temporal disambiguation, whereas the CHP is slightly favoured in the presence of temporal disambiguation (see §5.2.2 and §5.2.3). The difference in direction of effect might be due to the difference of focus between the CHP and the NPP. As explained in §6.5.3, the NPP denotes the post-phases of narrative events while the inner stages are implied. Since the NPP focuses on the result phase of the event, the completion of said event is asserted and the ensuing event is anticipated, hence the interpretation of temporal progression. With the CHP, emphasis is on the inner phase of the event. Its completion is inferred but not explicitly stated. Because of this, temporal progression might be more difficult to infer from a sequence of CHP-headed clauses. The introduction of an adverbial expressing temporal progression can help disambiguate the temporal relation between narrative events. A temporal adverbial is not, however, a necessity, especially given that the coordinator and with the sense of ‘and then’ (Levinson 1983: 98–99) begins 43% (2000/4684) of the narrative clauses of the entire dataset. It is also a property of narrative clauses that each of the events they describe be contingent on the completion of the preceding event (Hopper 1979a: 215).

In quotative contexts, the NPP is favoured with temporal disambiguation (see Table 5.13). By contrast, temporal disambiguation is not selected as a significant constraint on the CHP – the direction of effect indicates that the absence of temporal disambiguation slightly favours the form (.56) (see Table 5.20). I suggest that temporal progression is always expected in passages of constructed dialogue. Conversations reported via direct speech can only be reproduced in the order in which they unfold. Otherwise, they would be nonsensical. Consider (58) where the order of quotes – question and answer – has been reversed and results in a confusing exchange.

(58) And I said, “He’s fourteen.” And he goes, “Mate, how old is he?” (Male, 33, glazier)

Temporal disambiguation concerning temporal progression is therefore unnecessary in constructed dialogue sequences. While this account for the lack of effect of temporal disambiguation on CHP usage, it fails to explain and even contradicts the finding that the NPP is favoured in quotative contexts with temporal disambiguation.
However, results of the multivariate analysis on NPP usage must be interpreted with some caution as there are only 13 tokens in the cell for quotative verbs occurring with a temporal adverbial. Among the five NPP tokens appearing with temporal disambiguation (specifically adverb then) in quotative contexts, only one appears in conversation: it begins the sequence of quotes and corresponds to a new episode in the story. In the other four examples, the quotes stand alone. As such they are not embedded in a dialogue that would disambiguate the fact that there is temporal progression from one quote to the next. In all those examples, the temporal adverbial also occurs at a turn of event or start of a new episode in the narrative. The adverbial thus serves to confirm temporal progression through the transition from non-quotative to quotative, and from quotative back to non-quotative contexts. It also potentially underlines the turn of event.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented further quantitative information to better understand tense variation in performed narratives. These additional quantitative results show that SP-CHP variation in narrative clauses is the most common type of alternation overall, and the second most frequent type after SP-CHP-NPP variation for narrators who are consistent NPP users. The CHP and the NPP are compatible across the narrative clause sequence and the latter does not necessarily replace the former. In radio narratives, tense switching into marked forms is more prevalent. This finding underscores the impact of the medium of communication and reflects particular storytelling strategies adopted by radio presenters who must keep an audience entertained. Outside the sequence of narrative clauses, the NPP is less frequently used. This relates to structural considerations such as the lexical aspect of predicates. The NPP is near-categorically used with eventive predicates because it requires a result stage. On the contrary, the CHP can appear with both stative and eventive predicates.

Crucially, this chapter has offered a detailed discourse-pragmatic analysis of tense variation in the narratives of the dataset. This approach complements the quantitative analysis presented in Chapter 5 by zooming in on the functional considerations that also affect tense variation (see Schiffrin 1981: 45, 61).

26 The recommended number of tokens per cell to run a statistical analysis of variation is 35 tokens, though above 10 tokens per cell the variation is reliably predicted in 90% of cases (see Guy 1980: 20; Tagliamonte 2012: 136).
The analysis has shown that the discourse-pragmatic functions of the CHP and the NPP are comparable. Embedded in storytelling, they behave as signposts in narratives to help listeners navigate through the story. As such, they are discourse-structuring devices. They also pinpoint, by contrast to the SP (the default narrative tense in English), what is particularly worthy of attention. A narrative is not a mere reporting of events (see Chapter 3, §3.1.1). Narrators must clarify its raison d’être. They judge the experience they relate through the prism of their subjectivity (Wolfson 1982: 23; Fleischman 1990: 215). They use the CHP and/or the NPP to emphasise points that are unexpected or salient in their story. In other words, the CHP and the NPP fulfil an expressive, evaluative function.

The analysis has further revealed that these discourse-pragmatic functions operate in SP-CHP-NPP variation as well. Narrators who have the three tense forms in their repertoire can use them all in a single narrative to operate fine-grained distinctions. I have argued that the CHP and the NPP retain their Present and PP semantic properties when used in narrative discourse. This explains the linguistic constraint regarding the lexical aspect of predicates and the slightly different rhetorical effects that the two forms bring to bear.

In the following chapter, I discuss the main thesis findings and how they contribute to our understanding of tense variation in performed narratives and the evolution of the PP in AusE.
CHAPTER 7
Discussion

As shown in Chapter 2, perfects tend to follow an evolutionary path from resultative to past/perfective meaning (Bybee et al. 1994). Though the Standard English PP appears restricted to establishing a link between a past situation and a current state, a number of innovative uses have been reported for the form, notably in AusE radio chat-show programmes and police media reports (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz 2007, 2010). Crucially, many non-standard PP uses are embedded in narrative discourse (see Chapter 3). The aim of the present thesis was to offer a sociolinguistic study of the NPP, and more generally of tense variation, based on a specifically designed corpus of AusE performed narratives (see Chapter 1).

This chapter discusses the findings from the combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to the empirical data, and their implications vis à vis the literature on the topic (see Chapters 2 and 3). Section §7.1 provides succinct answers to the research questions posed in §4.2. The ensuing sections expand on four central points of discussion. Section §7.2 addresses the question of PP grammaticalisation into a past/perfective in AusE, and the question of language change in progress in the speech community. Section §7.3 tackles the discourse-pragmatic meaning of tense variation, emphasising the distinction between CHP and NPP denotation and connotation in narratives. It brings back into question the applicability of the concept of the sociolinguistic variable beyond the phonological level. Section §7.4 explores the social meaning of the linguistic variation. Finally, section §7.5 considers plausible paths of evolution for the (N)PP in AusE.

7.1 Summary of key findings

Three central research questions (see §1.2) and a subset of more specific questions (see §4.2) guided the present study. Brief answers to these questions are presented in Table 7.1.
### 1. What are the sociolinguistic constraints on the use of the NPP in AusE performed narratives?

#### i. How do specific linguistic factors affect the use of the NPP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Priming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a tendency for each tense variant to be preceded by the same tense form. The occurrence of an NPP in the preceding narrative clause significantly favours the NPP in the following clause.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b) Temporal disambiguation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, only 11% (483/4260) of narrative clauses extracted from the dataset are modified by a temporal adverbial. In non-quotative contexts, the NPP is favoured when there is no temporal disambiguation; in quotative contexts, on the other hand, the NPP is favoured when there is temporal disambiguation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>c) Grammatical person</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical person is not selected as a significant factor group on NPP usage. The use of first or third person pronouns does not affect the occurrence of the NPP.</td>
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<tr>
<th>d) Lexical effects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The NPP is favoured with the quotative verb go and disfavoured with the quotative verb say.</td>
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<tr>
<th>e) Position in the narrative clause sequence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The NPP is preferred in narrative clauses that occur in medial position.</td>
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#### ii. Is the occurrence of the form impacted by social factors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Age variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age was not selected as a significant variable on NPP usage, whether modelled as a categorical or continuous variable. NPP usage is thus not constrained by speaker age. The frequency of use of the NPP does not differ across age cohorts. Relying on the apparent-time construct, the NPP does not appear to represent a linguistic change in progress.</td>
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<tr>
<th>b) Sex/gender variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker sex/gender affects NPP usage: the NPP is favoured by male speakers and disfavoured by female speakers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>c) SES variable</th>
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| SES is selected as a significant factor on NPP usage with the largest magnitude of effect: the NPP is favoured by non-professional speakers and disfavoured by professional speakers. There is thus a sharp stratification in the use of the NPP between professional and non-professional speakers. This stratification along social lines,
associated with the apparent-time evidence, suggests a case of stable variation. Speaker occupation alone is an accurate predictor of the variation observed, though an index combining speaker occupation and level of education slightly outperforms this individual class indicator.

2. ARE USES OF THE NPP AND USES OF THE CHP CONSTRAINED BY SIMILAR LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IN PERFORMED NARRATIVES?

Each tense variant is favoured when preceded by the same tense form: the CHP is favoured when the CHP is used in the preceding narrative clause; the NPP is favoured when the NPP is used in the preceding narrative clause. Both the CHP and the NPP are favoured when the narrative clause is in medial position. Grammatical person is never selected as a significant factor group on NPP usage, neither is it selected as a significant constraint on CHP usage in non-quotative contexts. However, narrative clauses with third person subjects significantly favour CHP usage in quotative contexts. Strong lexical effects operate in quotative contexts on both NPP and CHP usage. The presence of temporal disambiguation favours the CHP in non-quotative contexts and favours the NPP in quotative contexts. Conversely, the absence of temporal disambiguation favours the NPP in non-quotative contexts. Temporal disambiguation is not selected as a significant constraint on CHP usage in quotative contexts.

Different social constraints govern the use of the CHP and the NPP. Age is the only social factor group significantly constraining CHP usage, albeit with a small magnitude of effect: the CHP is favoured by 16- to 29-year-old speakers, but not disfavoured by older speakers. Conversely, age does not constrain NPP usage. Unlike the NPP, the CHP is not constrained by speaker SES or sex/gender. Empirical evidence demonstrates that the CHP is used by all AusE speakers, regardless of their age, sex/gender and socio-economic backgrounds.

3. WHAT ARE THE DISCOURSE-PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS UNDERLYING TENSE VARIATION IN AUSE PERFORMED NARRATIVES?

i. What are the discourse-pragmatic functions fulfilled by the NPP in comparison to the CHP and the SP in AusE performed narratives?

The SP is the ‘default’ narrative tense whereas the CHP and the NPP are marked tense forms with pragmatic force in narratives. Consequently, the SP, CHP and NPP can all function as discourse-structuring devices. However, only the CHP and the NPP can serve as evaluation devices.

Eight patterns can be distinguished: (1) the SP frames the narrative clause sequence; (2) a marked tense form (i.e. the CHP or the NPP) is used for the climax; (3) a marked tense form is used in the lead to the climax; (4) rapid tense switching between tense forms occurs in quotative contexts (often serving a participant tracking function); (5) a marked tense form is used to signpost information, highlight salient situations, draw attention to a contrast, and – in cases of repetition/elaboration – insist on a particular situation; (6) a tense switch signals a landmark; (7) a tense switch isolates different narrative sections; (8) a tense switch operates ‘a change of lighting or scenery upon a stage’.

Discourse-pragmatic and stylistic effects arise both from the selection of unmarked versus marked forms, and from their alternation.

ii. Can the CHP and the NPP co-occur across the sequences of narrative clauses?

a) Frequency & organisation

The CHP and the NPP can co-occur across narrative clause sequences where they fulfill similar discourse-pragmatic functions. Their combined use enables the narrator to
establish further divisions in the story and to operate various *mises en relief* of events. However, the CHP and the NPP produce subtly different rhetorical effects because of their semantics, which may explain why both forms may be used throughout a narrative. The differing linguistic constraints operating on the two forms may also affect their usage and explain their co-occurrence.

b) Specialisation?

The CHP and the NPP do not undergo specialisation towards a specific set of discourse-pragmatic functions. Rather, linguistic (e.g. lexical effects) and social (e.g. speaker SES) determine their respective uses.

Table 7.1 Answers to research questions

Sections §7.2 to §7.5 elaborate on some of those findings and related issues.

7.2 Evolution of the Present Perfect in Australian English

As explained in §2.3.2, there is a cross-linguistic tendency for perfects to grammaticalise into past/perfective forms (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 81–87), or to develop evidential/mirative uses (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 95–97; Peterson 2017: 85). The category of perfects has been described as unstable (Vanneck 1958: 237), and shows variability in functions across languages as well as across varieties of the same language (see Chapter 2, §2.3.3 and §2.4.3). Lindstedt (2000: 366) argues that the instability of the category leads to the loss of many perfects – the forms themselves often do not disappear, but they no longer encode perfect meanings. Although the Standard English PP has not been claimed to grammaticalise into a past or perfective marker (Bybee *et al.* 1994: 85), non-standard PP tokens seemingly operating as past tenses in BrE, AusE and NZE narratives have been documented. The use of the PP as a past tense is therefore attested in narrative discourse, questioning PP grammaticalisation in some native English varieties, including AusE, and its spread across the speech community.

In line with Levey (2006), I make the point that the NPP is a contextualised, ‘pragmatic’ use of the PP, and does not constitute a grammaticalised substitute for the SP. It is a marked tense in narrative, comparable in its pragmatic force to the CHP (see §7.3). Moreover, evidence suggests that the NPP does not represent a linguistic change in progress (in the variationist sociolinguistic sense) – the proportion of NPP usage is not increasing in younger generations of speakers, and remains restrained to a specific social group in the speech community.
7.2.1 The NPP, a non-standard perfect with aoristic pragmatics

Canonically, standard perfects are incompatible with definite past temporal adverbials (Comrie 1976: 54), and cannot be used for foregrounded clauses in narration where events are reported as perfective and detached from the present time (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008: 4) (see §2.4.2).

Lindstedt (2000: 371) asserts that the use of the perfect form as a narrative tense implies that the form in question has ceased to be a perfect, except in some evidential contexts. I argue that the AusE PP has not ceased to be a perfect despite its narrative uses since past temporality and perfective aspect are pragmatically inferred in narrative contexts. They are not encoded in the semantics of the AusE PP.

Following Comrie’s (1985: 23) distinction between the ‘meaning’ of a particular form (which is independent of its context of use), and ‘implicatures’ (which stem from usage of the form in a particular context), I argue that past/perfective interpretation with the NPP is inferred and should not be considered a semantic component of the form. Though the contexts of use of a particular tense form may give an indication of its meaning, the proper semantic meaning of the form needs to be distinguished from the contribution of (and implications stemming from) the context (see Fleischman 1990: 23). Otherwise, analysts run the risk of attributing a meaning to the form that does not stem from the form itself.

At this stage, the NPP counts as a non-standard perfect with ‘aoristic pragmatics’ to use Caudal and Roussarie’s (2006) terminology. Caudal and Roussarie (2006: 16) describe three brands of perfects according to their degree of aoristicisation, which is assessed by their compatibility with past time adverbials and their use in narrative discourse:

(i) canonical perfects, which cannot combine with past time adverbials and do not occur in narratives;
(ii) “non-canonical perfects with aoristic pragmatics”, which are not used with past time adverbials but appear in narratives;
(iii) “[non-canonical] perfects with a partly aoristic semantics”, licensed both with past time adverbials and in narrative contexts.

According to Caudal (2012: 290), the acquisition of narrative uses is the first step separating canonical perfects from ‘aoristicised/perfectivised perfects’. NPP uses in oral
narratives of personal experience correspond to the second brand (ii) of perfects. The PP has indeed ceased to be a canonical perfect to the extent that it has expanded its context of use to a domain it does not canonically pertain to. However, the NPP is not a mere equivalent to the SP in narrative contexts. Past/perfective meaning is only inferred, not encoded in the semantics of the NPP.

This analysis is borne out by my empirical findings. First, the SP remains the most frequent tense form used across the narrative clause sequence, representing 64% of the variation (see Figure 5.1). Secondly, the NPP more closely patterns with the CHP than with the SP variant in terms of certain linguistic constraints. The CHP and the NPP are both favoured in the middle of the narrative clause sequence, whereas the SP is favoured in initial and final positions. This has been linked to the role of the SP as a past temporal anchor and the default tense in narrative contexts, whereas the CHP and the NPP are non-past tenses whose uses are marked in such contexts.

Two empirical observations support the claim that the NPP and the CHP do not express past meaning themselves. First, the SP generally features in the sequence of narrative clauses: I have shown that the form tends to be used at least once (see §6.1.1). Only a single narrative offers variation between the CHP and the NPP (and not the SP) across the narrative clause sequence. In the course of the narrative selection process, only four narratives featured the CHP for 100% of their narrative clauses, and only two narratives featured the NPP for 100% of their narrative clauses – and these are narratives containing few narrative clauses. Even when the SP does not feature in the sequence of narrative clauses, it is found in other sections of the narrative. The tense form used in the narrative clause sequence then contrasts with the other sections of the narrative (see §6.3.4). I concur with Schiffrin’s (1981: 51–52) proposal that there is “an upper limit on the number of events for which a reference time can be understood to hold, without a past-tense marker to re-establish that reference time”. The CHP and the NPP are unable to act as past-tense markers. This explains why sequences of narrative clauses not featuring a single SP token are rare. This also explains why the SP frequently opens and ends the narrative clause sequence (see §6.3.1). Though narrative clauses necessarily refer to past events, and though the reference time of events is usually established in the abstract or orientation, narrators often reassert the reference time in narrative clauses. They use an explicit past tense form at the beginning and end of the sequence to provide a clear past temporal frame. The second empirical observation supporting the claim that only the SP expresses past temporal reference
pertains to co-occurrence with definite past temporal adverbials. The SP is largely preferred with temporal adverbials expressing temporal location (83% [25/30]) – the majority of which express past temporal location in the dataset (see Table 5.9). The CHP and the NPP almost never appear with definite past temporal adverbials (e.g. last night). They do, however, appear with hodiernal temporal adverbials (this day, in the morning), and the temporal adverb now. The present meaning of these temporal adverbials is compatible with the persistent present meaning of the CHP and the NPP. Globally, only 11% (483/4260) of narrative clauses are modified by a temporal adverbial. It is a property of narrative clauses that the narrative events they describe are past and chronologically sequenced. The use of adverbials making such temporal anchoring and relation (more) explicit could appear redundant, hence their limited usage in narrative clauses. With the NPP and the CHP, the favouring or disfavouring effect of temporal disambiguation in quotative and non-quotative contexts was related to the semantics of the PP and Present tenses – an argument against their grammaticalisation in narrative contexts (see §6.5.4).

Regardless of any evidence for extension, I argue that the AusE PP is not being desemanticised. In the case at hand, desemanticisation does not correlate with generalisation (see Bybee et al. 1994: 6). The semantic neutralisation of the distinction between tense/aspect forms in narrative clauses is only partial. At the discourse-pragmatic level, the forms are not equivalent: the CHP and the NPP are direct variants of each other, contrasting with the SP (see §7.3.1). The important point is that generalisation may occur in the absence of desemanticisation, and that the latter process may follow generalisation rather than precede it. Some AusE speakers use the PP in non-canonical perfect contexts, displaying a more extensive usage of the form than other speakers. Whether such usage corresponds to an expansion of use of the AusE perfect remains an empirical question in the absence of real-time data. In any case, extension as a change mechanism is not confined to grammaticalisation, so that evidence of an extension of meaning of the PP would not support the grammaticalisation hypothesis.

7.2.2 Markedness, pragmatic inferences and (inter)subjectivity

The unmarked tense form to relate narrative events in English is the SP. Its semantics matches the temporality of events referred to. In the Reichenbachian representation of tenses (see Table 2.1), the SP is represented with Event Time (E) and
Reference Time (R) co-temporal and anterior to Speech Time (S), hence the past interpretation. In the same framework, the Simple Present and the PP locate R at S. These tenses are about the present, not the past. When they are used in narrative – what has been called CHP and NPP usage – we infer that the events referred to are located in the past, despite the fact that neither of these forms locates R as anterior to S. The use of the Present and the PP is unexpected to refer to past events since the forms are ‘about’ the present.

The assumption in communication is that people follow the Cooperative Principle (Grice 1989: 26). Successful communication assumes that speakers and hearers recognise and conform to certain norms of interaction and interpretation. If norms or ‘Maxims’ are flagrantly violated, the hearer concludes that the violation is purposeful – there is flouting of the maxim.

