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Creating Characters and Reconstructing Texts:
Evaluation in Children's Oral Narrative Re-tellings

by

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ABSTRACT

Creating Characters and Reconstructing Texts:
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This research analyzes the use of evaluative features in English language oral narrative re-tellings among a multi-lingual population of ninety-eight 2nd and 4th grade students. The results of the analyses strengthen our understanding of the use of evaluation by child narrators, suggesting that younger narrators reconstruct stories through re-creating the characters, while older children focus more on (precisely) reconstructing the text itself. Parallels with particular approaches to cognitive/psychological development are outlined, as are preliminary ramifications for educational methodology.

In the initial rounds of both qualitative and quantitative analyses, it was revealed that the employment of seven evaluative forms cited in earlier research (e.g., Peterson and McCabe 1983, Bamberg 1991, Reilly 1992) as among the most commonly used by the present age group (i.e., causals, compulsion words, emphatic pronunciation, gratuitous terms, hedges, lengthening, and negatives) was unable to account for differences in perceived narrative skill within the sample. The manipulation of these seven features was extremely homogenous across skill, age, and language groups. As a result, a second round of analyses was undertaken. Both qualitative and quantitative findings concurred that the use of two particular evaluative features (i.e., references to
mental activity, and character speech), in addition to the utilization of certain textual
devices (i.e., the presentation of mental activity within causal constructions, deference to
a third person “other” as the source of the narrative information, careful monitoring and
marking of errors), were capable of distinguishing both skill and age groupings within
the sample.

The manner in which the data from this research reflects the Vygotskian
perspective on cognitive/psychological development is discussed. The educational
implications of these findings—from assessment paradigms, to the planning of curriculum
and instruction—are addressed. One of the major discoveries was that, counter to
expectations, the multi-lingual subjects in this sample did not demonstrate divergent
narrative forms based on their differing linguistic/cultural schemas. In fact, the
perceived skill scores among the Limited English Proficient subjects appeared to be
related to issues of fluency rather than differences in narrative form. These findings
indicate that given a rich context in which information is repeatedly co-constructed, most
language minority students are highly capable of both interpreting and reproducing
information in a culturally/contextually prescribed manner.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Additional gratitude is due to the faculty, staff, and students of Herod Elementary School, whose interest, involvement, and support rendered this undertaking not only successful, but an extremely enjoyable venture. Special thanks to Nancy Nichols, former principal, for her vision, insight, and encouragement. You inspire my utmost respect as both an educator and a professional, and I am grateful to have shared in your world.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral narratives play a central role in the development of the self and in the creation and maintenance of communities (see, e.g., Goffman 1974, Halliday 1976, Hymes 1975, Scollon and Scollon 1981). Their foundational nature has inspired the scrutiny of multiple fields, from anthropology to psychology. Although there are diverse means and motivations for studying narrative, the various approaches are united in their desire to discover what it is that makes narratives such pivotal constructs, and to understand precisely how narratives come to function in their role as sense-makers and community-builders. No single line of research can be relied upon to reveal the multiple intricacies of narrative. The story-worlds we create are far too complex and changeable. Each field can, however, through its unique perspectives and methods, contribute distinct and valuable knowledge to our understanding of these fantastical, fundamental constructs. This research will examine the evaluative aspects of oral narrative retellings, using linguistic methodology to develop a qualitative description of evaluative features, and statistical analyses to investigate the relationship between evaluation, perceived narrative skill and academic achievement. The principal goal is to further our understanding of the evaluative components of narrative. Additionally, implications for cognitive/psychological development and for the role which narrative may play in educational settings among a multi-lingual student population are explored.

1.1 Oral Narratives: The Linguistic Perspective

Narrative has a rich history of linguistic study, albeit one whose origins were
narrowly conceived. To clarify the relevance of the goals addressed in this research, it is beneficial to briefly review previous work on narrative in the field of linguistics.

The modern study of narrative in the field of linguistics began with the seminal sociolinguistic work of Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972). In accordance with contemporary aims, these first linguistic studies of narrative were highly structuralist in nature. Though they acknowledged the self-/community-building function of oral narratives, their primary focus seemed to be that of uncovering potential patterns for the placement of narrative components—to map-out a syntax of storytelling. This early work—known as High Point Analysis (HPA)—privileged certain types of texts as a result of definitional constraints. In HPA, a “narrative” is defined as “any sequence of independent clauses which contains at least one temporal juncture,” and demands the presence, therefore, of at least two clauses in order to constitute a minimal narrative (Labov & Waletzky, 1967, p. 28).¹ By this definition, event representations (bounded temporal units with a telic orientation) are preferred, while descriptions of states or processes (no clear temporal boundaries) are excluded. Actor (animate agent) and action (intentional activities carried out by willful agents) representations are favored as they generally entail the type of temporal junctures required (Bamberg, 1997b, p. 92). HPA also defines two types of information which are communicated in narratives: 1) referential information, which relates “what happened” and 2) evaluative information,

¹ According to HPA, the typical structure of a narrative is as follows:
abstract->orientation->complicating action->evaluation->resolution->coda (optional)
The information presented within this narrative structure can be further broken down into that of informative/referential versus evaluative information and the placement of the various information units (including their presence/absence) can then be explored.
which relates perspective (the narrator’s and/or the characters’) and establishes the connections between referential elements. While HPA does make note of the distinction between referential and evaluative aspects of narrative, it does not move much beyond mere recognition in dealing with evaluative features. (The presence of evaluative material is minimally signified within narrative structures as represented by HPA conventions.) As McCabe (1996, 1997) notes, HPA is useful in performing certain types of analysis (e.g., in diagnostic settings HPA can be used to identify impairments in discourse production), but it certainly does not cover/is not applicable to all forms of narrative.

Following the interest in oral narratives generated by HPA, a second method of narrative analysis evolved from cognitive/developmental research. The various analytical models generated by this approach are known as “Story Grammar Analysis” (SGA). Stemming from the work of a number of researchers in the fields of linguistics and cognitive psychology (e.g., Black & Bower 1980, Lehnert 1981, Mandler & Johnson 1977, Stein & Albro 1997, Stein & Glenn 1979, Stein & Policastro 1984, Trabasso & van den Broek 1985), SGA focuses on the manner in which narrators are able to formulate goals for protagonists (use goal-structured knowledge) and engage in problem-solving in order to help protagonists achieve said goals. What results is a hierarchal approach to narrative that defines “true story structures” as those which involve goal-based action sequences carried out by an animate being and expressing both temporal and causal relationships. Though other more simplistic structures which occur in the course of development (e.g., descriptive sequences, reactive sequences, etc.) are elaborated, they
are not considered “true story structures,” as “true stories” are defined in terms of the production capabilities of a normally functioning adult speaker. While SGA aptly highlights the developmental stages of the structural components of narratives, it is of little use in dealing with factors less amenable to formalization, such as content, or tellability. As Nicolopoulou (1997, p.182-184) notes, SGA approaches are more concerned with mapping structural changes onto pre-established developmental sequences than they are with using these schemas to understand the developing narrative activity itself—which they view as deficient when compared with the competencies of older children and adults. In short, “Narratives are treated as sets of information to be processed, but not as symbolic and imaginative constructions” (Nicolopoulou, 1997, p.184) that simultaneously draw upon and define the narrator’s concept of the world and of self. In its portrayal of narratives, SGA aptly represents the cognitive component of human actions, but fails to even recognize evaluative components, and pays little attention to language per se.

A third set of approaches, though again maintaining a formalist design, evidences a very different emphasis from the first two paradigms. Stemming from the work of Givón (1979a), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Hopper and Thompson (1980), and others, the “Functional-Psycholinguistic” approach derives its treatment of narratives from a combination of functional linguistics and psychology. This paradigm focuses on the communicative uses of language in narratives by linking the employment of various linguistic devices (e.g., temporal and causal sequencing, cohesion/coherence, backgrounding and foregrounding of information, etc.) in certain structures with the
achievement of particular communicative functions. While efforts from this third approach are generally focused on "internal" issues of the linguistic structure of narrative texts, it does tend, more than the other paradigms mentioned, to focus on children’s own uses of language, and in so doing has developed a somewhat broader definition of what constitutes a "minimal narrative form." For example, Bamberg’s (1997b, p. 86) broad definition encompasses certain minimalist forms by attributing "third-person and first-person narratives equal weight, and even explanatory accounts are subsumed to be narratives, as long as generalized actors (e.g., one, you, they) act and position themselves in their actions vis-à-vis others." McCabe’s (1996, 1997) functional approach includes single clause forms as the most minimal type of narratives. Consisting of the (re)telling of a single event, McCabe labels these structures "One-Event Narratives," and notes that (1997, p.144), were her definition of narrative as narrow as those of other paradigms, it would rule out consideration of these earliest forms of narrative, which first appear between 2 and 3 years of age. In summation, the functional psycholinguistic approach brings to narrative analysis a wider definitional perspective, a shift in focus towards the examination of both structural and functional concerns, and an orientation which eschews the deficiency slant from which development is often viewed.

Though several other approaches to narrative analysis exist (e.g., Applebee’s
1978 developmental approach to plot structure, Deese's 1984 "Dependency Analysis"), most of them are, to a varied extent, derivations of one of the above major paradigms. HPA and SGA, while thorough in their attempts to outline the stages of structural development, evidence little concern with the evaluative aspects of narrative, and SGA in particular remains largely indifferent to contextual factors which may affect both form and function. The Functional-Psycholinguistic approach presents a more balanced perspective by addressing formal features in the context of functional concerns. The last to develop of the three major paradigms, it is the findings of this approach which provide the foundation and the impetus for the current research, in which the evaluative features of oral narratives among a multi-lingual student population are explored.

1.2 Evaluative Features of Oral Narratives: Previous Research

As described, the majority of linguistic research on narrative focuses on structural concerns, exploring the minimal number of structural elements necessary to constitute a "narrative," and examining the placement of narrative components relative to one another and/or the actual order of occurrence of the reported events. While maintaining this narrow focus, most of the aforementioned research does make a distinction between two types of information which narratives present: referential and evaluative. It is the

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2 Applebee's six-stage approach is based on the work of Vygotsky (1962), which outlines six major stages of cognitive development.

3 Dependency Analysis (DA) is actually a type of general discourse analysis. When applied to narratives, DA focuses on their elaboration, and compares the ordering of propositions as presented in a narrative with their actual chronological order, clarifying the number of implicit versus explicit propositions in the process.
evaluative features which serve as the listener's guide as to how a narrative is to be interpreted, by portraying the relationships between characters within the story, while simultaneously expressing the narrator's own frame of mind. Thus, while the referential components convey "what happened," it is largely the evaluative features which contribute to the success or failure of a narrative by serving as the "interpretive glue" which holds the referential material together. Seen in this light, both the referential and evaluative aspects of narrative are of equal importance. (As Schiffrin [1994] comments, a discourse consisting solely of referential information without any evaluative features present, is more like a list than a narrative.) This perspective is supported in the research of Peterson and McCabe (1983), who found that narratives which are structurally "perfect" and referentially "accurate," but which are lacking in sufficient evaluative material, will be judged as deficient by other native speakers.

Evaluative features—those elements which communicate perspective and thereby create connectivity within a narrative—exist on multiple levels. Different studies have adopted varying definitions, depending on their particular focus. The most extensive (though certainly not exhaustive) catalog of evaluative features is found in Peterson & McCabe's (1983) analysis of children's first-person narratives. Peterson and McCabe (who were primarily concerned with exploring the development of story structure from various theoretical perspectives) define evaluation as, "Statements or words that tell the [listener] what to think about a person, place, thing, event, or the entire experience" (p. 32). They cite twenty-one different forms of evaluation as having been encountered in their corpus:
As this list makes obvious, evaluative information in narratives can be realized at any linguistic level, and any particular segment of a narrative discourse can be at once referential and evaluative, or evaluative by merit of two or more simultaneously occurring traits, etc. Peterson and McCabe's list of evaluative devices is by far the most extensive in the existing literature (e.g., Shiro 1997 limits her analysis of Venezuelan children's evaluative stance to the expression of feelings, thoughts, and reported speech. Other researchers [e.g., Labov 1972, Reilly 1992] also examine a far more restricted set of evaluative features.). Working from within the functional-psycholinguistic paradigm, Peterson and McCabe explore such factors as frequency of use and usage preferences related to age and sex for the twenty-one features in a sample of ninety-six school children, ages 3 ½ through 9 ½ years.

Aside from Peterson & McCabe's work, a small number of additional studies have addressed children's ability to employ evaluation in narratives. Though the body of data is somewhat limited, it appears to house numerous contradictions. For example, Bamberg and Damrad-Frye's (1991) research indicates that evaluative devices of a linguistic nature are minimally present in picture-book narratives until at least 5-6 years of age, and that children's early attempts at using evaluation contribute little to the
overall coherence/connectedness of the narrative. In contrast, a study by Miller and Sperry (1988) of 2 year-old children's language notes that, even at this young age, evaluation may be one of the most distinctive characteristics of children's narratives. In their data, the children's narratives of past experiences contained five times more evaluations than all other types of discourse which the children produced. Perhaps these differing results can be explained by the work of Hemphill, et. al. (1994), which indicates that, for English speaking children, the pattern of evaluative development varies across genres. In any case, Emery and Milhalevich (1992, p.54) find that by the late elementary school years (5th–6th grade), most children begin to make skillful use of select features such as the expression of interpersonal relations, viewpoints, and motives, while Hill, et. al. (1997) note that the use of other common evaluative features, such as cognitive verbs (e.g., forget), is still relatively limited. Additional contradictions appear when Peterson and McCabe's (1983) work is compared with that of Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991). Peterson and McCabe (1983) find no increase in the amount of evaluation used by older children, but do note an increase in diversity of evaluative devices used, as well as a narrowing of the location of evaluative placement within the narrative. Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991), however, do find a correspondence between increases in the amount of evaluation and age, and, in addition, note the spreading of evaluation throughout the narrative as story-telling sophistication increase. Finally, studies of children from different cultures (especially more recent work on sub-groups within the Latino culture, see, e.g., Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias 1992, McCabe 1996, 1997) challenge the conclusions of earlier work—most of which was conducted on Anglo-
American speakers of English. As the use/appropriateness of evaluative devices in narrative is culturally, contextually, and linguistically determined—and thus can vary to a great extent—it is imperative that the development of this ability be understood, not only for speakers of English, but for children of varying linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

1.3 Narratives, Evaluation, and the Classroom: Making the Connection

Oral language proficiency is one of the strongest predictors of academic success, and academic achievement is more likely to be dependent on language proficiency than the reverse. These conclusions have been reiterated in linguistic and educational research over the course of the past three decades (see, e.g., Carter & Segura 1979, Catts & Kamhi 1987, Clark & Gonzalez 1998, Collier 1995, Cummins 1980, De Avila and Duncan 1980, Dickinson 1990, Haney & Madaus 1989, Heath 1996, Marston & Magnusson 1987, McCabe 1996, 1997, Meadows 1993, Mercer 1973, Michaels 1990, Notari-Syverson & Losardo 1996, Oller 1980, Oller & Perkins 1980, Roth & Spekman 1986, Shepard 1989, Sillman & Wilkinson 1991, Wiggins 1989, Wolf 1989, Wong-Fillmore 1999). Although many have duplicated these results, few have focused on refining them. While “academic achievement” is generally understood as test scores and/or (somewhat more subjective) letter grades, “oral language proficiency” remains a nebulous, and extremely broad category. It is likely that certain oral language skills are more crucial than others when it comes to achieving success in academic settings—and it is those students who have mastered the crucial skills who are perceived as most capable,
and thus *create for themselves* an educational environment conducive to success. By exploring the relationship between evaluative features of narrative, perceived narrative skill, and previous academic achievement, this research will attempt to discover whether any of the oral language skills examined here (recall that the features in question are those which contribute to the "success" of narratives by creating connectivity and perspective) can be consistently linked with high levels of academic achievement. This will provide new insight into the matter of which skills are most critical for the attainment of success in educational settings.⁴ (In addition, parallels with particular perspectives on cognitive/psychological development will be drawn in an attempt to explain *why* particular skills may play pivotal roles.)

Numerous researchers have suggested that the study of oral narratives may present one of the most promising means of examining oral language proficiency in educational settings (see, e.g., Bamberg 1987, Bishop and Edmundson 1987, Dickinson 1990, Dickinson and McCabe 1991, Fordham 1985, McCabe 1996,1997, Michaels 1990, Minaya Portella 1980, Norris and Bruning 1988). This suggestion stems from our understanding of the quintessential nature of narratives—that is, narratives are at once psychological, cultural, and linguistic constructs that function on the cognitive level as sense/meaning makers. Like the construction of oral narratives, much of what we are taught in school—from the development of literacy to the manipulation of mathematical formulas and scientific concepts—involves the activities of *symbolic representation* and

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⁴ See Torrance and Olson (1984) for a discussion of particular oral competencies which evidence a relationship with the acquisition of literacy skills.
meaning-making (Meadows 1993, Sawyer 1991). As Bamberg (1987, p. 99) notes, the type of metalinguistic/decontextualized\(^5\) skills which are necessary in the production of narratives (e.g., management of cohesive devices such as anaphora, manipulation of perspective, temporality, etc.) are the same sort of metalinguistic/decontextualized skills which are required in the development of reading and writing, in that both processes require "the ability to reflect upon language as a system in and by itself" (see also, Wimmer, 1982, p.127). From this perspective, positing a connection between oral narrative skills and academic achievement makes a good deal of sense. Well-developed narrative skills, it would seem, ought to be connected with advanced cognitive development, and hence, with academic success.

Unfortunately, much of the research on narrative language in educational settings concludes that narrative is a resource which is overlooked at worst, and misinterpreted at best. Dickinson (1990) did not find any sort of school activities which seemed to encourage narrativization. Rather, his study of preschool settings and teacher agendas found that management concerns tended to dominate most classroom talk-time, resulting in: 1) the restriction of discourse to the "here and now" and 2) severely limiting the length of most interactions—both antithetical to the production of narrative. (See also, DeStefano 1984.) In studies addressing narrative skills in the classroom among older

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\(^5\) By Dickinson's (1990, p. 256) definition, "decontextualized language" occurs in situations where novel information is being communicated to a partner who shares indeterminate amounts of background information and is unable to provide feedback regarding their comprehension of the message. Decontextualized language skills can be developed, Dickinson contends, "through conversations when topics discussed require communication of novel, cognitively demanding information (e.g., explanations, recall of past events, recounting experiences not shared by one's conversation partner)."
students, it would appear that the possession of narrative ability in and of itself is not enough. Michaels (1990), in looking at both oral “sharing time” stories and teacher-student writing conferences, concludes that the creation of “personal” narratives is largely discouraged in the classroom. The favored form encouraged by teachers is very narrowly defined, strictly linear in nature, and closer to that of descriptive prose. Michaels notes that those students who start out with narrative structures which differ from the one described (e.g., students from minority backgrounds in which topic-centered, linear structures are not the typical narrative form—see Hicks 1990) are often caught in a sort of “catch-22” in that their background does not provide them access to/experience with “acceptable” forms, and because of their tendency to produce forms which deviate from the expected norm, they are given much less opportunity to practice/produce extended stretches of discourse (i.e., teachers more often interrupt these students to correct them/stop their turn at talk). In fact, Michaels is one of numerous researchers to report that differences in narrative style which are the result of cultural/linguistic background, worse than being discounted, are often misinterpreted as indicative of language/learning disabilities (see also, e.g., Dickinson and McCabe 1991, McCabe 1996, 1997). In addition, several studies have shown that for both children and adults, lack of experience/familiarity with a particular culture’s preferred narrative schemas results in poor comprehension and recall, and when re-tellings are requested, what is produced is often a re-shaped version of events which has been adjusted to better fit the narrator’s own preferred narrative schemas (see, e.g., Dube 1982, Harris, et. al. 1988, Invernizzi and Abouzeid 1995, John and Berney 1968, Pritchard 1990). The
conclusion which must be drawn from all of this is that it is not only the production of narratives as a generalized ability that is of concern in educational settings, but also, the ability to produce particular forms of narrative that are sensitive to context.

A 1997 study by Quasthoff supports the assertion that as children age, adult (i.e., teachers, parents, etc.) expectations of narrative structure become more demanding. While five-year-olds can safely produce simplistic forms which will be considered sufficient as long as they correctly convey all the referential information, older children are expected to produce detailed narratives replete with both referential and evaluative information. As the form and type of evaluation provided tends to be largely dependent on a speaker's linguistic and cultural background, not all narrators will focus on or utilize the same sort of evaluative features. Due to the influences of language and culture, narratives may be produced which, because of their focus on evaluative material not condoned in the given context (here, the English-language educational setting), are construed as lacking in or misinterpreting telicity (Dickinson 1990, Michaels 1990). The assignment of "contextually condoned" evaluations is a difficult task even for native speakers, and there are many dangers when difference is mistaken for deficiency in educational settings—especially with linguistically diverse student populations such as the one examined here.

While the role that evaluation plays on the listeners' behalf (e.g., directing the

\[6\]

As an experienced reading teacher of students ages four and up, I can attest to the fact that evaluation is the stage at which the largest number of students begin to fall behind. While the majority of students are capable of explaining the "what" of information/events, they are often at a loss to assign importance (a "why") to this same information.
listener’s attention, helping them interpret the importance of/understand the relationship between the events, creating the perception of success/narrative skill) is an important one, the role that evaluation plays for the narrators themselves must not be overlooked. The use of evaluation essentially means that the narrator has “processed” the information contained in the narrative on what one might call a “deeper level.” Rather than simply reproducing a string of events which they have managed to acquire through rote memorization, narrators who evaluate are indicating that, not only are they aware of the referential facts, but they have attached a personal interpretation to them—indeed, they understand those facts well enough to assign an individual meaning, which requires mental manipulation beyond the level of simple memorization. Basically, use of evaluation signals the possession of “understanding” (as opposed to pure recall). As discussed above, there always exist multiple interpretations (“understandings”) of any given set of facts, and part of the goal of educational settings is to learn to interpret the facts in a contextually condoned manner. However, possession of the ability to evaluate/interpret information in a general sense would seem to be the logical foundation upon which the contextually determined understandings of the educational setting are built. From this perspective, the knowledge gained through this research is of a dual nature. In discovering the ways in which children use/lack evaluation in their oral narrative re-tellings, we will learn not only about those factors that lead to perceived success on the part of their adult listeners, but also about how the child narrators themselves use evaluation to both create and reflect their individual interpretations of
information and events.\textsuperscript{7}

* * *

Given the circumstances outlined above, it is easy to understand why the development of evaluation in a manner which is consistent with contextual and cultural norms is of critical importance in educational settings. As children progress in school, they are expected to produce narrative forms which are re-tellings not only of \textit{what} they have learned, but also of \textit{why} this referential knowledge is important, and of \textit{how} different aspects of knowledge relate to one another (a personal meaning/significance/interpretation must be assigned to referential material). Evaluation involves more than the mere perception of information--it requires the ability to manipulate/interpret the material.\textsuperscript{8} A child who makes little use of evaluation may be experiencing difficulty with developing any "higher-level" understanding of information--that is, they may be able to memorize, but unable to interpret. A child who consistently focuses their use of evaluation on matters considered extraneous by the establishment, or who includes "too much evaluation," may be labeled as deficient in the same way as those children who

\textsuperscript{7} While the employment of evaluation functions on behalf of both the child narrator and their adult listener, this research focuses on whether \textit{adult} patterns of perception can be related to other measures of performance. Other researchers (e.g., Stein and Policastro 1984) have analyzed the differences in adult vs. child concepts of "story," and of story "goodness." In keeping with the context (an academic setting in which the children are largely powerless participants), however, it is the adults' judgements of skill--and not the children's--which will receive primary consideration in this analysis.

\textsuperscript{8} See de Beaugrande (1982, 1984) for a discussion of the manner in which conventional models of language and learning suffer from "an overemphasis of structural analysis and from a neglect of discourse processing factors" (1984, p. 185). See also Fischer and Mandl (1984) on the role of monitoring in comprehension and recall.
produce structurally deviant forms (e.g., Hispanic and African-American students whose narrative forms often diverge from the topic-centered, linear structures preferred by the American educational system—see, e.g., Dickinson 1990, Michaels 1990, Peterson and McCabe 1983). Essentially, children who evidence a mis-match in their use of evaluation may be perceived as having grasped the facts, but as having mis-interpreted their intended meaning or importance. Clearly, it is crucial that we come to understand how evaluative aspects of narrative operate in educational contexts. In addition, by examining the evaluative aspects of narratives in a classroom setting, and then comparing the results of this qualitative analysis with quantitative data on student achievement, this study endeavors to refine our understanding of how oral language abilities may be linked with academic achievement in general.9

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9 This study focuses on 3rd person text-re-tellings, and although it is beyond the scope of this analysis to examine 1st person narratives, such data was collected in conjunction with the 3rd person text re-tellings. In general, the subjects who performed well on the 3rd person narratives also provided “rich/engaging” 1st person narratives. By contrast, those who performed poorly on the re-telling task often contributed similarly sparse/dull/confusing 1st person narratives, though there were a number of subjects whose poor performance on the re-telling task was in stark contrast to their exceptional 1st person narratives. While these conclusions are merely impressionistic (as the 1st person data was not analyzed in the careful manner of the text re-tellings), it would appear that narrative ability may be considered a general skill, which is then adapted to various contexts. Thus, this research examines the students’ production of what may be termed “academic narrative” and how it relates to their overall academic performance. It appears, however, that those subjects who possess skill in producing “academic narrative” also possess a more general/personal type of narrative skill which is native to quotidian conversational contexts.
2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

As discussed above, the majority of linguistic research on narratives has focused on structural properties. Given the limited, and often contradictory data on the subject of evaluation, the tenor of the current research is exploratory, and the methodology adopted reflects both the flexibility and diversity necessary in such contexts. A brief description of the sample, the setting, and both the quantitative and qualitative methods follows. The material contained here is introductory in nature. Specific descriptions of procedures and results are located within the respective sections in the context of the relevant data and discussions.

2.1 Research Goals

This research addresses the following goals:

1-To examine the form and use of the evaluative features of children’s narrative re-tellings in an educational setting among a multi-lingual student population.

2-To investigate the relationship between particular patterns of evaluation and adult perceptions of narrative skill.

3-To explore possible connections between oral language skills and academic achievement in general.

2.2 Setting

This research was conducted at a public elementary school within the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. Gary L. Herod Elementary
School serves approximately 800 students grades pre-kindergarten thru 5th. There are 25 different native languages spoken among Herod’s students, English and Spanish being the two most predominant. In the early 1990’s, Herod’s administrators, faculty, and parents began working together to address their growing concerns that currently available curriculum and assessment instruments were unable to meet the needs of the school’s culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Since that time, Herod has been awarded three federal grants which have been used to develop and improve instruction, curriculum, and assessment measures. The funds received from the first grant were used to found a “Two-Way Developmental Bilingual Education Program” (also referred to as the Dual Language [DL] program). Launched in 1994, this program provides native Spanish-speaking students the opportunity to develop both their oral and written English skills while also maintaining and developing their L1, and provides native English speakers the opportunity to develop both oral and written Spanish skills while maintaining their English. Four additional educational “tracks” are located at the site of study:

*English Only (EO)—serving “Fluent English Proficient students” (FEPs)*

*English as a Second Language (ESL)—English-language immersion, oriented towards “early exit” into the EO/GT tracks*

*Gifted and Talented (GT)—serving high-achieving students in English with Spanish immersion for instruction in a single subject (science)*

*Language Delayed/Learning Disabled (LD)—serving students with multiple cognitive/linguistic deficits*
The sample population for this research (see below) was selected from the DL, EO, and ESL tracks.

Conducted yearly, program assessments show that the efforts of Herod’s administrators, teachers, and parents are paying off. The school as a whole is one of the top-performers in the district, and test-scores among Herod’s “Limited English Proficient” (LEP) students are well above district averages (though they remain measurably below those of Non-LEP/FEP students), as illustrated in Graph 1:

**Graph 1 - Stanford Achievement Test: '97-'98 Scores**

Note: At the time these measures were recorded, Grade 1 students were exempt from the “language” portion of the Stanford exam.

**Stanford Achievement Test Scores: District-wide LEPs vs. Herod Elementary LEPs and Non-LEPs**
The school’s innovative approach to handling the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse urban population has attracted so many students that there is currently a waiting list for those outside the neighborhood who wish to enroll in one of the school’s specially designed programs. Having tasted success, the administrators, teachers, and parents at the site of study are eager to continue refining their programs. Boasting high levels of involvement, participation, and commitment, the site of study provides not only a linguistically diverse student population, but also an enthusiastic educational environment which is open to change.

2.3 Sample

Ninety-eight oral narrative re-tellings were collected from a sample of 50 second graders and 48 fourth graders. The students participating were enrolled in either the DL, EO, or ESL tracks, and can be classified (based on test scores and teacher assessments) as native English-speaking, native Spanish-speaking, or Spanish-English bilingual. The following tables display demographic information for both the second and fourth grade populations:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males-High SES</th>
<th>Females-High SES</th>
<th>Males-Low SES</th>
<th>Females-Low SES</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SES = Socio-Economic Status (Low SES means that the student is a recipient of free/reduced lunch).

**Age Range = 7yrs. 0 mo. - 9yrs. 1mo.

**TABLE 1 - 2nd Grade Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males-High SES</th>
<th>Females-High SES</th>
<th>Males-Low SES</th>
<th>Females-Low SES</th>
<th>Males-SES Not Available</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SES = Socio-Economic Status (Low SES means that the student is a recipient of free/reduced lunch).

**Age Range = 9 yrs. 1 mo. - 10 yrs. 10 mo.

**TABLE 2 - 4th Grade Sample**

Students from the second and fourth grades were chosen as the subjects of study in the hopes of producing a data set that was maximally informative in the developmental sense. Research from the fields of both linguistics and psychology supports the notion that the two age-groups delineated in this research represent two distinct stages in both cognitive and linguistic development. In Piagetian psychology, for example, children 2-7 years of age are said to be in the “pre-operational stage,” during which they are highly
egocentric in both the linguistic and cognitive arenas, and are pre-occupied with the development of verbal skills. At the end of their 7th year, children's egocentric speech (as well as their egocentric perspective on the world) has largely disappeared, replaced, through age 12, by the "social self" of the "concrete operational" stage. Here children begin to work in both their cognitive and linguistic systems on abstract concepts and the establishment of perspectives and relationships. In the sample population examined here, the majority of the 2nd graders are at the end of the pre-operational period, while the 4th graders are well-within the concrete operational stage.

Regarding the stages of linguistic development represented within the sample, Karmiloff-Smith (1986) examines later-developing syntax, and distinguishes the period between 5-8 years of age (here represented by the 2nd grade) as the time during which language becomes a "problem-space" for children. During this crucial period, children work on integrating the series of procedures for language use they have previously collected into a coherent whole. From 5-8 years of age, Karmiloff-Smith finds that children's performances on experimental tasks involving language are inconsistent as their interpretation of sentences can be influenced by the context. After the age of 8 (here represented by the 4th grade), however, a normally developing child is capable of interpreting sentences as abstract objects out of context, thus achieving more consistent performance on experimental tasks, and demonstrating the internal work which has been taking place within their linguistic and cognitive systems.

Numerous age-related changes have also been documented which are particular to narrative form and function. While the most basic forms of narrative begin to appear
around 2-3 years of age, it is around 5-6 years of age that narrative ability undergoes a
veritable explosion of form (see, e.g., Owens 1992, Paul 1995). Before this time,
children's narratives tend to lack planfulness, do not display causal and temporal links,
and do not appear to pay significant attention to cultural and contextual cues relating to
corns of telicity and tellability. Additionally, they rely largely on simplified scripts
(highly salient generalized event knowledge) and immediate context in order to
convey/clarify information. In short, these early narratives tend to be more like
descriptions of characters and settings, or sequences of actions (not causally related)
attributed to particular characters. By six years of age, several changes have usually
taken place. At this time, children's narratives begin to show evidence of planfulness,
and causal and temporal links begin to develop. There is less dependance on context at
this age, and thus, most children are now capable of producing complex narrative forms
upon elicitation (i.e., requests from adult interlocutors, teachers, peers, etc.). The ability
to focus on a particular topic and elaborate in a connected manner is beginning to
develop. Perspective taking remains somewhat lacking, as do resolutions/closure-type
statements. Additionally, *evaluative information in linguistic form is only minimally
present in narratives at this age.* (See, i.e., Bamberg 1997b, Hudson & Shapiro 1990,

Though less dramatic/sweeping than the changes which occur between the ages of
5-6, changes that take place during the mid-elementary school years (here represented by
the 2nd grade) continue to add to the structural complexity of narratives. By eight years of
age, most children's narratives show a fully developed sense of plot, character, and the
ability to bring a resolution to the central problem. Eight year-olds make use of story-openers and codas, include dialogue, adjectives, comparatives, and locatives. They produce longer stories, and in so doing, utilize conjunctions and causal connections. *Evaluative information may be included to varying extents.* (See, e.g., Owens 1992, Paul 1995.)

