

# Like Mother, Like Daughter: Similarities in Narrative Style

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Children (2–5-year-olds and 8–13-year-olds) and their parents were independently interviewed about highly salient events: injuries serious enough to necessitate hospital emergency room treatment. Free recall narratives were scored using 14 measures of length, elaborative detail, cohesion, coherence, and provision of context. Mothers' narratives were more cohesive and coherent than fathers', and girls' narratives differed from boys' in parallel ways. Parent and child measures were correlated, and narratives of mother–daughter dyads (for the older daughters) showed striking similarity in all 5 properties, whereas there was no narrative similarity within father–son, mother–son, or father–daughter dyads. This suggests a special status for mother–daughter dyads in terms of how events come to be linguistically represented in narrative.

A widely held belief is that daughters, as they grow up, come to resemble their mothers whereas sons increasingly come to resemble their fathers. This notion of same-sex similarity between parents and children was formalized by psychoanalytic theory into the concept of *identification*, whereby children identified with their same-sex parent during middle childhood through resolution of the Oedipus or Electra complexes (Freud, 1923/1974). Later conceptualizations of psychoanalytic identity theory stressed the importance of the early mother–child bond (Chodorow, 1978). She posited that both boys and girls formed a close relationship with their mothers in their early years, and subsequently boys faced the task of having to define themselves as not like mother, that is, “not female.” Unlike Freud, Chodorow suggested that mother–daughter similarity in older children would be greater than that between fathers and sons, although same-sex similarity was still seen as important for both dyads.

In social learning theory's conceptualization (Bandura, 1977), children adopt a gender identity and appropriate gendered behaviors through a process that includes modeling, imitation, and reinforcement. Later versions of this theory (renamed *social cognitive theory*; Bandura, 1986) give more emphasis to the child's own cognition in regulating behavior. Children are most likely to imitate models who are perceived as similar to the self, as well as powerful and nurturant. Thus, same-sex parental models are the most effective models in influencing the child's behavior, although

children's gender-typed behavior is also influenced by other people. However, because of the salience, availability, and importance of same-sex parental models, same-sex parent–child dyads would be expected to have a lot of similarities.

Cognitive developmental theory puts more emphasis on the child's cognition in the formation of gender identity (Kohlberg, 1966). The parent who is identified as being of the same sex is seen as a more appropriate model for behavior than is the opposite sex parent, so children should show more similarities with same-sex than with opposite-sex parents. However, the theory states that gendered behavior is the product of active cognition, and parents are only one of many guides for establishing appropriate behavior for one's gender category. Gender schema theory likewise emphasizes children's own cognition and their development of cognitive structures that organize information and guide their evaluation and assimilation of new information (Bem, 1985). This theory also emphasizes the importance of individual differences in how likely children are to apply gender schemas to their own and others' behavior. Recently, Harris (1995) proposed that a child's peer group is the most important influence on children's identity and behavior. That is, by middle childhood, peers become the mediators and interpreters of cultural views of gender, in other words, the cultural filters for what is seen as appropriate gendered behavior. Thus, children adopt the behaviors and attitudes of their peer group rather than those of their parents, so similarity with parents is predicted to be less than in other theoretical accounts.

Overall, different theories make different theoretical predictions about how similar children should be to their same-sex parent as opposed to their opposite-sex parent, and identification theories and social learning theory make the strongest predictions about same-sex similarity in parent–child dyads, whereas Harris's (1995) group socialization theory predicts the least similarity between parent–child dyads. However, gender identity (the experience of the self as male or female) and gendered behavior (the set of socially defined behaviors that are seen as appropriate for one's gender) are not the same and are not even necessarily highly correlated (Lips, 2001). It has been proposed that the display of gendered behavior can vary widely depending on the context or situation (e.g., the interactive model of gender-related behavior

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proposed by Deaux & Major, 1987). Thus, parent-child similarities might be seen in some contexts and not in others.

Empirically, the notion of high concordance between same-sex parent-child dyads has not received strong support. In a recent literature review that explored the question of whether mother-daughter, mother-son, father-son, and father-daughter relationships were distinct, A. Russell and Saebel (1997) concluded that empirical evidence in support of the distinctness of all four parent-child dyads was limited. However, many of the studies contributing to the mixed empirical evidence were flawed in important ways. For example, many had sample sizes too small for adequate statistical power, and in fact almost none of the studies with sample sizes of less than 100 found significant differences among dyads whereas larger studies were much more likely to do so. As well, most studies involved self-report about relationship quality, particularly from adolescents, and this may be too global a measure. Instead, sex differences may occur only on some measures or only under certain conditions. In particular, interactions between parent sex and child sex were most likely to be found in those studies that focused on measures of closeness and on affective aspects of the parent-child relationship; furthermore, greater affective closeness was most likely to be found for mother-daughter dyads. Thus, the authors conclude that there is reason to suspect that some parent-child dyads may be distinct and that gender may yet be seen to play an important role in mediating parent-child relationships in some domains. This conclusion is consonant with proposals of the interactive model of gender-related behavior mentioned above, that is, that context is important.

One of the domains where interactions between parent sex and child sex may be important is that of language. In a recent meta-analysis, Leaper, Anderson, and Sanders (1998) suggested that there seems to be differential socialization depending on gender in the area of language. Specifically, when talking to children (particularly young children), mothers and fathers differ, with mothers talking more as well as providing both more supportive and negative speech, whereas fathers use more directive and informing speech. Parents also seem to talk somewhat differently to their children depending on the child's gender. Leaper et al. found that mothers talk more and use more supportive speech with daughters than with sons. (In contrast, Lytton & Romney's, 1991, meta-analysis focusing on nonlanguage aspects of behavior found little evidence of differential parental treatment of sons vs. daughters.)