At face value, the use of the CHP or the NPP violates Grice’s (1989: 27) Maxim of Quality, “Do not say what you believe to be false”. E, R and S are all co-temporal for the Simple Present, implying that the events are unfolding at speaker-now – which is not the case. With the PP, E is anterior to both S and R; the latter two are co-temporal. The form thus indicates that the past events are presented from the perspective of Speech Time rather than the perspective of Event Time. The standard PP presents events as temporally unbounded, hence its purported incompatibility with narrative discourse (Jara Yupanqui 2011: 214). However, the narrator’s use of the CHP or the NPP – tense forms that do not match the temporal (and aspeccial) nature of narrative events – is understood as intentional. The CHP and the NPP utterances are considered to contain (conversational) implicatures; that is, inferences “intended to be recognized as having been intended” (Levinson 1983: 101). Listeners infer some reason(s) behind the ‘unexpected’ tense usage (Bach 2006: 24–25). They understand that the Maxim of Quality has been flouted for discourse-pragmatic purposes (see Chapter 6). Caudal and Roussarie (2006) pursue the idea that implicatures can explain the interpretation of tense usage. In narrative clauses, the CHP and the NPP “mean (in some general sense) more than what is actually ‘said’ (i.e. more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered)” (Levinson 1983: 97).

Clark’s (1988, 1990) ‘Principle of Contrast’ is useful here. This pragmatic principle dictates speakers’ selection of linguistic forms: “when speakers choose an expression, they do so because they mean something that they would not mean by choosing some alternative expression” (Clark 1990: 417). This pragmatic principle
operates with the ‘Principle of Conventionality’ according to which “for certain meanings, there is a form that speakers expect to be used in the language community” (Clark 1990: 418). The SP is the expected, conventional narrative tense. By contrast, the CHP and the NPP are marked tense forms and, therefore, must mean something that the SP does not.¹

In language acquisition, Slobin (1994: 121) also defends the idea that children learn the distinction between SP and PP usage in English relying on discourse-pragmatic oppositions:

“When the child hears the same verb in two grammatical frames, both referring to a past state with resultant consequences, he or she has no recourse but to try to differentiate the forms on discourse pragmatic grounds – on the assumption that grammatical choice is ‘motivated’, and that only pragmatic distinctions remain if lexical choice is held constant”.

Uses of the PP in narrative emerge as “motivated pragmatic responses” (Fleischman 1990: 314). They are the result of a process of (inter)subjectification. (Inter)subjectivity has been advanced as one of the sources of grammaticalisation of perfects (see §2.3.4). All narratives of personal experience contain an element of subjectivity since the experience conveyed has been configured by an individual speaker, and filtered through their vision (Fleischman 1990: 96, 183) (see Chapter 3, §3.1.1). Storytelling also involves intersubjectivity: the narrator relies on audience involvement to infer meaning (Tannen 1982: 4). As reviewed in §2.2.1, the PP has both temporal and aspectual meaning. Fleischman (1983: 185) claims that “perspectives on an event that are encoded in the form of [grammatical] aspects tend to be subjective, i.e. they reflect a particular speaker’s view of the event at a particular moment” (see §2.1.2). The use of the PP has been said to reflect “an emotionally grounded speaker’s attitude” (Hübler 1998: 96), though this psychological claim has yet to be empirically supported (see §8.2). The character of current relevance attached to the PP is also highly subjective (Engel 1998: 135). Via a process of (inter)subjectification, the NPP has come

¹I have argued earlier that tense/aspect distinctions are partially neutralised in narrative discourse. The narrative context neutralises, or rather enables, forms that have different meanings in non-narrative contexts to be used to refer to the same past temporal state of affairs. However, the original distinction between forms lingers on – the use of the NPP or the CHP in narrative is marked whereas the use of the SP is unmarked (it is the default form). There is a clear contrast between using a past tense form and using non-past tense forms to make reference to the past in narrative.
to convey the narrator’s evaluation of narrative events, while simultaneously drawing audience attention to those events. It is used as a feature of performance in storytelling (see §7.3).

Narrative contexts are amenable to language change in tense/aspect categories since, in narrative clauses, distinctions between tense/aspect forms are neutralised: they all refer to past/perfective events (Sankoff 1988a: 153). This type of equation between variants is “the fundamental discursive mechanism of language variation and change” (Poplack & Turpin 1999: 140). It can lead to desemanticisation and generalisation. The ‘neutralisation-in-discourse mechanism’ was, for instance, at play in the grammaticalisation of the Peninsular Spanish PP into a perfective: the change was enabled via temporally indeterminate past contexts (narrative contexts counting as such) (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008: 303).

A tense/aspect category may be reshaped by pragmatic usage and see an extension – or a specialisation (cf. Rodríguez Louro 2016) – of its meanings. In the present case, new meanings of the PP could emerge from pragmatic inferencing. The repetition of a rhetorical strategy inviting inferences may lead the inference in question to become conventionalised (Grice 1989: 39; Detges 2000: 346). In other words, the inferred meaning may become embedded in the semantic meaning of the linguistic form (Geis & Zwicky 1971: 565; Comrie 1985: 26). (Inter)subjectification and grammaticalisation therefore often coincide, though they are two independent processes since “neither subjectification nor intersubjectification entails grammaticalisation” and, conversely, grammaticalisation does not always involve subjectification (Traugott 2010: 38, 40).

The NPP in AusE narratives is the result of a process of (inter)subjectification. The use of the PP is pragmatically enabled to refer to past/perfective events in narrative: the NPP signals that the event referred to is significant; it is also used for discourse-structuring purposes. For some AusE speakers, the PP has a narrative function. However, the distribution of the NPP alongside the SP and the CHP variants, and the linguistic and discourse-pragmatic constraints on its use, suggest that the form has not (yet) grammaticalised into a past/perfective form. Section §7.2.3 offers a social perspective on the NPP.
7.2.3 NPP usage: Change in progress or stable variation?

A prerequisite to language change is variability and heterogeneity in language structure; however, these do not always lead to change (Weinreich et al. 1968: 188). Some variants are stable and persist, while others constitute ‘changes in progress’ diffusing through society. In any case, all instances of linguistic variation and change are embedded within a social matrix (Weinreich et al. 1968: 175–176). A central question surrounding NPP usage in this thesis was whether such a usage was indicative of a linguistic change in progress. Current findings suggest that this is not the case.

As shown in Chapter 5 (§5.3.2), the use of the NPP is not constrained by AGE, and this finding is consistent whether the social variable is modelled as a categorical variable – relying on three age cohorts, or as a continuous variable – using speaker year of birth. This means that, synchronically, there is no significant difference in the linguistic behaviour of speakers of different ages regarding the NPP. Specifically, there is no increase in NPP usage – at the expense of the SP or the CHP variants – from the oldest to the youngest age cohort; that is, there is no indication of a generational change (see §4.6.1). Rather, the tendency is that of a decrease in NPP usage in quotative contexts because the preferred quotative verb of the 16–29 year olds, be like, does not occur in the NPP. Using the apparent-time construct (Labov 2006b: 200), I conclude that there is no empirical evidence supporting the linguistic-change-in-progress hypothesis.

Additional evidence supports the rejection of the hypothesis. A linguistic innovation represents a change in progress if it gradually becomes adopted by the entire speech community (Lodge 2004: 11; Coates 2013: 171). Yet, the results of the multivariate analysis on NPP usage presented here have also revealed that the form is constrained by SES and SEX/GENDER (§5.3.2). The NPP is not uniformly adopted by all AusE speakers.

There is a sharp stratification between professional and non-professional speakers: the NPP is almost restricted to speakers from non-professional backgrounds (see Table 5.26). At all ages, the proportion of NPP usage is higher among non-professional than professional speakers. The relatively clear-cut division between professional and non-professional speakers in terms of NPP usage shows that the form is currently restricted to lower SES groups. This suggests that the form has been transmitted cross-generationally in this social cohort, but that the rest of the AusE speech community has not adopted its use.
The NPP – a non-standard variant – is favoured by male speakers, but disfavoured by female speakers (see §5.3.2). As discussed in §4.6.2, Labov’s (2001b: 266) Principle I on the role of sex/gender in language variation and change states that men use more non-standard forms than women with respect to stable sociolinguistic variables. Conversely, Principle II stipulates that women use incoming variants more than men in situations of linguistic change in progress from below (Labov 1990: 93). In a large number of studies, women have been found to lead linguistic change, with men lagging behind (Tagliamonte & D’Arcy 2009: 97). Considering morphosyntactic variation in AusE, Shnukal (1978) and Eisikovits (1981) have observed a tendency for female speakers to use more standard than non-standard variants. In the present study, female speakers disfavour the NPP while men favour it. This finding suggests stable sociolinguistic variation. I return to the social significance of the variation in §7.4. The following section (§7.3) addresses the discourse-pragmatic meaning of tense variation in narrative, beginning with a discussion of the definition of the sociolinguistic variable.

7.3 Linguistic variation and discourse-pragmatic meaning

7.3.1 Re-examining the sociolinguistic variable

This thesis brings back into perspective the question of the definition of the linguistic variable (see §4.1), specifically the question of true optionality when dealing with morphosyntactic variation (Aaron 2010: 3). Lavandera (1978) criticised the extension of the notion of the ‘sociolinguistic variable’ beyond the phonological level, arguing that semantic equivalence is only unproblematic for phonological variants that are referentially meaningless (for e.g. thinking vs. thinkin’). For non-phonological variables, she proposes to substitute the condition of semantic equivalence by the condition of ‘functional comparability’ (Lavandera 1978: 181). In his response to Lavandera, Labov (1978: 6) clarified that the linguistic variable is a ‘heuristic device’, not a theory of language, and that one can assert that two variants have the same truth-value or ‘meaning’ as long as they refer to the same state of affairs (see Bolinger 1977 on meaning equivalence in syntax). Researchers have shown that variants of the linguistic variable need not mean precisely the same thing: weak complementarity was advanced as a solution to the controversy about semantic equivalence (Sankoff 1973; Sankoff & Thibault 1981; Weiner & Labov 1983). The variants of a variable “say the same thing” (or almost the same thing), but they have social and/or stylistic significance.
The strict criterion of semantic equivalence is untenable for discourse-pragmatic variables (Dines 1980: 15), and the criterion of functional comparability can be problematic as well (see Pichler 2010).

Given that the morphosyntactic variants of a variable are not referentially meaningless, it is crucial to delimit a variable context where they do have the same truth-value (Sankoff 1988a: 154). In line with prior research, I defined the envelope of variation functionally, considering all the tense forms used for the narrative heads in narrative clauses (see §4.3.1). Narrative clauses necessarily refer to past/perfective events, and the various tense forms used are all interpreted as referring to the past. Past temporal reference thus served as the starting point to circumscribe the variable context (Tagliamonte & D’Arcy 2009: 79). Tense marking is obligatory in (Standard) English (Bhat 1999: 120), so each narrative clause was marked for tense – except verbless clauses and those headed by the zero quotative.

The use of the SP, CHP or NPP in narrative clauses does not affect temporal reference – whichever form is used, the same past temporal location is referred to. In that respect, the choice of one variant over another is not referentially motivated (Lavandera 1978: 177). When narrators switch from the SP to the CHP in the narrative clause sequence, they do not mean that they are no longer talking about the past and instead talking about the present. Reference to the past is maintained because, embedded in a temporal reference context of which it is not the primary exponent, a tense form assumes the properties prototypically associated with that context (Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001: 193). The Present and PP tenses assume a past/perfective function in narrative, a function that is discourse-dependent.

Though the SP, CHP and NPP appear to be referentially equivalent in the context of narrative clauses because they all point towards the same past state of affairs, I have defended the position that the CHP and the NPP themselves do not establish past meaning in narrative clauses (see §7.2.1). It is the context that clarifies the reference time. The use of the Present and PP is enabled in the context of narrative clauses where events are interpreted as located prior to speech time, whether or not an explicit past tense form is used (Schiffrin 1981: 51). The contribution of the SP is in fact minimal in narrative according to Couper-Kuhlen (1987: 24). The Present and PP tenses are licensed in such past temporal contexts; neither do they prevent a past temporal interpretation, nor do they contribute to it. Rather, because the forms only contextually

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2 The term ‘stylistic’ is used to describe the range of speakers’ speech styles, from casual to careful, according to their attention to speech (Labov 1972c: 112).
refer to the past, they are not semantically equivalent to the SP, justifying Lavandera’s 
(1978) concern over the lack of meaning of morphosyntactic variants (see Serrano 2011 
who recommends disregarding the criterion of semantic equivalence for 
morphosyntactic variables).

I claim that the use of the Present and PP tenses in narrative constitutes a case of 
contextual, not absolute, neutralisation (see Kiparsky 1968: 33); that is, the referential 
distinction between the tense forms is neutralised in narrative clauses, but maintained in 
other contexts. Moreover, this neutralisation is only partial: the Present and PP tenses 
are not entirely bleached of their meaning in narrative clauses. Instead, the CHP and the 
NPP are semantically ‘coloured’ by their original referential meanings, hence the 
discourse-pragmatic and rhetorical effects produced when they are used.

Contrary to the SP, which is used for its actual referential meaning in narrative, 
the CHP and the NPP are used for expressive purposes. In other words, they are 
interpreted not as temporal referential forms, but as expressive forms. Their function is 
at the discourse rather than the clause level – they contribute to structuring the narrative 
discourse and evaluating the events reported (see Chapter 6). They have a pragmatic 
force that the SP lacks. This has consequences in terms of the criterion of 
interchangeability.

Variants of a variable are supposed to be interchangeable because they “say the 
same thing”. Tagliamonte and D’Arcy (2009: 74) thus point out that various forms may 
be used interchangeably in a particular context while they have different referential 
meanings elsewhere. This is theoretically the case for the SP, CHP and NPP in narrative 
clauses where neutralisation operates. However, the empirical facts show that discourse- 
pragmatic considerations, in addition to sociolinguistic constraints, condition this 
interchangeability. The SP, as the unmarked tense form, can replace all instances of the 
CHP and the NPP in my data. By contrast, the limited number of examples with all- 
CHP or all-NPP narrative clause sequences suggests that the converse (i.e. all SP tokens 
replaced by CHP or NPP tokens) is rare. This is due to the marked status of the CHP 
and the NPP forms.

To summarise, the SP, CHP and NPP can rightly be qualified as variants of the 
same variable on the basis that they occur in the same context (narrative clauses) where 
reference is to past/perfective events. The three forms are used as narrative tenses and 
lead to the same past temporal interpretation. It would, however, be erroneous to claim 
that they are semantically equivalent. Past/perfective interpretation with the CHP and
the NPP is inferred in context: the forms themselves do not express past time meaning
or perfectivity. The respective semantic values of the Present and PP are not ‘lost’ in
narrative clauses. On the contrary, it is the mismatch between the semantic value of the
forms, and the (past/perfective) narrative context in which they appear, that boosts their
expressivity or constitutes them as expressive forms in the first place. I conclude that
any quantitative analysis of morphosyntactic variation needs to be combined with a
discourse-analytic approach in order to assess potential meaning differences between
variants at the discourse level. The explanatory power of discourse-analytic approaches
to linguistic variation has been recognised in more recent research (e.g. MendozaDenton 1997; Schilling-Estes 2004; Brown & Tagliamonte 2012; Fox 2012: 232; Hilton
2012). In the present study, the linguistic variable at hand can be qualified as
morphosyntactic since the different variants are all grammatical forms that enable the
same past temporal interpretation in the context of narrative clauses. The variable can
also be partly considered a discourse-pragmatic one since the CHP and the NPP are
used for expressive rather than temporal purposes. In §7.3.2, I turn to the patterns and
discourse-pragmatic functions of tenses in narratives.
7.3.2 Patterns and discourse-pragmatic functions
Tense/aspect forms are often exploited for discourse-pragmatic purposes in
narrative contexts (see §3.3.2). Close analysis of CHP and NPP tokens in the oral
narratives of personal experience in the dataset has revealed that the two forms are used
as discourse-structuring and evaluation devices (see §6.3 and §6.4), sharing similar
discourse-pragmatic functions.
The analysis I have presented (see Chapters 5 and 6) gives rise to eight
prototypical tense sequences, as follows.
1. The SP is used to open and end the sequence of narrative clauses, establishing a
past temporal frame.
SP
✓ ✓
✓ ✓
--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------->
*CHP/NPP
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
*The SP may also be used in the middle of the sequence, though it is less frequent in this position.

Figure 7.1 Framing of narrative clause sequence by SP
256


2. The CHP or the NPP is used to highlight the climax of the story – i.e. ‘the most reportable event’ (Labov 1997: 405).

![Figure 7.2 Marked tense form for climax](image)

3. The CHP or the NPP is used to foreshadow the climax.

![Figure 7.3 Marked tense form in lead to climax](image)

4. The SP and the CHP rapidly alternate in quotative contexts, helping to track participants and distinguish between new/unexpected versus known information.

![Figure 7.4 Rapid tense switching in quotative contexts](image)

5. The CHP or the NPP is used to signpost information relevant to the development of the story, to highlight salient situations, to draw attention to a contrast, and in cases of repetition/elaboration to insist on a particular situation.

![Figure 7.5 Marked tense form for emphasis or evaluative purposes](image)
6. The SP, CHP and NPP can be used contrastively to provide a landmark.

   Tense form  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
   -------------------------------------------->
   Different form ✓

   Figure 7.6 Tense switch to signal a landmark

7. The SP, CHP and NPP can be used to isolate sections of the narrative.³

   SP  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
   -------------------------------------------->
   CHP/NPP  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

   Figure 7.7 Tense switch to isolate narrative sections

8. The CHP or the NPP can operate ‘a change of lighting or scenery upon a stage’
   (Wolfson 1978: 220).

   SP  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
   -------------------------------------------->
   CHP/NPP  ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

   Figure 7.8 Tense switch to operate ‘a change of lighting or scenery upon a stage’

One of the research questions posed in §4.2 concerned the combination of tense forms in narrative clauses and, in particular, the possibility of concurrent use of the CHP and the NPP. The CHP and the NPP are optional performance features in narratives. Speakers may select the default tense form for storytelling – the SP in English – and use other performance devices to make their narratives more vivid. When speakers do tense switch – as is the case for all the narratives included in the sample – one or two forms are available for effect. The CHP forms part of the grammar of all 99

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³ For the different narrative sections, there are different envelopes of variation, i.e. different tense/aspect switching possibilities. Notwithstanding these differences, there usually remains a choice for speakers to alternate between different tense/aspect forms across different sections to operate a contrast. The CHP and the NPP typically serve to isolate the narrative clause sequence in opposition to the SP in other sections.
speakers, while the NPP is an additional option for a smaller cohort. The majority of speakers only use the CHP to depart from the default SP in narratives. For the 21 consistent NPP users (see Table 5.4) – who also use the CHP to varying extents – the two tense forms (CHP and NPP) are sometimes, but not always, in competition. The NPP can be used either to replace or complement the CHP. The larger number of narratives displaying SP-CHP-NPP variation, rather than simply SP-NPP variation (see §6.1.1), suggests that the NPP is not necessarily a direct competitor for the CHP. In fact, it is frequently used alongside it. In quotative contexts, in particular, the NPP is overall disfavoured, and cannot appear with quotative be like. The CHP is more likely to feature. Consistent NPP users can operate tense switches relying only on the CHP as a marked form. Nonetheless, those speakers have an additional linguistic device in their repertoire. Combining the CHP and the NPP allows them to operate fine-grained distinctions in narrative (see §6.5.1), though linguistic constraints do limit their usage. Ritz and Engel (2008) observe that the NPP mainly replaces the CHP with verbs denoting events. This is in line with the current finding that the NPP is not generally used with stative verbs (e.g. be like). The NPP mainly occurs in narrative clauses since these are usually headed by eventive predicates. Concurrent use of the CHP and the NPP can also be explained by the fact that each form produces different rhetorical effects (see §6.5.3). This might motivate speakers to use both forms within the same narrative.

7.3.3 Revisiting the form versus switch debate

There has been some debate in the literature about the contribution of the tense forms themselves, as opposed to their alternation, in serving discourse-pragmatic functions (see §3.3.3). Wolfson (1979: 172) defends the position that there is nothing about narrative events introduced with the CHP that makes them more dramatic than those told with the SP. She argues that the CHP cannot be attributed dramatic significance because the “important action” of the story is, for the most part, reported in the SP – not the CHP (Wolfson 1978: 219; 1979: 172; 1982: 34). Instead, she attributes significance to the switch between the SP and the CHP. Wolfson (1978: 220) also maintains that the direction of the switch is irrelevant. On the other hand, Schiffrin (1981: 56) claims that the direction of the switch matters, arguing that only switches from the CHP into the SP separate events in narrative. I surmise that, when it comes to
tense variation, discourse-structuring and evaluative functions should be kept separate, and that both the selection of tense forms and their alternation matter.

