

Narrative Acquisition in Educational Research and Didactics

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1 Definition

This article takes as its subject the approaches adopted and results gathered by research into narration by children under the age of ten, focusing on two aspects: (1) the acquisition and development of productive and receptive narrative ability; (2) possible means of cultivating productive and receptive narrative ability in school, along with criteria for evaluating these abilities. Special attention is paid to the difference between factual and fictional as well as between oral and written forms of narration.

Research in this field is concerned chiefly with three facets of narrative proficiency selected as being of particular significance for its development in the outside world and its cultivation in school: (1) experientiality as the preferred frame of reference for the content of narratives (children assimilate and produce stories in connection with their own experience in real life and in stories); (2) tellability as a criterion for determining the pertinence of what is being told (up to the first years of school, children are not always able to judge the tellability of stories without the support of an adult); (3) story repertoires, contents, structures and traditional and modern media, the use of which can develop and cultivate narrative competence.

2 Explication

Experientiality, “the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’,” is deemed by Fludernik (1996: 12) to be an essential characteristic of narratives. Children, both in their understanding and production of stories, refer back to their own experience of reality. If an adult and a child look at a book together, or if the adult reads or tells a story, the child connects what he sees and hears to his own experiences (Wieler 1997

). He imagines something, remembers, participates in the portrayed reality, and in doing so affirms a sense of self. Taking experientiality as the basis on which narration emerges is, in the field of narratology, one approach among others to the definition of narrativity: “to characterize the purpose and function of the storytelling as a process that captures the narrator’s past experience, reproduces it in a vivid manner[...].” (Fludernik 2003: 245). The category of experientiality is also central in developmental psychology and educational science. Bruner speaks about “the narrative construal of reality” (1996: chap. 7), stating elsewhere that “we organize our experience and memory of human happenings mainly in form of narrative” (Bruner 1991: 4). Stories told and read by others, whether fictional or factual, offer children alternative experiences that they can apply to confirm or alter their models of the world, representing and evoking experientiality at the same time. Therefore, almost from the time a child first begins to talk, narrative serves as a mediator between “the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires, hopes” (Bruner 1990: 52).

Whatever is being narrated must be of interest to someone, whether the narrator or the listener/viewer. Tellability (Labov 1972) depends on evaluation. Labov and Waletzky (1967) differentiate two functions of narration, the referential and the evaluative. The evaluative function consists in “the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its *raison d’être*: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at” (Labov 1972: 366). This evaluation forestalls a “so what?” reaction from the audience. Whether a narration is tellable depends on the context. Thus, picture books that show quotidian events from children’s lives are highly tellable because children, as they are growing up, see themselves as affirmed by *scripts* and want to see and hear them again and again. This early stage is concerned primarily not with eventfulness as the breach of expectation, but with affirmation of the familiar. Also potentially tellable—as in “braided” narration, i.e. dialogic narration with an open structure (Wagner 1986)—are shared experiences that narration can bring to mind for everyone present. This phenomenon corresponds to Lotman’s ([1970] 1977: 290–94) distinction between an “aesthetic of identity” and the expectation-breaching “aesthetic of opposition”. In this case, tellability is tied to the memory of a personally significant experience, and not to a break with expectation. Whether founded on surprise, memory or affirmation, personal significance can be seen as a central criterion for tellability (Fludernik 2003 : 245).

According to the definition by Labov and Waletzky, generating tellability is the task of the speaker. Whether he succeeds, however, depends also on the listener and how he, in his specific context, takes in what is narrated. This means that the story’s success relates above all to its relevance to its addressee. “Tellability [...] is

dependent on the nature of specific incidents judged by storytellers to be significant or surprising and worthy of being reported in specific contexts, thus conferring a 'point' on the story" (Baroni → Tellability [1]). Children find it difficult until well after they have begun school to bring out what is tellable in their narrations. In processes of learning and teaching, this initially requires above all that the adult cull from a child's statement (e.g. "I have yellow wellies") what it is that is tellable and help the child understand it (e.g. "Are they new? / Oh, they're lovely! / Were the old ones broken? / Did you choose the color yourself?"). By finding out what has prompted the statement, the adult addressee can locate the tellability attached to the statement's personal significance to the child (and his audience). A "so what?", on the other hand, whether verbally or merely as a gesture, would not encourage the child to further narration. Tellability is a central consideration for teaching methods in primary school, because it is often first generated and affirmed in interaction with adults, while it is only gradually that children learn to express it for themselves.

