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Building and breaking frames in welfare work

by

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BUILDING AND BREAKING FRAMES IN WELFARE WORK

Ruth MENSAERT

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1   Introduction

There is a growing sense that over the past two decades, globalization has changed the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world (Blommaert and Rampton, 2012). These effects are not only visible in the contact between languages and culture but also the concepts of language and culture themselves, as separate, bounded entities, have become problematic (Blommaert, 2012). Linguistic and cultural change becomes the main feature of our *superdiverse* society (Blommaert, 2012). Today, we are dealing with this diversification and more specifically with extremely complex migration patterns and the birth of the 'network society' (Blommaert 2012a:2, Castells 1996), in which individuals' and groups' networks have become intense and diverse. Van der Aa (2013) notes that this 'network society' is a real challenge for both civil and civic society in key areas such as healthcare, social work, education, union work and so on. It demands new frames, concepts, and actions through which it should become possible to handle the diverse needs of increasing numbers of people who fell outside the mainstream: newcomers from non-European Union countries, newcomers from other EU countries but also many EU natives that have become victims of the ever tightening economy and job market (Van der Aa, 2013). Therefore, a homogenous program to deal with e.g. 'problematic youth' is no longer applicable because it ignores their *superdiverse* background (Blommaert, 2012). Through the non-profit organization Tangram, I came in contact with adolescents who are at their wits' end and see the "independent living program" as their last hope. The social workers of Tangram provide integral care seeing that these adolescents have more than one problem. They face the difficult task of assessing the adolescent's situation correctly (taking into account their context) by means of an introductory talk and an intake interview; and subsequently providing adapted assistance. I was curious about this intake interview and quickly decided to study this procedure in further detail. How did this interview proceed and were both the interviewer and interviewee able to attain a compromise? In other words: Is the social worker able to get a precise image of the delicate and complicated situation of the adolescent so that he or she comes to grips with the real problem? It is important to realize that many institutions try to bind society together by adhering to static classifications in the hope of reducing complexity. Nevertheless, many concepts and frames give evidence of shortcomings given that our society continues to change. This dissertation draws on ethnographic monitoring, voice, narrative and frames to analyze the intake interview.

Given that my method and literature study are closely linked, I decided to discuss them in an 'umbrella' chapter (2). First, I will discuss my field of research. That will be followed

by a detailed description of "the ethnographic perspective", dealing with ethnography, 'Habitus', voice and ethnographic monitoring. Then, I will expand on my data and research instruments. Later in this section, I will elaborate on the frame analysis. The detailed presentation and analysis of the cases can be found in the three analytical chapters: Chapters 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. I conducted a qualitative research with three young adolescents. All three of them were just about to become eighteen and thus attaining the age of majority. The results of my research can be found from page 17 onwards, where I will describe this qualitative research. Finally, chapter 4 summarizes my findings, draws conclusions and makes some recommendations with regard to future practice and policy.

2   Method and literature study

This section will focus on the experience of doing ethnographic fieldwork in the centre "Tangram" in Antwerp.   After we discussed the two field sites ("De Touter" and "Tangram"), we will explain why ethnographic monitoring lies at the basis of our study. Therefore this methodological section comprises of three parts: a description of our fieldwork journey and an explanation of the workings of the centre "Tangram", a discussion on the ethnographic perspective, a summary of research instruments and data selection procedure, and an analysis of the frame theory.

2.1   "De Touter": "Harbour of hope"

Thanks to Jan Blommaert, I could work together with a 'researcher in residence' (Jef Van der Aa) for a couple of months. It was a unique opportunity by which I could start my research within the organization structure of "De Touter", a non-profit organization consisting of three branches: a 'home supervision' counseling service for families who have problems with one or more children; several day centres catering the free time and homework needs of young people aged 6-18 of a diverse background; and a service catering to adolescents aged 17-21 who want to live on their own because of problems at home, or not having a home at all (Van der Aa, 2013). I conducted my research in the latter, called "Tangram". In all branches there is an intake procedure, a waiting list, and an 'action plan'. After that, families or children are usually between one and two years under supervision of the centre's counselors. In my study, I will focus on the intake procedure, more specifically on the intake interview following the introductory talk. In both centres several activities take place such as participant observation; collecting documents; interviews with care providers as well as clients; the organization of discussion sessions, educational sessions; etc. One of the important issues is the links of the centre with and within the neighborhood (especially with "De Touter") (Van der Aa, 2013). As we notice, the centre ("De Touter") is situated in a historical – and *superdiverse* (Blommaert, 2012) - neighborhood of Antwerp which bears traces of more than fifty years of migration. We see that there is a strong interaction with the local environment, which shows in its infrastructure: shops providing telephone and internet services as well as offering products and food from all over the world. We thus observe that many different ethnic communities live next to each other -creating a complex, diverse but though livable neighborhood. When we walk through this street, we state that our society continues to change with regard to economy, power, belonging, political structures, identity, linguistics and semiotics, relationships between urban and rural areas, regions, nation-states and larger geopolitical units in the world (Blommaert 2012).

Let us now have a closer look at the working of the centre "De Touter". "De Touter" is a non-profit organization that guides families and adolescents, with different ethnic-cultural backgrounds, who face difficulties. The organization pursues an active diversity policy and cooperates with the Special Youth care service. The latter will refer their clients to the centre if needed. "De Touter" emphasizes that they search for solutions together with the client and their family and thus will do anything to prevent families of falling apart. That's why they draw up a file for every family, that can be looked in at any time by those family members. What characterizes the centre? They adapt their guidance policy to the most vulnerable groups of our society and handle problems from the perspective of the client. Since the latter is considered a full partner, the centre promotes involvement from all those concerned. If we have a look at the centre "Tangram", we note that it supports adolescents from 17 to 21 years old who want to live independently. These adolescents are put under the care of the centre by the committee of Special Youth Care (CBJ) or by the juvenile court (JRB). The centre provides all sorts of guidance with regard to family, school, leisure time, emotional wellbeing, administration, finance and practical housekeeping. The provided care depends on the demand of the adolescent (and his or her context) and on the order of the consultant of the committee of special youth care or the judge sitting in the juvenile court. How does the procedure at Tangram evolve? First, an introductory talk takes place at the centre. During this talk, the social worker explains how the "independent living program" works. At the end of the talk the adolescent receives a leaflet with all the information. Second, the client is asked to introduce himself/herself during an intake interview. I will study and discuss this intake interview in detail.

2.2 An ethnographic perspective

2.2.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is often seen as a research method for collecting specific types of data, as another name for description, or something that can be said about 'context' (Dong, 2009). It can be seen as a study that involves a perspective on language and communication, including ontology and epistemology, both of which are essential for the study of language in society, notes Dong (2009). To understand ethnography, we have to understand its history, a history that reveals its intellectual origins inscribed in its techniques and patterns of operation. Van der Aa (2012) adds that ethnography looks back at a rich tradition in which several methods have been successfully adopted, such as critical discourse analysis, nexus analysis, philology and even statistics, which allows for a variety of empirical 'methods' to verify an initial hypothesis based on literature research and looking around thoroughly. Anthropology lies at the basis of ethnography,

according to Hymes (1964: xiii). He accentuates that it is the task of anthropology to coordinate knowledge about language from the viewpoint of man. Since man is closely linked, conditioned or determined by society, community, the group, and culture, language is studied as something that has a certain relevance to man. Keeping this in mind, we will investigate the complexity of the way of speaking during the interview with regard to *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977), voice, narrative and context of usage. Hymes (1966) and Blommaert (2006) show that functions of language are relative, depending on the specific functions and that's why we will study these functions empirically. So even though some forms of language are the same, their function may be very different. Hymes (1966) calls this 'functional' relativity (as it brings more insight into the original Sapir-Whorf claim about relativity). If we take for example an utterance from our data, we would need a description of language-in-society, in order to fully comprehend its function. We see that function then becomes relative, and *patterns of use cannot be postulated or assumed*, but rather need a detailed description and analysis, remarks Van der Aa (2012). This leads us to a contrastive insight with regards to a specific society, group or individual that uses particular narrative devices and means that we need a robust description of the particular speaking situations in which the interviewer and the interviewee found themselves (Van der Aa, 2012). During these speaking situations, there is a constant dialogue between the ethnographic description ('what happened in the field') and the methodological hypothesis of the ethnographer ('what happened before and after fieldwork'), notes Van der Aa (2012). Ethnography works at the level of systematic description, paying close attention to the speech event itself, and it is at this level where 'new theory' is created, in constant dialogue with the participants in the field that is being studied (context plays a crucial role here). The connection between linguistic pattern and 'culture' is explained through its ethnographic groundings (Van der Aa, 2012). My investigation is based on these ethnographic research methods: I shall depart from observation and analysis of specific data extracts, the findings of which are then interpreted, related and synthesized in more general and theoretical terms. This approach is reflected in the organization of the chapters: whereas in the data chapters (3.1, 3.2 and 3.3), the problems are addressed as they turn up in the data – and therefore not by order of salience or immediate relevance – these findings are put in perspective in the last chapter (chapter 4). My analysis of the data relies on an assemblage of discourse-analytical methods. In broad terms my study is influenced by theoretical and field-work based studies of language, bureaucracy, frames and the discursive constitution of reality in this specific institutional encounter. In order to understand this, I also need to explain the methodological concepts of habitus and voice.

2.2.2 "Habitus" and voice

Voice

Theories of voice

Van der Aa (2012) notes that voice is a concept with a lengthy history in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, dating back to Jakobson (1960). In this section we will focus on the theories of Hymes (2003, 2004), Michaels (1983), Maryns (2002) and Blommaert (2002, 2006 and 2009). First, Michaels (1983) studies voice from a narrative point of view. She analyzes what happens when African-American children's stories are told in school. She thereby shifts the focuses on the problematic understanding of deeper structures at the level of syntax (Van der Aa 2012). Micheals (1983) and Collins (1986) note that the structure of African-American children's stories, their voice, becomes problematic when told in an institutional context led by a white American teacher. Second, Hymes' also examines narrative work; first, with Native American stories as recorded by Boas and Sapir and later with re-analyses of educational narratives. In 1981, Hymes analyzed Native-American myths for which he had no recordings, in his first narrative anthology (Hymes 2004 [1981]). Since he was unable to pay attention to actual voice quality, he looked for actual voices of characters in the stories told (Hymes 2004 [1981]), what later developed in a methodology (called ethnopoetics) to find larger patterns and relationships in children's classroom stories (Hymes 1996). Van der Aa (2012) remarks that these 'larger than syntax' relations were subsequently not recognized by the teacher and led to social exclusion. As we can see, Blommaert and Maryns (2002) also pay attention to these larger patterns of exclusion in encounters with authority by using 'applied ethnopoetics'. This allows them to analyze the linguistic misrecognition during asylum seekers' bureaucratic interviews (Blommaert 2006, 2009; Maryns and Blommaert 2002).

Habitus and problems of voice

Before analyzing my data, we need to turn to a theoretical perspective to grasp what is really going on. As Blommaert (2005), I would like to refer to the findings of Bourdieu with regard to "the ethnographic grounding of *habitus* and voice". Let us first have a look at a short definition of *habitus*:

> "The structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the habitus, which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences." (Bourdieu 1990a:54)

If we take into account habitus as an ethnographic concept, we could find ways of examining problems of voice – the conditions for speaking in society (Blommaert, 2005). This point will be illustrated with examples from three intake interviews in a non-profit

organization ("De Touter": "Tangram"), where habituated conversational practices by the interviewer at the same time appear to contain anticipatory moves that prepare the story of the client for the next step in the procedure of the "Independent Living Program". We will see that this form of simultaneity reflects a layered deployment of macro-social (institutional) conventions through conversational practices (Blommaert, 2005). While analyzing our data, we notice that the story of the client is frequently interrupted by various actors: summaries, reformulations, interpretations, evaluations (see Silverstein and Urban 1996; also Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996). We could ask ourselves: Wo speaks here? Whose voice do we hear? According to Blommaert, it is clear that, at the outset, the bureaucratic frame dominates and absorbs the voice of the adolescent. When we have a look at the final report –the last step in the institutional procedure-, we observe that the report is a summarized version of the client's story, framed in a *"metapragmatic evaluative grid"* (Blommaert, 2005) that presents us a coherent story. Blommaert states that what we read in the text is the end product of utterances that are orally produced and performed by both interviewer and interviewee. These interactions are characterized by a particular rhythm, prosody and intonation, accompanied by gesture and facial expression. Nevertheless the end product transforms the client's story and thus entails changes in the conditions for articulating subjectivity, raising issues of voice. The fact that the performed narrative transfers in a bureaucratic text-artefact, causes the transfer of contextualized subjectivity articulated in a performed narrative, to a *decontextualized 'pure' subjectivity*, indicates Blommaert (2005). He states that the story of the client is influenced by a "discourse of power". What we need to examine are the larger patterns of pre-structuring in intake interviews, but we need to do this ethnographically, taking into account that larger patterns are deployed and played out during concrete steps in the procedure, mentions Blommaert (2005). We will see that institutional rules are converted into institutional routines, and such routines organize behavior, experience and practices. As Inghilleri (2003) demonstrates, they also organize the discourse people use and thus provide the motives and the procedures for converting one discourse into another through interpreting, translation, summarizing, taking notes, or even conversational involvement (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other). Such discursive conversions, as Blommaert (2005) said before, are the key to the procedure, and they happen instantaneously. The social worker listens to the adolescent's story and questions him or her on aspects of it; the answers of the adolescent are immediately converted into summaries (the report). Also, interviewers - as Blommaert explains - engage in conversational interaction with the applicants by means of backchanneling cues, reformulations and clarifications, summaries, and so on. These routinized practices induce a particular kind of 'understandability' in relation to the statements of the client. Blommaert shows that this anticipating understandability in terms of criteria is used in

the next step procedure, the bureaucratic text-trajectory. According to Blommaert (2005), the delineation and identification of facts relevant to the case is already an intervention into the story of the adolescent, and it *involves insertion of the story in a discursive regime over which the applicant has no control,* by which he/she could lose his/her voice in this process.

For our purpose here, the point is that the social worker uses institutional strategies in routinized performance. That is, the institutional habitus is present in the conversational practices of the interviewer, which involve the adolescent as well. Both parties collaborate towards the performance of the narrative; but the interviewer simultaneously has to report the story, *proleptically shaping the situated interaction in view of* requirements of the next step in the procedure, according to Blommaert (2005). It is this particular institutional form of habitus deployed here which could accomplish and regulate the on-the-spot meeting of two different sets of frames, the particular kinds of simultaneity discussed by Blommaert (2005). He continues that this strange phenomenon can cause someone to lose his voice even while he or she is using it.

2.2.3 Ethnographic monitoring

To structure my involvement and activities in Tangram, I followed the steps of what Hymes has described as 'ethnographic monitoring'.

(i)   First, I consulted several social actors to identify what issues concern them most with regard to the intake interview (Hymes et al. 1981:5).

(ii)   Second, I observed behavior relevant to that issue in the context of the intake interview (Hymes et al. 1981:5).

(iii) The final step would be to share back my findings with the centre personnel) (Hymes et al. 1981:5).

In this way it is a guarantee that research findings and plans are developed organically, and in close consultation with all social actors involved, notes Van der Aa (2013).

"In other words: static solutions are being replaced by complex dynamics, because understanding the world involves changing it. Therefore when deploying ethnographic monitoring, one can speak of epistemic solidarity: build shareable knowledge together during a long-term commitment to the field where researchers together with social actors observe change and operationalize particular academic concepts relevant to them." (Van der Aa, 2013: 22)

2.3 Data and research instruments

The instruments used for my data collection include non-participant observation, group interview and document collection. As I mentioned before these instruments are used here from an ethnographic perspective. As soon as I entered the fieldwork sites, I used observation as an ethnographer. With fieldwork sites I mean the two centres "De Touter" and "Tangram". My observation in "Tangram" started from the moment I entered the big heavy door for the first time. When you enter the centre (as a client) you are led by a big hall into a small waiting room. If you cross that little room and descend the stairs, you will arrive at a small corridor with several doors. Behind these doors lay small rooms where interviews and conversations with clients take place. The aim of my observation at this stage was to get an overall image of how the centre works. Having established this general image, the observation focus moved into the specific site, the intake interview "room". Before I met the adolescent, I had a small chat with Els and/or Nadine about the background of the adolescent. After meeting the interviewer and future guide of the adolescent, it was time to go to the "interview room". After I was introduced to the adolescent, I shortly explained the aim of my research. Subsequently, I asked if my presence was okay and if I could audio-record the interview. During the intake interviews I observed silently and did not interrupt the conversation. Each intake interview was managed within one hour/one hour and a half. At the end I warmly thanked the adolescent for helping me with my research and left the centre after having a last word with Els and/or Nadine. As soon as I came home, I transcribed the audio-recordings seeing that the conversation was still fresh in my mind. Given that my purpose was to give feedback to the centre with regard to my findings, I also decided to interview Nadine and Els so that I could hear their thoughts and opinions about the intake interview. It was a success. They discussed openly what problems they experienced with the form and what they (not) expected to hear from the adolescent at the interview. Finally, they emphasized that they were very curious about my research and were looking forward to read my dissertation. Another research instrument was document collection. First, I gathered information about both "De Touter" and "Tangram". More specifically I searched the internet, I gathered leaflets and forms, and I talked to several social workers (working at Tangram).