An aspect of language use for which interactions between parent sex and child sex may be particularly important is that of autobiographical narration, that is, telling stories about one's personal experiences, also termed *reminiscing*. A number of lines of investigation have suggested the possibility of dyad-related gender effects in narrative. For one thing, autobiographical narratives of men and women have been found to differ on a number of dimensions. Those of women are longer as well as more detailed and vivid (de Vries, Blando, & Walker, 1995; Fitzgerald & Lawrence, 1984; Friedman & Pines, 1991; Ross & Holmberg, 1990). They are more likely to express emotion and to stress affiliative themes and social context (Friedman & Pines, 1991; Schwartz, 1984; Thorne, 1995). They include more information about other people and about relationships. Women also seem to access autobiographical memories more readily because they produce more memories (and do so more quickly) when asked to recall as many

as possible (Davis, 1999). Even when couples are asked to reminisce about salient joint events (such as their first date or last vacation), wives recalled more information than did their husbands, and both spouses judged the women's accounts to be more accurate (Ross & Holmberg, 1990). In contrast to women, men tell narratives that are shorter and less detailed; they are also more likely to emphasize performance, activities, goal achievement, and separateness or autonomy rather than affiliation (Cowan & Davidson, 1984; Friedman & Pines, 1991; Schwartz, 1984).

At all ages, children are immersed in narrative-rich environments (Miller, 1994). They are exposed to lots of adult narratives: parents telling narratives to each other (e.g., about what happened that day) and to the children themselves (e.g., giving information in narrative form: "That's how cousin Alex got hurt"). Adults also frequently tell each other narratives about experiences in their children's lives, often in the presence of those children. Because adult narratives differ in gender-related ways, children are likely to reflect the gender differences that are found in adult narratives, whether through identification, through modeling their behavior after the models they deem most appropriate (namely same-sex models), or through constructing cognitive structures that capture this differentiation. Indeed, Buckner and Fivush (1998) found that 8-year-old girls told longer, more detailed, and more coherent narratives than did boys, which parallels differences found in women's versus men's narratives (de Vries et al., 1995; Fitzgerald & Lawrence, 1984; Friedman & Pines, 1991; Ross & Holmberg, 1990). Girls were also more likely to situate their narratives within a social context and to stress affiliative themes and emotions, again parallel to gender differences in adult narratives (Friedman & Pines, 1991; Schwartz, 1984; Thorne, 1995). Thus, one would expect that the narratives of girls would differ from those of boys in ways that mirror the differences found between the narratives of women and men.

To some degree, parents also encourage gender-related differentiation in reminiscence by engaging differently in narrative activities with their children depending on gender—their own or their child's. Some studies have documented differences between mothers and fathers in how they talk with their children: Mothers are more likely to talk about talk (Ely, Gleason, Narasimhan, & McCabe, 1995), and they are more likely to stress affiliative themes and sadness in their stories about their own childhoods to their children, especially to their daughters (Chance & Fiese, 1999; Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995). In contrast, fathers are more likely to stress achievement themes (Fiese et al., 1995). However, most studies have documented similarities rather than differences between mothers and fathers in their narrative behavior when talking with their children, but both parents are differentiating their behavior depending on whether they are talking with their sons or their daughters. They are more elaborative with daughters (Fivush, 1998; Reese & Fivush, 1993); they mention a greater number and variety of emotion terms to daughters and in particular are more likely to focus on sadness (Adams, Kuebli, Boyle, & Fivush, 1995; Fivush, 1998; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992); and they are more likely to talk about people and social context to daughters (Buckner & Fivush, 2000). Studies that have included only mothers (not fathers) find similar differentiated behavior to daughters versus sons (Dunn, Bretherton, & Munn, 1987; Fivush, 1989, 1991a; Kuebli, Butler, & Fivush, 1995). In contrast, Flannagan and Baker-Ward (1996; Flannagan, Baker-

Ward, & Graham, 1995) found that mothers are equally elaborative overall when talking with their daughters and sons but differ in the topics they are elaborative about. Mothers are more likely to be elaborative when discussing people with their daughters and learning-related themes with their sons.

Taken together, the above studies converge on the suggestion that girls' and boys' narratives should be different, at least by the time they reach older ages. Furthermore, these differences should mirror the gender differences found in adult narratives. A variety of possible mechanisms may contribute to this: identification, linguistic socialization through immersion in narrative-rich environments, modeling parents and other adults whose narratives differ according to gender, differential reinforcement of their own narrative endeavors depending on their gender, and the development of cognitions and schemas about gender differences in narrative that reflect the gendered narratives they are exposed to. All of the theories outlined above would predict that as they grow up, girls versus boys would come to differ in their own narratives in ways that reflect the gender differences between women and men that surround them.

But some theories make stronger predictions than this. There is enormous variation within groups on all of the narrative measures that have been studied. Because narratives are increasingly seen to be important for self-concept and self-definition, with people's notions of who and what they are tied up in the autobiographical stories they tell to others as well as to themselves (Fivush, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1991), narratives may provide a unique window on parent-child concordance. Identity theories and social learning/cognitive theory in particular would predict high concordance between specific same-sex parent-child dyads. That is, the narratives of daughters should be more similar to those of their own mothers than to those of other women; likewise, they should be more similar to those of their mothers than to those of their fathers. In a parallel fashion, the narratives of sons should be similar to those of their own fathers and should also resemble those of their fathers more than those of their mothers.

There is some research that supports the notion of similarity between parents and their children on some narrative measures. For example, children's narratives resemble those of their parents in terms of elaborateness or amount of information (Fivush, 1991b; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Reese & Fivush, 1993; Snow & Dickinson, 1990), in what kind of information they are elaborative about (Flannagan & Baker-Ward, 1996), in the likelihood of embedding their accounts within causal and temporal information (Fivush, 1991b), in the amount of social embedding and talk about people (Buckner & Fivush, 2000), in the amount and nature of emotion talk (Adams et al., 1995; Kuebli et al., 1995), as well as in talk about talk (Ely et al., 1995).

However, most of the studies that have analyzed parents' and children's narratives have involved parent-child verbal interaction, that is, parents and children reminiscing with each other. During such dyadic interaction, speech is strongly influenced by what is happening turn by turn in the dialogue. That is, conversations are partnerships, with each partner responding to the utterances of the other. Perhaps a better way of assessing similarity or difference in narratives of parents and children is by exploring how language is used to other, nonfamily listeners, and in particular when the turn-by-turn demands by the conversational partner are

minimized. Such is often the case when people are telling narratives to someone else about a salient event.