Narration draws on story repertoires of heard, read or seen stories, of character groups, plot models, and patterns of text and genre. Propp ([1928] 1968) described a repertoire of characters and functions limited to a corpus of 100 Russian fairy tales. For children, the limit to the number of such functions, as Propp delineated them (e.g. hero, villain, magical agent or helper), and the way they can be applied to other types of fictional text helps them to learn. If a child aged three-and-half can have a Christmas story read to him from a picture book and say at the end, "There's no baddie in it," that shows just how early childhood attention can pertinently direct itself to such models—in this case, characters—and draw lessons from them, assuming, of course, that the child has the opportunity to learn this kind of "story repertoire." Such a repertoire comprises oral and written narratives as well as films.

In this repertoire of structural story-models, the prime position is given in school to the so-called 'climactic narrative' (Hühn → Event and Eventfulness [2]). Its structure corresponds to the oral narratives produced by adults that Labov and Waletzky studied in response to the question, "Were you ever in a situation where you thought you were in serious danger of being killed?" (1967: 14). This structural model comprises five stages: abstract, orientation, complication, resolution, coda (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972). Infants and children—even those already of school age—have difficulties in employing this structure. Particularly with regard to orientation and sequencing, they are reliant on interaction with adults—on their interest, their follow-up questions and thus (as with tellability) on "scaffolding" (Bruner 1986). One reason for favoring climactic narratives in school may be the ease of assessing children's efforts against that yardstick.

3 Dimensions of the Concept and History of its

Study

4.1 The Function of Narration in Child Development

The narrative framing of experience starts early in childhood: it is the primary means by which children make sense of those experiences (Hymes 1982). Infants and young children do so by forming cognitive models or *scripts* of events they take part in or that they observe at mealtimes or bedtimes, for instance. These scripts are at first rather fragmented. Through interaction with adults, they gradually become coherent narrative models of everyday experience (Nelson 1996: 341). At the age of about four, children not only start to put the perspectives of other people into clearer focus, they also begin to reflect increasingly on their own internal states (Nelson 1999: 248). They begin to develop a *theory of mind* and to gain an understanding of other people's intentions. This becomes "obvious in their use and comprehension of mental terms such as think, remember, wish, hope and want" (Wellmann 1988: 86).

The stories a child hears and tells about himself, about others and about the world, help him understand who he is and who others are, enabling him to find his own *identity* (Bamberg → Identity and Narration [3]). Cognitive narratologists emphasize the similarity between the process of becoming conscious of one's own experiences and a form of narrative that establishes a connection between single situations and events. By either receptively or productively drawing on a repertoire of stories, one can become conscious of one's own experiences. From an educational perspective, and in the context of new learning cultures, narrative is a medium for the generation and transfer of knowledge (Fahrenwald 2011). The underlying concept is that identity emerges out of an intersubjective and narrative process of self-construction, a process that, in the main, takes place dialogically (2011: 203; cf. Dehn & Dehn 1980).

4.2 The Acquisition of Narrative

4.2.1 Overview of Research

Studies on the acquisition of narrative pursue differing aims and proceed with highly diverse methods as regards the categories of experientiality, tellability and repertoires of stories.