The final report

The final report is composed at a meeting following the intake interview. Els and Nadine informed me that during this meeting, the centre personnel discuss the case of the adolescent by means of the completed form. When we have a look at the report we see that several topics are highlighted such as "client's consultant" (at CBJ Antwerp), "current situation", "story", "family", "network", "school", "therapy", "BZW" ("guided independent living programme"). As we will see, these topics reappear in our interviews.

2.4 Frame analysis

Since we are studying the interaction of different frames during the intake interview, it is necessary to briefly explain the frame theory at forehand. The notion of frame, according to Goffman (1986:8) deals with the fact that individuals attending to a certain situation "face the question 'What is going on here?'". This expectation is seen as an integral part of the fabric of social life and underlies discussions of frame theory, notes O'Malley (2009:347). Frames and structures of expectation are not innate but "acquired through socialization, 'constructed' out of experience", states Bednarek (2004:690). Let us have a look at Minsky's explanation of the frame theory (1977: 355):

> "Here is the essence of the frame theory: when one encounters a new situation [...], one selects from memory a structure called frame. This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary. A frame is a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation like being in a certain kind of living room or going to a child's birthday party. Attached to each frame are several kinds of information. [...] Some is about what one can expect to happen next." (Minsky, 1977: 355)

Tannen and Wallat (1987) note that the term frame, and related terms such as script, schema, prototype, speech activity, template and module, have been used in linguistics, artificial intelligence, anthropology and psychology. An important remark of Tannen and Wallat (1987: 206) is given here:

> "The various uses of frame and related terms fall into two categories. One is interactive "frames of interpretation" which characterize the work of anthropologists and sociologists. We refer to these as frames, following Bateson (1972), who introduced the term, as well as most of those who have built on his work, including scholars in the fields of anthropology (Frake, 1977), sociology (Goffman, 1974) and linguistic anthropology (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974). The other category is knowledge structures, which we refer to as schemas, but which have been variously labeled in work in artificial intelligence (Minsky, 1975; Schank and Abelson, 1977), cognitive psychology (Rumelhart, 1975), and linguistic semantics (Chafe, 1977; Fillmore, 1975; 1976)."

In our study, the notion of "interactive frames" is of importance since both interviewer and interviewee realize that every utterance needs to be interpreted as something that is going on in interaction. Goffman (1997) claims that the workings of the interaction order are ruled by conventions with regard to, for example, the syntax of language. In other words, both the interviewer and interviewee need to know what frame they are in so that

they can behave appropriately. People are continually confronted with the same interpretative task (Tannen and Wallat, 1987). In order to comprehend any utterance, a listener must know within which frame it is intended: for example, is this serious? Is this ironic? Otherwise this could lead to a conflict between both parties. Goffman (1974) described the theoretical foundations of frame analysis in the work of William James, Alfred Schutz and Harold Garfinkel to examine the socially constructed nature of reality. Building on their work, as well as that of linguistic philosophers John Austin and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Goffman worked out a complex system of terms and concepts to exemplify how people use multiple frameworks to make sense of events even as they construct those events. After Goffman (1981a) explored in more detail the linguistic basis of such frameworks, he introduced the term footing to describe how, at the same time that participants frame events, they negotiate the interpersonal relationships, or "alignments," that constitute those events, remark Tannen and Wallat (1987). But what do we need to remember for my study? The important question here is: What frames interact during the intake interview and do we observe a conflict between those frames? We will find answers to these questions in the next chapter: "3: Data analysis": "3.1 Conflicting frames".

3   Data analysis

3.1 Conflicting frames

The key question is: what kind of information is *exactly* required or pursued in an intake interview? Looking back on the data and their outcomes, we can see that what is ultimately pursued by the social worker is a *blend* of two types of information:

a.   Information that can be converted into a synthetic factual core: pieces of information that can end up as answers to questions in the scripted forms used during the intake, and that can be transmitted to the next step in the procedure (see habitus). This information, the discourses to which it is attached and the modes of practice attached to it, we can call the 'institutional frame'. The institutional frame simplifies cases into *standardized* packages of information.

b.   Simultaneously, however, social workers want to hear and know more than just factual answers to concrete questions determined by the procedural script. They are also looking for what is, in their vocabulary, often defined as 'context': insights into the deeper personal, social and relational issues surrounding the concrete case, 'getting to know' the client and his/her life world. This kind of knowledge, its discourses and modes of practice, we can call the 'experiential frame'. In contrast with the institutional frame, the experiential frame is necessarily *unique*, as it documents the highly specific circumstances under which the client seeks assistance and support.

The information sought in the intake is, thus, *hybrid* information that represents adequately both the uniform, non-unique features of each case, as well as its unique features. This hybrid information demands maximum sharedness: both the social worker and the client need to understand the specific mixture of unique and non-unique features, because this mix will determine the next step in the procedure. Obviously, at the outset the social worker is largely ignorant of the experiential frame that will generate the unique characteristics of the case; the client, in return, is often (but not always) largely ignorant about the institutional frame that will mold his/her unique case into templates for further professional action. The beginning situation of interviews, therefore, can be sketched as a fundamental asymmetry between frames, in which the availability of specific forms of information is distributed in a fundamentally different way. We can represent this as follows:

	Available frames	Available frames
Social worker	**PROCEDURAL**	
Client		**EXPERIENTIAL**

The outcome, in contrast, demands sharedness of both frames by both participants. We can render this graphically as follows:

	Available frames	Available frames
Social worker	**PROCEDURAL**	Experiential
Client	procedural	**EXPERIENTIAL**

While sharedness of frames is paramount, the outcome is not necessarily one of perfect symmetry. It is only to be expected that both parties will have learned *aspects* of the other's dominant frame. Thus, ideally, the client will understand the broad lines of the procedure that will be activated as well as the information required for that; the social worker will understand *aspects* of the unique situation that brought the client to the table. These differences in status, indicating different *degrees of availability of the* frames, is represented graphically by the different font choices in the table, with the dominant frame in bold and capital letters, the lesser known frame in plain font.

My analysis of the intake interviews will follow this transition from deep asymmetry to degrees of sharedness. We shall see that this transition includes three steps:

1. At the outset, the *frames are set.* This counts specifically for the institutional frame, which is invariably offered as the guideline for the interview. We shall see that as soon as this frame is set, clients will attempt to *break this frame*, trying to get their experiential frame inserted into the event.
2. The second aspect is *accommodation.* The social worker and the client will be shown to negotiate the boundaries between the different frames, in a gradual process of convergence through which 'the plot is thickened': the uniform template of case-types becomes gradually filled so as to produce a case-*token*, an actual and concrete instantiation of the institutional frame now enriched with elements of the experiential frame.
3. The conclusion of the interview is a *compromise* in which the particular hybrid information is 'packaged' and closed, and in which the social worker and the client can agree on what has been achieved and what can be decided in view of the next steps of the procedure.

3.1.1 Establishing and breaking the frame

We shall look at a number of examples at present. As a guide to reading these examples, two analytical points must be kept in mind:

1. The actual occurrence of talk in intake interviews is, as I said, governed by a fundamental asymmetry in frames; the client, usually, presents an experiential frame while the social worker can move between the experiential and the institutional frame, but needs to keep the institutional frame in focus. In interaction, we will see how this focus on the institutional frame takes the shape of utterances that are *simultaneously a conversationally cooperative move, and a step away from the client's frame* (Blommaert 2005). What we shall see is that the social worker continuously tries to stay 'on track' within the institutional frame. Summaries of clients' statements will be provided, reductions of the information provided by the client to just the point that needs to be procedurally established at that moment in the procedure. The social worker is always looking ahead to the next step in the procedure, and in order to protect the order and sequence of the procedure, she has to intervene by means of such precisely timed and organized 'framing' moves. We shall see how such moves cause important experiential information to be elided and erased from the record. The thing is, however, that such expressions of asymmetry always take the shape of utterances that *enable the conversation to proceed*. Conversationally, they are not disruptions but constructive turns that project a friendly, sympathetic and constructive attitude. The specific interactional morphology of such moments has thus been defined.

2. A second aspect worthy of attention is that handling the different frames and the asymmetry between them is a matter of *experience* and *familiarity with the procedure.* An experienced social worker will be capable of switching from frame to frame within an overall structure of conversational cooperativity, as described above. But *clients* can be experienced as well. It is a feature of welfare systems that some clients have entirely absorbed the professional dimensions of it to the extent that they have become, like the experienced social worker, a 'professional' in handling the procedurally and institutionally scripted proceedings. Such experienced clients are capable to by-pass moments of frame imposition by the social worker and get their experiential voice through. In the examples that follow, I shall address a non-experienced client (Damya) and an experienced one (Niels) (also Alice versus her mother); the differences between both will be manifest. Similar differences will be noted between Els and Nadine, two social workers, the former of whom is very experienced while the latter is rather new in the profession.

Let us begin with Damya's case.During the one hour interview, five different persons were present: Damya, Els (interviewer), Anke (future guide) and I. First I would like to present the story of Damya as it appeared in the final report.

DAMYA

The story of Damya

Damya lives together with her mother and two half-sisters. She has never known her real father because he left when she was born. Damya grew up with her mother and has two half-sisters from two different fathers. The relationship with the current partner of her mother has gotten worse because he often interferes and has a negative attitude towards her, indicates Damya. As a result, the relationship with her mother deteriorated as well. Two years ago, a drastic event changed Damya's life: she was raped by her uncle. She kept silent about this until two close friends revealed the incidentto her mother. Consequently, her mother became very strict what made Damya despair. Together with her two best friends she looked for help at the "CBJ" (committee for special youth care) and they suggested "home counseling". At the same time, the partner of her mother moved to an apartment below theirs and the atmosphere ameliorated. Damya states that in spite of the improvement she still desires to have a place of her own.

Intake

In the next fragment, we see that Els asks questions about Damya's current family situation and gradually focuses on the relationship between her mother and her "stepfather". When Els asks if her mother sees her current partner often (turn 13), Damya spontaneously indicates that she has a bad relationship with her "stepfather" and thus shifts to her personal experience (turn 14). As the interview continues, we will notice that this is one of the major reasons why she wants to live independently since she mentions this problematic relationship several times. Els gives a neutral response to stimulate Damya's personal experience (turns 15 and 17) but finally literally indicates that they will move further to the next question (turn 19: "To move further"). We observe that Els controls the interview through the <u>use of question and answer sequences.</u> By doing so, the talk is distanced from the life experiences of the interviewee. As we can see in this case, Damya fails to give the reason why she has a bad relationship with her stepfather because Els continues with her next question (turn 19).

Extract 1

E = Els

D = Damya

(1)   E: Ja en <u>die partner die woont nu bij uw mama</u> met de kindjes?

(2)   D: We hebben twee appartementen, hij woont beneden, wij boven

(3)   E: Ahja ja en <u>Samya is ook een dochtertje</u> van hen? (Samya = halfzusje van Damya)

(4)   D: Nee

(5)   E: Nee

(6)   D: Das van mijn mijn mama, das van een andere vriend van ervoor

(7)   E: Nog een andere vriend ja

(8)   D: Ja

(9)   E: Ok, das om zo wat een zicht te krijgen op u situatie he

(10) D: Ja

(11) E: <u>Dus uw mama woont nie echt samen</u> maar onder mekaar?

(12) D: Ja

(13) E: Maar <u>die hebben wel veel contact</u> veronderstel ik of hoe gaat da?

(14) D: Nu ik mee hem nie

(15) E: Nee

(16) D: Want da ga nie zo goe tussen ons

(17) E: Ahja

(18) D: Maar mee mijn mama wel en met de kinderen ook.

(19) E: Ja ja ja ok. Dan hebt <u>gij hier als contactpersoon</u> om verder te gaan effe ingevuld Sophie en Nele

Translation

(1)   E: Yes and <u>that partner he lives with your mother</u>together with the children?

(2)   D: We have two apartments, he lives downstairs, we upstairs

(3)   E: Oh Yes and <u>Samya is also his daughter</u>? (Samya = half-sister of Damya)

(4)   D: No

(5)   E: No

(6)   D: That's from from my mother, from another friend of before

(7)   E: Another friend yes

(8)   D: Yes

(9)   E: Okay, that is to gain insight in your situation huh

(10) D: Yes

(11) E: <u>So your mother doesn't actually live together</u> but underneath each other?

(12) D: Yes

(13) E: But they <u>do have a lot of contact</u> I suppose or how does that go?

(14) D: Now, I don't

(15) E: No

(16) D: because we don't get along that well

(17) E: Oh yes

(18) D: But with my mother and the children things are fine

(19) E: Yes yes yes okay. Then, to move further, you filled in Sophie and Nele <u>as contact person</u>

In this short fragment, Els tries to fill her form by asking several WH questions (turns 1,3, 11 and 13). As Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) show us, the interaction is driven by sub-goals. These sub-goals are topical units that match boxes on the application form. Just like these authors, we observe that the spoken information gathering goes on together with the filling in of the written form. In turn 9, Elseven uses a meta-comment indicating that she especially needs factual information-such as specific time and place-in order to have a better view on her situation ("Okay that is to gain insight in your situation huh"). In turns 13 and 14, we observe that Damya tries to shift from the institutional frame to a more experiential frame by focusing on her own problem and thus discussing the nature of the contact between her and her stepfather instead of answering Els' question and indicating how often her mother and her stepfather see each other. Even if the nature of that contact seems irrelevant at that moment in the interview, Damya continues to stress that she doesn't get on very well with her stepfather. She finally sets the interview 'back on track' by indicating that, by contrast, she has a good relationship with her mother and with the other children. This enables Elsto pick up the institutional frame by asking her next question.

On some occasions, the interviewee manages to break the institutional frame to tell his or her personal story. In the following extract Damya is asked how she got into contact with the Youth Welfare Office. At the beginning, Els explains that they need personal information given that they provide "network guidance". This means that the centreguides the young person taking into account his or her personal story. First, we see that Els keeps the institutional framein focus by literally indicating that she will conduct the conversation on the basis of her form (turn 9: "Yes, I will conduct the conversation by means of a a er the er form er"). She then adds that she has to gather enough information to complete the registration (turn 13). Blommaert (2005: 232) tells us something more about the influence of the act of *enregistering*:

"In other words, they induce a *register for talking about facts* in the specific application case, and as with all registers, the act of enregistering marks a clear distinction between what belongs to the register and what does not (Silverstein 2003). This is a very concrete matter. The interviewer makes on-the-spot decisions about which parts of the performed narrative 'belong' to the range of factuality and which parts are redundant. Interpreting and translation are, of course, clear cases in point. But such decisions are often also interactionally flagged during the interviews, e.g., by means of the synoptic reformulations or the evaluative framings seen in the examples above. They thus take the shape of interactionally produced, supportive and collaborative expressions of conversational understanding. It is again a case of simultaneity where two acts of a fundamentally different order (here to be taken literally) are blended in one performed sequence, and where we see the process of extraction of the story to the next steps develop in the form of an interactional pragmatics." (Blommaert, 2005: 232)

Second, Els sets a more experiential frame by indicating that she wants to hear Damya's personal story (turn 13 and 15). As a result, Damya responds with a breakthrough into performance (Hymes, 1981) (turn 16). This means that she brings an accelerated version of her story dealing especially with the context and the consequences of her violation. The four verses are preceded by a variation of "en euh/ en ja". LikeO'Malley (2009), we observe thatthe interviewer's next question is again a factual question (turn 17), with the perspective of personal experience falling between the frames. Els thus resets the institutional frame by asking for a specific time indication (turn 17: "The rape, it happened three years ago? Something like that?"). This feature is seen in the extract below which is representative of a pattern throughout the data.