Some studies have found parent-child concordance when narrative measures for parents (mostly mothers) are derived from parent-child dyadic conversations but child narrative measures are derived from the narratives children told to researchers. For example, children are similar to their parents in elaboration (Fivush, 1991b; Leichtman, Pillemer, Wang, Koreishi, & Han, 2000; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Reese, Haden, & Fivush, 1993), in what they are elaborative about (Haden, Haine, & Fivush, 1997; Peterson & McCabe, 1992), and in their propensity to embed narratives within a context of time and place (Peterson & McCabe, 1994), as well as to provide causal and temporal links (Fivush, 1991b). However, in none of these studies are assessments of both parent narratives and child narratives derived in contexts other than dyadic parent-child reminiscence.

There are other important limitations to this research as well. Most of these studies focused on only mothers and their children. Most crucially, the dyads only involved young (mostly preschool-aged) children. In all of this research, children of both genders resembled the parent they were talking with; that is, there was no gender differentiation in parent-child similarities. It may well be that if parent-child dyads with older children were studied, differences between mother-daughter and mother-son dyads would emerge. Furthermore, one needs to contrast mother-child dyads with father-child dyads. To our knowledge, no one has yet compared narrative concordance in same-sex parent-child dyads versus opposite-sex parent-child dyads, and in particular, no one has looked at concordance when narrative measures for both parents and children are derived from samples of narration when parents and children are not conversing with each other.

In the present study, a nonfamily researcher asked both children and parents to tell about a highly salient event in their lives, namely an injury to the child (which was witnessed by the parent) that was severe enough to necessitate taking the child to the hospital emergency room for medical treatment. Each participant was asked individually to tell about the injury and subsequent hospital treatment, with the researcher providing only minimal responses indicating interest. Narratives were compared for each type of parent-child dyad, namely the same-sex dyads of mother-daughter and father-son as well as the cross-sex dyads of mother-son and father-daughter.

Extant empirical work on gender differences in narration would predict that the narratives of girls as a group would be similar to those of mothers as a group, and likewise the narratives of boys would be similar to those of fathers (at least at older ages). Likewise, all of the above theories on sex-role development would make the same prediction because all of the theories posit children's acquisition of the gender-differentiated behaviors to which they are exposed. On the basis of this, we predicted gender differences in children's narratives that would reflect those found in their parents' narratives.

But there are potentially stronger concordance relationships between parents and children than this. Narrative research showing parent-child similarities in narrative properties would support the prediction of specific children resembling their own parents rather than other adults; that is, correlations between parents and their own children should be reasonably high on at least some narrative

measures, and this was one of the predictions of this study. However, this body of research has various limitations, as described above, such that it does not directly lead to specific and different predictions about narrative concordance for the four types of parent-child dyad, although there are suggestions that such dyad distinctness might be the case.

On the other hand, some of the theories of sex-role development do propose dyad differences, and in particular, that same-sex parent-child dyads have special status. If this is so, then narratives of older children should closely resemble those of their same-sex parent and bear considerably less resemblance to those of their cross-sex parent. (This same-sex concordance would not necessarily be expected for young children because the development of their own narrative skills is more limited.) Such a prediction of high same-sex concordance would be made by identity theories and by social learning theory. As children's reliance on their own parents for information about gender-appropriate behavior decreases (e.g., in cognitive- or schema-based theories and those based on peer-group socialization), similarity between specific parent-child dyads would be less. To our knowledge, there are no empirical investigations of dyad-specific narrative concordance to guide our predictions.

Researchers have studied a range of narrative properties, and we selected several that have been well-studied in children and that show considerable variation between individuals. These include the following:

1. Narrative *length* varies, with some narratives being short and terse and others quite long (Buckner & Fivush, 1998; Flannagan et al., 1995; Leichtman et al., 2000; Peterson, 1994; Peterson, Jesso, & McCabe, 1999).
2. Narratives differ in *elaboration*, that is, in how descriptively vivid and informative they are (Buckner & Fivush, 1998; Fivush, 1991b; Peterson, 1994; Peterson et al., 1999).
3. Well-structured narratives are *cohesive*; that is, component sentences are knitted together or related to each other (Bennett-Kastor, 1986; Peterson & Dodsworth, 1991; Peterson & McCabe, 1988).
4. Narratives also differ in *coherence*, that is, in how well they specify the temporal and causal links that connect events (Buckner & Fivush, 1998; Fivush, 1991b; Peterson, 1994).
5. Finally, narratives should provide *context*. They describe events that are distant in time and place, and narrators differ in the degree to which they embed those events into the appropriate there-and-then context (Fivush, 1998; Peterson, 1994; Peterson et al., 1999; Peterson & McCabe, 1994).

Because there is no extant research that compares narratives for parent-child dyads when older children are included as participants, we could make no informed predictions about which properties would most likely show parent-child concordance.

## Method

### Participants

Children and their parents were recruited from the emergency room of a children's hospital for purposes of other research (see Peterson, 1999; Peterson & Bell, 1996; Peterson & Whalen, 2001). Medical expenses are government funded in Canada, and the hospital is the only medical facility within a radius of more than 100 miles (160 km) where injured children are taken. Thus, the children were a cross-section of those in the geographical area where they lived; they were mostly White and from mixed socioeconomic backgrounds. All of the children had suffered an injury that was serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment and were treated on an outpatient basis. The injuries included breaking bones, being lacerated seriously enough to require stitches, getting bitten by a dog, getting burned, and crushing fingers in doors. Parents of the children had witnessed these injuries and/or subsequent hospital treatment. Children were classified as preschoolers (2- to 5-year-olds,  $n = 137$ , with 66 girls and 71 boys, mean age = 3 years 8 months, range = 2 years 2 months to 5 years 11 months) or school-aged children (8- to 13-year-olds,  $n = 98$ , with 41 girls and 57 boys, mean age = 10 years 8 months, range = 8 years 0 months to 13 years 11 months). For each child participant, the parent who witnessed the events was also interviewed. If both parents were witnesses, then data from only 1 parent were included in analyses so that all dyads would be independent. Early in recruitment, the parents themselves chose which one would be interviewed and most families chose mothers. Later in recruitment, fathers were encouraged to be interviewed because of a paucity of fathers in some groups.

### Procedure

Families were visited at home by a female researcher within a few days of the injuries (mean delay = 6 days), and both the child and witnessing parent were independently questioned about their recall of the events surrounding injury and treatment. For purposes of the present study, only the initial free recall narratives were analyzed. These narratives were elicited by general prompts: "Tell me what happened when you/your child got hurt" and "Tell me what happened when you went/took your child to the hospital." While the narrative was being told, the researcher only provided minimal responses indicating interest (e.g., "uh huh," "yeah?"). Conversations were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Scoring was done from transcripts.

