



Developmental & Other Considerations in Childhood Narrative



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Outline

- I: Introduction
- II: Developmental considerations (& activities)



- III: Some other considerations (e.g. cultural)





Some questions we will seek to answer

- **What is a narrative?**
- **Why do we engage in narrative telling?**
- **What kinds of knowledge do we need to produce a narrative?**
- **How are narratives constructed?**
- **Once constructed, what do children's narratives look like?**
- **What language skills are needed to produce a coherent and cohesive narrative?**
- **What pragmatic skills are needed to produce a narrative?**
- **How does culture influence narrative?**



NARRATIVE?

- THE ‘WHAT?’ OF NARRATIVE
- THE ‘WHY?’ OF NARRATIVE
- THE ‘HOW?’ OF NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION
- THE ‘SO WHAT?’ OF NARRATIVE



THE ‘WHAT?’ OF NARRATIVE



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Example

S: well it started one bright morning and ahm we’ d just been to our introductory lecture in the anatomy department?

L: OK

S: and every one was looking around kind of nervously and kind of giggling nervously

L: sure

S: pretending like that you know maybe recognizing a familiar face and ahm then after that was over our class kind of got together and said maybe we should go for a cup of tea and get to know each other so we we were all walking along

L: real ‘speech therapy’ style

S: yeah cup of tea walking along by College Green and then we said “where will we go?” and every one was chatting and then Ruth and I were walking ahead and realized that we’ d separated from the *entire* class and it was just me, Ruth and Ciara and we thought this is a sign of things to come -



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Continued

that the others would think we were a bit strange and they were all going to hate us and so we went along to the Buttery and we had a cup of tea and we bonded because we realized we liked our tea the same way and then we were talking about boys and Ruth was just chatting and chatting and chatting you couldn't get a word in edgeways (laughs) and I was just thinking the innocence! I was just seventeen very innocent and there was Ruth and she twenty

L: (laughs)

S: twenty years

L: old woman

S: telling me things that I need to know and ah ahm yeah and so we bonded and then we lost the rest of the class and then for the rest of the week ahm we were- we spent lots of time together and then we've been best friends ever since

L: oh wonderful



William Labov

University of Pennsylvania

‘(Grand)Father’ of
narrative

Work on narrative from an
observation of story
telling as ‘threat’ among
New York city gangs

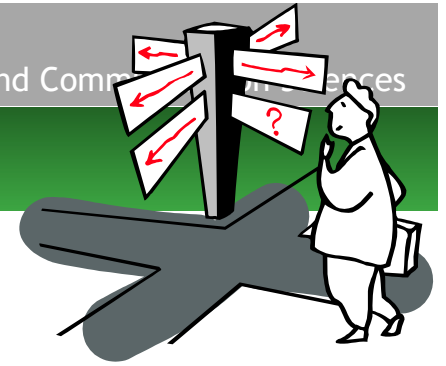
- *“Last time I seen
your mother she ...”*





What is a narrative?

- '... a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred' (Labov: 1997: 225)
- '...are generally told in answer to some stimulus from outside and to establish some point of personal interest(Labov & Waletzky, 1997; 29)



What is a narrative?

- ‘...linguistic crossroads of culture, cognition and emotion and serves the dual purpose of sense making and self presentation’ (Mc Cabe 1991, 1996)
- ‘Narrative discourse may be defined as at least two utterances produced in a temporal order about an event or experience’ (Hughes, Mc Gillivray & Schmidek, 1997 as cited by Boudreau, 2008; 99)

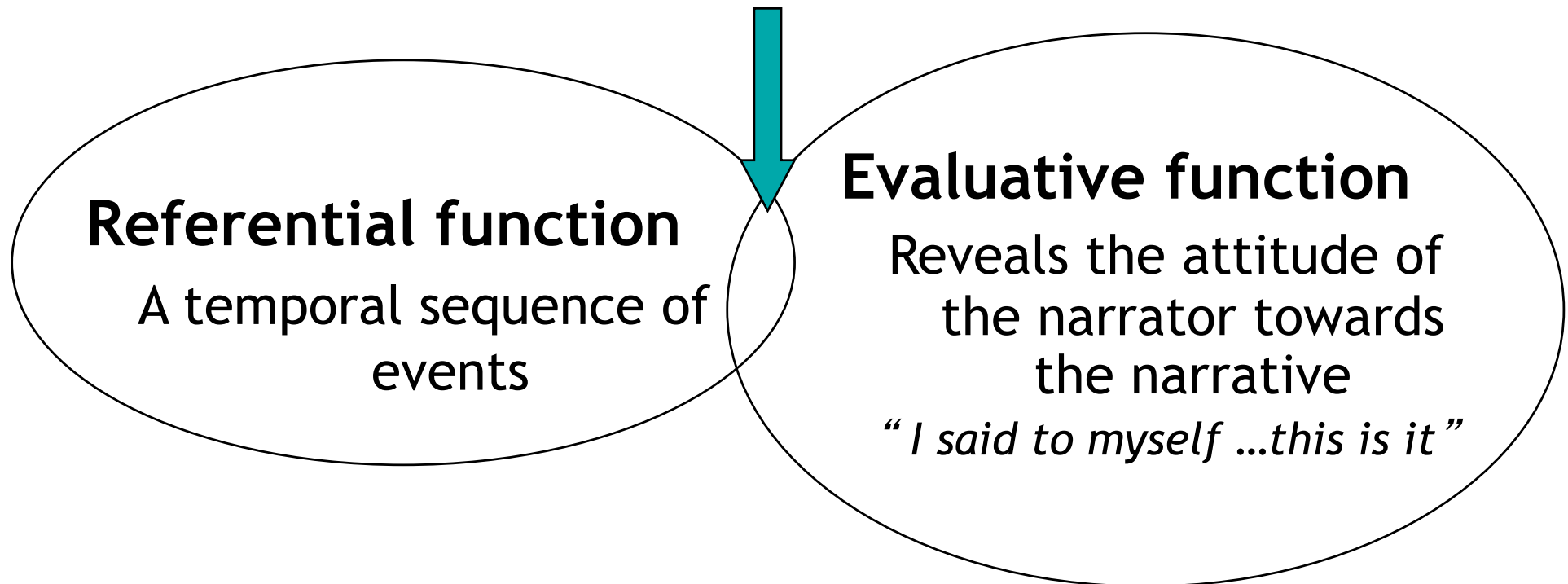


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- ‘...narratives are privileged forms of discourse which play a central role in almost every conversation. Our efforts to define other speech events with comparable precision have shown us that narrative is the prototype, perhaps the only example of a well formed speech event with a beginning, a middle, and an end’ (Labov & Waletzky, 1997)