Some researchers refer to Labov and Waletzky's (1967) structural model of the story, i.e. the climactic narrative. They use phased models to investigate how children appropriate climactic narratives and what role is played here by discourse between child and adults, also factoring in various genres of child narration (Boueke

et al. 1995; Hausendorf & Quasthoff 1996; Becker [2001] 2011; Ohlhus & Quasthoff 2005; Augst et al. 2007). Experientiality, particularly in studies that posit an event that is the same for everyone, is defined more strongly as a characteristic of the event than it is by the person's subjective experience of it (on changes to narrative behavior when a child is actively involved, see Hausendorf & Quasthoff 1996: 8, 55). Tellability, too, is regarded as a characteristic of a given situation. It is thus equated with the "abnormality of the narrated" and regarded as a parallel with Labov and Waletzky's "setting" (Kern et al. 2012: 1-2). For adults, the question of how then to construct a story also has a prototypical solution, namely to precisely reproduce the sequence of happenings and highlight the climax. In several studies, children's narratives are assessed on how closely they approximate this prototype. The focus on the climactic narrative as a type of structure limits consideration and analysis of child narration as regards children's interest in the content of what they are narrating.

Others have explored the effect that the appropriation of stories has on the content and language of the child's narration, and thus investigate child narration in the context of the available story repertoires (Wardetzky 1992; Dehn 1999, 2002, 2005; Weinhold 2000, 2005; Wieler 2011). In studies that analyze children's stories in the context of story repertoires (by using stories or paintings as prompts), the connection to the children's own experiences and to what they consider worth telling is at least suggested: in that they have to remember; in that their imaginative development is tested; in that they can be selective; in that they have to decide themselves what to focus their narration on; and in that they have opportunity to transfer what moves them, as a means of narrative self-affirmation, to focus on the people and happenings of their stories. Because children place emphases differently and so tell widely differing stories, their interest in the rest of the group's stories can be assumed, since stories told by others contain new accentuations and interpretations. There is quite distinctly *not* a prototypical "best" solution for the story. The group's interest is directed equally to the content and the narrative forms. One shortcoming of these studies is that they have so far been rather narrow as regards comparisons between age groups, and insufficiently differentiated as regards the forms in which acquisition occurs.

The following studies address the relationship between acquisition of factual and fictional narrative as well as that between acquisition of oral and written narrative.

4.0.1 Factual and Fictional Narration

Factual narration refers to individual experiences, to shared community experiences or to knowledge (Fahrenwald 2011). Fictional narration encompasses the "fantasy story," carrying on from a story beginning, narration in response to single or moving

pictures from art and the media, re-narration of stories and narration in response to stories. Over and above the various approaches to research, there is agreement that the acquisition of factual narrative proceeds much more slowly than fictional narrative (cf. Becker [2001] 2011; Andresen 2011; Weinhold 2010; Wieler 2011).

That the narration of real-life events develops more slowly than that of fantasy, and of re-narration, has to do with the way memory works in young children. For the first three years, they primarily remember experiences that recur frequently, taking on the form of *scripts*. It is only when autobiographical memory emerges, which Nelson (1996) places in the fifth year, that children become able to connect themselves verbally with the events they have experienced. The development of narrative is therefore directly bound up with cognitive processes and, by the same token, with the structuring of memory processes.

Of interest to narratology are the following findings: whereas Becker ([2001] 2011: 189) observed that five-year-olds mix fantasy and reality in narrative and concluded that children of that age are not yet able to securely separate fictive and real elements, Andresen (2011) shows by means of her investigations into the spontaneous oral narratives of four- to six-year-olds that four-year-olds are quite able to distinguish between fictive and real; five-year-olds then mix the forms, especially in real-life narratives, and can reliably separate these forms again only as six-year-olds. One conclusion that suggests itself is that playing with the boundary between fiction and non-fiction by literary texts has, *inter alia*, an anthropological basis.

Wordless picture strips are, in comparison with other narrative forms, the ones that children find hardest to cope with (Becker [2001] 2011). On the one hand, this is astonishing because the sequence, so difficult to acquire, is already provided. On the other hand, there are a number of explanations for this finding, first among them being that the picture strip appears to be fictional and factual at the same time. The happenings portrayed do not make a claim to “referential truthfulness” (Schaeffer → Fictional vs. Factual Narration [4]) and so can be seen as fictional; but they also appear to observing children as an extra-linguistic referent, i.e. factual. Secondly, narrating to a series of pictures is a form relevant exclusively to school in which what children produce is measured against a prototypical solution. Experientiality is present at most implicitly; and even if the examiner has already looked at the picture strip with the child (Boueke et al. 1995), the child feels scant motivation for narrating. Tellability loses its communicative function and becomes a merely formal aspect.

