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DISAGREEMENT IN PRESCHOOLERS' NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

The article considers disagreement as it occurs in the process of narrative text co-construction by peer participants. The data come from a study of 162 children between the ages of four and seven. The children participated in the study as co-narrators (two children in the role of co-narrators), who constructed a text for a peer listener (a third child in the role of listener). The analyzed material consisted of 93 narrative texts. Two basic dimensions as comprising the source of contradictory positions taken by discourse participants were identified: the semantic (or textual) and the interactional (or pragmatic). The most arguable aspects were related to the content of narration and to the process of text construction.The role of the opponent, as well as the ways of reaching agreement, are examined.

Introduction

There are at least two reasons why researchers are interested in studying how children oppose their partners (peers or adults) and in investigating children's disagreements. Firstly, the changes in children's ways of argumentation and in the dynamic of the disagreements reflect the development of socio-cognitive skills. Secondly, by investigating the variation of form and content of the arguments, the context in which they arise, the ways in which they are resolved and their consequences, we are able to comprehend the role of disagreement in the development of communicative competence. It was emphasized by Shugar (1995, p. 140) that all researchers working on this topic "agree with the general thesis that the appearance of contradictory standpoints triggers for a child the catalyzing processes

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in many cognitive dimensions: socio-cognitive, communicational and interactive, and socio-linguistic. This conviction is based on the assumption that in the process of oppositional discourse a person has to identify and coordinate contradictory viewpoints regarding any given issue".

Also Tomasello (2002), when characterizing the types of experiences (the types of discourse) that allow children to confront differences in viewpoints, draws attention to the situations in the conversations of a child with an adult partner, when lack of agreement occurs. The experience of this sort of situation by a child is of crucial importance, as "in order to develop communicative competence, one needs to be able to admit a partner's standpoint. And the awareness that in any given situation different viewpoints exist is knowledge of the mind and its processes" (Białecka-Pikul, 2002, p. 46). The research we present here concentrates on lack of agreement in narrations of pre-school children.

It is emphasized in the literature that narration is one of the earliest and most creative forms of children's linguistic activity. In the construction of stories, especially rapid progress is observed in children between 2 and 7 years of age. One can distinguish two approaches in the research on children's narration (see Bokus, 1988, 1991). One is monologue characterized by analysis of the text of the story in reference to its structure, or some chosen features or dimensions. This approach has one serious limitation. It ignores the fact that narration is not the product of discourse of a monologic nature and overlooks the interactive aspects of narration. "Narration, as an act of speech, is embedded in the processes of communication: a story is told by somebody, to somebody, because of something and for something. The story is also told about something" (Mitosek, 2001). McNamee (1979) stresses in reference to Vygotsky's theory, that the narrative abilities of children develop interaction with an adult person. The adult does not teach a child how to tell the story by explaining or instructing how it should be done, but simply by bringing the child into the task of narration. The adult first helps the child to understand what he or she should talk about and creates the narration for the child. He or she can participate in the process of narration by repeating the adult's utterances and by asking questions. Then the adult helps children to create the narrative by encouraging them to tell or to continue telling the story. This is achieved by careful listening, questioning or completing the child's story with necessary elements. Thus most frequently we deal with narration in the form of a dialog between child and adult. This is emphasized also by Shugar (2001, p. 85), who points out that "the primary context of narration creation is one of conversation". Therefore it is difficult to treat narration as the product of monologue discourse. Note also the standpoint of Bokus (1991, p. 42), who says that the monologue approach to children's narration "seems to be a methodological error". A child creates narrative text in the course of interactive discourse with an adult who is not just a passive recipient but whose actions influence the child's narration. This issue remains untouched by the monologic approach. Only an interactive approach

enables the study of the impact of an adult partner on children's narration. It also enables consideration of the role of both verbal and nonverbal behavior of the adult partner on the observed process (see Bokus, 1978, 1988).

Extensive evidence exists showing that the interaction of a child with an adult (an asymmetric relation) is characterized by a different dynamic as compared to that with another child (a symmetric relation) (see Shugar & Bokus, 1988; Shugar, 1995). A child narrator creates a story differently depending on whether the listener is younger or older. A narration differs also depending on why the story is told. Children construct their narratives in one way when the task of a listener is to draw a picture related to the story, and in another way for example when the task is to prepare a puppet show. Furthermore, when the function of the story differs, the narration is constructed differently. A narrative that aims at providing information is not the same as one of the moralizing type (Bokus, 2000). Moreover, a child describes a picture to an adult differently when the listener can see the picture and when the picture is not available for the listener and the child is the only source of knowledge about it (Bokus, 1978, 1991a). The above studies provide evidence that a child wants "to perform well in the role of a competent and reliable source of information" (Bokus & Shugar; 1985). And so children's narration differs depending on whether the child is able – or not – to perform such a role.