Extract 2

D = Damya

E = Els

(1)   E: Ok Damya, dan hebben wij al een beetje zo zicht op uw situatie he,<u>wat meer over de context, het gaat ook over een contextbegeleiding he da we</u>

(2)   D: Mhh

(3)   E: Euh<u>heen netwerkbegeleiding,</u> dus ik denk dat da voor u mensen zijn die, heb ik toch op de kennismaking gehoord, die voor u wa kunnen

(4)   D: Jaja

(5)   E: Betekenen, mmh

(6)   D: Ja heel veel

(7)   E: Heel veel

(8)   D: Ja ja

(9)   E: Ok, da komt misschien seffes nog aan bod, eh.
       Ja, ik ga de 't gesprek een beetje aan de hand van vaneuh het euh formulier euh voeren eh
       dat is euh makkelijk voor mij, dan een aantal gegevens die we moete moeten vragen euh

(10) D: Ja

(11) E: Voor de registratie enzo. Ok, dus euhm jij bent bij 't Comité?

(12) D: Ja

(13) E: Dat is al een tijdje of hoe wa hoe is da gebeurd? Hoe is da gekomen? Kunt ge daar iets
       van vertellen?

(14) D: Ahja
       da was
       euhpffffik denk
       euhkweetnie juist wanneer ma vorig jaar ergens in april ofzo
       da was toen alles was uitgekomen van
       euh alles wat er was gebeurd met die verkrachting

(15) E: Oei

(16) D: Euhh en ja euh mijn vriendinnen zijn da gaan zeggen tegen mijn moeder,
       toen was alles uitgekomen
              want ik verzweeg da zo heel lang (3)
       en euhm ja da ging dan thuis wa minder
        ale die gaven mij de schuld nieofzo
              maar gewoon euh beetje beschaamd ook enzo
                 omda ik Marokkaans ben (4)
       en euh mijn moeder begon strenger te worden op vlak van naar buiten gaan (1)
       en er onstondale ja er onstond altijd een conflict tussen ons
        en ook met die haar vriend,
              ik moet dienen al van in het begin nie hebben
                 da heeft niets euh met die zaak te maken (4)

(17) E: <u>Die verkrachting dat is dus drie jaar geleden gebeurd? Zoiets?</u>

(18) D: Twee jaar, twee en een half, zoiets.

(19) E: Ja

(20) D: Dusja

(21) E: En gebt da euhnie gezegd tegen u mama?

(22) D: Nee en euh ik had zo ruzie met twee vriendinnen die da wel wisten en die zijn da toen
       gaan zeggen

(23) E: Oei, ja

(24) D: Ja en vanaf toen, maar ik ben blij dat da uitgekomen is

(25) E: Ja?

(26) D: Ja en (?) zat ik zo wat in de problemen en euh ik ging ook heel veel naar Sarah (goede
       vriendin) en Sarah heeft mij daar waale heeft gezegd: "Ga naart comité, die kunnen
       misschien helpen."

(27) E: Ahja dus dan zijt gij daar terecht gekomen?

Translation

(1) E: Okay Damya, we have gained some insight in your situation now, <u>what more about the context, we are off course dealing with a context assistance</u>

(2) D: Mhh

(3) E: Euh <u>a network assistance</u>, so I think that means people who, have I heard at the introductory talk, who can … something for you

(4) D: Yes yes

(5) E: Mean, mmh

(6) D: Yes very much

(7) E: Very much

(8) D: Yes yes

(9) E: Okay, that will get a chance later, eh
Yes, I will conduct the conversation by means of a a er the er form er
That is uh easier for me, and then there are a number of questions we have to ask uh

(10) D: Yes

(11) E: For the registration etc. Okay, so you are with the Committee?

(12) D: Yes

(13) E: For a while already or how did that happen? How come? Can you tell something about that?

(14) D: Oh Yes,
That was
Er pfff I think
Er I'm not sure when but somewhere in April last year
That was when everything was revealed of
Er everything that was happened with regard to the rape

(15) E: Ooh

(16) D: Er and yeah my friends told my mother
Then everything was revealed
Because I kept silent about it for a long time
And er things didn't go well at home
They didn't blame me or anything
But er also a bit ashamed
Because I am Moroccan
And er my mother became severe with regard to going outside
And er we came er yes we came into conflict with each other again and again
And also that her friend
I can't stand him, already from the beginning
That has nothing to do with the case

(17) E: T<u>he rape, that happened three years ago? Something like that?</u>

(18) D: Two years, two and a half, something like that.

(19) E: Yes

(20) D: So yes

(21) E: And you er you didn't tell your mother?

(22) D: No and er I quarreled with those two friends who knew and then they told it

(23) E: Oh, yes

(24) D: Yes and from then on, but I am glad that it was revealed

(25) E: Yes?

(26) D: Yes and (?) I was in some kind of trouble then and er I went a lot to Sarah (close friend) and Sarah has er has told me: "Go to the committee, maybe they can help."

(27) E: Oh yes so then you ended up there?

We notice in the previous fragment thatEls explicitly frames the activity by using standard terminology such as "context guidance", "network guidance" and "registration" (turns 1, 3, and 11).But is Damya familiar with this terminology? Els not only uses this specific terminology but also applies standard phrases to meta-communicate and to structure her interview out loud (turn 9). In turn 11, we clearly see that Els is following the structure of her form by the fact that she asks a very explicit formal question: "*So you are with the committee*?"In fact, Els wants to know the reasons why Damya joined the committee. However, Damya gives a minimal response (turn 12) which obliges Els to further explain the nature of her question (turn 13). After that, Damya gives a time indication, followed by the actual reason that led her to the committee (turn 14). When we have a closer look at turns 13 and 14 we notice that Damya takes over the language of Els in order to accommodate her communication which could improve the effectiveness of the interview, affirmGiles, Hajek, Barker, Lin, Zhang, Hummert, Anderson(2006)(4.2 Accommodating each other). More specifically, Damya takes over the word "da" (That) which she uses to explain why she joined the committee. Consequently Els gives her space to elaborate on this by using an interjection displaying her empathic alignment (turn 15) ("Ooh"). As we mentioned earlier, Damya subsequently "breaks through into a performance" (Hymes, 1981) which enables her to bring a shortened version of her story (turn 16).Let us now look at the short burst of narrative in turn 16, and concentrate on the complex bundle of information offered by Damya in this short narrative. Damya presents us with an *episodic* story in which a stage of her life is summarized. We encounter:

a)   a set of *actors*: her friends, her mother, her mother's boyfriend and Damya herself;

b)   a key *event:* her friends telling her mother about the rape

c)   *Background* to the event: the fact that she had remained silent about this until then

d)   The *outcomes and effects* of the event:
     a.   things did not go well at home

b. her emotional state: shame in the context of being a Moroccan woman

c. her mother becoming stricter on her, emerging conflicts

e) A *relational* point: the conflict developed also with her mother's boyfriend, who is dismissed as a legitimate actor in this situation.

We can see how this very short narrative coagulates a variety of 'facts', their origins and effects in Damya's life and social relationships. The complexity of this bundle of elements will have to be reduced by Els, to the level of pure "facts". By way of this breakthrough, Els her question eventually is answered which leaves both parties satisfied (cf. 3.3 Building consensus). We can conclude from this small fragment that the social worker's behavior is indeed different from that of a bureaucrat, notes Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996). As we could see, Els responds to and participates in the talk of Damya. Given that Els controls the interview (power and discourse), it depends on her whether Damya is able to share her experiences. Nevertheless, Els is bound to her form and will reset her institutional frame by focusing on a time frame, more specifically she asks whether "the rape" happened three years ago (turn 17). We do notice in turn 21 that she tries to elicit experiential information ("And you er you didn't tell your mother?"). This confirms that her discursive behavior is different from that of a bureaucrat; argue Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996). The fragment ends with a closing line from Els affirming that her question is answered and that she is able to report (turn 27: "Oh yes so then you ended up there?")

In the following fragment, Anke –Damya's future guide- takes over the interview temporarily by asking more about Damya's father (turn 1). In doing so, she builds further on a previous question of Els, namely: "Does your father know about your existence?" Subsequently Els takes over the lead again by following the topics on her form and discussing Damya's family situation in more detail (turn 19). When Els asks about her uncles and aunts in turn 29, she unintentionally activates Damya's personal story. We see that Damya shares sensitive details concerning her rape but in a moderate emotional way. Does she objectify her story seeing that she has recounted it many times before? Or does she simply takes over the neutral analytical language of Elsto bring her personal story (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other)? We suppose that there could be many different explanations for this feature.

Extract 3

A = Anke (Damya's future guide)

D = Damya

E = Els

(1)   A: En weet uwen papa al da ge op zoek zijt naar hem?

(2) D: Nee want die is nog steeds in Marokko en die vriend heeft eigenlijkeuh mijn vader al jaren niet meer gehoord

(3) A: Niet gehoord

(4) D: Dus hij is zelf via vrienden van hem aant zoeken

(5) A: Zit hij al jaren in Marokko? Is hij…

(6) D: Nee die is gewoon op vakantie. Ma die zit daar al een tijdje ze, een maand ofzo?

(7)   E: Ahja

(8) D: Dus

(9) E: Die komt wel terug naar België?

(10) D: Jaja

(11) E: Ja en dan ist afwachten van wa da ge de volgende stap

(12) D: Ja

(13) E: Mhh spannend eh

(14) D: ja ja ja

(15) E: Amai want weet ge veel van hem?

(16) D: Nee niets bijna niets nee, nee. Ik heb wel altijd een va vaderfiguur gehad ze, mijn opa, dus

(17) E: Ahja uw opa

(18) D: ja ja ja

(19) E: Da was ik ook efkes aant denken, waren er nog andere mensen? Dus uw opa?

(20) D: ja ja ja

(21) E: En das dan via uw mama?

(22) D: ja

(23) E: De vader

(24) D: De vader van mij moeder, ja

(25) E: En ge hebt ook een oma?

(26) D: ja

(27) E: En dat is een, goed contact mee? Ziet ge die mensen…

(28) D: Euhm mijn opa vaker dan mijn oma

(29) E: ja en nog ooms of tantes? Zijn die er ook?

(30) D: ja mijn tante, eweleuhm, wacht eh hoe hoe moet ik dat zeggen?
Dus mijn tante haar man heeft mij verkracht
maar ik kwam heel goe overeen met mijn tante
dus we hadden het contact al verbroken.
Ik had haar graag ze. Wij hadden ook heel goe contact

maar zij wou da dan nie geloven wat dat er is gebeurd.
Dus het contact met haar is er al niet meer.
Dan heb ik nog een andere tante,
das gewoon, ik zie die af en toe. Das wel ok.

(31) E: mhh

(32) D: En dan nog een ander, das ook gewoon, ja

(33) E: Mhh en uw opa is een beetje speciaal?

(34) D: ja

Translation

(1) A: And does your father already know that you are looking for him?

(2) D: No because he is still in Morocco and that friend has actually er not heard my father since a couple of years.

(3) A: Not heard

(4) D: So he is looking himself through some friends of him

(5) A: Is he already staying in Morocco for years? Is he…

(6) D: No he is just on holiday. But he stays there already for a while, a month or something like that?

(7) E: Oh yes

(8) D: So

(9) E: He will return to Belgium?

(10) D: Yes yes

(11) E: Yes and then you will wait and see what the next step is

(12) D: Yes

(13) E: Mhh exciting uh

(14) D: Yes yes yes

(15) E: Wow, because do you know a lot of him?

(16) D: No almost nothing no, no. I did always have a father figure, my grandfather, so

(17) E: Oh yes your grandfather

(18) D: Yes yes yes

(19) E: I was also thinking about, were there any other people? So your grandfather?

(20) D: Yes yes yes

(21) E: And so that's from your mother's side?

(22) D: Yes

(23) E: The father

(24) D: The father of my mother, yes

(25) E: And you have a grandmother too?

(26) D: Yes

(27) E: And the, the contact is good? Do you see these people…

(28) D: Uh my grandfather more often than my grandmother

(29) E: Yes and uncles and aunts? Do you have these?

(30) D: Yes, my aunt, well er, wait er how how do I tell this?
So my aunt her husband has raped me
But I had a good contact with my aunt
So we already broke the contact
I liked her. We had a good contact.
But then she wouldn't believe what happened
So the contact was broken with her
Then I still have another aunt
That's normal, I see her occasionally, that's okay.

(31) E: Mhh

(32) D: And then another one, that's also okay, yes

(33) E: And your grandfather is a bit special?

(34) D: Yes

In this long fragment, especially turn 30 draws our attention. We see that Damya again breaks through into a performance which allows her to bring a "micro-narrative" (Blommaert, 2006). Let us have a look at this short burst of narrative and concentrate on the complex bundle of information offered by Damya in this short narrative. Damya presents us with an *episodic* story in which she describes the relationship with her aunt. We encounter:

a)   a set of *actors*: her aunt, her uncle, herself
b)   a key *event:* the relationship with her aunt (wife of the uncle who raped her)
c)   *Background* to the event: before the rape, she had a good relationship with her aunt
d)   The *outcomes and effects* of the event:
    a.   Good relationship with aunt
    b.   Raped by uncle
    c.   Aunt didn't believe Damya
    d.   No contact anymore
e)   A *relational* point: the relationship with her aunt

We can see how this very short narrative coagulates a variety of 'facts', their origins and effects in Damya's life and social relationships. The complexity of this bundle of elements

will have to be reduced by Els, to the level of pure "facts". This short burst of narrative embedded in a question-answer sequence, is a complex and layered narrative event in which she brings her personal story (Blommaert, 2006). In doing so, she also takes over the official language of Els by using the word "contact" three times in describing the relationship with her aunt. We presume she does this because she subconsciouslywishes to improve the effectiveness of the communication so that the interview is rewarding for both parties. We will discuss this feature in more detail in the next chapter (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other).

In the next fragment, we notice that Damya can't fully display her voice due to the dominant analytical frame of Els. She is interested in the factual details concerning her school and results (turns (1)-(8)). Damya indicates that she fell behind because the rape has hindered her studies. She mentions this in a detached way as if she is giving factual information. Els acknowledges and confirms her problem but then immediately shifts to the next question. Damya breaks the question-answer sequence by giving delicate information. Els carefully tries to activate her story by an interrogative "yes?". Nevertheless, Damya doesn't expand on the subject by which Els is able to resume her question and answer format. Before moving on to the extract in question, I would like to elaborate on the feedback with Els and Nadine. As I mentioned before, I invited Els and Nadine at the end of my data gathering to recapitulate on the previous intake interviews. I wanted to hear how they experienced the intake interview and if they had the impression that they could really hear the story of the adolescent sitting right in front of them. I was also curious about how they felt towards the form and how they felt it influenced the course of the interview. During my data analysis I will regularly refer to what Els and Nadine shared with me during that talk. I think it is important for my study to incorporate their voices since they already have a lot of experience with this format. During the feedback, Els mentions that she sometimes avoids sensitive subjects since she considers that as the responsibility of the guide. She adds that if she would elaborate on these sensitive matters, the interview would become a therapeutic talk. We also notice that the guide is present during the interview on admission but interrupts merely a few times to give practical information with regard to housing, administration and financial support. His or her aim is to observe so that he or she is well acquainted with the personal story of the adolescent. In this way, the guide can provide an appropriate "context assistance". We can conclude from this feedback information that the aim of the intake interview –established by the centre and government- is partially responsible for the dominance of the institutional frame.

Extract 4

(1)   **E: Kunt gij mij effe zeggen in welke school dat gij zit?**

(2)   D: Sint-Jan Berchmans college in de Jodenstraat op de Meir

(3)   E: Ahja en wat volgde gij daar?

(4)   D: Sociale wetenschappen

(5)   E: In het hoeveelste jaar zit gij daar?

(6)   D: Vierde

(7)   E: Ja euh dus nog vijf en zes. Hebde gij daar, is dat technisch niveau?

(8)   D: Ja

(9)   E: Ok en ge hebt daar wat achterstand opgelopen?

(10) D: Door die verkrachting he

(11) E: Ja?

(12) D: Da was die tijd da ik euh twee keer was blijven zitten.

(13) E: Ja

(14) D: (schraapt keel)

(15) E: Dat heeft inderdaad wel impact zoiets denk ik eh. Ja en nu zit gij dus in uw vierde jaar? En danhebtgijexamensgehad?

Translation

(1)   E: Can you tell me in what school you are?

(2)   D: Sint-Jan Berchmanscollege in the Jodenstraat on the Meir

(3)   E: Oh Yes and what are you following?

(4)   D: Social sciences

(5)   E: In what year are you?

(6)   D: Fourth

(7)   E: Yes er so still five and six. Do you have there, is that a technical level?

(8)   D: Yes

(9)   E: Okay and you fell behind?

(10) D: Through that rape huh

(11) E: Yes?

(12) D: That was the time that I had to repeat two years.

(13) E: Yes

(14) D: (clears her throat)

(15) E: I can imagine that has some impact uh. Yes and now you're in the fourth year? And then you had exams?

