



From Narrative to Definition. Methodical-Constructive Language Building and Violence Prevention

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Abstract

The paper is an answer to communication problems in a Grundtvig project, carried out as an EU study in five countries. The project aimed at producing new knowledge and at disseminating best practices from country to country to prevent violence against women. In this approach, storytelling seeks women to diminish violence through communication on experienced violence. The article describes the development on how to create a strategically communication in which the participants can proceed from experienced violence to a definition of violence. The method is analytically outlined. Storytelling opens the possibility to transform singularities into general terms, so that strategies can be embarked.

Keywords: The EU study "Domestic Violence Met By Educated Women" as starting point; storytelling concept using models from literature; storytelling as a method to create international terms and strategies; storytelling seeks active citizenship to diminish violence through communication on experienced violence; language development on the basis of the Methodical Constructivism.

1. Introduction

The Grundtvig project "Domestic Violence Met by Educated Women" was carried out between 2013 and 2015. The impulse came from the Istanbul Convention, a contract under international law that bears the title "Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence". The Grundtvig project was conducted as an EU study in five countries. Women's organisations from Germany, Finland, Romania and Slovenia, an organisation from Sweden and the Centre for Constructive Education Science (Zentrum für Konstruktive Erziehungswissenschaft, ZKE) at the University of Kiel, participated. Among the developments presented by the Kiel team in the context of the study was an objective, reliable and valid questionnaire to determine domestic violence, the adaptation of a tested programme to prevent, reduce or end domestic violence and, as a prerequisite for both developments, an explicit and unambiguous definition of violence. A report on the contributions of the ZKE was published by Krope and Petersen (2015).

Everyday language enables communication in a familiar environment. For communication in an international framework, however, everyday language forms an unreliable basis. Scientific language is one possibility to avoid misunderstandings. In defining violence, the ZKE team availed of the comprehensibility of a terminological agreement. However, the price for this clarity was a loss in richness of meaning. Therefore, the research group presented a storytelling concept in the context of the study, in order to give the women a language that allows them to communicate with others about their experiences of violence, using models from literature.

The concept was presented at conferences in Bucharest and Helsinki, with texts from Fontana's Effi Briest and Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, but not treated in detail. The idea is taken up and developed in this paper. The goal of the concept is not primarily to pursue didactical, advisory, therapeutic or diagnostic purposes. Rather, in the first instance the concept aims to provide an opportunity for communication in mutual agreement about experienced violence (erfahrene Gewalt), about experienced₂ violence (erlebte Gewalt) and about individual aspects¹. The methods of a process of developing language are described below, during which participants can progress from initial narrations of violence to a definition of violence.

¹ „Experience“ is the translation of „Erfahrung“. „Experience₂“ is the translation of „Erlebnis“.

2. Telling Stories

In Methodical Constructivism, language development begins with simple spoken acts (Sprachhandlungen). Let us assume that a music teacher is presenting the school's collection of instruments to his pupils. By pointing his finger, he can indicate the individual instruments and say something like: "That is a trumpet," and add: "It is a brass instrument". Pointing to a trombone, he can say: "No, that is not a trumpet". And, pointing to a saxophone, he explains: "No, that is not a brass instrument". In each of the short sentences, something is stated about an object, in that it is pointed out. Words such as "saxophone", "trumpet" and "brass instrument" are attributed to the objects. These words are called "predicators". The process is known as "predication". The method of determining a predicator with the help of examples and counterexamples is called an "exemplary method".

The concept presented in this paper uses an indirect version of exemplary determination: telling stories. Fictional stories can be used in indirect exemplary determination. The stories do not need to be related to "reality". It must simply be possible to assume that the words in the story have already been learned and can therefore be understood.

In this case, the language development begins with a story of violence. One example is the saga of Pyramus and Thisbe, told by the ancient poet Ovid in book 4 of his *Metamorphoses*. The story is summarised as follows in Wikipedia²:

Pyramus and Thisbe are two lovers in the city of Babylon who are forbidden to see each other because of their parents' hostility towards each other. Their only possibility of communicating with each other is through a crack in the wall between the houses in which Pyramus lives with his parents on one side and Thisbe with her parents on the other.