We have already indicated that a narration appears not only in the discourse of a child and an adult, but also in the spontaneous behavior of children. Researchers studying narration only recently have shown an interest in how children create narration within peer interaction. The focal point of the analyses here is the process of co-creation of a text by two or more narrators, providing the information about events to one or more listeners (see Preece, 1987; Bokus, 1991). When a story is created jointly by two peer narrators, they can act as equal partners, having similar competences and knowledge about the task which they are to perform together (in a symmetric relation). Such a situation gives a child the experience of being a subject, or the independent author of his or her own actions (see Shugar, 1989; Kofta, 1989). The way in which children share the authorship, creation and control over a common task with a partner can be formed freely in the course of an interaction.

Research questions

In this article we assume, after Bokus (1991, pp. 58-59, 2000, p. 28), that the narrative text, as a semantic language unit, is realized in discourse utterances (see also Shugar, 1993, 1995), where the discourse is treated as a pragmatic unit of language. Narrative text is created in a discourse process. Narration can be analyzed both on a textual level (semantic), which means analyzing the content introduced by discourse participants, as well as on a pragmatic level (interactive), which means clarifying who, when, and how introduces or has been introduced the par-

ticular information. Narration is treated as the common product of speaker-listener discourse, in which the discourse participants not only realize their narrative goals (constructing a story), but also negotiate their roles. Constructing a story by a peer group is a process of co-operation in which the participants must not only settle the roles, but also negotiate, accept and co-ordinate their own interpretations of what has happened. This leads to a situation where disagreement can relate to the semantic aspects of the constructed text as well as to the interactive side of the discourse.

The research questions which we attempt to answer in this study are formulated as follows:
1. On which dimensions of narrative activity do the discourse participants disagree?
2. Of the discourse participants, who expresses disagreement?
3. In what way do the discourse participants resolve adisagreement?

Subjects and material

A total of 162 children aged between 4 and 7 years took part in the research (54 children at each of three age levels: 4;3 – 4;9, 5;3 – 5;9 and 6;3 – 6;9). Of these, 108 children (36 at each level) recounted to peer listeners the adventure of film heroes. Fifty-four children (18 at each age level) played the role of listeners who could ask questions when they did not understand what has been said.

The children who participated in the study as co-narrators (two children in the role of co-narrator) constructed together a text for the other peer listener (one child in role of listener). In all cases the gender of the co-narrators was the same. In nearly half of the cases the listeners were of the same gender as the co-narrators and in the remaining cases were of the opposite gender.

The film entitled "Pear story" [used by Chafe and his co-workers (see Kurcz, 1987) in cross-cultural studies on the role of internal schemas in text construction] was seen by the narrators (but not by the listeners). The film starts with a scene where a man is picking pears from a pear-tree in a garden. A boy on a bicycle passes by. He looks all around and takes one basket of pears. Following that, there is a bicycle accident and three other boys help the main character. As a reward they get three pears, one for each of them. At the end of the film they pass by in front of the gardener and he observes them eating the pears. The film lasts about six minutes and there is no speech, but only a nonverbal soundtrack with sound effects.

The investigation had two phases: the preparatory phase, when the co-narrators planned the narrative discourse, and the narration phase proper, when they produced the narrative discourse. According to the research design, the second phase was followed by a preparation of a picture book about the narrative heroes' adventure. The narrative discourse in both phases was recorded. The children's nonverbal behaviors were also registered on observation protocols. The material

used in our analysis consisted of 93 narrative texts, 39 produced by two co-narrators in the preparatory phase and 54 produced in the narration phase proper. A total of 4463 child utterances in roles of narrators and listeners were analyzed.

Method of analysis

Out of the total material, we selected the cases of disagreement between the discourse partners. For each such case, it is identified, who initiated the discourse (N_1), who continued the discourse (N_2), or who expressed an objection (the listener – L) against things said or done (or against the way they were said or done). Moreover, for each such case, it is identified whether the disagreement relates to the content or to the process of the narration.

When the contradictory opinions relate to the content of the narration, that is, to the semantic dimension of the constructed text, they refer to the following informational categories:

1. The hero's/ heroes' characteristics – the contradictory opinions of discourse partners relate to: how many heroes there were, who were there, what they looked like, e.g.:

N_1 (Girl 5;5) N_2 (Girl 5;8)

Ten pan zrywał gruszki. Miał taki fartuch z taką kieszenią. Miał tutaj chustkę, czerwoną
'This man was picking up the pears. He had this apron with a pocket. And he had here such a hankie, red'

                              Nie, brązową
                              'No, a brown one'

2. The hero's/ heroes' actions – the contradictory opinions relate to the actions taken by the hero-actor, e.g.:

N_1 (Boy 6;5) N_2 (Boy 6;5)
No bo to było tak, taki facet ścinał gruszki
'And it was this way that this guy was cutting off the pears'

                              Wcale nie ścina, tylko on zrywa
                              'Not cutting off, he was picking them'

3. The object/ objects and their characteristics – the contradictory opinions of the discourse partners relate to what objects (thing/ things or animal/ animals) were the actions of the hero connected with, how many objects were there, and where, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Girl 4;4)   N$_2$ (Girl 4;7)

Zrywał pan jabłka, jeden mu spadł i
później
'He was picking the apples one fell
down and then'

                                                Nie, gruszki
                                                'No, the pears'