We clearly see in this fragment that Els first focuses on the facts (What school? What are you following? What year? What level?) and that she controls the process to achieve the purpose her interview (Kadushin, 1997) (cf. The act of eregistering). Kadushin remarks that such formats –as Tangram uses- provide interviewers with exactly what they must cover. Structured formats are designed to reduce information variance and provide systematically organized data. From turn 9 onwards, Els focuses more on the experiential frame by asking about Damya's arrears at school (turn 9: "Okay and you fell behind?").Els doesn't explicitly ask for a reason, nevertheless Damya spontaneously refers to her violation as the main cause of her bad school performances (turn10). Next, Damya provides relevant information by indicating that she had to repeat two years in the period after her violation and thus she causally links the two events (turn 12). This information is very relevant to Els and enables her to place the circumstances in time so that she can write down a coherent story. What interests us in turn 15, is how Els uses alignment so that she can move subtly from the experiential frame back to the institutional frame ("I can imagine that has some impact uh."). She acknowledges the impact of the violation and then notes that Damya is in the fourth year and that she has just finished her exams. In sum, we note that in this fragment the bureaucratic frame dominates the talk and in a way absorbs the voice of the adolescent (Blommaert, 2005). Els' interaction is influenced by the next step in the procedure, the report. This end product could transform Damya's story (by concentrating on the facts) and thus entails changes in the conditions for articulating subjectivity, raising issues of voice (Blommaert, 2005). Let us now move further to Niels' case. During the one hour interview four persons were present such as Niels (client), Els (interviewer), Rik (Niels' future guide) and I. First, we will present the story of Niels on the basis of the final report.

NIELS

The story of Niels

Niels is an only child who is brought up by his mother. His parents divorced when he was one year old. He grew up with his mother and visited his father every two weeks. Last year his mother married Joeri. Niels thinks that Joeri is a good substitute father given that he has no contact with his natural father. After the divorce, his father had a child with another woman and suddenly Niels had the feeling he wasn't important anymore. His father eventually broke up with his second partner and began a relationship with a mother of three children. When Niels visited his father he had to sleep on the couch and didn't have a room of his own while his stepsisters did have one. The conflict reached a climax and Niels and his mother decided to go to court in order to dismiss the father of guardianship. They won the case and Niels stopped seeing his father. Apparently, he now

has five stepsisters. During his adolescence, Niels was going through a difficult period. He sometimes longed for death and eventually went into therapy. He attempted a suicide at the age of fourteen and went into hospital for two weeks. After his hospitalization and several therapy sessions, Niels feels so good that his file is closed at juvenile court. Today, Niels lives with his grandparents because he ran off after a quarrel with Joeri. He indicates that although the dispute is settled, he still desires to live on his own. He wants a place of his own where he can do what he want, taking up his own responsibilities.

Intake

What strikes at first sight, when we compare the two interviews, is that Niels is much more assertive than Damya with regard to breaking the institutional frame. In contrast to Damya, he spontaneously gives more personal as well as factual information and less minimal responses such as yes/no. This could be explained by the fact that Niels has more experience with the therapeutic frame. Damya, on the other hand, is rather unfamiliar with this frame. Or this could be due to the fact that Niels is more extrovert than Damya. In sum, we have the impression that Niels uses his voice more to recount his story than Damya.The following fragment shows how Niels repeatedly tries to break the institutional frame in order to talk about his suicide attempt. His efforts to go more deeply into this subject are hampered by Els' stream of questions dealing with facts. In turn1, she immediately sets the analytical frame by using _an advanced organizer_ ("Then I would go over… with you for a moment") followed by the next topicto be discussed (turn1).We clearly see that the use of advanced organizers is quite common in an institutional encounter. It helps the interviewer to structure his or her talk and at the same time the client is made acquainted with the pre-structured procedure. By means of an advanced organizer, the interviewer is able to maintain a rational, linear, detailed and 'factually' coherent narrative as a model for completing the form (Blommaert, 2005). As we mentioned before, we see that both Els and Niels have different expectations of the current topic. While Els wants to talk about Niels' previous assistance, Niels mainly wants to talk about his suicide attempt. However, Els doesn't shift from an institutional to an experiential frame. As a result, each time Niels indicates that he wants to talk about this incident, Els wants new factual details and hampers Niels in bringing his full story. When he spontaneously reveals how (turn16) he did it (his suicide attempt), Els reacts to this by asking why he did it (turn17: "And how did that happen? What was so?"), to which he replies: "Pangs of love". In sum, first, Els tries to discover where and when he tries to commit suicide to move on and ask how and why he did it. So eventually she does shift from an institutional to an experiential frame.

Extract 5

E = Els (social worker)

N = Niels (adolescent)

(1) E: <u>Dan wou ik effe met u overlopen</u>, sinds wanneer ben jij of word jij gevolgd door de consulent?

(2) N: Euhm, ik denk van rond de kerstvakantie dat mijn mama der al eens iets dat mijn mama der al eens had … en gebeld.

(3) E: Ahja de kerstvakantie die nu pas voorbij is?

(4) N: Ja ja

(5) E: Ahja

(6) N: Ik heb daarvoor wel nog een jaar onder de jeugdrechtbank gestaan met euhm mijn zelfmoordpoging maar das in september afgelopen geweest.

(7) E: Ahja, dus da was een periode dan euhm tot september 2012 en wanneer was da wanneer is dat gestart bij de jeugdrechtbank?

(8) N: het jaar dervoor en euhm dat was ongeveer rond 16 oktober

(9) E: En die

(10) N: Want ik heb twee weken ook in een instelling gezeten in euh Sint-Paola door die zelfmoordpoging.

(11) E: Ahja en is da Paola kinderziekenhuis?

(12) N: Euhm ja da was da was een aparte instelling, ik weet da ook nie, da was zo ne groep laat ek maar zeggen, waar da wij in zaten

(13) E: ja ja

(14) N: Met allemaal psychologen die ons dan opvolgden

(15) E: En da was verbonden aant kinderziekenhuis? Eh?

**(16) N: Da was verbonden aan het ziekenhuis,
ik weet ook nie ja hoe dat da is gegaan want ik had dertig slaappillen gepakt
dus ik weet der eigenlijk niemeer veel van totdat ik eigenlijk in die instelling wakker wier
dus ik weet nie hoe da juist is gegaan ofzo**

(17) E: En hoe kwam da? Wa was zo?

Translation

(1) E: <u>Then I want to go over … with you for a moment</u>, since when are you followed by the consultant?

(2) N: Erm, I think it was round the period of Christmas that my mother … that my mother had phoned.

(3) E: Oh yes this Christmas period?

(4) N: Yes yes

(5) E: Oh yes

(6) N: before that I was under the supervision of juvenile court for one year because of my suicide attempt but that ended in September.

(7) E: Oh yes, so that was the period until September 2012 and when was it when did that start at the juvenile court?

(8) N: The year before and uh that was around 16 October.

(9) E: And that

(10) N: Because I also spent two weeks in an institution in uh Sint-Paola because of that suicide attempt.

(11) E: Oh yes and is that the Paola child hospital?

(12) N: Er yes that was that was a separate institution, I don't know; let us say we were in a group

(13) E: Yes yes

(14) N: With psychologists, who followed us then

(15) E: And that was connected to the child hospital? Yes?

(16) N: That was connected to the child hospital
I'm not sure how that happened because I had taken thirty sleeping pills
So I don't remember much until I actually woke up in that institution
So I'm not sure how exactly that happened

(17) E: And how did that happen? What was so?

The following fragment (Extract 6) is a continuation of the previous fragment and shows us a shift from context to content, more specifically from facts to deeper personal insight. Els activates Niels' story and seeks confirmation by repeating his answer (turn 2: "Love yes?"). Moreover, she makes use of previously gathered information in order to co-construct Niels' personal story (turn6: "E: Yes? Was that with, was that with that girl where you talked about, that best friend?"). Here we see a balance between the two competing frames, to put it concretely, we see a balance between "the facts and the personal story", which allows both parties to obtain their goal (cf. 3.3: Building consensus). At the end of the fragment, Erna shifts to the institutional frame by stabilizing Niels' words and by placing the events in a time frame (turn22: "Okay, yes, so you say, I hear you say, I was under supervision of someone for three years?"). Finally, her ultimate goal is to report a coherent story. During the feedback she indicates that she asks questions in order to register facts and in doing so she sometimes breaks off unconsciously the adolescent's story. She indicates that she just activates the sensitive subject quickly with an eye toward the following assistance provided by the guide. Blommaert (2005) remarks that interviewers sometimes induce a register for talking about certain facts, and this *act of enregistering* marks a distinction between what belongs to the register and what not. We mentioned before that the delineation and identification of facts relevant to the case is already an intervention into the story of the

adolescent, and it *involves insertion of the story in a discursive regime over which the applicant has no control,* by which he/she could lose his/her voice in this process (Blommaert, 2005).

Extraxt 6

(1) N: Jah liefde eh

(2) E: Liefde ja?

(3) N: ja (nerveusgelach)

(4) E: Liefdesverdriet?

(5) N: Jahjah. Maar daar ben ik nu wel volledig over ze

(6) E: Ja? Was da me, was da met da meisje die gij daarnet zei, die beste vriendin?

(7) N: neenenenenenenene, da was me nen jongen dus

(8) E: joa

(9) N: Ja, khad mijn hart daar aan gegeven eh. Maja pfff nu interesseert mij da zo veel niemeer ze. Ik ben er echt wel over. Na drie jaren heb ik wel wa geleerd.

(10) E: Ja, die slaappillen die waren in huis ofwa?

(11) N: ja die waren in huis, ik had die gevonden.

(12) E: Ahja, ge had die gevonden.

(13) N: Ja

(14) E: En dan die allemaal tegelijk ingenomen? En was da zo echt met het plan van "Ik wil er niet meer zijn."?

(15) N: Mhhm

(16) E: Ja?

(17) N: Ja, maar ik had daar jaren ervoor heb ik der ook altijd wel last van gehad
maar dan ben ik ook naar nen psycholoog geweest.Jana, daar ergens in Deurne ja
en euh dan heeft die toch zeker drie jaar met mij gewerkt
en dan is mijn zelfmoordpoging gekomen
en dan daar int ziekenhuis geweest
en sindsdien heb ik daar eigenlijk genen last niemeer van.

(18) E: Mhh Dus

(19) N: Nu

(20) E: Dus

(21) N: Nu zeg ik altijd dat shit happens eh (gelach)

(22) E: Ahja, dus ge zegt, ik hoor u vertellen, ik ben drie jaar in begeleiding geweest bij iemand?

Translation

(1) N: Yeah Love uh

(2)   E: Love yes?

(3)   N: Yes (nervous laughter)

(4)   E: Pangs of love

(5)   N: Yeahyeah. But now I'm completely over it.

(6)   E: Yes? Was that with, was that with that girl where you talked about, that best friend?

(7)   N: Nononononononono, that was with a boy so

(8)   E: Yes

(9)   N: Yes, I had given my heart to him huh. But yeah now that doesn't interest me no more. I'm really over it. After three years I've learned a great deal.

(10) E: Yes, those sleeping pills were in the house or what?

(11)   N: Yes they were in the house, I had found them.

(12)   E: Oh yes, you had found them.

(13)   N: Yes

(14)   E: And then you took them all together? And were you really thinking of: "I don't want to be here anymore."?

(15)   N: Mhhh

(16)   E: Yes?

(17)   N: Yes, but years before that I also struggled a lot with that
But then I went to a prychologist. Jasmine, somewhere in Deurne yes
And uhm then she worked at least three years with me
And then my suicide attempt came
And then I was in the hospital
And since then actually I don't struggle with it anymore

(18)   E: Mhh so

(19)   N: Now

(20)   E: So

(21)   N: Now I always say that shit happens (laughter)

(22) E: Okay, yes, so you say, I hear you say, I was under supervision of someone for three years?

We clearly see in this fragment that Els also encourages Niels to provide more experiential information. Let me illustrate this with some examples from the above fragment. In turns 2 and 12, she stimulates Niels in telling his story by literally echoing his words. She goes even further by using previously gathered information concerning his pangs of love in order to subtly activate his story (turn 6). We observe that Els also asks questions that are not on her form and in doing so she confirms our notion that the social worker's discursive behavior is different from that of a bureaucrat (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996). She feels for Niels' problems and lets him share his experiences. When we have a look at turn17, we note that her approach bears fruit because Niels

provides sufficient factual as well as experiential information in that specific turnwhich satisfies both parties. He indirectly indicates that his trauma is "recountable" since he has had three years of therapeutic assistance. His short account (turn17) makes sure Els is able to write down relevant factual information. Consequently, in turn 22, she summarizes Niels' words and places his account in a time frame ("Okay, yes, so you say, I hear you say, I was supervised for three years?"). We can conclude from this last turn that the bureaucratic frame dominates the interaction because she has to report a summarized and coherent version of her client's story, framed in a "metapragmatic evaluative grid"(Blommaert, 2005). Let us now have a look at Alice's case. During the one hour interview five persons were present: Alice (client), Alice's mother, Nadine (interviewer), the consultant and I. First, we will present Alice's story on the basis of the final report.

ALICE

The story of Alice

Alice's parents divorced when she was five. Today, she is eighteen years old. She has an older brother Thomas (19y) and a younger brother Stefaan (15y). The three children live separately: Thomas lives with a friend, Stefaan lives with their grandmother and Alice lives with their mother. Four years ago, a file was opened at the youth assistance for Alice. The family came into contact with the committee because Thomas found himself in several problems such as: drugs, theft, burglary, gambling, psychiatry, etc. After the divorce, Alice saw her father regularly but now it has been more than a month since she last saw him. She has no desire to maintain contact with him and as a consequence she will not involve him in her "guided independent living program". Alice declares that she often mediates between her mother and her brother Thomas. Thomas' behavior drove her mother to distraction and left her in a state of depression. As a result, Alice took over the housekeeping. These circumstances were too aggravating for her and she ended up in hospital with a "breakdown". Alice says that she stayed at the psychiatric ward for two months to calm down. We have the impression that her health has improved, nevertheless the problems aren't over yet. Through Thomas' problems, the family is in serious debt and consequently they were thrown out of their apartment. In addition to this, the mother paid a considerable sum to keep Thomas out of jail. After being informed about these problems, the father called the committee to express his worries concerning this situation. The consultant proposed the "guided independent living program" to Alice in order to make sure she has more stability in life. Until now, Alice hasn't actually started the program.

Intake

Let us first demonstrate the differences between the interviews of Els and those of Nadine. While Els is experienced with this sort of interviews, Nadine is rather inexperienced. We see that Els' interviews include three persons of whom two really participate (interviewer and interviewee). Opposed to that, four persons participate in the conversation during Nadine's interview (interviewer, interviewee, consultant and mother of interviewee). We have the impression that Alice doesn't talk much because her mother and the consultant interrupt frequently through which her voice is limited. It strikes us that albeit the limited voice of Alice, we do have a very intimate personal story at the end of the talk which shows us different perspectives on Alice's situation. Both Els and Nadine indicate that they try to discover more about the young person and his or her context. If they want to have a full image of the adolescent, they have to include different voices of, for example, family members and the consultant. The interviewer thus faces the delicate task of monitoring these voices so that each of them is equally heard. At the end of the intake interview, it becomes clear that in fact Alice doesn't necessarily want to live separately. She just wants a safe and quiet place to create some stability in her life. Afterwards Nadine also announced that until now, Alice hasn't actually started "the guided independent living program" which lets one to presume that the situation was more complicated as it seemed and that they found a more appropriate solution for her problems. Before we analyze our next fragment, we need to have a look at what Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) state with regard to bureaucratic procedures. According to them, most bureaucratic procedures start with establishing detals of identity, even though the institution already has access to this information. Sarangi and Slembrouck remark that often clients adapt to this routine aspect of information gathering by introducing themselves with a near-complete account of personal details. These observations reappear in the following extract. In extract 8, we note that the beginning of the procedure (establishing details of identity) doesn't pass off smoothly due to small misunderstandings. First, Nadine hands over the form to Alice (client) so that she can fill it in herself. However, Alice runs up against difficulties with regard to some bureaucratic notions such as'registration address' (turn4) and'official address' (turn 11). We also note that Nadine follows the structure of the form. The consultant, on the other hand, is not bound to the form seeing that she doesn't have to report the case; and as a result asks questions "off-form" but confirms the institutional frame by using an advanced organizer in turn 9 ("Yesyes maybe we should discuss her future plans later huh"). Hereby she respects the structure of the interview and states "this will be discussed later in the interview". Because of the different voices (four different persons) taking part in the interview, we receive a more dynamic interview in comparison with the previous interviews (only two persons). We must add that due to the fact that Alice's mother was

at quite a distance from the recorder and that she spoke a dialect, we were not able to transcribe all the utterances she produced.