Narrative (Labov & Waletzky, 1997)



Narrative category	Narrative question	Narrative function	Linguistic function
ABSTRACT	What was this about?	Signals that story is about to begin & draws attention from listener (L)	Short summarizing statement provided before narrative commences
ORIENTATION	Who or what are involved in the story, and when and where did it take place?	Helps L to identify time, place, persons, activity & situation of story	Characterized by past continuous verbs; & adjuncts of time, manner and place
COMPLICATING ACTION	Then what happened?	The core narrative category providing the 'what happened' element of story	Temporally ordered narrative clauses with a very in the simple past or present
RESOLUTION	What finally happened?	Recapitulates final key event of story	Expressed as the last of the narrative clauses that began the Complicating Action
EVALUATION	So what?	Functions to make point of the story clear	Includes: intensifiers; modal verbs, negatives, repetition evaluative commentary embedded speech; comparisons
CODA	How does it all end?	Signals that story has	Often a generalized



Narrative

(Labov & Waletzky, 1997; 37)

- Overall structure is not uniform
- Considerable differences in the
 - Degree of complexity
 - The number of structural elements present
 - How various functions are carried out

(e.g. 'orientation' may be left out)



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ACTIVITY 1

LET'S RE-VISIT OUR EXAMPLE TO APPLY THE LABOVIAN FRAMEWORK



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THE ‘WHY?’ OF NARRATIVE TELLING



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Why do we engage in narrative ?

- **Informative function**
Obtain or share information
- **Regulatory function**
Make sense of own and others' behaviour
- **Phatic /social-relational function**
Build & maintain social relationships; convey humour/sociability
- **Troubles-telling function**
Complain/ comfort others
- **Other functions**
Boast, compete, dominate etc.

URI Seminar IPWalsh





Why do we engage in narrative discourse ?



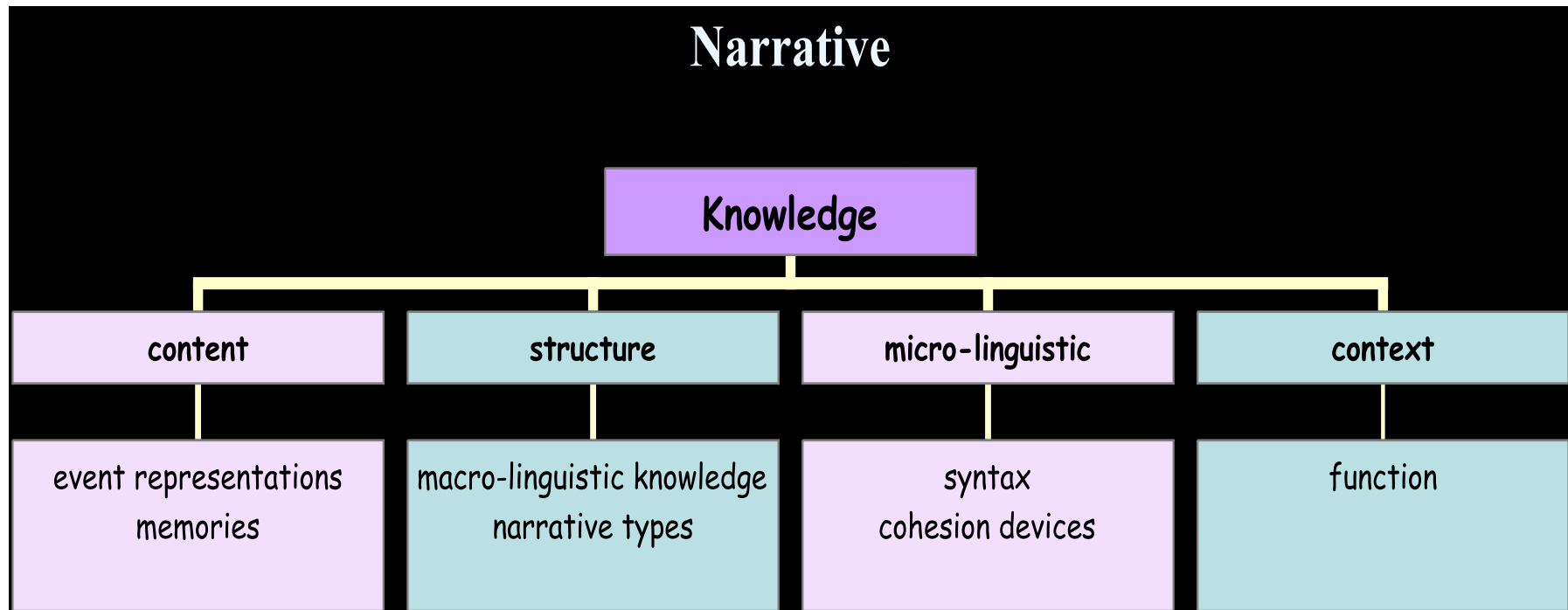
- Organizing autobiographical memory
- Furthering conversational sociability
- Providing a vehicle for thought about problems or difficulties
- Socializing children into membership of their culture
- Providing contexts for the individuality of the teller to emerge and be supported
- ‘We are the stories we tell’ (Martin, 1989 in Mc Cabe 1991; x) (e.g. links to our ‘identity’)



THE ‘HOW?’ OF NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION



What kinds of knowledge needed?





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How are narratives constructed?