4. The order of the hero's/ heroes' actions – the disagreement between the
discourse partners relates to the order of actions of one hero or of various heroes,
e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;4)   N$_2$ (Girl 6;5)

Wiesz co, wiesz, jak się zaczął ten film?
Chyba że, jak pan zbierał gruszki do
koszyka
'You know what, you know how this
film starts? I think, it is when a man
picks pears to put into a basket'

                                                Nie, jak on przyjechał rowerem
                                                'No, when he comes on a bicycle'

5. An accidental event experienced by the hero and the contradictory opin-
ions of the discourse partners as to the events occuring accidentally to the hero
(what happened to him), e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;9)   N$_2$ (Girl 6;5)
                                                I zasypały jego kamienie
                                                'And the stones fell down on him'

Nie, te gruszki mu się tak wysypały, bo,
bo, bo spojrzał na dziewczynkę i
zapomniał o drodze
'No, these pears spilled out, cause,
cause, cause he looked at the girl and
forgot about the road'

6. The mental states or processes attributed to the hero – the disagreement
between the discourse partners relates to the internal states and processes attrib-
uted to the hero and their content, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;6)   N$_2$ (Boy 6;4)
Oni później przechodzili obok tego
faceta i sobie
'Later they were passing by next to this
guy and they'

Jakby nigdy nic! Nic nie mówili, że to nie oni ukradli
'As if nothing happened! And they didn't say that they hadn't stolen'

I jeszcze, a ten facet dopiero zobaczył ten koszyk, że jest pusty, i pomyślał, że to oni
'And more, and this guy only, only when he saw that the basket is empty, he thought it was them'

Nie, on pewnie sobie pomyślał, że trzy gruszki, ale cały koszyk ukradli?
Nie wiedział, czy to oni. On zresztą tak szybko liczył
'No, he rather thought, three pears, but they had stolen the whole basket?
He didn't know if they had done that. He counted fast, anyway'

Nie, oni przechodzili i tylko z dala było gruszki widać, no i z dala od tego faceta
'No, they were passing by and only from far off one could see the pears and far away from this guy'

When the contradictory opinions relate to the process creating the narration text, that is, to the interactive dimension of the discourse, they refer to the following informational categories:

1. The person of the narrator – the contradictory opinions of the discourse partner relate to:

(a) Who (which of the narrators) will tell the story (now or in the future) or who will start to speak, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 4;7)   N$_2$ (Boy 4;3)
No to ty, ty mów
'So you, you speak'

                                    Nie, bo zapomniałem
                                    'No, cause I've forgotten'

(b) Who (which of the narrators) will tell the given part of the story, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;3)   N$_2$ (Boy 6;3)
Wiesz co, ja będę opowiadał o, o rowerze, o tym, jak się stuknęli
'You know what, I will tell about, about a bicycle, how they run into'

Nie, ja chcę o tym
'No, I want to tell about it'

2. The finishing of the story – the disagreement between the discourse partners relates to the finishing of the story telling and they concentrate on:

(a) Whether the story has been already finished, e.g.:

N_1 (Boy 4;5)	N_2 (Boy 4;4)
	Już, już skończyliśmy 'We've already, already finished'
Ale nie 'But no'	
	Skończyliśmy 'We've finished'
Nie 'No'	
	Skończyliśmy 'We've finished'

(b) Whether the whole content of the film has been described, or is there anything else be told to the listener, e.g.:

N_1 (Girl 5;4)	N_2 (Girl 5;4)
I koniec 'And that's the end'	
	Nie 'No'
I jeszcze coś było, ale dalej nie pamiętamy 'And there was something else, but we cannot remember'	

3. The way the story is told – the contradictory opinions of the discourse partners relate to the way the story is told, how the story should be told:

(a) Independently or together with a partner, e.g.:

N_1 (Girl 6;5)	N_2 (Girl 6;7)
Dobra, powiem, może powiemy najpierw, że, ja powiem, że 'OK., first maybe we tell, first that I will tell that'	
	Może wszystko razem powiemy 'Maybe we will tell everything together'
No nie. Nie, będzie bez sensu, bo każda	

będzie, co innego mówiła
'Well, no. No, it makes no sense, cause
each of us will tell something different'

(b) Quietly or loudly, in proper language, e.g.:

N$_2$ (Boy 4;8)   L (Boy 4;4)
No to tak… (szeptem)
'So it was…' (whispering)

                                               Ale głośniej! Bo ja nic nie słyszę!
                                               'But louder, cause I can't hear any-
                                               thing!'

(c) The order of telling the content of the film: from the beginning, according to the sequence of the film scenes, or from the end; should they stick to the content of the film or should they add something from themselves; should they come back or not to the thing already said (with or without repetition), e.g.:

N$_1$ (Girl 5;7)   N$_2$ (Girl 5;5)
Ja zacznę od końca
'I will start from the end'

                                               Ja też od końca
                                               'Me too, from the end'

Nie. Ty będziesz opowiadać od samego
początku
'No. You will tell from the beginning'

                                               Bo ty nie pamiętasz. Dobra
                                             'Because you don't remember, OK.'