After a long time, Pyramus and Thisbe arrange to meet at night under a mulberry tree, in order to leave Babylon forever. Thisbe, who arrives at the mulberry tree before Pyramus, flees from a lioness drinking from a spring, whose mouth is bloody after eating an animal. In the process, Thisbe loses her veil, which is torn by the lioness and covered in blood. When Pyramus appears, he finds the torn, bloody veil, assumes that Thisbe has been killed by the lioness, and thus throws himself on his sword beneath the mulberry tree. When Thisbe returns, she finds her dying lover, is overwhelmed by her tears and her love, and kills herself with his still-warm sword. The lovers' bloodstains the roots of the mulberry tree. The mulberries, which up to now had been white, are now dark-red forever more, as a sign of mourning. The parents of the two lovers place the ashes of the unhappy couple in the same urn, in order to fulfil their wish to be together.

Each person participating in a discussion of the story is required to list various aspects connected, in their view, with violence, such as: the authoritarian relationship of the parents with their children, youthful stubbornness, the disregard for convention, the sword as a symbol of discord, the auto-aggression, the blood on the mouth of the predator, the torn piece of clothing, the grief of the mulberry tree, and love as the pinnacle of irrationality. The expression "in their view" means that other persons do not have to agree with the interpretation. Moreover, the type of connection that might exist between the elements of the story and violence is completely open. The process of developing language is only just beginning.

3. Introducing Rules

If the statements made following the story can be used without question by other discussion participants as an understandable communication about violence, no further distinction is required between the statements that the discussion participants want to use for a secure representation, and those, which they do not wish to use for this purpose. Such a distinction is needed only when a statement is contradicted, in other words, when the same cited passage of a story is deemed by one person to be a violent act, and by another person as a non-violent act. In this case, it must be decided which of the two statements can be used by the discussion participants.

According to Lorenzen (1987, 20 – 21, 41 – 42), predicators such as the predicator "violent" are learned inempractical speech. Here, spoken acts are related to non-spoken acts in such a manner that the former can be controlled by the latter. This use related on actscanbe presented as if it would follow certain rules. It can also be said that the use of a predicator is correct if it corresponds with the rules, and incorrect if it is used contrary to these rules. In the first case, the relevant statement is true; in the second case, it is false. In cases of doubt, the introduction of "true" and "false" may require an explanation of the use to be made of the predicator in question, with the introduction of rules that the participants have observed thus far and wish to continue observing.

4. Agreeing on a Generic Act

The first step towards a definition of violence is that a person is required to list various features that are connected, in their view, with violence. The basis, for example, could be a story like that about Pyramus and This be. On the same basis, the participants in a group with whom the person wishes to communicate understandably suggest various features of their own. The second step is the introduction of predicator rules. In the third step, all participants in the discussion

²Wikipedia. Under https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_und_Thisbe, (German version) retrieved 18.2.2016.

must identify the general in the various different features described. To this end they agree on a generic act (Handlungsschema).

4.1 Repeatability

In Methodical Constructivism, the general is determined by three characteristics³. First, the general is considered to be a generic act with the character of repeatability. The following example is used to introduce the term “generic act”. After pupils have repeatedly collided when making a turn on their bicycle on a traffic training area, they make an agreement at the request of their teacher. They say: “From now on, whenever we want to make a turn, we will indicate the direction we plan to take by sticking out an arm”. If the youngsters keep to the agreement, an observer can then identify individual differences in their acts (Handlungen). Some pupils stick their arms straight out, some at an angle, others make up-and-down movements, some are foolhardy, others are hesitant. But all of the acts are interchangeable without changing anything in the agreed meaning. It should be said, with regard to such examples: if only such statements can be made about individual acts that also apply to every act of the same (relevant) description, then we speak of a generic act. This can be generalised as follows: “If we make statements about acts that are invariant with regard to the coincidental features of these acts, we then speak of the acts as generic acts. The ‘transition’ from an actual act to its generic act is [...] an abstraction, [...]” (Kamlah and Lorenzen 1973, 100; quotation without the emphasis of the original). Taking the example, the following can be said: as soon as there is agreement on the term “road safety education”, the road safety education acts of the teacher can be spoken of as generic act.