Finally, by the end of the elementary school years (age 10, here represented by the 4th grade) children are able to produce what cognitive approaches refer to as a "complete episode." These narratives contain a temporally and causally related sequence of events, in which goal directed behavior is implied, and in which planning/intentional behavior in overcoming an "obstacle" is made explicit. Perspective-taking is evident, as are resolutions. *Appropriate evaluative features should be included by this stage.* (See, e.g., Paul 1995, Stein and Albro 1997.)

Though the site of study provided access to students with multiple language backgrounds, logistical constraints and concerns regarding statistical validity led to the decision to limit the sample population to those whose native language was either Spanish or English—the two most predominant language groups at the site. The majority of students meeting the language criterion were enrolled in the DL, EO, and ESL tracks. Four teachers at both grade-levels (1 DL, 2 EO, and 1 ESL from each grade, for a total of 8 classes participating) agreed to take part in the research, and permission slips were sent home with each student. The sample population consists of those students meeting the native language criterion (native English, native Spanish, or Spanish-English bilingual) who returned a permission slip indicating their guardian's consent for their participation.
2.4 Data Collection

Data collection took place over a period of several months, and was planned in conjunction with the eight participating teachers. As a general rule, the most accurate data are obtained from experimental settings in which the normal context is maintained to the fullest extent possible. Though the maintenance of natural settings often requires researchers to sacrifice full control of the variables in a given situation, the necessity of preserving normal settings is especially paramount when eliciting language data from young children. As Peterson and McCabe (1983) and Hudson and Shapiro (1990) note, the task set before the child, the topic of discourse, and the context have been shown to affect the type of speech child subjects produce. Additionally, numerous studies suggest that children perform far better on familiar tasks, which make use of familiar objects in a familiar setting (e.g., Labov 1970, Menig-Peterson and McCabe 1978). There are two main points to be noted here: 1) This study is being conducted in the context of an educational setting—Narrative re-tellings provide an exemplary means of maintaining the context because stories and story-telling are already a typical feature of elementary-school classrooms. 2) This is an exploratory study, aimed at examining evaluation in children’s oral narratives. It is designed to provide an “optimal setting” in which the students can demonstrate their skills. Every effort has been made to avoid interference due to memory issues, lack of familiarity with the materials, the researcher, the setting, etc.\(^{10}\)

\(^{10}\) The research design is modeled after new forms of testing known as “dynamic assessment.” In dynamic assessment, test-subjects are repeatedly exposed to the material to be tested prior to actual testing. This
Nine months prior to beginning data collection, preliminary meetings were held with faculty and administrators, and initial steps were taken to compile the school’s standardized testing data. Furthermore, in an effort to create an “optimal setting,” classroom time was initiated, during which I functioned as a reading instructor and occasional substitute teacher for the eight classes participating in the research. This extended period of interaction prior to the actual data collection allowed for the establishment of an extensive rapport with both the faculty and the student subjects. At the beginning of the semester in which the oral language data was collected, a classroom visitation schedule was established for each of the eight classes. During classroom visits, I assumed the role of reading instructor, working with the classes as a whole. Two stories (one for the 2nd grade, another for the 4th grade) that were judged to be both stimulating and age-appropriate were pre-selected as the stimulus texts for the re-tellings. These stories (and related classroom activities)—interspersed with various other texts from the curriculum—were presented to the students on three separate but proximal occasions in the course of the classroom visits. On the day of the third and final presentation of the stimulus text, individual students (those who had turned in signed permission slips allowing their participation as research-subjects) were asked to provide me with their “best” (English language) re-telling of the story. These re-tellings were captured on video-tape for later analysis.

allows test-subjects to familiarize themselves with the test material so that they may demonstrate their highest level of ability, rather than performing below capability due to lack of familiarity with the material tested (Baca 1999). See also, Chapter 5.
2.5 Analyses

As discussed above, this research is of an exploratory nature given the paucity and the contradictory character of the existing data on children’s use of evaluation in narrative. While no single “method of analysis” is espoused as axiomatic, it was noted in Chapter 1 that the analyses undertaken here most closely resemble those of the Functional/Psycholinguistic approach. Essentially, this means that no formal definition of “minimal narrative form” is espoused—all forms (from the extremely sparse to the extensively detailed) that the subjects produce in response to the question, “Can you tell me the story of _____?” will be counted as “narratives.” In addition, no prior definition of what constitutes “evaluation”—beyond a general description of its functional role—is adopted. Though the initial phases of the analyses employ the findings of earlier research in order to examine several “forms of evaluation” purportedly favored among the present age-group, we will see in the later phases of the analyses that, had the investigations been restricted to particular, pre-determined “forms” (as opposed to working from a definition which only delineates function), then the very features which play such a crucial role in the creation/expression of evaluation among the child narrators would likely have been overlooked. Simply stated, the analyses undertaken here are conducted from the standpoint of what is commonly referred to as “variation analysis” (see Schiffrin 1994), which is based upon the assumption that speakers have choices with respect to the type of utterances they produce, and that the choices they make (some more conscious/intentional than others) are “signposts” with regard to the manner in which they wish to be understood. While the number of choices available to a child
whose development is not yet complete, or for whom proficiency is an issue, are necessarily limited, the possibility of purposeful variation remains. For this reason, a focus on the child’s own language use is compulsory, and comparisons among and between groups must be conducted not from a deficiency perspective, nor based upon a set of pre-determined forms, but with the aim of seeking-out and illuminating pattern whenever possible. To the fullest extent possible, the answers must emerge from the data, rather than being preordained by the method.

Recall that “evaluation,” as explained above, is that which in large part determines the success of narratives by creating perspective and connectivity—by synthesizing lists of “separate events” into coherent wholes. Hence, the initial step in the qualitative analysis was to sort the data by determining the “successfulness” of the re-tellings, assuming that those narratives most consistently judged as “successful” would be those which made the most advantageous use of evaluation. Eight educated\textsuperscript{11} adult native speakers watched the video-taped data and rated the subjects’ re-tellings on a scale of 1-5. Raters were asked to base their ratings on how well they felt the students told the story. Scoring sheets, with ID codes to identify each student and additional space for optional written comments, were used to collect the raters’ scores. Each narrative was scored by three raters, and the average of the three was used to group the narratives using the following ranking system:

\textsuperscript{11} All raters possessed a bachelor’s degree or higher at the time of participation.
Best = an average of 5.00 - 4.00

Adequate = an average of 3.99 - 3.00

Marginal = an average of 2.99-2.00

Poor = an average of 1.99-1.00

Correlations were run to establish inter-rater reliability. As the initial division of the data into the four skill groups was based upon the raters' subjective, native-speaker reactions to the narratives, it was crucial to confirm that the raters were predicating their responses on similar criteria. The correlations confirmed a high level of agreement among the raters (.85 or higher throughout, p≤.01), verifying that the initial rankings of the data were sufficiently consistent across raters. Thus, although the four skill groups can only be said to represent a rough ranking system, the high level of inter-rater reliability that was maintained imparts confidence in the initial segmentation of the data. It was this initial segmentation of the data based on perceived skill levels that laid the groundwork for the analyses which followed.

In the next stage of the research, the video-data were transcribed using SALT (Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts) 6.0 software. Following the initial transcription, both the videotapes and the typed manuscripts were reviewed multiple times in order to insert the codes marking the seven forms of evaluation: negatives, lengthening, gratuitous terms, compulsion words, causals, emphatics, and hedges. The initial seven forms of evaluation were selected for coding based on a review of previous research in which said forms were cited as among those most frequently used by the age-groups in question. When coding was complete, the qualitative analyses indicated that
these seven forms could not account for the differences in perceived narrative ability among the subjects.

Quantitative analysis re-confirmed the reliability of the qualitative results. Percentages of use, as well as preferences for, and placement of the seven forms showed little variation between perceived ability, language, or age groups. Finally, the relationship among the variables (the evaluative forms and the final received scores) was explored. Correlations were run to test the independence of the variables from one another. By and large, the evaluative forms, though separable, showed a high level of correlation with one another. While this result would be disappointing from a strictly statistical perspective, it was not surprising (or indeed, problematic) given the nature of the research. The evaluative components, which are easily distinguishable from one another in form (e.g., negative vs. causal constructions), all work toward a single goal on the functional level—the creation of perspective/connectivity. Thus, the use of any one form is highly correlated with the use of all other forms, though the strength of the relationship may vary depending on which forms a particular child has mastered/prefers. Essentially, the findings support the contentions of the research that, on the functional level, the various forms examined here are performing similar work.

Having discovered little beyond widespread homogeneity regarding the seven initial evaluative forms, the transcriptions of the narratives were revisited in an effort to discover whether additional means of accomplishing evaluation might play a role in accounting for the variance between perceived ability groupings, language groups, or the two age groups. Two features were distinguished as playing a vital role in the perceived
success of the narratives: 1) references to mental activity (cognition, intention, perception, etc.) 2) references to speech (direct, indirect, and free). These two components, which often functioned in consort, appeared to bear a large portion of the responsibility for creating evaluative stance in both the 2nd and 4th grade narratives. Qualitative differences in usage which distinguish the grade levels and the perceived skill groups are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

A regression analysis (in which a stepwise regression model was constructed using SPSS) was performed to assess the extent to which the use of individual evaluative features was predictive of adult native-speaker perceptions of narrative skill (as evidenced by initial rankings based on averaged scores). In stepwise procedures, a model of the data that best predicts the criterion variable (the averaged score) is produced by adding in predictor variables (the evaluative features) one at a time. Those variables which do not make a significant contribution in predicting the criterion variable are dropped from the model, resulting in an equation that displays, in a weighted (stepwise) fashion, those variables which best account for the data.\textsuperscript{12} As the qualitative analysis asserted that certain evaluative features bear a greater load than others in the creation of connectivity and/or the perceived success of the narratives, it was hoped that stepwise regression models would isolate these same features as strongly predictive of the scores

\textsuperscript{12} Stepwise regression analyses must be interpreted with caution, as they “capitalize on chance differences in the data” in order to construct optimal models (Howell 1999, p. 211). What this means is that a model produced to fit one set of data may be highly specific to that particular set, and could loose much/all of its predictive strength when applied to other data. While the findings of this exploratory research will hopefully increase our understanding of the evaluative features of children’s narratives, they are not being proposed as universals, or as broadly predictive outside the given context. In this light, the use of a stepwise regression model is both appropriate and informative.
received from adult raters. This was, in fact, the case. For the 2nd grade subjects, references to *frame of mine* in *character speech* was isolated as the single, strongest predictor of scores received, while for the 4th grade subjects, *character speech* was isolated as the single strongest predictor. Once again, the quantitative analysis supported the assertions made in the qualitative analysis.

The final stage in the quantitative analysis explored the relationship between success in the production of 3rd person, "academic" narratives of the type examined here and other measures of academic achievement—specifically, Stanford scores and letter-grades assigned by teachers. Correlations were run, but did not reveal any significant relationships for any of the skill, language, or age groups between the type of oral language skills demonstrated by the subjects and the two achievement measures assessed. These results would appear to frustrate the aforementioned claims that oral language skills are the strongest predictor of overall academic success. However, the discussion contained in Chapter 5 addresses this issue, and proposes several means through which the findings of this research might still be gainfully applied in the context of educational settings.
3.0 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS:

SEVEN PREVALENT FORMS OF EVALUATION

Compare the following two narratives, both produced by 2nd grade bilingual females in response to the request that they provide their “best” re-telling of the text Doctor DeSoto (Steig 1982).\(^\text{13}\)

**TEXT 1 (with codes 1-7):**

Subj. ID: 2FG3

Age: 7 yrs., 9 mos.

\(C = \text{Child}\)
\(E = \text{Examiner}\)

\(+A: \text{Causal}\)
\(+O: \text{Compulsion}\)
\(+M: \text{Emphasis}\)
\(+G: \text{Gratuitous}\)
\(+H: \text{Hedge}\)
\(+L: \text{Lengthening}\)
\(+N: \text{Negative}\)

\(+Ew: \text{Error at the word level}\)
\(+Eu: \text{Error at the utterance level}\)

Score: 1.66

1  \(C (\text{Um})\) that there was two mice and one was a dentist.
2  \(C (\text{And um um})\) and then a fox came because[A] he had a toothache.
3  \(C (\text{Um})\) and the dentist pull/ed it out.
4  \(C\) And he said come back tomorrow at eleven.
5  \(E\) Uhhuh.
6  \(C\) And (um) \{C puts hand to forehead, trying to remember\} :04 (um) he want/ed to eat them.

\(^{13}\) A list of transcription conventions is located in Appendix A.
8 C But first he said he did/n't[N] want to.
9 C Then he said (uh it) he could[EW:would] [H] again.
10 C (Um) then he (w*) try/ed to eat them when he put the tooth in.
11 C (And he s* and then he put glue) and the dentist (put gl*) put glue on his teeth.
12 E Yes, exactly.

**TEXT 2 (with codes 1-7):**

Subj. ID: 2FG4

Age: 7 yrs., 5 mos.

C = Child  
E = Examiner

+A: Causal  
+O: Compulsion  
+M: Emphasis  
+G: Gratuitous  
+H: Hedge  
+L: Lengthening  
+N: Negative  
+EW: Error at the word level  
+EU: Error at the utterance level

Score: 5.00

1 C (Um) DoctorDeSoto was a very[G] good (um) dentist, and (he) he work/ed a
2 lot.
3 E Uhhuh.
4 C And his (a*) assistant/s never[N] stop/ed.
5 E Uhhuh.
6 C And his finger/s were very[G] delicate and his drill/s were (th*, the*) they
7 could/n't[N] even[G] feel a pain.
8 E Uhhuh.
9 C And one day this fox came.
10 C And his sign said DoctorDeSoto dentist.
11 C And the sign said cat/s and other dangerous animal/s not[N] accept/ed for
12 treatment.
13 E Uhhuh.
14 C And they would/n't[N] even[G] let the most[G] tempted[EW:timid] cat come
in.
C So the one day this fox came, and (he, he was) he was (very) very[G] hurt
because[A] of his %achetooth.
C And he was cry/ing.
C And DoctorDeSoto said what are we go/ing to do?
C And the wife said hmmm {C makes thinking face}.
E {E laughs}.
C And then she press/ed the buzzer.
C And she let the fox in.
E Oh no!
C And (then) {C laughs}, then the fox came in and said mercy on your heart/s for
(uh) :03 (uh)>.
C And DoctorDeSoto said sit on the floor please, and take off your bandage.
E <Uh oh>!
C <{C laughs}>.
C (And he) and he wash/ed his hand/s in that picture.
E Uhuh.
C (And then, then he <{C laughs}>), he, he w*, he will, w* his wife, (he pull/ed
the) she pull/ed the :03 (pul*) pulley to[A] lift him up <> into the fox/z mouth.
E <{E laughs}>.
E <Uhuh>.
E Uhuh.
C And then he got out of the pulley and got into his mouth and he wore rubber/s.
E Okay.
C And he <{C laughs}> this part/s very[G] bad.
E <{E laughs}>.
C Then (he) he said yuck (because)<> because[A] he had a rotten tooth and
especially[G] bad breath {C laughs}.
E <{E laughs}>.
E {E laughs} yuck!
C And then he said this tooth will have[O] to come out.
E Uhuh.
C And when he pull/ed it out {C begins to laugh}, it came out with a sucking
sound.
E {E laughs}.
C Out like this {C, laughing, makes a sucking noise and uses her hands to
demonstrate how the tooth came out}.
E {E laughs}.
C (And) and there was blood on it, {C makes a yuck sound and a face}.
E Yuck.
C And he said he would get another tooth for him.
E Uhuh.
C And at night, his wife made a golden tooth.
C And in bed, (they) they were awake, and they wonder/ed how to protect
themselves.
C And they made a special formula, <> a secret formula.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (And they) and soon, {C begins to laugh} DoctorDeSoto was snore/ing.
E Uhhuh.
E Yeah.
C And the next morning at eleven (the uh) a[EW:the] fox (um) he came in.
C And he {C pantomimes tipping hat} tip/ed off his hat like this.
E Uhhuh.
C (And he was) he did/n't[N] have a bit of pain {C shakes head no}.
E Uhhuh, exactly.
C (And he um) DoctorDeSoto got up into his mouth, and the fox {C laughs} he
shut his mouth.
E {E laughs}.
C And he said, hahahahahaha just[H] a joke {C laughs}!
E {E laughs}.
C (And then) and then he said, keep your mouth open!
C And (his) his wife said, {C shakes index finger} wide open {C laughs}!
E Exactly {E laughs}.
C And then (he) DoctorDeSoto step/ed out of his mouth and gave him some gas.
E Uhhuh.
C And then {C begins to laugh} he was in dreamland.
E Uhhuh.
C I think[H] I can remember what he said.
C He said, yumyumyumyumyumyum {C laughs} yumyum.
E {E laughs}.
C Oh how I like to eat them raw <> with just[G] a pinch of salt <> (and dr*) and
a cup of dry wine {C smacks lips w/ tongue}.
E <{E laughs}>.
E <{E laughs}>.
E {E laughs}.
C And then (he) his wife {C begins to laugh} gave him a pole (and he kept) to[A]
keep the fox/*z mouth open.
C (And when he, and he) in the picture I saw that he was open/ing his eye/s a
E Uhhuh.
C And a little[G] before that (he sa*) he realize/ed he had a little[G] bit of morsel
in his mouth [EU].
E Uhhuh.
C And his jaw began to quiver <> {C makes a quivering jaw face with sound}.
E <Uhhuh>.
E {E laughs}. 
C (And then, and then, .04, {C laughs} then he said) then his wife was cargo/ing the big old golden tooth.
C And he[EW:she] was cargo/ing it up the ladder {C laughs}.
E Uhhuh.
C (And, and then he {C laughs}) and then he open/ed the>
C No[N], he (um) put the tooth in.
E Uhhuh.
C And the fox (tried it) test/ed it with his tongue {C uses tongue in cheek to demonstrate}.
E Uhhuh.
C (And then {C laughs}, and then he, he did) he thought about something.
C He said, {C puts hand to chin} hm, maybe[H] I should/n't[N] eat them, <and on> the other hand, how can I resist {C laughs}?
E <Exactly>.
E {E laughs}.
C And then (he) he definitely[G] made his mind up to eat them.
E Uhhuh.
C (And so, he, he, um) DoctorDeSoto step/ed out of his mouth.
C And he said how would you (be the fir*) like to be the first one to receive (this) this special treatment?
E Uhhuh.
C And the fox said, I would be delighted to {C laughs}!
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C (And the) and the fox, he let (the) him step in again.
C And (the, the mou*) DoctorDeSoto (um) {C makes painting gesture} paint/ed it on his teeth.
E Uhhuh.
C And he step/ed out of his mouth and he said, now {C squeezes finger & thumb together making a 'closed' motion} close your mouth for one whole[G] minute!
E Uhhuh.
E Uhhuh.
C And {C laughs} then when he open/ed his mouth, (he s*) he could/n't[N] {C demonstrates by mumbling behind closed teeth}.
E {E laughs}.
C Then {C laughs} DoctorDeSoto said, oops[H], I forgot to tell you something {C smiles & shrugs shoulders}!
C You may[H] have[O] to have your teeth open[EW:closed] for (two) one day or two day/s.
C (And he, and the fox) {C laughs} the fox, <> (he, um) all he could say was, {C talks with mouth closed} thank you very[G] much {C laughs}!
E <Yeah>.
E {E laughs}.
C And (he) he look/ed up at (m*) MrsDeSoto and (MrDeSoto) DoctorDeSoto (and he) and they smile/ed up/ed[EW:up] at him {C smiles, tilting head upwards}. E Uhhuh. C {C laughs}. C (And then) and then the fox look/ed at them and he/'s like {C makes a face}. E {E laughs}. C (And he walk/ed) he try/ed to leave with dignity and he stumble/ed down the stair/s and he left. E O^ C (And) and DoctorDeSoto and his wife outfox/ed the fox. E Wow!

Both narratives recount the same actual events:

A fox has his tooth pulled by a mouse dentist. The fox returns the next day to have a new tooth put in. The fox tries to eat the mouse, but the mouse tricks him by gluing his teeth together.

Yet, aside from their agreement on the events of the story, these two narratives contrast starkly with one another. Text 2 presents a vivid, detailed description of the events in which the narrator explicitly motivates the actions of the characters throughout the text.

In the opening scenes, for example:

Lines 1-6 – We are introduced to Doctor DeSoto, and his reputation as a skilled and gentle dentist is established.

Line 8 – A fox arrives.

Lines 9-13 – The narrator backtracks momentarily to report that Doctor DeSoto has a firmly established rule, posted on his sign, that he will not treat “dangerous animals.”

Lines 14-16 – The fox’s arrival is re-stated, and the severity of his need for dental attention is described.

Lines 17-18 – Doctor DeSoto and his wife hesitate to let the fox in. (Will they stick to their rule, as established in lines 9-13, or will their kind nature and ability to be of assistance, per lines 1-6, win out?)
Lines 20-24 – Doctor DeSoto’s wife finally opens the door and the fox enters, gratefully.

The narrator continues in this manner throughout the text, prefacing each character’s actions with details that assist her listener in understanding the reason for the ensuing events. Yet Text 2 is by no means inviolate in form. Some seemingly important details—such as the point that Doctor DeSoto is, in fact, a mouse—are never even mentioned in this re-telling. However, by attempting to proscribe rational motivations to the events of the story, this text works for the listener in a way that Text 1 does not.

In Text 1, we see that the narrator’s recounting of the events is, essentially, correct. The actions of the characters are clearly stated, and presented in a logical order. Unlike Text 2, however, there is less detail provided as to the motivations for the characters’ actions, and what little perspective is included is strictly limited to the fox’s point-of-view (lines 6-10), or his physical state (line 2). For example:

**Line 1** – States the existence of two mice, noting that one is a dentist.

**Line 2** – Reports that a fox arrives at the dentist due to a toothache.

**Lines 3-4** – The dentist pulls the fox’s tooth and tells him to return the next day.

**Lines 6-10** – The fox deliberates about eating the mouse, and finally attempts to do so.

**Line 11** – The mouse puts glue on the fox’s teeth.

In Text 1, no mention is made of the mice’s perspective, and it is largely left to the listener to infer a rational for many of the characters’ actions. While the work of inferring is not difficult given the context (What fox wouldn’t be tempted by a mouse so
near his mouth? What mouse [of the fairy-tale variety] wouldn't recognize this fact, and thus, have an escape plan [e.g., a large jar of glue] ready and waiting?), leaving out the details makes for a much less interesting story. More detrimental than boredom, however, are misinterpretation and misunderstanding—either of which could easily result from the omission of connective details in less clear-cut contexts.

This chapter will examine the use of seven forms of evaluation that were selected due to their prevalent use by the present age-group (see Section 3.2). The employment of these seven forms will be analyzed in an attempt to highlight the differences between those texts consistently judged as successful (such as Text 2, whose final, averaged score was 5.0 out of 5.0) and those texts viewed as less masterful (such as Text 1, whose final, averaged score was 1.66 out of 5.0). The goal is to understand, from a qualitative, linguistic perspective, how the selected features are utilized by child narrators in constructing what adult raters have deemed a “skilled” narrative re-telling.

### 3.1 Oral Narrative Ratings

The first step in the qualitative analysis was to determine success levels among the oral narratives. Recall that the focus of this research is to examine evaluation in

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14 Detail in conversation occurs in a variety of forms—listing, naming, dialogue, paraphrasing, use of descriptors such as adjectives and adverbs—to name a few. Regardless of presentation, detail serves the recurrent function of creating involvement. According to Tannen (1989, p. 135), involvement is achieved because, “details create images, images create scenes, and scenes spark emotions,” making involvement possible. The images created by detail in conversation can be especially powerful linguistic devices when they cause internal evaluation on the part of the listener (the listener creates an image inside their mind, thus performing internal evaluation). Internal evaluation (inside the mind of the listener) is more persuasive than external evaluation (on the part of the speaker) because it requires more work (more involvement) on the part of the listener (see, Labov 1972, Tannen, 1989, p. 138).
children's narratives. Evaluative forms are broadly defined as those elements which, through the creation of perspective and connectivity, combine separate events into narrative wholes, and thereby determine in large part a narrative's success. It is here assumed, therefore, that those narratives most consistently judged as "successful" will be those which make optimal use of evaluative forms. The determination of such broad concepts as a narrative's "success" obviously involves a large amount of subjective judgement, and should thus be handled with care. With this caveat in mind, however, we can still proceed under the assumption that, as participants in the same cultural and linguistic environment, there are certain amounts of background knowledge which we hold in common, and that the shared percentage of this knowledge is large enough to allow us to make reliably similar (though not identical) judgements in a given context.

Eight adult, native English-speakers, all of whom possessed a bachelor's degree or higher at the time of participation,\footnote{This group of raters (2 men and 6 women) was selected to model those adults (e.g., teachers and administrators) with whom the subjects of study must interact in educational settings—i.e., educated, native English-speakers.} were asked to watch the video-taped narratives, and to score them 1-5 (lowest-highest) based on how well the subjects "told the story."

Information on the grade-level of the subjects (2\textsuperscript{nd} or 4\textsuperscript{th}),\footnote{This information was provided based on the conclusions of earlier research (e.g., Quasthoff 1997), which found that adult expectations for narrative performance become gradually more demanding in correspondence with the age of the child-narrator.} and the context (re-tellings of texts read in the classroom) was supplied to the raters. Space was furnished on the score sheets for written comments, which raters were encouraged to provide at their own discretion.
Each of the 98 video-taped narratives was viewed by three adult raters. The three scores received were then combined and averaged, resulting in a single, final score ranging from 1.0-5.0. For each grade-level, the narratives were then sorted by overall score into one of four groups, roughly representing the success/skill-level of the oral narratives. The groupings were as follows:

- **Best** = 5.00 - 4.00
- **Adequate** = 3.99 - 3.00
- **Marginal** = 2.99 - 2.00
- **Poor** = 1.99 - 1.00

The following distribution of scores resulted:

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17 The use of video-tape was determined to be both necessary and appropriate in the given context. Factors such as physical attractiveness and affect, which become evident in the use of video data, may influence scores (e.g., Cunningham 1986). However, these same confounding factors would occur in face-to-face interaction in classroom contexts. Therefore, it is assumed that, while these features have an effect on scores, their effect is defensible as an inextricable feature of the context. Additionally, and perhaps of primary importance, the subjects of study are children, some of whom are very limited with respect to English-language proficiency. For this sample population, gesture and paralinguistic features can be quite important. In the most extreme instances, where subjects rely on gestures to fill in the gaps in their linguistic knowledge, entire sections of text would be rendered incomprehensible without access to visual cues. (See also, Stam 2000 on the use of video data in oral proficiency interviews and Torrance and Olson 1984 on differences obtained in ratings from video-tapes vs. transcripts.)

18 Narratives on which the scores received represented more than a 1 point range (e.g., two 4s and a 2, or a 1, a 2, and a 3, etc.) were marked as receiving “skewed” scores, and were subject to individual consideration later in the analysis.
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**TABLE 3 - 2nd Grade Narrative Scores**

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**TABLE 4 - 4th Grade Narrative Scores**

For a visual depiction of the distribution of scores, Tables 3 and 4 are converted into graphs below. Essentially, we see a relatively normal distribution of scores for both the 2nd and 4th grades. In each case, the majority of scores fall within the middle range (3.99-3.00 and 2.99-2.00, the *adequate* and *marginal* groups), with a substantially smaller number of cases scoring in the outer ranges (5.00-4.00 and 1.99-1.00, the *best* and *poor* groups). In the 2nd grade, females as a group perform somewhat better than males, with 71% (15/21) of females scoring in the top two rankings (*best* and *adequate*), as opposed to 39% (11/28) of males. This sex-linked advantage has disappeared,
however, by the 4th grade, in which approximately the same proportion of both the male and female groups score in the top-half of the rankings (58% [15/26] males and 59% [13/22] females). In addition, both the English-speaking and Bilingual groups display higher ratings in both grade-levels, with 50% or more of both language groups scoring 3.00 or above. For Spanish-speakers at both grade levels, only about 1/3 receive scores of 3.00 or higher. Finally, for both grade levels, slightly more than half of all subjects score in the top two groups (3.00 or higher = 52% [26/50] of 2nd graders and 58% [28/48] of 4th graders).

Graph 2 - 2nd Grade Narrative Scores

See Hoff-Ginsberg (1997) for discussion of research on sex-linked differences in language development.
The above distribution of scores yields largely routine results. The relatively normal distribution of the scores for both the 2nd and 4th grade groups, coupled with the high level of inter-rater reliability which was maintained (.85+, p≤.01), suggests that we can now turn toward the analysis of evaluative forms with a high level of confidence in both the sample and in the ratings used to sort the data.

3.2 Selection of Evaluative Forms for Initial Analysis

To begin the analysis of the children’s use of evaluation, the narratives were transcribed using SALT 6.0 (Miller 1999) software. The video data were then repeatedly viewed in order to code the texts for seven different types of evaluative forms. As noted, the findings of earlier work on evaluation have often been contradictory. In addition, the
elements examined, though frequently of an overlapping nature, represent a wide array of evaluative forms. The seven forms selected for the initial phase of this analysis were chosen based on a review of previous research, and included the following.\textsuperscript{20}

**Causal Explanations:** because, so, since, (in order) to, etc.

**Compulsion Words:** have to, must, make (as in “force”), etc.

**Emphasis:** word stress

**Gratuitous Terms:** very, really, so, such, etc.

**Hedges:** might, maybe, sort of, I guess, kind of, etc.

**Lengthening:** protracted pronunciation

**Negatives:** no, not, un-, -n’t, etc.

Five of the seven evaluative forms—causals, compulsion words, gratuitous terms, negatives, and stressors (here labeled “emphasis”)—were chosen based on Peterson and McCabe’s usage preference findings (most preferred forms) for 7-9 year-olds (1983, p. 58):

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\textsuperscript{20} The categories specified here are those which are employed in the literature on narrative evaluation. From a linguistic perspective, these divisions may appear unusual, and as we will see later in the forms elaborated in Chapter 4, the categories often overlap. Another means of typologizing many of these forms (i.e., compulsion words, hedges, references to mental activity, speech) is Givon’s (1980) binding hierarchy, which outlines both the semantic and syntactic levels of integration of verbal complements. Readers who prefer a more formalized/linguistic perspective may wish to refer to Givon’s (1980) work or to Chapter 4 of his 1995 book, which discusses “modal prototypes of truth and action.”
TABLE 5 - Percent of 5 Most-Preferred Types of Evaluative Forms per Narrative Comment

Peterson and McCabe (1983) isolate 21 different types of evaluative forms in their analysis (see p. 7, above, for the full list of forms), offering not only one of the most exhaustive approaches, but also the only categorization of usage preferences broken down by age for their 96-subject sample of children 3 ½ thru 9 ½ years old. According to their findings, a full 50% of narrative comments offer some type of evaluative information, and though they find no age-related changes in the overall incidence of evaluation, they do note the use of a greater variety of evaluative forms among their older subjects. Four of the five categories listed above—causals, gratuitous terms, negatives, and stressors (here, emphasis)—were the most commonly used across all Peterson and McCabe’s age-groups (3 ½ - 9 ½ years). Of the twenty-one forms analyzed, stress (emphasis) was the only one which displayed statistically significant changes in percentage of usage related to age. This phonological evaluative form was used twice as often by 6 and 7 year-olds as by either the younger (3-5 year-olds) or older (8-9 year-olds) groups. Finally, Peterson and McCabe found that, rather than being randomly scattered throughout the narrative, the majority of evaluative information was placed towards the
ends of stories, near the “high point” or climax. This preference for the placement of evaluative information near the climax is explained by the fact that this is often the “point” of the narrative (the reason that the narrative is being told), and thus, the part of the narrative most likely to be evaluated.  