Extract 8

N= Nadine

M = Alice's mother

A= Alice

C = the consultant

((?) = onduidelijk)

(1) N: (gericht naar Alice) **Op welken datum, waar woonde officieel** en die dingen eh zo seh. (gericht naar de mama) Mag ik u ondertussen al **een folderke** geven? Da zijn om da ze nog minderjarig is zijn wij verplicht om u euh da te geven, da zijn de **rechten van een minderjarige in de jeugdzorg**

(2) M: (?)

(3) N: Dan euh ge moogt da eens doornemen, edde daar nog vragen over kunde da altijd aan den begeleider vragen eh

(4) A: da **adres bij aanmelding,** is waar dak nu woon?

(5) N: Waar da ge nu euh woont ja, ge zij uit ziekenhuis uit ja

(6) M: (?) gaan naar Nationale Bank (?)

(7) C: <u>Ahja</u>

(8) M: (?)

(9) C: <u>Jaja misschien moeten we het **seffes eens hebben** over wat haar toekomstplannen zijn</u>

(10) M: Ja da weet ik want

(11) A: **En officieel?**

(12) N: **Officieel is wat er op uwen pas sta** geschreven, wete gij da?

(13) A: Adres of

(14) N: Ja, **waar zijde gij laatst ingeschreven?** Is da bij de mama of bij de papa?

(15) M: (?)

(16) <u>C: Hebde nog **contact** met uwen papa Alice?</u>

(17) A: (Schudt nee)

(18) <u>C: Nee niemeer? Ahja</u>

(19) A: Nee

(20) <u>C: En al lang niemeer? Of euh</u>

(21) A: Euhm toch al een maand ofzo

(22) <u>C: Ahja, ja</u>

(23) A: **Een maand en een half ofzo, sinds wanneer zijn jullie gescheiden (gericht naar de mama)?**

(24) M: Euhm 10 februari 2000

(25) N: Amai gij weet da nog goe

(26) M: Ja op mijnen verjaardag

(27) C: Ah

(28) N: Amai

(stilte)

(Alice vult het formulier verder in)

(de mama kijkt uit het raam: tijdens het interview zal ze geregeld uit het raam staren)

Translation

((?) = unclear, not transcribed)

(1)   N: (addressed to Alice) **On what date, where do you live officially** and that sort of stuff huh so.
       (addressed to the mother) In the meantime, can I give you **a leaflet**? Since she is still a minor, we are obliged to give you erm this, those are **the rights of a minor in the youth welfare work**.

(2)   M: (?)

(3)   N: Then erm you can go through it, if you still have questions you can always ask the guide huh

(4)   A: **Registration address**, is that where I live now?

(5)   N: Where you live now yes, you are out the hospital yes

(6)   M: (?) go to The National Bank (?)

(7)   <u>C: Oh yes</u>

(8)   M: (?)

(9)   <u>C: Yesyes maybe we **should discuss** her future plans **later** huh</u>

(10)   M: Yes I know because

(11)   A: **And official**?

(12)   N: **Official is what is** written **on your passport**, do you know that?

(13)   A: Address or?

(14)   N: Yes, **where were you last registered**? With your mother or with your father?

(15)   M: (?)

(16)   <u>C: Are you still in **contact** with your father Alice?</u>

(17)   A: (Shakes her head)

(18)   <u>C: No, not anymore? Oh yes</u>

(19)   A: No

(20)   C: And not anymore since a long time? Or er

(21)   A: Er approximately one month

(22)   <u>C: Oh yes, yes</u>

(23)   A: **A month and a half or something like that, since when are you divorced? (addressed to the mother)**

(24)   M: Er, 10 February 2000

(25)   N: Wow you still remember that well

(26)   M: Yes on my birthday

(27)   C: Oh

(28)   N: Wow

(silence)

(Alice completes the form)

(mother looks through the window: she will do this regularly throughout the interview)

Let us have a closer look at the turn-taking in this fragment. After officially introducing the interview, Nadine gets interrupted by Alice as well as by the consultant. What we see here is that Alice asks for some explanation with regard to some official notions (turns 4, 11 and 24) while the consultant builds further on one specific question, more specifically: "Do you live with your father or with your mother?" (turn 14). In turn 16, she wonders if Alice still has contact with her father (detail: it was the father who contacted the committee to inform them about Alice's problems). Alice responds with a short answer ("No"), and the consultant consequently asks for a time indication (turn 20: "And not anymore since a long time? Or er"). Alice, in turn, answers with a rough estimation (turn 21: "er approximately one month") and subsequently continues to fill in her form and asks her mother when she and her dad divorced. To everybody's amazement the mother quickly comes up with an exact date (turn 24). We will see that Alice's mother has absorbed the professional dimensions of the welfare system, to the extent that she has become a 'professional' in handling the procedurally and institutionally scripted proceedings (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other"). At the end of the extract we note that both Nadine and the consultant express their amazement which gives evidence of their alignment with the client. Throughout the interview we will see that both frames (institutional and experiential) will alternate (cf. 3.3: Accommodating each other).

In extract 8, Nadine asks Alice how she landed up in hospital. Nadine adds that they already discussed this matter (on the introductory talk in the hospital) but that she has to ask it again on the intake for official reasons (turn 1; "And can you tell something

more about why you landed up in hospital? I've already asked you that huh but I need to ask it again on the intake."). In this way Nadine accentuates the formality of the talk seeing that she needs to ask these questions again with an eye toward the next step in the procedure, the report. This habituated conversational practice ("I need to ask it again on the intake") used by the interviewer could at the same time contain anticipatory moves that prepare the story of the client for the report (influencing the story of the client). Blommaert (2005) shows that this form of simultaneity reflects a layered deployment of institutional conventions through conversational practices. Alice subsequently gives several reasons for her admission into hospital including the death of her grandfather and the problems at home. When she explains the problems at home, she gradually shifts towards the problems of her mother. Nadine notices that it is also a sensitive topic for the mother (turn13). Subsequently, the mother breaks through into a performance (Hymes) and gives her view on the issue. She states that her biggest problem is her son Thomas, who caused a lot of emotional and financial damage. She indicates that Alice's breakdown is an indirect consequence of Thomas' bad behavior.

Extract 9

(1)   N: En kunde gij iets vertellen over waarom da gij int ziekenhuis zij terecht gekomen? Kheb u da al eens gevraagd eh maar kmoet da nu op den intake nog eens vragen

(2)   A: Euh meer door ons voke dat ij gestorven is

(3)   N: Ja

(4)   A: En euhm ja veel problemen thuis
dak euh dat de mama het allemaal nie zo goe kost doen
dak veel moest ale veel op mij moest nemen
en dak gewoon op was genen energie niemeer

(5)   N: Dus gij gij om de mama wat te helpen ebde gij veel huishoudelijke taken overgenomen? Eh zo?

(6)   A: Ja

(7)   N: En da werd wa te veel voor u? En hebde gij da een lange periode gedaan? Al die taken op u genomen? Gaat da over een paar maanden of gaat da over een paar jaar?

(8)   A: Ik heb mijn mama altijd goe geholpen ma das hoelang heeft da geduurd? Een paar maanden ja

(9)   N: Ja een paar maanden de mama had het toen moeilijk denk ik had gij verteld he

(10)   A: Ja de mama heeft altijd wel goe haar best blijven doen
ale ja de mama is ook maar een persoon eh

(11)   N: Ja

(12)   A: Zij was ook op eh

(13)   N: Ja tis ook wa moeilijk voor de mama precies om daarover

(14) M: Tgruutste probleem voor mij is den Thomas altijd geweest,
Alice heeft altijd geprobeerd om tussen Thomas en mij
maar voor mij was da al lang duidelijk dat em voor mij buiten moest,
dat da uiteindelijk wel men dood zou worden

(15) N: Ja? Wast zo erg?

(16) M: Alice is blijven bemiddelen echt van mama zo en zo en
ik heb altijd gezegd: "nee Alice"
en ik heb ook gezegd: "Alice het begint een beetje euh u eigen een beetje te
beschermen tegen tegen den Thomas tegen eu broer"
want uiteindelijk den Thomaseuh manipuleert dan heel hard en euhm
en Thomas eist heel veel dinges van haar
en Alice heel haren tijd en dinges die ze nie wou doen dee ze wel voor Thomas te
helpen
ik heb gezegd van euh ge moet uw eigen van Thomas proberen ja af nee af te
zetten gelijk da kik aant doen zijn want anders ja anders ga Alice nooit geen leven
hebben
int ziekenhuis ook had dan problemen gehad kwam int ziekenhuis naar Alice,
"Alicekzenbuitengegooiddinge"
kzeg: "Thomas das den moment nu nie voor de zus uiteindelijk voor de zus nu lastig
te vallen de zus werkt nu aan aar genezing en gij moet hier in da ziekenhuis nie
komen en gij moet Alice daar nie mee lastigvallen"

(17) N: Ja ma da was moeilijk voor hem om dat te zien en te begrijpen

(18) M: Nee nee nee (?)

(19) N: Nee nee

(20) M: Da kan nie

(21) N: Ja nee ja en den Thomas woont die nu nog thuis? Wacht

(22) M: Nee

(23) N: Nee? Waar is Thomas nu dan?

(24) A: Die zit bij zenne vriend

(25) M: De reden waarom da wij uiteindelijk uit ons appartement zijn gezet da waren
acht jaar klachten van Thomas van de huisbazin
en das voort vredegerecht gekomen
kzat toen in eudepressie met dak et niemeer aankon
en Thomas is al moeilijk van zijn twaalf jaar die wordt er tweeëntwintig euh
drugsfeiten inbraken al hetgeen ge wilt euhkzag da niemeer zitten
kheb 'm dan uiteindelijk buiten gezet

(26) N: Mhh

(27) M: Euh uiteindelijk ist voort vredegerecht gekomen
en ik heb mijnen post niemeer opengedaan
en ik heb ook te laat kunnen reageren euh
en da was euh uitdrijving vant appartement met deurwaarder

(28) N: Oei

(29) M: En van den enen dag op den anderen dag staan wij opt straat
en dan ja da is van een goeie veertien dagen da we nu een nieuw appartement
hebben
euh Thomas zijn euh ja zijn schulden gaan afbetalen van zijn speelautomaten

Translation

(1) N: And can you tell something more about how you landed up in hospital? I've already asked you that huh but I have to ask it again on the intake.

(2) A: Er more because our grandfather has died

(3) N: Yes

(4) A: And er yes many problems at home
I er mom couldn't take it anymore
I had to, I had to take over a lot
And I couldn't, I didn't have the energy anymore

(5) N: So, you you, to help mom, you took over the housekeeping? Yes like that?

(6) A: Yes

(7) N: And it became too much for you? And did you do that for a long period? Taking over all those tasks? Is it a matter of months or a matter of years?

(8) A: I have always helped my mother sufficiently but how long? A couple of months yes

(9) N: Yes, a couple of months, mom faced difficulties then I think, you told me huh?

(10) A: Yes, mom continued to do her best, yes but mom is just a person too huh

(11) N: Yes

(12) A: She didn't have the energy anymore

(13) N: Yes, apparently it is also hard for mom to … about that

**(14) M: My biggest problem was Thomas, always has been
Alice has always tried to... between Thomas and me
But for me it was already clear that he had to leave a long time ago,
It would cause me my death**

(15) N: Yes? Was it that bad?

**(16) M: Alice kept mediating, really like mom so and so
I have always said: "No Alice"
And I have also said: "Alice it begins to er you have to begin to protect yourself from your Thomas, from your brother."
Because eventually Thomas manipulates firmly and er and Thomas demands a lot of her
And Alice her time and stuff she didn't want to do, she did to help Thomas
I have said that you have to … yourself from Thomas yes no try to distance yourself, like I do because otherwise yes otherwise Alice never will have a life
In the hospital also, he had problems and came to hospital to Alice, "Alice I have been kicked out", stuff
I said: "Thomas, now is not the moment to actually bother, to bother your sister, your sister tries to recuperate, and you don't have to come to this hospital and you don't have to bother Alice with that."**

(17) N: Yes but that was hard for him to see and understand?

(18) M: No no no (?)

(19) N: No no

(20) M: That is not possible

(21) N: Yes no yes, and Thomas, does he still live at home? Wait…

(22) M: No

(23) N: No? Where is Thomas now?

(24) A: He is with a friend of him

(25) M: The reason why we were eventually kicked out of the apartment was eight years
       of complaints of Thomas of the landlady.
       And it appeared in (justice of the) peace court
       I was in a depression back then, because I couldn't handle it anymore
       And Thomas has been difficult since he was twelve, he will be twenty two now
       Drug traffic, burglaries, everything you can name, er I couldn't handle it anymore
       I finally kicked him out

(26) N: Mhh

(27) M: Er finally, it appeared in court
       And I didn't open my mail anymore
       And I reacted also too late
       And then we were kicked out of the apartment by a process server

(28) N: Ow

(29) M: And then from one day to another we are on the street
       And then, yes since two weeks we have a new apartment
       Er Thomas his, er yes discharge his depths, from his slot machines

This long fragment gives us very personal and intimate information concerning Alice's background and the problems of her family. In turn1, Nadine sets the institutional frame by indicating that she has to ask these question –such as how did you land up in hospital?- for official reasons. Consequently, Alice gives some personal reasons why she thinks she needed medical care. In turn 5, Nadine repeats and clarifies Alice's words and subsequently asks for a confirmation. Subsequently, Nadine asks how long she took over the housekeeping. It seems that this question is rather difficult to answer since Alice indicates that she has always helped her mother (difficult to provide a specific time indication). What we see here and throughout the interview is that in some occasions the questions on the form don't match the reality of the situation of the interviewee and that by filling in these questions, their story gets narrowed and transformed. When we compare our data (the interviews) with the final report of the centre, we notice that the one hour interview is reduced to a condensed written version. We also note that the interviews are often about factual accuracy and logical consistency (Blommaert, 2006). Since the centre depends on subsidies originating from the government, they have to follow these official instructions and they have to be able to account for what they are doing at the centre. With the result that this logic consistency simplifies or erases complicated relationships, important details and specific emotions. In sum, it reduces the complexity of the story. People's lives do not match these question and answer forms made up by boxes, dotted lines and pre-formulated answers (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996). In a general sense, in constructing their clients in a particular way, institutions tend to underestimate the actual range of client behaviour we come across (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996). Alice knows, for example, that in this institutional frame she is

expected to give a precise time indication and she finally replies: "A couple of months". Nadine uses her previously gathered information to complete her answer and in doing so she emphasizes again the official character of the interview (turn 9: "Yes, a couple of months, mom had a difficult time then I think, you told me huh?"). It is as if we can read between the lines: "We already had this conversation but now we have to fill in the form so we need to go through the same topics". When Alice adds that her mother always did her best despite her problematic situation (turns 10 and 12), Nadine observes that it is a very sensitive topic for the mother as well (turn13). Nadine her remark enables the mother to take over and she brings her own version of the story (turns14, 16, 27 and 29). In these turns we see that the mother produces a multitude of micro-narratives (Blommaert, 2006). We can say that she breaks through into a performance (Hymes 1981). Blommaert explains that during such encounters (interviews), people produce short bursts of narrative embedded in question-answer sequences. That's why these encounters are complex and layered events in which several stories are produced, often in complex relations to one another, states Blommaert (2006). Let us now look at the short bursts of narratives in turns 14, 16, 27 and 29 and concentrate on the complex bundle of information offered by the mother in these short narratives. The mother presents us with *episodic* stories in which different events of her life are summarized. We encounter:

a)   a set of *actors*: Alice, Alice's mother and Thomas

b)   a key *event:* the problems with Thomas/the fact that they were kicked out of the apartment

c)   *Background* to the event: Thomas even troubled his sister in the hospital

d)   The *outcomes and effects* of the event:
    a.   The problems with Thomas: drugs, burglaries, etc.
    b.   She kicked him out
    c.   The complaints of the landlady
    d.   The eviction order (justice of the peace court)
    e.   her emotional state: the depression
    f.   the new apartment since 14 days

e)   A *relational* point: she claims that her son Thomas is the cause of their financial and emotional trouble

We can see how these very short narratives coagulates a variety of 'facts', their origins and effects in the mother's and Alice's life and their social relationships. The complexity of this bundle of elements will have to be reduced by Nadine, to the level of pure "facts". In the extract above, we get a lot of information by way of the mother. She indicates that Thomas –her oldest son- is the cause of many of their problems. We notice that

Nadine responds to this new delicate information by acknowledging and stimulating the mother's story (turn15: "Yes? Was it that bad?"). In turn16, the mother makes use of reported speech in order to depict a vivid story concerning Thomas' different problems affecting his life as well as those of his family members. She emphasizes the seriousness of the situation by dramatically performing different voices in her narrative. She alternates three voices: hers, Alice's and Thomas'. She puts herself in the position of adviser ("I have said"); at the same time advising Alice to stay away from her brother as warning Thomas to leave his sister along. After the first long burst of narrative, Nadine carefully evaluates the situation in turn 17 ("Yes but that was hard for him to see and understand?"). She moves on by focusing on the question: "Where does Thomas live now?" Alice answers that he lives with a friend for the moment. The mother, however, does not answer the question but instead, once again, "breaks through into a performance" (turns 25, 27 and 29). She clearly wants the interviewer and consultant to know why he is the source of all the trouble. She gives a clear chronological account, starting from the period when Thomas was twelve up to now that they have received a new apartment. Thomas forms the connection thread in her story. The fact that she spontaneously gives a coherent account of the events, leads one to presume that it isn't the first time she tells her story. As we mentioned before, we presume she is a "professional client" since she pre-empts the institution's information seeking routines (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996)? We (Els, Nadine and I) asked ourselves during the feedback: "Would we have the same amount of information about Alice her situation if her mother did not come to the interview?" This fragment shows that by means of activating different voices, we sometimes get a very interesting story. Moreover, we suppose that if we had only heard the voice of Alice, we would have had a more restricted version of her story. The second aspect we will discuss is accommodation.