4.2 Synthesis Function

The second characteristic in the constructive determination of the general is responsible for the synthesis function: in Methodical Constructivism, the general is considered to be a generic act for equality that has been derived via abstraction from inequality. Abstraction is the process in which one ignores everything that distinguishes two expressions and concentrates only on that which equates them. Seiffert (1973, 38) describes abstraction as a “transition from ‘inequality’ to ‘equality’: objects that are initially unequal are made equal, by focusing only on certain features”. Andhe concludes: “Equality and inequality exist only in relation to certain characteristics of the given objects. Two objects are never absolutely equal or unequal, but always only equal or unequal in relation to certain characteristics” (Seiffert 1973, 40). What has been said about equality and inequality applies to both individual words and individual statements. Thus in the sentences “The pupil Felix A. hit teacher B. in the eye with a snowball in the schoolyard” and “Teacher B. was hit in the eye by pupil Felix A. with a snowball in the schoolyard”, one can focus on both the equality and the inequality. The first sentence has been formulated actively, and the second passively. Insofar as the reason for the difference in phrasing is that the first sentence focuses on the perpetrator and the second on the victim, the statements differ. But if we ignore this difference, it can be said that sentence 1 and sentence 2 are equal. Both sentences mention that school regulations have been infringed. Equality is, in turn, “equality in relation to something”. That which is initially unequal is made equal by concentrating only on certain contents.

4.3 The Predicating Subject

Repeatability and equality are the first and the second characteristic of the general. They presuppose a third characteristic. If several individual things are equal only in a certain respect, then equality and also repeatability presuppose the assumption of a position from which an individual thing can be defined as the repetition of another individual thing. Below we address the subjective character of the choice of position. Thus, the question of the general becomes the question of the predicating subject.

Evidence of this connection comes from an essay in which Lorenzen (1962) proves the existence of abstract objects with the help of equivalence relations, as a foundation of constructive theory. “Equivalence relations” are understood to be the relations between statements that have the features of reflexivity, symmetry and transitivity. In his explanations, Lorenzen does not refer explicitly anywhere to an actor. Rather, it appears at first as if an equation such as “ $x = x$ ” itself indicates reflexivity, “in and of itself”, as it were. But the mere transfer to simple linguistic phrases illustrates clearly the untenability of this assumption, as shown by an example (after Seiffert 1973, 97). The statement “A knows B” can be both non-reflexive and reflexive. It is non-reflexive when $A \neq B$, for example when “A” means Mr A. and “B” means Mr B.; and it is reflexive under the condition $A = B$, which could be the case, for instance, when “A” means Mr A. and “B” means Mr A. at an earlier point in time. However: Are we then still speaking of the same Mr A.? If one transfers the statement “A knows B” back to the equation “ $x = x$ ”, then the question also arises as to in which regard the equality is claimed. For, as mentioned, equality exists only with regard to a certain aspect. The letter x would be equal only in “one and the same realisation” of the “letter at the same point in time” (Seiffert 1973, 40). So how should the question of equality be decided, if a subject of the decision remains excluded?

In their textbook “Logische Propädeutik”, Kamlah and Lorenzen (1973, 45 seq.) introduced the bearers of the acts where it concerns an explicit agreement and the exemplary practice of the linguistic generic act. The question is therefore: Who

³ The remarks on the agreement of a generic act are a revision of the presentation by Kroppe (1986).

else should and can judge whether an individual thing falls under “general” according to the criteria of substantial equality, than those who have committed to and practised a generic act. If we follow this argument, then the purpose – provided it is legitimate – pursued by the predicating persons is the measure for evaluating equality and inequality. Both sentences about the snowball in the schoolyard concern inequality if the headmaster wants to focus on the perpetrator and the eye clinic on the victim. Thus, the rules for using the predicators represent an ordering principle for the participants in the discussion group on violence.

These three characteristics specify those rules according to which the generalis formulated. These are the rules for the exemplary practising and the explicit agreement of predicators, the rules for the transition from inequality to equality, and the rules for the choice of position, which is incumbent on the predicating person, from which they articulate the purpose they are pursuing with a statement. These rules must be observed when, after each participating person has been asked individually, a definition can be rightly said to be subsumed under a definition of violence.