4. Other situations not connected directly with the story telling process – the disagreement between the discourse partners does not refer directly to the story telling but to:

(a) Formal characteristics of the film, as the basis for the story telling, e.g.:

N1 (Girl 6;5)   N2 (Girl 6;7)   L (Girl 6;6)
                                                                               A, a, a było kolorowe, czy
                                                                               czarno-białe?
                                                                               'And, and, and were they in
                                                                               color or black and white?'

Mhm, kolorowe, ale takie
sta..., stary film, takie tro-
chę kolorowe
'Mhm, in color, but such
ol… an old film, just, a lit-
tle color'

No, no. Miał czerwoną
chustkę ubraną, a ten ko-
lor był dobry
'Yeah, yeah. He had a red
hankie on, and this color
was good'

Kolorowy był
'It was in color'

(b) The final outcome of the narration, that is, the preparation of the picture
book based on the story, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;5)   N$_2$ (Boy 6;4)   L (Boy 6;8)
A ja tę bandę, ja narysuję
ci, co mu pomogli
'And me, this strip, I will
draw it, those, who helped
him'

                         Ja też
                         'Me, too'

                                              A ja narysuję, ja narysu-
                                              ję…To muszą być trzy inne
                                              'And I will draw, I'll
                                              draw…These have to be
                                              three different'

                         Nie
                         'No'

Tak
'Yes'

(c) The characteristics of the interaction partners: their identity, mutual rela-
tions, their preferences, likes and dislikes, as well as possibilities, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Boy 6;3)   N$_2$ (Boy 6;3)
                                                    Wiesz, że ja się nie nazywam Grześ
                                                    Kowalski. Nazywam się Grześ Paweł
                                                    Kowalski.
                                                    'You know, my name is not Grześ
                                                    Kowalski[1]. My name is Grześ Paweł
                                                    Kowalski'

Paweł? Grześ Kowalski

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[1] The name "Kowalski" replaces the real name of a child.

Nie, Grześ Paweł Kowalski
'No, Grześ Paweł Kowalski'

No to dobra, no to…
'OK., so…'

Ale mów na mnie Paweł
'But call me Paweł'

(d) The place where the task took place (a room and its setting) e.g.:

N_1 (Boy 5;4) N_2 (Boy 5;4)
Musimy Kubie to opowiedzieć, ale wąż
zwiąże nas zaraz
'We have to tell the story to Kuba but
the snake will tie us together'

Kto zwiąże?
'Who will tie us?'

Ten gruby wąż
'This fat snake'

On nie jest żywy, co ty. On jest, to jest
taka zabawka w ogóle
'It is not alive, come on. This is a kind
of a toy, anyway'

Nie. Ten to jest naprawdę, prawdziwy wąż
'No. This is for real, a real snake'

A pójdź i przyjrzyj mu się
'And go and take a good look at it'

The disagreement between the discourse partners, which relates to the introduced content or to the constructing the narration, is an obstacle for the continuation of this process. Therefore, we investigate how the children deal with the discrepancies in their standpoints and reach agreement on the controversial issues. The following strategies are identified:

1. The acceptance by the proponent of the contradictory opinion of the opponent – in such cases the discrepancy in viewpoints is resolved, since the proponent accepts the position of the opponent. Then the discrepancy disappears, e.g.:

N_1 (Boy 4;7) N_2 (Boy 4;3)
I potknął się o kamień
'He stumbled over the stone'

Nie, o kubeł. O kubeł, bo mu spadł ku-
beł, a on się potknął o ten…
'No, over the bucket. Over the bucket,
'cause it fell over and he stumbled over
it...'

Tak. I, i spadł tak
'Yes. And, and it fell over'

2. The cancellation of the contradictory opinion by the opponent – in such cases, the opponent withdraws his viewpoint and accepts the position of the proponent. By that, the discrepancy disappears, e.g.:

N_1 (Girl 5;4) N_2 (Girl 5;4)

Ty opowiesz Łukaszowi (imię dziecka-
słuchacza)
'You tell the story to Lukasz' (a name
of the child-listener)

                                                       Nie, ty
                                                       'No, you'

Ty
'You'

3. The proposal of a compromise by one of the sides – in such cases the discrepancy is resolved by a compromise, suggested by one of the discourse partners, e.g.:

N_1 (Girl 5;5) N_2 (Girl 5;3)
(the children discuss the order in which they will take the picture books)

                                                       Ty pierwsza zabierzesz, Mikołaj (imię
                                                       dziecka-słuchacza) *drugi, a ja trzecia*
                                                       'You take it first, Mikołaj (the name of a
                                                       child-listener) you second, and me – third'

Nie, ty pierwsza
'No, you first'

                                                       Nie
                                                       'No'

Ty
'You'

                                                       No dobra, ja nie zabiorę pierwsza
                                                       'OK., but I won't take it first'

Ja też nie zabiorę, to Mikołaj pierwszy
'I won't either, so Mikołaj will take it
first'

                                                       No dobra
                                                       'Well, OK.'