Peterson and McCabe’s data consist of spontaneous personal narratives collected from native English-speakers, as opposed to the text re-tellings from a multi-lingual sample population analyzed in this research. Previous research has shown that the developmental path of narrative differs across genres and across linguistic/cultural backgrounds. Thus, the five forms which are most preferred among 7-9 year-olds in Peterson and McCabe’s work may not turn out to be of pivotal importance in the genre and sample population examined here. Nonetheless, their age-differentiated preference analysis provides a tenable starting point.

Two additional evaluative categories—*lengthening* and *hedges*—were added to accommodate the findings of researchers such as Reilly (1992) and Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991), both of whom have explored the use of evaluation in narrative by children of the age-range studied here. Reilly (1992) uses spontaneously constructed picture-book narratives to explore the relationship between storytelling performance (affect) and story construction (structure) in the development of narrative skill. Reilly’s category of “affective aspects,” which she uses to examine storytelling performance,

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21 As Peterson and McCabe (1983) are primarily concerned with analyzing the structural features of narrative from different theoretical perspectives, their definition of narrative skill centers upon the placement of the various narrative components. While they recognize the role evaluation plays in narrative success, their work does not focus on evaluation in the same manner that this analysis does.
includes those features which “convey the narrator’s perspective and attitude” (p. 356). This category is roughly equivalent, conceptually, to those elements which are referred to here as “evaluative forms.” In her analysis, Reilly establishes a distinction between linguistic markers of affect (i.e., characterization and evaluative comments) and paralinguistic markers (i.e., facial expressions, gestures, prosodic features, and lexical stress). According to her findings, the use of linguistic markers of affect does not differ among younger age-groups (3 and 4 year-olds vs. 7 and 8 year-olds), though older children (10 and 11 year-olds) do utilize these features more frequently. Paralinguistic features, on the other hand, evidenced significantly more use among the youngest and oldest groups, while the middle group displayed the lowest percentage of use. In addition, there was a strong preference among the oldest and youngest groups for the use of vocal paralinguistic features (i.e., prosodic features and lexical stress) as opposed to gestural paralinguistic features (i.e., facial expressions and gesture). Reilly explains this “U-shaped” curve in the development of affective narrative skill by proposing that the middle-group (7 and 8 year-olds), whose narratives display an affective low-point, but a structural middle-ground (i.e., more complex than the younger subjects, but less complex than the older), may find it necessary to temporarily submerge certain skills (e.g., affective features) in order to master the manipulation of others (e.g., structural complexity). To summarize, her results indicate that for her youngest subjects (3 and 4 years-of-age), there is a high level of performance skill, but a low level of construction skill present. For the middle group (7 and 8 year-olds), stories are better constructed, but are perceived as less successful than those of both the younger and older groups due to
their lack of performance skills. Among the oldest subjects (10 and 11 year-olds), performance and construction skills are present, and begin to function in consort with one another.

For the purposes of this research, the main point which must be taken from Reilly’s analysis is the central role which vocal paralinguistic features apparently play in the development of narrative performance. In order to accommodate these findings, a sixth evaluative form—lengthening—was added to the list of features for initial analysis. Recall that Reilly (1992) examines two types of vocal paralinguistic features: lexical stress (which is already included in this research under the category of emphasis) and prosodic features (e.g., length, voice quality, etc.)—represented here by the addition of the category lengthening.22 Incidentally, Peterson and McCabe (1983) include the analogous category of elongation in their list of 21 evaluative forms. With one exception, elongation did not play a particularly prominent role in their analysis for any of the age-groups examined. Interestingly enough, it is the 7 year-olds in Peterson and McCabe’s sample who seem to make the most use of elongation—a result which seems to directly contradict Reilly’s (1992) findings. For the 7 year-old subjects in Peterson and McCabe’s study, elongation achieves its highest ranking on the preference scale, placing 8th out of the 21 features examined for usage preferences. The inclusion of the additional feature of lengthening in this research not only expands the scope of the analysis, but could, in addition, help to clarify the conflicting results of earlier work.

22 Like the evaluative forms discussed above, these two prosodic evaluative forms can occur separately, but often overlap.
The final category included in the initial analysis was *hedges*. Several researchers have examined the role of hedging (e.g., use of distancing devices such as "seems like," "kind of," "I guess," "I think," etc.) as an evaluative form. Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991) found that in the context of picture-book narration, 9 year-olds use hedges more than twice as much as 5 year-olds, and adults use hedging four and one-half times more than 9 year-olds. Again, Peterson and McCabe (1983) included a similar category among their 21 evaluative forms—that of *hypotheses or inferences*. They found that for the 7 year-old subjects, this category tied with *elongators*, ranking 8th out of 21 on the scale of usage preferences. For both the 8 and 9 year-old subjects, *hypotheses or inferences* ranked 7th out of the field of 21. It was hypothesized that hedging might become ever more significant in the context of this research, as subjects were being asked not to construct spontaneous texts for which they bore the rights of authorship, but rather, to reconstruct another author’s text. Under such circumstances, it is possible that narrators might make more use of devices which suggest non-accountability and/or personal non-commitment to the truth value of the reported events. For these reasons, the category of *hedges* was included in the initial analysis.

3.3 Qualitative Analysis of Seven Most-Preferred Evaluative Forms

(The following discussion refers to the coded versions of Texts 1 and 2, above.)

In Text 2, five of the initial seven evaluative forms are employed: *causals, compulsion words, gratuitous terms, hedges, and negatives*. In Text 1, three forms are used: a *causal*, a *hedge*, and a *negative*. Two features—*emphasis* and *lengthening*
(Reilly's [1992] "vocal paralinguistic" category) do not appear in either text. The following discussion will examine, in brief, the whole of the texts, and the use of the evaluative forms therein. Relevant excerpts from additional texts are included for purposes of comparison and expansion.

In Text 2, lines 1-7 serve as a sort of introduction. They present the main character (Dr. DeSoto), establishing his profession (dentist), his popularity (his practice is very busy), and his level of skill (he is extremely gentle—which may account for his popularity!). Within these opening lines, we encounter the use of two evaluative forms: gratuitous terms and negatives. Gratuitous terms are lexical items such as very, just, really, so, especially, too, some, etc. These items are used to stress and/or emphasize the elements they modify, but do not contribute any specific information of their own. In drawing our attention to those aspects of the text which they consider important through the use of gratuitous terms, narrators not only present their perspective, but attempt to create coherency by highlighting those items which they believe will help their audience interpret the narrative in the desired manner. Thus, in the opening lines of Text 2, the narrator uses gratuitous terms in lines 1, 6, and 7 to emphasize to her listeners that Dr. DeSoto is not just a "good dentist," but rather, a "very[G] good dentist." His fingers are not just "delicate," they are "very[G] delicate." When he uses his drill, it is not just "painless," but rather, you can't "even[G] feel a pain." The narrator's repeated use of gratuitous terms in the introduction helps the listener by both linking together the various pieces of the description, and by adding a real assertive force to the characterization of the dentist, helping it to remain with us and guide our expectations as we move through
the narrative.²³

Negatives is a category which covers a variety of constructions, from free-standing lexical items such as no, not, never, etc. to negative affixes such as un-, im-, -n't, etc. Negatives incorporate perspective by indicating violations of expectations, lack-states that are counter-intuitive, etc. As Peterson and McCabe (1983, p. 223) note, mentions of “events that did not happen are extremely evaluative since there is literally an infinite set of events that did not happen in any given situation and these were selected from that infinite set [for mention by the narrator].” In the first seven lines of Text 2, we find two negatives: “And his (a*) assistant/s never[N] stop/ed.” (line 4) and “…and his drill/s were (th* the*) they could/n’t[N] even[G] feel a pain.” (lines 6-7). The negative constituents never and couldn’t incorporate perspective by focusing the listener’s attention on unanticipated circumstances. In line 4, the narrator emphasizes Doctor DeSoto’s popularity by noting that, contrary to expectation, his practice is so busy that his assistants can’t even take time for an occasional break. In lines 6-7, the narrator counters the widely-held belief that going to the dentist is necessarily a painful experience by reporting that even when Doctor DeSoto is using his drill, you won’t feel any pain. Like the gratuitous terms discussed above, negatives infuse the introduction with descriptive force. This vivid, coherent perspective on the central character and his dental practice is intended to direct our interpretation of events as we move through the

²³ If you’re having trouble getting a feel for how the evaluative forms operate, try reading lines 1-7 omitting all three of the gratuitous terms. As you may notice, the introduction loses much of its assertive force. It begins to sound list-like, passionless—essentially, much less believable, as if the narrator herself is not really interested, and is only concerned with “passing on” the information.
remainder of the narrative.

In stark contrast to Text 2, the “introduction” to the narrative in Text 1 consists of a single line (line 1): “(Um) that there was two mice and one was a dentist.” While this opening provides the listener with an important detail absent from the introduction in Text 2—namely that Doctor DeSoto the dentist is a mouse—it is clearly less effective than the introduction to Text 2. The opening of Text 1 is not only short on detail, it also lacks perspective. Two facts are reported: 1—The existence of two mice 2—One of the mice is a dentist. The listener, however, is afforded no clues as to how to construe this information.

Returning to Text 2, in line 9 a new character—“this fox”—arrives. Lines 10-15 then display a rather interesting move on the part of the narrator. Seeming to realize that she has not yet established the conflict which the fox’s arrival will create, she backtracks, strengthening the perspective on this turn of events by explaining that the dentist has a firmly established policy prohibiting the treatment of “dangerous animals.” Again we find negatives and gratuitous terms being used to create a powerful description of Doctor DeSoto’s (previously) uncompromising stance regarding this particular class of clients.

Having elaborated the context, the narrator of Text 2 repeats the arrival of the fox in line 16. This time, however, she expands her description, noting that the fox is “very[G] hurt” and is crying (lines 16-18). Line 17 employs a causal explanation (i.e.,

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Note that the child’s seemingly awkward syntax is actually due to the fact that she at first claimed she was unable to tell the story, and was responding to the encouraging prompt, “Oh you can do it!... Tell me what you remember.”
“because[A] of his %achetooth.”) describing the nature of the fox’s impairment, through which we appreciate his decision to visit the dentist. Causals are one of the most transparent means of creating connectivity in a text. By declaring a catalytic relationship to exist between two events and/or states, causal constructions offer perspective and create connectivity by providing the listener with an explanation (motivation) for the reported events. The majority of causals contained in the texts are of the “because” (e.g., lines 16-17) and “so” variety. All occurrences of “because” and “so” were coded as “causal”—with the exception of those cases in which it was determined that the terms were functioning as conjunctions rather than as causal explanations. For example, lines 8, 10, 15, and 16 below (from Subj. 2mj2, English-speaking male, 7yrs., 6mos.):

7 C And (um) really[G] big animal/s would sit in the special room.
8 C So then one day a fox came and he was cry/ing.
9 C So[A] (and then) they let him in.
10 C So they start/ed work/ing on him.
11 C (And they) and then DoctorDeSoto (woo) said woo!
12 E {E laughs}.
13 C (And the* and um um) because[A] he had bad breath <from the tooth>.
14 E <{E laughs}>.
15 C And (uh) so (then the) then DoctorDeSoto said to be back on time tomorrow.
16 C So then (um) at night DoctorDeSoto/z wife (um) polish/ed the new tooth.

A second variety of causal explanation commonly found in the narratives—“to + V” (infinitive constructions)—occurs later is Text 2, and is discussed below.

Text 1 also employs a causal explanation in describing the arrival of the fox. In line 2 the narrator states, “(And um um) and then a fox came because[A] he had a toothache.” Text 2 and Text 1 do not differ with respect to their use of the causal explanation in describing this particular event. Yet one is again struck by the lack of
detail/perspective which the narrator of Text 1 has adopted. In Text 1, the narrator has informed us that Doctor DeSoto is a mouse. Hence, we can infer that the arrival of a fox is problematic. Nevertheless, our only basis for doing so comes from our past experience with fairytale texts/our world knowledge, and not from within the narrative itself. By simply reporting facts without incorporating any perspective, the narrator of Text 1 forces the onus of interpretation on her listeners rather than sharing the burden. Unlike Text 2, in which evaluation is guiding the listener through the events, Text 1 has not yet offered its listeners an answer to the critical and ever-present question, “So what?”

Lines 19-25 of Text 2 recount how the fox eventually gains entry into Doctor DeSoto’s office. Having set up the conflict in the previous lines (i.e., Doctor DeSoto is a gentle and dedicated dentist and the fox is truly in need of dental attention, BUT treating the fox would violate DeSoto’s own rule about carnivorous clients), the narrator describes the DeSotos’ hesitation, their eventual decision to let the fox in, and the fox’s ensuing gratitude. Lines 27-53 detail the extraction of the fox’s rotten tooth. In line 33 we see the use of a second type of causal explanation. The narrator states, “...his wife (he pull/ed the) she pull/ed the pulley to[A] lift him up into the fox/z mouth.” Infinitive constructions were coded as causals in those cases where their meaning appeared to be catalytic in nature (e.g., she pulled the pulley in order to/because she wanted to/so she could lift him up). Lines 39, 41, and 42 again display the use of causals and gratuitous terms in describing the fox’s dental exam.

In line 45 of Text 2, we find the first use of a compulsion word: “And then he said this tooth will have[O] to come out.” Compulsion words contribute perspective by
indicating intensity and/or by stressing the necessity or forced nature of an event, acting essentially as the verbal counterpart of gratuitous terms (e.g., stop vs. you must stop, we left vs. we had to leave, I put him to sleep vs. I made him go to sleep). Thus, in Text 2, the narrator indicates that Doctor DeSoto, a consummate professional in his field, has made a decision which is not to be questioned. The fox’s tooth will be removed, and that is that! Lines 47-53 then proceed with a particularly graphic description of the tooth’s removal.

Returning for a moment to Text 1, we are confronted once again with a one-line summary of events (line 3): “(Um) and the dentist pull/ed it out.” The activities which the narrator of Text 2 has taken 10 utterances complete with at least 5 evaluative forms to relate, are tersely presented in a single statement with no perspective attached. While there is no difficulty in attributing a rational to the reported events (recall that in the preceding line the fox showed up at the dentist’s office with a toothache), we do not yet have much of a “feel” for the characters in Text 1. In Text 2, evaluative forms such as gratuitous terms, negatives, compulsion words, etc. have been used not only to describe the characters, but to present them as motivated actors who carry out the events of the text in a manner that is consistent with their individual perspectives/personalities. In Text 1, the characters are of a “stock” nature. Flat and featureless, they supply the listener with very little in the way of expectations/explanations (beyond those of a physical nature, e.g. the causal explanation in line 2) for the events of the narrative.

In line 55 of Text 2, a new tooth (to replace the one just removed) is promised to the fox. Lines 57-62 describe the making of the tooth, the DeSotos’ renewed reluctance
to admit the fox, and their creation of a secret formula—which we assume they will use to protect themselves from the fox the following day. Though this section of Text 2 does not demonstrate the use of any of the seven evaluative forms which are currently in question, we will see (in Chapter 4) that it is does, in fact, involve the use of critical evaluative elements. For now, we proceed to lines 66-116, which describe the fox’s return, and the events which occur during the replacement of the missing tooth.

In line 68 of Text 2, a *negative* statement marks the fox’s return. Contrary to expectations, but true to Doctor DeSoto’s reputation, the fox endures no pain from the previous day’s oral surgery. In line 73, we encounter the first use of *hedging*. Doctor DeSoto has just stepped in to the fox’s mouth to begin his work when the fox snaps his jaws shut and then laughs, claiming that this action was, “just[H] a joke.” In the work of Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991–see above), a “hedge” is any lexical item which functions as a distancing device by suggesting, “non-commitment to the truth value of the proposition” (p. 694). In this analysis, lexical items that worked as distancing devices by suggesting a lack of accountability for an action/event were also counted as hedges. Such expressions are evaluative as they directly express a narrator’s or a character’s attitude or stance toward the information/events reported (i.e., they do not wish to be obligated to or responsible for them). In line 73 of Text 2, we see this evaluative form operating on behalf of one of the characters. The fox, having closed his mouth with Doctor DeSoto in it, has just committed a very revealing act. As the DeSotos suspected, the fox is hoping not only for a new tooth, but a meal on which to test it. Trying to cover for himself, the fox utters the hedge in line 73, hoping to reassure the
DeSotos that he possesses only the most benign intentions. As we see from their
responses in lines 75 thru 78, the DeSotos are not convinced. Doctor DeSoto gives the
fox gas to put him to sleep before re-entering his mouth.

In line 82 of Text 2, we find another hedge. This time however, it is the narrator
whose perspective is expressed. She states, "I think[Hi I can remember what he [the fox]
said," and then proceeds to report the fox's unconscious utterances in the form of a direct
quote (lines 83-86—note the gratuitous term in line 85). The fox's statement is crucial
because it establishes his true character by revealing his intentions. He is, in fact, hoping
to eat the DeSotos. Perhaps the narrator realizes the pivotal nature of the fox's statement
within the context of the narrative, perhaps she wished to dissociate herself from the
depravity displayed by the fox, or perhaps she is simply extra-cautious in her attempt to
precisely reconstruct the words of a third party. Whichever the case, the narrator uses the
evaluative feature of hedging to call attention to her subsequent statement. In so doing,
she not only eschews complete accountability for the quote, but also draws her listener's
attention to the quotation, as if to say, "This part is really important, so I'm trying extra-
hard to get it right!" Hedges are used in a similar manner throughout the 2nd grade
sample to present both character and narrator perspectives. (In the 4th grade sample, their
use is largely limited to the presentation of the narrator's stance.)

Knowing the fox's intentions, the DeSotos proceed with caution in the ensuing
lines of Text 2. The causal explanation in lines 90-91 reinforces the fact that the
DeSoto's precautions are indeed motivated. The repeated use of little as a gratuitous term
in lines 92-96 draws attention back to the sneaky fox, building suspense until, in line 98,
his jaw begins to quiver. Happily, the replacement of the missing tooth is completed without incident in lines 101-106. In line 108, the fox tests his new golden gum-rock with his tongue. Lines 112-113 report the fox’s thoughts as he deliberates his next move. A hedge and a negative are used to intensify the suspense. Will he eat the DeSotos, or will he let them go? In line 116, the gratuitous term definitely emphasizes the fox’s mind-set—he will eat the mice.

In lines 118-126 of Text 2, Doctor DeSoto invites the fox to try a “special treatment.” The fox agrees, and Doctor DeSoto applies the secret formula with a paintbrush. Lines 129-131 demonstrate the now familiar repeated use of gratuitous terms to create emphasis and connectivity, while also building suspense. In line 133, the narrative reaches its climax, and a negative is used to signal the surprising and marvelous (for the DeSotos, anyway) turn of events. The fox’s mouth has been glued shut! In lines 136-139, Doctor DeSoto maintains his supposed naiveté by neglecting to admit that he has tricked the fox. Rather, he continues the ruse by informing the fox that he “forgot” to tell him that the treatment would render him unable to open his mouth for a few days. Two hedges and a compulsion word are employed in the construction of this excuse. While their sincerity is doubtful, they have the desired effect of construing the dentist as unaware of the real circumstances, or the frustration that his actions would cause. The fox, still not realizing that he tipped his own hand while under sedation, and not wanting to reveal his true (lack of) character, mumbles a response through closed teeth in line 141. The use of the gratuitous term “very” demonstrates the fox’s attempt to appear sincere in his appreciation. With no means left to accomplish his carnivorous
conspiracy, the fox tries to "leave with dignity" (line 151), but only ends up stumbling away. In conclusion, the narrator adapts the final lines of the actual text (Steig 1982, p. 28), stating that the DeSotos "outfox/ed the fox."

In Text 1, the events of the fox's return are reported in lines 4-11. As the story reaches its climax, the extent to which the lack of perspective and connectivity (evaluation) sabotage the success of the narrative become ever more apparent. In line 4, Doctor DeSoto tells the fox to return the next day. Up to this point, the only perspective the listener has been given is that of the fox. Recall that in line 2 he arrived at the dentist because[A] he had a toothache. This type of perspective, however, does not give much insight into the fox's character. We only know that his visit to the mouse dentist is motivated by his physical pain. As for Doctor DeSoto, we know even less. He simply does what any dentist would do—he pulls the rotten tooth. When he directs the fox to return the next day, we can only assume that this is because further dental work must be done.

In lines 6-7 of Text 1, it is reported that, "...he [the fox] want/ed to eat them." Given the circumstances, this is a rather sudden (not to mention unexplained) turn of events. Although we can guess that the fox is motivated by the laws of nature, so to speak, we have no way of predicting how the mice will react. Unlike Text 2, we have no insight into the characters. No way of knowing that Doctor DeSoto and his wife are kind, but also wise, and have probably anticipated and prepared for the fox's return. And other than the fact that it is never a pleasant proposition to be eaten alive, we have no sympathy for the mice. As the audience, should we root for the hungry fox or the naive
mice? Essentially, we are still faced with the question of, "So what?" It is the juxtaposition of motivations (i.e., good = the DeSotos and evil = the fox), such as was constructed in Text 2 through the use of evaluation, which creates suspense, and allows us as listeners to interpret and connect the events of the narrative. In Text 1, from which nearly all of these elements are missing, the events do not seem well motivated. Even when evaluation is employed, such as in lines 8 and 9, where a negative and a hedge present the fox's momentary indecision, connectivity is lacking. Why is the fox indecisive? What made him want to eat the mice in the first place? If the reason is simply because, being a fox, he can, then why would he waver in this decision? Though the narrator of Text 1 has attempted to make use of evaluation in constructing the climax of the text, it appears that she has added too little, too late.

In line 10 of Text 1, the fox goes through with his attempt to eat the DeSotos while they are putting in his new tooth. Then in line 11, a final, unexpected event takes place. Doctor DeSoto puts glue on the fox's teeth, and the narrative ends. Like the previous segment of the text in which the fox's hesitation has little motivation, Doctor DeSoto's action is unanticipated and, as the narrative abruptly ends, the listener is likely left with one of two assumptions: 1) That the glue was applied as part of the dental procedure 2) That the glue was applied by Doctor DeSoto in an effort to save himself. Having received no prior information on the character/perspective of the dentist, and without a single evaluative form to guide interpretation, we as listeners are left to our

25. Note that the insertion of a single evaluative form, such as a causal explanation, specifies one possible meaning for the narrative's conclusion:
own resources to decide what the significance of the final event—not to mention the entirety of the text—may be. One might argue that this is an unduly harsh assessment of Text 1, given the fact that the narrator knew that her listener was also familiar with the story she was trying to reconstruct. Recall however, that Text 2 was elicited under the same conditions. As demonstrated in the preceding discussion, the differences between the two are glaringly evident. Text 2 not only makes constructive use of evaluation, it also includes enough detail in the employment of those forms as to be of real assistance in guiding the listener through the narrative. Text 1, while essentially correct in its recounting of the events, provides barely any detail. In addition, its use of evaluation is both limited and ineffective.

While the juxtaposition of two such contrastive texts is useful in developing an understanding of how the evaluative forms work within a narrative, it is rarely the case that any two texts from the sample, when compared, display the pronounced type of differences found in the preceding two. To illustrate this point, compare Texts 3 and 4, below:

**TEXT 3 (with codes 1-7):**

Subj. ID: 2MG9

10 (Um) then he (w*) try/ed to eat them when he put the tooth in.
11 (And he s* and then he put glue) and SO[A] the dentist (put gl*) put glue on his teeth.

By the addition of the causal *so*, we understand that the dentist but the glue on the fox’s teeth as a result of the fact that the fox tried to eat him. In this context, the application of the glue was not part of the dental procedure, but rather, an act of self-preservation. Void of any evaluative signposts, this passage serves as a prime example of how crucial evaluation is in the creation of perspective and connectivity.
Age: 7 yrs., 7 mos.

C = Child
E = Examiner

+A: Causal
+O: Compulsion
+M: Emphasis
+G: Gratuitous
+H: Hedge
+L: Lengthening
+N: Negative

+EW: Error at the word level
+EU: Error at the utterance level

1  C DoctorDeSoto was a dentist.
2  C And he was very[G] popular (w*) for big animal/s.
3  C (And he) and he {C begins to laugh while talking} had a sign outside that said
4  no[N] cat/s <or other dangerous thing/s allow/ed>.
5  E <{E laughs}> exactly.
6  C No[N] exception/s.
7  E Uhhuh.
8  C And (f* f* f*) for (um) big animal/s (he he he he) they sat down on the floor
9  (a*) and he had[O] to use a ladder.
10  E Yeah.
11  C (W*) and for extra large animal/s (he they uh) he had (a r*) a special room.
12  E Uhhuh.
13  C (For) because[A] they had[O] to hoist them up {C amiles}.
14  E Yep {E laughs}.
15  C And (uh the the su*) the animal/s (that) that are DoctorDeSoto/z size <> (uh)
16  sat in the regular dentist chair {C smiles}.
17  E <Uhhuh>.
18  E Right, right.
19  C And the fox came complain/ing that he had an ache/ing tooth {C laughs}.
20  E Uhhuh, uhhuh.
21  C And then DoctorDeSoto (um) look/ed at the rotten tooth.
22  C (And) {C laughs} (a* a*) and (um) the next morning he put him to sleep {C
23  laughs}!
24  E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
25  C Then (um) they knew what he was dream/ing about.
26  C He was (drink/ing about) dream/ing about (um) eat/ing rat/s {C smiles}.
27  E Right {E laughs}. 
C And :03 (uh the*) then they got that thing that {C pulls right hand from left to
demonstrate the sucking motion; suck/ed out his tooth {C smiles}.
E Uhhuh {E laughs} yeah.
C And he was in so[G] much pain he woke up {C smiles}.
E Uhhuh.
C And then (um) they put the gold tooth in *and he was like {C opens mouth and
bounces head while quivering jaw} ah[L].
E {E laughs}.
C He was about to shut his mouth.
E Uhhuh.
C (So then they so the* the* then so then) but when they put him to sleep they put
a pole <> so[A] he would/n't[N] do that {C smiles}.
E <Yeah> right, right.
C And then (um) they put the golden tooth in there (a*) and *he was in so[G]
much pain {C laughs}.
E Uhhuh.
C {C mumbles and acts as if feeling inside own mouth with tongue} m m m.
E {E laughs}.
C (He was like, h*) he was think/ing (how the) how the golden tooth felt.
E Uhhuh.
C {C shows own silver tooth to E} it's like this one only golden.
E Oh yeah, wow!
C (Th* o* on*) only golden[M].
C And (they lo* the*) then (the* the* the*) they said there was a secret formula
but it was actually glue {C smiles}!
E Uhhuh <{E laughs}>
C <(I found out that)> I knew it was glue.
C And then (he he he he he paint/ed) he paint/ed all his teeth.
E Uhhuh.
C (And he) and he told him (um uh uh) close your mouth.
E Uhhuh.
C And then (he try/ed to open it) he try/ed to open it (and he and he w*) and he
end/ed up like this {C closes mouth and makes grunting sound} <uh uh uh uh
uh uh uh uh>.
E <{E laughs} > right.
C And then the only thing he could say was {C talks through closed teeth}
(thank) thank you thank you <thank you>.
E <{E laughs} uhhuh>.
C Because[A] his teeth were stuck together.
E Uhhuh.
C (A*) and he said oh[L] oh[L] I forgot to tell you!
C (Um) <> (y*) your mouth will be shut for a few day/s {C laughs}!
E <{E laughs}>.
71 E Oops!
72 C {C laughs}.
73 : 0:05
74 E The end?
75 C {C nods yes}.
76 E Okay.

TEXT 4 (with codes 1-7):

Subj. ID: 2FM4

Age: 7 yrs., 9 mos.

C = Child
E = Examiner

+A: Causal
+O: Compulsion
+M: Emphasis
+G: Gratuitous
+H: Hedge
+L: Lengthening
+N: Negative

+EW: Error at the word level
+EU: Error at the utterance level

    C Well, DoctorDeSoto (wa*) was work/ing at a dentist and the big animal/s
    would sit on the floor and the little animal/s would sit in the little chair that he
    got.
    4 C And his little hand/s were very[G] dainty {C amiles}.
    5 E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
    6 C And he would work in big people/z mouth/*s, just[G] get in there.
    7 C And then the fox came and said {C makes a howling sound} (my) my tooth is
    kill/ing me.
    9 E Uhhuh.
   10 C (And then the two little mice) well, DoctorD* said, no[N] you can/n't[N] come
    in here, I can/n't[N] treat you!
   12 E Uhhuh.
   13 C But he said, have (mu*) mercy on me.
C So[A] they said, well poor little fox, what should we do?
C And so they let him in!
E Uhhuh.
C But, when the (d*) DoctorDeSoto got in their[EW:his] mouth, <> the fox went
like {C makes jaw quiver with sound}.
E <Uhhuh>.
E {E laughs}.
C And then DoctorDeSoto said, keep your mouth open!
C Wide open, said his (wife) I mean wife.
C And so, *the next day when the fox came back, he was think/ing, {C puts hand
to chin and makes a face} hm, <>(<I'm not>) maybe[H] it should[EW:would] be
good to eat them.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And so, next morning he figure/ed it out, and he went back.
C And then he said maybe[H] I should/n't[N] eat them.
C But he could/n't[N] help it.
C So when he did he's like hahaha, <just[H] joke/ing>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And then (um, h*) they put the tooth in and he said maybe[H] I could do it with
my other tooth.
C (And so when he tri*) and so when they put it in (um, he s*, um, they said) he
said thank you.
C And then DoctorDeSoto {C holds up index finger} wait[M], I'm not[N]
finish/ed yet!
C (And they hold*) he was hold/ing a big jug, (and then put it) and then put the
stuff in his mouth.
C And then he said keep you mouth shut for a whole[L] minute.
C And then when he did he was surprise/ed.
C (I c*) he could/n't[N] open his mouth and so[A] he could/n't[N] eat
it[EW:them].
E Uhhuh.
C And then (d*) DoctorDeSoto and the wife kissed each other {C makes two
kisses in the air}.
C And then the end {C laughs}.
E {E laughs} That was an awesome job!

Text 3 is from a bilingual male, and received a final score of 3.00*—the lowest
score in the *adequate* range. Text 4 is from a native English female, and received a final
score of 4.33, placing it solidly within the *best* range. Though they differ slightly in their
exact ordering of the events, both re-tellings are well-constructed. They relay the events of the narrative in a clear manner, and make thorough and competent use of the evaluative forms. *Causals* are found in lines 13, 39, and 66 of Text 3, and in lines 14 and 42 of Text 4. *Gratuitous terms* occur in Text 3 in lines 2, 31, and 41 and in Text 4 in lines 4 and 6. *Hedges* are used in lines 24, 28, 30, and 32 of Text 4. *Negatives* are located in lines 4, 6, and 39 of Text 3, and in lines 10, 11, 28, 29, 36, and 42 of Text 4. *Compulsion words* are used in Text 3 in lines 9 and 13. *Emphasis* and *lengthening*, which were not included in either of the two initial texts, were employed in both Texts 3 and 4. *Emphasis* occurs in line 50 of Text 3 and line 36 of Text 4. *Lengthening* is exploited in lines 34 and 68 of Text 3, and in line 40 of Text 4. These changes in pronunciation are used to draw attention to particular aspects of the texts. By signaling to the listener those points which they perceive as important, the narrators are again using evaluation to embed perspective and create connectivity. These prosodic markers guide the listener through the narratives by steering interpretation in the desired direction.

Given that Texts 3 and 4 are both reasonably clear and coherent, and that both display adept use of the seven predominant evaluative forms, one must begin to question what it was that the adult raters were reacting to when they relegated Text 3 to the very bottom of the *acceptable* range, and Text 4 to the *best* category. In an effort to answer

---

The narrator of Text 3 is somewhat more disfluent than the narrator of Text 4. SALT analysis shows that 70.59% of narrator 3's utterances contain pauses (filled pauses, repetitions, and reformulations), as opposed to 48.00% of narrator 4's utterances. However, the disfluencies contained in Text 3 are not so severe as to render the text incomprehensible, or to impede the listener's understanding of the events.
this query, the 2nd grade texts were compared with texts from the 4th grade sample. It was hypothesized that these older, more experienced narrators might display patterns of usage which differed in some way from those of the 2nd grade sample. By contrasting the two populations, patterns and variations which were less obvious in the somewhat homogenous 2nd grade sample might be brought to light.