5. Definition Development as a Dialogical Iteration

As soon as the development of the predicator rules and the abstraction process has been completed, the definition can be formed. In this context, it is a shortcut definition. It takes the form

$$\text{Violence} \iff P_1 \wedge P_2 \wedge \dots \wedge P_n,$$

With “ \iff ” as definition sign, “ \wedge ” for “and”, as well as “ P_1 ” to “ P_n ” as predicator variables. The definiens (the defining parts) is on the right-hand side of the definition sign, while the definiendum (that which is to be defined) is on the left-hand side. The form allows the replacement of the composite expression of the definiens by the simpler expression of the definiendum.

The path from narrated violence to a definition of violence can be described in more detail by departing from the traditional doctrine of definition. In the scholastic tradition, terms are defined by providing a generic term (genus proximum) and a specific difference (differentia specifica): *Omnis definitio fiat per genus proximum et differentiam specificam*. For example, a hammer is categorised as a tool (genus proximum) for hammering in nails (differentia specifica). The traditional method is suitable for classification in a closed hierarchical terminology.

In contrast, the concept described in this paper is a development process, in which spoken acts are obtained, with which on the one hand experiences are had (namely qua narration) and on the other hand can be shared (namely qua definition). The persons involved in the process are not only addressees, but also the originators of rules and abstractions.

The participants agree on the purpose of their efforts. But the progress of the discussions is not straightforward. There are repetitions, new beginnings and corrections, so that phrases can change their meaning several times. Whether, in the saga of Pyramus and Thisbe for example, the blood on the mouth of the beast and the torn piece of clothing have anything in common, or should be separated from the further determination of the definition of violence, is by no means clear at the beginning of the efforts at a definition in the discussion about the narrative. During several repetitions with speech and counter-speech, suggestions as to what should be deemed to be equal or unequal are submitted, accepted, rejected or replaced by alternatives. Sometimes it is argued that the sword in the story should be seen as a sign of violence. Then this suggestion is questioned, and so on. Once a result has been achieved, it can be questioned again when more people join the discussion group, if the predicator rules are changed, or if another story prompts a new aspect in the discussion. This process is known as “dialogical iteration”⁴.

6. Possibilities and Limitations of Understanding

The objective of the method is to allow communication in mutual agreement about violence: A person must be assured that his discussion partner is talking about the same object as he is. The objective was expanded already at the beginning of the Grundtvig project, which was conducted between 2013 and 2015. Participants in the project had demanded that not only experienced violence (erfahrene Gewalt) be addressed in the discussion on domestic violence. Rather, experienced violence (erlebte Gewalt) and the individual should form the main focus of the confrontation. The following sections concern the possibilities and limitations of this demand.

6.1 The Individual

Below is an example⁵ for a situation, in which the individual plays a role:

During a final examination, two experienced sports teachers evaluate the Abitur performance of their pupil. The pupil, Leszek H., ended his gymnastics routine after a handstand on the parallel bars with a motion that was unexpected for the teachers, and one never seen before. Since the dismount also led to injuries to the pupil and torn clothing, the teachers assume an error and give Leszek H. a second chance. However, if the pupil insists that he

⁴The exposition of the dialogue principle is mostly based on the works of Kuno Lorenz (1980, 2005, 2009, and 2011).

⁵The example is a revised version of the presentation by Kroepe et al. (2000, 74).

actually ended his bars routine in the intended manner, and thus wanted to demonstrate a unique performance, something individual, and if the two teachers accept the pupil's claim, they are then faced with a description crisis: How are they supposed to describe the dismount from the bars, which had never been seen before, when their terminology, containing terms such as crouch, straddle and flank, does not apply? Finally, they describe the event as follows: "That which Leszek H. presented at the conclusion of his bars routine on 10.3.1994 at 10.20 a.m. in his Abitur examination". In other words: the two sports teachers use a definite description (Kennzeichnung). It applies to only one single person or one single event, and is situational. Those who did not themselves see the gymnastics examination of Leszek H. on 10.3.1994 at 10.20 a.m. cannot be made to understand what is meant.