- Collaboratively
 - parent
 - Peer
 - group
- Narratives jointly constructed;
 - interactive
 - dialogic
- Not always a 'solo' performance
- Sequentially
 - over time
 - repeated experiences





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Collaboratively produced narrative (Foster, 1990; 128)

(Mealtime: Ross (C)(2;6) and his mother (M) are gazing at the food they are eating)

- C: Sometimes
- M: (she looks at him)
- C: Ross come out bed - bed come out my
- M: What are you talking about? What about the bed at night?
- C: Mm
- M: What did you say?
- C: In a dark
- M: In the dark?
- C: Ross em Ross runs in a dark
- M: Run in the dark
- C: Ross runs
- M: You get out of the ...you got out of the bed in the night, did you, and ran around in the dark?





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Collaboratively & sequentially produced narrative (Halliday, 1979 in Foster, 1990; 128)

(Nigel (N) @ 1;8 a few hours after a visit to the zoo talking with his Dad (F))

N: try eat lid

F: what tried to eat the lid?

N: try eat lid

F: (repeats Q) what tied to eat the lid?

N: goat. goat try eat lid.

F: (encourages him to continue)

N: man said 'no!'

(Later)

N: goat try eat lid...man said 'no'





Continued

(Later again; mother (M) becomes involved)

N: goat try eat lid...man said no

M: why did the man say no?

N: goat shouldn't eat lid... [shaking head] good for it

- The final version- repeated again and again

'Goat try eat lid...man said no...goat shouldn't eat lid...[shaking head] good for it'



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A narrative elicitation technique which resulted in the following narrative on next slide

- Adapted from [Peterson & McCabe \(1983\)](#)
[Trip to Doctor's office](#)
- 'Guess what?'
- 'I went to the doctor's office the other day. I had to wait 3 hours to see him. There were twin brothers about 5 years olds waiting too. They kept trying to read magazines. But every time one brother picked out a magazine, the other brother wanted to read the same magazine. They would start fighting and their mother would take the magazine away from them. The went through the whole pile of the magazines and didn't get to read any of them'
- 'Do you have any brothers or sisters?'
- 'Do they fight or argue?'
- **Other:** visit to hospital?



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Collaborative narrative

(context: Student (ST) trying to elicit a narrative from a child (C) talking about a doctor's waiting room where twin children were arguing over magazines)

ST: ...EVERY time one brother picked up a magazine the OTHER brother wanted to read it...so...he picked it up and the other fella would just come in and want to read it and take it from him ok? ==

C: ==but what so it was like "I want it I want it I want it" [mimes pulling back and forth]

ST:EXACTLY don't fall off the chair ok? EXACTLY==

C:== "I want it. I want it"==

ST:== that's exactly what they'd do they'd start fighting and it was really terrible and their mother would have to get up and take the magazines off them- she did the to get up about three times to take the magazines off them ok?==

C: ==did they just keep going for one another?

S: you're absolutely right they did they went through the WHOLE pile==

C: ==no so so em say they were fighting ==

S: ==yeah?

C: and then the mother came put it- then the boy said "Mammy Mammy Mammy Mammy"

S: yeah exactly

C: and yeah she kept picking them up again

S: yeah these two twin brothers ...they did they went through the whole pile of magazines the two brothers were fighting all the time

C: I wouldn't like twin brothers



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Collaborative narrative

(context: Student (ST) trying to elicit a narrative from a child (C) *talking about a doctor's waiting room where twin children were arguing over magazines => abstract given & orientation*)

ST: ...EVERY time one brother picked up a magazine the OTHER brother wanted to read it...so...he picked it up and the other fella would just come in and want to read it and take it from him ok? == [complicating action]

C: ==but what so it was like “I want it I want it I want it” [mimes pulling back and forth] [elaboration; dialogue]

ST: EXACTLY don't fall off the chair ok? EXACTLY==

C: == “I want it. I want it” == [elaboration; reported dialogue]

ST: that's exactly what they'd do they'd start fighting and it was really terrible and their mother would have to get up and take the magazines off them- she did the to get up about three times to take the magazines off them ok?==

C: did they just keep going for one another? [clarification]

S: ==you're absolutely right they did they went through the WHOLE pile==

C: no so so em say they were fighting == [reinforcement/clarification]

S: ==yeah?

C: and then the mother came put it- then the boy said “Mammy Mammy Mammy Mammy” [elaboration; dialogue]

S: yeah exactly

C: and yeah she kept picking them up again

S: yeah these two twin brothers ...they did they went through the whole pile of magazines the two brothers were fighting all the time [complicating action; resolution]

C: I wouldn't like twin brothers [back to present; coda]



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Collaborative Support?

(Snow & Imbens-Bailey, 1997; 198)

- Elements most crucial for pragmatic effectiveness and most difficult for child: orientation and evaluation
- Telling of events: less difficult
- **Historical support:** to provide right kind and amount of orientation; shared history
- **Psychological support:** for the expression of evaluation; requires taking and (often) reinforcing child's point of view



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Supports

(Boudreau, 2008; 104ff)

(i) Opportunities for narrative interactions are critical to narrative development

e.g. Beal, 2001- narrative talk at mealtime positively associated with language and literacy measures in kindergarten, including higher receptive vocabulary scores

(ii) Parental style of interactions predicts narrative performance

e.g. mothers and fathers do not significantly differ in terms of overall style but engage in more elaborative narrative exchanges with daughters than sons

(Rees & Fivush, 1993) URI Seminar IPWalsh





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Supports (Boudreau, 2008; 104ff)

(iii) Storybook reading supports the development of narrative structure

e.g. Morrow & Gambrell (2002) reviewed studies & summarized factors that contribute to narrative development including:

- previewing the story & making predictions
- discussing ideas related to the story as they arise spontaneously during storybook reading
- activities following storybook reading
- e.g. discussion, story retellings, reenactments, reconstructing stories through pictures





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WHAT ARE NARRATIVES ABOUT ?