**DISCOURSE-STRUCTURING FUNCTION**

Tense forms participate in the organisation of narrative discourse by their alternation (see §6.3). For instance, the SP, CHP and NPP can all be used to provide a landmark when used contrastively (see §6.3.2). In this case, it is purely the switch, regardless of direction, that matters. However, given the status of the SP as the unmarked tense in narrative, and the status of the CHP and the NPP as marked tenses, the choice of forms usually matters.

I showed in §6.3.1 how the SP is used to mark the boundaries of the narrative clause sequence, while the CHP and/or the NPP occur in the middle. The SP gains its ‘framing’ function by virtue of the use of other forms in the middle of the narrative clause sequence. However, neither the CHP nor the NPP are used to frame the narrative clause sequence – the forms are disfavoured in initial and final positions (see §5.2.2–§5.2.3). This is explained by a preference for explicit past temporal reference for the opening and closing of the narrative clause sequence. The CHP and the NPP do not express past meaning so cannot fulfill this role. This is also due to the fact that the CHP or the NPP tend to be used to highlight specific events in the story, and events worthy of emphasis are more likely to be reported in the middle of the narrative clause sequence. Finally, this is related to the preference for the SP variant to mark story resolution or to end an episode, concurring with Schiffrin’s (1981: 56) claim that a switch from the CHP into the SP separates events. However, some such switches serve an evaluative rather than a discourse-structuring function (see the EVALUATIVE FUNCTION section below).

In §6.3.3, I illustrated how the alternation of tense forms serves to track participants. Since participant tracking is especially operative in quotative contexts where the NPP is dispreferred, the alternation more frequently involves the SP and the CHP. Grammatical person affects the choice of tense forms: the SP usually introduces quotes with the first person, whereas the CHP usually introduces quotes with the third person.

I showed in §6.3.4 that narrators use the CHP or the NPP, not the SP, to isolate the narrative clause sequence. Two reasons explain this empirical fact. First, the SP can be used without restriction in all clauses in all sections of the narrative. This is not the
case for the CHP and the NPP: they are not always acceptable outside the narrative clause sequence. A scenario where the narrative orientation would entirely be reported in the CHP or the NPP, while the complication and resolution would entirely be reported in the SP, is unlikely. Secondly, isolating the narrative clause sequence is a discourse-structuring as well as an evaluative strategy. Narrative clauses refer to the core narrative events leading to ‘the most reportable event’. They constitute the foreground of the narrative. Tense switching is commonly used to operate a background-foreground distinction, with the unmarked tense (the SP) used to express the background, and marked tenses (the CHP or the NPP) used to express the foreground (see §3.3.1).

In the same vein, when tense switching is used to signpost information that is mundane in itself, but essential to the unfolding of the story (see §6.3.5), it is the CHP and the NPP that feature in the clauses that need to be signposted because of their marked nature.

EVALUATIVE FUNCTION

Besides discourse-structuring functions, tense switching serves a range of evaluative purposes (see §6.4). The SP, as the unmarked narrative tense, cannot be used with an evaluative function. The choice of tense forms matters in the sense that only the CHP and the NPP can highlight certain situations in the story. However, events not introduced with the CHP or the NPP may still form part of the “important action” of the story (Wolfson 1978: 219). This is the case when the build-up to climax is presented in the CHP or the NPP, but the climax itself is presented in the SP; or when the build-up to climax is in the SP, and only the climax is presented in the CHP or the NPP. However, uses of the CHP and the NPP do frequently coincide with the build-up to climax and/or climax. The two forms most readily appear in the narrative clause sequence to report the complicating action of the narrative, which by definition recounts the “important action”.

The CHP and the NPP are understood as marked, hence special, tense forms in narrative, whether the SP is used or not. For instance, in (35) presented in §6.4.2, the CHP (simple and progressive) is used in embedded orientation clauses to set the scene with the huntsman spider:

- And as I’m standing there, and my eyes are adjusting to the dark floorboards
- and it’s right near my feet (The pronoun it refers to the spider)
- My husband’s sitting on the bed going, “What is it? What is it?” I can’t speak
- I’m screaming
- So we’re stuck in this room with a spider that size of my hand easily but the body was the size of a mouse.

The CHP is also used throughout the sequence of core narrative clauses. (The SP is only used to open and end the narrative clause sequence.) There is no switch operated between the SP and the CHP to create a contrast. Rather, the narrator portrays both the plotline and the state of affairs paralleling the unfolding of events with the CHP. Yet, since the CHP is a marked tense form, it is zooming in on the situation described, and a sense of immediacy/vividness is conveyed.

Only the CHP or the NPP, relative to the SP, may be used to stress or evaluate a certain situation in the narrative.4 Even in narratives with only a few SP tokens, the SP forms do not ‘stand out’ to serve evaluative purposes. Instead, they fulfil discourse-structuring functions (see §6.3.1–§6.3.2). This finding demonstrates that the evaluation and emphasis of narrative events is achieved by way of a switch, but specifically a switch into a marked tense form. Similarly, in quotative contexts, the SP is generally used for unremarkable quotes, containing old or known information. These tend to be clauses headed by the first person. However, if a clause headed by a third person is deemed unremarkable, then the SP may be used. Conversely, clauses headed by first person subjects usually appear in the SP. However, they may appear in the CHP or the NPP to be emphasised. Using the SP to introduce a quote has no evaluative effect; using the CHP or the NPP to introduce a quote potentially highlights it as remarkable (though it might only be used for participant tracking purposes, see §6.3.3).

The evaluative function of the CHP and the NPP stems from their nature as marked tense forms. Their original semantic meaning (they both refer to the present in non-narrative contexts) is theoretically incompatible with the past time reference of narrative events. Their use therefore draws listeners’ attention. The latter try to reconcile the apparent violation in communication by making inferences (see §7.2.2). I have also argued that the present meaning undertones that the CHP and the NPP carry may produce a sense of vividness/immediacy and create rhetorical effects in narrative discourse (see §6.5.3). I thus do not adhere to the view that the Present tense is a

4 There are, of course, other linguistic and non-linguistic devices besides tense that can be used for evaluative purposes (e.g. intensifiers, see Labov 1972d: 378–380).
timeless form with no semantic value of its own (see §3.3.3). Rather, I align with researchers who postulate that the English Present is used for situations overlapping speech time (Anand & Toosarvandani 2016); that is, the Present refers to a time span that includes speech time (Palmer 1965: 37; Comrie 1985: 37). Because the tense system in English is based on a present-past distinction (Michaelis 2006: 240), the use of the Present tense in past contexts is unexpected. However, I have claimed that the CHP does not in fact express past time meaning: the tense is used as a pragmatic – rather than a purely temporal – form and still conveys present time meaning. I thus disagree with Wolfson’s (1979: 180) stance that the CHP lacks a present semantic component in narrative. Instead, I claim that the form provides a (metaphorical) present time anchor at story-now. Scenes become vividly depicted because CHP usage creates a sense of immediacy during the retelling.

The reasoning according to which the Present tense can be used in narrative contexts because it is a timeless form is flawed. It implies that the PP (or any other marked tense/aspect form in narrative) is also timeless. Yet, the PP has a complex temporal reference that seems to include both past and present times (Kearns 2011: 182). Its use with a past/perfective interpretation is, however, unexpected since it is not ‘about’ the past; rather, it canonically presents a past situation as relevant to speech time (see §2.2). Similarly to the CHP, the NPP introduces a local present-time sphere in narrative context. The story-now, rather than the speaker-now, becomes the perspective from which the narrator tells the story. A sense of vividness ensues.

Speakers’ metalinguistic awareness illustrates this. AusE speakers recognise the pragmatic effects of non-standard PP usage in radio narratives and police media reports, as shown by the comments collected by Ellis (2012: 52–55) and presented in Table 7.2.
The perceived effect of immediacy shows that the NPP, in a way akin to the CHP, introduces a metaphorical now that brings vividness to the narrative. Speakers also analyse the use of the NPP as a means for narrators to get their point across – they recognise its evaluative function.

Tense variation is a stylistic device that serves multiple functions. Though the alternation itself – that is, the contrast between tense forms – remains at the core of the analysis, the selection of particular tense forms is not trivial. The unmarked status of the SP by contrast to the marked status of the CHP and the NPP impacts variation patterns. The choice of tense forms and their potential discourse-pragmatic effects should not be underestimated.

### 7.3.4 Tense maintenance versus tense switching

In the literature, tense switching has been attributed one main discourse-pragmatic explanation: it separates events into episodes (Wolfson 1979: 181). Conversely, tense maintenance is understood as continuity in the sequence (see §3.3.2). However, Schiffrin (1981: 55–56) suggests that tense maintenance may simply be the result of a ‘mechanical constraint’ by which the same form is maintained unless there is motivation to switch. Tense maintenance is then analysed as the result of a potential priming effect related to speakers’ bias for constructions recently employed in discourse (Scherre & Naro 1991; Torres Cacoullos & Walker 2009; Tamminga 2014).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio narrative</th>
<th>Police media report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“they’re trying to get a point over and emphasising”</td>
<td>“using ‘has’ (present tense) reliving events as telling it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“they [PP sentences] make it more interesting”</td>
<td>“PP sentences seeming like it’s an ongoing thing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“PP sentences being more like it’s happening, suspenseful”</td>
<td>“trying to make it in the present, in the present tense, ‘has pulled up’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“trying to build suspense and make it really interesting for the radio”</td>
<td>“as though somebody’s actually watching it happen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“sounding more immediate”</td>
<td>“sentences making you feel like you’re there, a part of it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“being related as if someone was there, helping you feel you’re observing it”</td>
<td>“sounding as if it adds emphasis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“a desire to emphasise something”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 Speakers’ metalinguistic comments on non-standard PP usage in a radio narrative and police media report (from Ellis 2012: 52–56)
The role of priming on tense usage needs to be discussed. In the present thesis, priming was measured by coding for the tense form of the verb in the preceding narrative clause (see §4.5.2). Results showed that tense in narrative clauses is largely conditioned by the tense used in the preceding narrative clause: each form is more commonly used after a narrative clause headed by the same form (see §5.2.1). This tendency is in line with the findings of previous studies of tense variation in narrative (see §3.3.1). Researchers have concluded that rapid tense/aspect alternation is atypical in narrative (see Schiffrin 1981: 51), and that a priming effect operates. However, the actual impact of priming is difficult to assess for three reasons.

First, the coding does not account for the tense forms used in clauses occurring between two narrative clauses. Thus, the preceding narrative clause might not coincide with the immediately preceding clause. Intervening clauses (e.g. embedded orientation clauses or evaluation clauses) headed by other tense forms can interrupt the narrative clause sequence. As shown in §6.3.4, tense variation is often used to dissociate different sections of the narrative. The tense used in clauses occurring between two narrative clauses may differ from the tense used for the narrative clauses themselves. Arguably, tense maintenance operates for the core narrative line of events and priming might still be said to apply over the interruption. In such cases, though, it is not the immediately preceding tense form that primes the choice of the following tense form.

Secondly, priming is a cognitive, psychological process. Tense maintenance may be a symptom or effect of priming, but the actual existence of the process for tense in narrative discourse has yet to be demonstrated through psychological testing. Thirdly, how much of an influence (if any) does priming have on tense maintenance? Do other linguistic and discourse-pragmatic reasons better explain the patterns of tense variation observed? Szmrecsanyi (2006: 22) raises the question of the “interplay between priming/repetition and discourse-functional goals”. Tense variation serves a variety of discourse-structuring and evaluative functions in narrative (see Chapter 6), including, but not limited to, the separation of episodes within a story. In different patterns of variation (see §7.3.2), tense maintenance may or may not isolate a narrative section or passage. The same tense form may be used until there is a specific reason to switch (e.g. climax reached; new episode begins), but is this reason mechanical, part of a discourse-structuring/evaluative strategy, or a combination of both?

Finally, the results of the current study have shown that tense maintenance is lessened in quotative contexts in comparison to non-quotative contexts (see also
Tamminga 2014: 5). In quotative contexts, the use of the NPP is not constrained by tense in preceding narrative clause (see §5.2.2); the use of the CHP is favoured when the CHP is used in the preceding narrative clause (.63) but this predictor has the smallest magnitude of effect in comparison to the other significant predictors of CHP usage (see §5.2.3). Moreover, the preceding narrative clause headed by the CHP might in fact appear in a non-quotative context, as in _comes back_ in (1).

(1) Anyway this girl cop _comes back_ and we’re chatting away and she _goes_, “Look, you know you did something wrong, you did something wrong twice.” She _goes_, “I’m not going to give you a ticket. I’ll give you a warning.” um And I _was like_, “Look, thank you so much.” (Male, 28, health administration manager)

Rapid tense switching is characteristic of quotative contexts where tense usage interacts with the choice of quotative verb, grammatical person, and discourse-pragmatic considerations such as information structure, participant tracking and the narrator’s subjective evaluation of the quote (see §6.5.2). If a persistence effect is indeed in place, the situation in quotative contexts shows that other factors can override this effect. Tense maintenance might in fact be better explained by some of those other factors. For instance, (1) illustrates that quotes attributed to the same protagonist are often introduced with the same tense (_she goes_; _she goes_), thus facilitating participant tracking. Quotatives might also be more resistant to priming because they have a strong lexical effect on tense usage (see Gries 2005: 365 on the impact of lexical verbs on priming).

7.3.5 Comparing non-standard PP usage in different corpora

Tense choice is sensitive to, and dependent on, narrowly defined discourse types (Engel 1999: 22). As reviewed in Chapter 2 (§2.4.4), non-standard uses of the PP in AusE have been documented in radio narratives (Radio Narrative Corpus) (Engel & Ritz 2000; Ritz & Engel 2008), and police media reports (Police Corpus) (Ritz 2010). The data in these two corpora constitute different situational contexts and discourse genres. With my dataset comprising performed narratives from the newly construed UWA Narrative Corpus, and a selection of narratives from the UWA Corpus of English in Australia, I have been able to analyse storytelling in face-to-face conversation. In this
section, I seek to reconcile how non-standard PPs are used across these different types of corpora, underscoring the importance of the situational context and discourse genre at hand (Wolfson 1978: 234). 5

THE NPP IN AUSE RADIO NARRATIVES

The NPP is not used at similar rates in oral narratives of personal experience produced in face-to-face interaction and in radio narratives involving an invisible audience. The NPP represents 6% of narrative tense variation in the face-to-face interview data from the 99 participants in the current study (see Figure 5.1). Considering specifically the 19 consistent NPP users, that proportion rises to 18% (see Figure 5.3). However, NPP usage is much more frequent in the radio narratives where it represents 40% of the variation. 6

Tense switching away from the SP is more frequent in the 44 radio narratives than in the 287 oral narratives of personal experience produced in face-to-face interaction in the sample (the SP represents respectively 50% and 64% of the variation). This finding suggests that being on the radio is conducive to tense switching into marked forms. Speakers have the pressure to entertain a large (albeit invisible) audience to whom the narrative is broadcast and this must trigger breakthroughs into performance. They need to produce highly performed retellings to ensure that they captivate their listeners’ attention (see Bell 1984; 2001 on audience design). The speech event “demands performance” (Wolfson 1978: 234). Amongst the features of performance detailed in §3.2.1, narrators cannot use motions, gestures or other visual cues. Instead, they make frequent use of tense switching. To compensate for the lack of visual support on the radio, Engel (1999: 22–23) writes that presenters rely on “a variety of narrative techniques and a clear signalling of structure (links between items, specific tense usage to mark introductions and conclusions, pauses and intonation patterns to mark separate news items, musical interludes and time signals)”. Tense switching is a handy means to create structure.

I have shown that tense switching into the CHP or the NPP serves evaluative purposes in storytelling (see §6.4). As argued by Romano et al. (2013: 86) who analyse narratives from a Spanish late-night call-in radio programme, the main focus of such

5 Pichler (2010: 584), for example, stresses the impact of the interactional and situational context on the use of discourse-pragmatic variables.
6 Tense variation in the 44 radio narratives from the Radio Narrative Corpus is as follows: 50% (182/364) SP, 10% (38/364) CHP and 40% (144/364) NPP.
narratives is on the narrator’s feelings towards the events rather than on the events themselves. Event evaluation sits at the core of narratives of personal experience. However, to ‘justify’ one’s time on air, it is crucial that the evaluation of events as remarkable be at the heart of the retelling. Tense switching proves useful to convey the narrator’s emphasis on particular events. Analysing tense usage in French radio news, Engel (1999: 19) remarks that the Présent Historique (i.e. CHP) is not used in news bulletin, advancing Bres’ (1992: 125) explanation that “such a present would be sociolinguistically impossible in the reporting of a news item on the radio: Présent Historique would emphasise enjoyment in the storytelling and the narrative process itself, rather than being an objective recounting of recent events”. This is precisely the reason why the CHP and the NPP are used in AusE storytelling: they convey an element of subjectivity while the SP offers a seemingly objective recounting (cf. Hernández 2013: 280 on the variation between the Pretérito and Pretérito Perfecto [Compuesto] in Spanish).

The NPP occurs more frequently in stories produced on the radio than in face-to-face interactions (40% vs. 18%). However, as shown in §6.1.2, a distinction must be made between the radio narratives where callers and radio presenters alike tell narratives of personal experience, and radio narratives where the radio presenters relate pieces of news as stories or report on callers’ stories. The NPP is most frequently used in the latter case. This usage might derive from the hot news function of the PP. Hot news perfect usage has been posited as a ‘stepping stone’ for grammaticalisation from perfect to perfective (Schwenter 1994b: 997, 1024) (see §2.3.2). Stories reported by the radio presenters are often recent (This is absolutely true, right, I’m not joking, this happened just recently) and, importantly, newsworthy or significant. As previously mentioned, the focus is on the feelings and emotions provoked by the stories rather than the factual events. Rather than an objective description of events, narrators, and radio presenters in particular, offer a subjective assessment of events. I hypothesise that there is a radio presenter narrative style that breaches the line between (hot) news reading and storytelling with the NPP used for mirative effects. The (standard) PP has overall been reported as more common in news reports and bulletins than in other text categories (Elsness 1997: 158; Biber et al. 1999: 462; Engel 1999: 265). The frequency of use of

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7 This finding has methodological implications: language used in the media (on the radio, on television, on social media, etc.) might not serve as an accurate proxy for vernacular speech. Linguistic production is sensitive to a host of contextual factors.
the PP in this genre is likely to promote further use (see Foulet 1920 on the development of the French *Passé Composé*).

Another possible explanation for the higher use of the NPP by the radio presenters is interactional: the form might be used as a means to establish solidarity and create a social bond with an audience who are likely users of the form themselves.

### THE NON-STANDARD PP IN AUSTRALIAN POLICE MEDIA REPORTS

The discourse-pragmatic functions identified for the NPP in oral narratives of personal experience (see §6.3-§6.4) resonate with the functions identified by Ritz (2010) for non-standard PP uses in police media reports. Ritz (2010: 3409) observes that the non-standard PP is “predominantly used to denote some of the events that make up the main incident and precede the final outcome”; in other words, the build-up to the climax. She also finds that the form is used to emphasise the main topic-event (i.e. the climax). She argues that its use conveys a sense of unexpectedness and creates a mirative effect in discourse (Ritz 2010: 3410). The non-standard PP also introduces new discourse information such as a new sub-episode in the narrative (that is, it serves as a landmark), or a new protagonist (Ritz 2010: 3410).

Ritz (2010: 3409) suggests that non-standard PP usage in police media statements can sometimes be viewed as a type of hot news usage because of the recency of events. Crimes and accidents are reported shortly after they happen. The events reported are newsworthy. They are also significant at Speech Time since the police often issue a call for witnesses in the hope of gathering further information. Similarly, in the examples of radio narratives where the presenters report on recent news, the function of the NPP is akin to that of the hot news perfect.