Unfortunately, comparison with 4th grade texts does little to unravel the mystery. Text 5, below, is from a 4th grade native English male. It is a “tall tale” recounting the life of Pecos Bill. This re-telling received a score of 4.33, placing it in the best category. A brief read-through reveals that this narrator’s use of the evaluative forms does not differ in any notable way from that of the successful 2nd grade texts. Causals, gratuitous terms, negatives, etc. are distributed throughout the text, and function in the same capacity as illustrated for the 2nd grade narratives:

**TEXT 5 (with codes 1-7):**

Subj. ID: 4MJ9

Age: 9 yrs., 6 mos.

C = Child
E = Examiner

+A: Causal
+O: Compulsion
+M: Emphasis
+G: Gratuitous
+H: Hedge
+L: Lengthening
+N: Negative

+EW: Error at the word level
+EU: Error at the utterance level

+Score: 4.33

1 C One day PecosBill (fell) was fight/ing with his brother/s because[A] they were
2 so[G] bore/ed.
3 C Because[A] their mom and dad said that they have[O] to go west because[A]
4 there/’re more[G] neighbor/s come/ing and they were so[G] crowded.
5 C So[A] now they had[O] to move west and they were so[G] bored that they
6 start/ed to fight.
7 C And PecosBill fell out and (I* s* lay   um) stay/ed on the floor and wait/ed.
8 C And kept on watch/ing his parent/s (walk away um) drive away in the (um)
9 dust.
10 C And then a coyote came around and sniff/ed him.
11 C (And) and PecosBill said googoo!
12 E {E laughs}.
13 C And (um on) the coyote said in his language that ooh he must[O] be one of my
14 people because[A] <> that mean/3s hello.
15 E <Uhhuh>.
16 C And so[A] he {C nods head} took him by his neck and brought him to his
17 home.
18 C And then he play/ed around and chase/ed lizard/s.
19 C And then one day he met a cowboy seventeen year/s later.
20 C And the cowboy said what are you?
21 C And he said varmint.
22 E {E laughs}.
23 C And he said you’re not[N] no[N] varmint!
24 E {E laughs}.
25 C Well I got flea/s don’t[N] I?
26 C He said most[G] Texan/s got flea/s, it does/n’t[N] matter.
27 E {E laughs}.
28 C And then he took him to his place and he start/ed to dress up like a regular
29 person.
30 E Uhhuh.
31 C And he did/n’t[N] never[EW:ever][N] shave/ed[EW:shave] and did (not)
32 none[N] of that [EU].
33 C And then (he) one time he was clean/ing his plate off with his tongue and
34 hear/ed that his friend/s were talk/ing about (um um Hell/zGate um)
35 %Hell/zGang.
36 C And he said well I gotta[O] go meet these people <> (he) they sound like[H] my
37 people.
38 E <{E laughs}>.
39 C And so[A] he jump/ed on the horse before anybody could say yeehaw[L] <>
and start/ed to go.
E <{E laughs}>.
C But soon his horse fell in a hole and broke it's leg.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> so[A] he threw (the thing on) his horse on his shoulder and start/ed to
walk.
P E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> knock/ed it (um um) crosseyed.
E {E laughs}.
C And then threw the thing on his back because[A] the thing was jealous that he
got beat.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And then> he walk/ed (uh) another hundred mile/s.
C (And then he got then he met a) then he hear/ed a sound like[H] a mountain
lion.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> (um) the mountain lion jump/ed on his back.
C Before he could let the mountain lion bite him he knock/ed him away [EU].
E <{E laughs}>.
C <And> then (he) he walk/ed away because[A] he was (um um) jealous that he
got beat like the snake.
C (And) and then PecosBill said (um) jump on my back, you can come along with
me.
C And then he kept on walk/ing and walk/ing and then he saw Hell/zGateGang.
C (And um told them) and came over there and said who/s the boss around here?
C (And he) and then a nineteen foot man with ten pistol/s on his waist said I
use/ed to be but now you are.
E {E laughs}.
C And PecosBill said well thanks feller!
C (And it s*) and then PecosBill said finish your dinner just[H] (me* um)
think[EW:pretend] that I did/n't[N] interrupt.
C And then he walk/ed around with his gang and (um) saw the cyclone.
E Uhhuh.
C And (Pe*) PecosBill/z friend/s ran away.
C (And) but (he) PecosBill just[G] got his rope <and> whirl/ed it around the
cyclone.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And whirl/ed it around and around and he got suck/ed in the cloud.
E {E laughs}.
C And then he drop/ed the thing forty feet down *a deep valley.
C (C nods} now it/s call/ed %DeepValley.
C And then he walk/ed a hundred and>
C Well, he walk/ed some[G] more {C flings out right arm}.
C And then (he he him) him and his gang were so[G] drought/ed out with water
that they had[O] to get their rope/s and (c* um) reel it in from *the RioGrande
[EU].
C Then that one was drought/ed.
C (Then they did it from then they re* re*) then they (um) got water from (um)
the Gulf of Mexico.
C (And the* and then um) and then um>
; 0:04
C I forgot what happen/ed.
C After they drought/ed then[M] the cyclone came!
E Uhhuh.
C And then (it) all the water came.
C And then he walk/ed with his friend/s (to) to %SlowFootSue <and> said
hello[L] in coyote language.
E <{E sighs}>.
E {E laughs}.
C And she said hello in coyote language too.
C And then (they) they thought that they should (be m*) get married.
C And so[A] they got married.
C And before the marriage SlewFootSue jump/ed on WidowMaker.
C And WidowMaker before (sh*) she stuck her shoe in him <> start/ed to>
E <Uhhuh>.
E <{Uhhuh}>.
C The WidowMaker jump/ed {C rocks head up and down} and jump/ed and
jump/ed and jump/ed.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And then she> land/ed on the moon.
C And then (um) PecosBill (Bill) wheel/ed his (um) rope around her.
C (But the but) but PecosBill get/3s stuck with her <on the moon too>.
E {E laughs}.
E That was great!

Rather than highlighting differences in usage, this sample text from an
accomplished, older narrator seems to illustrate that, like the earlier similarities across
skill-groups among the 2nd grade sample, there are also similarities across age-groups
regarding the use of the evaluative forms. This 4th grader’s use of gratuitous terms, for
example, is both formally and functionally indistinguishable from that of a skilled 2nd
grader's use. The same can be said of the remainder of the evaluative forms that appear in the text. Additionally, this narrator's patterns of use do not differ from those displayed in the preceding narratives. The evaluative features are distributed throughout the narrative, rather than clustering near the climax, as they do in Text 6, below (Subj. 2FG1, 2nd grade, native English, female):

TEXT 6 (with codes 1-7):

Subj. ID: 2FG1

Age: 7 yrs., 8 mos.

C = Child
E = Examiner

+A: Causal
+O: Compulsion
+M: Emphasis
+G: Gratuitous
+H: Hedge
+L: Lengthening
+N: Negative

+EW: Error at the word level
+EU: Error at the utterance level

+Score: 3.66*

1  C (Um) DoctorDeSoto (he put up) he (um) was a dentist.
2  E Uhhuh.
3  C And he would work for (s*) %aminal/s.
4  C He would/n't[N] work with (um) cat/s or fox/s or dangerous %aminal/s -> to
5  him [EU].
6  E <Uhhuh>.
7  C And one day a fox came.
8  C And (he s*) his tooth was hurt/ing and it was rotten.
9  C And they pull/ed it out {C puts hand to jaw}. 
E {E laughs} Uhhuh.
C And then (the ne*) the next day they said that they had[O] (um) to put in a new
tooth at eleven sharp.
E Uhhuh.
C And then, they put in the new tooth.
C And they put a (f*) {C puts hand to mouth in painting motion} special formula
(in h*) on (e*) every tooth.
E <Uhhuh>.
C {C points at own mouth} And his wife was point/ing to every single[G] spot.
C And (th*) then he said shut your mouth for one[M] full[M][G] minute[M].
C And (he) the fox did.
C And he could'n't[N] open his mouth again because[A] they glue/ed it
together[M].
E {E laughs}.
C {C laughs}.
E Good job!

Prior to the climax of the narrative, which begins around line 14, the narrator
makes use of only two evaluative forms—a negative in line 4, and a compulsion word in
line 11. In lines 14-22, which make up the narrative’s climax, we find four uses of
emphatics, two gratuitous terms, one negative, and a causal for a total of eight
forms—four times more than she has used throughout the rest of the text. This pattern of
clustering evaluation around the climax is rare, but is occasionally found among the
lower-scoring texts (adequate and below). Recall that in the work of Peterson and
McCabe (1983), more skilled narrators concentrated their placement of evaluation
around the climax (“high point”) of the text, while in Bamberg and Damrad-Frye’s
(1991) analysis, increases in narrative skill resulted in the distribution of evaluation
throughout the text. In general, the evidence from this sample supports the findings of
Bamberg and Damrad-Frye. The majority of narrators in both grades, including all of
those who produced the best texts, distribute evaluation throughout the narrative.
3.4 Quantitative Analysis of Seven Most Preferred Evaluative Forms

The results of the initial qualitative analysis having run counter to expectations, simple quantitative analyses were performed. The results of these analyses supported the conclusions of the qualitative analysis. Few appreciable differences were found to exist between the groups with respect to the use of the evaluative forms in question. The most significant results are displayed below, beginning with those from the analysis of percentage of use.

Recall that in Peterson and McCabe’s (1983) findings, a full 50% of narrative comments offer some type of evaluative information. The number of evaluative forms examined here is far fewer than the number examined by Peterson and McCabe (7 as opposed to 21), however, the forms examined are (purportedly) the most commonly used among narrators of the present age-range. In order to obtain comparable results, the number of utterances containing evaluative forms was divided by the total number of utterances for each text, and then an average was calculated for each of the skill-groups in both grade levels. Average percentages of use could then be compared across the groups. As demonstrated above, the employment of evaluation contributes to the success of a narrative. Hence, one might hypothesize (though it is likely an oversimplification) that the more successful narratives employ a greater number of evaluative forms.

As Table 6 shows, percentages of use did not differ significantly across the skill groups—with the exception of the lowest-rated (*poor*) youngest group and the highest-rated (*best*) oldest group. All other skill-levels in both age-groups use approximately the same amount of evaluative forms:
TABLE 6 - Percentage of the Total Utterances with Codes: 2nd and 4th Grade Samples

With only 22% of their total utterances employing the use of evaluative forms, the 2nd graders scoring in the poor range evidence significantly less use of the features than all other groups. These narratives, however, tended to be extremely sparse. Many involve ten or fewer total utterances on the part of the narrator, and are incomplete (i.e., the narrator does not finish the story, usually claiming that they cannot remember the text) and/or incomprehensible (i.e., the events are extremely disordered, or the narrator reports on nonsensical/non-text events). Text 1, examined above, represents one of the more intelligible texts from this group. By and large, these narratives display inadequacies which extend far beyond their limited use of evaluation (e.g., lack of detail, structural issues, etc.). As a result, it is doubtful that the low scores these narratives received from the adult raters can be attributed solely to the limited use of evaluative forms. Rather, the limited use of evaluation among this particular group appears to reflect a general pattern of inadequacy and disorder related to numerous aspects of narrative construction.
For the 4th graders ranking in the best group, an average of 47% of the total utterances within a given text made use of one or more of the evaluative forms. However, as demonstrated in Text 5, above, the patterns of usage do not appear to differ. Best 4th graders simply seem to make more use, across the board, of this particular asset. While this group's enthusiastic approach to the employment of evaluation may account for their higher scores, this again seems unlikely given that sheer percentage of use does not account for the skill rankings among any of the other groups in the sample. All other skill groups in both grade levels make use of the evaluative forms in approximately 1/3 of their total utterances. Essentially, these findings rule out the "sheer amount of evaluation employed" as the determining factor in the adults' ratings of narrative skill. Incidentally, they are largely in agreement with Peterson and McCabe's (1983) findings, which conclude that there is no age-related change in the overall incidence of evaluation.

A second quantitative analysis examined usage preferences. It was hypothesized that certain evaluative forms and/or combinations of forms might be preferred by particular groups within the sample, and that those preferences (or lack thereof) might provide some insight into explaining the differences which caused the narratives to receive their particular scores. For example, if best 4th graders prefer the use of negatives and causals over all other features, then the lower-scoring narratives in the 4th grade sample may be understood, in part, in terms of their diminished usage of these forms. Table 7, below, displays the results of the usage preference analysis for the seven forms examined:
### 2nd Grade

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<th>G/M</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>L/O</th>
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<td>1.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 4th Grade

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<th>Grade Range</th>
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<th>A/M</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>O</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.99</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 7 - Average Frequency per Narrative of the Evaluative Forms: 2nd and 4th Grade**

**Samples**

As the results demonstrate, little explanatory power is gained from the preference analysis. In the majority of the groupings *negatives* and *gratuitous terms* are the two most preferred forms. For the two groups in which this is not the case (2nd grade *average* and 4th grade *marginal*), they remain two of the top three. *Lengthening* and *compulsion* words are the two least preferred forms in all of the groups—with the exception, again, of
the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade average group, where they remain two of the three least preferred. \textit{Causals, emphasis,} and \textit{hedges} generally occupy the middle of the preference scale, with the exception of the two groups already mentioned (2\textsuperscript{nd} grade average and 4\textsuperscript{th} grade marginal), in which they display some variance towards either end. Unlike the findings of Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991), in which proportional preferences for forms such as \textit{hedging} were noted to increase with age, this also does not appear to be the case for this sample. Clear patterns of proportional increases in the use of particular forms were not found. Finally, with respect to the findings of Reilly (1992), this sample both agrees and contradicts. As anticipated, the vocal \textit{paralinguistic features} of \textit{emphasis and lengthening} account for a relatively minor percentage of the total evaluative forms used among the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade texts. Yet for the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade texts, in which Reilly reports a dramatic increase in the use of these features, no significant increase in the use of these forms is discovered. Overall, the preference analysis uncovers little variation among either the grade- or skill-levels. On the basis of these results, the preferential use of particular forms (among the seven) can be ruled out as a determining factor in explaining the distribution of scores.

Additional diagnostics, such as the analysis of codes per coded utterance (i.e., probing the use of the evaluative forms in consort with one another), invariably resulted in similar findings across the groups. As a final measure, correlations were run to assess the relationship between the individual evaluative forms and overall scores received by the narratives, as well as to examine the relationship between the evaluative forms themselves. Table 8, below, displays the \textit{Pearson product-moment correlation}
coefficients,\textsuperscript{27} as calculated by SPSS for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade sample. Table 9, also below, displays the results for the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade sample:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccc}
\text{Avg Score} & \text{Caus} & \text{Comp} & \text{Emph} & \text{Grat} & \text{Hedge} & \text{Leng} & \text{Neg} & \text{Ttl \# Codes} & \% \text{Utt w/ Cd} \\
1.00 & .28 & .08 & .17 & .33* & .23 & .08 & .57** & .39** & .27 \\
1.00 & .65** & .49** & .60** & .30* & .12 & .36* & .77** & .52** & \\
1.00 & .44** & .55** & .25 & .09 & .37** & .69** & .36** & \\
1.00 & .34* & .02 & .40** & .36* & .70** & .34* & & \\
1.00 & .46** & .03 & .61** & .80** & .49** & & \\
1.00 & .11 & .46** & .53** & .55** & & \\
1.00 & .16 & .38** & .10 & & \\
1.00 & .72** & .50** & & \\
1.00 & .62** & & & \\
\text{N = 50} \\
* = \text{correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)} \\
** = \text{correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)} \\
\end{array}
\]

\textbf{TABLE 8 - 2\textsuperscript{nd} Grade Sample Correlation Matrix: Average Narrative Score with Evaluative Forms and Usage Variables}

\textsuperscript{27}

\textit{Pearson product-moment correlations} are the most commonly used for interval/ratio variables, and take into account the exact magnitude of each score on each variable (see Butler 1985 for discussion).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avg Score</th>
<th>Caus</th>
<th>Comp</th>
<th>Emph</th>
<th>Grat</th>
<th>Hedg</th>
<th>Leng</th>
<th>Neg</th>
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<th>% Utt w/ Cd</th>
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N = 48
* = correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
** = correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**TABLE 9 - 4th Grade Sample Correlation Matrix: Average Narrative Score with Evaluative Forms and Usage Variables**

In Table 8, we see that for the 2nd graders, only *gratuitous terms, negatives*, and "total number of codes" display a significant relationship with the final averaged score.

By comparison, the 4th grade results in Table 9 demonstrate that all variables except *negatives, compulsion words*, and *hedges* are correlated with the final score. These findings may suggest that perceived "skill" among the 2nd grade narratives was more
narrowly defined, centering on the presence of two evaluative forms, and on the sheer volume of forms employed. For the 4th grade sample, these results imply a broader basis for judgement, taking into account both a wider variety of evaluative forms, as well as volume and proportion of use. However, there are several caveats associated with these conclusions, the first of which being that while certain of the evaluative forms are correlated with final scores in the two samples, they are also highly correlated with one another. From a statistical standpoint, this is an extremely negative outcome, as it suggests that the seven evaluative forms do not actually represent separable variables, but rather, form a sort of “unitary factor.” From a functional standpoint, by contrast, these results are quite positive. Insomuch as the seven evaluative forms cannot be separated from one another, they can be understood as functionally equivalent. In this sense, the statistical analysis supports the theoretical foundations of the research, in which the contention is made that a diverse set of elements are all working towards a common goal in the construction of oral narratives. Nonetheless, to draw conclusions as to the basis for the narrative scores from the above results—without due recognition of the highly correlated nature of the seven evaluative forms—would result, at best, in a naive

28 Recall that gratuitous terms and negatives were among the most preferred features in all skill-groups at both grade-levels.

29 Recall the findings of Quasthoff (1997), cited above, in which adult expectations of children’s narrative structures were found to become progressively more demanding with age.

30 Since they are functionally equivalent, the evaluative forms could differentiate the narratives by their presence or absence (e.g., Texts 1 and 2), by their relative presence, or by their distribution within the narratives—which they do not.
interpretation of the data.

A final word of caution in interpreting the above statistical findings is based on the nature of the statistic itself. Correlations measure nothing further than the mathematical relationship between the variables involved. Even with the existence of a significantly high correlation coefficient between two variables, it would be improper to assume a cause-and-effect relationship. The point is, the statistical analysis may reveal/support the existence of a relationship between two variables, but it is left to the researcher to responsibly interpret and explain the nature of that connection, taking all factors into consideration, and all caveats into account. Given the circumstances (significant relationships between independent and outcome variables, BUT also between independent variables themselves), it would appear that we have gained no ground in discovering an explanation for the distribution of scores among the narratives. Like the preference and percentage of use analyses before it, the calculation of correlation coefficients has provided only limited insight, and the overall findings appear inconclusive.

3.5 Summary

In the initial phase of the analysis, the role of the seven evaluative forms was illustrated, and usage was compared across both age- and skill-groups. Counter to expectations, little variation was found among the groups with respect to the forms, functions, patterns, or preferences for use. Quantitative results back the qualitative findings, while also supporting the theoretical foundations of the research, which claim
that the various forms examined all work towards the accomplishment of a single goal—the creation of coherence through the manipulation of perspective.

While it is both useful and surprising to discover that the manipulation of the seven evaluative forms most commonly used among 2nd - 4th graders is relatively standard throughout the sample, it does not provide us with the hoped-for explanatory power regarding the distribution of narrative scores. This fact prompted a re-examination of the narratives from a different perspective, the results of which are the subject of Chapter 4.
4.0 RE-ANALYSIS OF THE NARRATIVES: REFERENCES TO

MENTAL ACTIVITY AND SPEECH

In the preceding chapter, 7-10 year-old children's use of seven different evaluative forms was analyzed. As demonstrated, the majority of child narrators employed these features quite capably to create perspective and connectivity in their oral narrative re-tellings. The pervasive nature of the features examined, in conjunction with the uniformity of their use throughout the sample, resulted in their inability to account for the perceived differences in narrative skill as judged by adult raters. While the seven features already examined represent some of the most prevalent means of achieving perspective and connectivity for the age group under consideration (according to the findings of previous research), they do not constitute the entirety of evaluative forms available. In the analyses which follow, the use of two additional evaluative forms will be studied: references to mental activity, and speech references. The manner in which these two features create coherence, working both separately and in conjunction with one another, is the subject of this chapter.

4.1 References to Mental Activity in Text 2

4.1.1 Mental Activity of the Characters

The analysis of the initial seven evaluative forms having reached inconclusive results, the texts were re-examined in hopes of discovering additional factors which might be able to account for the adults' perceptions of skill. Upon re-analysis, one of the
most striking characteristics of the higher-scoring texts was the abundance of references
to mental activity. In both the 2nd and 4th grade samples, those narrators rated as most
skilled employ a variety of means to indicate the occurrence of cognition, the most
obvious of which is the use of cognitive verbs. Consider the following examples from

Text 2 (Subj: 2fg4, bilingual female, 7 yrs. 5 mos., Score = 5.00):

58     C And in bed, (they) they were awake, and they wonder/ed how to protect
59     themselves.
60     C And they made a special formula, <> a secret formula.

95     C And a little[G] before that (he sa*) he realize/ed he had a little[G] bit of morsel
96     in his mouth [EU].
97     E Uhhuh.
98     C And his jaw began to quiver <> {C makes a quivering jaw face with sound}.

111    C (And then {C laughs}, and then he, he did) he thought about something.
112    C He said, {C puts hand to chin} hm, maybe[H] I should/n't[N] eat them, <and
113    on> the other hand, how can I resist {C laughs}? 
114    E <Exactly>.
115    E {E laughs}.
116    C And then (he) he definitely[G] made his mind up to eat them.

151    C (And he walk/ed) he try/ed to leave with dignity and he stumble/ed down the
152    stair/s and he left.
153    E O^ 
154    C (And) and DoctorDeSoto and his wife outfox/ed the fox.

Wonder, realize, think, resist (in the given context), make up one's mind, and
outfox. Each of these verbals indicates the occurrence of some type of mental activity on
the part of the characters. By pairing each reference to cognition with an event in the
narrative, the narrator not only recounts the events clearly and accurately, but provides a
reason for each event's occurrence. In motivating the occurrence of the events, the
narrator constructs a well-connected, highly coherent narrative. In line 58, the DeSotos
wonder how to protect themselves from the fox. In line 60, they make a special, secret formula—the concoction of which, we infer, is the result of their preceding ruminations. The same can be said of the subsequent example in which the fox realizes (line 95) that the mouse dentist who is working inside his mouth would make a tasty snack. As a result (we infer), his jaw begins to tremble in anticipation in line 98. The example in lines 111-116 is interesting in that the event which is the result of the fox’s mental activity is itself a mental act. In line 111 the narrator reports that the fox thought about something—setting up the mental activity which precedes the mental event. Then in lines 112-113, she constructs a direct quote, verbalizing the fox’s thoughts. Within this quote, we find the use of the verb resist, understood as a reference to the “mental act” of having “will-power” (as opposed to an act of physical “resistance”). The fox’s cognitive calisthenics finally result in a mental event in line 116, where the fox makes up his mind to eat the DeSotos. In the last example, the narrator uses a reference to mental activity to bring the narrative to a close. In lines 151-152, the defeated fox takes his leave. In a global statement which both summarizes and accounts for the events of the entire narrative, the narrator borrows the closing sentiments of the actual text (Steig 1982), stating that (line 154) the DeSotos outfoxed (outsmarted) the fox. In so doing, she acknowledges that a character’s mental activity can have effects which extend beyond the domain of that individual, and which, in a direct or indirect manner, can be viewed as accountable for the actions of others.

Equally transparent in suggesting the occurrence of mental activity are references to emotions, mental states, and subjective judgements on the part of the characters. The
following examples are taken, once again, from Text 2:

83 C He said, yumyummyumyumyum {C laughs} yumyum.
84 E {E laughs}.
85 C Oh how I like to eat them raw ↔ with just[G] a pinch of salt ↔ (and dr*) and
86 a cup of dry wine {C smacks lips w/ tongue}.
87 E <{E laughs}>.
88 E <{E laughs}>.
89 E {E laughs} oh my.
90 C And then (he) his wife {C begins to laugh} gave him a pole (and he kept) to[A]
91 keep the fox/*z mouth open.

119 C And he said how would you (be the fir*) like to be the first one to receive (this)
120 this special treatment?
121 E Uhhuh.
122 C And the fox said, I would be delighted to {C laughs}!
123 E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
124 C (And the) and the fox, he let (the) him step in again.

In the first example (lines 83-91), the fox, who is under sedation, unknowingly reveals his intentions to the DeSotos when he begins to talk in his sleep, mentioning (line 85) his penchant for raw mouse. Like the example from lines 151-154, above, this bit of mental activity causes action on the part of another character. Upon hearing of the fox’s partiality for “la souris crue,” Mrs. DeSoto immediately gives her husband a pole with which to prop the fox’s mouth open while replacing the tooth. In the second example (lines 119-124), the DeSotos are about to enact their plan to trick the fox. As part of the ruse, Doctor DeSoto takes the stance of a concerned care giver, inquiring as to the patient’s state of mind (line 119) before commencing. In line 122, the fox falls for the deception, telling Doctor DeSoto that he would be “delighted” to try the treatment. Assured of the fox’s co-operation, Doctor DeSoto steps back into his mouth to carry out his sticky plan.
The use of cognitive verbs and references to emotions/mental states directly
signals the occurrence of *mental activity* on the part of the characters. *Without exception,*
these references to cognitive action are paired with events in the text, implying a
catalytic relationship between the two. Less direct methods of indicating the occurrence
of *mental activity* are also found throughout Text 2. Like their more overt counterparts,
these references function to create connectivity and coherence by establishing
perspective and motivating the actions of the characters. Return, for example, to the
opening lines of Text 2:

7   C (Um) DoctorDeSoto was a very[G] good (um) dentist, and (he) he work/ed a
8   lot.
9   E Uhhuh.
10  C And his (a*) assistant/s never[N] stop/ed.
11  E Uhhuh.
12  C And his finger/s were very[G] delicate and his drill/s were (th*, the*) they
13   could/n't[N] even[G] feel a pain.
14  E Uhhuh.
15  C And one day this fox came.
16  C And his sign said DoctorDeSoto dentist.
17  C And the sign said cat/s and other dangerous animal/s not[N] accept/ed for
18   treatment.
19  E Uhhuh.
20  C And they would/n't[N] even[G] let the most[G] tempted[EW:timid] cat come
21   in.
22  C So the one day this fox came, and (he, he was) he was (very) very[G] hurt
23   because[A] of his %achetooth.
24  C And he was cry/ing.
25  C And DoctorDeSoto said *what are we go/ing to do?*
26  C And the wife said *hmmm {C makes thinking face}.*
27  E {E laughs}.
28  C And then she press/ed the buzzer.
29  C And she let the fox in.

As discussed in Chapter 3, lines 1-7 of the narrative introduce Doctor DeSoto and
establish his good reputation. In line 9, a fox arrives. While the narrator of Text 2 fails
to mention that Doctor DeSoto is a mouse (a fact which would allow us to infer that the arrival of the fox is problematic), she does move to establish the conflict that the fox’s arrival will create by presenting, in lines 10-15, Doctor DeSoto’s mind set regarding the treatment of dangerous animals. Under no circumstances will he accept them as patients. While direct reference to mental activity is lacking, it is clearly implied. Doctor DeSoto has made a decision (a mental act), and has posted a sign stating his intentions (the product of his mental act). Having established the dentist’s frame of mind, the narrator then restates the arrival of the fox in lines 16-18, this time noting the severity of his need for dental attention. In lines 19-20, we find the event which is the result of the implied mental activity in lines 10-15. That is, the DeSotos contemplate whether or not they should let the fox in as this would violate their earlier decision not to treat dangerous animals. Itself a mental act, the DeSoto’s contemplation of their circumstances is initially presented through Doctor DeSoto’s question in line 19, “What are we going to do?,” which indicates conflict and intentionality on the part of the DeSotos. This query is followed by Mrs. DeSoto’s cogitation in line 20, which the narrator indicates using a direct quote (“And the wife said ‘hmmm’”) and paralinguistic cues ({{C makes thinking face}}). Their deliberations result in the event which unfolds in lines 22-23. Dismissing their previous stance, Mrs. DeSoto pushes a buzzer and lets the fox in.

Similar examples, in which mental activity is implied but not directly stated, are demonstrated in the following excerpts in which the narrator attributes subjective judgement, uncertainty, and intentionality to the characters:

C Then (he) he said *yuck* (because)← because[A] he had a rotten tooth and
especially\{G\} bad breath \{C laughs\}.

E \{E laughs\}.

E \{E laughs\} yuck!

C And then he said \textit{this tooth will have\{O\} to come out.}

E Uhhuh.

C And when he pull/ed it out \{C begins to laugh\}, it came out with a sucking sound.

In the above example, subjective judgement (\textit{mental activity}) on the part of Doctor DeSoto is indicated in lines 41 and 45. In line 41, the dentist reacts to the fox’s rotten tooth and the smell of his breath with the statement “yuck.” In line 45, he determines that the only course of action is to remove the tooth. Again, the references to \textit{mental activity} are paired with an event—as a result of the dentist’s assessment, the rotten tooth is removed in line 47.

A second set of examples in which \textit{mental activity} is implied:

C (And then \{C laughs\}, and then he, he did) he thought about something.

C He said, \{C puts hand to chin\} hm, \textit{maybe\{H\} I should\'/n\{N\} eat them, \langle and on\rangle the other hand, how can I resist \{C laughs\}?}

E \{Exactly\}.

E \{E laughs\}.

C And then (he) he definitely\{G\} made his mind up to eat them.

C Then \{C laughs\} DoctorDeSoto said, oops\{H\}, I forgot to tell you something \{C smiles \& shrugs shoulders\}!

C You \textit{may\{H\} have\{O\} to have your teeth open\{EW: closed\} for (two) one day or two day/s.}

C (And he, and the fox) \{C laughs\} the fox, \(\langle\) he, um \rangle all he could say was, \{C talks with mouth closed\} thank you very\{G\} much \{C laughs\}!}

C (And then) and then the fox look/ed at them and he/’s like \{C makes a face\}.

E \{E laughs\}.

C (And he walk/ed) he try/ed to leave with dignity and he stumble/ed down the stair/s and he left.
The use of *hedging* is found in lines 111-113 and in lines 136-139. As mentioned at the outset, it is often the case that categories begin to overlap as the analysis becomes more complex. Clearly, *hedges* indicate reference to *mental activity*, as by definition they invoke a state of mental uncertainty. In the case of the first example, the fox’s hesitation, though fleeting, appears genuine. In the second example, Doctor DeSoto’s displayed uncertainty (as well as his supposed forgetfulness, mentioned in the preceding line) is undeniably feigned. The second example illustrates not only the narrator’s use of *mental activity* as a means of motivating the events in the text, but also her understanding that states of mind can be intentionally misrepresented for the purpose of deception. Doctor DeSoto wants to be rid of the fox without further incident, thus, he represents himself as well-intentioned and oblivious to the fox’s true intent. The ruse is successful, and results in the prompt departure of the somewhat stunned fox (lines 149-152).

The final set of examples are all linked by the indication of intentionality:

55  C And he said he *would get another tooth* for him.
56  E Uhhuh.
57  C And at night, his wife made a golden tooth.

70  C (And he um) DoctorDeSoto got up into his mouth, and the fox {C laughs} he shut his mouth.
72  E {E laughs}.
73  C And he said, *hahahahahaha just[H] a joke* {C laughs}!
74  E {E laughs}.
75  C (And then) and then he said, *keep your mouth open!*
76  C And (his) his wife said, {C shakes index finger} wide open {C laughs}!

151 C (And he walk/ed) he *try/ed to leave with dignity* and he stumble/ed down the stair/s and he left.

32  C (And then, then he <{C laughs}>, he, he w*, he will, w*) his wife, (he pull/ed the) *she pull/ed the :03 (pull*) pulley to[A] lift him up <> into the fox/z mouth.*
90  C And then (he) his wife {C begins to laugh} gave him a pole (and he kept) to[A]
91  keep the fox/#z mouth open.