Narrative Type & Content (*Preece, 1987*)

Personal anecdotes	Related personal past experiences	<i>“ I’m gonna tell you what happened this morning”</i>
Anecdotes of vicarious experience	Related events experienced by someone else	<i>“You know what my mum did?”</i>
Tattle tales	Complain to a 3rd party about someone else (while the person being complained about is present)	<i>“ I’m telling on you”</i>
Retelling print source	Stories originally read to children	<i>“we read that in a book, in an animal book”</i>
Retelling visual media	Retold stories viewed by narrator on TV/stage/film	<i>“I’ll tell you a scary, scary thing in a movie”</i>
Original fantasies	Stories created by the narrator and involving fantasy characters	<i>“ my story now...santa... couldn’t find his reindeer”</i>
Other	Hypothetical narratives, narrative jokes, repeats	<i>“did I tell you the one about..”</i>



Narrative Content

(Preece, 1987)



- ‘Here and now’ or shared events
- Most common forms: **personal event narratives** (over 50%)
- Concern over negative past events
- When producing fantasies, pre-occupied with themes of aggression, death, hurt, misfortune etc.



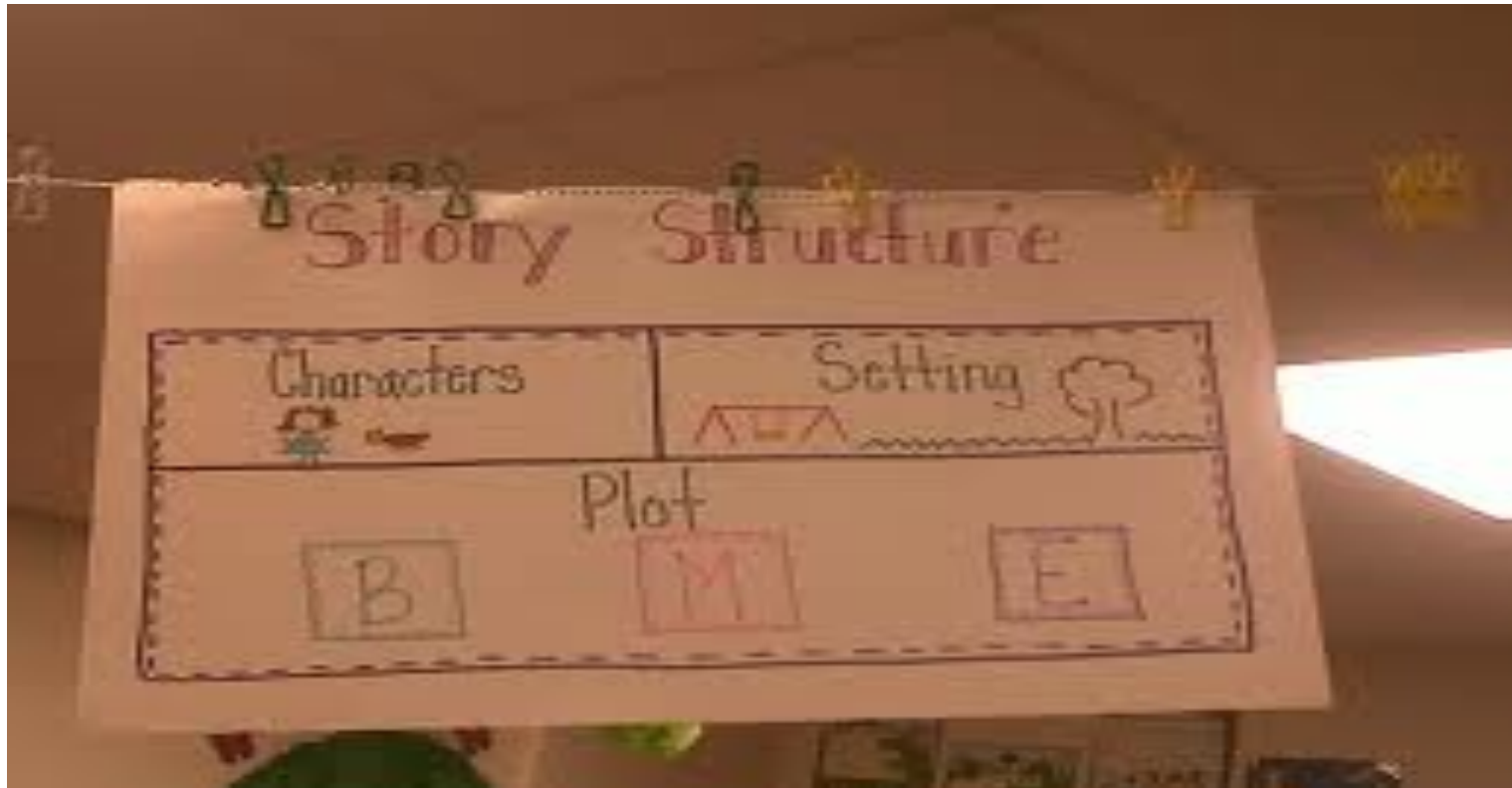
Narrative Content

- Different content types will place different linguistic demands upon child
 - Syntax
 - semantics (relational/ lexical semantics)
 - lexicon of emotion

=> Level of linguistic sophistication needed
- Different pragmatic constraints (Roth & Spekman (1984))
 - Communicative intent; Organisation of discourse
 - Listener's needs; Context



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WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?



Narrative structure

Mc Cabe & Peterson (1991); Peterson & Mc Cabe (1983)

- 1 event narrative : §2yrs
- 2 event narrative : §3yrs
- ‘Leap frog’ narrative : § 4 yrs
- End at high point narrative: § 5yrs
- Classic narrative : § 6yrs
-

Crais & Lorch (1994)

- Stories with multiple episodes emerge: §7yrs
- Considerable detail and complete episodes: §9/10 yrs
- Typically embed one episode within another: § 11yrs



Warning

- **NB**
- **Beware of rigid ages and stages!**
- **Why?**





Narrative structure (demands)

1 event §2yrs approx	<i>"I hied to the big boy (said 'hi')"</i>	One specific past tense action; Construct 1 proposition; past tense
2 event §2-3yrs	<i>"I go to Janie's school and da man had a white rabbit"</i>	Two actions; Construct 2 propositions; simple sentences; past tense; coordination;
Leap frog § 4 yrs	Jumbled order of events; omits major events; listener has to infer	Increased demands on syntax, lexical & relational semantics; coherence & cohesion;
Chronologi cal	Listing of events without much coherence (c.f travel itinerary)	Lexical semantics; syntax
End at high point § 5yrs	End prematurely at high point without resolution	As above; more success with coherence, cohesion (connectives) and sequencing; use of reported speech
Classic § 6yrs	Close to Labovian structure – reaches resolution	Increasingly complex syntax/semantic relations; cohesion/ coherence and sequencing; complete story grammar