A crucial point of difference between the NPP as used in oral narratives of personal experience and the non-standard PP used in Ritz’s *Police Corpus* is with regard to temporal disambiguation. The non-standard PP in police media reports frequently collocates with definite past temporal adverbials since such anchors (precise dates and times) are crucial to police statements. This is a result of the discourse genre. The type of temporal disambiguation in oral narratives of personal experience is markedly different – in the current study, the discourse marker *then* is the most common form of temporal disambiguation in narrative clauses. Other adverbials expressing temporal progression (i.e. forward movement in time) are frequent as well (see Table
As a whole though, narrative clauses in oral narratives of personal experience rarely feature temporal disambiguation (11%).

Another difference concerns the envelope of variation in which the non-standard PP enters. Tense variation operates only between the SP and the non-standard PP in Ritz’s (2005) Police Corpus data. The CHP does not occur.\(^8\)

Police media statements constitute a formal, written genre. The production is planned rather than spontaneous. With the exception of non-standard PP instances, the reports of the Police Corpus contain no non-standard linguistic features. As shown by Ellis (2012: 54), speakers easily recognise a police media report when presented with one and identify the non-standard PP as “a legal thing”, “the way police often speak”, and the fact that “Police have an obsession with being very exact (sounding nice and proper for the courts/legalese)”. A respondent commented that emphasis was a more relevant distinction than formality between the police media report in the non-standard PP and that in the SP (Ellis 2012: 55). This suggests that the use of the periphrastic PP construction is not necessarily considered more formal. Another respondent viewed the version of the police media report in the SP as “a recount of past events rather than a narration” and judged it “less emotional” (Ellis 2012: 84). Police media reports are meant to be descriptive and objective. They are ‘reports’ of events. However, they have a high narrative focus (Cox 2005: 54). Police officers want to draw listeners’ attention to particular events and the non-standard PP is used to achieve this effect.

Non-standard PP uses in police media reports correspond to Caudal and Roussarie’s (2006) third brand (iii) of perfects: “[non-canonical] perfects with a partly aoristic semantics”. Such perfects are licenced both with past time adverbials and in narrative contexts. The non-standard PP of police media reports thus appears more advanced in terms of grammaticalisation/aoristicisation as it can co-occur with definite past temporal adverbials (Ritz 2010: 3415). However, they are used alongside – not entirely in lieu of – the SP and give rise to mirative readings (Ritz 2010: 3410). This suggests that the form is grammaticalising into a mirative past in police media reports. Such non-standard PP uses are not documented in other AusE text types. They appear to be genre-specific and stylistically marked.

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\(^8\) The CHP represents 8% of past time referring verbs in Cox’s (2005: 75) corpus based on a New Zealand police reality television show. However, the data consist largely of interviews with police officers about unsolved crimes and are not police media statements (Cox 2005: 56). The absence of CHP may be specific to police media statements.
As shown in this section, tense variation bears significance at the discourse-pragmatic level and is impacted by the situational context and discourse genre at hand. In addition, tense variation carries social significance, discussed in §7.4.

7.4 Linguistic variation and social meaning

The variation observed in linguistic systems is partly conditioned by social factors. The influence of social factors lies in the nature of language as a social product and a social tool (Guy 1988b: 38). Early sociolinguistic studies adopted a structuralist approach to the variation, viewing linguistic behaviour as determined by existing social structures. Later research started focusing on the active role of individuals – whether consciously or subconsciously – in the process of building their own social identity; that is, “linguistic variation as social practice” (see Eckert 1989; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992; Kiesling 1998; Bucholtz 1999; Eckert 2000; Mendoza-Denton 2002, 2008; Lawson 2015). According to this social constructivist approach (the Third Wave of variation studies, see Eckert 2012), the linguistic behaviour adopted by individuals is instrumental in the construction of their identity, along other semiotic practices such as the way they dress and where they live. The structuralist and constructivist conceptions of the relationship between linguistic behaviour and social life are not, however, antithetic. Adopting a constructivist approach, the analyst acknowledges that speakers “style off the existing resources” to which they have access (Allan Bell interviewed by and cited in Tagliamonte 2016: 137), and that their linguistic repertoire is largely conditioned by their position in the social structures in place (Guy 2011: 177). For instance, a speaker born and raised in an Australian professional household located in a socio-economically advantaged neighbourhood will be exposed to, and therefore acquire, a vernacular different to that of a speaker born and raised in an Australian non-professional household in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood. The variety of social groups to which speakers belong and their different social ties affect their linguistic behaviour (Wolfram 2004: 59). However, social practice and speaker agency should not be disregarded. The social networks in which speakers enter and participate influence their speech behaviour (Milroy & Milroy 1978), but so do their perception of their own identity and social membership (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985). In the end, language use both reflects speakers’ identity and participates in its construction.
The present research aimed at determining the social characteristics of the users of the NPP in the AusE speech community. The ‘social meaning’ of the linguistic variation was measured by observed correlations between speaker linguistic behaviour and social attributes (age, sex/gender, SES) (Chambers 2009: 25). I thus followed the research tradition of large-scale sociolinguistic studies. This approach needed to be adopted in order to locate the NPP in the existent social structures and to provide a first social overview of the form. The NPP is found to be a stable, non-standard linguistic variant constitutive of the sociolect of non-professional speakers. The form is indexical of working-class male speech and might be a source of covert prestige for its users. I unpack these findings in what follows.

7.4.1 The NPP: Indexing non-professional background and masculinity

As shown in Chapter 5, only a small group of speakers in the sample (24/99) used the NPP at least once across the narrative clause sequence. The other 75 participants never used the form. By contrast, all but two speakers in the sample used the CHP at some point in their performed narratives. The NPP, rather than spread throughout the entire AusE speech community, is socially restricted. The results of the distributional and statistical analysis have revealed that it is favoured by non-professional male speakers (see §5.1.2 and §5.2.2). This correlation between a linguistic variant and two social variables – speaker SES and SEX/GENDER – indicate that the linguistic variation is socially significant (Chambers 2009: 25). Such correlations serve the emblematic function of language (Guy 2011: 159). There is, of course, no intrinsic relationship between a particular linguistic form and its meaning, whether referential or social (cf. De Saussure [1916] 1974: 67, 78 on the arbitrariness of the sign). However, if a linguistic variant is strongly correlated with a particular social group, it might gain social meaning and come to index the social group in question (see Ochs 1992; Silverstein 2003). Social evaluation studies have supported the claim that speakers/hearers associate linguistic features to social information (Campbell-Kibler 2011: 423). There is conclusive evidence that probabilistic differences in linguistic usage along social lines carry social significance. The implication for the present

9 Though the use of the NPP is associated with non-professional speakers, and males in particular, there is variability within cohorts. For instance, out of the 25 non-professional male speakers in the sample, 13 produced at least one token of the NPP in narrative clauses, whereas 12 never used the NPP in their narratives. Instead, these latter speakers – most of whom are young adults (N=7) – used the CHP. It would be erroneous to assume that all non-professional male speakers use the NPP. This is not the case. However, the NPP is most likely to be used by speakers from the non-professional male cohort.
research is that the NPP likely has some indexical relationship with non-professional background and masculinity in the community, as the form is favoured by non-professional male speakers (see Guy 2013: 69).

Chambers (2002: 350) observes that social class membership is often signalled by the use of exclusive morphosyntactic variables. My results confirm this observation since the NPP is used almost exclusively by non-professional speakers and serves as their hallmark. The social evaluation of the form discussed in §7.4.2 also supports the contention that the NPP is associated with non-professionals.

Non-standard forms tend to be associated with working-class speakers as well as with male speakers (Coates 2013: 55). With respect to the association with masculinity, Pauwels (1991: 322) suggests that the extreme division between men and women in the Australian society – which has persisted since early colonial days – has impacted the linguistic behaviour of AusE speakers along sex/gender lines. NPP usage is separated along such lines: regardless of speaker SES, male speakers use the form three times more frequently than their female counterparts (see §5.3.1). Amongst non-professional speakers, males favour NPP usage while females disfavour it (see §5.3.2). Such sex/gender differentiation between speakers belonging to the same SES group has already been documented in prior research (see Trudgill 1974; Macaulay 1977, 1978; Eisikovits 1987, *inter alia*). Women have consistently been found to use non-standard variants less frequently in Western societies. In the Australian context, the linguistic differentiation between male and female speakers might partly be explained by the perseveringly small proportion of female workers engaged in trades and technical occupations (15%) (NSW Government 2013). Preston and Whitehouse (2004: 11) comment that women have “made little progress in accessing male-dominated fields at the lower levels of the skill hierarchy”. This rigid sex/gender division in the workplace affects the types of social contacts between members of the community and can have linguistic consequences. Limited contact and exchange between social groups due to social distance and social barriers creates linguistic differences along social lines (Guy 1988b: 41).

The NPP is a non-standard feature in AusE and non-standard forms are usually considered low prestige. However, the concept of prestige is relative (see Kiesling & Wisnosky 2003): it depends on the speaker and linguistic situation considered (Labov 1972b: 308). Previous studies have demonstrated that “working-class speech has favourable connotations for male speakers” (Trudgill 1972: 179). Non-standard
linguistic forms may signal toughness or masculinity (Guy 2011: 173; Lawson 2015). They may also be an expression of solidarity between speakers of a particular social group (Guy et al. 1986: 38): by using the same linguistic forms, hence sounding like those around them, speakers assert and reinforce their membership to the group (Guy 2011: 173). In other words, they attach social value to the forms which mark them as belonging to a specific group. They capitalise on those linguistic indexicalities in building their identities.

A particular linguistic feature may represent a source of covert prestige – as opposed to overt prestige – for its users (Labov 1972b: 249; Trudgill 1972: 188). This explains why speakers continue to use non-standard forms rather than adopt the standard (Guy 1988b: 51). Other speakers will avoid those socially connoted linguistic forms to distance themselves from this particular social group of speakers (Kiesling 2005: 2–3). Based on the literature on this topic, I posit that the use of the NPP may be a source of covert prestige for non-professional speakers – especially non-professional men – in Australia (cf. Richard 2015: 44).

### 7.4.2 Social evaluation

Contemporary prescriptive grammars of English acknowledge and accept the use of the HP as a special instantiation of the present tense to refer to past events in narrative (e.g. Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 129–131; Leech & Svartvik 2002: 74; Kearns 2011: 180); however, they never mention a similar use for the PP. In her analysis of Inner-Sydney speech, Eisikovits (1981: 50–51) observes that the use of the HP is not restricted to ‘non-mainstream varieties of English’ but that it is equally used by ‘standard’ speakers. Though stylistically marked, the HP is a well-accepted usage and considered part of Standard English grammar. This is not the case for the NPP.

Non-standard PP uses are negatively evaluated. Ritz (2010: 3416) quotes a passage from a letter to the editor of an Australian newspaper where the writer complains about the NPP: “The over-use of the present perfect tense in place of the simple past tense at times sounds ridiculous, to put it mildly, and it’s becoming an ever

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10 The usefulness of the concept of covert prestige has been questioned by Labov (2001b: 222–223) himself. Eckert (2000: 227) contends that “the crucial dynamic is not so much the construction of prestige and stigma as the construction of identities, all of which are positive”. Social networks (see Milroy 1980) and the differentiated daily interactions of speakers might prove better explanations for differentiated linguistic usage (Pauwels 1991: 322; Labov 2001b: 192).

11 Eisikovits (1981) uses the term ‘non-mainstream’ in the sense of ‘non-standard’. In the present thesis, mainstream AusE is understood as the main variety of English spoken in Australia and inherited from the Anglo-Celtic culture (cf. Leitner 2004: 1). It includes standard and non-standard usage.
increasing problem” (*The West Australian*, ‘Letters to the Editor’, 21.05.2009). Ritz and Engel (2008: 139) refer to an English newspaper editorial by McKie (03.10.2002) where the author complains about the ‘re-enactment perfect’ (i.e. the NPP) and worries that the practice may spread. Cox (2005: 120) cites a New Zealand newspaper article in which a judge complains about police officers’ use of “this peculiar ‘has done this, and has done that’ tense”, and explains that she has been “fighting that grammar for the last 16 years to no avail” (*Christchurch Star*, ‘Please, speak English’, 06.08.2003). Cox (2005: 91) also reports a police inspector’s observation that most New Zealand police officers react negatively when they hear themselves use the non-standard PP on television. She argues that this relates to the lack of establishment of the non-standard PP, as opposed to the CHP. She also argues, in line with Bauer (1994), that the non-standard PP is a feature of informal language, not deemed appropriate in formal contexts by NZE speakers (Cox 2005: 48). Though the form is frequently used in mainstream media in New Zealand, it usually appears in quotes rather than in the actual newspaper report.

How a linguistic form like the NPP is socially evaluated depends on the social characteristics of its users and, more specifically, their social status/prestige (Guy 2011: 162). Ellis (2012: 34) finds that AusE respondents associate the use of the NPP with speakers who are young, poorly educated and from lower socio-economic backgrounds.\(^\text{12}\) In her research, respondents were presented with three versions of the same narrative text, manipulated to contain different tenses – the SP, CHP or NPP (see Ellis 2012: 102 for the texts used in her attitudinal study).\(^\text{13}\) The texts were introduced as being “part of a conversation taken from a radio chat show transcript” (Ellis 2012: 101). Sex/gender-wise, the text in the SP is largely attributed to a female speaker, and so is the text in the CHP, though to a lesser extent. The text in the NPP is almost evenly attributed to a male or a female speaker, suggesting that the NPP might not be perceived as gendered. With respect to age, most respondents believe the speaker to be young, in their teens or twenties (Ellis 2012: 39). The use of the NPP suggests to respondents that the speaker is a blue-collar worker; the use of the SP that the speaker is a professional; the use of the CHP that the speaker is a student (Ellis 2012: 42). The age variable most likely interacts with this last association: as shown in §5.3.3, the CHP is favoured by

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\(^\text{12}\) The majority of respondents in the survey are university-educated (N=39/52).

\(^\text{13}\) The attitudes towards the narrative text in the NPP are not related to the combination of the NPP with definite past temporal adverbials or adverbials expressing temporal progression since the only temporal adverbial used in the narrative in question is *now*. 

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younger speakers (the 16–29 year olds in the current sample). In terms of SES, respondents classified the NPP user as being from a low SES group, whereas they classified the SP user as being from a middle-class background; the CHP was not strongly associated with any SES group (Ellis 2012: 44).\footnote{Very few responses suggested that the speakers belong to the upper class. This is probably related to the Australian ethos of egalitarianism and to the ‘tall poppy syndrome’ – a tendency to disparage people who are considered to be too successful; also a reticence to celebrating one’s own success (http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2017/06/tall-poppy-syndrome/). During the 2015 ANU Poll (Sheppard & Biddle 2015) the majority of Australian respondents (N=1200) self-identified as ‘Middle Class’ (51.5%) or ‘Working Class’ (40.3%). Only 2% of respondents classified themselves as ‘Upper Class’ in response to the question “Which social class would you say you belong to?” (Sheppard & Biddle 2015: 3). This is a long-standing trend. In the 1987 Australian Election Study survey, already 44% of Australians self-described as ‘Middle Class’ and 47% as ‘Working Class’ (McAllister & Mughan 1987). However, this type of subjective self-identification does not match the results of surveys based on objective criteria (e.g. Connell & Irving 1980; Baxter, Emmison, Western & Western 1991) (see also §4.6.3).} In terms of education – which did not figure in the questionnaire but was mentioned by all respondents – the speaker producing the text in the SP is believed to be well educated; this is not the case for the speaker producing the text in the NPP (Ellis 2012: 40). The association between the NPP and a lack of education likely relates to the status of the NPP as a non-standard form. Anecdotally, several unsolicited metalinguistic comments made by native speakers of AusE during informal discussion of my work reveal that they associate the NPP with non-professional males in Australia.

There is some level of truth to such associations: the results of the statistical analysis showed a favouring effect of non-professional and male speakers on NPP usage (see §5.3.2). Moreover, the analysis has shown that the NPP is favoured with quotative \textit{go}, which has also been associated with male speech in North America (Tagliamonte & Hudson 1999: 160), as well as “uneducated, lower-class males”, “blue-collar” workers, or “men like Rocky” (Blyth \textit{et al.} 1990: 224).\footnote{Contrary to popular perception, Buchstaller (2004: 101) finds that social class does not constrain quotative \textit{go} usage in her AmE and BrE data. Quotative \textit{go} is not constrained by speaker sex either in BrE (Tagliamonte & Hudson 1999: 160).} The association of the NPP with speakers in a low prestige position in society might lead to negative attitudes towards the form by speakers from higher prestige positions.

7.4.3 The NPP: Feature of a sociolect

The social constraints operating on the NPP suggest that the form might be a feature of a sociolect, that of non-professional speakers in Australia. A sociolect is defined as a variety of speech associated with a particular group of speakers, in
particular speakers belonging to a particular social class or occupational category (Biber 1995: 1).

Pawley (2008), for example, discusses what he calls ‘Australian Vernacular English’ (AusVE), a variety he loosely defines as the informal speech of certain AusE speakers – working-class and countrymen in particular – which contains non-standard features (Pawley 2008: 362). Some of these features appear in the narratives from the consistent NPP users, including have-auxiliary deletion in PP construction, as in (2) (see also Eisikovits 1989), the use of the past participial form for the past tense of strong verbs, as in (3) to (5), and the use of the past tense of strong verbs as past participles, as in (6) to (8).\(^\text{16}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
(2) & \quad […] he was just waiting in line and I \textbf{been} here for over twenty minutes. \\
& \quad (\text{Male, 21, bank staff})^\text{17} \\
(3) & \quad \text{And like two o’clock in the morning this motorbike \textit{come down} the street.} \\
& \quad (\text{Male, 22, electrician}) \\
(4) & \quad \text{And I went and \textit{seen} him. (Female, 24, teacher aide)} \\
(5) & \quad \text{So, played one more game, full forward, ball \textit{come down}, took a mark, kicked a goal, walked off. (Male, 60, process operator)} \\
(6) & \quad \text{And I’ve \textit{ran} inside to get away from everyone. (Male, 33, glazier)} \\
(7) & \quad \text{I never climbed on to it, but I \textbf{might have swam} out near it. (Female, 51, homemaker)} \\
(8) & \quad \text{And then he’s \textit{did} it again. (Male, 27, electrician)}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{16}\) Eisikovits (1989: 9–10, 19) argues that there is no evidence supporting a merge of the SP and the PP in Inner-Sydney English despite some examples of have-auxiliary deletion in PP constructions and an apparent weakening of the distinction between the SP and the past participle forms for some lexical verbs. Other English varieties also exhibit the use of past participle forms in preterite contexts and the use of past tense forms in past participle contexts (see, for e.g., Smith 2004: 183–184 on Buckie speech, a dialect spoken in Northern Scotland).

\(^{17}\) In this example of have-auxiliary deletion in PP construction, the PP is used in lieu of the Past Perfect. The deictic \textit{here} indicates that the narrator switches the reference time to the story-now (\textit{I have been here} vs. \textit{I had been there}).
Surprisingly, Pawley (2008: 362) includes the use of the CHP as a feature of AusVE but not the NPP. The current study has shown that the CHP occurs in the informal speech of all AusE speakers. It is a well-accepted usage and should not be considered a non-standard feature. Another non-standard feature documented in the current dataset and not reported in Pawley (2008: 362–363) is be-auxiliary deletion in progressive constructions, as shown in (9) to (12).

(9) And he **going**, “Yeah, yeah. It’s all turned off. There’s nothing turned on.” (Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)

(10) Sean’s come to and got up, walked inside and just **sitting** in a chair. (Female, 53, medical receptionist)

(11) And he just pretend-- pulls his pants up and **playing around** with his leg. (Male, 27, electrician)

(12) And then I opened the door, and **walking out**. And there was just people sitting there with that <MIMICS GRINNING AND MOCKING EXPRESSION> on their face. (Male, 46, process operator)

As documented in Eisikovits’ (1981: 51) study of grammatical variation in Inner-Sydney English adolescent speech, the current data contain quotative verbs inflected for the third person singular Present tense but used with non-third person singular subjects.¹⁸ This is shown in (13) and (14).

(13) And I **goes**, “That is so typical of you.” (Female, 67, medical liaison officer)

(14) I **says**, “There’s no key here I think.” (Female, 51, homemaker)

A final non-standard feature documented in the narratives of the consistent NPP users is the possessive pronoun **me** for **my**, as in (15) and (16).