3.2 Accommodating each other

After we described and demonstrated the initial asymmetry betweenthe institutional and experiential frame and subsequently the way clients will attempt to break the institutional frame in the previous chapter, we will now examine how the social worker and client negotiate the boundaries between the different frames through a gradual process of convergence. More specifically, we will see (and already saw) in our data that the institutional frame gets enriched with elements of the experiential frame. Both the social worker and client will gradually share both frames by means of different strategies, for example, by taking over ((un)consciously) each other's discourse features. But first I would like to explain shortly why people tend to accommodate each other (un)consciously in different sorts of talk. In doing so, I would like to refer to the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) described by Giles, Hajek, Barker, Lin,

Zhang, Hummert and Anderson (2006). This theory tries to predict and explain many of the adjustments people make to create, maintain, or decrease social distance in interaction. One of the accommodative strategies that speakers use is convergence. An important motive for convergence is the desire to gain approval from one another, particularly in the case where there is a status, power, or respect differential (see Fitzpatrick, Mulac and Dindia, 1995). One of the reasons why we recovered this 'convergence feature' in our data could be the power disparity between the social worker and the adolescent. Blommaert (2005) states that the story of the client can be influenced by the interviewer's "discourse of power" (institutional routines). Coupland, Giles and Henwood (1998) for their part demonstrate that accommodating to a common linguistic style and taking into account the listener's interpretive competence or knowledge about a topic also improves the effectiveness of communication, stimulating mutual understanding. In this chapter we will see that both the social worker and client will take over each other's language. In this way they assure a compromise at the end of the interview by sharing both frames. Seeing that in many cases, one frame dominates the other, we will divide this chapter up in two "sub-chapters". The first will focus on extracts where the institutional frame is taken over in order to accommodate and the second will focus on fragments where the experiential frame dominates the talk.

3.2.1 Institutional frame

As we mentioned before, the key question of our study is: what kind of information is *exactly* required or pursued in an intake interview? We saw –after analyzing our data- that the social worker pursues a blend of two types of information. On the one hand, he or she looks for information that can be converted into a synthetic factual core; on the other hand, he or she wants to gain deeper personal, social and relational insights surrounding the concrete case of the client ("context"). However, as our data proves, it is not easy to equally balance these two sometimes "conflicting" frames. Nevertheless, social workers see themselves *outside 'traditional' bureaucracies* and are convinced that they are able to balance those two frames, state Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996). But does the social worker's discursive behavior actually differ that much from that of a bureaucrat in this particular case? We already saw that many features of the bureaucratic language reappear in our data. Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) enumerate some of the discourse practices construed as bureaucratic such as: applications must be filled in, information has to be provided, the same routine information (such as name, date of birth) to which the institution already has access has to be provided, the outcome of the procedure is only communicated in writing and the institution gives standard responses. These elements clearly reappear in our data. But does that mean that the social worker is a "pure" bureaucrat? Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) add, "In the bureaucratic

encounter, bureaucrats take clients through the procedure step by step. Each layer of information has to be self-contained and the order of topical progress is fixed by a set agenda which must enable the labeling process". Although, these layers reappear in our data, Els claims (during the feedback) that she doesn't really follow the form that strictly, nevertheless the structure of her interviews correspond more or less to the structure of the form. Could this be due to the fact that Els leads those interviews for nearly 16 years now? After so many years it is possible that you become set in ways and that you are less aware of the influence of the form on the voice of the interviewee. Let us first have a look at a couple of fragments.

In the following extract, Els announces the interview on admission officially and conceptualizes the notion of "BZW" (Begeleid Zelfstandig Wonen= guided independent living (turn1)). She continues by indicating that she will first go through the document in order to discuss the information Damya has filled in (turns (3)-(6)). The fact that Els places Damya's surname before her name gives evidence of an institutional frame (turn5).Especially turn 12 draws our attention because we notice that Damya takes over the bureaucratic language from Els. She not only indicates that she lives on the left side of the Scheldt but spontaneously adds the postal code to provide sufficient information. This example shows how Damya"pre-empts the institution's information seeking routines" (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996).

Extract 10 (Damya)

(1)   E: ok, ma dus **vandaag de intake e van uwen bzw**en khoop da gij der wel wa op uit zijt om te zien ja?

(2)   D: ja ja, <u>al keilang ze</u>

(3)   E: <u>ja, al keilang</u>? **Ik ga dit euh document euhm ne keer efkes eerst lezen wat gij zelf hebt ingevuld overlopen**

(4)   D: ja

(5)   E: **Zodanig dak euhm effe met u concreet overloop wat dat er ingevuld is. Dus gij noemt <u>FarounDamya?</u>**

(6)   D: ja

(7)   E: En gij wordt drie januari achttien

(8)   D: ja

(9)   E: eh dus das binnenkort. Ge zijt hier in X geboren en ge woont in de X Straat

(10)   D: ja, 1

(11)   E: en dat is op

(12)   D: **twintig vijftig Antwerpen Linkeroever**

(13) E: twintig vijftig linkeroever, ja. Ok, ja. En gij licht in over u euh van uw familie. Uw mama noemtHoram?

Translation

(1) E: Okay, but so **today the intake of your "independent guidance program"** and I hope that you look forward to see yes?

(2) D: Yes yes, since <u>a long time</u>

(3) E: <u>Yes? Since a long time?</u>**I am going to er first er read what you filled in on this document**

(4) D: Yes

(5) E: **So that er, just go over the things you filled in concretely. So you are <u>Faroun Damya?</u>**

(6) D: Yes

(7) E: And will be eighteen three January?

(8) D: Yes

(9) E: Er so that is very soon. You are born here in X and you live in X Street?

(10) D: Yes, one

(11) E: And that is

(12) D: **Twenty fifty Antwerp left bank**

(13) E: twenty fifty left bank, yes. Okay, yes. And you inform about er your family. Your mother is called Horam?

As we mentioned earlier, Els announces the commencement of the interview and sets the institutional frame by using official concepts such as "intake" and "BZW". We assume –as the interviewer- that Damya is familiar with these terms seeing that the centre explained these at the introductory talk (besides, they distributed a leaflet with all the information). In turn 2, Damya declares that she has been looking forward to the beginning of her "independent living programme" by saying "Yes yes, since a long time"("Ja ja al <u>keilang</u>"). We note that speakers use more colloquial vocabulary, popular sayings ("keilang") and direct speech quotations in their talk. This 'high-involvement style' (Tannen, 1984), in contrast to institutional discourses, positions the speaker as the author and principal of their talk (Goffman, 1981) by which they take responsibility for their utterances (Campbell and Celia, 2007). In turn 3, we see that Els repeats this popular saying (keilang). We suppose she does this with a view to create some alignment with Damya. Do we observe a *sharedness* of the institutional and experiential frame in this small fragment? And do we encounter this feature throughout our data in ascending line so that a compromise could be attained at the end of the interview? Subsequently, Els resets her institutional frame by announcing that she will go through the form to see

what Damya has filled in (turn3). We will see in our data that Els regularly makes use of standard phrases, such as in turn 3, to structure her interview ("I am going to er first er read what you filled in on this document"). Next, Els asks Damya for confirmation with regard to some facts, such as name and birth date (turns 5, 7, 9 and 13). When she moves further and discusses Damya's address, Damya spontaneously adds "2050 Antwerpen Linkeroever". We notice that she takes over the official language of Els in order to improve "the effectiveness of communication" (Giles, Hajek, Barker, Lin, Zhang, Hummert, Anderson, 2006). As Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) would say: "Damya plays the bureaucratic language game". Sarangi and Slembrouck (1996) also remind us that the topical units in the institutional encounter match the boxes on the application form. In the following fragment, we notice that Els, likewise, wants to maintain the structure of her form. In turn1, she officially closes off the introduction (the gathering of personal information) and subsequently indicates that she wants to move further. As we mentioned before, we notice that Els has the habit to (re)set the institutional frame by using official terms such as "context", "context assistance", "network guidance", "form", "registration" and "committee". As a result, Damya is constantly reminded of the dominance of the institutional frame by which her experiential frame risks staying in an "underdog" position. When we have a look at turn 9, we observe that Els explicitly announces that the conversation will match the structure of her form because in that way she can easily gather the required information (cf. *the act of enregistering*). In turn 11, she indicates that she does this with a view to register Damya's case. What we see here is that the social worker clearly looks ahead to the next step in the procedure. In order to protect the order and sequence of this procedure, she has to intervene by means of timed and organized 'framing' moves. As we mentioned before, the focus on the institutional frame takes the shape of utterances that are simultaneously a conversationally cooperative move, and a step away from the client's frame (cf Blommaert 2005 [Bordieu the ethnographer: 219-236]. But does the 'report writing' actually influence the further development of the procedure? According to Roose, Mottart, Dejonckheere, Nijnatten and De Bie (2009) report writing is a delicate language-centred activity in social work. Even if the voice of the client is present in the reports, this does not always mean that it is sufficiently heard by the team of social workers. Or on the other hand, if the client is absent in the reports, this does not mean that his voice is not heard in the care process. However, it is certain that the absence or presence of the voice of the client has a major impact on the further evolution of the situation, state Roose, Mottart, Dejonckheere, van Nijnatten and De Bie (2009). Their study shows how the credibility and authenticity of the client's perspective is influenced by rhetorical strategies. Due to a concrete, contextualized and formulated language, the room for interpretation of the client's words gets reduced. Finally, the authors emphasize that

writing reports may have important consequences for social workers and for clients in terms of relations between clients and social workers and in terms of pathways for change. We thus conclude that the social worker has a great deal of power (Healy and Mulholland 2012) in the way he constructs the image of a client (Mass & van Nijnatten, 2005).

In the next fragment, Nadine discusses the topic "school" (turn 1). Here we clearly see that Alice is rather an "inexperienced client", while the mother is more an "experienced client". The mother provides extra information concerning Alice's specific "registration status" (turn 4: "She is still registered at school"), whereas Alice only gives a minimal response ("No"), indicating that she left school (turn 2). The mother adds that she has a receipt from the doctor lasting until the 28 of February (turn 6). We thus observe that she is quite accurate concerning administrative information by which we presume she is familiar with the institutional frame and its specific discourse features.

Extract 11 (Alice)

(1)   N: Gij ging nie naartschool eh Alice?

(2)   A: Nee

(3)   N: Nee euhm en wa was **uw hoogst geslagen jaar, het laatste jaar da ge nog een A of B attest had?**

(4)   M: Ze is **wel nog ingeschreven** in school

(5)   <u>N: Ze is nog ingeschreven</u>

(6)   M: maar die is uiteindelijk **nog tot eind februari ziek geschreven door de door de <u>psycholoog ale de psychiater dokter X</u>**

(7)   <u>N: Tot eind feb</u>

(8)   M: Ja **ze heeft een attest tot 28 februari**

(9)   N: Ok en **int hoeveelste jaar**zitte dan?

(10)   A: Int vierde

(11)   <u>N: Int vierde</u> en **welke richting?**

(12)   A: Voeding verzorging

(13)   N: En **welke school**?

(14)   A: Sint-Aloysius in Lier

(15)   N: Ja wilde wilde gij nog terug naart school gaan?

(16)   A: Nee

(17)   <u>N: Nee eh da had ze tegen mij al verteld eh (lacht)</u>

(18)   <u>C: Wa wilt ge dan wel doen op da vlak?</u>

(19) A: Ik wil zo nen cursus bij de VDAB gaan doen dak ondertussen wa centen kan verdienen ma toch ook nog iets kan behalen

(20) C: Gij zijt toch **nog geen achttien eh** zijde dan

(21) N: Bekanbekan

(22) C: **Nie nog schoolplichtig**?

(23) N: Veertien maart dus nog een maandje

(24) C: Nog een maand

(25) N: Nie zo lang meer

(26) M: Nie zo lang meer nog een goei drie weken

(27) N: **En wete gij al welke cursus da ge wilt gaan volgen?**

(28) A: Ik denk in de richting van voeding verzorging

Translation

(1) N: You are not going to school huh Alice?

(2) A: No

(3) N: No er and what was y**our highest year of success? The last year that you still had an A or B certificate**

(4) M: She **is still registered** at school

(5) N: She is still registered

(6) M: But eventually she is **reported sick by the by the psychologist, I mean the psychiatrist, doctor X**

(7) N: Until the end of February

(8) M: Yes, **she has a certificate until 28 February**

(9) N: Okay and **in what grade** are you in then?

(10) A: The fourth

(11) N: The fourth and **what formation?**

(12) A: nourishment and care

(13) N: And **what schoo**l?

(14) A: Sint-Aloysius in Lier

(15) N: Yes and do you do you want to return to school?

(16) A: No

(17) N: No huh, she already told me that, huh? (laughter)

(18) C: What do you want to do then in that field?

(19) A: I want to follow a course at the VDAB, that meanwhile I can earn some money but still be able to obtain something

(20) C: You are **not yet eighteen huh**? Aren't you then

(21) N: Almost almost

(22) <u>C: **still school able?**</u>

(23) <u>N: The fourteenth of March so still a month</u>

(24) **C: Still a month**

(25) N: Not that long

(26) M: Not that long, still

(27) N: And do you know already what course you want to follow?

(28) A: I think in the direction of nourishment and care

In this fragment we notice a dominance of the institutional frame through the WH questions concerning Alice's "school career" (What year? What formation? What school?). Nadine follows the form correctly but gets interrupted by the consultant who notices that Alice still has the school-age since she isn't eighteen yet (turns 20 and 22). We thus observe that Nadine tries to maintain the structure of the form but occasionally gets interrupted by the consultant who asks questions off-form (but still within the bureaucratic frame). In addition to this, we note that Nadine repeats the words of her clients frequently. We suppose she does this with a view of stabilizing the gathered information (turns 5, 7 and 11). In turn 17, we notice a "moment of alignment". It is as if, for a moment, Nadine steps out of her bureaucratic frame by referring to the previous talk they had. She does this in an amusing and relaxed way (laughter). From turn 18 onwards, the consultant brings herself into the conversation. She is curious about Alice's future plans and wants to find out if she is still school able. When Alice announces that she will be eighteen in one month, Nadine takes the next turn and controls the interview again. It has struck me that, though Nadine is still inexperienced with the intake interview, she does manage to create a relaxed and intimate atmosphere. Besides, she is able to give everybody the floor by which she obtains a lot of factual as well as personal information. Both Els and Nadine indicate during the feedback that they attach great importance to the context of the adolescent. In this case, we get a lot of context through the consultant and the mother. Therefore it is important that the social worker stimulates the enrichment of the institutional frame with elements of the experiential frame by the client. Let us move on to the next sub-chapter, "The experiential frame".

3.2.2 Experiential frame

In the next fragment we notice how Els uses previously gathered information by asking specific questions (turn 1: "Oh yes mhh so you say, you reason, gosh I want my own place because then I can do what I want?"). She wants to find out why Niels wants to live on his own and if he reflected long enough about his decision (turn 5). Given that Els

is quite an experienced social worker, she understands what influence living independently can have on an adolescent with a problematic background. Besides, she faces the delicate task of evaluating correctly if Niels qualifies for the "Independent Living Program". This fragment proves that Els is an experienced social worker who can switch easily from frame to frame within an overall structure of conversational cooperativity.