Narrative structure (demands)

Between age 6- 11:

- Increased language sophistication (e.g. semantic & syntactic complexity e.g. passive forms ; subordinate clauses; lexical range) required to produce more ‘adult-like’ narratives
- Changes occur in the inclusion of internal responses such as internal goals, affects, cognitions, plans and evaluation types



Development: other

(Mc Cabe & Bliss, 2003)

- Topic maintenance: 3-4 yrs
- Event sequencing: 5 yrs
- Conjunctive cohesion (semantic & pragmatic):
4-6 yrs
- Fluency: 5-6 years
- Referencing: 5-7 yrs
- Informativeness: 9 yrs



Elaboration (4-9 years)

Elaboration type	Example
Onomatopoeia	<i>'It went bam'</i>
Stress	<i>'I SCREAMED and SCREAMED!'</i>
Elongation	<i>'We had to stay a looong time'</i>
Exclamation	<i>'oh boy!'</i>
Similes	<i>'my throat was as red as the devil's skin'</i>
Attention getters	<i>'I gotta tell you the important part'</i>
Exaggeration	<i>'I picked them trees up'</i>
Subjective judgments	<i>'That was my favorite'</i>



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The development of expressive elaboration in fictional narratives

Ukrainetz et al., (2005)

- Fictional narratives; short picture sequence likely life event
- 293 children 5-12 yrs
- **Results:** significant age effect
- Diverse patterns of acquisition
- **Study:** great detail re developmental sequences of elaborations



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Activity 2

**LET'S LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES FROM
A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE: HOW
COULD WE DESCRIBE THEM?**



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Did you ever see a car crash?

3 yrs old

C: I think my Dad crashed. My Dad crashed a long time ago I think

A: and what actually happened?

C: just crashed just crashed in that

A: yeah?

C: just crashed

A: yeah?

C: and nothing else happened to him and then he got it fixed



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4year old

1. A: did you ever see a car crash?
2. C: yeah
3. A: you did? Will you tell me about it?
Yeah
4. C: only on TV when I was a little baby
5. A: when you were a little baby
6. C: yeah when I was just one
7. A: just one
8. C: just one
9. A: really?
10. C: yeah just one and a quarter
11. A: tell me all about it what happened?
12. C: see the lorry broke up and y' know
there were tops all over the truck
13. A: wow!
14. C: bunnies bunnies
15. A: bunnies?
16. C: yeah
17. A: really?
18. C: yeah
19. A: and?
20. C: they all hopped all over the place
think- I think I was terrified of them
21. A: really?
22. C: but the truck was all in pieces
23. A: aw wow
24. C: because the car went underneath
and then bashed
25. A: oh
26. C: they were safe
27. A: mmm
28. C: the men were safe
29. A: the men were safe
30. C: only the back piece broke
31. A: only the back piece?
32. C: yeah eventually there was no fire
33. A: yeah?
34. C: no 'cos sometimes when crashes
comes an almighty fire



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6 year old

A: did you ever see a crash?

C: yeah I was on a crash...a k- a car was coming around when we were [go] - we were going to Clara Lara and a car was coming around the corner and and em the woman that was driving was looking down underneath the hill and em she didn't know the bus was coming and crashed into us....we were all screaming and shouting there was seven or eight kids in it ...and a man

A: Oh

C: or five kids I don't know

A: yeah

C: or maybe three I don't know ...and that's all that happened

A: that's all that happened

C: and the we had to - the the crashed bus had to go up and then the man fixed it and then we had to wait until it's fixed and then got on then went to Clara Lara.



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Activity 3

WHAT ARE THE **TASK DEMANDS** ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF NARRATIVE?



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Think about the various task demands of:

1. Narrative retelling from a previously heard story
2. Narrative telling from a picture book
3. Narrative telling of a movie seen by both child and adult listener
4. Narrative telling of a movie to an adult listener who did not see the movie
5. Narrative telling: elicited by another (child told to ‘tell a story’)
6. Narrative telling: spontaneous personal narrative

Do 2 things here:

1. consider the various task demands (linguistic & other) of 1-6
2. order 1-6 above from ‘least difficult’ to ‘most difficult’



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COHESION & COHERENCE



Cohesive & Coherent?

- A narrative is ideally easy to follow i.e. coherent and cohesive
- What does this mean?



What do you make of this ?

- *“I’m so pleased for Mike and Fiona today. If you remember that Thursday it was a glorious evening, warm and sultry just like the wine. That says something about the Burkes and a lot about Fiona. Fiona always put it in the press under the sink and I never thought of looking there. It was when Mike was sick that I saw Fiona at her best. Thank you Fiona...”*
(McGee, 2001)



Cohesion & coherence?

- A text (written or spoken) has to ‘hang together’ in terms of meaning and form

i.e. it has to be coherent and cohesive in that the concepts and relationships expressed should be relevant to each other, thus enabling us to make plausible inferences about the underlying meaning.

(Crystal, 1987; 119)