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¹⁸ Though social class was not a selection criterion in Eisikovits’ (1981) study, most speakers come from non-professional backgrounds, with their parents engaged in occupations of low social status (e.g. cleaner, truck driver, storeman) (Eisikovits 1981: 19).
(15) I took me gear with me. (Male, 60, process operator)

(16) I said to me mate John… (Male, 52, former tiler)

The NPP should be added to the list of non-standard linguistic features that characterise the speech of non-professional speakers in Australia.

Considering that the share of blue-collar employment has been declining between the 1960s and the 2010s due to a shift towards service industries (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012), it will be interesting to observe whether some such features will become adopted more widely or remain strongly embedded within the community of non-professional speakers (see §7.5).

7.5 What lies ahead for the (Narrative) Present Perfect?

The (N)PP could become grammaticalised into a preterite if it loses its discourse-pragmatic significance and marked status in narrative, and if, from a semantic perspective, it gains full past temporal meaning. Past inference would need to become semantically entrenched in the PP and part of its meaning. The PP would then compete both within and outside narrative contexts with the SP. Further reorganisation of the SP and the PP in the linguistic system relative to the encoding of the past time sphere would operate.

Schaden (2008) argues that, cross-linguistically, the perfect and the preterite compete such that one member of the opposition is considered unmarked, whereas the other is considered marked (i.e. is more restricted than the other). Whenever the marked form is used in a language, additional pragmatic inferences are triggered. Such a pragmatic theory accounts for the variation between the preterite and the present perfect observed across languages and dialects and the different inferences triggered by their use. One of the forms may expand its usage and encroach into the other’s territory, to the point that there may be a reversal of markedness.

The evolution of the PP into a past/perfective tense is not only plausible, but its origin in narrative contexts has been documented. For example, the Passé Composé encroached on the French past tense system via narrative (see §2.3.5), and the Peninsular Spanish Pretérito Perfecto [Compuesto] made its way into perfective territory via past ‘indeterminate temporal reference contexts’ (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008: 303). The grammaticalisation of the (N)PP into a past/perfective
marker would parallel Schwenter’s (1994b) explanation regarding the grammaticalisation of hot news perfects into past/perfective forms in some dialects of Spanish. The pragmatic motivations behind hot news perfect uses are not unlike those identified for the NPP in AusE narratives: the forms are used to refer to events judged significant/newsworthy. The connection to the present is tenuous in such cases. Schwenter (1994b: 1006) contends that “the subjective link by which the speaker relates hot news to the present situation is one that can be easily eroded”. Similarly, the (subjective) association of NPP usage with pragmatic significance could gradually erode in narrative. If this last aspect of ‘current relevance’ were no longer required to use the PP, then the form would be left to only signify past time.

Another plausible path of evolution for the NPP is its grammaticalisation into a mirative. The use of the Present and PP tenses in narrative is marked; the forms have a discourse-pragmatic force in narrative contexts that the SP lacks. This discourse-pragmatic force is initially inferred. The mirative meaning that ensues from such uses could become semantically embedded in the PP form itself. The process would resemble ‘pragmaticalisation’ (Dostie 2004: 27), the grammaticalisation of discourse functions (Diewald 2011: 384), with the difference that the NPP is not a discourse marker but a morphosyntactic construction – specifically, a tense/aspect form – used for discourse purposes. However, the discourse-pragmatic, interactional function that the NPP has gained in narrative has not grammaticalised yet. Ritz (2010: 3410) argues that the non-standard PP in police media reports and radio narratives produces mirative effects but that such meaning is not necessarily “being fixed in the language more generally”. Schwenter (1994b: 1020) also remarks that languages that use the perfect form as a pragmatic marker for significance for some situations lack more grammaticalised uses of the form.

The results of synchronic and diachronic corpus linguistic studies investigating the PP in AusE in a large range of contexts do not suggest that the form is grammaticalising into a past or perfective at the expense of the SP, nor do they suggest that the PP is losing ground to the SP (Yao 2015: 263) (see §2.4.3). Rather, the AusE PP continues to fulfil canonical PP functions (resultative, continuative and experiential),

19 In line with Diewald (2011) and the contributors in Degand and Simon-Vandenbergen (2011: 293), I treat pragmaticalisation as a form of grammaticalisation rather than as a separate phenomenon (see Badiou-Monferran & Buchi 2012). Grammaticalisation covers the development of ‘grammar’, broadly defined as “structuring communicative as well as cognitive aspects of language” (Traugott 2003: 626).
and does not appear to shift its focus onto the past. NPP usage is contextually-dependent/genre-specific. Sociolinguistically, it is also highly constrained.

The NPP currently is a ‘pragmatic’ tense in narrative. The change in the use of the AusE PP has operated at the discourse rather than at the referential level and only for some speakers in the speech community.

As discussed in §7.2.3, the results of the multivariate analysis on NPP usage suggest that this variant shows linguistic stability. The usage trend across age cohorts does not support the hypothesis of a linguistic change in progress. On the contrary, the results show a slight decline in NPP usage in the youngest age cohort, which is partially related to the increasing use of quotative be like. Besides, the NPP is only favoured by non-professional male speakers, and does not appear to be spreading to the rest of the speech community.

Though linguistic variation offers the possibility of linguistic change, it also mirrors and maintains social variation (Coates 2013: 187). Linguistic choices illustrate social differences in a speech community (Guy 1988b: 37). The connotation of a linguistic form with a particular SES group has ramification for language change. Linguistic variants used by lower SES groups are often stigmatised and speakers from higher SES groups avoid using non-standard variants (Labov 1990: 220). Subjective attitudes thus play an important role in language variation and change (Milroy & Milroy 1985; Preston 2002; Kristiansen 2011; Milroy 2016). Linguistic change is conditioned by speakers’ motivation to innovate (Labov 1972b) but also to resist change (Kroch 1978). Both forces are in place (Guy 1988b: 57–58). Men often initiate changes away from the standard norm (Coates 2013: 185). A differentiated linguistic usage may serve as a symbol of group identity (Lodge 2004: 11). The association of the NPP with non-professional male speakers both signals and likely reinforces membership to the group. As a non-standard feature of the sociolect of non-professional speakers, the form is not a strong contender to be a linguistic change in progress in the AusE speech community.

Borrowing Milroy’s (2007) terminology for sound change, I believe the NPP could be described as an ‘under the counter’ feature. Such features “tend to be linguistically more complex and localised” (Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox & Torgersen 2011: 179). They are associated with close-knit networks on which they rely for transmission. If the social networks of AusE non-professional speakers are close-knit, they will favour language maintenance. The NPP is unlikely to get diffused throughout the rest of the speech community. It will only be transmitted generationally within the relatively close-
knit networks of non-professional speakers (Labov 2007). However, the use of the NPP on the radio could help spread its usage. This will depend on the degree to which the form is associated with non-professional male speakers and deemed stereotyped: more AusE speakers will adopt the NPP if it is not stigmatised and no longer characterised as part of a sociolect.

Chapter 8 summarises the conclusions drawn from the discussion and the key thesis contributions. This final chapter also acknowledges the limitations of the present study and offers avenues for future research.
CHAPTER 8
Conclusion

This thesis has offered the first comprehensive sociolinguistic and discourse-analytic investigation of tense/aspect variation in AusE narratives, with a focus on the Narrative Present Perfect (NPP).

This is the first large-scale study to have empirically established the sociolinguistic conditioning of the NPP using a specifically designed corpus of performed narratives. The analysis rests on a broad, representative sample of native speakers of (West) AusE. It accounts for speaker SES, a factor that has received relatively little attention in relation to morphosyntactic variation in AusE. Several individual indicators of SES and a combination of those indicators have been tested and compared to ensure the best fit to the data.

This study demonstrates that the social distribution of the NPP in the AusE speech community is highly constrained. The form is quasi-restricted to the speech of non-professional speakers. The results of the statistical analysis also indicate that males favour the NPP, while their female counterparts disfavour it. Speaker age, however, is not a significant constraint. On the other hand, speaker age is the only social constraint operative on CHP usage: the form is slightly favoured by the 16–29 year olds in the sample. While virtually all AusE speakers use the CHP in performed narratives, only a sub-group uses the NPP. Given that speaker age does not constrain NPP usage and given the sharp social stratification of the form, I have concluded that the NPP does not constitute a change in progress. Rather, I have argued that the form is a stable sociolinguistic variant, indexical of non-professional males.

The present research has further shown that several linguistic constraints operate on the NPP. The form is favoured in non-quotative contexts, whereas the CHP is favoured in quotative contexts. In fact, the analysis has revealed that linguistic constraints operate differently in quotative and non-quotative contexts – a testimony to the existence of a specific grammar of quotation. The two largest predictors of NPP and CHP usage in non-quotative contexts are TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE and POSITION IN SEQUENCE OF NARRATIVE CLAUSES: both forms are favoured when they are already used in the preceding narrative clause and when the narrative clause occurs in middle position. In quotative contexts, on the other hand, the largest predictor of both
the NPP and the CHP is quotative verb. Strong lexical effects are in play: the NPP is favoured by quotative *go*; the CHP by quotative *be like* and *go*.

This study has demonstrated that linguistic, social and discourse-pragmatic factors govern tense/aspect usage in AusE. This in-depth exploration was enabled via a qualitative analysis of the narrative discourse, supplementing the quantitative analysis (see Johnstone 1987: 33), and unveiling the discourse-pragmatic functions played by the variation between the three tense variants at hand: the SP, the CHP and the NPP. I have shown that the NPP and the CHP are enlisted to do similar discourse-pragmatic work in narratives and enter into typical patterns of use with the SP. On the one hand, the interplay between the SP, CHP and/or NPP can be used to structure the narrative discourse – storytellers thus help their audience keep track of situations in the story. On the other hand, tense switching away from the unmarked SP can be used as an evaluative strategy. The CHP and the NPP are marked tense forms in the discourse. They allow narrators to draw their listeners’ attention to what they deem important, unexpected or salient in their narrative. The NPP, like the CHP, can be used to break the narrative clause sequence and highlight specific events in the narrative.

The CHP and the NPP are not trivial substitutes for the SP in narrative clauses but complex stylistic devices with pragmatic force. I have made the case that both the alternation between tense/aspect variants and the selection of variants matter for discourse-pragmatic purposes. Rhetorical effects are produced by the semantics of the Present and the PP that persist in narrative contexts. I have addressed the question of priming and contended that the continued or discontinued use of a form in narrative is governed by both linguistic constraints and discourse-pragmatic considerations. The actual psychological/cognitive effect of priming, if any, is difficult to assess. For instance, I have shown that quotative contexts display more rapid tense switching than non-quotative contexts; these switches align with switches in person reference, correlate with particular lexical heads and may serve evaluative purposes.

The present research has provided conclusive evidence that the incursion of the PP into narrative contexts does not constitute a case of grammaticalisation of the PP into a past/perfective. The phenomenon is pragmatic rather than semantic. The NPP is a non-standard perfect usage with aoristic pragmatics, rather than a grammaticalised substitute for the SP in narrative (Levey 2006: 148). When evidenced in narratives to refer to past/perfective situations, the NPP – like the CHP – serves discourse-pragmatic rather than purely temporal/referential functions. I have defended the position that the
NPP and the CHP are marked tense forms, not expressing past tense meaning, but allowing past interpretation in the contexts of narrative clauses where partial neutralisation operates between tense forms. The semantics of the Present and Present Perfect tenses is partially carried over in narrative discourse, thus producing a contrast with the past temporal reference of narrative events. This contrast explains how the forms come to serve expressive purposes. One could therefore defend the position that semantic motivation underlies the selection of variants to the extent that using a tense form that does not canonically refer to the past in order to refer to the past creates a contrast. However, the choice of marked forms does not affect the truth-value of propositions. The selection impacts the discourse at the pragmatic, not the semantic level. Moreover, not all AusE speakers use the PP as a pragmatic narrative tense.

Narrative tense is a variable that lies at the crossroads between morphosyntactic and discourse-pragmatic variation. Studies of language variation and change considering variables above the level of phonology should combine quantitative variationist methods with discourse-analytic methods to account for potential differences in the discursive goals of the different variants used.

Any sociolinguistic theory of language variation and change needs to account for the phenomenon from a pragmatic perspective, considering “non-literal meaning that arises in language use” (Traugott 2004: 539).

### 8.1 Some remarks on the methodology

A central contribution of the current thesis is its focus on strictly defined narrative data. The issue when employing the term ‘narrative’ is that it covers a broad range of discourse types – historical narratives, legends, novels, biographies, and more. It is also used to refer to both spoken and written data. I have used the term in the Labovian sense of ‘oral narratives of personal experience’ (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1997). The data collected consisted of narratives that fulfilled both the structural and the functional criteria of the definition: two clauses organised around temporal juncture (i.e. narrative clauses) only form a narrative if they refer to a reportable event and are evaluated. The creation of the *UWA Narrative Corpus* aimed at producing a homogeneous dataset based on a strict definition of the narrative and the type of data to
be included. As shown in §6.1.2, the situational contexts in which narratives of personal experience arise also impact the variation (tense variation – and NPP usage in particular – was more frequent in radio narratives than in narratives produced in face-to-face conversations).

The data collection process targeted performed narratives (see §4.3.2). A set of prompts was specifically devised to encourage vivid storytelling (see Appendices B and C). Narratives included in the final dataset feature tense switching as well as another feature of performance to avoid the risk of circularity in the definition of performed narrative. The complexity of the process lied in the need to obtain tense switching which is an optional feature. While Wolfson (1976: 189; 1978: 233–235) observes that the production of performed narratives in sociolinguistic interviews – and the occurrence of the CHP – is rare, the storytelling sessions conducted for the present research yielded a large number of performed narratives. Contra Horvath (1987: 220), middle-class but also working-class speakers produced numerous narratives of personal experience. The interview setting was not an impediment to storytelling for one SES group in particular. Rather, it is the personality of individual participants that impacted the outcome (Wolfson 1982: 72; Tagliamonte 2006: 48). Some speakers were more at ease than others, despite all efforts by the interviewer to create a relaxed atmosphere.

Narrative clauses were the focus of the quantitative analysis because the event time of such clauses is fixed (Schiffrin 1981: 51). Regardless of the tense forms used in narrative clauses, the events referred to are understood as past and temporal progression is inferred, providing a neat envelope of variation. The other clauses in narrative were named after the narrative section in which they occur (for e.g. ‘embedded orientation clauses’). Crucially, these were not referred to as ‘narrative clauses’ – even though they form part of narrative discourse – because they do not share the same properties as narrative clauses. NPP tokens outside the narrative clause sequence were, however, systematically extracted in order to fully account for the phenomenon in narrative. As expected (see §3.3.1), the majority of NPP tokens (87%) were found across the sequence of narrative clauses (see §6.1.3). Expanding the analysis beyond the envelope

1 Large corpora, such as the ICE (International Corpus of English) corpora distinguish between spoken and written data and different text types (e.g. face-to-face conversations, phone calls, broadcast interviews, unscripted speeches). Several of these different text types may include Labovian narratives and other narrowly defined genres within. Depending on the object of analysis, researchers should use caution in treating these text types as undifferentiated linguistic wholes.

2 Tense switching was a requirement for a narrative to be included in the final dataset. While some narratives counted as performed but did not display tense variation, all the narratives displaying tense variation happened to count as performed, featuring at least one other feature of performance besides tense switching.
of variation, I was able to establish that NPP usage is largely confined to the narrative clause sequence. The stability of the PP/SP ratio in AusE between the nineteenth and twentieth century reported by Yao (2015: 263) suggests that the PP is not expanding into SP territory. In particular, corpus linguistic studies have found little evidence of non-standard PP uses in the different types of texts they have considered (Werner 2013a; Yao 2014: 186–189).

This study has highlighted the importance of the nature and breadth of the data under investigation and the methodology employed. The NPP is a non-standard variant used almost exclusively by non-professional speakers in performed narratives. This implies that datasets comprising speech production largely from professional speakers would barely evince the NPP. The second issue pertains to the narrative genre. The NPP, like the CHP, is a feature of performance. Narratives that are not performed, or narratives that are performed via means other than tense switching, will near-categorically be encoded in the SP. This is what Yao (2014: 199) finds in fictional texts, leading to the exclusion of narrative passages from her variationist analysis. The absence of tense variation in narratives inhibits NPP usage. As previously mentioned, the term ‘narrative’ encompasses a large variety of data. The types of ‘narrative’ analysed may be distinguished by different linguistic characteristics, including considerations of tense usage. Though Fludernik (1991: 365–367) argues against the strict ‘oral vs. written’ and ‘literary vs. non-literary’ dichotomies based on similarities between ‘oral’ and ‘quasi-oral’ storytelling, I maintain that different types of stories produced in different situational contexts abide by different linguistic rules. For example, Leith (1995: 59) presents a retelling of a Scottish folktale where the HP is used as the default/unmarked tense form. This is never the case in oral narratives of personal experience: only the SP can serve as the unmarked narrative tense (Fleischman 1991: 86). It is therefore crucial to carefully define and delimit the data under analysis.

Some corpus linguistic studies have searched for non-standard PP uses in AusE datasets and dismissed the evidence as anecdotal (e.g. Elness 2009: 105) (see §2.4.3). However, most of those studies relied on collocation with definite past temporal adverbials (e.g. yesterday) to locate non-standard PP uses. This is a limited strategy that does not account for all other non-standard PP uses that occur without temporal specification. The majority of the NPP tokens in the current dataset (92% [345/373]) occur without temporal adverbials and only one NPP token appears with a definite past temporal adverbial (last night). Studies automatically seeking non-standard PP instances
based only on their collocation with definite past temporal adverbials have possibly failed to identify other non-temporally modified non-standard PP uses.

Prior research has shown that quotative contexts are conducive to tense switching and that quotative verbs impact tense usage (see §3.3.1). However, sociolinguistic variationist analyses have always collapsed quotative and non-quotative contexts when running multivariate analyses. The current study is the first to have modelled variation for quotative and non-quotative contexts separately. The results reveal that running all contexts together in a model is problematic. In such runs, some factor groups are or are not selected as significant because the data from one context overweigh the data from the other. There is a risk of reaching the misleading conclusion that a factor group operates across the board while it only operates in one context, not in both. As shown in Chapter 5, different constraints operate across contexts (see Tables 5.10 and 5.12 on NPP usage; Tables 5.14, 5.17, and 5.19 on CHP usage).

8.2 Limitations and directions for future research

The current research focused on tense/aspect variation in oral narratives of personal experience. Analysis of the variation between the SP and the PP in other genres would offer a broader picture of the organisation of the two forms and their division along the aspectuo-temporal spectrum.

NPP tokens occurring outside the defined envelope of variation (i.e. outside the narrative clause sequence) had to be excluded from the statistical analysis. However, “looking beyond the variable context” (Aaron 2010: 1) and offering a quantitative analysis of non-standard PP usage in different narrative sections, and in other genres, could shed further light on the development of the PP in AusE (cf. Aaron 2010).

The participant sample consisted of native speakers of mainstream AusE, residents of the Perth metropolitan area. Future research could analyse the linguistic usage of speakers living in rural areas of Western Australia, as well as urban and rural speakers living in other Australian states to consider regional variation.

As explained in the methodology (see Chapter 4, §4.3.1), this thesis focused on the presence of tense/aspect variation in narrative (cf. Schiffrin 1981: 47), and on its mechanisms – how it is sociolinguistically constrained and what functions it fulfils in discourse. However, it would be worthwhile asking why speakers sometimes do, and sometimes do not, use tense/aspect variation in narrative. Contrasting cases of intra-speaker and inter-speaker variation – or lack thereof – could shed light on the range of
factors impacting tense/aspect variation and the use of the NPP. Wolfson (1978: 223) noted that AmE speakers were more likely to use the CHP in interaction with speakers sharing similar backgrounds and similar attitudes (see Chapter 3, §3.2.2). Whether similar conditioning factors apply to the (non-)occurrence of the NPP remains to be established. It would be interesting to find out whether there are similar social characteristics to non-variable individuals (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012: 27). It would then be crucial to consider tense/aspect variation in relation to the other performance strategies available to speakers (see Chapter 3, §3.2.1). Leith (1995: 56) warns against “the problems of treating a single performance feature in isolation from the others” and suggests paying attention to the vocal, in addition to the verbal, dimension of performance. A thorough treatment of speakers’ storytelling strategies, besides tense/aspect switching, could be the object of future studies.