Extract 12(Niels)

(1)   **E:** Ahjamhh dus gij zegt, gij redeneert van Goh ik wil toch **wel men eigen plekje omdat ik dan meer kan doen wat ik zelf wil doen?**

(2)   N: Ja en mijn eigen plekje, gewoon rust, ook in mijn hoofd

(3)   E: Mhh da geeft u rust

(4)   N: Ja

(5)   E: Ja ja, gij vindt nie, gij denkt nie van, euh een eigen plekje euh, ik ga veel alleen zijn?

(6)   N: Nee daar heb ik helemaal geen probleem mee.

(7)   E: Ge ziet da als een voordeel?

(8)   N: Ja

(9)   E: Eindelijk

(10) N: Voor mij wel ja

(11) E: Voor u wel ja, want voor sommigen is da juist

(12) N: Ja nee voor mij nie

(13) E: Een moeilijk iets he, alleen gaan zijn ja

(14) N: Nee, als ik iemand bij mij wil dan kan ik altijd mijn beste vriendin bellen
en die zou er direct staan, dus das nu geen probleem.
Tis gewoon de momenten nu als ik alleen wil zijn kan ik nie alleen zijn.

(15) E: Mhh

(16) N: En das wel belangrijk

(17) E: mhh

(18) N: of ik zou naar buiten moeten gaan maar ja (gelach) da zien ek ook nie echt zitten.

(19) E: Ja ja en 't schrikt u ook nie af?

(20) N: Nee totaal nie

(21) E: Van ik moet dan alleen mijne plan trekken en euh

(22) N: Nee. Mijn mama is altijd druk werkende geweest al heel mijn leven lang dus ik heb al wel vaak voor mezelf moeten zorgen.

(23) E: Ja en ge kunt da ook wel aan die verantwoordelijkheid?

(24) N: Tuurlijk

(25) **E: Ok ja want ge zou kunnen denken de ruzie is nu bijgelegd met Johnny euh het hoeft niemeer maar dat hoor ek u nie zeggen.**

(26) N: Nee, nee ja gewoon kweenie, kan da niegoe uitleggen, ik zit graag op mezelf en ik zit graag voor mijnen tv in mijnen zetel.

Translation

(1) E: Oh yes mhh so you say, you reason: Gosh I want **my own place because then I can do what I want?**

(2) N: Yes and my own place, just rest, also in my head

(3) E: Mhh it gives you rest

(4) N: Yes

(5) **E: Yes yes, you don't, you don't think that, er an own space er, I will be often alone?**

(6) N: No I have absolutely no problem with that

(7) E: You see that as a benefit?

(8) N: Yes

(9) E: Finally

(10) N: For me yes

(11) E: For you yes, because for some that is actually

(12) N: Yes no, not for me

(13) E: something difficult er, to be alone yes

(14) N: No, if I wanted someone with me then I can always call my best friend
      and she would be there immediately, so that is not a problem now
      it's just now when I want to be alone, I can't

(15) E: Mhh

(16) **N: And that's quite important**

(17) E: Mhh

(18) N: Or I should have to go outside but yes (laughter), that doesn't seem good to me either

(19) **E: Yes yes and it doesn't frighten you?**

(20) N: No not at all

(21) **E: Like I have to manage on my own and er**

(22) N: No, since all my life my mother has always been a hardworking person so I already had to take care of myself a lot

(23) E: Yes and you can handle that responsibility?

(24) N: Off course

(25) **E: Okay yes because you could think now that you patched up the quarrel with Joeri er it is no longer necessary but that I don't hear you say**

(26) N: No, no yes it's just I don't know, I can't explain it, I like to be by myself and I like to sit in front of my television in my couch

In turn 1, we observe that Els summarizes Niels' words with an eye toward the report (*the next step of the procedure*). Els listens to Niels' story and questions him on aspects of it. As we will see in the report, the answers are immediately converted into summaries, often already *incorporating categorizing terminology* (turn 1: "Oh yes mhh so you say, you reason: 'Gosh I want my own place because then I can do what I want'?") (Blommaert, 2005). Also, we see in this extract (and many others) that Els engages in conversational interaction with her client by means of backchanneling cues, reformulations (turn 1: "Oh yes mhh so you say, you reason…") and clarifications, summaries, and so on (Blommaert, 2005). In turns 2 and 3, we notice that both Els and Niels repeat each other's words. Niels confirms the reformulation of Els and adds that he wants a place of his own in order to find rest (turn 2). Subsequently, Els carefully represents reality by showing Niels the downside of autonomous living (= solitude) (turn 5: "Yes yes, you don't, you don't think that, er an own space er, I will be often alone?"). We suppose that she emphasizes this downside because she wants to make sure Niels is able to live on his own seeing that he once attempted a suicide. It is clear that Els takes her time to expand on this subject given that it is important that she evaluates the situation correctly. The outcome of the report depends on her accuracy by which she describes Niels' situation. In order to make a precise evaluation, it is important that Els knows how to move between the two frames. In this fragment she departs from the topic "reasons for autonomous living" but also expands on it by asking questions "off-form" (turn 19: "Yes yes and it doesn't frighten you?"). We suppose she does this with a view to guarantee the best solution for the adolescent (adapted to his context).

The following fragment is taken from Alice's interview. After discussing extensively the problems with Thomas (oldest brother), the consultant switches the focus to Stefaan (youngest brother) by asking Alice how the contact is between her and Stefaan. Again, this shows us that these social workers are not just bureaucrats but that they know how to anticipate and how to switch frames when necessary. Nadine doesn't interrupt the conversation between the consultant, Alice and her mother; instead she listens carefully and gives minimal cues in order to stimulate the talk.

Extract 13 (Alice)

(1) C: Hoe is uw contact met Stefaan eigenlijk?

(2) A: Oh Stefaan, die zit bij de moeke, ik zie die zo een paar keren op de week en maar ook nie lang, die komt es goeiendag zeggen of ik zien die is bij de moeke ma

(3) C: Die stel et wel goe ofwa?

(4) A: Die zit heel goe ja, dien eeft ook goe punten op school enzo

(5)   M: Ja Stefaan die zit in X (school)

(6)   C: Ahja ja ja

(7)   M: Ja zijn rapport was **bangelijk**

(8)   C: Ooh das goe

(9)   M: De hoogste punten van de hoogste en echt zo van da ze em graag hebben en dat em echt jaa nen schat is voor mee samen te werken

(10) C & N: Ooh das goe

(11)   A: En hij doet da ook heel graag eh

(12)   M: De Stefaan, diejen is, die zit

(13)   C: Wa richting was da?

(14)   A: Grootkeuken

(15)   C: Grond?

(16)   N: Grootkeuken

(17)   C: Ah ik dacht grondhoreca (lacht)

(18)   M: Uiteindelijk heeft em ook een paar jaarX gedaan

(19)   C: Ja?

(20)   M: Ma da ging nie

(21) C: Nee dan zit em daar op zen plek

(22)   A: Ja hij zit daar goe en hij doet da heel graag dus

(23) N: Ja ja

(24)   M: Den Stefaan zit ook graag bij de moeke omda Stefaan ook veel problemen met den Thomas eeft gehad, mee al hetgene da gebeurd is, en bij de moeke zit em çava stabiel en

(25)   C: Ja ja ja

(26)   M: En veilig

(27)   A: En alles euh (fluit plus handgebaar) (= geregeld)

(28)   C: Ja ja ja ja ja ja

(29)   A: Ja die zit goe onzen kleinen

Translation

(1)   C: How is your contact with Stefaan actually?

(2)   A: Ow Stefaan, he lives with mummy, I see him a couple of times in a week and but not so long, he says hello or I see him at mummy's place but

(3)   C: He is doing fine or what?

(4)   A: He's very well off there yes, he also has good results at school and so

(5)   M: Yes Stefaan is at X (school)

(6)   C: Oh yes yes yes

(7)   M: Yes his school report was **"crazy"**

(**8**)   **C: Oh that's good**

(9)   M: the highest results and really like that they like him a lot and that he really is a pleasure to work with

(10)   C & N: Oh that's good

(11)   A: And he likes it a lot huh

(12)   M: Stefaan, he is, he is

(13)   C: What formation was it again?

(14)   A: Catering

(15)   C: Ground?

(16)   N: catering

(17)   C: Oh I thought ground catering (laughter)

(18)   M: Eventually he also tried X for two years

(19)   C: Yes?

(20)   M: Yes, but he didn't succeed

(21)   C: No then he found the right place

(22)   A: Yes he is better off there and he likes it a lot so

(23)   N: Yes yes

(24)   M: Stefaan also likes to be with mummy because Stefaan also had a lot of troubles with Thomas, with everything that happened, and he's fine at mummy's, stable and

(25)   C: Yes yes yes

(26)   M: And safe

(27)   A: And everything er (whistling and gesticulation = organized)

(28)   C: Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

(29)   A: Yes he's well off our little one

First, we see that the consultant operates in an institutional frame seeing that she puts questions to Alice with regard to the contact between her and her younger brother (turn 1). This question corresponds to the topical unit on the form: "contact with the family". We suppose that the consultant does this because she is experienced with the form and/or just because she wants to find out more about the family's current situation (since she knows their history). In turn 3, the consultant focuses completely on Stefaan. She wants to know how he is doing. Alice, the more inexperienced client, indicates that he is doing fine and that he achieved good results at school. The mother then

spontaneously adds to what specific school he is going to. This reoccurring feature (factual accuracy of the mother) shows us that the mother is a 'professional' client who has already a lot of experience with this particular procedure. She clearly understands what information she is supposed to provide to the centre in order to complete the procedure.It must be said that during the interview of Alice, both the consultant and Nadine succeed in creating an intimate atmosphere (achieved by sharing both frames) which allows their clients to speak openly about their current situation, previous problems and future plans. Let me illustrate this with some specific turns. Turns 8, 10, 21, 25 and 28 illustrate that Nadine and the consultant acknowledge the experiential frame and that they allow their clients to elaborate on this topic. By confirming and stimulating the talk, they create a kind of optimistic atmosphere. Given that the family went already through a lot, it is important for them to look forward with a positive attitude. This is a typical social work skill. We can conclude from this fragment that the social worker and the client negotiate the boundaries between the different frames in a gradual process of convergence which will finally allow them attain a compromise (cf. 3.3: Building consensus).

3.3 Building consensus

As we saw in the beginning of my research, the asymmetry between the institutional and experiential frame influences both the client and the social worker. Whereas the institutional frame is present and legitimate with the social worker, it is absent with the client. As far as the experiential frame is concerned, it is –on the one hand- present but not legitimate with the social worker and –on the other hand- present and legitimate with the client. These contrasting properties are responsible for a certain tension during the interview. At the outset, the institutional frame is set since it is offered as the guideline for the interview. Seeing that the social worker –who has the power-, is responsible for the end product he or she is preoccupied with the next step in the procedure, the report. However, we notice that clients attempt to break this frame in order to get their experiential frame inserted into the interview. In the previous chapter (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other), we demonstrated that the social worker as well as the client learn aspects of the other's dominant frame so that both parties deal correctly with the unique and non unique aspects of the procedure. This means that the client understands what information is required for the procedure and that the social worker understands the importance of the client's context. With this in mind, we now wonder if both parties achieve a compromise at the end of the interview, packaging and closing the hybrid information in view of the next step in the procedure.

As we demonstrated in the beginning (cf. 3.1.1: Establishing and breaking the frame), the handling of different frames also depends on the experience and familiarity of the interviewer/interviewee with the procedure. In the following extracts we will see that both Els and Nadine are capable of switching from frame to frame by means of a semi-structured interview. Arksey and Knight (1999) point out that the unstructured interview is far more interviewee-oriented and enables clients to talk about what is important to them, or raise their particular concerns. Note also how the structure of conversational cooperativity also depends on the experience of the client. There is a clear difference between the experienced clients (Niels and the mother of Alice) and the inexperienced clients (Damya and Alice). The fact of the matter is that if we compare their responses, the inexperienced clients tend to give much more minimal responses which make things difficult for the interviewer (with regard to the next step of the procedure). During the feedback, Els and Nadine point out that some clients are unresponsive and introvert (or just not familiar with the procedure) so that they are forced to lead a structured interview, obtaining a 'pure' question and answer format. On the other hand, if a 'professional' client takes the lead, the freedom to talk has the potential to encourage long, detailed stories, not always relevant to the subject under discussion (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Seeing that the interviewer can run out of time, he or she risks missing some of the issues that are significant to study. What I want to show here is that the social worker needs a lot of skills and expertise in order to conduct a semi-structured interview (with symmetry between both frames). This means that they should also dare to redirect the conversation back to the main topic, whilst bearing in mind that they should not obstruct people's way of thinking and telling, note Arksey and Knight (1999). As we noticed, leading semi-structured interviews, is a very delicate and difficult task but manageable (in contrast with a structured interview), given that they are conversations organized, albeit loosely, around an interview guide (= the form). The three final extracts, selected from the end of the interview, are centred on three topics: "Experience with previous assistance", "Reasons for living independently" and "future plans". First, we will have a look at a fragment taken from Damya's interview showing how Els deals with the fact that Damya is an inexperienced client who gives minimal responses. In turn 1, she asks an open question inquiring after her experience with previous assistance. Damya gets the opportunity to share her experiences but responds with minimal responses (yes/no) (recurrent feature). As a reaction, Els is obliged to follow the form (as in a structured interview) in order to receive sufficient information.

Extract 14 (Damya)

(1)   E: Ok, uw ervaring met hulpverlening? Ik heb al gehoord dat da Wingebloei was. Wat zou, wat zou, hoe was dat voor u?

(2) <u>D: Leuk</u>

(3) E: Was dat leuk?

(4) <u>D: Ja ja ja</u>

(5) E: Wat vond ge der goed aan?

(6) <u>D: Da mijn mama echt zo positief was en euh we deden vragen en dingen die ik stelde en zij luisterde ook. Dat heeft echt wel een beetje geholpen.</u>

(7) E: Dat heeft een beetje geholpen, ja. Dat was een positieve ervaring.

(8) <u>D: Ja ja zeker</u>

(9) E: Waren er ook dingen bij die ge niet leuk vond?

(10) <u>D: Euh</u>

(11) E: Aan die aan die begeleiding?

(12) <u>D: Nee nee</u>

(13) E: Niets da ge kunt zeggen, da vond ge echt niet tof, dat die da en da?

(14) <u>D: Nee</u>

(15) E: Ok euhm. Iets anders dan. Ervaring met huishouden, hebt gij da?

(16) <u>D: Euh ja</u>

(17) E: Kunt ge da? Koken, wassen, plassen, poetsen?

(18) <u>D: Niet perfect maar euh</u>

(gelach)

(19) E: Ja maar da lukt u wel?

(20) <u>D: Ja</u>

(21) E: Ja, administratie?

(22) <u>D: Nee</u>

(23) E: Nee, da nog nie?

(24) <u>D: Nee</u>

(25) E: Ok ja, je bent hier via uw consulent eh. Ik hoor u zeggen: "Ik wou eigenlijk al lang BZW." (begeleid zelfstandig wonen)

(26) <u>D: Mhhh</u>

(27) E: Ik wou dat al langer. Ja? Was dat uw vraag?

(28) <u>D: Ja</u>

(29) E: Ja euhm en dat alleen wonen ziet gij zitten?

(30) D: Ja echt al heel lang, ik ben al lang aan het wachten.

(31) E: Is dat ook iets da gij zegt van ik ben wel wa ongerust of dat da ga gaan?

(32) D: Nee, ik krijg wel hulp van vele mensen

(33) E: Ja ja dat stelt u wel gerust

(34) <u>D: Ja ja</u>

(35) E: Dat er mensen zijn die euh die u willen helpen. Ja ok, euhm ja dan ben ik wat rond met mijn vragenlijst. Euhm ik weet nie of dat gij nog iets denkt van dat moet ik nog vertellen of dat was belangrijk en das nog niet aan bod gekomen?

Translation

(1) E: Okay, your experience with assistance? I've already heard that it was Wingebloei. What would, what would, how was that for you?

(2) <u>D: Amusing</u>

(3) E: Was that amusing?

(4) <u>D: Yeah yeah yeah</u>

(5) E: What did you like about it?

(6) <u>D: That my mother was really positive and er we did questions and things that I asked and she also listened. That has really helped a bit.</u>

(7) E: That has helped a bit, yeah. That was a positive experience.

(8) <u>D: Yeah yeah certainly</u>

(9) E: Were there also things you didn't like?

(10) <u>D: Er</u>

(11) E: About the assistance?

(12) <u>D: No no</u>

(13) E: Nothing that you can say, that I really didn't like, that that and that?

(14) <u>D: No</u>

(15) E: Okay erm. Next, something else. Do you have experience with housekeeping?

(16) <u>D: Er yes</u>

(17) E: Can you do that? Cooking, washing, cleaning?