Ja po Mikołaju, a ty ostatnia
'I'll take it after Mikołaj, and you last'

                                                       No
                                                       'Yeah'

4. No solution – in such cases the discrepancy of the positions remains and the discourse partners do not reach an agreement, e.g.:

N$_1$ (Girl 6;9)

Potem się poślizgnął, kosz gruszek miał tu, przy kierownicy, cały kosz się wy-wrócił
'Then he slipped, he had the basket of pears, here, at the handle, and the whole basket fell over'

                                    N$_2$ (Girl 6;3)

                                    Przewrócił
                                    'Fell down'

Wywrócił
'Fell over'

                                    Przewrócił
                                    'Fell down'

I, I, wywrócił
'And, and, fell over'

                                    Przewrócił
                                    'Fell down'

Nie, tak nie było
'No, it was not like that'

Results

In the analyzed material[2] there are 194 cases of contradictory positions of the discourse partners. For the 4-year-olds there are 32 such cases, for the 5-year-olds 59 cases, and for the 6-year-olds there are 103 cases.

The lack of agreement between the discourse partners relates to the content introduced into the narration or to the process of narration. In other words, it refers to either the semantic or interactive dimension of the discourse. Which one is more controversial and produces more frequent disagreements? The analyses show that the discrepancies in viewpoints are produced meaningfully more often in regard to the semantic dimension. Among all 194 situations of contradictory positions, 109 cases (56,2%) relate to the content of the narration and the remaining 85 cases (43,8%) to the process of narration creation. The difference between these proportions is statistically significant ($z = 3,47$; $p < 0,05$).

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[2] The analysis of the material, which aimed at identifying the cases of disagreement, was conducted independently by two researchers. The analysis of the contradictory standpoints, categorizing them on dimensions of narrations and their aspects, was conducted by three independent judges. Inter-rater reliability was over 90%.

Table 1. The contradictory positions related to the semantic or interactive dimension

| Dimension | Age of children | | | | | | Total | |
| | 4-year-olds | | 5-year-olds | | 6-year-olds | | | |
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Semantic	18	53,3	27	45,8	64	62,1	109	56,2
Interactive	14	43,7	32	54,2	39	37,9	85	43,8
Total	32	100,0	59	100,0	103	100,0	194	100,0

The counts of the cases, when the disagreement occurs in the reference to semantic or interactive dimensions are presented in Table 1 for each age level.

Story content

Which categories related to narrative content are the most disputed, leading to disagreement between 4-7-year-old participants in the narration discourse? The answer to this question is presented graphically in Figure 1. It depicts the frequencies of all content-related categories of disagreement that appear in the narration of the children aged 4, 5 and 6.

Figure 1. The contradictory positions related to the semantic dimension
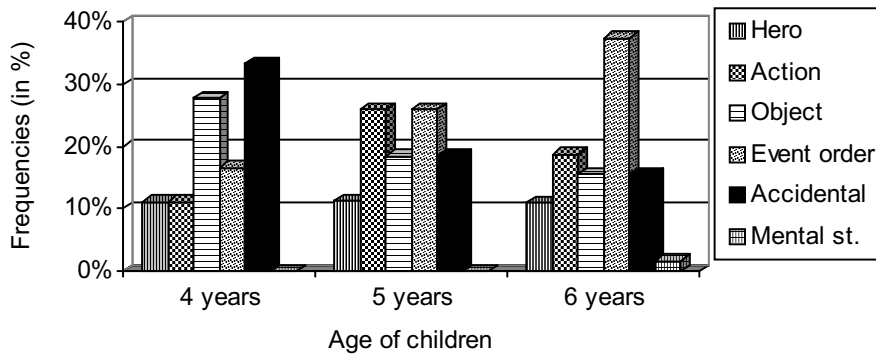
For the children of age 4, the cases of contradictory opinions relating to story content most frequently refer to accidental events experienced by the hero (33,3%), objects, to which actions of the hero were connected (27,8%) and the order of his actions (16,7%). The differences between the share of this third category and the shares of the two less controversial aspects is not statistically significant (see Table 2). These last categories that produce less disagreement relate to the hero's actions (11,1%) and to the hero's person (11,1%).

The lack of agreement between 5-year-old children most commonly refers to the hero's actions (29,5%) and their order (29,5%), followed by accidental events experienced by the hero (18,5%) and objects, to which his actions were connected (18.5%). Finally, the last category refers to the person of the hero (11,2%). If we

Table 2. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the semantic dimension of narration, children of age 4

Category	Action	Object	Event order	Accidental
Hero	0,00	1,84*	0,70	2,34*
Action		1,84*	0,70	2,34*
Object			1,14	0,50
Event order				1,65

*$p < 0.05$

compare these shares, however, only the first and second category (actions of the hero and their order were disputable to the same extent) differ significantly from the last category – the hero's person (see Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the semantic dimension of narration, children of age 5.