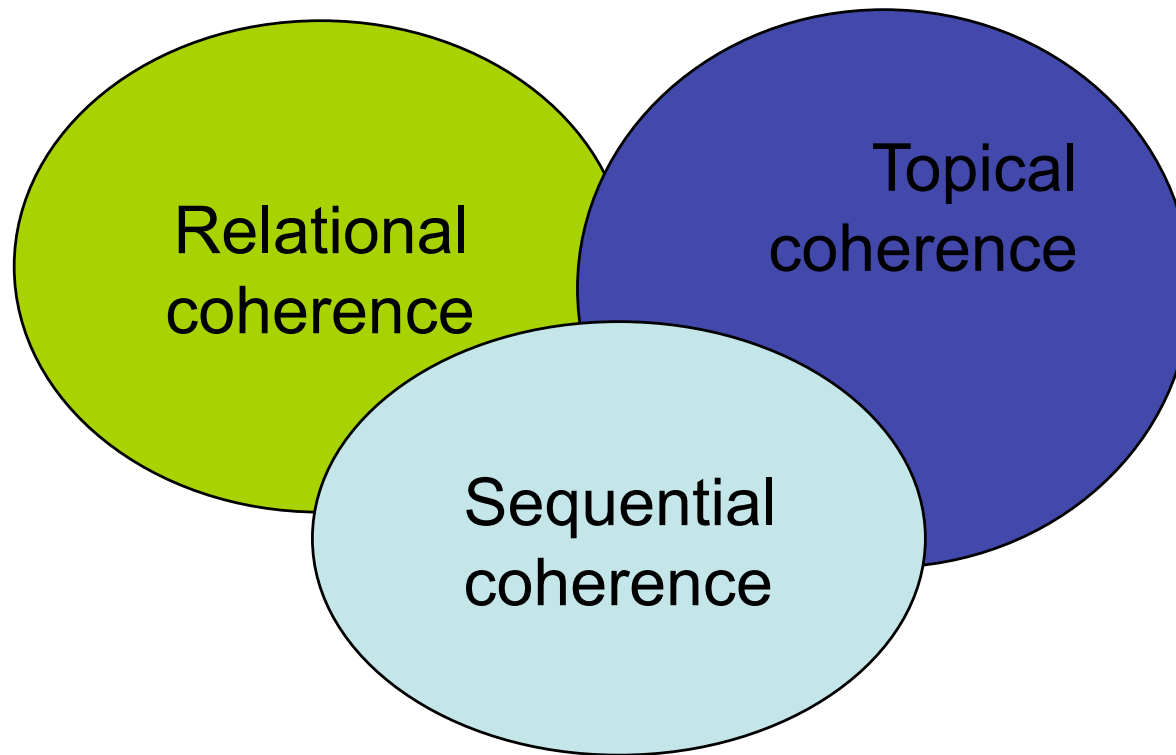
Cohesion & coherence (Crystal, 1987)

- A **cohesive** but **incoherent** sentence sequence ...

“A week has seven *days*. Every *day* I feed my *cat*.
Cats have four legs . *The cat* is on the *mat*. *Mat*
has three letters.”



Coherent narrative? (Leinonen, Letts & Smith, 2002; 97)





Coherent Narrative?

(Leinonen, Letts & Smith, 2002; 97)

- **Relational coherence:** conceptual relationships are the core of coherence
- **Topical coherence:** expect ideas expressed in a text to relate to a topic and to be developed towards a goal specified by the topic
- **Sequential coherence:** expect closely related aspects of the topic to follow one another in sequence; reflect order of event in real world; if not signaled as such



WHAT ARE COHESION MARKERS?



Cohesion device	Explanation	Example
<p>Conjunctive relations</p>	<p>What is about to be said is explicitly related to what has been said before, through such notions as contrast, result & time</p>	<p>I left early. <i>However</i>, mark stayed till the end.</p> <p><i>Lastly</i>, there's the question of cost</p>
<p>Coreference</p>	<p>Features that cannot be semantically interpreted without referring to some other feature in the text</p>	<p>Anaphoric : Several people approached. <-<i>They</i> looked angry. Cataphoric: Listen to <i>this</i>->: John's getting married</p>
<p>Substitution</p>	<p>One feature replaces a previous expression</p>	<p>I've got a pencil. Do you have <i>one</i>?</p>
<p>Ellipsis</p>	<p>A piece of structure is omitted and can be recovered from the previous discourse</p>	<p>Where did you see the car? In the street</p>
<p>Repeated forms</p>	<p>An expression is repeated in whole or part</p>	<p>Canon Brown arrived. Canon Brown was cross .</p>
<p>Lexical relationships</p>	<p>One lexical item enters into a structural relationship with another</p>	<p>The <i>flowers</i> were lovely. He liked <i>tulips</i> best.</p>
<p>Comparison</p>	<p>A compared expression is pre-supposed in the previous discourse</p>	<p>That house was <i>bad</i>. This one's far <i>worse</i>.</p>