While this work does not engage with the psychological concerns surrounding storytelling and the switch between various tense/aspect forms, future research could investigate this both from the speaker’s and the hearer’s perspective. Psychological tests could attempt to measure the hearer’s reaction to tense/aspect switching. They could assess the existence of priming effects underlying tense maintenance.

Future research could also analyse the diachronic evolution of the PP with respect to the SP in AusE and attempt to determine the origins of the NPP. Historically, variability between the English PP and the SP has been frequent (Strang 1970: 149; Traugott 1992: 190; Lawrence 2001: 200) (see §2.4.3). In Middle English, the SP and the PP are used in similar contexts (Fischer 1992: 257; Denison 1993: 352; Hübler 1998: 114–115). The distinction between the two forms has never been as clear-cut as prescribed (see Elsness 1997; Tagliamonte 2000; Walker 2011: 75). Take, for example, the restriction over the compatibility of past temporal adverbials with the PP: Miller (2004) points out that the co-occurrence of the English PP with past temporal definite adverbials is in fact an old and recurrent phenomenon.³ With respect to NPP usage, Mustanoja (1960) already describes such similar occurrences of the PP in Middle English narratives. The question therefore remains over the historical origin of the NPP, and its origin in AusE specifically.

³ Though not in a position to prove whether such usage has continued over time or only recently re-emerged in English, Miller (2004: 235) argues that a strong pragmatic consideration – namely, “enabling listeners to locate the event accurately in past time” – must always have had an influence on PP usage with past definite temporal adverbials and would support the hypothesis of a continuation of this usage. The infelicitous combination of the PP with definite past temporal adverbials can be bypassed for pragmatic reasons (Rastall 1999: 81–83; Miller 2004: 235).
Engel and Ritz (2000), who first brought attention to NPP usage in AusE, analyse data collected between the years 2000 and 2004. But how old is this usage? AusE is a ‘transplanted L1’ variety in Schneider’s (2007) model of Postcolonial Englishes, now in a differentiation phase (phase 5). First migrants to Australia from the late eighteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century came largely from England and Wales, as well as Ireland, and many were convicts. Was the NPP already used by some of those speakers? Has the use of the NPP documented in contemporary BrE and AusE persisted over the past two centuries? Or has this usage developed endogenously in both Britain and Australia? And if so, when and how?

Pawley (2008: 386) hypothesises that the non-standard forms that characterise ‘Australian Vernacular English’ have been retained from earlier BrE varieties since they are also attested in several other non-standard English varieties worldwide. Walker (2011: 83) suggests that NPP uses in AusE and NZE are related to non-standard BrE varieties. The profile of the first migrants to Australia – largely men of low SES – coincides with the profile of current NPP users. It is plausible that these speakers were NPP users and imported this usage that has continued ever since.

I have suggested that the NPP may be a source of covert prestige for non-professional speakers in Australia, and non-professional males in particular (cf. Richard 2015: 44). However, the present research did not set out to measure the covert prestige afforded to the NPP by its users. The only social evaluation study of non-standard PP uses in AusE surveyed university-educated speakers and explicitly asked respondents to comment on non-standard PP forms (Ellis 2012). As noted by Trudgill (1972: 179), positive attitudes towards non-standard linguistic features are not usually expressed and “emerge only in inaccurate self-evaluation test responses”. The task of assessing how native speakers of AusE with diverse occupational backgrounds perceive and evaluate the NPP is left for further research.

Investigating social networks lied outside the scope of the present study. Using the ethnographic methods of the Second and Third Wave of variationist studies could provide further insight into NPP usage and its potential expansion. Network strength (Milroy 1980; Milroy & Milroy 1985; Milroy 1992) has been shown to impact the adoption of innovations ‘from outside’: social networks of strong, dense and multiplex ties (i.e. close-knit networks) tend to prevent linguistic innovation or slow its spread, whereas networks of weak, loose and uniplex ties (i.e. loose-knit networks) tend to invite linguistic change (Milroy and Milroy 1985: 355). On the one hand, speakers in...
loose-knit networks are more exposed to variation and change because of the varied nature of the social interactions they engage in (Milroy & Milroy 1985: 362). Denis (2011: 67) argues that gregarious speakers with diverse networks are more likely to hear innovatory features and subsequently adopt these (Secova 2017: 13–14). On the other hand, Milroy and Milroy (1985: 359) suggest that close-knit networks function as norm-enforcement mechanisms with the ability to maintain and reinforce linguistic norms, including norms that defy the standard. If NPP users form part of a close-knit network (namely working-class men), the spread of the NPP to the rest of the speech community is unlikely, but its maintenance is possible. A different methodological approach to tense/aspect variation and NPP usage, specifically an ethnographic or interactional study, could broaden our perspective.

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the sociolinguistic constraints on, and discourse-pragmatic functions of, tense/aspect variation in AusE narratives. Analysis of the NPP and its competitors was enabled through a combination of multivariate statistical and qualitative analyses on a unique dataset of 331 performed narratives. The results show that the NPP does not represent a linguistic change in progress and is favoured by non-professional males. The findings also suggest that the NPP is a ‘pragmatic tense’ rather than a grammaticalised substitute for the SP. Grammaticalisation would only be evidenced if the form semantically acquired past meaning and spread out of narrative contexts.
Appendices
Appendix A: Participant questionnaire
Name (to be replaced by pseudonym):

Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY):

Male: ☐   Female: ☐   Other gender identification: ☐

1. Where were you born? (city/country)

→ If you were born outside Australia, how old were you when you arrived in Australia?

→ If you were born outside Perth, how old were you when you arrived in Perth?

2. Where do you currently live? (suburb)

3. Where else have you lived in your life and for how long? (suburbs/cities/countries)

4. Which of the following have you completed?

   Primary schooling   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
   Name and location of institution:

   Secondary schooling   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
   Name and location of institution:
Ongoing/Completed tertiary education: Vocational (e.g. TAFE)  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
Name and location of institution:

Ongoing/Completed Tertiary education: University  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
Name and location of institution:

If you didn’t complete primary schooling/secondary schooling/tertiary education, when did you stop?

5. What is your occupation (consider ‘student’ to be an occupation)?

6. What is/was your parents’ occupation?
   
   Father:
   
   Mother:

7. Did you grow up speaking more than one language?
   
   → If yes, which language(s) and how fluent are you in each?
   
   → Which language do you prefer to use and why?

Thank you for your participation!
Appendix B: Topics and questions for speakers over 18 years old
On the road
Did you crash the car?
Did you roll the car?
What hit your car? – Kangaroos and other wildlife animals on the road
Where did the car end up?
Have you ever been in a car accident? What happened?

Neighbourhood
Bad/crazy neighbours: What did your neighbour(s) do?
Craziest person to knock on your door
Breaking and entering

Bad employee of the month
Drunk at work
Mistake that got someone fired
Most embarrassing moment in front of the boss and/or co-workers
Someone stole your work/ideas
Late for the most important meeting/appointment ever

Creepy crawlies
Were you surprised by a creepy crawly?
Where was the spider?
Did you ever have any problems with a snake? What happened?
What bit you?

Love is in the air
How did you meet your partner?
How did you/he propose?
Most beautiful surprise s/he ever did for you?

Hulk
When was the last time you turned red? What had happened?
Going ballistic: What is the craziest thing you did when you completely lost it?

At the beach
Evacuate: Sharks!
Caught in waves / drowning / drifting
Rescued by the lifeguard
First attempt at surfing

I should be so lucky!
Have you ever won anything? (trip, gift card/voucher, lottery, etc.)
Unexpected encounters: Have you ever met someone famous? Someone you had not seen for years?
Have you ever run into someone you knew when you were far from home?

Near miss
Have you ever witnessed a terrible accident or tragic event? What happened?
Were you ever in a situation where you had to dial an emergency number?
What’s your ‘near death’ experience?

Queueing
Cutting the line
The longest you had to wait in line

siblings, like cats and dogs
Sibling fights
Do/Did you ever play tricks on your sister/brother?
What’s the worst thing you ever did? What’s the funniest thing you ever did?

Nosey
Have you spied on anyone?
Ever snooped through someone’s belongings? Did you get caught?
What did you find in the cupboard that you shouldn’t have?

Fight club
Ever picked on the wrong guy?
Witnessed a fight?
Verbally abused by a drunkard?
Having to deal with the police

Home sweet home
What happened when you moved in/out?
What did you discover in the attic?
What happened when the power went out?

Crazy night out
Has anything funny happened at a club you were at?
What happened at the end of your big night out? How did your night end up?
What was the dumbest/silliest thing you or your friends ever did when drunk?
Did you get (close to being) arrested?

Bad drivers
Who got arrested? Who lost their driving licence?
Have you ever been pulled over? What for? Did you try to get out of it? What was your excuse? Did it work?

Pets
Missing pet
Did you kill your goldfish?
Hero pet: When your pet comes to the rescue
Naughty naughty pets

Technology
Accidentally cracked my smartphone screen
What went wrong while texting?
Ever erased data from your computer/phone?
Online
Bad surprises when buying things online (Issues with delivery? Size/colour of product?)
Internet dating
Did you ever have an argument with someone on the net? What happened?
Wrong website

Up to some mischief
Did you get into trouble as a kid? What was the worst thing you did?
What was the worst thing you did to your siblings or friends?
What were you grounded for?
What were you wrongly accused of or blamed for?
What did your dad let you do? Did dad get you into trouble?
Biggest tantrum ever
Learning that Santa Claus/the Tooth Fairy do not exist

Worst meals
Delicacies from abroad…
Food poisoning
What did you find in your food?
What’s your food revenge story?

Mr/Mrs Bump
Ever got injured at work?
Embarrassing emergencies
Did you hurt yourself in the dark?
What did you swallow? Have you ever choked on something?
What was removed from your body?
What went wrong with surgery?
Have you ever faked an injury? Have you ever pretended to be sick to get out of something?

Master chef
Have you ever had a big fail in the kitchen? What were you trying to cook?
What happened?
Kitchen injuries?

Trips from hell
Airport nightmare: Did you ever lose your luggage? Missed a plane? Got stranded? Got arrested? Quarantined?
What went wrong when you travelled alone?
Lost in a foreign city
Miscommunication abroad/cultural gaffe
On the wrong train
Hotel nightmares
What’s the funniest/scariest thing that ever happened to you when you were travelling?
Were you injured sightseeing?
Children
Were you a child liar?
Lost teddy bear drama
Kids at work
Embarrassing moments with babies and children
What did you find in the kids’ bed?

Parties
What is the worst birthday party you ever had or ever went to?
What is the worst gift you’ve ever received? How did you react?
Party damage
Have the police ever come to a party that you were at?

Oopsie daisy
Ever set anything on fire? How did you start the fire?
Have you ever thrown away someone’s things? Why? What happened next?
I’ve put my foot in it…
Secrets revealed in blunder

Wardrobe malfunction
My pants split all the way open as I was about to present at a meeting
Spilled coffee on my shirt before a big meeting
Wearing your clothes inside out

I’m sorry, Mum and Dad
Introducing the boyfriend/girlfriend
Did you have any rules about when you (or your children) had to be in at night?
What happened when you (they) stayed out late? Did you (they) ever get caught sneaking out?
Have you (they) ever snuck in after curfew? Did you (they) get caught?
Did you get a tattoo/piercing behind your parents’ back?

Trapped!
Locked in overnight
Stuck in an elevator
Locked yourself out of your house
Lost your keys

Mr/Mrs Scatterbrain
What did you forget to do? What did you forget to bring?
I could not find my way back!
I lost my …. / I left my … behind

At work
What happened on your first day/last day at work?
Hazing stories
Can you remember your worst moment as a [your profession]?
Worst thing you had to do on the job
Workplace idiot
Upset/angry customers – Their unbelievable complaints
Have you ever been in big trouble with your boss? Ever had an argument with your colleagues?

Dating
Worst chat-up lines
Tell a story about a very bad date
What was your strangest date ever?
Have you ever been cheated on?
Anyone hit on your partner?

Natural disasters
Have you ever experienced an earthquake? Have you ever seen a tsunami?
Were you ever at risk because of a bushfire?
Was the house/town flooded?

Sports
Ever got injured in a competition?
What’s the most memorable match/competition/point?
What is the best historical sporting event that you have witnessed?
Your proudest moment (standing on a surfboard, a 3-point basketball shot, 10 spins dancing, etc.)
Extreme sports – Skydiving, bungee jumping, etc.

Friendship
Have you ever been in a fight with a mate?
What is the worst argument you’ve ever had with your best friend?
What did you/they do for revenge?

In your sleep
Where did you wake up?
Do you sleepwalk? Where did you go? What did you say?
If not, do you know someone who sleepwalks/talks in their sleep?
Weirdest dreams
Have you ever had a dream that really scared you?

Pranks
The best April fool’s ever
Halloween tricks: Did you scare someone off or did they scare you?

Home job gone wrong
The mission: Putting together an Ikea piece of furniture
What were you glued to?
What did you make a hole into?
Flooding in the house
Bad experience with a plumber, an electrician, etc.

On stage
Who stormed off the stage?
Performance going wrong
Forgetting one’s lines, lyrics to a song, etc.
Have you ever met/seen someone famous? Who was it? Where was it? Did you talk to them? Did you get their autograph?

Keep calm, the baby’s coming 😊
When were the first contractions? What happened next?
Where was the baby born?
When you found out that you were going to be a parent

I got robbed
Conned by a con-artist
Pickpocketed
Lost a bet
I was ripped off

What happened at the wedding?
Issues with catering
The ring bearer forgot the rings!
Surprise dance
Uninvited/unwelcome guests…
X had a little bit too much to drink and started…
Where’s the groom??

Family
One of the most hilarious things that happened at a family gathering
What happened when you last visited some family members?
Losing one’s child in the superstore
Appendix C: Topics and questions for speakers under 18 years old
Creepy crawlies
Were you surprised by a creepy crawly?
Where was the spider?
Did you ever have any problems with a snake? What happened?
What bit you?

At school
What was the last argument/fight that happened on the playground?
What was the most stressful time ever at school?
What was the most embarrassing incident at school?
When was the last time you went: “Oh my god, it was awesome!”
What is the meanest thing someone ever said to you or someone you know?
Why did one of the kids at school cry?
What was the biggest laugh you ever had at school? What happened?
What happened when the fire alarm went off?

Technology / Online
How did you crack your smartphone screen?
What went wrong while texting?
What happened when you erased data from your computer/phone?
Did you ever have an argument with someone on the net? What happened?
What is the funniest YouTube video you have recently watched?

Teachers
What did your teacher do when s/he went ballistic?
Funny teachers: What was the funniest thing your teacher ever did/said?
When was the last surprise test/quiz your teacher gave you?
Did you or one of your friends ever cheated at an exam? Did you get caught?
Did a teacher ever catch you passing notes? What happened?

Bad student
Who skipped school?
Crazy things that you took to school or that some other kid brought to school?
Who got punished? For what?
Who blurted out a swear word in the classroom?
Who copied on your test?
Who had not learnt their lesson? What happened?
Who got a bad grade?
Who was late on the worst possible day?

Wardrobe malfunction
I got up and my pants split all the way open
Spilling your drink on your shirt at the canteen
Wearing your clothes inside out

Sports
Have you ever got injured in a competition?
What was the best goal ever? (Crucial moment)
What’s the most memorable match/competition/point?
Who cheated during the game? What happened?

On the road
Have you ever been in a car accident with your family? What happened?
What hit the car? – Kangaroos and other wildlife animals on the road
Did you damage/crash the car? How? What happened? What did you do?

Natural disasters
Have you ever experienced an earthquake? Have you ever seen a tsunami?
Were you ever at risk because of a bushfire?
Was the house/town flooded?

Adventures / Trips
What happened on your overnight camping trip?
What went wrong on your school trip?
Airport nightmare: Did you ever lose your luggage? Missed a plane? Got stranded?
What went wrong when you travelled alone?
Did you get lost? Did you get on the wrong train/bus?
Were you injured sightseeing?

At the beach
Evacuate: Sharks!
Caught in waves / drifting away / drowning
Rescued by the lifeguard
How did your first attempt at surfing, bodyboarding, scuba diving, windsurfing, stand up paddling, etc. go?

Walk of shame
Forgot to bring a towel at the swimming pool
What happened when you swam naked?
Nude in the wrong place
The whole content of your bag fell on the floor, and there was something embarrassing in it!
Did you ever get caught doing…?
What were you glued to?

Scary, spooky times
What happened on the horror train?
Calling the spirits: Have you ever had a séance?
Was there ever anything that happened when you were growing up that you couldn’t explain? Were there any spooky places you wouldn’t go at night?
Do you have a ghost story?

Near miss
Have you ever witnessed a terrible accident or tragic event? What happened?
Were you ever in a situation where you had to dial an emergency number?
Do you have a scary experience?
Hulk
When was the last time you turned red? What had happened?
Going ballistic: What is the craziest thing you did when you completely lost it?

Neighbours
Bad/crazy neighbours: What did your neighbour(s) do?
Craziest person to knock on the door
Breaking and entering

Up to some mischief
Did you get into trouble as a kid? What was the worst thing you did?
Do you play tricks on your sister/brother?
What was the worst thing you did to your siblings or friends? What’s the funniest thing you ever did?
What were you grounded for?
What were you wrongly accused of or blamed for?
What did your dad let you do?
What’s the biggest tantrum you’ve ever thrown?

Nosey
Have you ever spied on anyone?
Ever snooped through someone’s belongings? Did you get caught?
What did you find in the cupboard that you shouldn’t have?

Parties
What was the best surprise party?
What is the worst birthday party you ever had or ever went to?
What is the worst gift you’ve ever received? How did you react?
What happened at the school ball?

Oopsie daisy
Ever set anything on fire? How did you start the fire?
Have you ever thrown away someone’s things? Why? What happened next?
I’ve put my foot in it: Which secret(s) did you reveal in blunder?

Mr/Mrs Bump
Have you ever injured yourself quite badly? What happened?
Embarrassing emergencies
Did you hurt yourself in the dark?
What did you swallow? Have you ever choked on something?
Have you ever faked an injury? Have you ever pretended to be sick to get out of something?

Mr/Mrs Scatterbrain
What happened when you locked yourself out of your house? What happened when you lost your keys?
What did you forget to bring to school?
What did you leave behind at school?
Worst meals
Food poisoning
What did you find in your food?
What’s your food revenge story?

Friendship
Have you ever been in a fight with a mate?
What is the worst argument you’ve ever had with your (best) friend?
What did you/they do for revenge? How did you make up?

Pets
Did your pet go missing? What happened?
Hero pet: When your pet comes to the rescue
What is the naughtiest thing your pet has ever done?

Parents
What was the most embarrassing moment with your parents?
Have you ever disobeyed your parents? What did you do?
Who got grounded at home? Why?
What did you break in the house?
What did you lie about to your parents? Did they find out? What happened?
What did you hide in your bedroom?
Ever get caught sneaking out?
What did you do behind your parents’ back?
Did you shave your head/let your hair grow? Did you dye your hair? Did you get a tattoo/piercing?

In your sleep
Where did you wake up?
Do you sleepwalk? Where did you go? What did you say?
If not, do you know someone who sleepwalks/talks in their sleep?
Weirdest dreams

Pranks
The best April fool’s ever
Halloween tricks: Did you scare someone off or did they scare you?
What pranks did you pull on other kids at school?

Show time
School plays, musicals, or similar productions
Performance going wrong: Forgetting one’s lines, lyrics to a song, etc.
Who stormed off the stage? Who forgot their costumes?
Who was late? Who was sick?

Family
One of the most hilarious things that happened at a family gathering
What happened when you last visited some family members?
Did you get lost at the shopping mall, in a theme park, etc.?
Appendix D: Statistical analyses with *GoldVarb X*
Linguistic factors

Multivariate analysis on NPP usage

Table A.1 presents the results of two independent multivariate analyses performed with GoldVarb X and measuring the impact of linguistic factors on NPP usage. The first analysis comprised all narrative clauses; the second only non-quotative contexts.
Table A.1 Two independent *GoldVarb X* analyses of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of NPP usage in all narrative clauses and non-quotative contexts only

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<td>FW  %  N</td>
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Table A.2 presents the results of a *GoldVarb X* analysis measuring the impact of linguistic factors on NPP usage in quotative contexts.