We can determine what should be understood as an individuum (an individual) by referring to Aristotelian tradition (Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1038 b, 11/12) for the purpose of this explanation in relation to the general. Accordingly, the general is that to which several objects can be attributed. Thus the individual is that to which several objects cannot be attributed. This definition is comparable with the definitions of subsequent authors – notwithstanding all differences – insofar as they describe the general as a linking moment. Through the general, the diversity of phenomena is drawn into unity.

Something individual can be named by means of a definite description. The expression "definite description" stands for a deictic act. In the last example, the two sports teachers, using the phrase "That which happened at the conclusion of the routine on the bars on 10.3.1994 at 10.20 a.m." designate precisely one object, as it was never found anywhere else. Furthermore an individual (an individuum) can be named by means of a proper name. When the two sports teachers call Leszek H. by name, then only one particular student is designated, who exists only once in the school assembly.

Kamlah and Lorenzen (1973, 31/32) make the following distinction between a predicator (e.g. "pupil") and a proper name (e.g. "Leszek H."): "A predicator is distinguished between a 'common name', which can be applied to several objects, and a 'proper name', which is intrinsic to precisely one object". When, in the American crime series "Colombo", the inspector's dog has been given the name "Dog", aficionados of the TV series might accept this odd name as an attempt by Colombo to disguise his criminalistic astuteness with his peculiar appearance. However, a person who uses a phrase in the discussion in the sense of a proper name instead of a predicator to represent violence – in order to express the individual –, will not be understood by his discussion partners. On the one hand, whoever wants to present the richness of nuance of the phenomenon of violence, can revert to stories with proper names ("Anna Karenina") or definite descriptions ("The events under the mulberry tree, with the initially white, then red berries"). On the other hand, only the definition of violence guarantees clarity among the discussion partners. The reference to the individual is unsuitable when communication in mutual agreement is intended.

6.2 Experience₂ (Erlebnis)

The following example (after Kroepeck et al. 2013, 95–96) refers to an experience₂ (Erlebnis) with which a discussion partner can empathise only to a limited degree, and which is therefore difficult to understand. A literary equivalent can be found in the first novella in Stefan Zweig's collection "Erstes Erlebnis" (Zweig 1976).

A young man is kissed tempestuously for the first time in his life. Not attentively by Mama and Papa. But instead passionately by a young woman. Immediately after the overwhelmingly erotic kiss, his four-year-old brother demands an explanation for what he has just observed. The young man can no longer see or hear. Everything is spinning. The earth is swaying. He goes hot and cold by turn. He is in a state in which he is speechless. At present, the youth is incapable of answering his brother, because he does not have the words. Then, in a later, second state, when the brother is still awaiting an answer, the young man is confronted with different areas of experience₂, for which he needs possibilities of expression in order to bridge them. He refers to a favourite specialty of his brother and says that a kiss is like delicious ice cream. The little brother, a specialist in liquorice ice cream like his big brother, but erotically inexperienced₂, therefore assumes that a kiss tastes like liquorice. If the conversation were to stop here, the little brother would have formed a category: "A kiss is like eating liquorice ice cream". With the categorisation, he subjects the statement by his big brother about the erotic event to his own interpretation. But the young man attempts to break up this category. In answer to the question as to what else is great, the little brother replies: "Riding a rollercoaster with you", and, when asked why: "Because we both like it". In this fourth state, the young man tries to make sure that what he has said is identified as the same thing by the other: "Great is something that one likes. Liquorice ice cream is great for both of us. Riding a rollercoaster is great for both of us. Kissing a big girl is great for me."

What does "experiencing₂" ("Erleben") mean? In the history of philosophy, "experience₂" is defined as "the subjective factuality of the phenomenon before all objectification" (Gethmann-Siefert 1980, 586)⁶. Already during the Grundtvig project, attention was drawn to the fact that a subjective factuality (Gegebenheitsweise) is not sufficient for distinguishing between "violence" and "no violence". In the concluding report of the project, Kohrs and Kroepeck (2015, 123–124) analyse such an insufficiently designed questionnaire survey and add, for the purpose of illustration: In Germany, many

⁶"Factuality" is the translation of "Gegebenheitsweise".

people sign a living will. In the event of serious illness, they do not want to be kept alive by means of medical equipment. However, doctors are reporting that some patients revoke their living will once they have recovered from a serious illness. These experiences₂ show that some people change their opinion unforeseeably on something they consider violence. The remarks indicate that a subjective factuality is insufficient as the sole basis for answering the question as to whether or not violence is present.