Appropriating narratives that are bodied forth as climactic narratives has been broken down into a sequence of stages. The various findings about these

developmental stages resemble one another. For the narrative acquisition of picture stories, Boueke et al. (1995) distinguish isolated-enumerative, linear-sequential, contrastive-discontinuous, evaluative-involving/narrative. Augst et al. (2007) also identify four stages and, for writing to a single picture, set up as an end-point for this development the significance of a break in the scheme, bringing out a “point,” framing by means of a coda, dramaturgy of speech and reply and finally, achieving a “narrative tone” (51–2). Of course, climactic narratives do form part of the repertoires of stories, but limiting the definition of narrative competence to the ability to keep to a structural schema does not do justice to the complexity of the repertoires of stories available.

Fictional narration develops far more rapidly than factual. To what degree and in what ways this is so can be seen by the following finding. At the end of their first year (aged 7), and within a few days, children wrote stories both about their experiences and in response to a picture book. The task was not to re-tell the story portrayed by the picture book but rather to write about what was important to them. While in their real-life narratives they mostly named only a single event or formulated several in a row, forcing the reader to ferret out the tellability of the story for himself (“At the circus. I went to the circus on Saturday and with my parents”), a clear majority of the same children came out with complete stories when writing to a picture book (cf. Dehn et al. 2011: 8–10; 176–8). These stories contained narrative models from the picture book but also from other texts appropriated by the child such as for temporal organization (“once upon a time”; “oneday”), for intensification (“very...”; “above all”; “went and went”). These are often not climactic narratives in a strict sense even though the turning point of the story may be marked by use of the adversative conjunction “but.” The children figured out the need that motivated the character to set off and almost always brought the story of his quest to a happy ending.

In their play between what is provided and what is brought forth, between reception and production, these kinds of narrative display rhetorical figures, metaphor construction and genre patterns, e.g. the crime story or the serial with patterns such as “material of transformation” (Dehn 2005: 52; on structural characteristics in narrative texts from learner writers to literary and media figures, see Weinhold 2005, 2010). Becker (2002: 32), too, shows that fantasy narratives contain formulaic expressions as early as in the first year of school (age 6), especially for the end of the story.

One reason for the differences in appropriation of the two narrative forms is that thanks to their experiences with heard (and seen) stories, children have more phraseological and textual models of structure to draw on in fantasy narrative (as

shown by Andresen 2011), starting as early as at the age of four in oral narrative (cf. Fox 1993; in reference particularly to the variability in evaluative functions in five-year-olds, cf. Griffin et al. 2004: 128). The appropriation of narrative models is thus not bound to literacy.

The significance for narrative acquisition of the connection between personal experience and access to repertoires of stories is underlined by Lesemann et al. (2007): “talking with the child about personal experiences, memories, stories, and about topics of general interest, on the one hand, and reading narrative books, picture books, and information books to the child, on the other hand,” (340) has a positive effect not only on lexis and textual comprehension, but also on their own capacity for narration, and especially re-narration. For continuations of fairytale-like story beginnings in grades 2 to 4 (age 7 to 9), Wardetzky, with reference to Propp ([1928] 1968), investigated the stories’ motifs, figures and symbols. She shows that the stories are not reproductions but “I-centered mental games played with received material” (208). She sees the results of this study as having been confirmed by narrative experiments in schools and concludes that a child achieves “narrative competence” when he can orient himself in relation to examples. “Traditional motifs, character groups and pictures are transformed into imagined worlds of their own, open to all the sources by which the imaginations of today’s children are nourished” (2011: 41).

