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THE ORIGINS, THE LIFE AND THE REFLECTIONS OF STORIES ABOUT (NON)MEDIATED CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE IN THE FAMILY AND SMALL GROUPS

SUMMARY

Ever since its birth, a child is a part of a narrative environment where people largely narrate their own and the child's past experience. Children may be onlookers, they may be literally merely present while a narrative or a conversation is taking place, they may be more or less independent participants, and sometimes they may be independent narrators, which depends on the child's age, its interests and current activities, the adults' intentions and their current activities, the conversational context and numerous social and cultural factors.

Children may hear certain narratives of other people's experience several times and may remember them, making them a part of their own repertoire of the mediated experience of others. Certain narratives about the child's own experience may become a part of the child's active repertoire by mediation of others (thus becoming a personal narrative in the sense of a folklorist genre); other narratives may remain unmediated. Children may hear or tell certain stories only once, forgetting many of them and remembering only some. They may influence the child's perception of the self and others. Sometimes, they may produce unexpected effects, becoming narratives important for the life of the child and the future adult.

There are a variety of narrative practices about personal experience in the narrative context in which the child lives. They may have far-reaching effects and repercussions on the narrative practices of the child and the future adult, as well as on his/her social construction of the self. Given this background, this article focuses on the possibilities of examining the situatedness of narratives in a conversation as well as the situatedness of narratives in the life of an individual, the family and small groups, based on an example of four common narrative practices.

Key words: narrative socialization, storytelling about childhood, narrative environment, ethnography of communication, conversation analysis, language socialization research