In each of the above cases, resolve/determination (mental activity) to act in a
particular manner and/or to achieve particular ends is indicated. In line 55, for example,
Doctor DeSoto states his intention to get a new tooth for the fox. His resolve is answered
in line 57, when his wife makes a new, golden tooth. In the second example, the fox
attempts to misrepresent his intentions in line 73. Unlike the DeSoto’s deception of the
fox in lines 136-139 (discussed above), the fox’s deceit is unsuccessful in convincing the
other characters of his innocence. In lines 75-76, the DeSotos reprimand the fox, sternly
reminding him to keep his mouth open during the dental work. In lines 151-152 the
phrase “tried to leave with dignity” again indicates intention on the part of the fox. His
attempt to maintain his composure fails, however, and he stumbles down the stairs in
taking his leave.

The final two examples (lines 32-33 and 90-91) have in common the use of
infinitive constructions, coded as causals ([A]) in the initial phase of the analysis. The
justification for inclusion of these statements among those indicating intentionality (and
hence, mental activity) is similar to the justification for their inclusion as causals. That
is, in the given constructions, the narrator seems to be suggesting that Mrs. DeSoto’s
performance of the stated acts is the result of her own volition (her volition is the catalyst
for the actions taken). In lines 32-33, she pulls the pulley for the specific purpose of
lifting Doctor DeSoto into the fox’s mouth. In lines 90-91, Mrs. DeSoto hands her
husband a pole with the rationale that it will be used to keep the fox’s mouth open while
the dentist works. Though perhaps more implicit than the initial examples in their
indication of intention, these final cases demonstrate the same pattern as the more
transparent examples in that they present the actions of the characters as resulting from
prior mental activity or states of mind.

4.1.2 Mental Activity of the Narrator

In the preceding section, the manner in which mentions of mental activity on the
part of the characters helped to create a well-connected narrative by providing a reason
(motivation) for the occurrence of the narrative events was illustrated. In the present
section, we will see that the narrator’s references to her own mental activity are similar
to the mentions of character mental activity in that they again offer the listener a
perspective on the events of the narrative. However, the narrator’s references to her own
mental activity function somewhat differently than her references to character mental
activity in that, rather than providing a reason for the occurrence of the events, they more
often act as “guideposts” by drawing the listener’s attention (intentionally or otherwise)
to particular (often important) information within the re-telling and by encouraging the
listener to interpret the information in a particular way. In this sense, the narrator’s
references to her own mental activity, like her references to the characters’ mental
activity, help create a well-connected narrative by helping the listener to navigate the
events of the story.

While the majority of references to mental activity in Text 2 are concerned with
cognition on the part of the characters, the narrator does make a small number of direct
references to her own mental activity. In line 82, for example, she states:

82 C I think[H] I can remember what he said.

This comment immediately precedes a direct quote in which she reports the revealing statements made by the fox while under sedation. As discussed in Chapter 3, the narrator’s statement begins with the hedge “I think[H].” In this context, think is not counted as a cognitive verb (as referencing actual mental activity), however, its formulaic use in this instance does indicate frame of mind in that, as discussed above, hedges by definition indicate a mental state of uncertainty. This conversational use of think\(^{31}\) is then followed by the cognitive verb remember, referring to the actual cognitive act of “recalling” information. In the Chapter 3, two possible reasons for the narrator’s hedged aside were mentioned. First, she may have wished to draw attention to the quote which follows as it is crucial in establishing the true intentions of the fox. In addition, she may have wished to disassociate herself from the fox’s wicked intentions, or from full accountability for the precise wording of this pivotal paraphrase. In any event, the narrator’s reference to her own mental activity underscores the quote which follows, directing her listener’s attention at a critical point in the text.

Additional references by the narrator to her own mental activity include the following:

37 C And then he got out of the pulley and got into his mouth and he wore rubber/s.
38 E Okay.
39 C And he <{C laughs}> this part/s very[G] bad.

\(^{31}\) See discussion of Hill, et. al. (1997) in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.2, for further elaboration on the conversational use of cognitive verbs.
E <{E laughs}>.
C Then (he) he said yuck (because)<> because[A] he had a rotten tooth and especially[G] bad breath {C laughs}.

27 C And DoctorDeSoto said sit on the floor please, and take off your bandage.
28 E <Uh oh>!
29 C <{C laughs}>.
30 C (And he) and he wash/ed his hand/s in that picture.
31 E Uhhuh.
32 C (And then, then he <{C laughs}>, he, he w*, he will, w*) his wife, (he pull/ed the) she pull/ed the :03 (pul*) pulley to[A] lift him up <> into the fox/z mouth.

90 C And then (he) his wife {C begins to laugh} gave him a pole (and he kept) to[A] keep the fox/*z mouth open.
91 C (And when he, and he) in the picture I saw that he was open/ing his eye/s a little[G] bit.
92 E Uhhuh.
95 C And a little[G] before that (he sa*) he realize/ed he had a little[G] bit of morsel in his mouth [EU].
96
103 C And he[EW:she] was %cargo/ing it up the ladder {C laughs}.
104 E Uhhuh.
105 C (And, and then he {C laughs}) and then he open/ed the>
106 C No[N], he (um) put the tooth in.

In the first example (lines 37-42), the narrator pauses her report of the events to comment on the impending episode. In line 39, we find her subjective judgement (mental activity) of what is to follow when she giggles, and then states, “this part/’s very[G] bad.” Her aside draws attention to the events which follow, and explicitly informs her listener as to the manner in which she interprets the events. In essence, she catches and focuses her listener’s attention, assuring that her listener is both following the events, and developing a “proper” (= her) perspective on those occurrences.

In the next two examples (lines 27-33 and 90-96), the narrator again suspends the narrative to comment on her own mental activity. In both cases, her comments describe
her visual recall of the storybook. In recounting two pictures from relevant points within
the text (lines 30 and 92-93), the narrator demonstrates that her memory of the story is
not only verbal, but visually encoded as well. At first glance, the narrator’s mention of
her visual memory may not appear to be aimed at guiding the listener’s understanding in
the manner typical of the previous examples. Rather, in reflecting aloud upon her own
processing, the narrator’s comments might initially seem to be the unintentional result of
her intense focus on the work at hand. That is—she accidentally reveals the nature of her
own mental connections as she moves through the task of reconstructing the text. While
the two utterances in question do provide information as to the events of the narrative
(line 30: Doctor DeSoto washed his hands before beginning the exam, lines 92-93: the
fox opened his eyes a little bit while supposedly under sedation), the narrator’s
unprecedented direct reference to illustrations from the text in presenting the information
does create a sense of tangentiality\(^{32}\)—if one overlooks the context of the re-telling.
Rather than viewing these two utterances as unsuccessful attempts at constructing
meaningful asides, these instances are interpreted here as reflective of the level of self-
involve:.ment under which the narrator is functioning in order to reconstruct the events of
the narrative, and as probable reflections of the context under which the reconstruction
occurred. That is, in her mention of the pictures from the text, the narrator reveals
(intentionally or not) her own mental processing, yet this mention is made to the very

\(^{32}\) Try reading the utterances in lines 30 and 92-93 with the phrases in that picture and in the picture I saw
that deleted from the respective utterances. Without these interjections, the utterances lose their tangential
feel, and the flow of information no longer appears to suffer from interruption.
adult with whom she has read and discussed the text on several occasions. In this setting, she may view her recall of specific visual information as an accomplishment worthy of note, and she may in fact feel that the visual information she is reporting, since it is also accessible to her listener, will be helpful to said listener in following the narrative. In this sense, the narrator’s references to her visual memory of the text can be viewed as yet another (indirect) reference to mental activity which supports the creation of a coherent retelling.

An additional point of note regarding the examples in lines 27-33 and 90-96 is that, like the narrator’s previous references to her own mental activity, these examples help to focus the listener’s attention on “important information,” reenforcing the manner in which the information should be understood. The first example, in lines 27-33, bolsters the “good-guy” image of Doctor DeSoto. That is, like any conscientious medical practitioner, he washes his hands before beginning an exam. By contrast, the example in lines 90-96 reenforces the deceitful, sneaky nature of the fox, who, having been gassed, is supposed to be asleep. It would appear, however, that he is only pretending to be asleep, as he opens his eyes to “peek,” and continues to plot the DeSotos’ demise. Both of these examples, in recounting the narrator’s visual memory of the text, highlight crucial information and the manner in which it is to be understood, helping the listener to follow and interpret the narrative.

In the final example (lines 103-106), the narrator abandons her statement in line 105, utters the negative “No” in line 106, and then proceeds to finish the utterance with a corrected version of events. Her abandonment of the initial utterance in line 105,
emphasized by the single word *no* in line 106, highlights the narrator's confusion (*mental activity*) over the exact order of occurrence of the events. This example of the narrator's reference to her own *mental activity* is somewhat different from the previous examples in that it marks a repair in the retelling. In some sense, however, such markers may still be viewed as assisting the listener in interpreting the narrative in that they call attention to abrupt transitions in the story. They let the listener know that a repair is, in fact, occurring and/or that the narrator herself was (momentarily) unsure. (Consider how the absence of such markers might confuse the listener, especially in cases where the narrator's reconstruction of the information is less fluent. Frequent abrupt transitions and repairs, left unmarked, would almost certainly result in a recounting that was somewhat difficult for the listener to interpret/follow. See, for example, Text E,\(^\text{33}\) in which the narrator confuses the order of events and repeatedly cycles through the text.) While this is the only example of this type of marker in Text 2, we will see that such forms are much more frequent and play a particular role in the 4\(^\text{th}\) grade re-tellings.

4.1.3 Summary of References to *Mental Activity* in Text 2

As the preceding examples have demonstrated, the majority of references to *mental activity* in Text 2 are made regarding the characters. (That is, these are 3\(^\text{rd}\) person references as opposed to 1\(^\text{st}\) person—see, e.g., Chafe 1994 and Shiro 1997 for a detailed discussion of continua of displacement of the self in the representation of consciousness.)

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\(^{33}\) Texts with alphabetic designations can be found in their entirety in Appendix B.
These references range in nature from explicit and direct (i.e., cognitive verbs, emotions) to implicit and indirect (i.e., subjective judgement, hedges, intentionality). Regardless of form, mentions of cognition attributed to the characters are consistently paired with resulting (we infer) events in the narrative. By attributing perspective, and by providing motivations for the events, the narrator of Text 2 creates a well-connected re-telling. (As we will see below, it not the mere presence, but also the placement of these references which renders them so effective in this and many other 2nd grade texts.)

References to the narrator’s own mental activity (1st person), though less frequent, also occur. Like the references to character cognition, the narrator’s references to her own mental activity range from explicit to implicit in nature and help the listener to interpret the story by providing a perspective on the events. While the narrator’s mentions of character mental activity provide a reason for the events, her references to her own mental activity function more as “guideposts,” by drawing the listener’s attention to (important) information and by directing the listener’s interpretation of that information. Often, the narrator’s references to her own mental activity give the impression that they are somewhat accidental in their inclusion (as if they were a “reflex” on the part of the narrator resulting from her intense involvement with her own cognition while reconstructing the text). Intentional or not, these references help to

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34 The narrator’s references to her own mental activity might be counted as much more frequent if every paralinguistic indicator (denoted by comments enclosed in {} which seemed to express the narrator’s perspective (e.g., giggling, smiling, shoulder shrugs, etc.) were counted. Though this analysis acknowledges the presence and the probable primary function of such devices, its focus is largely limited to the analysis of verbal features. See, e.g., Reilly (1992) for a thorough discussion of the role of gesture and paralinguistic devices in children’s narratives.
create a coherent narrative by helping to guide the listener through the retelling.

4.2 References to Character Speech in Text 2

A second notable characteristic of the higher-scoring texts was the frequent use of character speech. References to speech were categorized as one of three types: direct, indirect, and free (see Shiro 1997). In direct speech, a character’s words are reported verbatim (e.g., And Doctor DeSoto said, “What are we going to do?”). In indirect speech, a character’s words are paraphrased (e.g., And he said he would get another tooth for him). In free speech, the narrator’s lexical choice implies that speech occurred, but no explicit report of the words spoken is made (e.g., I think I can remember what he said). The following examples are taken, once again, from Text 2 (Subj. 2fg4, bilingual female, 7 yrs. 5 mos., Score = 5.00):

+V: Voicing

Direct Speech:

19  C And DoctorDeSoto said what are we going to do?

20  C And the wife said hmm {C makes thinking face}.

25  C And (then) {C laughs}, then the fox came in and said mercy on your heart/s for (uh) :03 (uh)>

27  C And DoctorDeSoto said sit on the floor please, and take off your bandage.

41  C Then (he) he said [V] yuck (because)< because[A] he had a rotten tooth and especially[G] bad breath {C laughs}.

45  C And then he said this tooth will have[O] to come out.

73  C And he said, [V] hahahahahaha just[H] a joke {C laughs}!
C (And then) and then he said, keep your mouth open!

C And (his) his wife said, {C shakes index finger} [V] wide open {C laughs}!

C He said, [V] yumyumyumyumyumum {C laughs} yumyum.

C [V] Oh how I like to eat them raw <> with just[G] a pinch of salt <> (and
dr*) and a cup of dry wine {C smacks lips w/ tongue}.

C And his jaw began to quiver <> [V] {C makes a quivering jaw face with sound}.

C He said, {C puts hand to chin} [V] hm, maybe[H] I should/n't[N] eat them,
<and on> the other hand, how can I resist {C laughs}?

C And he said how would you (be the fir*) like to be the first one to receive
(this) this special treatment?

C And the fox said, [V] I would be delighted to {C laughs}!

C And he step/ed out of his mouth and he said, [V] now {C squeezes finger &
thumb together making a 'closed' motion} close your mouth for one whole[G] minute!

C And {C laughs} then when he open/ed his mouth, (he s*) he could/n't[N] [V] {C demonstrates by mumbling behind closed teeth}.

C Then {C laughs} DoctorDeSoto said, [V] oops[H], I forgot to tell you
something {C smiles & shrugs shoulders}!

C [V] You may[H] have[O] to have your teeth open[EW:closed] for (two) one
day or two day/s.

C (And he, and the fox) {C laughs} the fox, <> (he, um) all he could say was, {C
talks with mouth closed} [V] thank you very[G] much {C laughs}!

**Indirect Speech:**

55 C And he said he would get another tooth for him.

**Free Speech:**
I think[H] I can remember what he said.

As the above examples confirm, the narrator’s use of references to character speech are extremely diverse, evidencing a multitude of forms (statements, questions, requests, exclamations, etc.) and referencing a range of topics. Given the overwhelming diversity that is possible, it is crucial to recognize what it is that unites these constructions under the single heading of “evaluative form.” Essentially, it is not the content of the speech which is key, but the nature of speech itself that places these diverse forms in a single category. References to character speech are understood as a evaluative form in that, inescapably, speech attributes a perspective to the speaker (character) who utters it. In this sense, references to character speech imply mental activity and may be viewed as an extension of the indirect references to mental activity cited in the preceding discussion. By inferring perspective and thus, mental activity on the part of the characters, references to character speech help create connectivity in the narratives in a manner similar to that described for the preceding evaluative forms.

The three different categories of speech references can be distinguished by their formal properties as well as by the amount of cognitively complex machinations they require of the narrator (see also, Shiro 1997). Free speech is a relatively simple form that does not demand a great deal of mental maneuvering on the part of the narrator. In free speech references such as “He complained,” “They talked about it,” or “She yelled at him,” the narrator does little more than report the event of occurrence of character speech. In some cases, a minimal amount of perspective-taking (e.g., “He complained”) is involved, but for the most part, these constructions do not demand that the narrator put
forth a great deal of effort towards the creation of perspective. *Indirect speech* is slightly more demanding. The paraphrased references to character speech which are involved require that the narrator reconstruct the "gist" of the speech event. In so doing, they become accountable for interpreting said event. In this sense, the narrator is required to do more work in the construction of *indirect speech* since, by nature of the form, they are providing their perspective (interpretation) of the event of occurrence of character speech. Finally, in the case of *direct speech*, the narrator provides an exact quote. This form of character speech is viewed as the most taxing of the three in terms of the demands which it places on the narrator. First, it is understandably more difficult to recall the event of occurrence of speech (or any other event for that matter) at the level of precise detail which *direct speech* requires. Second, there is a sense in which the verbatim recreation of the speech event requires the narrator to move outside of their own perspective and adopt, if only momentarily, the perspective of another. Especially among the younger narrators (2nd grade), the suggestion that the construction of *direct speech* compels the adoption of an outside perspective is reinforced by the narrators' consistent use of changes in vocal quality (indicated in the examples by [V]) which were affected in representing the *direct speech* of individual characters.\(^{35}\) On some level, it was as if the narrators had given their own life to the characters by "becoming" the characters in the moment of reporting the speech event. As Davis (2000) comments, "In

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\(^{35}\) Gardner (1980) found that narrator and character voices begin to be differentiated by 4 years-of-age. Note that this finding brings up the question of the role that affect in general plays in the raters' assessments. This point is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.
moving from: 1) Narration of events  →  2) Narration of events with someone talking  →  
3) Narration of events with citation of speech  →  4) Narration of events with speech

"acted out," there is an increased life to the characters involved. They become more and 
more [like] people, and less [like] cardboard cutouts. [This] is more than the narrator 
‘moving outside their own perspective.’ It is an act of creation."

As demonstrated, the narrator of Text 2 overwhelmingly prefers direct speech. Given the preceding explanation of the nature of the three types of speech references, it is easy to understand why the use of direct speech is so commonly preferred among the high-scoring texts. The most cognitively demanding of the three to construct, this form of character speech requires the narrators to recreate another’s perspective at a level which surpasses that of indirect or free speech. Given the understanding that it is the creation of perspective and connectivity that are the hallmarks of well-constructed narratives, it is only logical that the use of direct speech—which most vividly portrays the individual “voices” of the characters (see, e.g., Shiro 1997)—is the most typical form of speech among the higher-scoring texts.

4.3 Positioning of References to Mental Activity and Character Speech within Text 2

As the above examples illustrate, references to both mental activity and character 
speech are distributed throughout Text 2. Examining the text as a whole, we find that the 
narrator consistently uses these evaluative forms to motivate the various episodes of the 
narrative. Regarding the placement of these features, one may note that there are a great
number of references to *mental activity* which occur *within* references to *character speech*. Referring to the above list of *direct, indirect, and free speech* references in section 4.2, we find that well over half of them contain references to *mental activity* (as indicated by the italicized portions within the bolded examples). In creating these constructions, the narrator of Text 2 accomplishes a fascinating feat. Especially in the context of *direct speech* (which most explicitly conveys the "voice" of the characters over that of the narrator), the placement of references to *mental activity* within *character speech* allows the characters themselves to indicate/imply the occurrence of their own *mental activity*. That is, *the characters, acting as rational agents, construe themselves as motivated actors in carrying out the events of the narrative*. This adds another level to the scale from Section 4.2 (Davis 2000):

1) Narration of events → 2) Narration of events with someone talking →

3) Narration of events with citation of speech → 4) Narration of events with speech "acted out" → 5) *Narration of events with speech "acted out" and with the character’s perspective stated*

This fifth level of involvement contributes still more delineation to the characters. As they accrue form from stages 1-5, they become increasingly more lifelike. Overall, this approach is quite complex, in that it requires the narrator to step in and out of the roles of multiple characters (of multiple perspectives) in the recreation of the text, and to embed references to *mental activity* within the recreated speech events. Complexity aside, there are concrete reasons why this approach is perceived as most successful by the adult raters. Before delving into the discussion of these reasons, however, it is helpful to
compare the patterns of Text 2 with those found in other texts in the sample.

4.4 Comparison of Text 2 with Less Successful 2nd Grade Texts

In Chapter 3, Text 3, which received a final score of 3.00*, was examined for its use of the initial seven evaluative forms. Recall that Text 3 made proficient use of the seven features, rendering its final score (the lowest possible in the adequate range) difficult to explain. Text 3 is re-printed below, this time with references to mental activity in italics and character speech bolded:

Text 3 (with references to mental activity and character speech)

7 C DoctorDeSoto was a dentist.
8 C And he was very[G] popular (w*) for big animal/s.
9 C (And he) and he {C begins to laugh while talking} had a sign outside that said
10 no[N] cat/s <or other dangerous thing/s allow/ed>.
11 E <{E laughs}> exactly.
12 C No[N] exception/s.
13 E Uhhuh.
14 C And (f* f* f*) for (um) big animal/s (he he he he) they sat down on the floor
15 (a*) and he had[O] to use a ladder.
16 E Yeah.
17 C (W*) and for extra large animal/s (he they uh) he had (a r*) a special room.
18 E Uhhuh.
19 C (For) because[A] they had[O] to hoist them up {C smiles}.
20 E Yep {E laughs}.
21 C And (uh the the su*) the animal/s (that) that are DoctorDeSoto/z size <> (uh)
22 sat in the regular dentist chair {C smiles}.
23 E <Uhhuh>.
24 E Right, right.
25 C And the fox came complain/ing that he had an ache/ing tooth {C laughs}.
26 E Uhhuh, uhhuh.
27 C And then DoctorDeSoto (um) look/ed at the rotten tooth.
28 C (And) {C laughs} (a* a*) and (um) the next morning he put him to sleep {C
29 laughs}!
30 E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
31 C Then (um) they knew what he was dream/ing about.
C He was (drink/ing about) *dream/ing* about (um) eat/ing rat/s {C smiles}.
E Right {E laughs}.
C And :03 (uh the*) then they got that thing that {C pulls right hand from left to
demonstrate the sucking motion} suck/ed out his tooth {C smiles}.
E Uhhuh {E laughs} yeah.
C And he was in so[G] much pain he woke up {C smiles}.
E Uhhuh.
C And then (um) they put the gold tooth in *and he was like {C opens mouth and
bounces head while quivering jaw} [V] *ah[L].
E {E laughs}.
C He was *about to* shut his mouth.
E Uhhuh.
C (So then they so the* the* then so then) but when they put him to sleep they put
a pole <- so[A] he *wouldn't[N] do that {C smiles}.
E <Yeah> right, right.
C And then (um) they put the golden tooth in there (a*) and *he was in so[G]
much pain {C laughs}.
E Uhhuh.
C {C mumbles and acts as if feeling inside own mouth with tongue} [V] *m m m.*
E {E laughs}.
C (He was like, h*) he was *think/ing* (how the) how the golden tooth felt.
E Uhhuh.
C {C shows own silver tooth to E} it's like this one only golden.
E Oh yeah, wow!
C (Th* o* on*) only golden[M].
C And (they lo* the*) then (the* the* the*) they *said there was a secret formula
but it was actually glue {C smiles}!
E Uhhuh <{E laughs}>
C <(I found out that)> I *knew* it was glue.
C And then (he he he he he paint/ed) he paint/ed all his teeth.
E Uhhuh.
C (And he) and he *told him* (um uh uh) close your mouth.
E Uhhuh.
C And then (he try/ed to open it) he *try/ed to open* it (and he and he w*) and he
end/ed up like this {C closes mouth and makes grunting sound} [V] *uh uh uh uh uh uh*
E <{E laughs}> right.
C And then the only thing he could *say* was {C talks through closed teeth}
(thank) *thank you thank you* <thank you>.
E <{E laughs} uhhuh>.
C Because[A] his teeth were stuck together.
E Uhhuh.
C (A*) and he *said oh[L] oh[L] I forgot to tell you!
C (Um) ← (y*) your mouth will be shut for a few day/s {C laughs}!
E ⟨{E laughs}⟩.
E Oops!
C {C laughs}.
: 0:05
E The end?
C {C nods yes}.
E Okay.

Beginning with references to speech, lines 19, 34, 44, 51, 57, 60-61, 63-64, 68, and 69 contain character speech. Of these nine utterances, seven involved direct speech (lines 34, 44, 57, 60-61, 63-64, 68, and 69) and two employ indirect speech (lines 19 and 51). Like the narrator of Text 2, the narrator of Text 3 prefers direct speech over both indirect and free speech. Beyond this, however, the narrator of Text 3 uses references to speech in a manner which differs markedly from that seen in Text 2. Not only does Text 3 contain proportionally less use of character speech, but the majority of instances which occur do not display references to mental activity embedded within. Instead, the use of these two features is generally kept separate. Only two of the utterances—line 19 in which the narrator’s use of the verb complained infers that the fox was in an unhappy state of mind, and line 68, in which Doctor DeSoto uses the cognitive verb forgot—contain references to mental activity. Of these two instances containing embedded references to mental acts, only one (line 68) contains direct speech (which, as noted, was preferred in the high-scoring Text 2, and allows the characters to construe themselves as rational agents carrying out motivated acts). In addition, three of the instances of direct speech which do occur (lines 34, 44, and 60-61) report vocal “sounds” made by the fox and contain no reference to actual lexical items. If these three instances
are excluded from the count,\textsuperscript{36} that leaves only six occurrences of character speech (4 direct and 2 indirect) in Text 3. Of these six, only one embeds a reference to mental activity in direct speech.

Turning to mental activity, aside from his preferences for placement, Text 3's narrator uses references to mental activity in a manner similar to those displayed in Text 2. Cognitive verbs are found in lines 25, 26, 46, and 68. Subjective judgement and/or perspective on the part of a character is indicated in lines 4, 6, and 19. Intentionality is indicated in lines 36, 39, and 59. Line 54 even displays the narrator's use of a cognitive verb (knew) in reference to his own mental activity. As in Text 2, these references are positioned throughout the text, and serve the general purpose of providing motivation for the occurrence of the events of the narrative.

Text 3 is admittedly less detailed than the perfect-scoring Text 2. At first glance, one might ascribe the difference in scores to this fact,\textsuperscript{37} rather than to the narrator's use of character speech and references to mental activity. This intuition is challenged, however, by a brief review of the high-scoring Text 4 (see Chapter 3, pages 67-68). Recall that in the preceding chapter, Text 4 was introduced for purposes of comparison with Text 3. Both texts made similar use of the initial seven evaluative forms, and a quick re-read of Text 4 reveals that, like Text 3, it is somewhat short on details when

\textsuperscript{36} Some analyses (Peterson and McCabe 1983, for example) would place these examples in a separate category of "sound effects," found to be especially typical in the spontaneous narratives of young males.

\textsuperscript{37} See Footnote 14, Section 3.0, for a discussion of what is meant by "detail" and the manner in which the use of details creates involvement in conversation.
compared to Text 2. However, it demonstrates that Text 4's employment of references to mental activity and character speech are highly similar to those of Text 2. Given that there are no differences in the relative amount of detail provided by the high-scoring Text 4 and the lower-scoring Text 3, and that the previous analyses have shown that there are no appreciable differences between the two texts regarding the use of the initial seven features, it would appear that one highly plausible explanation for Text 3's final score is the manner in which its narrator's use of references to mental activities and character speech differs from that of the higher-scoring texts, such as Texts 2 and 4. In Text 3, proportionally, character speech occurs less frequently. In addition, references to mental activity and character speech are generally kept separate from one another, rather than embedding references to mental activity within character speech. Analysis of even lower-scoring texts from the 2nd grade sample (below) strengthens the conjecture that the use of references to mental activity and character speech in the proscribed manner is of central importance to the perceived success of the narratives.

Text 7, below, is from a 2nd grade native-Spanish male (Subj. 2mg6, 7 yrs., 8 mos.). It received a final score of 2.50:

**Text 7 (with references to mental activity and character speech)**

7  C (Um well um it's a um) DoctorDeSoto (um was put/ing in the uh how um he
was um how do you s*) he put {C traces sign in air} (uh um) something up there
9  {C traces sign in air again}.
10  C And *it said (don't uh) no[N] cat/s allow/ed.
11  C (And uh well) and dangerous[M] {C nods affirmatively} animal/s[M].
12  E Right.
13  C And the wolf was *say/ing {C puts hand to jaw} [V] please let me in!
14  E {E laughs} right.
15  C (And um um the um) DoctorDeSoto let/s him in.
E Uhhuh.
C And the wolf, it was try/ing to eat DoctorDeSoto.
E Uhhuh.
C And DoctorDeSoto {C grimaces trying to remember} (um um) he said (h* g*)
come (um) tomorrow at (um) twelve.
E Uhhuh.
C Oclock.
E Uhhuh.
C Be here at twelve (oclock) <> oclock.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And (he um) that time (he went) he went (to the um) to DoctorDeSoto.
C And (um they were they were plat plant he) they had a plan.
E Uhhuh.
C And (um) they went to sleep.
C (And that um that) and then that day (he um) the wolf come[EW:came].
E Uhhuh.
C And DoctorDeSoto {C makes thinking face & fidgets with fingers} (um) :03
(um um) he put glue {C points to own teeth} (on) in[EW:on] his teeth.
E Yeah.
C And he was try/ing to open his mouth and he could/n't[N] open (her m*) his
mouth.
E Right.
C And he said {C shakes head affirmatively & talks with mouth closed} [V]
E {E laughs} right.
C And then he went to (um) his house.
C (And he and um) {C inserts own face in shirt collar} and he could/n't[N] eat
(um) DoctorDeSoto.
E Right.
: 0:03
C (And :06 um :05 uh) {C makes worried face} I can/n't[N] say <anything>.
E <Is that>>
E Are you done, (are you) or is there more?
C I'm done.
E Alright!

Text 7 contains only 3 references to character speech. Lines 7, 13-18, and 32-33 all employ direct speech on behalf of one of the characters. None of these occurrences contains an embedded reference to mental activity. The four free-standing references to mental activity which do occur are located in lines 4-5, 11, 21, and 29. In each case, the
references are implicit, implying mental activity by attributing intentionality to one of the characters. As these references are not embedded in character speech, the attributions are made on behalf of the narrator, who acts as an omniscient reporter of the events and of the characters’ motivations for performing them. In addition, the references to mental activity which occur within this narrative are not as carefully paired with resulting events/actions on the part of the characters, as was the case in earlier texts. For example, the first reference to intentionality in lines 4-5 indicates that Doctor DeSoto will not treat “dangerous animals.” In the following utterance, the “wolf” arrives, and politely asks (paw on jaw) to be admitted. Doctor DeSoto immediately complies. No hint of hesitation (which one would expect given the preceding edict) is given. The same can be said of the next two references to intention. In line 11, it is stated that the “wolf” was “try/ing to eat” Doctor DeSoto. In the utterance which follows, Doctor DeSoto invites the “wolf” to return at noon the next day!?! (We can only guess as to why the “wolf” is invited back, considering his behavior. No motivation [e.g., the necessity of further dental work] is given on behalf of the dentist.) In lines 20-24, the narrator appears to confuse the order of events. In line 20, the “wolf” goes to the dentist’s office. In line 21, the narrator states that the DeSotos “had a plan.” In line 22, the DeSotos go to sleep. In line 24, the “wolf” arrives again. While we are familiar enough with the narrative to recognize that the narrator has confused the order of events, an unfamiliar listener might interpret this portion of the text quite differently. To an unfamiliar listener, it might appear that the DeSotos had a plan—that plan being to go to sleep when the “wolf” arrived. Then, as the DeSotos were asleep upon his arrival, the “wolf” leaves and returns
again the next day?? (This scenario, however, does not make much sense. If the “wolf”
wanted to eat the DeSotos, why wouldn’t he simply do so while they were sleeping?)
The narrator’s final reference to intentionality is more clearly linked with the reported
events than the preceding three. In line 27, Doctor DeSoto puts glue on the “wolf’s”
teeth. In line 29 the “wolf” tries to open his mouth, but cannot.