“Collective narrative processes—individual stories” (Dehn 2002). How these go together and the fact that models from the media appear in children’s narratives is demonstrated by Erlinger (2001), drawing on more than a hundred stories written by children in response to the TV series “Siebenstein.” Analyses of fantasy narratives (here from grade 8, age 14) display forms of “visualizing narrative” (Fix & Jost 2004: 168–69), which is not only shown in the use of single models but is inherent to the text on a conceptual level as regards cuts, shots and zooms. Hoffmann and Lüth (2007) investigate how narratives in response to a computer game in grades 3 and 4 (age 9 to 10) have their perspectives determined by an altered picture-perception. Game situations and played stories oscillate between factuality and fictionality. The avatar is both a protagonist of the narrated story (i.e. fictional) and the game-character with whom the player moves the narrative forward (i.e. factual). In nearly half of the stories, the pupils take in several perspectives simultaneously: their own as players and the avatar’s, whom they write about sometimes as “I,” sometimes as “he,” sometimes as “we” (260).

These findings about narrative acquisition demonstrate the close connection between experientiality, tellability and access to story repertoires. Children draw ever more deeply on these repertoires and so widen their access to the world,

narrative being “a central hinge between culture and mind” (Brockmeier & Carbaugh 2001: 10). McCabe shows how the acquisition of narrative ability is anchored in a culture’s narrative traditions (cf. McCabe 1997 for an overview). This also applies to experientiality and tellability. Narrative traditions exert a great influence not only on how children comprehend and remember stories (Invernizzi & Abouzeid 1995) but also on how they tell stories of their own.

With explicit reference to Herman’s (2009) concept of “storyworld” in the sense of available repertoires of stories, Spinner (2013: 171), analyzing the case of a spontaneous monological narrative by a seven-year-old girl without any addressee present, explains in detail how biographical narration of urgent experiences is permeated by transformations of narratives from a children’s book. The case study makes clear the existential significance of narration for self-affirmation. People feel an urge to put what they feel and imagine into some form. One of these forms is narration, even if, as Gertrude Stein had it, the interlocutor may not understand the narrative: “It is a well-known fact that no human being can really stand not being able to tell some one something, you can see an audience not understanding does not make any difference as long as any one can tell any one something” (1935: 56).

This emphasis on the significance of narrating, rather than on being heard, does not mean that scaffolding is not also important in processes of appropriation and transfer. This has been investigated for both factual and fictional narration:

Hausendorf and Quasthoff (1996) not only tease out what children have to do (demonstrate the relevance of content and/or form, bring out themes, elaborate and/or dramatize, conclude, segue), but they also show that references by adults to the story’s content foster the child’s narrative ability. McCabe (1997) also shows that the type of input provided by an adult exerts considerable influence on real-life narratives and that children narrate for longer and with greater structural complexity the more highly elaborated that input is. Of particular interest in educational contexts is the observation that children whose parents did more to extend the topic during parent-child reminiscing resorted more frequently to evaluating the narratives they structured themselves, indicating that parental interest in a child’s past experience supports the development of evaluative elements more than does specific parental attention to evaluation (Peterson & McCabe 2004: 41). That not only narrative development but also scaffolding displays genre-specific characteristics is shown by Kern and Quasthoff (2005), using the examples of fantasy-stories and real-life narratives. This is further attested by Pramling and Ødegaard’s (2011) study of scaffolding by pre-school teachers for one- to four-year-old nursery children in the shared development of a story in response to various picture cards, or in the gradual reconstruction of a child’s narrative of a

sibling's baptism. In fictional narration, the teachers need only remind the children of familiar formulae for openings and endings, since the children already know them. The upshot, which is directed above all at the equalizing of socio-cultural difference in such settings, is that "Learning to narrate means appropriating a cultural mould for sense-making and communication, through which we learn and make sense of the fantastic [...] as well as the ordinary [...], ourselves and each other" (32). Other forms of this type of scaffolding are prompts for fictional narration in books or picture-books, a teacher's narrative (cf. Wardetzky) or a computer game as a mixture of fictional and factual narration.

4.0.2 Oral and Written Narration

Narrating a story means that the narrator places himself at a distance from the momentary situation, regardless of whether he is narrating factually or fictionally or of whether this is orally or in writing. This abstraction from the situation is an essential characteristic of conceptual writtenness in Koch and Oesterreicher's (1985) sense, i.e. of decontextualized use of language. In this sense, narration is an excellent medium for the full education of a person. This applies to written narration even more than to schoolchildren's oral narration. The transition to writing has been investigated by Merklinger (2011), who discovered that pre-school children and those just starting school (at age 6) dictate their ideas for a written response to a picture book. In speaking and then in seeing how the words are written down before their eyes, the children gain the experience of a writing situation. This changes not only the way they articulate (speaking more slowly, pronouncing case endings) but also how they phrase their stories. In this way, dictation can be a bridge to written narration.