### Measures

The following narrative properties were assessed:

1. *Narrative length*. This was measured in two different ways: the number of words in the narrative and the number of subject-predicate clauses.
2. *Elaboration*. Specifically, we wanted to know how descriptive and informative narratives were. Descriptive vividness was measured by the number of descriptors (adjectives and adverbs) used. To assess informativeness, researchers have tabulated the number of unique (i.e., new) pieces of information of various types. Fivush (1991b) subdivides these information units into five subcategories.
3. *Cohesion*. We measured cohesion by counting the number of linking interclausal connectives the narrative has.
4. *Coherence*. Because narratives are fundamentally about a series of events (and reactions to those events) that are temporally and causally linked, the organizational coherence of a narrative can

be measured by tabulating the linguistically explicit links that specify how the events of the narrative are related to each other temporally and causally or conditionally.

5. *Contextual embeddedness.* This property measures the degree to which narratives orient the listener to where and when events took place.

The scoring procedures that target these five domains have been used in a number of studies, so all five domains are scored here in the same ways as in earlier research. There are nine different measures plus five subcategories for one of the measures:

*Length.* Two measures of length were derived: (a) word count, that is, the total number of words in the narrative and (b) clause count. A clause was considered to be a subject–predicate proposition.

*Descriptive and informative elaboration.* The third measure was descriptors, for example, “my heavy cast” or “there were two doctors.” Adjectives and adverbs were counted to provide an assessment of vividness or descriptiveness. The fourth measure was unique new units of information—the introduction of a new detail or bit of information. (Repetitions of previously introduced details were not counted.) The total amount of new information of all types was tabulated, which was the sum of the subcategories below. These subcategories subdivided new information into details pertaining to (a) person (e.g., “Daddy brought me”), (b) location (e.g., “I went to the hospital”), (c) activity (e.g., “I was running up the street”), (d) object (e.g., “I had a hamburger after”), and (e) attribute (e.g., “I had a big cut”). (Note that this category differed from the descriptors category above in that only new pieces of information were counted. The later repetition of a descriptor that had been used before would not be counted here, although it would be included in the descriptor count. Thus, new information would be counted in both categories, but repetitions would be counted only under the descriptors category.)

*Cohesiveness.* The fifth measure was connectives. These included only interclausal connectives, for example, “Mommy saw it and she ran over,” “It hurt but I didn’t cry,” or “We saw the doctor then we went to the X-ray place.”

*Coherence.* The sixth measure was temporal linking terms, that is, words that temporally linked events together, for example, *first*, *next*, *later*, *before*, *afterwards*. Note that some of these (e.g., *then* if used as a clausal connective as in “I fell down then I cried”) would also be counted above in the total connective count, but other temporal linking terms would not be (e.g., “I was the *next* one” or *then* as in “I did it *then*”). The seventh measure was causal/conditional linking terms, that is, words that linked events together via causal or conditional relationships such as *because*, *so*, and *if*. Some of these could also be tabulated above in the connectives category if they were used as interclausal connectives, for example, *because* in “I cried *because* it hurt so bad.”

*Contextual embedding of the narratives within time and space.* The eighth measure was time context or references to time, for example, “It happened on *Monday*,” and “We were there *two hours*.” These were nouns (not connectives) that specified a particular time context. The ninth measure was spatial context or references to place or location, for example, “I went into the *examining room*.” These were nouns that specified particular locations. (Note that these were counted each time they occurred in a narrative, as opposed to above in the category “new information—location,” where they were counted only the first time they were given.)

Each of the categories above was scored separately (with the exception of the category of unique new units of information, which was the sum of its five subcategories). To obtain interscorer reliability, two researchers independently scored all of the measures in approximately 20% of the narratives. The average percentage of agreement (scored as number of agreements divided by agreements plus disagreements) between the two scorers was 96.6%. Some of the categories above have some limited overlap with other categories, and thus they are not all independent. However, each category is conceptually distinct and has been used multiple

times in previous research; each has also been found to vary substantially among individuals.

## Results

The first question addressed was the degree to which parents’ narratives differed by gender and whether children’s narratives showed gender differentiation that was similar to that displayed by adults. Secondly, the concordance of parent–child narratives was assessed, specifically for mother–daughter, mother–son, father–daughter, and father–son dyads.

### Gender Differentiation of Narratives

Each of the five narrative properties was independently assessed and then compared for the narratives of mothers versus those of fathers. In all analyses, there was one between-subjects factor (gender). For properties for which there were multiple measures (i.e., all except cohesion), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was calculated that included all of the relevant measures for that property. If the MANOVA was significant, follow-up ANOVAs were conducted on each component measure. For cohesion, there was only one measure, so an ANOVA was calculated.

The data on properties of mothers’ and fathers’ narratives (means and standard deviations) are presented in Table 1. On a number of measures, the narratives of mothers and fathers did not differ. To assess whether narratives differed by length, we analyzed the two measures of length (words per narrative and clauses per narrative) by a MANOVA, and the narratives of mothers and fathers did not differ. To assess narrative elaboration, we analyzed the two measures of elaboration (number of descriptors and number of unique units of information) by a MANOVA, and there were no gender differences in narrative elaboration. In addition, the five subcategories of unique information units were analyzed by a

Table 1  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Narrative Measures of Mothers and Fathers*

Measure	Mothers		Fathers	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Length				
Clauses	59.7	44.4	53.4	39.8
Words	354.5	258.4	317.8	247.4
Elaboration				
Descriptors	17.4	15.6	21.5	22.3
Unique units of information	64.5	34.8	62.7	39.0
Person	5.1	3.3	4.3	3.4
Location	4.4	2.7	4.4	2.7
Object	9.6	5.5	8.8	5.4
Activity	25.5	12.4	24.5	12.8
Attribute	20.0	14.3	20.7	18.3
Cohesion				
Connectives	25.1	21.0	19.6	13.5
Coherence				
Causal/conditional terms	9.3	8.1	6.8	7.7
Temporal terms	6.5	5.5	6.3	5.4
Context				
Time context	4.0	4.4	4.6	4.6
Spatial context	6.9	5.7	7.0	5.5

MANOVA, and no significant gender difference was found. The context setting of mothers' versus fathers' narratives was analyzed by a MANOVA that included the number of references to time context and spatial context, and no differences were found.