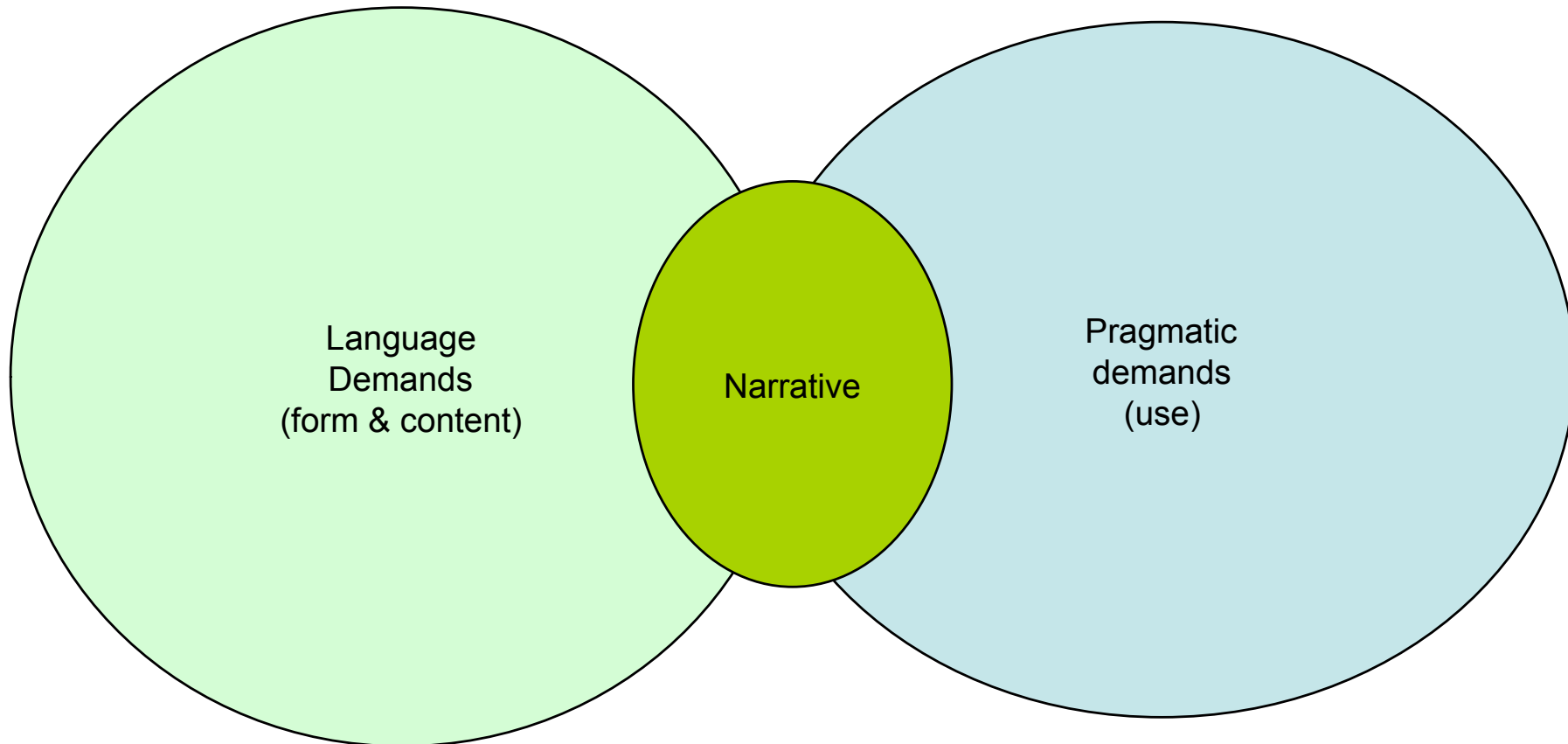


Other pragmatic considerations

Narrative



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Grice's Maxims (1975)

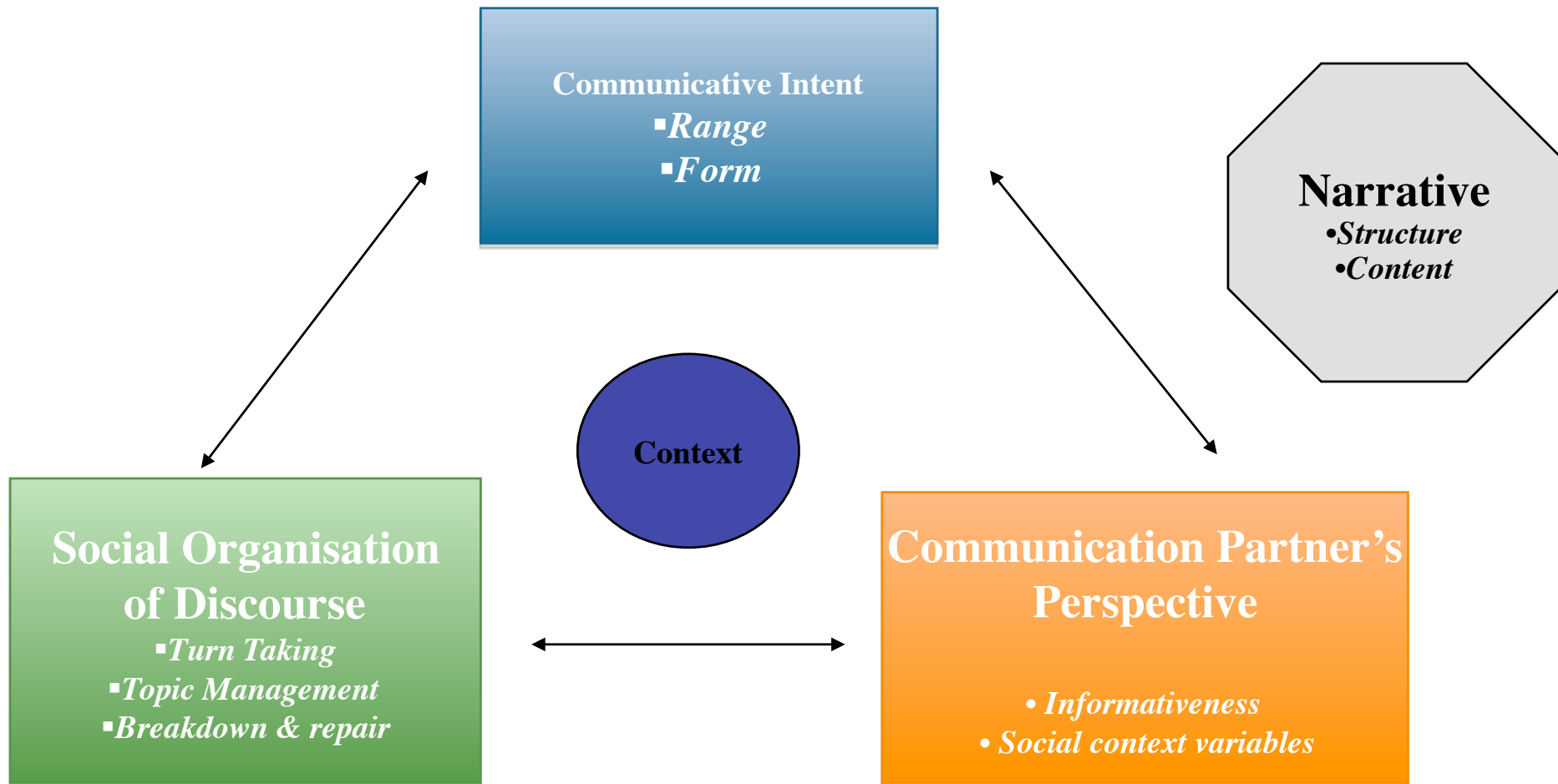
Narrative application

- **Quantity:**
 - don't say too much ;
 - don't say too little
- **Quality:**
 - be truthful
- **Relevance:**
 - be relevant
- **Manner:**
 - be clear /orderly*





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1. Communicative Intent & Narrative

- Form (e.g. narrative)
- Range (e.g. function of narrative)
 - Informing
 - Complaining (e.g. tattle tales)
 - Requesting
 - Warning
 - Boasting
 - Pretending
 - Competing etc.





Developmentally?