Category	Action	Object	Event order	Accidental
Hero	2,01*	1,08	2,01*	1,08
Action		0,93	0,00	0,93
Object			0,93	0,00
Event order				0,93

*$p < 0.05$

As far as the content of the story is concerned, for the children of age 6 the order of the hero's actions was the most disputable aspect (37,5%). The lack of agreement regarding this category occurs significantly more often than for any other category. The next, more controversial, categories are actions of the hero (18,8%), objects, to which these actions are related (15,6%), accidental events (15,6%) and the person of the hero (10,9%). The frequencies of arguments that refer to the four categories are all differ significantly from the frequency of the contradictory positions on the clearly least controversial aspect of the narration: mental states attributed to the hero (1,6%) (see Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the semantic dimension of narration, children of age 6.

Category	Action	Object	Event order	Accidental	Mental st.
Hero	1,79*	1,11	5,16*	1,11	2,79*
Action		0,68	3,37*	0,68	4,58*
Object			4,05*	0,00	3,90*
Event order				4,05*	7,95*
Accidental					3,90*

*$p < 0.05$

Figure 2. The contradictory positions related to the interactive dimension
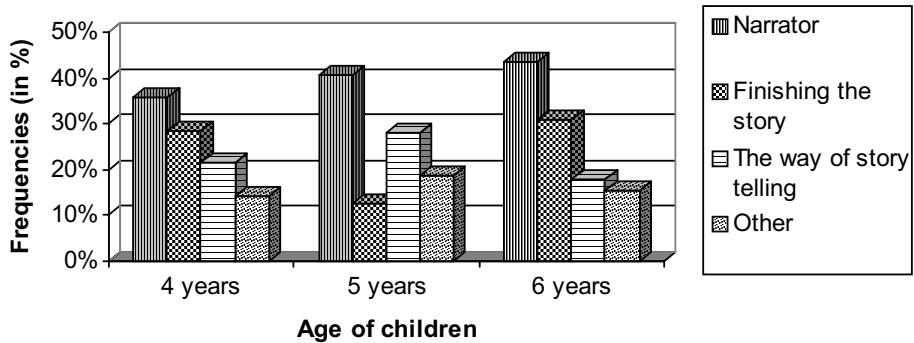
Overall, the order of the hero's actions is the most disputed category of narration content. For 4-year-old children, this aspect is one of the three most commonly argued ones, next to the accidental events experienced by the hero, and the objects connected to his actions. For the 5-year-olds, all elements of the semantic dimension are disputed with similar frequencies. Still, for this age group as well, the order of events is most controversial, next to the issues related to the actions performed by the hero. Also, the children of age 6 argue about the order of the actions more often than about any other element of the narration.

In contrast, the mental states attributed to the hero are the least disputed category. Also, this issue appears as the source of disagreement only for the 6-year-old discourse partners.

The story telling process

Figure 2 presents the frequencies of the contradictory positions related to the second, less controversial, dimension of the discourse: the process of story creation.

For the children aged 4, the person of the narrator turns out to be the most disputable issue (35.7%). As far as other categories are concerned: the finishing of the story (28.6%), the way the story is told (21.4%), or any other situation, not directly connected to the process of narration, disagreement appears less frequently (see Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the interactive dimension of narration, children of age 4

Category	Finishing	Way of telling	Other
Narrator	2.59*	3.21*	3.91*
Finishing		0.76	1.32
Way of telling			0.70

*p < 0.05

Table 6. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the interactive dimension of narration, children of age 5

Category	Finishing	Way of telling	Other
Narrator	3.73*	1.49	2.74*
Finishing		2.23*	0.98
Way of telling			1.25

*$p < 0.05$

For the children of age 5, the person of the narrator (40.3%) again together with the way of the story is told produces the disagreement between discourse partners most frequently. When we compare, however, the frequency of contradictory opinions on the way the story should be told with the two remaining categories, that is, with the arguments caused by other situations, not related directly to the process of story telling (18.8%) and with the finishing of the narration (12.5%) – only the second comparison gives a result that is statistically significant (see Table 6).

The person of the narrator is the main issue of dispute for the 6-year-old children, too (43.6%). The remaining aspects are less controversial. These are: the finishing of the story (23.1%), the way the story is told (17.9%), and other situations (15,4%). The differences between frequencies related to these three categories and to the most common one, are statistically significant (see Table 7).

The most disputed aspect of the process of narration is clearly the person of the narrator. For the 4-year-old story-tellers, who would tell the story (now or in the future, first or at any given part of it) is the most common source of arguments that refer to the interactive dimension. In the group of children of age 5, also this topic prevails together with the way in which a story should be told. For 6-year-olds, again, the issue of the person of narrator dominates. The remaining categories are disputed less commonly.