On the other hand, the narratives of mothers and fathers did differ on other measures. To compare the cohesiveness of their narratives, we analyzed the number of connectives by an ANOVA, and mothers' narratives were more cohesive than those of fathers,  $F(1, 233) = 4.51, p = .04$ . That is, mothers ( $M = 25.1$ ) connected more of their sentences with interclausal connectives than did fathers ( $M = 19.6$ ). To evaluate coherence, we analyzed the number of causal and temporal linguistic links by a MANOVA and the narratives of mothers and fathers differed, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 232) = 3.77, p = .03$ . Follow-up univariate analyses showed that mothers ( $M = 9.3$ ) differed from fathers ( $M = 6.8$ ) in the number of causal and conditional links in their narratives,  $F(1, 233) = 5.18, p = .02$ , but not in the number of temporal links.

To summarize, the narratives of mothers were more cohesive and more coherent (at least in terms of providing more linguistically explicit causal and conditional links between events) than were the narratives of fathers. However, men and women did not differ in the length, elaboration, or contextual embeddedness of their narratives. Next, the narratives of children were assessed to see whether there were parallel differences between the narratives of girls and boys. Means and standard deviations for properties of children's narratives are presented in Table 2.

In all of the following analyses there were two between-subjects factors, each with two levels: gender (girls vs. boys) and age (younger vs. older). Of most interest is any relationship between gender and the properties of children's narratives. There were no Age  $\times$  Gender interactions in any analysis. The main effect of gender was nonsignificant for how elaborated and contextually

embedded the children's narratives were. Gender was of only borderline significance for narrative length, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 2.94, p = .06$ . Follow-up ANOVAs showed that girls ( $M = 105.9$ ) had more words per narrative than did boys ( $M = 89.5$ ),  $F(1, 231) = 4.60, p = .03$ . There was also a tendency for girls ( $M = 17.8$ ) to have more clauses per narrative than boys ( $M = 15.6$ ),  $F(1, 231) = 3.60, p = .06$ . The narratives of girls were more cohesive than those of boys,  $F(1, 231) = 5.42, p = .02$  ( $M_s = 9.3$  vs.  $7.5$ , respectively). Girls' narratives were also more coherent, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 5.85, p = .003$ . Follow-up ANOVAs showed that girls included both more linguistically explicit temporal links,  $F(1, 231) = 8.57, p = .004$ , and more causal/conditional links,  $F(1, 231) = 9.27, p = .003$ , than did boys ( $M_s = 3.9$  vs.  $2.7$  for temporal links and  $1.5$  vs.  $0.8$  for causal/conditional links for girls vs. boys, respectively).

As one would expect, the main effect of age was also significant. In every analysis for every measure, the narratives of older children differed from those of younger children at the  $p < .01$  level. Narratives differed in length, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 39.43$ . Follow-up ANOVAs showed that the narratives of older children had more words per narrative,  $F(1, 231) = 78.71$ , and more clauses per narrative,  $F(1, 231) = 73.80$ . Narratives also differed in elaboration, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 84.99$ . Follow-up ANOVAs showed that this was true for both the number of descriptors,  $F(1, 231) = 42.72$ , and the number of unique units of information,  $F(1, 231) = 130.45$ . Age differences were also found on a MANOVA that included the five subcategories of information units, Wilks's Exact  $F(5, 227) = 41.37$ , and follow-up ANOVAs showed that age differences characterized every one of the subcategories, namely unique new information about people,  $F(1, 231) = 35.71$ ; location,  $F(1, 231) = 104.56$ ; activity,  $F(1, 231) = 175.46$ ; objects,  $F(1, 231) = 76.40$ ; and attributes,  $F(1,$

Table 2  
Means and Standard Deviations for Narrative Measures of Younger and Older Children

Measure	Younger children				Older children			
	Girls ( <i>n</i> = 66)		Boys ( <i>n</i> = 71)		Girls ( <i>n</i> = 41)		Boys ( <i>n</i> = 57)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Length								
Clauses	10.9	9.5	9.4	6.4	28.8	23.4	23.2	15.4
Words	61.0	62.3	49.0	39.3	178.3	153.0	139.9	93.8
Elaborative detail								
Descriptors	3.0	4.6	2.2	2.9	8.4	8.4	6.3	6.0
Unique units of information	15.0	10.9	12.4	7.4	36.9	21.2	32.5	16.0
Person	1.6	1.9	0.8	1.0	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.0
Location	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.0	3.4	2.1	2.9	1.4
Object	3.3	2.3	3.1	1.9	6.9	4.2	6.1	3.0
Activity	5.5	3.3	4.8	2.9	15.1	7.8	13.6	6.7
Attribute	3.4	4.3	2.5	2.8	8.8	7.1	7.3	5.9
Cohesion								
Connectives	4.5	5.3	3.2	3.4	17.0	15.7	13.0	8.5
Coherence								
Causal/conditional terms	0.5	1.6	0.3	0.8	3.0	3.5	1.5	2.4
Temporal terms	1.7	2.8	0.8	1.7	7.3	7.1	5.1	4.5
Context								
Time context	0.3	1.1	0.3	1.0	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.9
Spatial context	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.4	5.0	4.6	3.9	2.2

231) = 59.04. Narratives of older children were also more cohesive,  $F(1, 231) = 98.19$ , and coherent, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 43.37$ . Follow-up ANOVAs found age differences for both temporal links,  $F(1, 231) = 82.54$ , and for causal/conditional links,  $F(1, 231) = 42.74$ . The narratives of older children also included more contextual embedding, Wilks's Exact  $F(2, 230) = 48.72$ , and follow-up ANOVAs found that this was true for both time context,  $F(1, 231) = 53.42$ , and for spatial context,  $F(1, 231) = 72.24$ .

To summarize, the narratives of older children were more complex as assessed by every measure than were the narratives of younger children. The narratives of girls were also more cohesive and more coherent than those of boys and tended to be longer. No gender differences were found for narrative elaboration or context-setting. Next, we turn to how similar children's narratives were to those of their parents.