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Table A.2 *GoldVarb X* analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of NPP usage in narrative clauses **headed by a quotative verb**

<sup>6</sup> The total number of tokens for *TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE* differs due to the following exclusions: (i) tokens in initial position – which are not preceded by any other narrative clause, and (ii) tokens preceded by a narrative clause with the *zero* quotative or some ambiguous/non-canonical form as its narrative head.

<sup>7</sup> The total number of tokens for *GRAMMATICAL PERSON* differs due to the exclusion of unexpressed subjects (N=21), and second person pronouns (N=1).
Multivariate analysis on CHP usage

Table A.3 displays the results of a *GoldVarb X* analysis measuring the impact of linguistic factors on CHP usage. The analysis comprised all narrative clauses.

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Table A.3 *GoldVarb X* analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in all narrative clauses

---

8 The total number of tokens for 'TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE' differs due to the following exclusions: (i) tokens in initial position – which are not preceded by any other narrative clause, and (ii) tokens preceded by a narrative clause with the zero quotative or some ambiguous/non-canonical form as its narrative head.

9 The total number of tokens for 'GRAMMATICAL PERSON' differs due to the exclusion of unexpressed subjects (N=536), and second person pronouns (N=8).
Table A.4 displays the results of a *GoldVarb X* analysis measuring the impact of linguistic factors on CHP usage in non-quotative contexts.

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Table A.4 *GoldVarb X* analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in narrative clauses **headed by a non-quotative verb**

<sup>10</sup> The total number of tokens for **TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE** differs due to the following exclusions: (i) tokens in initial position – which are not preceded by any other narrative clause, and (ii) tokens preceded by a narrative clause with the zero quotative or some ambiguous/non-canonical form as its narrative head.

<sup>11</sup> The total number of tokens for **GRAMMATICAL PERSON** differs due to the exclusion of unexpressed subjects (N=473), and second person pronouns (N=5).
Table A.5 displays the results of a *GoldVarb X* analysis measuring the impact of linguistic factors on CHP usage in quotative contexts.

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Table A.5 *GoldVarb X* analysis of the contribution of linguistic factors to the probability of CHP usage in narrative clauses **headed by a quotative verb**

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12 The total number of tokens for GRAMMATICAL PERSON differs due to the exclusion of unexpressed subjects (N=63), and second person pronouns (N=3).

13 The total number of tokens for TENSE IN PRECEDING NARRATIVE CLAUSE differs due to the following exclusions: (i) tokens in initial position – which are not preceded by any other narrative clause, and (ii) tokens preceded by a narrative clause with the zero quotative or some ambiguous/non-canonical form as its narrative head.
Social factors

Multivariate analysis on NPP usage

Table A.6 displays the results of a GoldVarb X analysis measuring the impact of social factors on NPP usage.

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<table>
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<th></th>
<th>FW</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-professional</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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| SEX/GENDER |       |      |     |
| Male       | .54   | 19.8 | 865 |
| Female     | .36   | 11.9 | 303 |
| Range      | 18    |      |     |

| AGE        |       |      |     |
| 30–49      | [.52] | 20.7 | 545 |
| ≥ 50       | [.50] | 13.4 | 410 |
| 16–29      | [.43] | 18.3 | 213 |
| Range      |       |      |     |

Table A.6 GoldVarb X analysis of the contribution of social factors to the probability of NPP usage in narrative clauses
**Multivariate analysis on CHP usage**

Table A.7 displays the results of a *GoldVarb X* analysis measuring the impact of social factors on CHP usage.

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<td>30–49</td>
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<td>≥ 50</td>
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Table A.7 *GoldVarb X* analysis of the contribution of social factors to the probability of CHP usage in narrative clauses
Appendix E: Sample narratives
Please click on the following link to access the audio recordings:
https://tinyurl.com/y7abfnnu

The file contains the following:

(a) In a fight
(b) Embarrassing moment
(c) The Grand Canyons
(d) Crazy night out
(e) Queue cutting
(f) The no-show stage daughter
(g) The dare
(h) The earthquake
(i) Being pulled over
(j) Locked out of the house
(k) It’s the woman who pays
(l) Online dating
(m) The huge huntsman spider
(n) Car accident
(o) Baby tiger snake
(p) High-school performance
(q) Suitcases
(r) Playing a trick on mum

Full transcripts of the recordings are provided below.
I can- Oh, I got in a fight one time um <LAUGHTER> Like exactly once. And for anyone that- that knows me, you know, like the- the standard reaction to that when I told people was like, “Really? You? Like, [<LAUGHTER>] in a fight? What?!?” <LAUGHTER> um And, you know, I’ve got the scars to prove it [Oh!] um <LAUGHTER> So, basically I- I don’t even know what happened but are you- are you familiar with Club Baywatch? Do you know [No. I don’t know it.] about this? Ok. This- this is a really bad nightclub down in Nedlands. [Ok.] It’s terrible and this is sort of during uni days um <LIP SMACK> And I went down there with some friends and, you know, it was getting pretty boozed er but I was just having a great time. er And then there was a guy that, you know, thought I was- I think he thought I was looking at his girlfriend or something er which I wasn’t. I was just drunk and, you know, having a good time. And so he starts sort of coming in, like, he- you know, getting up in my face a bit. And I just thought the whole situation was really ridiculous so I was kind of laughing, which probably wasn’t helping things um. And eventually what ends up happening is he shirtfronted me um inside the- the club and the bouncer sees this and kicks both of us out er. And of course that was my fault um according to him so. Then we’re at this point downstairs like outside of the club where, you know, with- there’s him and his mate and they’re just sort of snarking up at me and I’m just there by myself. So I was going, “Ah, this isn’t so good.” Like, you know, “I don’t wanna get beat up.” um And then as it happens it was very lucky ’cause my friend’s girlfriend was just literally driving around the corner um to pick him up. And um she sort of saw me and was like, “Oh”, you know, “get in the car. I could give you a lift home.” And I’m like, “Yeah, awesome.” So I go to get in the car and then basically get the hand on my shoulder, like, from this guy. He’s like, “Oh I’m not finished with you yet.” um And he turns me around on the car just like starts basically trying to tackle me and- and at that point I was like, “Well, I gotta probably fight back here.” ’Cause, you know, I realises (sic) that I’m gonna get into trouble so, I had to- Took a couple of swings um I connected with one um and like othe--, you know, managed to dodge, you know, what he was doing and then by that point there’s a bunch of people now just pulling us apart and- and I got in the car and went home. And then the next day my hand is about three times the normal size ’cause I’d broken my um <LIP SMACK> er the er metacarpal um
[Oh, ok.] on my little finger. Which apparently when I went to the doctor is extremely common in people that get in fights that aren’t used to getting in fights um <LAUGHTER> And- and so um yeah I broke my hand um but I suppose this is- this is, you know, cou-- could have been worse um but [mm] Yeah. [<LAUGHTER>] So that was- that was my one and hopefully only fight. [Only fight, yeah.] um <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>]

(Male, 27, consulting manager)
EMBARRASSING MOMENT

Most embarrassing moment well I got a couple of those. I remember I got a job once with a company when I was very young um. It was probably only my second job [Ok.] growing up [mm] and um <LIP SMACK>. My- my parents were, “You must work. You must have a job.”, you know. So I was never like allowed to go on the dole and just chill out and do nothing. So I got this job working for a mob called Perth Door & Window Company. It was making like gutters and downpipes and things. [Ok.] Never done it before but, I got a job. My very very first day er I had to be there like at seven o’clock in the morning. So that was pretty early for me. I’d never had a job where I had to be there that early um. So I was a bit nervous um. A bit nervous, a bit excited um. Wanted to make a good impression. And um <LIP SMACK> I remember driving to work and I was busting to go to the toilet. Busting. And I knew- I couldn’t stop before I went to work. I- I was- I had to sort of get there. So I got there, parked the car, went in. Didn’t know anyone. It was back in the day when you didn’t really have orientation or anything you just were told to be here at seven o’clock and see ... Mister Zed. <CLAPS HANDS> So I got there and the overriding thing for me is, I need to go to the toilet. Like I really really had to-. I’m busting, majorly. And um I remember walking into this very very large mess hall. Um, must have been a common room where people can have a cup of coffee or whatever and just like er [mm] a very very large room with just-- just a series of tables and at the end of the room was the toilets. Right? Facing into this room. And in my haste of running in there- And this room was packed because everyone was getting ready to go to work. It might have been two hundred people in there. <LIP SMACK> I’ve walked in. And it’s the usual thing. Everyone’s sort of staring at you ’cause you’re the new guy. You could feel it. And because I was busting I didn’t actually look at the symbol above the door and I’ve walked into the ladies’ toilet. And er I’ve gone in, s-- sat down to do my business, and looked to my left and seen one of those sanitary bins and thought, “Mm <LAUGHTER> it’s a bit weird for a boys’ toilet.” [<LAUGHTER>] And then I thought, <whispering> “When I walked in here I didn’t see a urinal.” And then I remember, thinking, “When I walked in here, it was just a series of toilets.” [mm] And I thought that’s really weird for a men’s t--. And I went, <whispering> “I’m not in a men’s toilet. I’m in a ladies’ toilet.” [<LAUGHTER>] And um <LIP SMACK>. So anyway <CLAPS HANDS> I knew at this point what everyone
out there was thinking. [LAUGHTER] So I g-- did my thing, got up, washed my hands and I remember standing at the door on the inside just thinking, “I have to open this door and I have to go out and it doesn’t matter. I don’t know any of them. I just need to-- just do it.” And then I opened the door, and walking out. And there was just people sitting there with that <MIMICS GRINNING AND MOCKING EXPRESSION> [CHUCKLE] [LAUGHTER] on their face. And I was like, “Oh...”. Yeah and then I went and found the guy I was supposed to talk to. And <CLAPS HANDS> just thinking all day how much of a dickhead I felt like. And- and people coming up and saying, “Hey mate, you’re that guy this morning that went into the girls’ toilet, aren’t you?” “Yeah, my name’s Jack. How are you going?” “Yeah, Jack, how are you going?” And he said, “Ha, don’t worry about it mate. <SLAPPING NOISE> We’ve all done it, you know.” And it’s like, “<SLAPPING NOISE>.” Yeah. [LAUGHTER] Ay but, you know, they- <LIP SMACK> A few people tried to make me feel better but I still felt- Even today I feel stupid.

(Male, 46, process operator)
The next morning I got up to go and see the Grand Canyons. And it was like eighty-dollar bus ticket out there so I went - with breakfast. Well, the little packed things [Yeah.] you get. So I said, “Oh yeah, hop on there.” So I hopped on there and I met this girl who was from Korea. So she sat next to me and we’re having a bit of a chat. Hannah. And then um we end up in um I think it’s called the West Wing in oh- You stop off at this little house and as you enter you enter down this other way and it opens up into the canyons. [Ok.] And it’s absolutely beautiful. And we had this um And these two er Jamaican girls- They were from Miami but they were Jamaican. They’re like, “Oh excuse me. Do you mind taking us a photo- taking a photo of us.” I said, “Oh yeah, sure, no worries.”, you know. I said, “As long as you take one of me.” 

[<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> And um they’re like, “Yeah, no worries.” So, I took one of them and I said, “Ok. Can you take one of me?” And they took one of me and then they said, “Who are you here with?” And I said, “Oh I’m actually just travelling on my own.” And <LAUGHTER> And they looked at me and they’re like, “Really?” And I said, “Yeah.” And they’re, <affecting Jamaican accent> “Girlfriend, you can’t hangout on your own.” [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> “What?!” And they’re like, <affecting Jamaican accent> “Girlfriend, uh-uh, you can’t hang out on your own sister.” [<LAUGHTER>] She goes- she goes, “Where are you staying?” And I just went, “um I’m staying at the Las Vegas.” And they’re like, “<EXPRESSIVE SOUND>” <affecting Jamaican accent> “Girlfriend we’re staying there too. You can come out and hang out with us.” And I just went, “Oh bless you.” ‘Cause I just loved them. And they were like Jamaican like their skin colour was beautiful. So anyway as soon as we hopped off the bus like we- like mates for the next two days. And Julia loves shopping. Danielle hated shopping. No Julia hated shopping. Da- Danielle love (sic) shopping. Alright? [Ok.] So Julia thought she was in her element because I could go shopping with Da- Danielle and she could go and do her thing. Or she’d wait outside <LAUGHTER> And um Anyway so I hang out with them, you know, I had a really really good time.

(Female, 34, senior investigator)
CRAZY NIGHT OUT

Oh yeah I did get drunk once. Terrible. “Crazy night out.” [CHUCKLE] The girl that um I was sharing house with, I went to school with. Her stepmother’s Italian. [Ok.] My girlfriend speaks Italian fluently. And we went to the Italian club here in Perth. It’s south of the river. I was fully qualified then and doing round-the-clock shift work and it was the weekend so we decided to go to the Italian club on a Sunday afternoon. At that stage we were actually sharing our house with another person who was a male, and he was a friend of my brothers. And he was a very lovely person too. So the three of us went to Sunday afternoon at the Italian club, which went into the evening. And that was fine. I was just drinking white wine. Don’t drink beer or carbonated drinks or anything. And then they brought out steak tartare. “The raw meat, Miss. You must have this here.” Ok, it was fine, I had that. Then somebody decided- someone arrived and it was their birthday. And my friend Gabi knew her. And Matt, who was the other person sharing our house said, “Oh we should celebrate. Let’s get some champagne.” [LAUGHTER] So drinking champagne. This is a Sunday night. It was a long weekend so [Ok.] Matt and Gabi had the Monday off. I didn’t. I had to go to work at seven in the morning. And I was on a acute surgical ward so it’s very busy. Lots of surgery coming and going, just frantic. So I had to work from seven in the morning ’til three thirty in the afternoon. So I had one glass of champagne and then another glass, and another glass, and a bit more steak tartare. Like I probably I didn’t have that- I wasn’t drunk so to speak. I still knew what was going on. But I think the champagne mixing with the raw meats. Matt was driving. He hadn’t drunk. He was the driver. Gabi was drinking. She was, “Hahaha.” Oh Schnapps. They were drinking that. That’s it. I had one of them. Most revolting drink. I had that. That’s what did it ’cause it was sweet. Driving down Curting Highway I still know the oval it’s Thompson’s Park and it’s where I used to do my athletic training when I was in secondary school, Millenium. I said to Matt, “Quick, pull over.” That’s it. I wasn’t really that- “I feel so ill.” He barely had time to pull up. Curt’s a main road. Fortunately there wasn’t anyone behind him. Quickly opened the door and he was still travelling a bit. And just vomited everything out into the gutter, onto the curb, and it splashed back onto his car [LAUGHTER] It’s revolting. [LAUGHTER] And he was like, “How could you do that?!” Anyway we get home. [LAUGHTER] Gabi at the end
of the night she goes, “Oh my goodness, you gotta go to work.” I said, “I feel so sick.” I think I must have spent three hours just kneeling over the toilet. Just like “wow.” It’s like food poisoning [Yeah.] almost. Hot, cold, awful. Sweating. Anyway she goes, “Oh, come on, I’ll practise being a nurse.” Like, she was being funny. She’s a beautician. “I’ll practise being a nurse. I’ll put you to bed.” And I’m like, “Oh don’t put me to bed. The room’s gonna spin, I know. I feel sick. Just- I’ll have some pillows and I’m just gonna sit up.” And I must- I went to sleep sitting up on the bed [<LAUGHTER>] with my bedside lamp on. And apparently she was checking on me but. I mean I did sleep and um <LIP SMACK> My alarm went off at five thirty for work. And I looked at it. I thought, “Oh I just can’t do this.” And I said to Gabi, “I- I can’t call in because I’m [Yeah.] quite coherent and I’m feeling guilty but can you plea--” I hate this when someone doesn’t turn up. “Can you please phone up for me [mm] and say-” And it’s a public holiday Monday they know, like, “You’ve been sick. Oh yeah, right. What have you been doing?” “Can you please call up and say that you share the house with me and I am sick?” Anyway she did it and I heard her try to [mm back up] negotiate this whole phone conversation carefully and <LAUGHTER> Anyway she managed to convince them. I mean, what are they gonna do? Come over and pick me up and make me go to work? Not likely. [Yeah.] But they were very short-staffed ‘cause they don’t have-[mm] They don’t. ’Cause it costs them more money. It was a private hospital. So you had- get paid more for working on a public holiday [holiday]. mm So um come about ten o’clock in the morning, Gabi and Matt are cooking up breakfast. They were cooking eggs and bacon and sausages, like nice. [mm] Spinach and tomato and mushrooms and- And I’m like, “<INHALING> Oh that smells really good.” And Matt’s going, “Yeah, yeah, this will make you feel better. You’ve got the whole day off now.” Well stupid, stupid me. I eat breakfast, and I’m still feeling really badly about calling in. What did I do? <LIP SMACK> I called them up at about eleven o’clock or so and said, “Look I really am feeling much better, and if you’re short-staffed, would you like me to come in now?” “Oh no, no, no. Don’t worry about it. You can do the evening shift.” <SOUND OF DESPAIR> <CLAPS HANDS> I was so mad with myself for doing that. “Just come in at one o’clock and you can work ’til nine thirty.” Well you know how badly you feel come evening again when you haven’t had a good night the night before. So stupid for doing that. They just laughed at me. They just thought it was hilarious. And they were going to a barbecue or something that afternoon [<CHUCKLE>] with some of their friends. And I came home from work and they weren’t home and I just felt like
death [<LAUGHTER>] warmed up by the time I got home. I remember I was sitting in the kitchen making a cup of tea and they walked in. They just laughed even more. “You stupid, stupid person. <LAUGHTER> What were you thinking?” “You are such a glutton for punishment.” And I’m like, “I’ll never ever do that again.” [<LAUGHTER>]

(Female, 53, registered nurse)
Queue cutting, ah! Do I have a story about queue cutting?! [CHUCKLE] When I was in Rome ... We had to wait- I think we got there at- We went to the Vatican. [Yeah.] And we had to queue. So we got told you have to get there at about four thirty-five in the morning just to start queueing because it only opens at nine o’clock in the morning. Ah and the queues go right around like they queue for hours. [Oh my god.] So we managed to hit right at the front. Right. So we’re right at the front. All ready. Because the queues <in exasperated tone of voice> just take hours to get in. It’s like, you know, line up for the Eiffel Tower. Through- so- so we’re there. We’re all excited, you know. We reach the front. <LIP SMACK> We’re- we’re at the front. And we got there earl-- We had our little breakfast packs and everything else. And the next minute, we’ve turned around and there’s five nuns that’ve jumped the queue in front of us. And we all looked at each other. We didn’t know- What do you say when nuns like jump in front of you? <LAUGHTER> You go- What do you say? “Excuse me”, you know, “we know this is the <CLAPS HANDS> Holy Grail for you guys but could you not jump the queue like.” We’re just like- And we all looked at each other and shrugged. And we were like, “We can’t really kick them out. They’re all nuns like”, you know. [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER>. It was like- I feel like tapping them on the shoulder and go, “<MOUTH CLICKS> [<LAUGHTER>] Back of the queues ladies. Back of the queue. Been queueing for four hours.” But, we let them in. We were nice.