In reference to fairytales, Wardetzky and Weigel (2008) showed how children's narration can be stimulated by the narratives of professional story-tellers who, every week for two years, told classes from 16 schools (with children from 27 nations) fairytales from around the world without simplifying the language. This oral narration, in which voice, gesture and facial expression are central, is clearly distinguished from everyday narratives or from such institutionalized narrative forms as the "What I did at the weekend" type in schools. Children become familiar with pictures, motifs and conflict groupings which they can apply to their own experiences, imagine and transform, first through oral re-telling, re-making, invention of their own fairytales, and later through written narration. Wardetzky sees this narration as an "incubation period of the oral" (2010: 46). In this project of cultural language help, therefore, oral expression provides a basis for written expression.

Wieler examines teaching methods (lesson reports and the children's work) and

shows that the written narratives of multi-lingual children in grades 1 and 2 (age 6 to 7) in response to a wordless picture book (*The Snowman*) are far more diverse than their contributions to discussion in class. This applies to the portrayal of temporal structure and relationships as “integrated dialogic sequences” and, above all, to attempts to convey the perspective of the characters in the story (2011: 140). Writing allows the children to “give expression to the experiences relevant to them” in their engagement with the book (144). Wieler sees the reasons for this higher diversity as “freedom from the communicative pressure of class discussion” and a longer time allowed for planning to write (140). Becker (2002) compared oral and written fantasy and real-life narratives from the end of first year. She shows that written narratives of both types contain considerably more emotional markers and that fantasy narratives already contain “genre schemes” (36; cf. Weinhold 2005). Writing frees up to a higher degree the narrative resources that children have gathered through contact with stories. In that sense, it is also plausible that the supportive interaction of an adult is more necessary in real-life narratives than in fantasy ones (Becker 2005; Kern & Quasthoff 2005; Ohlhus & Quasthoff 2005).

4.1 Teaching

Since the beginning of the 20th century, written real-life narratives have stood on center stage in primary school writing lessons, long based on the introduction—climax—conclusion template. As early as 1968, Geißler pointed out that this could lead to “sensationalism” and that personal “experience” (in Dilthey’s sense), which is centered around a core, could not be evaluated. Geißler thus argued that “free, fictional narrative, so-called fantasy narrative, should be taken into greater account” (112). Up till the “communicative turn” in the teaching of German in the 1970s, this form remained dominant as part of a quartet with depicting, reporting and describing. Even with the extension of writing practice to such types as giving instructions and arguing and with the abandonment of description, narrative retained its dominant position in scholastic practice on the assumption that it was the basis of the other types of text. However, that these forms do in fact develop independently of one another has been emphatically shown by Augst et al. (2007) in their long-term study.

The findings from research suggest that today’s teaching ought to place greater emphasis on fiction as a means to imagining one’s own concerns in an unfamiliar story (in reception) and to bringing them to expression (in production), rather than on real-life narratives and the everyday stories told in school. This also goes for written narratives based on narrative prompts, including oral ones, rather than on the children’s oral narratives.

4.1.1

Experientiality und Tellability

Narration in an institutional framework, particularly in school, is a sensitive topic, because the object of the lesson bears on the whole person far more than other types of discourse do. If the narrating of a story becomes too standardized, experientiality and tellability are at risk of being lost, thus limiting narration to forms “relevant in school” such as wordless picture strips or climactic narratives.

In schools, whose educational mandate is bound up with evaluation of performance and selection, it is particularly the criterion of experientiality that requires a sensitive approach. If, as in a morning story circle, personal experiences or shared class experiences such as braid narrative (Wagner 1986) become part of the lesson, this can even potentially foster the development of a shared class identity.