*Concordance of Parent-Child Dyads*

Each of the measures that was assessed showed considerable variability between individuals, both for parents and children. The narrative properties of parents and children in each type of parent-child dyad, namely mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, and father-son, were assessed by means of correlations between parents and children. These correlations answered the questions of how similar the partners in each type of dyad were to each other. Furthermore, by looking at the patterns of correlations obtained for each group, one could compare the four different types of dyads. Table 3 presents the parent-child correlations for all narrative measures. Because of the large number of correlations calculated (nine measures for the five different properties, plus five subcategories for one of the properties, making a total of 14

correlations for each dyad), Bonferroni correction was applied to determine significance, and parent-child correlations that were significant ( $p < .004$ ) are indicated in the table.

Overall, the patterns of correlations tell an interesting story. Looking first at mother-daughter dyads, there was little relationship between the narrative properties of younger daughters and their mothers. Only one correlation was significant, namely the number of linguistically explicit temporal terms used. However, among 14 correlations this could well be due simply to chance. On the other hand, the narratives of older girls and those of their mothers were highly similar. They were similar in terms of length; those mothers who told long narratives had daughters who also told long narratives, and likewise, terse mothers had terse daughters. Both measures of length had correlations higher than .70. The narratives of daughters and mothers were also similarly elaborative, with elaborative mothers having elaborative daughters, both in terms of how descriptively vivid and how informative their narratives were. When we looked at the subcategories of unique information units, mother-daughter similarity was significant in terms of the amount of new information they included about people, locations, and attributes, although their similarity for inclusion of new information about objects and activities only reached the  $p < .01$  level and thus did not meet significance levels under Bonferroni correction. Mother-daughter dyads were also similar in how cohesive their narratives were and in how coherently they made explicit the causal and conditional links between events. Furthermore, mothers and daughters were similar in terms of context setting, at least for spatial context. Thus, there was substantial similarity between mothers and daughters in all five narrative properties.

Table 3  
*Correlations Between Child-Parent Dyads for Younger and Older Children (With Bonferroni Correction)*

Measure	Parent-daughter dyads				Parent-son dyads			
	Younger children		Older children		Younger children		Older children	
	Mothers (n = 51)	Fathers (n = 15)	Mothers (n = 25)	Fathers (n = 16)	Mothers (n = 48)	Fathers (n = 23)	Mothers (n = 30)	Fathers (n = 27)
Length								
Clauses	.01	.54	.76*	.02	.28	.42	.03	.23
Words	.09	.45	.72*†	.07	.29	.43	.00	.27
Elaboration								
Descriptors	.11	.21	.74*†	.32	.37	.25	.23	.45
Unique units of information	.16	.48	.64*†	.04	.41*	.16	.23	.46
Person	.35	.15	.52*†	.10	.34	.22	.21	.29
Location	.22	.29	.54*	-.06	.29	.27	.29	.36
Object	.01	.36	.45	.33	.30	.27	-.02	.32
Activity	.12	.39	.49	-.09	.33	.29	.33	.34
Attribute	.17	.30	.74*†	.15	.35	.09	.20	.45
Cohesion								
Connectives	.14	.22	.77*†	.03	.30	.39	.06	.18
Coherence								
Causal/conditional	.11	.10	.66*	-.27	.02	.82*†	.06	-.04
Temporal	.39*	.57	.23	.09	.01	.69*	-.05	.05
Context								
Time context	-.10	.23	.28	.26	-.08	.09	.09	.39
Spatial context	.12	.37	.77*†	.10	.47*	.52	.21	.41

\*  $p < .004$ . † Still significant after length was controlled for.

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The narratives of mothers and sons did not show this kind of similarity to each other. The narratives of younger sons were similar to those of their mothers in terms of how informative they were. This was only true for the summed measure of all of the subcategories of information; none of the correlations for the individual types of information reached significance. As well, the narratives of mothers and young sons were similar in terms of the amount of spatial context that was provided. None of the other correlations reached significance. For older sons and their mothers, none of the correlations was significant.

Daughters and their fathers did not tell narratives that were similar in terms of any of the five properties of narratives that were assessed. None of the correlations between fathers and their younger daughters were significant, nor were those between fathers and their older daughters.

Last, narratives of fathers and sons were compared. Younger sons told narratives that were similar to those of their fathers in coherence. That is, fathers who explicitly linked events together temporally and causally/conditionally had younger sons who did the same (Pearson  $r_s = .69$  and  $.82$ , respectively). No other correlations between younger sons and their fathers were significant. For older sons, none of the correlations reached significance; the narratives of fathers and older sons were not similar in terms of any of the five narrative properties being assessed.

One possibility that may account for the high similarity between mothers and daughters is talkativeness. That is, mothers and daughters were highly similar in terms of how many clauses and how many words their narratives had. To see if the similarity between these mother–daughter dyads was simply due to chattiness, we controlled for length of the narratives by dividing every narrative measure by the number of clauses in the narrative. Then we recalculated the correlations between parent and child. The partial correlations that were still significant are marked with a superscript dagger symbol in Table 3. Most were still significant, indicating that the correlations were not an artifact of longer narratives. As well, one of the correlations between the narratives of younger sons and their fathers remained significant after narrative length was controlled for.

To summarize, the narratives of older daughters and their mothers were highly similar in all of the narrative properties, although not necessarily in every measure of each property. They were similar in length (both clauses and words), elaboration (both descriptiveness and informativeness), cohesion, coherence (for causal/conditional links only), and contextual embedding (for spatial context only). In contrast, the narratives of older daughters and their fathers were quite dissimilar, and the narratives of older sons were not similar to those of either parent. For younger children, daughters resembled their mothers on only one measure and showed no similarity to their fathers. Sons were similar to mothers on two measures and to fathers on two other measures. Thus, similarities between narratives of younger children and their parents were modest at best.

## Discussion

Parents and children all provided narratives about the same event, an event that was highly salient and memorable in their lives. Furthermore, it was an event that involved considerable emotion. It was an event that was undoubtedly talked about a lot

at the time it occurred, as breaking bones or getting stitches is a “big news” event within families and is commonly reported to grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and friends. In the present research, children and parents independently were asked to talk about this event by means of an open-ended, nondirective probe, so the narratives they told were constructed by themselves. Some narrators produced lengthy narratives, and others told short ones. Some narrators were concerned about setting the context for the events, and others were not. Some narrators provided lots of elaborative detail, and others did not. There was also considerable variation in narrative cohesion and coherence. Thus, there was a lot of variation in how people linguistically represented experience, even when they were talking about a highly similar event.