(Female, 34, senior investigator)
THE NO-SHOW STAGE DAUGHTER

um [<CHUCKLE>] I remember one night I was playing the mother of this young girl <LIP SMACK> who was standing in the wings and unbeknownst to me I’m on the co-- on stage talking to my so-called on-stage husband. And we were supposed to get to this particular part in the play. And then our daughter was to walk on and ask us if we would like coffee. <LIP SMACK> And <LAUGHTER> so I then had this conversation with my daughter. Anyway we get to this point, and there’s no daughter. And <LAUGHTER> So the-- it- probably- it was probably about a minute but it seemed like an hour. And this guy um David who was playing my husband, I’ll always remember him sitting in the chair. Well he’s gone puce in the face. His eyes are popping out like organ stops. And I said to him, “I think we have a bit of bother here.” And he goes, <yelling> “Bother! Bother! I’ll give you bother!” So <LAUGHTER> with that I’ve walked behind him and I’ve put my hands on his shoulders and I said, “There, there dear. Nah nah nah.” And somehow or other, I don’t know what kicks in but something kicks in <LIP SMACK> and you manage to pick up the play. [Yeah.] So- which we did. And so we’ve carried on. And this was like a- a little bit of an argument where he said this, I said that type-thing con-- usual conversation. And then in the middle of this the daughter walks in and goes <LAUGHTER> “Would you like coffee?” <LAUGHTER> whereby again he’s gone, <yelling> “Coffee! Coffee!” <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER> And I’m trying to keep a straight face. And I thought, “Oh my god.” um So I said, “Yes, dear. That would be nice.” So that we’ve had this conversation, and we get back to this place where we’d- we’d picked up two pages ago. And he’s looking at me and I’m looking at him. And I said, “<CLAPS HANDS> Now, to get back, I’m sorry. I’ve forgotten.” And so you preempted everything. So we preempted everything. I preempted all my questions to him and said, “I know I’ve asked you before but.” [mm] And then we’d get on this. And then he’d say, “Oh typical woman. You never listen. Blah blah blah.” So we managed to get out of it but we both got off stage and my legs were like jelly. And I don’t smoke. <LAUGHTER> ((But)) I said to this chap, “Could I have a cigarette? Can I have a cigarette?!” <LAUGHTER> I was shaking so much. Thought, “Oh, god!”

(Female, 67, medical liaison officer)
THE DARE

Bad employment. I’ll tell you about bad employment. My first job was um KFC. [Oh yeah.] So bad! um <LIP SMACK> I er <SOUND OF DESPAIR> ‘Cause the food there is really disgusting, right? So we dare- dare each others to do just really disgusting stuff’ [<CHUCKLE>] for like ten bucks or twenty bucks <LAUGHTER> [Like <LAUGHTER> I’m waiting.] <LAUGHTER> Yeah. And one of the guys was like, “I’ll give you- it’s fifty bucks.” I was like, “Fifty bucks! That’s like the highest we’ve ever gone.” [<CHUCKLE>] Right? “This must be good.” He goes- he looks at me. ‘Cause I used to work the fries. The fr-- the chips. And um and like all the salt that doesn’t get put on the chips filters down into like this oily sludge underneath the fry rack. [I see.] Right? And he lifts it up and he goes, “Handful of that.” <LAUGHTER> [Oh <LAUGHTER>] For fifty bucks. And I did it. [Oh, no. <LAUGHTER> How bad was it?] It’s disgusting. <LAUGHTER> I had to spit it out but he still gave me the fifty bucks which was pretty good, [<LAUGHTER>] so.

(Male, 25, music teacher)
THE EARTHQUAKE

um now the other story I was gonna tell you [Oh, Meckering earthquake.] Meckering earthquake. Ok. So um ... Just, a- a preamble to it um. I used to have these er we used to have these flu injections, every wint-- every winter. And um w-- I used to like-sometimes it happened, I would look out through the venetians or to the venetians outside, and the venetians started to flicker. [Yeah.] And it was my eyes. They simply-my eyes used to [Yeah.] be affected by the- the flu shot. And you’d get a- m-- m-- mixed vision. That sort of shaped your vision. And so, you’d get that sort of- I used to like that, you know. er Anyway so one Sunday morning my brothers and sisters and my mother were sitting in the lounge room playing Scrabble. On the- the Scrabble board’s on- on- on- on- on the floor. And then the sis-- the vibration starts happening. I look up the venetians. “Oh whoa!” [<CHUCKLE>] “That’s cool.” And then I look down. I thought, “I got the flu.”, you know. And then- but then, then I looked down and the- the Scrabble chips are bouncing up and down, [<CHUCKLE>] on the board. And then I thought, “Whoa, look at that!” And I- I stand up, and you can feel the floor vibrating. [Yeah.] And I- “Oh, great!” I go running up a passage <MIMICS HOW HE IS RUNNING> [<LAUGHTER>] like that. Yeah <LAUGHTER> It was kind of-<LAUGHTER> I enjoyed it! [You did, yeah.] So, yeah, so er ((And then it’s)), “Oh, it’s over.” [mm] “What was that mum?” “That was an earthquake, Daniel. An earthquake.”

(Male, 63, psychologist)
‘Have I ever been pulled over?’ Yeah I got pulled over. I was- been- I don’t know, kind of had a bad day at work [mm] Got in my car. And I was really really busting to go to the toilet. So I should have gone to the toilet when I was at work. I was sitting at these lights and it was red for ages. And it’s where the train line is so I was trying to turn right. And being, you know, like er school time, mid- peak time, the trains run like every seven minutes. So I- just one car would go, a train would come. One car would go, a train would come. And I was sitting going, “Oh I really really gotta go.” And I just went, “I can’t do this anymore!” So I’ve pulled out from around this car. And I’ve seen the opening. And I’m like, “Ok.” It was an old guy in this car. I thought, “No, he’s not gotta take this gap. I can take it.” So I’ve gone it. And I didn’t know that there was a cop sitting behind the truck that was sitting behind me. [mm Ok.] So I went through the train light, which was three demerits, the red light, and a stop sign. <LAUGHTER> So it was something like nine demerit points. [So did he chase you?] Yeah he chased me. He goes, “Look mate, I’m not gonna do you for the red light because you’d already gone through just as it turned red.” [mm] “So technically it’s an orange. I’ll let you off on that.” ... “Not the train line. <SIGH> What were you thinking?” And I’ve gone, <LIP SMACK> “Dude, I wasn’t, because I really need to go to the toilet, and if you don’t mind I need to go to the toilet like right now. You don’t mind if I go over there?” And he was- said, “No, I don’t mind.” “Just don’t let anyone see”, you know. [<CHUCKLE>] And I was like, “Cool.” So nice enough copper to let me do my business when I probably shouldn’t have, in public. And, so he got me for doing thirty Ks over [mm] the speed limit, [Ok.] and running um the train line [the train line]. So he did me for six demerits, and let me off the stop sign and a red light. <OUTBREATH> [Not too bad.] One, [’Cause it-] one bad moment. [Yeah.] One bad moment, and all that happened. I learned my lesson. [Yeah.] I’ve never lost my licence again. [<CHUCKLE>] I’ve only ever had a couple of fines since then [mm].

(Male, 33, glazier)
‘What happened when you locked yourself out of your house’ um we locked ((ourselves)) out once. And we um there was three of us and we didn’t have a key to the house so my mum thought it would be a good idea to try and crawl through the roof. So <LAUGHTER> she gets a ladder. And she gets up there. And she takes the tiles out. And she gets into the roof. And she falls through the roof in my sister’s room. And <LAUGHTER> I was really worried but my mum comes to the front door and unlocks it and she looks so hurt. I’m like, “Mum, are you ok?” But the first thing my sister does is um she ((’s)) just goes, “Is my room ok?” [CHUCKLE] you know. It was just really bad but. Yeah it was fine, you know. And then another time we kind of broke the front window to get in as well. [CHUCKLE] LIP SMACK But, yeah. <LAUGHTER>

(Female, 16, secondary school student)
IT’S THE WOMAN WHO PAYS

um ‘Hotels?’ <LAUGHTER> Lille was funny. um We stayed in Lille for one night. We were in between staying in Arras and we were going up to Calais to see Jane’s great uncle. And we were wearing nice things, you know, just going something gastronomic and whatever, you know, walk up the river and- that sort of stuff. But it was really funny ’cause I’d- ’cause I sometimes do quite stupid things and ’d left my credit card at home. [Ah] And so we had an international cr-- travel credit card which is great unless it’s um [<LAUGHTER>] Happily Jade had one as well but it meant that she paid for everything which across, particularly France, but Europe generally. You’d get the bill. And I get the bill 'cause we’re a couple, dining together. And then I’d hand the bill to Jade. And we’d go pay. But the- the guy in Lille he was- Lovely guy. Really friendly, really helpful. Really appreciative that we both spoke French 'cause we’re Australians and he said, “Australians”, like. “But it’s ok, you know, we can speak French.” um Yeah so he- he gave us the bill whatever. And so he handed me the bill and I handed it to Jade and he just burst out laughing. Anyway, “What’s up?” And he’s like, “Ha, c’est la dame qui paye!” <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] He then went and called over his associate- colleague from the other room. Said, “Look, look, the Australians, it’s the woman who pays.” And then he called out someone from the kitchen to again laugh at us in terms of “Oh, look, it’s the girl who pays- the lady who pays.” And apparently this is very culturally interesting. <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] And I think that we now represent over about twenty-two million people. This is the done thing in Australia. So I don’t [Yeah. <LAUGHTER>] quite like that.

(Male, 27, doctoral student)
ONLINE DATING

Mm oh I’ve got a funny- it’s not my um <LIP SMACK> not my anecdote [<LAUGHTER>] but um I’ve got some friends who are fairly recently single and they’re starting the whole kind of online dating thing. [Oh yeah. <LAUGHTER>] The last time they were doing online dating um Well, the last time they were dating it was more in person [Yeah.] dating [Yeah.] rather than online dating. um One of my friends signed up to eHarmony. [Ok.] um And apparently, like, I don’t know the- the technicalities of it, but they send you kind of twenty matches and [Ok.] you go with something. And then- And you kind of review those. And the first twenty matches she got um one of her friends was in it. [<CHUCKLE>] And- and they had a good laugh about it. They were kind of like, “Hahaha, maybe we should go on a date, hahaha.” like this. Pretty funny. um And then the second lot arrived. um And she was on the phone with a client at work and she just, “I- I’m sorry. I’m- I’m really sorry. I’ll- I’ll call you right back.” And hangs up. ’Cause the matches had just come up on her phone, and one of them was her boss. <LAUGHTER> [<LAUGHTER>] So she immediately logged on and just deleted her profile. She was like, “I- If I block him he still won’t be able to see that I was there. And I was just like, ‘I don’t know what to do.’” So- so she ended up blocking like deleting her entire profile [<CHUCKLE>] so that her boss wouldn’t realise that she’d been matched.

(Female, 29, doctoral student)
THE HUGE HUNTSMAN SPIDER

‘Creepy crawlies.’ I’m not really scared of creepy [mm] crawlies. I used to be. um Do you wanna hear about a big spider? [Oh, yeah ((INAUDIBLE))] Ok. [<LAUGHTER>] um marr-- oh I wasn’t married. I don’t know. Anyhow we had a child. And we went down to Margaret- my husband- he became my husband. And we were staying in this room that was very dark with all wood panellings. So everything, all the woods were- the walls were dark wood, the door was dark wood, the board floors were dark wood. <LIP SMACK> And my daughter was sleeping on the kitchen floor just outside. Because the only other bedroom was in- out of the house. And she was about two and a half so we couldn’t leave her outside. So I- I’d gone- The day before when I’d taken my jeans- I’d washed my jeans, and I hung them on the line and about the evening time I said to my husband, “We’d better bring my jeans in and got- I don’t want any spiders getting into them.” ’Cause we’d already had an experience with a <LIP SMACK> What do you call them? Those big hairy ones that walk up the wall. They ((trap--)) The big hairy ones that we get. Have you seen them? Huntsmans. [Oh the huntsmans. Ok.] Yeah, we’d already had an experience with one of those and at this time I was really really scared of spiders. [mm] And I- I’m not that scared of them now but I take them outside, even the big hairy ones, with a- a container or anything. [Yeah, yeah.] I don’t kill anything <LIP SMACK>. But anyhow I go out and I get my jeans and I tiptoe back into the room ’cause my daughter’s still asleep. And I flick my jeans out. You know how you do this <MIMICS FLICKING CLOTHES> [Yeah.] to straighten the legs. And as I flick the jeans – and I hope it doesn’t make a really loud noise <the participant gets ready to slap her hand on the table> – I seriously hear a noise this loud <BANG> on the floor. And I’m going, [Oh dear.] “What the hell was that that’s just dropped out of it? That was really big. Just dropped down in my pants.” And as I’m standing there, and my eyes are adjusting to the dark floorboards, I see the biggest spider I’ve ever seen in my life. It had the- its body was the size of a mouse. [Oh my god.] It was absolutely enormous and it’s right near my feet. So I scream and go running around the other side of the bed. My husband’s sitting on the bed going, “What is it? What is it?” I can’t speak. I go running around the other side of the bed. It goes under the bed, and comes out <LAUGHTER> this side at me <LAUGHTER> I’m screaming and then I’m jumping on the bed and it runs up the door. So we’re stuck in this room with a spider that size of my hand easily
but the body was the size of a mouse. It was enormous. Now today I wouldn’t kill it. But I was only nineteen or something back then and, my husband killed it and seriously it splattered for probably a meter of- around. It was that big. [Oh] It was a big, big spider.

(Female, 54, remedial massage and stretch therapist)
CAR ACCIDENT

[And you had a third one as well?] Of car accidents? Yeah, I- I have had- I’ve- I’ve got a lot of car accident stories. So I- seven days before I got my licence, before I went for my driving test, I totalled my mum’s car. And, it was her fault. [<LAUGHTER>] So my mum’s- my mum’s a very funny person so it was the only time we’d- 'cause I’d always driven with my dad. I’d never driven with my mum. So we got on the car together but she refused to let me reverse out of the driveway. [Ok.] I don’t know why she thought it was a complex procedure. So she wouldn’t- sh-- she reversed out of the driveway. Then we swapped and I got on the car and drove. Anyway, we drove for about half an hour, and it was going quite well. And I followed a- a truck around the corner. But the truck went around a corner, stopped immediately. And I had to stop. And then just started reversing. He didn’t even look, just started reversing. And of course, you know, in every car, reverse is in a different place and if you’ve never been on that car before. So I’m stru-- ((like and)) we can see the car coming but I’m putting it into the wrong place for reverse. And like- and the truck just smashes into the front of the car. And my mum’s really annoyed at me. She never drove in a car with me again, you know, until like I was much older. [<CHUCKLE>] But it was, you know, her fault. If she’d let me drove (sic) out of the- [Yeah.] out of the driveway, I would have known ((how to reverse.)) [You would have known the reverse on that car. Yeah.] Yeah, yeah.

(Male, 41, learning skills advisor)
BABY TIGER SNAKE

And the other time I’ve come across a snake was good fun. It was a baby tiger snake. And it would have been about the width of a pencil. [Ok.] Maybe a foot long. And er it was when I was living in Chidlow down by er Bibra Lake. And ... You could see on its back it had some like bite marks. Looks like cats’ teeth ’cause they were really thin sort of needles and marks. And I had some mates coming over that arvo for a beer. And I thought, “<CHUCKLE> This could be fun.” ’Cause [<CHUCKLE>] one of my mates does not like creepy crawlies [<LAUGHTER>] at all. So I went inside and put it in a lunchbox. [<LAUGHTER>] And we had two beers and I went, “Oh Ron, that’s it, I’ve got something for you.” And he’s- he’s perked up thinking, “Yes!”’, you know. He’s more than happy to receive presents. So I’ve gone in, come back out the door, and as I’ve come back out the door I’ve done this Oscar-winning fake, “Oh, I’ve tripped.” as I’ve opened the thing. And this baby tiger snake has landed directly in his lap… He’s jumped up screaming, while me and my mate are screaming laughing. ’Cause [<LAUGHTER>] my mate got there early and I told him what I was gonna do. Yeah, Ron did not think it was nearly [<LAUGHTER>] [<LAUGHTER>] as funny as we did. He wanted to punch me but, yeah we called him a sook. [<LAUGHTER>] [<LAUGHTER>] It was awesome fun. It really was. [<LAUGHTER>] He still hasn’t forgiven us to this day but. [<LAUGHTER> Yeah.] Yeah. [<LAUGHTER>]

(Male, 36, chef)
Oh when I was in high-school I did lots of um performance stuff like drama and [mm] <LIP SMACK> school productions and all that sort of thing. And we did the Princess Bride. [Yeah.] Have you seen that? Yeah. And there’s not many female parts in that play. There’s the Princess and then an old croney woman. So I was the old croney woman [<LAUGHTER>] <LAUGHTER>. And I had a couple of other minor like roles so um I had that role and then a voice off stage [Ok.] at one point but oh and then a- a male part as well where I had to have a beard and a moustache. So they did the beard like the proper way instead of like a elasticised one. It was, you know, with the glue and you put on the individual- 'cause there was like a make-up crew and they wanted to do everything. Anyway. [mm] <LIP SMACK> So they did this beard. So I had the beard on for later. And it was the first part of the performance. So I had the opening scene. So someone calling off the stage and the person on stage responding. So I’m the person talking. I go to say my first line and it’s like the opening night. 'Cause I went to privates it’s not like a crazy private school but sort of the big yearly production sort of thing. And I breathed in to take my first line and of course all my moustache- the hair went <MIMICS SWALLOWING HAIR> like into my throat and I just started choking and I couldn’t- <LAUGHTER> So [<CHUCKLE>] the whole- everything’s silent waiting for me to say this line and I’ve like breathed in and I, yeah, just literally choked. So I think someone had to- I think I eventually got it out but it was quite bad and the poor person on stage’s like, “What the hell.” 'Cause they couldn’t see me, like, yeah <LIP SMACK> So that was probably the worst performance [<LAUGHTER>] for me. [Aw poor thing.] Yeah. <LAUGHTER> 

(Female, 31, teacher)
SUITCASES

And you’re better off with the suitcases that aren’t fabric the- you’re better off getting the- what do they call them? Samsonite. No. [Yeah, I don’t know what they call them.] Samsonite or whatever. [The tough one, like.] Yeah. So that it’s actually kind of semi-waterproof for [Yeah.] if it’s in the rain. [Yeah, yeah. <LAUGHTER>] ’Cause I’ve seen- Even my boss that- at the moment. He’s a mechanic by trade. He was um he was in the air force. [Ok.] Australian air force so he was- he did his apprenticeship there on the ground vehicles, like what I do at the airport now. So working on all the push backs to push the planes back and all that kind of side of things. And he- he actually went and worked in baggage for a while as a manager, for them. But he still obviously had to drive around and do stuff. <LIP SMACK> And he um <LIP SMACK> it’s quite funny 'cause he’s- he’s stuffed up as well. Like he said he’s been driving around the ring road, and he’s just kind of looked in the mirror on the tug. And he’s noticed this thing just kind of sliding across the back of a tray about to fall off. And so he’s hit the brakes. And it’s slid off and into the dirt and mud and that sort of thing. And he’s just like, “Oh, no.” So he picks it up and he’s like dusting it off <LAUGHTER>. And there’s like grass stains on it and <LAUGHTER> he’s putting it back on. He’s like, “Oh, no one will notice. No one will notice.” [<LAUGHTER>] And it’s just like- that’s probably some poor little old lady’s suitcase that <LAUGHTER> Oh, no! [<LAUGHTER>] But yeah. It’s amazing how many of those things happen and you just never hear about them or never think about it but it happens no matter what you do, in every business so.

(Male, 26, auto electrician)
PLAYING A TRICK ON MUM

‘Did I ever play tricks on sister, brother?’ I’ve- there probably was lots, and they probably did lots on me, but I can tell you about one that I played on my mum which was [LAUGHTER] very rare for me to do [LAUGHTER], but it was really classic. [LAUGHTER] We- And I remember it really well. We’d moved into a new house for us, um in Stratton, when I was fourteen. And mum is a very small stature person, she’s very petite. And she feels- she has bad circulation, she feels the cold [Yeah.] a lot, she still suffers with the cold. So she always wants to have the heater on. Anyway, when we moved into the new house [LIP SMACK] um it was coming up to winter. And mum and dad had just had all gas lines put in the house so gas bayonets put into the living-room and family room so she could have a gas heater. um And it came up to April Fools’ Day. [Oh yeah. <CHUCKLE>] Alright? So mum being a little bit naive about things, I um got up in the morning. And I- And I wal-- walked out and I- I started talking to mums. “What do you want for breakfast?” <SNIFFLING> And I just sat down and I went, “<SNIFFLING> I can smell gas. That’s terrible.” So anyway, again, mum’s going, “Where? What?” I said, “It might be in- in the lounge-room.” So she’s gone in there. I’ve got mum down on her hands and knees [LAUGHTER] with her nose right up to the- the gas bayonet [LAUGHTER] [<LAUGHTER>], sniffing to see if she can smell gas. [LAUGHTER] And then I had to f-- I couldn’t hold it together. I had to finally start laughing and “Hey mum, April Fool.” [<LAUGHTER>] She- she got very upset. [Oh [LAUGHTER>] I think she saw the funny side of it eventually.

(Male, 53, finance broker/financial planner)
Corpora


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