Essentially, the narrator of Text 7 does not use references to mental activity and
character speech in a manner which is effective for his listener. The placement of these
features within the text forces the listener to make inferences which must be carried
across large portions of the narrative rather than assisting the listener in moving through
the text at a more local level, episode by episode (e.g., The assertion that the “wolf”
wants to eat the DeSotos is made in line 11, though no direct statement of action toward
this end on the “wolf’s” behalf is ever made. We must then infer, all the way down in
lines 21 and 27, that this is why Doctor DeSoto has a plan and puts glue on the “wolf’s”
teeth., etc.). In some instances, no motivation whatsoever is provided for the reported
events (e.g., Why did the dentist tell the “wolf” to return in the first place?). Finally, by
maintaining a complete separation between speech and cognition, the narrator constructs
a text in which the characters are somewhat lacking in affect. Rather than presenting
themselves as the rational agents of their own actions, it is left to the narrator to infer
motivation on their behalf—a task which he does not consistently achieve. Thus, it is not
only the paucity of references to character speech and mental activity, but also their
employment in a less than optimal manner which renders this narrative less successful
than the preceding texts.
As mentioned in Chapter 3, texts whose final score averaged in the 1.00-1.99 range tend to be widely deficient in all areas. The majority of the texts in this group abandon the re-telling short of completion, or present a narrative which is so disordered as to be incomprehensible. Text 1, examined in Chapter 3, was noted to be one of the more comprehensible/complete texts in this lowest-scoring group. A brief review of Text 1 (Chapter 3, pages 31-32), reveals that, surprisingly, the narrator does make some use of both character speech (line 4 = direct lines 8 and 9 = indirect) and references to mental activity (lines 6, 8, 9, and 10). In fact, two of the references to mental activity are even embedded within indirect speech (lines 8 and 9). The deficiencies of Text 1 were thoroughly examined in the preceding chapter. It would appear that the narrator’s use of the two features under consideration (which are the only ones of which she does make consistent use) is not sufficient to redeem the narrative as a whole.\footnote{38}

Unlike Text 1, most of the narratives scoring in the poor range are similar to Text 8 (Subj. 2mj10, English speaking male, 7yrs. 7 mos., Score=1.17) with respect to the use of character speech and references to mental activity:

**Text 8 (with references to character speech and mental activity)**

7 C There was a fox that had a toothache that they pull/ed out.
8 C And he was gonna eat them but (um) they put some[G] (um) :03 super (gl*)
9 glue.
10 E Uhhuh.
11 C That’s hX Xm.

\footnote{38 Text 1 brings out an important point—that is, it is not the evaluative forms alone, or even character speech and references to mental activity in particular, which determine the success of a text. These features work in conjunction with other properties, such as structure, fluency, relevance, level of detail, etc. (See also, Shiro 1997.) The relationship of these elements is quite complex, and merits further discussion, which can be found in Chapter 5.}
Clearly, Text 8 is deficient beyond the relative absence of references to mental activity and character speech. Regarding these two features, however, it contains only one reference to mental activity on the part of a character (line 2 “was gonna eat” = intention). There is one other use of a cognitive verb (think, line 12), but its use does not appear to be aimed at connectivity. Rather, it is used by the narrator to end the narrative (“That’s all I can think of.”). No references to character speech are used.

A final example drives the point home. Returning to the higher-scoring texts in the sample, we find the following (Subj. 2mj4, English speaking male, 8 yrs., 10 mos., Score = 4.67):

Text 9 (with references to mental activity and character speech)

C Ok once upon a time there was[EW:were] two little mouse/s[EW:mice].
C It was DoctorDeSoto and his wife.
C (They took they it was a it was a f* old) a fox he had a rotten tooth and (he he um) he (w*)>
C DoctorDeSoto/*z wife shine/ed up the golden tooth.
E Uhhuh.
C And then DoctorDeSoto {C makes a rotating motion with both hands} pull/ed it out.
E Uhhuh.
C And then it was rotten and brown.
C (And then) <> and then DoctorDeSoto put some superglue on his teeth {C points to own teeth} everywhere and his wife {C looks & points upwards} point/ed out the missing spot/*s that he miss/ed.
E <{E laughs}>.
E Uhhuh.
C (And then) then he said *I forgot to <mention but you won't[N] be able to
(open your teeth um)> open your mouth (in*) into[EW:until] a couple of day/s.
E <{E laughs}>.
E Uhhuh.
C (And then and then) so[A] he said [V] {C makes thoughtful face and noise}
hmm.
E {E laughs}.
C And then he walk/ed down the stair/*s.
C And there was a big stair/s {C puts right hand out on right side} and a little
stair/s {C puts left hand out on left side} for the <> mouse (and for the for the big
animal/s) for the bigger animal/*s.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (And then he uh he) and at first he said [V] {C makes thoughtful face} hmm I
think[H] I should eat them <> then he said I think[H] I should*n't[N] eat them.
E {E laughs}.
C But he said [V] {C shrugs and tosses hands out to sides} how can I resist?
E {E laughs}.
C (And then and then) and then he try/ed to eat them and then he {C makes
chomping motion with mouth}.
C And then he said just[H] a jokey joke.
E {E laughs}.
C (And then) and then (DoctorDeSoto) DoctorDeSoto (he said he sa* he he said
and he said c* should we let him sh*) you know his wife (his sh*) she said should
we let him in tomorrow?
C And his wife open/ed the door and let him in.
C And then he said [V] {C puts hand to jaw} eee[M][L] <my teeth[EW:tooth] is
killing me>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C (And then and then uh he uh um he uh he say he say uh he say) he
said I should*n't[N] eat them.
C (And then and then he said then Doctor) then (DoctorDeSoto/*z wife who they)
they put superglue on his teeth and he could*n't[N] open his mouth.
C And he go [V] {C makes mumbling noise with mouth shut} m m m m m.
E {E laughs} exactly.
C (And then and then) then the DeSoto/s kiss/ed.
C [V] {C makes a yuck face} ew[L].
E {E laughs}.
C That's the end.
E That was awesome!

Text 9 received an extremely high final score of 4.67. The male, English
speaking narrator is high in affect, making extensive use of references to mental activity both embedded in and separate from character speech. He also makes talented use of changes in his vocal quality in direct speech. The structure of his narrative, however, is extremely disordered. Our familiarity with the story allows us to connect the pieces to the extent that we can interpret/follow the re-telling, but from the perspective of an unfamiliar listener, Text 9 would most likely seem "jumpy," and far from coherent. As this final example demonstrates, effective use of references to character speech and mental activity are powerful enough influences (in some cases, at least)\(^{39}\) to overcome other deficiencies within a narrative.

4.5 Summary of Findings for the 2\(^{nd}\) Grade Texts

As the preceding examples demonstrate, the use of references to character speech and mental activity in the prescribed fashion conclusively distinguish the higher-scoring 2\(^{nd}\) grade texts from those which score in the lower range. Among the best group, approximately half of all of the narrator's utterances will display the use of one or both of these features, often in combination with one another. As scores decrease, the percentage of use of these features gradually diminishes. In addition, the features tend to be used separately from one another rather than in conjunction in the lower-scoring texts. In the lower-half of the scoring range (marginal and below) the tendency to employ the

\(^{39}\) Recall that this was not the case with Text 1. As mentioned in Footnotes 35 and 38, the complex relationship between the evaluative forms, other aspects of narrative, and the perception of success is explored in Chapter 5.
features in a manner which blocks the achievement of optimal functionality was noted.

4.6 Comparison with 4th Grade Texts

4.6.1 References to Mental Activity and Character Speech

Compare the use of character speech and mental activity in Text 5, the high-scoring 4th grade re-telling from Chapter 3 (Subj. 4mj9, English speaking male, 9 yrs., 6 mos., Score=4.33), with Text 2, from above:

Text 5 (with character speech and mental activity)

7 C One day PecosBill (fell) was fight/ing with his brother/s because[A] they were so[G] bore/ed.
8 C Because[A] their mom and dad said that they have[O] to go west because[A] there're more[G] neighbor/s come/ing and they were so[G] crowded.
9 C So[A] now they had[O] to move west and they were so[G] bore/d that they start/ed to fight.
10 C And PecosBill fell out and (l* s* lay um) stay/ed on the floor and wait/ed.
11 C And kept on watch/ing his parent/s (walk away um) drive away in the (um) dust.
12 C And then a coyote came around and sniff/ed him.
13 C (And) and PecosBill said [V] googoo!
14 E {E laughs}.
15 C And (um on) the coyote said in his language that ooh he must[O] be one of my people because[A] <> that mean/3s hello.
16 E <Uhhuh>.
17 C And so[A] he {C nods head} took him by his neck and brought him to his home.
18 C And then he play/ed around and chase/ed lizard/s.
19 C And then one day he met a cowboy seventeen year/s later.
20 C And the cowboy said [V] what are you?
21 C And he said [V] varmint.
22 E {E laughs}.
23 C And he said [V] you're not[N] no[N] varmint!
24 E {E laughs}.
25 C [V] Well I got flea/s don't[N] I?
26 C He said [V] most[G] Texan/s got flea/s, it does/n't[N] matter.
27 E {E laughs}.
C And then he took him to his place and he start/ed to dress up like a regular person.
E Uhhuh.
C And he did/n't[N] never[E:ever][N] shave/ed[E:shave] and did (not) none[N] of that [EU].
C And then (he) one time he was clean/ing his plate off with his tongue and hear/ed that his friend/s were talk/ing about (um um Hell/zGate um) %Hell/zGang.
C And he said [V] well I gotta[O] go meet these people <(he)> they sound like[H] my people.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And so[A] he jump/ed on the horse before anybody could say [V] yeehaw[L]
<> and start/ed to go.
E <{E laughs}>.
C But soon his horse fell in a hole and broke it/s leg.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> so[A] he threw (the thing on) his horse on his shoulder and start/ed to walk.
C People say he walk/ed for a hundred miles and then met a snake.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> knock/ed it (um um) crosseyed.
E {E laughs}.
C And then threw the thing on his back because[A] the thing was jealous that he got beat.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And then> he walk/ed (uh) another hundred mile/s.
C (And then he got then he met a) then he hear/ed a sound like[H] a mountain lion.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> (um) the mountain lion jump/ed on his back.
C Before he could let the mountain lion bite him he knock/ed him away [EU].
E <{E laughs}>.
C <And> then (he) he walk/ed away because[A] he was (um um) jealous that he got beat like the snake.
C (And) and then PecosBill said (um) [V] jump on my back, you can come along with me.
C And then he kept on walk/ing and walk/ing and then he saw Hell/zGateGang.
C (And um told them) and came over there and said [V] who/s the boss around here?
C (And he) and then a nineteen foot man with ten pistol/s on his waist said [V] I use/ed to be but now you are.
E {E laughs}.
C And PecosBill said [V] well thanks feller!
C (And it s*) and then PecosBill said [V] finish your dinner just[H] (me* um)
think[EW:pretend/] that I did/n't[N] interrupt.
C And then he walk/ed around with his gang and (um) saw the cyclone.
E Uhhuh.
C And (Pe*) PecosBill/z friend/s ran away.
C (And) but (he) PecosBill just[G] got his rope <and> whirl/ed it around the
cyclone.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And whirl/ed it around and around and he got suck/ed in the cloud.
E {E laughs}.
C And then he drop/ed the thing forty feet down *a deep valley.
C {C nods} now it/s call/ed %DeepValley.
C And then he walk/ed a hundred and>
C Well, he walk/ed some[G] more {C flings out right arm}.
C And then (he he him) him and his gang were so[G] drought/ed out with water
that they had[O] to get their rope/s and (c* um) reel it in from *the RioGrande
[EU].
C Then that one was drought/ed.
C (Then they did it from then they re* re*) then they (um) got water from (um)
the GulfofMexico.
C (And the* and then um) and then um>
; 0:04
C I forgot what happen/ed.
C After they drought/ed then[M] the cyclone came!
E Uhhuh.
C And then (it) all the water came.
C And then he walk/ed with his friend/s (to) to %SlowFootSue <and> said [V]
hello[L] in coyote language.
E <{E laughs}>
E {E laughs}.
C And she said hello in coyote language too.
C And then (they) they thought that they should (be m*) get married.
C And so[A] they got married.
C And before the marriage SlowFootSue jump/ed on WidowMaker.
C And WidowMaker before (sh*) she stuck her shoe in him <> start/ed to>
E <Uhhuh>.
C The WidowMaker jump/ed {C rocks head up and down} and jump/ed and
jump/ed and jump/ed.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And then she> land/ed on the moon.
C And then (um) PecosBill (Bill) wheel/ed his (um) rope around her.
C (But the but) but PecosBill get/3s stuck with her <on the moon too>.
E {E laughs}.
Text 5 displays nineteen instances of character speech (direct speech = 14 occurrences, indirect speech = 4 occurrences, and free speech = 1 occurrence). Twelve references to mental activity are also found. The narrator of Text 5 does embed some references to mental activity within character speech (e.g., lines 71-72), though this pattern is not as consistent as among the 2nd grade texts. In those instances where references to mental activity are embedded in speech, the constructions function in the manner discussed above in that they allow the characters to construe themselves as rational actors performing motivated acts. Of greater interest, however, are the ways in which this successful 4th grade text differs from the high scoring 2nd grade texts. The patterns of use for references to mental activity and character speech are, in fact, different enough to suggest that this older, skilled narrator approaches the task of reconstructing the text quite differently from the younger narrators.

In Text 5, the narrator employs character speech in approximately 30% of his utterances. This proportion of use is equal to that of the successful 2nd grade re-telling recorded in Text 2. Like the successful 2nd grade narrators, this older narrator recognizes the powerful, affective role that quoted speech plays in the presentation of the narrative, making use of this device with the same frequency as that of the successful 2nd graders. Unlike the 2nd grade narratives, however, most of the references to speech in Text 5 do not display embedded references to mental activity. Note the following example:

33 C And then (he) one time he was clean/ing his plate off with his tongue and
34 hear/ed that his friend/s were talk/ing about (um um Hell/zGate um)
%Hell/zGang.
C And he said [V] well I gotta[O] go meet these people <(he)> they sound
like[H] my people.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And so[A] he jump/ed on the horse before anybody could say [V] yeehaw[L]
<> and start/ed to go.

The preceding eight lines contain three references to character speech. Lines 34-35
contain a free speech reference. Lines 36-37 and 39 employ direct speech. Of the three,
only one contains an embedded reference to mental activity. Lines 36-37 indicate
intentionality ("gotta[O] go meet") and subjective judgement ("they sound like") on the
part of Pecos Bill. The other two examples simply cite the occurrence of an act of
speech. As discussed above, there is a sense in which all acts of speech imply mental
activity on the part of the speaker. Like the majority of the narratives in the 4th grade
sample, most of Text 5's references to speech do not move beyond this underlying
implication of cognition by locating other references to mental activity within character
speech.

In keeping the references to mental activity separate from character speech, the
narrator of Text 5 removes the onus of attributing cognition from the characters, placing
it, instead, upon himself. The following examples demonstrate:

C One day PecosBill (fell) was fight/ing with his brother/s because[A] they were
C Because[A] their mom and dad said that they have[O] to go west because[A]
there/are more[G] neighbor/s come/ing and they were so[G] crowded.
C So[A] now they had[O] to move west and they were so[G] bored that they
start/ed to fight.
C And then threw the thing on his back because[A] the thing was jealous that he
got beat.
C <And> then (he) he walk/ed away because[A] he was (um um) jealous that he
got beat like the snake.

C And then (they) they thought that they should (be m*) get married.
C And so[A] they got married.

In each of the above cases, mental activity is cited as the motivation for a physical act.

However, unlike the previous examples from the high-scoring 2nd grade texts, references
to mental activity are generally not embedded in character speech. Instead (and
invariably), the narrator uses a causal construction with each mention of mental activity.

The use of causal connectives makes the link between mental activity and "real world"
events explicit, binding the occurrence of cognition with concrete effects in the tangible
realm. Having transferred accountability away from the characters to himself, the
narrator appears to be using overt linguistic links to resulting events to reinforce his own
third-party assessment/reconstruction. In some cases, this pattern is even retained in
constructions which embed references to mental activity in character speech (Text 5):

C Because[A] their mom and dad said that they have[O] to go west because[A]
there/re more[G] neighbor/s come/ing and they were so[G] crowded.
C So[A] now they had[O] to move west and they were so[G] bored that they
start/ed to fight.

C And (um on) the coyote said in his language that ooh he must[O] be one of my
people because[A] <> that mean/3s hello.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And so[A] he {C nods head} took him by his neck and brought him to his
home.

C And he said [V] well I gotta[O] go meet these people <> they sound
like[H] my people.
E <> {E laughs}.
C And so[A] he jump/ed on the horse before anybody could say [V] yeehaw[L]
<> and start/ed to go.
The pattern of placing references to mental activity in causal constructions is not unique to the narrator of Text 5. Rather, this pattern is common throughout the 4th grade texts (both high and low scoring). Note the following analogous examples from Text A, produced by 4th grade subject 4fd3 (English speaking female, 9 yrs., 7 mos., Score = 5.00):

26 C (And um) and then all the other brother/s and sister/s were fight/ing and
27 fight/ing so[A] they did/n't[N] notice (that some*) that someone[M] or
28 something[M] was miss/ing.

37 C And sure enough (the coyote um) the coyote knew that he was (like) say/ing
38 glad to meet you!
39 C So[A] he {C lifts up with right hand} pick/ed him up and went back to his den.

66 C First time in his life he realize/ed that he did/n't[N] have a tail.
67 C And so[A] he went with the cowpoke to become a cowboy.

111 C And then the mountain lion was really[G] embaress/ed <and> PecosBill felt
112 sorry for it.
113 E <Uhhuh>.
114 C So[A] he {C makes jumping motion with hand} jump/ed on top of him and
115 they went along the trail.

132 C [V] {C flings hand out to side} I don't[N] want to interrupt your dinner so[A]
133 keep on eat/ing.

While the use of causal connectives is not completely absent from the 2nd grade texts, it is far more common for these younger narrators to leave the connection between the mental and the physical implicit. A brief review of the examples in Section 4.1.1, which were taken from the 2nd grade Text 2, demonstrates this fact. In these excerpts, references to mental activity are placed adjacent to mentions of physical acts. In the given context, it is easy to infer that the events described are to be understood as resulting from the mental activity. As the Text 2 examples demonstrate, the 2nd grade
narrators, unlike the 4th grade narrators, are not compelled to make the connection between the mental and the physical explicit through the use of causal connectives. For the 4th graders, references to mental activity, when employed, are still intended to motivate (give a reason for) the occurrence of the events of the narrative. What seems to have changed (as illustrated below in detail) is the way the 4th graders view their role as narrator. It is the 4th graders' differing perspective on their function as narrators which renders mentions of characters' internal (mental) motivations less central in reconstructing the narrative.

Children's tendency to employ causal constructions in conjunction with references to cognition has been observed in other research. McCabe and Peterson (1985) conducted a detailed study of the "naturalistic production of causal connectives by children," finding that the majority (81%) of children's semantically correct uses of causal constructions encode "psychological causality," as illustrated above. The concerted effort that the older narrators make in establishing the link between the mental and the physical can be explained in terms of their psychological development. Briefly, at this stage in their development, children are more concerned with working out the "human meaning" of experiences than they are with understanding the physical relationships among objects. Detailed discussion of this position is reserved for Chapter 5 (see also, McCabe and Peterson 1985). At present, the point of note is that the role of "interpreter of experience/information" places the 4th grade narrators in a position of both

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40 "Psychological causality" is defined as "the relation of motive for action with a consequence" (Piaget 1928/1972, p. 7).
authority and distance from the text. Unlike the 2nd grade narrators, who seem to immerse themselves within the text through recreating the perspectives/roles of multiple characters and then allowing those characters to present their own perspectives by embedding references to cognition within speech, the 4th grade narrators are more concerned with building their own interpretation of the text—albeit one which precisely mirrors the referential facts and is “correct.” Essentially, the 4th graders interpret their task as that of becoming an “omniscient narrator.” This approach situates them in a position of accountability that is largely absent from the 2nd grade re-tellings, and that places the onus of explanation (motivation) not upon the characters, but upon the narrator. A resulting artifact of this stance is that the text itself becomes an object in its own right. As “omniscient narrators” the 4th graders view their re-telling of the story as the reconstruction of an external entity—of a “thing” which exists, in a unique and proper form, external to and separate from the narrator who recreates it. Simply stated, the 2nd graders busy themselves with the recreation of the characters, while the 4th graders are concerned with the recreation of the text (Davis 2000). Seen in this light, it easy to understand why the use of references to the mental activity of the characters does not play as central a role in the 4th grade texts, as well as why, when such references do occur, they are often found in causal constructions that explicitly bind them with a physical result (essentially “verifying” the narrator’s explanation of cause).

41 The 4th graders’ seeming concern with correctness/precision is likely another reflection of their level of cognitive/psychological maturity. That is, they have reached the stage where the concept of individual meaning is important. Yet, having just entered that stage, they have not refined their understanding to the point of realizing that individual interpretations may differ—that there is not necessarily a single, “correct” interpretation.
4.6.2 Narrative-External References in 4th Grade Texts

Further support for the hypothesis that the 4th graders approach the task of the re-tellings as omniscient narrators attempting to reconstruct a unique, external object is found in their frequent tendency to include “narrative-external” comments, and, in some instances, to defer to a “text-external” third party (meaning not one of the characters in the narrative) as the source of the information related. As noted above in Text 2, 2nd grade narrators do occasionally make seemingly tangential comments when reconstructing the text. The function of these asides varied slightly from one instance to the next—some expressed the narrator’s subjective judgement of the events, some reflected the narrator’s own processing in attempting to reconstruct the text, etc. The majority of these “extra-textual” comments served the purpose of creating connectivity within the narrative in that they helped the listener both follow and interpret the information presented. Among the 4th grade narrators, the use of such comments is much more frequent, and plays a critical role in the 4th graders’ re-tellings. The first two examples are from Text 5:

Text 5:

46 C People say he walk/ed for a hundred miles and then met a snake.
91 C (And the* and then um) and then um>
92 ; 0:04
93 C I FORGOT WHAT HAPPEN/ed
94 C After they drought/ed THEn[M] the cyclone came!

In line 46, the narrator eschews accountability for the authenticity of the reported events by placing responsibility for the report of their occurrence on a third-person other—
“people.” This type of utterance is surprisingly frequent in the 4th grade narratives, and plays a vital role in the given context. Approaching the re-telling as omniscient narrators, the 4th graders construct utterances such as that of line 46 in an effort to communicate those points at which they are not comfortable taking on that role. In the case of tall tales (such as “Pecos Bill”) these utterances are often used to communicate information which appears exaggerated and/or far-fetched. (The text itself uses this device in the concluding lines, which report that Pecos Bill and Slew Foot Sue are currently living on the moon...!) Earlier research (see, e.g., O’Reilly Landry, et. al. 1982, and Shiro 1997) has noted that at approximately 9 years of age, children begin to demonstrate sensitivity to violations of social and psychological reality as well as other issues associated with plausibility in narrative texts. This is demonstrated by the 4th grade narrators who, having taken an authoritative stance in reconstructing the texts, do not wish to weaken their role by being held accountable for the sort of “questionable” information which is so often the stuff of tall tales. At the same time, they feel obligated to include such information since they approach the task of re-telling the story as the precise reconstruction of an independent object (the text)—which brings us to the next point, illustrated in the second example.

Lines 91-94 illustrate another frequently occurring type of comment found within the 4th grade narratives. That is, 4th grade narrators are extremely careful to point out to their listener where and when they have made a mistake, left out details which were included in the original, etc. In this example, the narrator abandons his utterance in line 91. This is followed by a 4 second pause in line 92. In line 93, the narrator directly
states that he has “forgotten” what happened next. In line 94, he corrects his own error, emphatically pronouncing the word “then” to indicate that he presented the events of the narrative in reverse order. Though 2nd graders occasionally draw limited attention to such gaps (as demonstrated in line 106 of Text 2), their tendency to continue through/in the face of their own errors and omissions is so strong that it sometimes causes one to question whether they themselves are aware of the gaps (see, e.g., Text E, located in Appendix B). 4th grade narrators are much more consistent in monitoring their re-tellings. Perhaps their presentation of the text to a listener whom they know is familiar with the original places the 4th grade narrators under added pressure to admit to their own mistakes. In any case, their efforts towards precision support the theory that the 4th graders approach the task of reconstructing the texts in a manner which differs greatly from that of the 2nd grade narrators. As noted above, the 4th graders’ primary concern seems to be that of reconstructing that unique entity which is “the” text.

The additional examples which follow were culled from the indicated texts, and present further evidence (SMALL CAPS, SHADED portions) of the use of extra-textual comments to both eschew accountability and to indicate gaps/errors in the re-telling:

Text B (Subj. 4mr7, Bilingual Male, 9 yrs., 1 mos., Score = 4.00*)

14 C And so *then came (um) [[THINK[H]] IT WAS a varmint, SOMETHING LIKE[H]
15 THAT.]

30 C And then (he tol*) he ask/ed him what he was, <> and he said he had a tail
31 (that every thi*), ALL THE DETAIL'S ABOUT HIM.

34 C (And that he had) and he was (a a varmint, some* um) a bear, SOMETHING
35 LIKE[H] THAT.
C {C repeatedly hits left hand with right fist} and so[\(A\)] he learn/ed and learn/ed
and, {C makes circular motion with right hand} (you know) hop/ing around (like
a) like a dog <SOMETHING LIKE[H] THAT>.

C (And one) and (one) one day (he was) he was eat/ing (some*) SOMETHING, (like
a f* like) SOME[H] friend <> (he saw) he heard (you know) howl/ing like (you
know) weird cowboy/s.

C And he got there and all of them (were) were (this) the sniff/ing AND
EVERYTHING [EU].

AND PAST EVERYTHING and they got married.

Text A (Subj. 4fd3. English speaking female, 9 yrs., 7 mos., Score = 5.00)

C And he had such[G] a good time with the coyote/s all run/ing around naked[M]
<AND {C SMILES} ALL THAT>.

C And PEOPLE exaggerate/ed that it was as long as the equator <but> OTHER/S
argue/ed that it was just[G] two feet shorter.
E <Ah>.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C WHICH IS {C WAVES HAND} REALLY[G] NOT[N] THAT REAL.
E {E laughs} ok.
C {C smiles} IT'S IMPOSSIBLE[N]!

Text C (Subj. 4fd7. English speaking female, 9 yrs., 3 mos., Score = 3.50)

C He said (um um uh) go away (you) you>
C (I can ma* I can make s*) I CAN PUT SOMETHING IN.
E Ok.
C YOU MICHAEL JACKSON WANT TO BE <BULLDOG> {C laughs}.

C (A ten) YEAH I THINK[H] a ten foot man came out say/ing [V] I'm the boss,
but you can[H] be boss now.

Text D (Subj. 4fj2. English speaking female, 9 yrs., 3 mos., Score = 3.00*)

C Ok, he was very[G] crazy {C nods}.
The preceding examples are just a few of those from throughout the sample which illustrate the extent to which the 4th grade narrators approach the task of the re-tellings as omniscient outsiders, attempting to meticulously recreate the unique object that is the text, while at the same time maintaining their own credibility as an information source. One final example demonstrates the most extreme case from the 4th grade sample. In Text 10, which ranks in the best category with a score of 4.50*, the narrator provides an accurate and detailed re-telling, but is so ill at ease with accepting accountability that he continually refers to a (intentionally) vague third-person “they” as the source of the information reported. Through repeated deference to “they” and the use of several external comments, this narrator achieves a separation between himself and the narrative which is unparalleled throughout the sample (Subj. 4mj2, Bilingual male, 9 yrs., 5 mos., Score = 4.50*):

Note that the majority of the bolded comments in the above examples work towards the creation of connectivity in a manner similar to the previously examined evaluative forms—that is, they present the narrator’s perspective (uncertainty, disbelief, etc.) on the reported events, and in so doing, aid the listener in following/connecting the events of the narrative.
C First (he start*) THEY told about him, a wolf told the beginning (then Pec*).
then THEY talk/ed about his family when he was a baby.
C Then after (he talk/ed about) THEY talk/ed about his family <$> (they s*) THEY
told the story.
E <Uhhuh>.
C First (they these um) the family said that it was too crowded.
E Uhhuh.
C So[A] they move/ed out.
C And then, it was so[G] dry and hot <$> that the kid/s start/ed fight/ing.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C And then before they turn/ed each other into catfish (beat) <bait> (they)
PecosBill fell out.
E <$E$ laughs>.
E Uhhuh.
C Then after he fell out, a wolf came over him.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> and sniff/ed him.
E Uhhuh.
C (Then) then PecosBill said googoo.
E {$E$ laughs}.
C A way of say/ing how you do/ing in coyote language!
E Uhhuh.
C I NEVER KNEW THAT.
E {$E$ laughs}.
C (But) and then after he said googoo then he took him to (this den) <$> his den.
E <Uhhuh>.
C Then {C shakes head no} THEY said that that was the meanest family he ever
seen.
E Uhhuh.
C And then one day he was chase/ing (uh) a little scorpion OR SOMETHING.
E Uhhuh.
C (Then) then he came up to a cowpoke.
E Uhhuh.
C And then after (the cow) the cowpoked[EW:cowpoke] ask/ed what are you?
E Uhhuh.
C Then he said (s* wha*)>
C Since[A] he has/n't used his human voice for seventeen year/s.
E Uhhuh.
C So[A] he said he was a varmint[M].
E Uhhuh.
C (But and then) then he said (you are) what do you have that a varmint has?
E Uhhuh.
C Then he said [V] flea/s.
E {E laughs}.
C And then he say/3s (everybody h*) almost every Texan has flea/s.
E Uhhuh> C So[A] he said he has[EW:had] a tail[M].
E Uhhuh.
C And after he (s*) said that he had a tail, the cowpoke ask/ed him [V] let me
see it.
C Then he turn/ed around and figure/ed out for seventeen year/s that he did/n't
have a tail!
E {E laughs} uhhuh.
C So[A] he turn/ed into a cowboy!
E Uhhuh.
C (And then) so after he turn/ed into a cowboy, he heard story/s about this gang
<> the Hell/zGateGang.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (Then and then they then he) then they heard all kind/s of negative thing/s
about them.
E Uhhuh.
C And then after that (they) he went to go check them out.
E Uhhuh.
C His animal/s got hurt.
E Yeah.
C First there was the horse <> that broke his ankle then a snake try/ed to attack
him.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C He wrap/ed him around his arm <> by knock/ing him crosseyed.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C And then, they came up to a bobcat {C looks unsure} <> OR SOMETHING LIKE
THAT.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And then *it try/ed to jump on him.
E Uhhuh.
C Then he call/ed him a fleabag <OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT>.
E <{E laughs} uhhuh>.
C And (then) then he jump/ed on his back.
E Uhhuh.
C And (after he jump/ed on his back um) after he jump/ed on his back they all
start/ed do/ing their noise.
E Uhhuh.
C (F*) by the horse do/ing it's {C puts out right hand, palm up} YOU KNOW <> and then the snake with it's and>
E <Yeah>.
C *It went like {C shakes finger & makes rattling sound}.
E Uhhuh.
C (Then and uh) and the bobcat roar/ing.
E Uhhuh.
C And PecosBill scream/ing [V] yeehaw!
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C And (after he start/ed they he hear*) the Hell/zGateGang heard those noise/s.
C Then they came out with their six gun/s.
E Uhhuh.
C Then a large man, nine feet with ten pistol/s <> OR NINE[M] around them, he said>
E <Uhhuh>.
C And then, PecosBill ask/ed who/s in charge?
E Uhhuh.
C Then the nine foot guy say/3s, in a scared voice <> that he/s in charge now.
E <Uhhuh>.
C Uhhuh.
C (And then first) then (he would) he raise/ed a horse.
E Uhhuh.
C A bronco.
E Uhhuh.
C Then (he) all he raise/ed it on was dynamite <> and I DON'T REMEMBER THE OTHER ONE but>
E <Uhhuh>.
C And then they were go/ing through the (s*) the forest <OR SOMETHING>.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (They w*) he saw a girl <> on top of a fish.
E <Uhhuh>.
C Uhhuh.
C And (then) then they met each other!
E Uhhuh.
C (Then) then he try/ed to find her cabin.
E Uhhuh.
C (They f*) they[EW:he] found it.
C They start/ed howl/ing at the moon.
E Uhhuh.
C And then after (sh*) they start/ed howl/ing at the moon, THEY said they wanted to get marry/ed.
E Uhhuh.
C Then after that they got marry/ed and then she want/ed to get on the bronco.

E Uhhuh.

C And PecosBill try/ed to stop her but she would/n't.

E (E laughs) yeah.

C And then she got on it and she hit it as hard as she can.

E Uhhuh.

C Then after that (um) she flew in the sky.

E Uhhuh.

C Over the moon.

E Uhhuh.

C Then came back down and bounce/ed from the heaven/s (t*) to Earth.

E Uhhuh.

C Then up and down and up and down.

C Then PecosBill got his (eq*) long equator rope.

E Uhhuh.

C Which people think is two feet shorter.

E Uhhuh.

C Then he threw it and then (got) lasso/ed her.

E Uhhuh.

C Then they both flew in the sky.

E Uhhuh.

C Then after they both flew in the sky (they they) they told about the last thing (like) if you hear something in the dark that's PecosBill/z (fa*) <family>.

E <Uhhuh>.