Objects can be described only with the help of language, for example by a definite description. For example, a person, let's call him "Mr C.", after an overwhelming experience₂, can refer to verses 120 – 125 in the fourth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and draw attention to the text about Pyramus' suicide with phrases such as "that there":

"He drove the sword he had been wearing into his groin, and, dying, pulled it, warm, from the wound. As he lay back again on the ground, the blood spurted out, like a pipe fracturing at a weak spot in the lead, and sending long bursts of water hissing through the split, cutting through the air, beat by beat." (Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, book IV, verses 120 – 125).

By means of a definite description, Mr C. is empowered with a language with which he can communicate with his discussion partners. With the intention of reaching communication in mutual agreement, the discussion partners, together with Mr C., will determine the commonality between his narration and other stories on the path to a definition of violence. In the process, the objects in the various stories that are unequal are made equal. A transition from inequality to equality occurs in the abstraction. When the process has been completed successfully, the discussion group can communicate understandably with Mr C. about violence. It is still the case, however, that Mr C. can only avail of a definite description (along with the use of proper names) to describe the particularity of his experience₂ (Erlebnis).

6.3 Experience (Erfahrung)

Polyphem experiences violence. In twenty-four books, the ancient Greek poet Homer describes the adventure of King Odysseus of Ithaca and his companions on the return journey from the Trojan War. On their odyssey, the warriors arrive at an island, where they are captured in the cave of the man-eating giant Polyphem. In order to escape, the Greeks blind the giant when he has fallen into a deep sleep, by thrusting a glowing stake into his only eye. Odysseus himself narrates:

"Then verily I thrust in the stake under the deep ashes until it should grow hot, and heartened all my comrades with cheering words, that I might see no man flinch through fear. But when presently that stake of olive-wood was about to catch fire, green though it was, and began to glow terribly, then verily I drew nigh, bringing the stake from the fire, and my comrades stood round me and a god breathed into us great courage. They took the stake of olive-wood, sharp at the point, and thrust it into his eye, while I, throwing my weight upon it from above, whirled it round, as when a man bores a ship's timber with a drill, while those below keep it spinning with the thong, which they lay hold off by either end, and the drill runs around unceasingly. Even so, we took the fiery-pointed stake and whirled it around in his eye, and the blood flowed around the heated thing. And his eyelids wholly and his brows roundabout did the flame singe as the eyeball burned, and its roots crackled in the fire. And as when a smith dips a great axe or an adze in cold water amid loud hissing to temper it – for there from comes the strength of iron – even so did his eye hiss round the stake of olive-wood. Terribly then did he cry aloud, and the rock rang around; and we, seized with terror, shrank back, while he wrenched from his eye the stake, all befouled with blood, and flung it from him, wildly waving his arms." (Homer *Odyssey* book IX, verses 375 – 397).

What does "experience" ("Erfahrung") mean? A distinction is made between the colloquial and the social-scientific use of the term experience⁷. As shown by Homer's narrative, "experience" means colloquially

- a skill that presupposes the observation and treatment of acts (Odysseus' deed in blinding Polyphem),
- the capability of certain orientation (Polyphem rightly suspects an escape attempt by Odysseus after the blinding) and the ability to master differentiation (Polyphem, who previously did not even fear the gods, can distinguish violence from non-violence after the blinding),
- Knowledge of the particular (violence in the specific form of the blinding of Polyphem by means of a glowing stake).