Table 7. Comparison of the proportions of contradictory positions (z values) for the categories related to the interactive dimension of narration, children of age 6

Category	Finishing	Way of telling	Other
Narrator	2.74*	3.55*	3.97*
Finishing		0.81	1.22
Way of telling			0.42

*$p < 0.05$

Figure 3. The content of the story – taking the role of the opponent by the initiator (N1) or the partner continuing discourse (N2) and the listener (L)
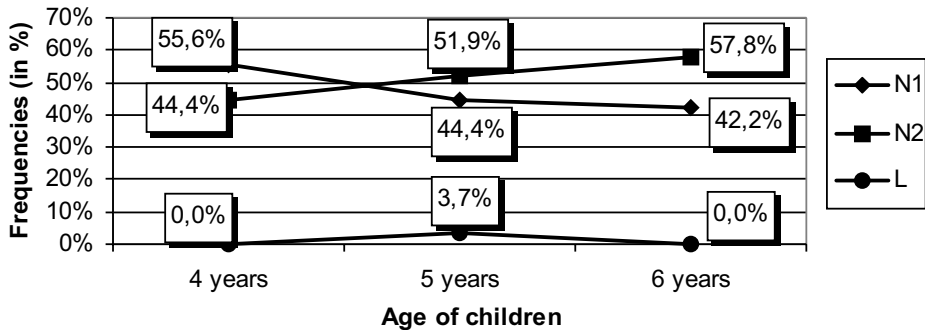
The role of the opponent

Figure 3 depicts how often the given discourse participant expresses a lack of disagreement regarding the content of the story (semantic dimension). It also shows (as in Figure 4) how often the role of opponent is taken by the children who were the listeners during the task. Note that the listeners participated only in this part of the study, i.e., at the stage of narration proper.

Both co-narrators take the role of narrator with the same frequency in the group of 4-year-olds ($z = 0.950$; nonsignificant). This is also the case for the 5-year-olds ($z = 0.755$; nonsignificant). In the group of 6-year-olds, the child who continues the discourse takes the role of opponent more frequently ($z = 2.504$; $p < 0.05$).

When the lack of agreement relates to the process of story telling (interactive dimension), for the 4-year-old children it is the continuator of the discourse who takes the role of the opponent most frequently ($z = 2.185$; $p<0.05$). The same situation is observed for the 5- year-olds ($z = 2.144$; $p < 0.05$). However, in the group of 6-year-old children, both co-narrators take the role of opponent with equal frequency ($z = 0.543$; nonsignificant).

Figure 4. The process of narration - taking the role of the opponent by the initiator (N1) or the partner continuing discourse (N2) and the listener (L)
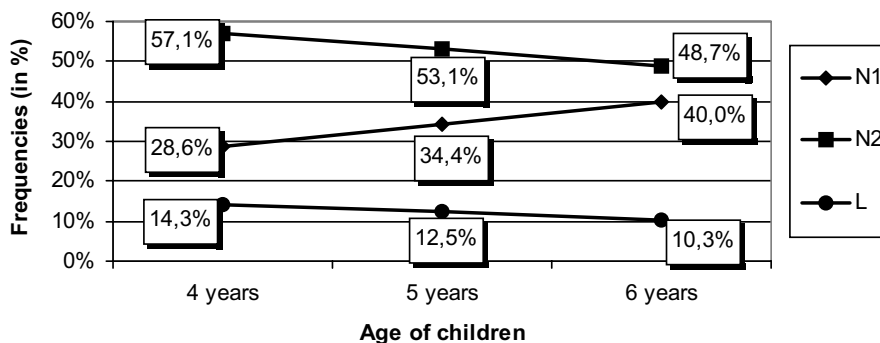
Table 8. Different solutions to situations of disagreement

| Type of solution | Age of children | | | | | | Total | |
| | 4-years | | 5-years | | 6-years | | | |
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Acceptance	19	59.4	43	72.9	81	78.7	143	73.7
Cancelation	11	34.4	15	25.4	18	17.5	44	22.7
Compromise	0	0.0	1	1.7	2	1.9	3	1.5
No solution	2	6.2	0	0.0	2	1.9	4	2.1
Total	32	100.0	59	100.0	103	100.0	194	100.0

Reaching agreement

When the narration is created jointly by discourse partners, the fact of disagreement makes for a kind of "stop" in the on-going interaction. It is rather not the case that lack of the agreement breaks the flow of the narration, but rather suspends it. And it remains in this state until the contradictory standpoints come to an agreement. From that moment on, the interaction can continue in the direction indicated by the agreement. In what ways can agreement be reached? There are three such ways:
– the proponent accepts the contradictory position of the opponent;
– the opponent cancels his or her position;
– one partner suggests a compromise.

The disagreement can also remain unsolved, when the partners do not reach agreement and each maintains his or her position. Such situations are labeled as: no solution. Table 8 presents the frequency of the different outcomes.

Agreement is reached in 97.9% of all cases of contradictory standpoints. The partners of the discourse resolve the situation of conflicting positions with higher frequency, when compared to cases where agreement is not reached (2.1%, $z = 35.657$; p < 0.05). Most frequently agreement is reached by one partner accepting the position of the other. That is, either the proponent accepts the position of the opponent, or the opponent withdraws his conflicting opinion and accepts that of the proponent. Clearly, the compromise is reached in few cases.