C Or[M] it could be[H] (bo*) PecosBill and (Sue*) SlewFootSue howling on[M]

the moon but not at the moon anymore.

C That's it.

E Great!

***

To review the findings thus far, the 4th grade narrators approach the task of reconstructing narratives quite differently than the 2nd grade narrators. The most successful 2nd grade narrators immerse themselves within the narrative, recreating multiple characters as they relate the events of the text. The 4th grade narrators, on the other hand, remain outside the narrative, acting as omniscient informants who attentively monitor the precision of their re-telling, with a primary goal of precisely recreating the
text. As a result, the definition of what makes a narrative “successful” for a 4th grader differs somewhat from that which was outlined above as creating “success” for a 2nd grader. For 4th graders, references to mental activity and character speech are still found within the texts. These two features, however, need not occur in consort as they did in the high-scoring 2nd grade texts. Rather, the 4th grade narrators tend to separate the two, and in so doing, create a type of explicit personal accountability that is absent from the younger sample, and that renders references to the mental activity of the characters less central, and therefore less frequent.

While references to mental activity are less frequent in the 4th grade narratives, references to character speech occur with the same frequency as in the successful 2nd grade texts. Though the older narrators have taken the responsibility for attributing motivation upon themselves, they still recognize the powerful, affective role that the use of quoted speech may play in relating the events of the story.

The 4th graders’ authoritative, exacting approach (as well as their periodic discomfort with this method) is reflected in their need to reinforce their assertions by explicitly linking the mental with the physical, by their numerous inserted comments, and by their occasional reliance on a third-person “other” as an information source. Often evaluative in nature, the 4th graders’ “extra-textual” comments offer glimpses into the narrators’ personal perspectives, while also helping to guide the listener through the re-telling by serving as “guideposts” which indicate the manner in which the presented information is to be understood.
4.6.3 Lower Scoring 4th Grade Texts

In concluding the analysis of the 4th grade data, we now turn our attention to some of the lower scoring 4th grade narratives. Compare the following three texts, which are arranged in descending order by score:

Text 11

Subj. ID: 4mj5  Sex: Male
Age: 9 yrs., 1 mos.  Lang.: English
Score: 3.00

7 C (Um) he was (like) a guy (um who's um who's like um) was really[G] strong.
8 E Uhhuh.
9 C And (um) when he was a baby he always play/ed with bear/s.
10 E Uhhuh.
11 C And (um) one day (the) these neighbor/s were move/ing in so[A] they move/ed away.
12 E Uhhuh.
13 C Except he fell out of the truck.
14 E Uhhuh  {E laughs}.
15 C {C smiles} (and then um) and (um) he met some[G] coyote/s.
16 E Uhhuh.
17 C (And um) and then this man came and he ask/ed what are you AND STUFF.
18 E Uhhuh.
19 C And (um) he kept on say/ing %vermint.
20 = E turns and reminds others in the room to be quiet.
21 C And (um) when (um) he said that he has a tail (um) for the first time (he did/n't) he realize/ed that he did/n't[N].
22 E Uhhuh.
23 C (And then um) and then that man told him about (like these three sk* like) these three guy/s that were really[G] strong.
24 E Uhhuh.
25 C (And then on) and then he went (um) on his way there [EU].
26 C And (um) on his way there he saw this snake.
27 C And (um) he kept on (say/ing) tell/ing the (um) snake not[N] to attack him.
28 E Uhhuh.
C And um) and then he (like) beat the snake.
E Uhhuh {C laughs}.
C And then (um) also on his way (um) he (um) met this lion and he call/ed it a
(um) mangy something fleabag {C smiles}.
E Uhhuh.
C And (um when he um when he um) he jump/ed on him he made[O] the lion say
uncle.
E Uhhuh.
C (And um) and when they finally got there (um they were um) the three men they
were (like) all scare/ed of him because[A] he was carry/ing a horse.
E Uhhuh.
C (And um) and then (um) he went back to his home I think[H].
E Uhhuh.
C And (um) on his way he saw this woman name/ed SueFootSue.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (When) and Sue was ride/ing the biggest catfish he ever saw.
E Uhhuh.
C (And then um and then um when um) and then they had a wedding.
E Uhhuh.
C And when (um) Sue want/ed to ride on the bronco he kept on try/ing to talk her
out of it.
C But (um) Sue went on the (uh) horse and he kick/ed her to the moon.
E Uhhuh.
C (And um) and (when um when) when he try/ed to lasso her back <> (he um)
instead[N] of bring/ing her back (um) he went (um) fly/ing into space.
E Uhhuh.
C So[A] that when you hear him howl/ing that's just[G] him howl/ing (at the m*)
{C shakes head no} I mean on the moon instead[N] of at the moon.
E Awesome!

Text 12

Subj. ID: 4fr7 Sex: Female
Age: 9 yrs., 11 mos. Lang.: Bilingual
Score: 2.67

C There was a family <> that was move/ing west <because[A]> they thought that
the place where they live/ed was get/ing too crowded.
E <Uhhuh>.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhuh.
C And on their way (um) PecosBill/z (um) borther/s and sister/s were all fight/ing
AND ALL THAT.
E Right.
C He accidently {C puts right hand out to the side palm up, as if falling} fell out
of the (um) <car>.
E <Uhuh>.
C And (um um) a pack of wolve/s pick/ed him up and raise/ed him.
E Uhuh.
C And one day a cowpoke <-> (um) saw him and (um um) PecosBill (um) found
out that he was really a human.
E <Uhuh>.
E Uhuh {E laughs}.
C So[A] (um) the cowpoke took him over with him and (um) PecosBill met this
girl name/ed (Slew*) SueFootSue.
E Uhuh {E laughs}.
C And (um) she knew a little[G] bit of wolf too.
E Uhuh.
C And at the end they got married.
E Uhuh.
C And THEY say that {C points up & out with right thumb} they got stuck on
the moon <-> (um) because[A] of PecosBill/z horse I THINK[I].
E <Uhuh>.
E Uhuh.
C She {C makes a point with right index finger} decide/ed to ride him {C nods
affirmatively and makes continue motion with right hand}.
E Yeah.
C And (she) he got excited and threw her on the moon.
C And PecosBill try/ed to get her with his lasso.
E Uhuh.
C And he accidently went with her too.
E Uhuh.
C (Um) THEY say that they/re stuck on the moon and they always keep
howling with their kid/s AND ALL THAT.
E Uhuh.
C And {C waves left hand} that/s it.
E That was great!
Text 13

Subj. ID: 4mj4
Sex: Male
Age: 9 yrs., 10 mos.
Lang.: English
Score: 1.00

7 C (Like) he was naked.
8 E Ok.
9 C And (he) he thought he was (a coy*) a coyote but {C shakes head no and
10 laughs}.
11 E {E laughs} uhhuh.
12 C But when his father came <> (he s* he) his father told him that he was/n't[N]
13 (no) no[N] coyote.
14 E <Uhhuh>.
15 E Uhhuh.
16 C And then he just[G] start/ed to remember that he/s not[N] no[N] coyote.
17 E Uhhuh.
18 C And then, when he went (to the um) with his dad <> he got on he just[G]
19 start/ed dress/ing like[H] a wet dog.
20 E <Uhhuh>.
21 E {E laughs}.
22 C Alright, and :04 I DON'T[N] HAVE NO[EW:ANY][N] MORE.
23 E And that/s it?
24 C Yeah.
25 E <Ok>.
26 C <THAT/S ALL> I HAVE {C POINTS TO SELF} IN MINE.
27 E Well that/s okay!

Moving through Texts 11-13, one may note certain similarities to the high-scoring
4th grade narratives. The separation of references to character speech and mental
activity, and the numerous external comments on the part of the narrators again support
the hypothesis that even the lower-scoring 4th graders approach the task of the re-telling
as omniscient narrators seeking to deliver a precise reconstruction. In contrast to the
high-scoring texts, however, notable differences in the use of character speech seem to
parallel the decreases in the scores.
In Text 11, which scores in the lower-end of the adequate range, the percentage of use of character speech was similar to that of the higher-scoring texts. The narrator, however, does not favor direct speech to the extent demonstrated in the higher-scoring texts. Rather, his references to speech are more frequently of the indirect and free varieties. As noted above, these references do not necessarily require a great deal of perspective taking work on the part of the narrator, and, in extreme cases, may do little more than report the occurrence of the event of speech. In Text 11, speech references are distributed throughout the text, and help the listener to move through the events of the narrative. The forms in which they occur, however, render their use slightly less vivid, less efficacious, than the use of direct forms in the higher-scoring texts.

Text 12 scores in the marginal range with a 2.67. Though the basic facts of the story are communicated, there are some structural difficulties within the text that probably account, in part, for its low score. In addition, the narrator of this text only employs two instances of character speech. In line 25-26, the narrator adapts the closing lines of the actual text, using the third-person “they” as the source of the information reported through indirect speech. In the next several lines, the narrator backtracks, attempting to account for the information reported in lines 25-26. She then repeats the information in lines 37-38, again using indirect speech and the third-person “they.”

Text 13, scoring at the bottom of the poor category with a 1.00, is exceedingly deficient on a number of levels. Not only does the narrator stop short of completing the
narrative, those events which he does report are confusing and inaccurate. In cutting
the narrative short, the narrator comments:

20 C <That's all> I have {C points to self} in mine.

As this remark reveals, the narrator is aware that the narrative he has produced does not
match that of the text. Like the more skilled narrators, the narrator of Text 13 perceives
the text as an independently existing entity. Unable to reconstruct it in its original form,
he attempts to dismiss his lack of skill by stating that what he has presented is his own
(read: a different) version. Like Text 12, Text 13 makes minimal use of character
speech. Only one instance of indirect speech occurs in lines 6-7.

Regarding references to mental activity, there appears to be little difference
between the various texts. At all skill levels, references to mental activity are used in
anywhere from twenty to forty percent of the total utterances. The type of references
which are employed also evidence little variance among the skill groups. As
demonstrated in relation to the higher-scoring texts, cognitive verbs, and mentions of
emotions, intention, etc. are distributed throughout the narratives. As discussed above in
relation to the higher-scoring 4th grade narratives, references to the mental activity of the

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43 The goal of this research was not to test the accuracy of the children’s recall, but rather, to assess their skill
at relating the narrative. However, the necessity of employing the same adult rater for multiple subjects
made this factor difficult to avoid—especially in extreme cases such as Text 13, where the errors were both
noticeable and frequent. Having become familiar with the text through listening to multiple re-tellings, the
adult narrators could not help but recognize the deficiencies of narratives such as Text 13. Consequently, in
the most extreme cases, accuracy becomes a factor in the adults’ assessments of skill. As one narrator
comments with regard to Text 13, “What version did he read?”

44 Several of the lower-scoring 4th grade narrators made similar excuses for their “versions” of the narrative—a
fact which corresponds with their perspective on the present task.
characters do not play as central a role for the 4th graders as for the 2nd graders, likely due to their interpretation of their own role as that of omniscient narrators/interpreters of information.

It is notable that while the use of references to mental activity did not display a great deal of variance among the skill groups, the use of character speech does evidence variation in both form and frequency in correspondence with the skill ratings. As scores among the 4th grade sample decreased, the use of character speech declined in frequency and moved away from direct toward indirect and free forms. Clearly, the scores received by the texts in the lower half of the 4th grade sample cannot be attributed to the narrators’ use (or lack thereof) of references to character speech. The texts rated as marginal and poor evidence numerous deficiencies which are certainly a factor the adult raters’ perception of skill. However, it is worthy of mention that the decreases in scores are paralleled by changes in the form and frequency of speech references.

4.7 Summary of Qualitative Findings

Thus far, the findings of the qualitative analyses indicate that, for 4th graders, the task of re-telling the narrative is approached as an omniscient narrator whose focus is to reconstruct “the” text. Regardless of perceived skill, the 4th grade narrators’ 3rd person approach to the re-telling task is reflected in their separation of mental activity from character speech, in their use of causal constructions linking the mental and physical realms, and in their frequent narrative external remarks. For the 4th grade narrators rated as most skilled, the defining traits are narratives that are not only structurally sound, but
evidence more frequent and masterful use of (direct) character speech.

For the 2nd graders, the re-telling, in its most successful attempts, is structurally sufficient, and is an immersion of the self within the text through the recreation of the characters. In the most successful narratives, references to the mental activity of the characters are often embedded within character speech. As perceived skill scores decline, these two features are used separately from one another, and begin to diminish in frequency. In the section which follows, quantitative analyses are undertaken in an effort to further examine the sample.

4.8 Quantitative Analyses

In the second round of quantitative analyses, the goals were:

1) To explore whether the factors discussed above (references to mental activity and character speech) evidence any significant relationship to the outcome (the received scores).

2) To determine whether the two features identified as qualitatively significant are quantitatively distinguishable from one another, and from the initial seven features examined in the preceding chapter.

To answer these goals, a stepwise regression analysis was performed using SPSS. This type of analysis is highly sample specific, and its results, therefore, experience limited transferability to different sample populations.\textsuperscript{45} In the given setting, however, regression analysis allows us to construct a model of the data (a regression equation) that

\textsuperscript{45} The automatic computational procedures used in building this type of model can capitalize on chance differences within the data, resulting in models which are highly sample-specific (see Howell 1997, 1999 for discussion).
best predicts the criterion variable for the given population by analyzing the relationship between a set of independent variables (the evaluative forms) and a dependent variable (the narratives’ overall scores). The resulting regression equation displays that combination of independent variables that best predicts the dependent variable, and also determines how much the variables in each step contribute to the prediction. The results of the regression analysis for the 2nd grade were as follows.46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Indep. Vars. Entered In Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Causal, Comp., Emph., Grat., Hedge, Length, Neg.</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.288</td>
<td>7/49</td>
<td>3.837*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>add Mental Activity in Character Speech</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>.407</td>
<td>8/49</td>
<td>5.201**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.003
**p<.000

TABLE 10 – Summary of SPSS Stepwise Regression Analysis for Evaluative Forms to Predict Overall Narrative Scores – 2nd Grade Sample

Correlation matrices, etc. for both the 2nd and 4th grade samples are located in Appendix C.
The regression analysis of the 2nd grade data confirmed the qualitative findings that the use of references to mental activity embedded in character speech is the central feature in determining the success of the 2nd grade narratives. For this portion of the sample, SPSS grouped the original seven features in the initial step of the analysis. As a group, these seven features have a coefficient of determination (the $R^2$ value) of .390 (or we may take the more conservative estimate of the adjusted $R^2 = .288$), which is significant at or above the .003 level with df = 7.49. What this essentially means is that, taking the initial seven features together, we can account for 39% (or, more conservatively, 28.8%) of the overall variance in the final scores. In the second step, SPSS adds in a single feature—the use of references to mental activity within character speech. The addition of this single factor within the second grade sample raises $R^2$ to .504 (or, more conservatively, to .407), which is significant at or above the .000 level with df = 8.49. That is, the use of references to mental activity within character speech single-handedly increases predictive power of the equation by .114 to 50.4% (or, more conservatively, by .119 to 40.7%) of the variance in the final scores accounted for.

In studies which examine human behavior in social settings, the ability to account for 25% of the total variance is generally accepted as having achieved a high level of success (see, e.g., Cohen 1988, Kellow 1998). In the 2nd grade sample, the features examined have been demonstrated to account for an exceptionally large portion of the variance within the results—just over 50% (or, by more conservative figures, just over

47 Stepwise criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter < .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove > .100 Once a variable has been entered or removed, its status in the model cannot be changed.
40%). In addition, the use of references to mental activity within character speech is the only variable within the sample which can be singled out to account for a significant portion (approximately 11%) of the variance by itself. These findings strongly support the qualitative analyses in which it was hypothesized that the use of evaluative forms in general contributes to the success of the narrative, and that references to mental activity within character speech was the distinguishing feature of those 2nd grade narrators ranked as most skilled by the adult raters.48

The results of the regression analysis for the 4th grade sample were as follows:

48 A brief examination of the correlation matrices in Appendix C reveals that the use references to mental activity within character speech is highly correlated with almost all of the other evaluative forms. While this may lead some to view references to cognition within speech as inseparable as a unitary factor, it can be argued that its single-handed ability to account for just over 11% of the final scores is enough to distinguish it as worthy of individual consideration. (The same argument can be made on behalf of character speech in the 4th grade sample, below.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Indep. Vars. Entered in Model</th>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Causal, Comp., Emph., Grat., Hedge, Length, Neg.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.637</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>7/47</td>
<td>3.907*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>add Character Speech</td>
<td></td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>8/47</td>
<td>4.961**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.002  
**p<.000

TABLE 11 – Summary of SPSS Stepwise Regression Analysis for Evaluative Forms to Predict Overall Narrative Scores – 4th Grade Sample

As with the 2nd grade sample, the regression analysis confirms the qualitative findings that, for the 4th grade, the use of character speech is the evaluative form which plays the most significant role in the perception of narrative skill. For the 4th graders, SPSS again grouped the original seven features in the initial step of the analysis. As a group, these seven features have a coefficient of determination (the R² value) of .406 (or we may take the more conservative estimate of the adjusted R² = .302), which is significant at or above the .002 level with df = 7,47. What this essentially means is that, taking the initial seven features together, we can account for 40.6% (or, more conservatively, 30.2%) of the variance among the final scores. In the second step, SPSS adds in a single feature—*the use of character speech*. The addition of this single factor within the
second grade sample raises $R^2$ to .504 (or, more conservatively, to .403), which is significant at or above the .000 level with $df = 8,47$. That is, the use of *character speech* single-handedly increases predictive power of the equation by .098 to 50.4% (or, more conservatively, by .101 to 40.3%) of the variance within the final scores accounted for.

In the 4th grade sample, the features examined have again been demonstrated to account for a remarkably large portion of the variance in the results—just over 50% (or, by more conservative figures, just over 40%). In addition, the use of *character speech* is the only variable within the sample which can be singled out to account for a significant portion (approximately 10%) of the variance by itself. These findings, once again, reinforce the conclusions of the qualitative analyses, in which it was hypothesized that the use of evaluative forms in general contributes to the success of the narrative, and that the use of *character speech* was the distinguishing evaluative feature of those 4th grade narrators ranked as most skilled by the adult raters.

For both the 2nd and 4th grade portions of the sample, the quantitative findings precisely mirror the qualitative conclusions. What neither of these analyses has revealed, however, is why the features of *character speech* and references to *mental activity* should play such a central role in the perception of skill by the adult raters. The opening section of Chapter 5 will explore this question.

### 4.9 Summary

Previous researchers have analyzed children’s use of evaluative forms, including the use of references to *mental activity* and *character speech*. What appears to have been
overlooked, however, is the pivotal role which these two features play in the perception of narrative skill.

The 2nd and 4th graders evidence different patterns of use regarding these two critical features—patterns which are reflective of their approach to the task of reconstructing the narrative. Among the most skilled 2nd graders, references to *mental activity* are often embedded within *character speech*. The use of the two features in this manner allows the 2nd graders to re-create the characters, and grants the characters of the narrative their own individual "voices," such that the characters *construe themselves* as rational agents performing motivated acts. In addition, this affords the younger narrators the chance to immerse themselves within the narratives/the characters, and the re-telling becomes, in a sense, an act of creation and of pretend play. Among the 4th graders, references to *mental activity* are generally separated from *character speech*. This fact (in combination with the use of other discourse devices such as causal constructions and text-external comments) places the 4th graders in a role of authority—in effect, they become omniscient narrators whose primary concern is the reconstruction of "the" text. For the 4th graders, the text is viewed as an independent entity that exists separately from the narrator, in a unique and proper form. They approach the re-telling as a task demanding a high level of precision, and as one for which they, as individuals, will be judged based on their performance. Because the 4th graders adopt this position of authority, the use of references to the *mental activity* of the characters does not play as important a role as it did in the 2nd grade narratives. However, the most skilled 4th grade narrators persist in making abundant and skillful use of *direct character speech*. Unlike
the 2nd graders’ narratives, the 4th graders’ re-tellings do not appear to be manifestations of pretend play, but rather, attempts to convey detailed data, as well as to create a positive impression of themselves as information sources.
5.0 Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

Several issues which arose in the analyses of the data merit further discussion. This chapter will address the following:

1) Can the importance of references to mental activity and character speech be explained? That is, why should these particular features play such a significant role in the perception of skill? Furthermore, what are the implications of their centrality?

2) What is the relationship between evaluation and other aspects of narrative? Furthermore, what is the connection between evaluation, affect, and perception of skill?

3) Having discovered certain age-related differences in the employment of the evaluative features, are other factors—such as language or gender—linked with differences in use?

4) Is there a relationship between the students’ performance on this task and other measures of academic success (e.g., standardized test scores and teacher grades)? What are the implications of the findings for curriculum, instruction, and assessment?

Section 5.1 addresses the issues raised in question 1. Queries 2-4 are discussed in Sections 5.2-5.4, respectively.

5.1 Interpreting the Findings

When analyzing language data, it is always difficult to provide concrete “proof” as to why one’s results have occurred. Our understanding of language as a product of cognition is the source of this difficulty. By its very nature, cognition can only be “observed” second-hand, through those behaviors which we presume to be its products. In this sense, the workings of cognition cannot be examined in the manner typical of
other types of "scientific inquiry," but can only be inferred. The seemingly intimate
bond between language and cognition justifies linguistic observations as a relatively
secure basis for the advancement of cognitive theories and explanations. However, the
closest thing to "proof" that one can achieve is admittedly (as in all fields of scientific
inquiry) high levels of stability among repeated observations. In the discussion which
follows, an explanation (an answer to the question, "Why?") for the present findings is
proposed, and parallels between the linguistic data and psychological theory are outlined
and examined. The manner in which the linguistic findings support particular
perspectives on cognitive development is discussed.

5.1.1 The Development of a "Theory of Mind"

At first glance, the use of references to mental activity and character speech
within the narratives may not appear to be particularly interesting. Generally speaking,
these references were employed clearly and correctly in connection with mundane
circumstances (given the anthropomorphic context of the fairytale realm). It is, however,
the narrators' very use of references to mental activity and character speech (which, as
discussed, implies mental activity) that reveal a crucial fact. By representing the events
of the narrative to be the result of the cogitation of the characters, the child narrators
clearly demonstrate that they possess (and believe others to possess) a "theory of
mind." As Perner (1988, p. 271) notes, "the idea that the social significance of human
interaction depends on the mental states of the interacting parties, in particular their
higher-order mental states" is not only prevalent, but "opens up understanding of a much
richer variety of social interactions because it allows understanding not only of a
particular person’s perception of a social situation but also of different persons’ concern
about each other’s mental states.”

The idea that individuals develop a “theory of mind” as a normal part of the
maturation process gained ascendancy in the work of the Swiss psychologist Piaget
(1929/1979). Briefly, possession of a “theory of mind” presumes the apprehension of a
fundamental distinction between two realms of reality: the tangible realm of perceived
objects and actions and the intangible realm of thoughts and emotions. In the process of
understanding the latter of the two, and in integrating it with the former, individuals are
said to develop a “theory of mind.” The implication for this context is that as children’s
understanding of the intangible mental realm becomes more refined, they become
increasingly adept at assessing what sorts of perspectives can be taken in what contexts,
as well as at determining what information needs to be made explicit in a given situation
in order to convey both relevance and coherence. That is, they become more skilled at
ascribing culturally condoned motivations/explanations to events/actions which occur.

Children’s development of a theory of mind has become a topic of particular
interest in contemporary psycholinguistic research. Under the prevailing paradigm,
metaknowledge of cognition is considered a prerequisite to the development of numerous
higher-level skills (cognitive, behavioral, linguistic, etc.) that are necessary for the full
participation of the individual in the social realm. Translation: the ability to “think about
thinking” allows us not only to reflect on and sometimes adjust our own perspectives and
behavior, but also to assess the perspectives of others. It is on the basis of such
judgements (e.g., I know that you know that..., I think that you think that I think..., etc.)
that we predict the actions of others, and even modify our own behaviors to attempt the
achievement of desired ends.

Psycholinguistic researchers analyze children’s language use in both manipulated and natural contexts, viewing it as a means of gaining insight into the path of cognitive development. Previous research (e.g., Stein and Albro 1997) has shown that children as young as two years of age have begun to understand and manipulate (through language and other behaviors) cognitive and emotional states, as well as the relationship between intentions and goal-directed actions. These early developments are only the beginning, however. Numerous studies have analyzed children’s understanding of second-order beliefs, their moral judgement of speech acts, etc., demonstrating that the development of the theory of the mind continues well into the late adolescent years and beyond (see, e.g., Chandler 1988, Hogrefe, et. al. 1986, Perner 1988, Perner and Wimmer 1985, Yuill and Perner 1987), with the steepest area of the development curve occurring between 5 and 7 years-of-age (Hogrefe, et. al. 1986, Perner and Wimmer 1985). A great variety of linguistic evidence has been used to demonstrate that children both possess and are capable of manipulating their “theories of mind” to varying degrees. In general, however, to show that child subjects are capable of manipulating mental states as part of a “theory of mind,” one must demonstrate that they can accomplish two things (Perner 1988, p. 273, citing Premack and Woodruff 1978, p. 515):

1) They can infer mental states from observable events.

2) They can use the inferred states to make predictions about behavior.
The narrators in this sample clearly and repeatedly demonstrate these two skills, as illustrated in the above analyses. In fact, both the younger and older narrators display a high level of competence regarding these abilities (see Section 5.1.2 below for a more detailed discussion of this point), which implies, from the perspective of psycholinguistic research, that they possess surprisingly well-developed "theories of mind."

The findings of psycholinguistic studies have been applied in a variety of fields, and are of obvious importance in the context at hand. In their attempts to interpret the information given (the texts), and then to reconstruct that information for their listener, the subjects of this study are drawing upon their own perspectives as well as those which they attribute to others. In the process, they are practicing the sort of cognitive and linguistic skills that are crucial in educational settings as well as in the interactions and exchanges of every-day life. Essentially, this explains why the use of references to mental activity and character speech play such a crucial role in the perception of skill.

Of all of the evaluative forms examined, these two most directly express the narrators' apprehension of that which the culture perceives as the driving force behind all "human" events—(rational) thought. References to mental activity and character speech (which implies mental activity) both work to create connectivity and to infuse the narratives with perspective—just like the initial seven evaluative forms examined. But since it is cognition which functions as the "default motivator," the "ubiquitous creator of connectivity" for the adult raters, the narrators' use of evaluative forms which imply mental activity are perhaps the most supportive—and narrators who employ them skillfully are thus perceived as the most skilled by the adult raters.
5.1.2 Level of Development of the Theory of Mind

While it is clear from earlier research that children begin to develop and/or understand a theory of mind at a very young age, their apprehension is often construed as extremely limited in nature until the late childhood or even mid-teenage years (see, e.g., Selman 1980). In the work of earlier researchers, the frequency and effectiveness with which children employ references to mental activities has been described in a manner that suggests that (especially younger) children’s use of this feature is not very sophisticated. According to Bamberg and Damrad-Frye’s (1991) findings, their youngest subjects’ (5 years-of-age) use of references to mental activity in spontaneously constructed picture-book narratives was restricted to the function of local coherence, and its presence appeared to be largely reliant on concrete contextual cues, such as a picture illustrating an identifiable emotion on the face of a character. For older subjects (9 years-of-age and adults) the use of references to frame of mind increased in frequency, was progressively less tied to immediate, concrete cues, and was used in reference to situations--where it functioned to integrate the various episodes within the narrative into increasingly complex hierarchical structures. As the data demonstrate, even the younger narrators in this sample are capable of using all of the evaluative forms (including references to mental activity) to create both local and global connectivity. Review, for example, the opening lines of Text 2 (Section 4.1.1, page 90). As these first 23 lines illustrate, this 2nd grade narrator uses evaluative forms to construct a vivid, coherent view of the central characters—one which is intended to guide the listener not only through the opening scene, but throughout the events of the entire narrative. In addition, she does not
evidence any reliance on concrete, contextual cues (such as pictures from the text—which she does comment on later in the re-telling) in reconstructing this segment of the text, although this was a strategy which Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991) found to be typical of younger narrators in their spontaneous picture-book narratives. The opening lines of Text 2 are just one example of the manner in which many of the narrators in this sample evidenced skills which were surprisingly advanced considering the findings of previous research.

Another study by whose standards the present subjects appear surprisingly adroit is that of Hill, et. al. (1997), which investigated the use of cognitive verbs (in particular, the verb forget). As the authors explain, the use of these verbs by child-subjects often proves particularly enlightening in that it is reflective of their conceptualization of the designated mental events (and thus, it is inferred, of the level of development of their theory of mind). Hill, et. al. (1997) introduce their investigation of children’s understanding of the cognitive verb forget with the following explanation (59):

Until the child has acquired the capacity to represent and reflect upon mental states, full understanding of cognitive verbs which denote these mental processes cannot be attained... Usage of forget to denote a mental state presumes the presence of prior knowledge or intention. In other words, one cannot forget something..., or forget to do something, unless one has consciously seen, become aware of, learnt, or intended to do it, in the past. Actual present performance, assuming there was prior knowledge or intention, reflects one’s state of mind: if performance is incorrect, one has forgotten, i.e. behavior has been guided by one’s mental state. To use these terms correctly, then, indicates a need for a theory of mind, i.e. the representational ability of reflecting on the prior and present knowledge/intentional state of oneself or another.

According to Hill, et. al.’s findings, young children do not consider the role of
prior knowledge when using the verb *forget*. Rather, they employ *forget* in
circumstances in which unfulfilled desires or states of not knowing (as opposed to a
failure to recall prior knowledge) are indicated. Even their oldest subjects, who were 8
years-of-age, were still refining their understanding of this cognitively complex verb.
The authors provide several possible explanations for these results, noting that even in
adult usage, the verb *forget* does not always indicate reference to a mental state.
Common expressions such as “Don’t forget to call/write/bring the ax” use *forget* to
emphasize the phrase which follows, rather than referring to an actual mental state.
Another example occurs in contexts where *forget* is used to express a regrettable end
state or unintentional failure in performance. For example, in the statement “I got a flat
on the way here, but I couldn’t fix it because I *forgot* my spare,” the use of the verb
*forget* is most likely interpreted as offering an explanation for an avoidable mishap rather
than indicating that one intended but did not remember to pack a spare tire. Hill, et. al.
find that like adult usage in certain contexts, children’s early use of cognitive verbs such
as *forget* is largely limited to conversational functions, rather than referencing actual
mental states (see also, Shatz, et. al. 1983). In addition, they note that most children’s
early references to mental states are either “volitional (‘I want it’), perceptual (‘It hurts’),
or physiological (‘I’m hungry’)” (58).

The data from this research do not support the above contentions that (especially
younger) children are relatively unskilled in their ability to reference *mental activity*
using complex, cognitive verbs (and thus, it is implied, possess a relatively undeveloped
theory of mind). Two illustrative examples of sophisticated use of references to *mental*
activity demonstrate this fact. The first case is taken from Text 2, which was produced by a 2nd grade subject (Subj. 2fg4, Bilingual female, 7 yrs., 5 mos., Score = 5.00):

136  C Then {C laughs} DoctorDeSoto said, oops[H], I forgot to tell you something
137  {C smiles & shrugs shoulders}!
138  C You may[H] have[O] to have your teeth open[EW:closed] for (two) one day
139  or two day/s.

The excerpt in lines 136-139 is interesting in that it demonstrates deceptive use of the cognitive verb forget by the 2nd grade narrator. Referring back to the text (p. 35), we find that the fox, having received the “special treatment” is unable to open his mouth. In response, Doctor DeSoto states (direct speech) in line 136 that he forgot to tell the fox something. Through her delivery of this statement, which is interrupted by an anticipatory giggle, and punctuated with a sardonic grin and shoulder shrug, the narrator clearly indicates that Doctor DeSoto’s use of the verb forget is insincere, as is the resulting hedged statement in which he informs the fox that he “may” not be able to open his mouth for a couple of days. In this example, the 7 year-old, 2nd grade narrator not only demonstrates her understanding of the complex cognitive verb forget, but also displays her ability to take multiple, external perspectives into account when she embeds the verb within character speech 49 (e.g., she knows that the fox does not know about the ruse, she knows that Doctor DeSoto is trying to deceive the fox, etc.). She also indicates through paralinguistic means that she is aware that Doctor DeSoto is not using the verb forget in the true sense of “a prior intention mistakenly neglected,” but rather, is only attempting to deceive the fox through his use of the term.