There were some gender differences in the tales told by mothers versus fathers. Mothers’ narratives were more cohesive and more coherent in terms of providing explicit causal and conditional links between events. That is, their sentences were knitted together with more linking connectives, and causality was explicated more clearly. However, their narratives were neither longer nor more elaborative than were those of fathers. This is not consistent with earlier work that found more elaborative narratives by women, particularly in terms of descriptive vividness (de Vries et al., 1995; Fitzgerald & Lawrence, 1984; Friedman & Pines, 1991; Ross & Holmberg, 1990). However, the event the parents were all talking about was a highly salient one that had occurred in the very recent past; in other research, events were considerably more remote. As well, the event was an emotional one for the family because the child and the parents were usually emotionally distressed during it. Fivush and her colleagues (Adams et al., 1995; Buckner & Fivush, 2000; Fivush, 1998; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992; Reese & Fivush, 1993) have argued that within the context of close familial relations, fathers and mothers may be quite similar in language use.

The narratives of children were gender differentiated in the same ways as were those of their parents, a result that is consistent with our hypothesis. Those of girls were more cohesive and more coherent than were those of boys, parallel to the gender differences of women versus men. Also parallel is the finding of no gender differences in either elaboration or contextual embedding. However, there was a tendency for girls’ narratives to be longer than boys’, whereas no differences in length were found for adult narratives. These gender differences in cohesiveness and coherence and the tendency toward greater length are similar to the findings of previous research with children (Buckner & Fivush, 1998).

The fact that children displayed gender-differentiated behaviors that were similar to those displayed by the adults to which they were exposed is not only consistent with previous narrative research, it is also consistent with all of the gender-role development theories outlined above. All would predict that children are sensitive to gender differences and that they tend to incorporate such differences into their own behavior.

However, a different and much stronger prediction is that there should be high concordance between specific parent–child dyads, namely same-sex ones. Under this prediction, daughters would be expected to be similar to their own mothers in various ways but not so similar to their fathers. Likewise, sons would be expected to share a lot of commonalities with their own fathers but not with their mothers. In the literature on narrative development, there are suggestions that such gender-related dyad differentiation may be

the case, although there are no clear-cut predictions that can be derived from this body of research, especially because research has shown that children of both genders equivalently adopt the narrative properties that have been scaffolded by parents. On the other hand, various theories of gender-role acquisition do make specific and differential predictions. Identity theories stress the importance of children becoming similar to same-sex parents, although the mechanism of identification may differ among theories. Likewise, social learning/cognitive theory stresses children's greater likelihood of imitating models that are powerful, nurturant, and available, and as a result, this theory posits that parents are the most salient models for children to use. Therefore, these two theoretical approaches predict that same-sex parent-child concordance should be reasonably high and considerably higher than opposite-sex dyad concordance. In contrast, theories that stress children's acquisition of gendered behavior from multiple models and that downplay the special importance of parents would expect some but probably not high concordance between particular parent-child dyads.

The findings of the current research do not neatly fit any of these patterns. Older daughters and their mothers are strikingly similar in how they linguistically represent salient experiences. Mothers who tell long narratives have daughters who do likewise. Mothers who tell descriptively vivid and informationally dense tales have daughters who do the same. Their narratives are also similar in cohesion, coherence, and context setting. In other words, the narratives of mothers and their older daughters were similar on all five of the properties that we assessed. This is not just a function of narrative length, with mothers who produced longer narratives having girls who produced longer narratives, and during the course of these additional sentences, more information of all sorts was provided. Even after length controls were included in analyses, the narratives of girls still strongly resembled those of their mothers. In contrast, such same-sex concordance was not found for fathers and sons. None of the correlations between older sons and their fathers reached significance. Thus, the pattern of results does not fit a simple model of children being similar to same-sex parents and dissimilar to opposite-sex parents. Rather, it is only girls who show this pattern. (It should be noted that there was only minimal concordance between younger children and parents, regardless of the nature of the dyad. This is probably because the narratives of younger children were so short and thus variability between scores was not as wide.)

In their review of the distinctness of the four types of parent-child relationship, A. Russell and Saebel (1997) suggested that the dyad for which there seems to be the strongest possibility of distinctness is that of mothers and daughters, particularly when emotional closeness or affective cohesion are measured. The data presented here suggest that there seems to be not only a strong degree of affective closeness but also linguistic closeness between mothers and daughters. In her conceptualization of identity theory, Chodorow (1978) proposed that children of both genders develop strong bonds with their mothers in their early years and that girls maintain this strong bond as they get older whereas boys have to switch identification from their mother to their father. Thus, Chodorow posited that bonds between girls and their mothers are stronger than those between boys and their fathers. Consequently, Chodorow predicted more same-sex concordance between mother-daughter dyads than between father-son dyads; furthermore, opposite-sex concordance was expected to be considerably

less. Our findings are most consistent with Chodorow's theoretical predictions of dyad concordance.

Another factor contributing to the higher concordance of mothers and daughters than fathers and sons is the greater amount of time mothers and daughters spend together. There is considerable evidence suggesting that girls spend much more time with their mothers than boys do with their fathers (Ninio & Rinott, 1988; Parke, 1995; Parke & Stearns, 1993; Thompson & Walker, 1989). Contact time between parents and children is greater for mothers than for fathers not only during infancy but also through middle childhood (Collins & Russell, 1991). Most relevant, perhaps, is that mothers spend much more time alone with their children than do fathers. For example, G. Russell and Russell (1987) found that mothers spent an average of 22.6 hr alone with their children per week whereas fathers spent only 2.4 hr per week alone with their children. Furthermore, there are suggestions that when both parents are present, mothers take the lead, not only in caretaking and supervision (Parke, 1995; Parke & Stearns, 1993) but also in conversational dominance (Stoneman & Brody, 1981). Of even more relevance to children in the age range studied here, there seems to be a pattern of gender intensification in early adolescence (Crouter, Manke, & McHale, 1995; Galambos, Almeida, & Petersen, 1990). In a longitudinal investigation of 9- to 11-year-old preadolescent children and their parents, Crouter et al. (1995) found that girls of this age became increasingly involved with their mothers over the course of the year of the study. Boys also became increasingly involved with their fathers, but the amount of time boys spent with fathers was less than the amount of time girls spent with mothers. Thus, the sheer amount of time mothers and daughters have spent together over the years, particularly in one-on-one interaction, as opposed to the amount of time fathers and sons have spent together probably plays an important role in the disparity of mother-daughter versus father-son concordance.