However, this situation places a high demand on teachers not to pass judgment on children’s expression of experientiality. It seems more advantageous to allow pupils to transform their experiences within the “protection” of a fictional story. This has been confirmed by the results of research into fantasy narratives. Teaching narration can play a central role both in language development and in the wider sense of a rounded education, especially for pupils who have little opportunity in their domestic environment to experience, whether by listening, reading or narrating, how narration can function as a means of constructing identity.

Of decisive importance is the teachers’ attitude. If they assume that what their pupils are narrating necessarily is worth telling, then they can accompany the story with reactions that bring tellability to the surface through a combination of questions and comments (cf. McCabe 1997: 466; see also the concept of a “resource-oriented narrative didactics” in Ohlhus & Stude 2009: 480).

4.1.4 Story Repertoires

Studies that examine child narration in the context of the available story repertoires contain many examples of implicit learning. Appropriating and playing with rhetorical figures and models of text and genre takes place first operatively, not declaratively, without the learners being able to say what is going on. This implicit learning mode appears “above all in circumstances of high complexity” and is more successful in these circumstances than explicitly directed learning (Neuweg 2000: 203). It is specifically the high complexity of narration that invites implicit learning processes. “If the system in use is too simple, or if the code can be broken by conscious effort, then one will not see implicit processes” (Reber 1989: 220, in reference to artificial grammars). From this perspective, it is no longer entirely up to the teachers to determine precisely what is to be taught and, above all, what is to be learned. It is far more about conceiving stimuli and challenges for implicit learning

processes, thus extending children's resources. As regards narration in the institutional framework of school, it must be considered whether the explicit teaching of structural characteristics is not more advisable for other types of text such as reporting or instruction, which do not bear on the individual in the same way as real-life narratives.

Taking experientiality, tellability and story repertoires into account when planning lessons means, above all, searching for answers to the following questions: Do pupils have the opportunity to receptively and productively construct story repertoires so as to become conscious of their own experiences, to process them and so also gain a distance from them? Do pupils have the opportunity to choose for themselves what they consider worth telling? Can pupils extend their repertoires of culturally pre-formed stories in the lesson? Many children develop these kinds of story repertoires from pictures and modern media.

In narratology (Ryan → Narration in Various Media [5]; Kuhn & Schmidt → Narration in Film [6]), in art pedagogy (e.g. Sowa 2012) and in (native) language didactics (e.g. Maiwald 2012), interest has widened in the past decades to encompass narration with and in response to (moving) pictures (Dehn 2007; Dehn et al. 2011; Dehn et al. 2004; Abraham & Sowa 2012; Schüler 2013). In lessons, however, these forms do not yet play a central role. It is a question that comes down to the "connection between narrative imagination and pictorial representation" (Sowa 2012: 358), to "making pictures/images talk" (Maiwald 2012: 38).

If pupils become familiar with numerous varieties of culturally based narratives, both verbal and visual, and if they are given the opportunity to transform what they have heard and seen into words, pictures and figures and to bring their experience to a narrative form of expression as well as to exchange their views about this experience with others, then identity can be constructed in social contexts and story repertoires are developed on which the pupils can draw when they tell a story themselves.

5 Topics for Further Investigation

To the best of our knowledge, no research has been carried out as to how the reception of scripts develops in early childhood relative to the reception of stories where a breach of expectation occurs. The findings on child narration in the context of story repertoires require differentiation and specification in both institutional and familial contexts. The narration of fictional stories deserves particular attention.

a) How does model formation develop in fictional narration (oral and written) in pre-school and school (as a controlled long-term study)? b) How can fictional stories

(narration by professional storytellers, teachers' narratives, reading of narrative literature and use of children's media in pre-school, school and at home) foster narrative acquisition? In reference to model formation and decontextualization of language use, both oral and written? c) What function do pictorial forms of narration have in verbal narration and vice versa? And how can this be observed in children's narratives? d) How can explicit teaching (e.g. the analysis of plot structure and forms of representation) encourage fictional narration? e) What forms of scaffolding and task assignment prove beneficial, especially for the beginnings of factual and fictional narration?

(Translated by Alexander Starritt)

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