Dore (1975) & Halliday (1975)

- 1-2 word utterances/
signs display functions of
 - Naming
 - Requesting
- Protesting /rejecting
 - Commenting
 - Responding
 - Greeting

Multiword utterances

communicative intentions
increase

- Express feelings
- Assert independence
- Use language imaginatively
(later development)
- Use language descriptively
- @ 4 yrs child adept at expressing
intentions in a variety of
forms
- Older child: joking, teasing,
sarcasm

2. Taking the listener's perspective in narrative

The child's message (narrative) in relation to the specific information needs of the listener

- 'informativeness' - cohesion & coherence- already discussed
⇒ language skills -> pragmatic implications
- social context variables- taking into account audience variables such as
 - Age
 - Status
 - Level of familiarity
 - Shared past experiences
 - Linguistic & cognitive level





Developmentally?

Informativeness

- able to use some **cohesion markers** e.g. ellipsis (2-3years), NP-> pronouns (2-3yrs); connecting words e.g. *sure, well, y'see* (3 years) (see Foster, 1990)
-

Social Context variables

- by 2 yrs modify their speech to **status** of addressee
- by 4yrs to **age** of listener (e.g. as demonstrated in doll play: adopt speaker roles e.g. doctor-patient; teacher-pupil; SLP-client!)

• Implications for narrative telling



3. Social organisation of discourse

- Narratives emerge conversationally
(*Snow & Imbens-Bailey, 1997; 198*)



⇒ Child needs to be able to

⇒ Turn-taking

⇒ Predict possible turn completion points

⇒ Initiate/maintain/terminate topic within narrative

⇒ repair: responding to requests for repair & self-repair



Developmentally ?

Turn-taking:

- by school age young child able to take turns in an orderly fashion (Mc Tear, 1985; 200)

Initiation:

- 2-3 yr olds “bare messages” e.g. *“I’m 3 today”*
- 3-4 year olds : vocative and an attention getting word e.g. *“Daddy, know what?”*
- older child may use full sentence e.g.
“remember that car we saw yesterday, well...”



Developmentally ?

Topic:

- “a paralysing problem for the aspirant conversationalist is the issue of topic selection”
(Ninio & Snow, 1996; 152)

Repair:

- **initiate self- repair** at 1; 6- 2yrs: younger children correct pronunciation; older children correct word endings or word order
- **respond to requests for repair** by 2 yrs or may remain silent
- **issue repair requests** by 3-4 yrs
- **repair to adapt to listener** 3-4yrs
- Not using “I mean” or ‘that is’ for correction until about 6 yrs of age
(Garvey, 1984; 47)



THE ‘SO WHAT’ OF NARRATIVE? : SOME CLINICAL/EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS



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Why look at narrative in the school/ clinic?

6 reasons!

1. To explore processing deficits

2. To decontextualise language

Power of language to take us away
from 'here and now' to 'there
and then'

3. To help children connect

“What a powerful social tool, and
how profound its
absence!” (Johnston, 2008; 96)

4. To improve listening skills

making use of Wh...?

Framework *Who? What? Where?*)

5. To improve reading
comprehension

*‘Children who know the
generic narrative schemes can
use this knowledge to guide
their meaning in written
texts’ (Johnston 2008; 97)*

6. To reveal linguistic & cognitive
strengths!



Why consider *culture* & narrative?

- Example:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS-MPYM6yHI>

- Culture specific
 - Irish- inner city Dublin
 - Religious - Catholic
 - Educational focus
- *‘Give up yer aul sins’*



Other cultural considerations

- See e.g. Bliss & Mc Cabe (2008; 164)
- *“ American children from cultures other than European North American culture have often been found to produce personal narratives that reflect the cultural style of their community rather than ones that reflect European North American patterns. ”*



Other cultural considerations

- European North American cultures generally produce **topic-centred narratives** (Peterson & Mc Cabe 1983)
 - i.e. *‘succinct chronological ordering of events around a central topic’* (p. 164)
- African American children produce **‘topic-associating’** (e.g. Hyon & Suzby, 1994) or performative (e.g. Champion, 2003) personal narratives -
 - i.e. *‘inclusion of several experiences in one narrative, lengthy descriptions, presentation of events in semantically rather than chronologically related sequences, and inclusion of evaluative elements as a means of expressing thoughts of a speaker’* (p. 165)
- Central or South American cultures (1st language Spanish) - differ also.



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Other cultures?



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Activity 4

Let's analyse a Narrative



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Narrative 1

1. C: I drank too much Calpol
2. [3]
3. C: my Gran was- do you wanna hear the story?
4. T2: aw I do go on
5. C: okay my m=
6. T2:= you started it so you have to finish
7. C: okay my Mum and Dad went off to this hotel
8. T2: yeah
9. C: So my Gran was in charge and my sister was asleep alright? So she's just watching TV for a bit thinking I was ok I sneak down and I go and drink the Calpol...the whole bottle...mainly...eh eh then eh she comes in she finds me drinking it...she thinks I drink it all...which I did actually...and eh she goes and calls my parents...eh but she asks for X yeah and the hotel says there's no X here there's no X here...okay...but...they were meant to be under the party of Y.
10. T2: oh right yea they
11. C: so my Gran had to take me to hospital so the got the neighbour
12. [3]



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Narrative 1 (contd)

13. C: like the neighbour what was the name of that man who died the singer...eh in Dublin
14. T2: this one just the other day
15. C: yea
16. T2:Ronnie Drew
17. C :that was the younger one the children from the house next door
18. T2: oh really
19. C: we my Mom knew Ronnie Drew
20. T2: okay
21. C: so eh so so eh the Dad alright stayed eh crying with my Nan we went to hospital my sister stayed with the neighbours went to hospital my Mom and Dad come home and find me not there
22. T2: oh my goodness
23. C: so they stayed there and wait til I came home but...the doctor said I was fine ()
24. T2: mhh
- 25: C: just to keep me away from the medicine from now on



Final words



- *Narrative structure is not innate (Berko-Gleason & Melzi, 1997; 222)*
- *Story tellers are made not born (Mc Cabe, 1997; 170)*
- *Narrative can interpret the past and structure the present. It can also predict the future.
(Berko-Gleason & Melzi, 1997; 222)*



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