But more than sheer amount of time spent together may be involved. Leaper et al. (1998) found that mothers were likely to talk with their daughters more than their sons as well as be more linguistically supportive. In research that specifically investigated personal experience narratives, Reese and Fivush (1993) found that mothers were likely to spend more time encouraging their daughters than their sons to narratively reminisce about their experiences and that the joint co-narrations of mothers and daughters were more elaborative than those involving sons. In fact, Reese and Fivush even suggested that "reminiscing may be a sex-typed activity" (p. 596). Although this research exploring parent-child co-narrating only looked at preschoolers, it may well be the case that mothers and daughters at all ages spend more time telling narratives to each other than do mothers and sons, fathers and sons, or daughters and fathers. In accordance with social learning/cognitive theory, girls thus have frequent models of maternal narratives to draw on and model their own narratives after. If girls simultaneously feel closer or have a more emotionally cohesive relationship with their mothers than with their fathers, this may well account for why their narratives and those of their mothers are so strikingly similar. After all, mothers are models who are highly salient, nurturant, powerful, and available. But the relationship could well be bidirectional in that mothers are also exposed to frequent daughter narratives within the context of a close emotional relationship, and thus the narratives of both partners could become similar through mutual bidirectional modeling.

There is also evidence suggesting that parents scaffold their children's narratives in ways that are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (Fivush, 1991b; Haden et al., 1997; Leichtman et al., 2000; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Peterson et al., 1999; Peterson & McCabe, 1992, 1994; Reese et al., 1993). Through their scaffolds, parents teach children what is important to include in a narrative and how it should be structured. The extant research on parental scaffolding and child narrative development has documented similarity between parents and children on a number of narrative measures that were assessed in this study, including length, elaboration, coherence, and contextual embedding. However, this research has found parent-child concordance irrespective of gender. That is, both boys and girls came to adopt the narrative characteristics that had been scaffolded by their parents (mostly mothers). But all of this research focused on preschoolers. If, however, mothers spend more time over the years engaged in narrative activities with their daughters than their sons, it is reasonable to assume that more narrative scaffolding is taking place; in other words, there is more teaching of daughters about how narratives should be constructed and what they should include, and the effects of this may only become apparent over time and with older children.

Again, we stress that the relationship between parent and child is bidirectional and that the high mother-daughter concordance we found may be due to mothers as well as daughters adjusting narrative style to match each other more closely. Indeed, Fivush and her colleagues (Fivush, Haden, & Reese, 1996; Haden et al., 1997; Reese et al., 1993) have documented bidirectionality in narrative style over time, with children influencing parents as well as parents influencing children. Such bidirectional adjustment may be more likely to take place if parents and children spend a lot of time reminiscing with each other, and if, as Reese and Fivush (1993) propose, such reminiscing is gendered, mothers and daughters may engage in more of this activity than other parent-child pairs.

An important issue that cannot be answered here is the degree to which the style differences that we found between dyads will generalize to other content domains. In the present study, investigation was limited to narratives about an emotional and highly salient event, namely a relatively serious injury to a child—at least serious enough to justify whisking the child off to a hospital emergency room. Thus, these findings may be limited to narratives about highly emotional experiences that are shared with close intimate others such as members of the immediate family. An important direction for future research is to investigate the extent to which these style differences generalize to narratives about other sorts of events. However, there is ample evidence in the literature suggesting consistency in narrative style. For example, parents maintain consistency in narrative style longitudinally and across discussion of a wide range of topics (Fivush et al., 1996; McCabe & Peterson, 1991; Reese et al., 1993). Furthermore, parents are consistent in narrative style when comparisons are made between how they reminisce with their children about an injury versus a happy time such as a trip or party (Sales, Fivush, & Peterson, in press). On the basis of this research, one might predict that these narrative style differences are robust, but further empirical work is needed to explore this.

This research has a number of limitations. These data were collected from an almost entirely White and nonimmigrant Cana-

dian sample. Because there is no direct cost for health care in Canada, all families regardless of socioeconomic status have access to the same health care. Thus, the socioeconomic status level of the children was mixed because every child within a 100-mile (160-km) radius of the hospital where we recruited goes exclusively to that hospital emergency room for treatment of the sorts of injuries that were involved here. It may be that different results might be found with other cultural groups. As well, all of the interviewers were female. Although it is possible that gender of the interviewer may have played a role, it seems unlikely because there were so many similarities in their narratives between men and women and between boys and girls. Furthermore, the narratives were constructed during the initial free recall part of the interview when the interviewer did little more than ask the respondent to tell them about the target event, after which she sat back to listen. The most striking finding of this research was the high concordance between mothers and daughters, and although it is conceivable that interviewer gender affected this, it is not clear how it could. An additional limitation is that children who suffer these sorts of accidental injuries may not be typical of all children. Indeed, there is evidence that unintentional injuries requiring emergency room treatment are associated with a number of risk factors, including social class (Faelker, Pickett, & Brison, 2000).

These data are of course preliminary, but they suggest that a fruitful direction of future research is a closer investigation of how parents and children represent their experiences linguistically at different ages. It would be important to expand the age ranges studied to older children. Do the patterns of concordance found here also characterize the narratives of older children, especially adolescents? Or does the increasing dimorphism in gender socialization suggested by the literature lead sons to become increasingly concordant with their fathers in narrative style as they get older? Although only preliminary, these data suggest new avenues of research that could be highly productive.

In conclusion, children are exposed to both mothers and fathers reminiscing about events in their everyday lives. That is, both parents tell stories within the family. Overall, the narratives of children are gender-differentiated in ways that reflect the differences found in narratives of mothers versus fathers. More importantly, daughters who are at least 8 years of age show striking similarities in narrative style with their mothers but not with their fathers. In contrast, sons do not show strong resemblances in narrative style with either parent. Through narration, people represent their experiences linguistically, and it seems that daughters and mothers represent those experiences in ways that are highly similar.

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