Discussion

We have analyzed disagreements that occur in the narrative discourse of preschool children in terms of both dimensions: content of the story and discourse organization. On both aspects, we identify the elements that most frequently cause disagreement. They inform us as to what aspects of co-narration are most important for the children. Moreover, the lack of disagreement about these aspects shows the differences in how children perceive their own roles and also the contributions of each partner for completing the task. Children disagree more frequently regarding the se-

mantic dimension of the constructed text, and the order of the hero's actions turns out to be the most controversial aspect here. In the case of 4- and 5-year-old children, both narrators expressed lack of agreement on this issue with similar frequency. For 6-year-old children, the narrator that continues the discourse takes the role of opponent more frequently. Below, we present the aspects of the narration context about which participants in each age group argued most frequently (see also Figure 1):

Accidental Object **Event order** Hero Action	**Event order** Action Accidental Object Hero	**Event order** Action Accidental Object Hero Mental states
4-year-old children	5-year-old children	6-year-old children

From the narrators' point of view, the sequence of events and hero's actions turn out to be the important aspects of the story. For our narrators, most of all 5- and 6-year-olds, the content of the narration should relate as accurately as possible to the real effects of heroes' actions and reflect their true order. Most frequently they disagree on what actions the hero performed and what were their consequences. Referring to Bruner's concept (1986), we can say that disagreement most frequently relates to "a landscape of action". The mental states or processes attributed to the hero are the source of disagreement only in very rare cases and only for the 6-year-olds. Does this mean that only at age 6 do children create stories with a double landscape? Our analyses presented elsewhere (see Rytel, 2005) give a negative answer to this question: already the youngest narrators – 4-year-olds – create stories with a double landscape. They present not only the changes which according to the narrator took place in external reality (the landscape of action), but also they draw a picture of these changes from the hero's perspective (the landscape of consciousness), and describe the hero's thinking. Children provide arguments for their attributions of the mental and emotional states to the heroes most frequently, in order to support the plausibility of their interpretations. By doing so, the narrators revealed their knowledge that some of the reported facts (internal states or motivations of the hero) are equivocal and can be perceived as such by others. The opinions of the discourse partner may differ from those of the narrator. Therefore, there is a need to make one's own interpretation more plausible, a need to formulate the arguments in order to make the partner accept it. The statements about the hero's internal states are identified as potentially disputable and, as such, they are supported most frequently with arguments, in order to prevent the partner's disagreement.

The process of story creation itself, although less controversial, is a source of conflict in 40% of all disagreement cases. Let us recapture what aspects of this process are argued about mostly (see Figure 2).

The person of the narrator	The person of the narrator	The person of the narrator
Finishing of the story The way the story is told Other situations	Finishing of the story The way the story is told Other situations	The way the story is told Other situations Finishing of the story
4-year-old children	5-year-old children	6-year-old children

For the 6-year-olds, both of the narrators with similar frequency, express disagreement on what the joint telling of the story should be like, and, most of all, who should tell it. In case of 4- and 5-year-olds, the narrator who continues the discourse expresses the contradictory viewpoint more often. This seems to be connected with the different positions the co-narrators assume in the discourse. The child who first (spontaneously) starts telling the story is responsible for developing the narration. The superiority of the discourse initiator is more evident for younger children (3 and 4 years of age) and decreases with age (for 5- and 6-year- old children) (Bokus, Więcko, & Zamęcka, 1992). For 4- or 5-year-old continuators of the discourse, the expression of a contradictory standpoint about the way the story is told, not only shows the opponents' preferences, but also enables the negotiation of their acceptance. It gives also an opportunity to gain control over the process of story telling and to clearly mark the child's input in this process. The older co-narrators who take the role of the opponent with similar frequency, act as equal partners in organizing the discourse.

The opponent's actions turn out successful in most cases. A child, taking the role of opponent can judge about his/her own efficiency, based on the reaction of the discourse partner. When the opponent expresses his/her viewpoint, the discourse partner most frequently accepts it. The disagreement is almost immediately resolved and both sides reach agreement onthe further course of the action. Co-narrators, both taking roles of actors with different standpoints, almost always are able to coordinate the contradictory positions and turn the disagreement on the means of actions into agreement.

Gadamer (1993, p. 189) in his "Truth and method" recalls a very important statement of Schleiermacher: "the disagreement appears on its own accord, and agreement must be in each and every point desired and searched for". That means that disagreement is permanently possible, and in order to avoid or solve it, it is necessary for all the engaged partners to communicate and cooperate. It is, how-

ever, most of all necessary for the actors to be able to admit and consider any different, or contradictory viewpoint. When a child participates in situations where it is confronted with contradictory opinions or admits the possibility of such opinions, it develops dialogic cognitive representations. That allows a child to acquire (internalize) different subjective positions that are particular ways of experiencing and interpreting reality (see Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2001; Tomasello, 2002; Puchalska-Wasyl, 2003).

Such a situation, as our research shows, can be created by constructing a story together with a peer partner. In such a case, there are two sources of contradictory positions: the situation that is described or the content introduced by any of the discourse participants (the semantic dimension of the constructed text) and the situation, in which the story telling take place, which is the act of telling itself and the manner of performance (the interactive dimension of the discourse). Regarding both these dimensions, the lack of the partner's agreement occurs or can be expected. The ways in which the contradictory perspectives are coordinated and how the disagreement is resolved document children's competence in reaching agreements.

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