(18) <u>D: Not perfect but yes</u>

(Laughter)

(19) E: Yes but you can manage that

(20) <u>D: Yes</u>

(21) E: Yes, administration?

(22) <u>D: No</u>

(23) E: No, not yet?

(24) <u>D: No</u>

(25) E: Okay yeah, you are here by way of your consultant huh. I hear you say: "I already wanted BZW for quite some time."

(26)   D: Mhhh

(27)   E: I already wanted that for quite some time. Yes? Was that your question?

(28)   D: Yes

(29)   E: Yes and erm, are you looking forward to live alone?

(30)   D: Yes since a long time, I've been waiting a long time

(31)   E: Is that also something you're afraid of?

(32)   D: No, I am supported by many people

(33)   E: yes yes that reassures you

(34)   D: Yes yes

(35)   E: That there are people who want er who want to help you. Yes okay, erm then I have finished my list with questions. Erm I'm not sure if you still have something in mind that you need to tell or something that was important and didn't get a chance yet?

As shown above, both the social worker and client need to negotiate the boundaries between the different frames in order to obtain symmetry. In this extract, we see that Els sufficiently probes and prompts Damya's responses in order to seek further elaboration (turn 3, 7, 19, 29, 31), clarification (turn 13, 23, 27), specific examples (turn 9) and so on. Els has shown throughout the interview that she is a flexible interviewer who doesn't follow a rigid framework but also tries to gain more personal information from Damya. But here it seems that she is obliged to lead a structured interview because Damya doesn't really fill the institutional frame with extra elements of the experiential frame. Els thus needs to fall back on her form because she wants to register the interview. She wants to induce a particular kind of 'understandability' in relation to the statements of Damya, a proleptic understandability in terms of criteria used in *the next step of the procedure* (Blommaert, 2005). Els finally announces that she has finished her list of questions and that Damya is now free to share things she ought important, that she wasn't able to share yet (turn 35).

In contrast with Damya, Niels is a 'professional'client when it comes to switching frames. He shows that he is not only able to handle the procedurally and institutionally scripted proceedings, but that he can also get his experiential voice through. In extract 15, Niels tries to explain why he wants to live independently. In doing so, he uses a chronologically structured narrative explaining that they kicked him out of school and referred him to adult education but that he took his case to a higher court. Unfortunately he lost the case. Niels indicates that although, nowadays, everything goes off smoothly at home, he still longs for a place of his own. After Niels explained his case and the reasons why he wants to live on his own, Els comes up with a new question: "Why did

your mother come to the committee?"It seems that Niels had a big fight with his father-in-law Joeri who consequently kicked him out of the house. We clearly see here that the interviewer has the power to bring the conversation round to a delicate topic that otherwise wouldn't have been mentioned.

Extract 15 (Niels)

(1) E: Ok
en en ik heb u het verhaal van uw hoe dat vroeger bij u was he
bij uw mama,
de relatie met uw papa, hoe dat da verlopen is
en dan hoor kik u vertellen van
ik heb het eens een tijdje moelijkgehad,
met Jasmine een begeleidingsgesprekje gehad,
dan tot een zelfmoordpoging omdat ik het effeniemeer zag zitten

(2) N: Mhh

(3) E: allemaal. Euhmnu voel ik mij beter.
Dan kom ik op het moment nu dat gij de vraag hier stelt voor begeleid wonen voor zelfstandig wonen.
Hoe situeer ik da?
Vanwaar komt die vraag nu?

(4) N: Euhm vorig jaar euh ben ik met <u>school gestopt</u>
en ale ben ik eigenlijk <u>buitengegooid</u>op school omda ik euhm twee jaar den ezel had uitgehangen
en ze hadden mij nog een kans gegeven, een jaar hadden ze mij de kans gegeven om mij te verbeteren
euhm dan hebben ze mij toch buitengegooid en
euhm wij zijn <u>dan in beroep gegaan</u> tegen die euhm beslissing
en dan hebben wij de beroepscommissie gedaan
en die hebben voor, die hebben gezegd daar mijn school had gezegd da ze da ik verbeterd was maar nog nie genoeg
en da ze een voorstel deden voor in <u>volwassenonderwijs</u> te gaan
en da ik nie functioneerde in nen kindergroep
en da ik beter zou functioneren als ik tussen volwassen mensen zou zitten
en nu <u>thuis alles loopt goe</u> alles ga nu goe
maar ik zou ook liever toch stillekes aan <u>dienen aanloop</u> gaan nemen voor alleen te gaan wonen
en ons <u>mama zei:</u>"ja we ik wil da wel doen maar doet da via via begeleid wonen, dan hebt ge toch altijd iets van houvast."

(5) E: Ja

(6) N: Ik zeg:"ale ok ja das goe"

(7) E: ja en de reden waarom da uw mama in december naart comité gestapt is?

(8) N: da was omda het thuis toen niemeergoe liep,
ik had een beetje <u>ruzie met den Joeri</u>
en dan euh ja ik werkte der ook en dan euh had em gezegd dak niemeer moest komen
ja dan stond ik zo goe als iets wa op straat ja vant frituur

(9) E: Van Joeri

(10) N: Ja

(11) E: Ge had ruzie met Joeri

(12)   N: Ja en dan wou ik ook niemeer daar gaan slapen
       En dan ben ik dus bij mijn boma gaan slapen.
       Nu woon ik daar.

(13)   E: Ja

(14)   N: Voorlopig totdat ik iets heb gevonden.

Translation

   (1) E: Okay
       and and I have heard the story of how it was in the past huh
       With your mother,
       the relationship with your father, how that evolved
       And then I hear you say
       I've had a difficult time,
       A "guidance" conversation with Jasmine
       And then a suicide attempt because you were not able to see your way out

(2)   N: Mhh

(3)   E: Everything. Erm now I feel better.
       Then now you ask for guided living for independent living
       How do I situate that?
       From where does that question come?

(4)   N: Erm last year I dropped out of school
       And actually I was kicked out of school because I erm misbehaved for two years
       And they still gave me a chance, they gave me one year to prove myself
       Erm then eventually they did kick me out and
       Erm then we lodged an appeal against that decision
       And then we went to the committee of higher court
       And they have, they have said that my school had said that I had improved but not enough
       And that they proposed adult education
       And that I didn't function in a child group
       And that I would function better if I was surrounded by adults
       And now everything goes fine at home, everything is fine
       But I would prefer to take the run-up to live alone
       And my mother said: "Yes I want to do that but you should do it through through guided living, then you always have something to hold on."

(5)   E: Yes

(6)   N: I say: "Okay yes that's fine"

(7)   E: Yes and the reason why your mother went to the committee in December?

(8)   N: That was because it didn't work out well at home
       I had a quarrel with Joeri
       And then er yes I also worked there and then er he told me not to come anymore
       Yes then I was like out on the street, outside the chip shop

(9)   E: Of Joeri

(10)   N: Yes

(11)   E: You had a quarrel with Joeri

(12)   N: Yes and then I didn't want to sleep there anymore
       And then I went to my grandmother
       Now I live there

(13)   E: Yes

(14) N: Temporary, until I found something

In this extract we see how Els starts with a chronologically structured summary of Niels' story in order to come to her key question: "Why do you want to live independently?"In doing so, she performs Niels' voice (first person) in order to produce a realistic account of his story (turn 1 and 3). It strikes us that Niels takes over her structured format to recount his story (turn 4). We suppose he takes over her language in order to stimulate mutual understanding (cf. 3.2: Accommodating each other). Besides, he is familiar with both the institutional and therapeutic frame. Els subsequently uses previously gathered information in order to evaluate the situation correctly (Turn 7: "Yes and the reason why your mother went to the committee in December?"). We suppose she wants to hear his version of the story compared to that of his mother's in order to have a complete view of the situation (context assistance). Finally, Niels continues his story by which Els is able to write down a complete answer to her question. It seems that both parties finally could reach a compromise by acknowledging and sharing both frames.

Finally, we want to have a look at two extracts taken from Alice's interview. Nadine wants to finds out more about Alice's motivation to live independently and her future plans. Alice starts off with a minimal response (turn 2) by which Nadine echoes her minimal response "yes" to stimulate Alice's talk. After Alice has specified her answer, Nadine reformulates her words with an eye toward the report. Both Els and Nadine fill up their clients' stories with summaries, reformulations, interpretations and evaluations (see Silverstein and Urban 1996; also Sarangi and Slembrouck 1996). What happens next (turns (4)-(8)) is quite important in respect of Alice's motivation to start the "independent living program". As we mentioned before, until now, Alice hasn't actually started the program and this leads one to presume that she found another solution for her problem. At the end of the interview it becomes clear that given the strong bond between mother and daughter (turn 10); it is hard for them to live separately. After Alice carefully answers Nadine's initial question, Nadine provides an answer herself that can be inserted in the official report of the interview. Thus, what we read in the report afterwards is a summarized version of the applicant's story, framed in *a metapragmatic evaluative grid* (she has to fill in the main reason why she wants to live independently) (Blommaert, 2005) (turn 5: "A place of your own? Would you say it like that? So that is the most important for you? A place of your own?"). This, as we mentioned before, could raise issues of voice. The transformations of the story entail changes in the conditions for articulating subjectivity, notes Blommaert (2005). We see in the transfer from performed narrative to bureaucratic text (the report) a transfer of one form of subjectivity into another: from a situated, conditioned and contextualized subjectivity articulated in

performed narrative, to a decontextualized 'pure' subjectivity. This transfer could eliminate small but important details. But as we see in turn 7, Nadine, again, carefully sounds Alice about her motivation to live autonomously ("And you're looking forward to it if I hear you…"). She then switches to another question, enquiring about the contact between her and her parents (who are divorced now) (turn 9 and 11). We presume that Nadine doesn't elaborate on the bad relationship with her father given that the committee is aware of the family's history. What we saw in this extract confirms our previous thoughts with regard to the pressure of *the next step of the procedure*. For Nadine it is important that she writes down Alice's motivation to live independently. She thereby risks ignoring the possibility of other solutions. Given the fact that it was not Alice who took the initiative for the independent living program but the committee (after a phone call of the father), it leads one to presume that maybe she wasn't that convinced about the program. We could say that in this case, the routinized practice (reformulation/clarification: turn 5: "A place of your own? Would you say it like that? So that is the most important for you? A place of your own?") induces a particular kind of 'understandability' in relation to the statements of the client (Blommaert, 2005) but could intervene into the story of the adolescent, by which he or she could *lose his or her voice in this process*, states Blommaert (2005).

Extract 16 (Alice)

(1)   N: In de huidige situatie is eigenlijk hoor ik da gij wa meer stabiliteit wa meer rust?

(2)   A: Nja

(3)   N: Ja?

(4)   A: Ma zo mijn eigenheid zo

(5)   N: Een eigen plek? Zoude het zo zeggen? Een eigen plek? Dus das het belangrijkste voor u? een eigen plekje?

(6)   A: (lacht en knikt)

(7)   N: En ge kijkt er naar uit ze als ik u hoor

(8)   A: Ja ze (lacht)

(9)   N: Goe, dus met de mama is er nog een goe contact denk ik eh want gebt ze ook meegevraagd zelf eh

(10)   A: Met de mama altijd eh

(11)   N: Ja en de papa al een maand geen contact meer heb ek gehoord eh?

(12)   A: Nee

(13)   N: Is er nog een ander familielid? Nee? Nie direct? Euhm mogen wij als begeleider uw papa contacteren of liever nie? Nee?

(14)   A: Liever nie

(15) N: De mama wel veronderstel ek

(16) A: Ja

Translation

(1) N: With the situation as it stands I actually hear that you want more stability and more rest?

(2) A: Yes

(3) N: Yes?

(4) A: But my own individuality so

(5) N: A place of your own? Would you say it like that? So that is the most important for you? A place of your own?

(6) A: (laughs and nods)

(7) N: And you're looking forward to it if I hear you

(8) A: Oh yes (laughs)

(9) N: Fine, so there's a good contact with the mother I think uh because you asked her voluntarily to come with you

(10) A: Always with mommy

(11) N: Yes and dad? I've heard no contact anymore since a month huh?

(12) A: No

(13) N: Are there any other relatives? No? Not directly? Erm can we, as guide, contact your father or rather not? No?

(14) A: Rather not

(15) N: I suppose we can contact mommy

(16) A: Yes

I would like to end by showing that both Els and Nadine are optimistic with regard to the future of the adolescent. Once they collected sufficient information about facts, attitudes and behaviours, they gradually move to a more "experiential frame" by eliciting information that is more personal or sensitive. They mainly ask those questions towards the end (but also during the interview) given that, at that stage of the interview, they have built up a relationship of trust. This enables them to ask about the adolescent's future plans, hopes and wishes. Some clients really grab this chance to expand on personal and delicate matters, while others don't. During the feedback, Els and Nadine indicate that they sometimes have to interview clients who are not motivated at all with regard to the program. These clients just see this solution as their last resort given that they are, for example, stuck in an institution. Motivation thus also plays a considerate role when it comes to handling and balancing the two frames by using your voice. As we mentioned before, voice refers to the capacity to make oneself understood as a situated

subject (Blommaert, 2005). However, when an adolescent refuses to use his voice, it is difficult for the social worker to fully understand his or her situation, by which a wrong conclusion could be drawn and consequently the wrong solution selected. Opposed to that we notice that despite Alice's reticence, she manages to use her voice to share her future plans.

Extract 17 (Alice)

(1)   N: En gij zou graag, uwen droom is uiteindelijk om iets in de voeding of verzorging?

(2)   A: In de verzorging

(3)   N: Ja? Wa zoude, wa zoude graag worden?

(4)   A: Da da (voeding) pakte der maar bij want da hoort erbij maar ik zou graag ja oude mensjes verzorgen en kindjes enzo

(5)   N: Ja dus euhm bejaardenverzorger of kinderkindereuh

(6)   A: Ja

(7)   N: Gij zorgt graag eh

(8)   A: Ja

(9)   C: Jajajaja da denk ik ook eh ja

(gelach)

(10) N: Dan gade gij daar uw beroep van maken eh (lacht)

Translation

(1)   N: And you would love to, your dream is to eventually do something with nourishment and care?

(2)   A: With care

(3)   N: Yes? What would you, what would you like to become?

(4)   A: That comes with it (nourishment) because it is part of it but I would love to yes take care of old people and children and so

(5)   N: Yes so erm geriatric helper or child child er

(6)   A: Yes

(7)   N: You love taking care huh

(8)   A: Yes

(9)   C: yesyesyesyes I think she does huh yes

(laughter)

(10) N: Then you will make your trade of that huh (laughs).

4 Concluding remarks

This study set out with the aim of analyzing the intake interview with regard to the interaction of different frames. We defined two interacting frames on the basis of our key question: What kind of information is exactly required or pursued in an intake interview? While factual information is especially necessary for the *next step in the procedure* (institutional frame); deeper personal, social and relational information is crucial in order to have a precise image of the adolescent's 'context' (experiential frame) (purpose of the centre = context assistance). Although we noticed that both frames are shared during the interview, the outcome is not necessarily one of perfect symmetry. The results of this study indicate that both parties eventually have learned aspects of the other's dominant frame so that they can come to a compromise through a gradual process of convergence. Nevertheless, the (as)symmetry between the different frames depends on factors such as familiarity and experience with the procedure (both social worker and client), client's personality and motivation, number of participants during the intake, interview format (structured, semi-structured or unstructured) and acquaintance with the case/file of the client. These findings confirm our supposition that though the client dominates the frame, the social worker still determines it, seeing that he or she is responsible for the end product (the report). Blommaert (2005) shows how the *next step in the procedure* can influence and transform the client's story (by institutional routines such as summaries, reformulations, clarifications and so on), by which the client's voice risks being hampered. The question is: "How do we bring these two frames still further together?" We think it is necessary to make the social worker acquainted with the notion of frame and the influence of conflicting/interacting frames on the outcome of the report. It is also important to realize that by reducing complexity (for example by eliminating side-paths), one may lose crucial details. As we mentioned in our introduction, in many institutional settings staff tends "to account for" and report since they are bound to formal procedures imposed by the government. We saw that social workers sometimes get lost in the "evidence based procedure" of the organization. This conflict between qualitative and quantitative research not only affects the client, but also the social worker seeing that his or her greatest concern is the wellbeing of the adolescent. This means that they want to provide "context assistance" so that the adolescent is able to live independently. The social worker thus faces the delicate task of dealing with the adolescent's complex situation by using both soft and hard skills without reducing the client's experience to static categories. Blommaert (2005) observes that we need a 'new language' in order to deal with the new complex realities of our *superdiverse* society. We keep in mind that it

is important to *replace static solutions by complex dynamics, because understanding the world involves changing it* (Van der Aa, 2013).

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