What can be understood by "experience" ("Erfahrung") in the social sciences? Situations can be created in the social sciences, in which acts take place. Textbooks on empirical research methods describe procedures for the creation of such situations, such as systematic observation, questionnaires, tests and experiments. In the philosophy of science "situation" is described as follows: "A situation should be understood as a system of relevant facts [...]. The relevance of a fact – in other words, whether or not it belongs to the situation – must be established based on evaluation criteria, according to which certain facts are then deemed to be 'relevant' when they are necessary for the achievement of certain purposes or to solve certain tasks" (Paul Lorenzen 1987, 43/44). With reference to the methodical and theoretical elements, it should

⁷ In the following passage the works of Kambartel (1976), Lorenzen (1987, 43 – 44 and 269) and Mittelstraß (1980) are continued.

be said: “Experience” in the social sciences is the ability to formulate situation-invariant statements about different acts in constructed situations and to argue about the relevance of the differences based on regulations or standardisations that have been introduced in a dialogical iterative process to establish truth. The definition of violence developed by the ZKE is an example of an ability to differentiate that was generated qua construction. With a questionnaire created on this basis, domestic violence carried out by men against women can be differentiated into, among other things, the areas “physical/sexual violence”, “household”, “education”, “physical proximity”, “communication” and “career and finances”. These (qualitative) distinctions are the methodical prerequisites for quantitative statements in the empirical social sciences.

7. Conclusions

Polyphem cannot communicate unambiguously:

When the other giants came running from the surrounding caves and asked for the reason for his cries of pain, the blinded Polyphem wants to name Odysseus. He, however, with cunning foresight, had introduced himself to the giant as “Nobody”. Thus, Polyphem replied to the others: “Friends! Nobody is killing me by treachery or force” (Homer *Odyssey*, book IX, verse 408).

The task in the context of this paper was to develop a secure and reliable concept on communication in mutual agreement about violence. For this purpose, a language development process method was described. During its course, one person has to transfer the experience that he had while observing and dealing with violence and by speaking about it, into the experience of his discussion partners. At the end of the process, a definition of violence has to be made, which is the prerequisite for ensuring that discussion partners do not misunderstand each other.

Language development in Methodical Constructivism is started with an act that is certain to be understood. In the simplest case this is a definite description (Kennzeichnung), where a person points to something. For the sake of simplicity, this “something” being indicated, is called “object”. The definite description can be accompanied by words such as “That is ...”. The method of determining a predicator with the help of examples and counter examples is known as the “exemplary method”.

In the Grundtvig project, it was requested that consideration also be made of the individual and of experiences₂ (Erlebnisse) in the context of the discussion on violence. This request was taken up by using the indirect exemplary method, beginning with violence narratives. In the context of the follow up study, texts from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Homer’s *Odyssey* were included for this purpose. For example, a person can point to a text passage in Ovid’s tale of the suicide of Pyramus and Thisbe and say, at the same time: “That is violence”. And with reference to the burial of Pyramus and Thisbe in one single urn, the person concerned might say: “That is not violence”.

When a predicator, such as the predicator “violence”, is rightly attributed to an object, in other words, when a predicator corresponds with this object, then it is said in Methodical Constructivism (Kamlah and Lorenzen 1973, 92) that “violence” is a characteristic of this object. This characteristic is not, as it were, intrinsic to the object, but rather the result of the predication, whose originator is the predicating person. This person might stress a peculiarity of the concept of violence that was not taken up by any other person in a discussion group, for example when he says: “To me, the dark red fruit of the mulberry tree is a symbol of violence”. Even if no other discussion partner picks up on this statement, the specific view of this person does not get lost in the plurality of this concept of violence: Ovid’s story provides a language for the peculiarity that this person wishes to express.

Dispute may arise among the participants, however, on the question of whether a predicator has been rightly attributed to an object. To settle the conflict, predicator rules – for example, on the use of the predicator “suicide” – are introduced at the same time as the exemplary introduction. On their basis, objects that are unequal – for example the suicides of Pyramus and Thisbe and the blinding of Polyphem as (an aspect of) “violence” – are equated in the abstraction process, by concentrating on only certain of their characteristics.

This paper presented the concept of a process of language development. The process begins with the narration of violence, concludes with a definition of violence and takes account of the individual and of experiences₂ (Erlebnisse). The concept becomes relevant when a discussion on violence is to be conducted between the poles of isolating self-assurance and generalising understanding.

8. References

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