49 Recall that speech is, “by default,” indicative of the occurrence of mental activity.
attempting to deceive the fox through his use of the term.

A 2nd example of sophisticated usage—in the following excerpt from a re-telling of “Pecos Bill” (Osborne 1991), a 4th grade narrator uses references to cognition to explain to her listener how Pecos Bill came to include a mountain lion among his menagerie

(Text A, Subj. 4fd3, English-speaking female, 9 yrs., 7 mos., Score = 5.00):

105 C (And um) and then (the panth*) the mountain lion {C makes jumping motion
106 with right hand} pounce/ed on him.
107 C (And there was) and then PecosBill wrestle/ed <-> and there was {C tosses hand
108 to the side} so[G] much hair fly/ing everywhere that the sky turn/ed dark.
109 E <Uhhuh>.
110 E Uhhuh.
111 C And then the mountain lion was really[G] embaress/ed <and> PecosBill felt
112 sorry for it.
113 E <Uhhuh>.
114 C So[A] he {C makes jumping motion with hand} jump/ed on top of him and
115 they went along the trail.

In assembling this description of the events, the narrator accomplishes a third-order psychoanalysis of sorts. Her explanation involves: 1) the mountain lion’s mental state—embarrassed because Bill beat him 2) Pecos Bill’s frame of mind—sympathetic because he knew that the mountain lion was embarrassed 3) her own knowledge/perspective—she knows how Pecos Bill felt, and she knows that he felt that way because he knew how the mountain lion felt. By passing on her interpretation, which is built upon two additional, embedded viewpoints, the narrator guides her listener’s understanding of the characters and events (i.e., Pecos Bill is tough, but not unkind). Her references to the mental states of the characters evidence her ability not only to perceive others’ perspectives, but also her understanding of the fact that, in the
activities and eventually, the actions of others.

The two examples discussed above are representative of numerous others contained throughout the data which demonstrate that the young narrators in this sample not only comprehend the perspectives of others, but are capable of representing the full complexity of that understanding through language (making use of a full range of explicit and implicit means such as mentions of cognition, emotion, intention, speech, etc.—for further examples, readers are referred to the complete texts contained in Appendix B and to other examples of complete texts which are contained throughout the manuscript). In contrast to previous research, these data present a highly capable picture of many of the young narrators. Adopting the current paradigm, their demonstration of the use of advanced linguistic skills in both explicit and implicit reference to mental activity can be interpreted as illustrative of the relatively advanced nature of their theories of mind. The central question now shifts from why particular skills seem to play such a crucial role, to why so many of the subjects in this study have demonstrated such seemingly advanced understanding and usage of the pertinent features. It is proposed below that the answer to this question lies in how one approaches the path of cognitive development, and in the implications of said approach for managing assessment.

5.1.3 The Path of Cognitive Development

While there is little argument that the data from the sample support the hypothesis that the child narrators possess (and in the most successful cases make particular use of) a theory of mind, what is even more intriguing is that which the data
imply regarding the path of cognitive/psychological development. In attempting to draw parallels between theories of development and the linguistic skills demonstrated by the subjects from this sample, we will see below that the most widely accepted paradigm—the Piagetian model—does not fit the sample. Rather, a different approach to development—which essentially reverses the Piagetian paradigm—appears to find a much better fit with the present data.

The developmental perspective most widely embraced among modern practitioners is the Piagetian model. According to Piaget (1929/1979), children’s cognitive development invariably proceeds from the egocentric to the social. The purported proof of this fact is children’s inability to demonstrate perspective-taking in language and other types of behavior. Hence, from the Piagetian perspective, the process of maturation is largely the development of a “social self” capable of influencing and adjusting to its surroundings.

Piaget examined children’s language and other behaviors in both experimental and natural settings. His model for early development can be broken into three basic stages (Piaget 1929/1979):

**Stage I** — *Autism* = subconscious thought

**Stage II** — *Egocentrism* = thought which is solely about and directed towards oneself

**Stage III** — *Logic/Directed Thought* = thought about conscious aims which adapts to and endeavors to influence reality (including the thoughts and actions of others)

From his many experiments, Piaget concluded that the majority of preschool children’s
speech—a reflection of their cognition—was *egocentric*. According to his findings, during this stage, children talked only about themselves, taking no interest in their interlocutor—often to the extent that they did not even care if one was present. Presumably, they were not trying to communicate, and did not expect to be answered or even listened to. Even those small portions of social interaction which they managed to accomplish were consistently riddled with egocentric thinking. In the Piagetian model, *egocentrism* is the defining trait which unites all of childhood cognition, and is the result of children’s cognitive immaturity—their inability to adapt to/be influenced by the social realm which surrounds them. According to Piaget, it is not until nearly 8 years-of-age that children first begin to develop *logic/directed thought* (the ability to influence and be influenced by their surroundings), thus taking the first steps towards their development as social beings.

The data from this sample call the Piagetian model into question. Particularly apparent is the manner in which these data undermine the invariable directionality of the Piagetian perspective by suggesting a reversal of the developmental paradigm. The linguistic evidence offered by the child subjects in this sample demonstrates the ability to attend to, manage, and satisfy the needs of multiple perspectives. Even among the youngest narrators—who, according to Piaget, are just at the cusp of directed thought—high levels of skill are demonstrated with respect to the ability to recognize and adapt to the needs of both the characters and the listener. As described, the most successful younger narrators display the tendency to “immerse themselves within the text,” often pretending to become multiple characters throughout the task of the re-
telling. As illustrated in the present analysis, it is difficult to view their conduct as other than a "social" act (simultaneously directed at both the "external world" of their adult listener, and the "internal world" of the text and it's characters). Unfortunately, various renditions of Piagetian psychology seem to have become so firmly ingrained that the majority of researchers still interpret children's behavior on a mainly egocentric basis. Bamberg and Damrad-Frye (1991, p.694) for example, note the frequent use of references to character speech among even their youngest narrators (5 years-of-age), but describe said use as a "distancing device" through which narrators separate themselves from the plot line of the narrative by attributing "particular intentional states" to a third party. Such approaches hardly appear tenable in light of the data examined here.\(^{50}\)

In conjunction with the "precocious presence" of social thought/behavior, there also appears to be a surprising tendency (from the Piagetian perspective, anyway) among the older narrators to establish their individuality by differentiating themselves from the narratives and their characters through the means previously discussed. This is not to assert that the older narrators have abandoned the needs of their listeners, or of the characters represented in the narrative—attention to such details is in fact necessary for the achievement of successful communication. The older narrators, however, appear to posses an additional goal. Not only do they wish to reconstruct the text, but in so doing, they wish to project a particular portrayal of themselves as information sources, and hence, as individuals. The older narrators employ various linguistic means (e.g.,

\(^{50}\) It is, in fact, the contrast between the performance of the two age groups which clearly calls the Piagetian model to question.
references to mental activity paired with concrete events/actions in causal constructions, the separation of references to mental activity and character speech, assignment of accountability to a third party, etc.) to demonstrate that they place themselves outside the narrative and its events, and depending on their level of confidence, to construe themselves as either omniscient narrators, or as blameless reporters charged with repeating the facts. It would appear that the older narrators, by asserting a level of autonomy not found among the younger narrators in this particular context, are moving away from the enactment of purely social behaviors and towards the formation of a balance between attention to social needs and the establishment of an individual identity.

Though seeming to contradict the tenets of Piagetian psychology, the data from the present sample pattern precisely as expected from a Vygotskian perspective. A contemporary of Piaget, Vygotsky was a Russian intellectual whose works have slowly made their way into discussion by Western psychologists during the last half-century. Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development can be broken down into five basic, interlocking concepts (Kozulin 1990):

1) Higher mental processes—including such activities as verbal thought, logical memory, selective attention, etc., these processes are the result of psychological development, and differ qualitatively from the lower, natural processes of memory, attention, and intelligence

2) Action → Thought—all higher mental function is created through activity, and is an objectivation of action. (Higher mental processes are a function of socially meaningful activity.)

3) Mediation—any activity that is generative of higher mental processes is a socially meaningful mediated activity—the source of mediation being either a material tool, a system of symbols, or another human
being. (Vygotsky felt that the psychological impact of “material instrumental activity” was akin to that of “symbolic activity” in that the mastery of both bring about transformations of the self. Internalization of interaction with others, however, is considered the most significant form of mediation.)

4) *Internalization*—the principle element in the development of higher mental function, this is the process through which explicitly external, social activities are internalized and individualized.

5) “*Primitive*” processes—occur during internalization, and are the simplified forms of complex social behaviors that are experiencing a period of “functional regression” during the transition to their adapted individual forms. (Symbolic operations evolve from behavior which is not initially symbolic.)

One of the major differences which arises from Vygotsky’s approach is a reversal of the developmental path. According to Vygotsky, it is the individual which evolves from the social (recall that Piaget asserts the opposite). In the course of interacting with others, children adapt the behaviors which are initially directed towards them. During the process, these behaviors are at first simplified, but eventually achieve highly complex, individualized states in the form of higher mental processes. These individualized versions of the higher mental processes are at the heart of psychological/cognitive development, and are the means through which we direct our own behavior and attempt to influence the behavior of others. The data from the present sample find a much better fit with this perspective on development. Recall that among the 2nd grade subjects, the ability to communicate perspective was linked to the immersion of the self within the text and its characters (*mediation*), while the 4th grade subjects managed to communicate perspective while distancing themselves from the
characters and events to a much greater extent than the 2nd graders (internalization). The assertion of a separate identity on the part of the 4th graders appears to support Vygotsky’s position that it is the individual self which emerges in the course of psychological development, and the skilled (if not absorbed) performance by the 2nd graders supports the notion that we start out as social beings, and only gradually impart our own individualized “spin” on the skills gleaned from social interaction. In Vygotskian terms, the higher mental processes (e.g., logical memory, selective attention, etc. that are employed in constructing the narrative) are the result of action (e.g., reading, discussing, and working on classroom activities related to the texts). This action, having been mediated by myself, the other students, and the classroom activities, is what allows the students to internalize the activity of narrative. In the process of internalization, many of the students demonstrate “primitive” processes (e.g. simplified forms of the complex act of “narrating” to which they have been exposed), signifying that their internalization and individualization of this new skill is not yet complete.

5.2.4 The Intersection of Affect and the Developmental Path

Interestingly, the Vygotskian developmental path espoused above appears to work against the 4th graders to some extent. Written comments by the adult raters indicate that they often found the 4th grade narratives well formed, but tedious to listen to in comparison with the lively 2nd grade re-tellings. Prior to the analyses, such comments were attributed to the length of the 4th graders’ story Pecos Bill (Osborne 1991), the text of which was several times longer than that of Doctor DeSoto (Steig 1982). As the data
were examined, however, it became apparent that there were actual differences in the overall “level of affect” between the 2nd and 4th graders. It seems that the 2nd graders construct stories which are much higher in affect by essentially pretending to become the various characters represented in the re-telling. In the process of re-telling the narrative, the 2nd graders entertained both themselves and their listener through the same linguistic means (character speech and references to mental activity) which helped them to so effectively communicate the events of the text. The 4th graders, who have moved beyond the stage of pretend play and are more focused on establishing their status as an individual and as a reliable source of information by relating the facts of the text, made not only less use, but less dramatic use of such highly affective features as character speech and references to mental activity (e.g., their use of character speech is not as consistently accompanied by changes in vocal quality).

This is not to infer that the 4th graders are incapable of innovation or of the use of affective features. The reader is referred, for example, to Text C (Appendix B), in which the narrator forgets what Pecos Bill said, but offers to insert her own, original insults (lines 50-53), and to Text D (Appendix B), in which the narrator opens with a highly affective and evaluative summary of the text (lines 1-16). The point is, the 4th grade narrators appeared to be at a transitional stage in their development, the result of which is that their attention is apparently diverted away from the inclusion of extreme amounts of affect, and more towards the establishment and communication of “the facts.” This “U-shaped” developmental curve, in which affect is temporarily diminished while the child focuses on other aspects of narrative development, has been noted in previous research
(see, e.g., Reilly 1992). That is, by temporarily simplifying the forms of interaction (functional regression/“primitive” processes), children become capable of internalizing, individualizing, and adopting complex social activities into their own expanding system of higher mental processes.

The majority of the 4th graders effectively communicate the details of the longer narrative. The diminished affect of their re-tellings is the result of the fact that they are less concerned with re-creating characters, and more concerned with re-constructing the referential facts of the text—hence their placement of references to mental activity outside of speech references, and their diminished attention to the creation of highly affective direct speech segments. Consequentially, the 4th grade re-tellings are related from a single perspective—that of the narrator. In a sense, this is logical, given that the 4th graders understand the role of the narrator as one of authority. At the same time, they are cognizant of the fact that the manner in which they manage this “authoritative role” will determine not only their listeners’ understanding of the story, but also their listeners’ judgement of them as an individual. Together, these two facts help to explain why the 4th graders act as omniscient narrators, as well as why they make such concerted efforts to communicate “the facts” of the narrative in their “proper” form. Unfortunately, for many of the 4th grade narrators, the result of this developing awareness is a detailed but

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51 Note that only the first two segments of the developmental curve are represented in these data—it is assumed (but would be interesting to explore, nonetheless) that the level of affect would again increase as skill/ease in presenting the referential information was gained. Note also that in Reilly’s (1992) sample, the diminished presence of affective features was noted not among her older subjects, but among subjects of the same age as the 2nd grade sample examined here. One possible explanation for this disparity may be the difference in the experimental tasks—Reilly examines spontaneously constructed narratives of a picture-book (an on-line cognitive task), while this research asks the students to reconstruct an extremely familiar text.
laborious re-telling. So what saves the older narrators from becoming the targets of perpetually harsh judgement on the part of the adult raters? Perhaps it is the fact that just as the child narrators approach their own performance differently at different ages, the adult raters function in kind. Recall the earlier mention (Chapter 1, page 14) of findings by Quasthoff (1997), which support the contention that adult expectations for narrative performance become gradually more demanding in correspondence with the age of the child. Perhaps, however, the nature of the adults’ expectations should be further examined. The current findings seem to suggest that the adults’ expectations may be largely geared toward the conveyance of referential information, while the role of evaluation/affect takes a (at least temporary) back-seat for both the adult raters and the child narrators. That is, the absence/diminishment of affect is remarked upon by the adult raters, but is not as harshly judged as one might anticipate.

5.1.5 Effects of the Research Design on Demonstrated Skill: A Vygotskian Approach to Assessment

A final avenue of discussion pertaining to the level of narrative skill demonstrated among the present sample examines the question of why these narrators so often displayed skills that appear advanced in comparison to earlier research on children of the same age range. The answer submitted can again be tied to Vyotskian psychology, and, in particular the Vygotskian perspective on assessment. Recall that Vygotsky’s

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52 See Section 5.2, below, for a more detailed discussion of the role of affect in the adult raters’ assessments of skill.
paradigm assumes that all forms of higher mental functioning evolve from social interaction. Hence, it follows that his proposed model for education and/or intellectual development and assessment would revolve around social settings. Vygotsky proposes that both instruction and assessment should be approached from the perspective of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) (Daniels 1996). The ZPD is defined as the distance between a child’s “actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving” and the higher level of “potential development as determined through problem solving” under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86, as cited in Hood Holzman 1996). Directly stated, Vygotsky’s interest was primarily that of assessing the ways in which learners make progress. He therefore shifts the focus away from an exclusive concentration on the product to that of a dual focus on both the product and the process.

In its focus on the learning process, Vygotsky’s approach differed considerably from those of his contemporaries (e.g., Piaget, for whom learning lags behind development, or Skinner, for whom learning is development), and eventually inspired a range of new techniques which are known, in the modern jargon, as “dynamic assessment” (Daniels 1996). As noted in Chapter 2 (Footnote 10, page 26), the present research design, which was an attempt to examine the subjects’ highest levels of narrative skill (as opposed to testing their memory for the texts), was modeled after dynamic forms of assessment. The subjects were intentionally exposed to the texts on a repeated basis, and participated in multiple group discussions of the texts guided by myself (their eventual listener). The richness of their exposure to and familiarity with
the texts, in conjunction with the ample amount of guidance they received (from both myself and their peers) in interpreting the stories, very likely explains what would appear to be the precocious performance of (especially the more skilled) students when compared with data from earlier research. Rather than excuse such results as biased, it is precisely this type of finding which Vygotsky viewed as key. From his perspective, the truest indicator of a child’s capability is the performance which they demonstrate in the context of full access to the resources necessary to solve a problem and/or perform a task. That is, given the necessary resources, some children will use those resources to bolster their performance, while others will not make adequate or competent use of the assets available. As Vygotsky notes, “the capability of children with equal levels of mental development to learn under a teacher’s guidance varies to a great degree” (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86), and it is those children who demonstrate advanced skills (e.g., verbal thought, logical memory, selective attention, etc.) under guidance who possess the greatest potential advantage in terms of development. The educational implications this suggests are discussed later in this chapter. At present, the point of note is that Vygotsky’s intuitions appear correct. Given a context rich in resources, many of the children in this sample performed beyond age-level expectations as established in previous research on children’s production of oral narratives.

5.1.6 Summary

By directly mentioning or alluding to rational thought as the motivation behind the actions and events of the narrative, the young narrators in this sample make dramatic
and effective use of that which we as adults believe to be the ubiquitous motivator of
“human” activity. In so doing, they not only infuse their narratives with perspective and
connectivity, but are perceived as highly skilled by the adult raters. The young narrators’
ability to manipulate references to cognition (both explicit and implicit) is attributed to
their possession of a theory of mind.

The development of the theory of mind evidenced in the language data support
the model of psychological development proposed by Vygotsky. The narrators in this
sample appear to be moving in the direction of social ➔ individual, displaying, in the
process, functional regression of select skills. The students’ internalization and
manipulation of the material was facilitated by the mediation of both myself and their
peers, allowing many of them to demonstrate levels of skill that were beyond expectation
for their age range according to earlier research. Such precociously, however, was
anticipated by Vygotsky in his proposal that “dynamic” forms of assessment should be
applied in order to assess not only the product, but the process through which the product
is formed.53

5.2 The Relationship Between Evaluation and Other Aspects of Narrative

The construction of narratives is perhaps best understood from the perspective of

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53 In contrasting the Vygotskian and Piagetian developmental paradigms, this discussion (like the majority of
those found in the literature) treated the two approaches as inflexible, thus rendering the Piagetian approach
unable to account for the present data. While such tactics are helpful in the context of comparative
discussions, it is likely that proponents of the Piagetian paradigm would reject such rigidity, thereby
reclaiming Piaget’s ability to account for the data—e.g., a proponent of Piaget might view the developmental
path demonstrated here as a proliferation of “egos.”
Gestalt psychology—that is, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. For the sake of conducting a particular analysis, we may attempt to identify the discrete pieces which make up the whole. The distinctions we draw, however, are always the products of our analytical approach, and the divisions we create often begin to blur when faced with the full complexity of the product. Recall, for example, the distinction that was made at the beginning of this analysis between the two types of information contained in narratives: referential information—which recounts the facts of what happened, and evaluative information—which answers the question “So what?” by providing us with perspective on and motivation for the reported events. As we have seen in this analysis, these two types of information cannot always be separated from one another. Information can be at once referential and evaluative, and furthermore, it can be evaluative by merit of more than one “feature” at a time. Though this analysis has endeavored to draw its distinctions from the texts rather than from a predetermined paradigm, it remains a product of its own approach. Given this understanding, we begin the discussion of the relationship between evaluation and other aspects of narrative with the awareness that these are created distinctions whose boundaries often overlap one another.

5.2.1 Evaluation and Referential Information: Patterns of Interaction

In Chapters 3 and 4, the data demonstrated that the lower scoring narratives (those in the marginal and poor range) often displayed deficiencies in the communication of both referential and evaluative information. In some cases, the referential information was inaccurate or incomplete (see, e.g., Text 13, Section 4.6.2).
In other cases, evaluative information was either lacking (see, e.g., Text 8, Section 4.4), or was employed in a manner that was largely ineffective (see, e.g., Text 7, Section 4.4). The lower scoring texts established that insufficient and/or unskillful use of either referential or evaluative information could result in a low appraisal of the child’s narrative skill. That is, both types of information must function appropriately and in conjunction with one another in order for a narrative to achieve optimal success.

In the more successful narratives (those in the adequate and best categories), appropriate use of both referential and evaluative forms occurs. What determines “appropriate,” however, is dependent upon a variety of factors. As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, one of the crucial variables appears to be the age of the child. For the younger narrators, the embedding of references to mental activity within character speech is pivotal. For the older narrators, the use of character speech alone is the central evaluative characteristic—with nearly all of the older narrators also employing other select discourse devices such as the use of causal constructions, extra-textual comments, anddeference to a third-person “other” as an information source. For both age groups, the use of the seven evaluative features initially examined occurs in 1/3 to 1/2 of the total utterances. Finally, regarding referential information, those subjects scoring in the top two categories in both grades generally communicated the referential material in a clear and complete manner (Text 9, [Chapter 4, Section 4.4] is an exception).

While the discussion in the preceding two paragraphs adequately describes the majority of cases in both the high and low scoring groups, it was noted in the preceding chapter that there are aberrant cases involving narratives that deviate from the described
patterns. The examination of these narratives is extremely informative in that it allows one to discover the extent to which the proscribed patterns of use are flexible, allowing for performance in one area to outweigh skills/deficiencies in another, etc. For example, Text 9 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4) was discussed above as illustrative of a case in which the frequent and skilled use of the pivotal evaluative features of character speech and references to mental activity by a 2nd grade male apparently compensated for deficiencies in the communication of referential information. However, extensive use of evaluation does not always result in a strong positive reaction on the part of the adult raters.

Consider the following narrative, which was produced by a 4th grade bilingual female (Subj. 4fr5, 9 yrs., 1 mos., Score = 2.67*):

**Text 14**

7 C This little *NASTY[M]* little boy that/s {C laughs}>
8 E Ok {E laughs}.
9 C He/s naked (he) and he act/3s like[H] a>
10 C I FORGOT.
11 ; 0:03
12 C Coyote.
13 E Uhhuh.
14 C THAT/S SO[G] NASTY.
15 E {E laughs}.
16 C He say/3s he has a tail.
17 E Ahha.
18 C When he does/n't[N].
19 C So once this cowpoke came and said [V] who are you?
20 E {E laughs}.
21 C So he have/n't[EW:has/n't][N] used his human language.
22 E Ahha.
23 C He said [V] varmint then he>
24 E {E laughs}.
25 C And the cowpoke/s like *no[N] you/’re not[N]*.
E {E laughs}.

C [V] You're a cowpoke just[ʃ] like me {C waves right arm} come on!

E {E laughs}.

C He's like [V] no[N], I have flea's don't[N] I?

E {E laughs}.

C [V] {C waves right arm as if "never mind"} everybody has flea's!

E {E laughs}.

C He's like [V] (I have a tail) {C uses an even deeper voice} I have a tail.

E [V] No[N] you don't[N]!

E {E laughs}.

C He's like [V] yes I do.

C [V] No[N] you don't[N].

C [V] Yes I do.

C [V] No[N] you don't[N].

C {C looks over own right shoulder} He see/3s his[EW:the] back of his butt and

he say/3s [V] I don't[N] have one.

E {E laughs}.

C So[A] the cowpoke's like [V] {C waves right arm} come on, dude!

E {E laughs}.

C [V] Let's hit the road.

E {E laughs}.

C So[A], he forgot {C moves both hands out from middle covering a wide area}

all[L] all about his parent/s and family/s <WHOLE WHOLE[G] THING[M]>

E <Uhhuh>.

C He just[G] did/n't[N] know {C shrugs shoulders, palms up} who was he [EU]?

C He does/n't[N] {C counts on left fingers} play with teddy bear/s he play/3s with

grizzly bear/s.

E Oh.

C He follow/3s lizard/s.

C THAT'S KIND[H] OF SPOOKY!

E {E laughs}.

C THAT'S SPOOKY FOR ME (<BECAUSE> BECAUSE) BECAUSE[A] ONCE I SAW ONE

*AND IT SCARED ME BIGTIME {C NODS AFFIRMITIVELY}.

E <Oh, I see>.

E Wow.

C YEAH {I} IT WAS UP UNDER MY FACE {C SHRUGS, PALMS UP}!

E Oh.

C IT WAS LIKE {C STICKS TONGUE OUT TWICE LIKE A LIZARD}

E {E laughs}.

C THEN I WAS LIKE {C STRETCHES OUT OWN MOUTH WITH FINGERS IN CORNERS &

STICKS OUT TONGUE}

E {E laughs}.

C {C PRESSES HANDS TOGETHER OVER HEART IN INNOCENT POSE} THAT'S HOW I
SPEAK TO THEM.

E {E laughs}.

C DON'T [N] WORRY ABOUT IT.


E Oh.

C WAS HIS GRANDMA IN IT?

E I don't know.

C MAYBE [H], ~ BECAUSE [A] IT SAID THE WHOLE FAMILY.

E <Hmm>.

E Yeah, true, true.

C WAS IT {C STRETCHES ARMS OUT ON BOTH SIDES COVERING A LARGE AREA} A LITTLE CAR?

C LET'S SEE, {C SHAKES RIGHT POINTER FINGER} IMAGINE FIFTEEN KID'S IN A MINIVAN?

C [C SHAKES HEAD NO] NO [N]?

E {E laughs}.

C WHAT ABOUT (UH) IT COULD [H] BE (A) IN A BUS.

C OH.

C BECAUSE [A] FIFTEEN KID'S CAN'T [N] FIT IN NO [N] CAR.

E Yeah.

C OR IT CAN FIT {in a in a in a in a in a hm hm}>

C I THINK [H] IT WOULD [EW: WOULD] BE BETTER IF [H] (UH) THEY WERE (IN) {C NODS AFFIRMATIVELY} RIDING IN [EW: ON] PONY'S OR IN [EW: ON] A HORSE.

E Ah.

C And the little kid was>

C IT WOULD BE BETTER IF [H] THE LITTLE KID WAS {C MAKES SHARP DOWNWARD MOTION WITH BOTH HANDS, PALMS IN, IN FRONT OF TORSO} IN FRONT WITH THEIR PARENT'S, {C MOVES BOTH HANDS TO THE LEFT} THAT'S HOW HE CAN'T [N] FALL DOWN.

E Oh, I see.

C So they had him on the end {C points back over shoulders with both thumbs}, that's how he fell/3s [EW: fell] down {C shrugs}.

E Oh, ok.

C AND I WONDER WHY PECOS BILL HE DRINK'S WATER OUT OF THE>

C I DON'T [N] KNOW.

C (GROOOO*) <> GROUND INSTEAD [N] OF DRINK/ING IN [EW: FROM] A CUP {C MAKES CUP SHAPE WITH RIGHT HAND}?

E <Uhuh>.

E Ahha.

C THAT IS SORT [H] OF [LIKE] {C LOOKS TO SIDE & COVERS EYES} GROSS.

E {E laughs}.
112  C {C smiles & nods head} IT IS
113  C So wait, but my brother thinks it's not gross because he
114  GET/3S USED TO DRINK/ING FROM MY DOGGY/2(D*) WATER.
115  C Once he ate his food.
116  C That was nasty.
117  C You know because [A] dog food is just [G] like people food.
118  C There's this barbeque nachos and (my B*) my puppy gets 3s (like) {C
119  makes little shapes with fingers in front of torso} the same smell of
120  the barbeque nachos [EU].
121  C And it's nasty.
122  C My grandma says that my brother ate one of dog bxs.
123  E {E laughs}.
124  C And Pecos Bill, I wonder what he ate?
125  C I think [H] he ate lizard/s.
126  E Hm <maybe>.
127  C <YEAH> because
128  C Or (he'll/EW; he) ate he'll kill a snake and eat it.
129  C That's how usual/EW; normal] people eat.
130  C (But) but that is nasty.
131  C How can he (s*) {C turns to side & opens hands apart} do something (to) to a
132  snake and then a>
133  C A mountain what?
134  E A mountain lion?
135  C Yeah, a mountain lion came and said>
136  C And how can the mountain lion talk if [H] it's an (A*) animal?
137  C Saying WHAT [V] uncle uncle.
138  E {E laughs}.
139  C Well, usually I do that sometime/s.
140  C So {C places both hands in front of her, palms in, emphasizing} Pecos>
141  C {C covers face with hands} AY!
142  C Ok, Pecos Bill once saw this lazy[M] woman[M] (and her) and her>
143  C Ok, and her horse, they call it something like [H]> 
144  C What do they call him in the book?
145  E Oh, Widow Maker.
146  C No[N], how [EW; WHAT] do you call the horse?
147  E Widow Maker[M].
148  C {C waves arms} No[N] (not that) not [N] Pecos Bill/z horse, some[H]
149  (uh) CATBLABLABLAH.
150  E Oh, catfish!
151  C Yeah, Catfish, THAT'S A WEIRD NAME FOR AN ANIMAL.
152  E {E laughs}.
153  C And what was the horse/z name, the horse name from Pecos Bill [EU]?
154  E Widow Maker.
C Yeah, WidowMaker (can't be) can't[ N] jump that high { C shakes head no}
<though>.
E <Uhhuh>.
C If[H] he could[ H] jump (if he had a) if[H] he was in[ EU, on] a trampoline
though.
E Uhhuh.
C But maybe[ H] he had trampoline shoes's just[ G] like I have them { C makes
wide space between palm in hands} this big X.
E Possibly.
C Because[A] in fairytale sometimes { C brings hands down in front of her
in matter of fact manner} they do those stuff that *'s so[ G] weird that
people can't[ N], even[ G] do [EU].
E Yeah.
C And that's so[ G] cool[ M]!
E { E laughs}.
C Because[A] that's so cool, I wish I was in a TV show { C looks dreamy}.
E { E laughs}.
C { C puts both hands together dreamily by head} imagine that.
E { E laughs}.
C I imagine'ed it.
C Ok, so if[H] I was PecosBill? >
E Uhhuh.
C I'm a girl though.
C If[H] it was a girl he would' ve had another name.
C (Um uh) what I would do is follow my parent/s everywhere.
E Ok.
C But I'll get tired though, so[A] I'll just[ G] go rent a (p*) pony.
C Because once I saw a pony { C puts right hand out, parallel to the
floor} that big.
C It did poop on the street, it's stuck, ew [EU]!
C Ok, and so (I'd) { C puts hands forward, palms up} I'd just[ G] follow
my parent/s and { C waves right hand in a circular motion} if[H] I was a
little[ G] bit older (I'll tal *') I'll talk to them.
C [ Y ] parent/s, { C puts hands forward, palms up as if matter of fact} may I go in the front with y'all to[A] not[ N] fall down with the
lazy fourteen kid/s in the back [EU]?
E { E laughs}.
C (Cynthia) I think[H] they were hyper like that, <= like Cynthia get/3s
hyper <=too> { C shakes head yes} uhhuh.
E <Oh>.
E <Oh>.
E { E laughs}.
C { C waves arms around, making point} (um) so, that's what I would do but
PecosBill was so[G] little he couldn't[N] even[G] do nothing[EW: anything][N].

E Uhuh.

C GOOGOO IT CAN'T[N] BE A WORD FOR (S*) HELLO {C waves hello with right hand}.

C (F*) {C waves arms, making a point} BUT FOR BABY LANGUAGE IT COULD[H].

E Uhuh.

C BUT IT'S NASTY WHEN A COYOTE LICKS HIS RIGHT THIGH ON YOU LIKE {C sticks tongue out} OH!

E Yeah.

C (Like) TOTALLY GROSS LIKE I SEE IN SOME[G] CARTOONS.

E Yeah.

C AND PECOSBILL HE COULD[H] HAVE DIED WHEN he get/3s him from there {C grabs the back of own neck}.

E Uhuh.

C SO[H] THE COYOTE GET/3S HIM {C grabs the back of own neck} FROM THERE MAYBE[H] THE COYOTE DIDN'T HAVE {C points to own mouth} THE EW ANY TEETH {C shrugs}.

E Could be.

C LIKE {C makes a toothless face by covering teeth with lips and rocks back and forth}.

E {E laughs} could be.

C I DON'T[H] THINK[H] SO {C shakes head no}.

C (He go/3s) IF[H] IT WAS (LIKE) {C traces fang shape in front of mouth} REALLY[G] SHARP AND>

C LIKE MY DOGGYZ.

E Uhuh.

C (He w*) PECOSBILL WILL BE BLEEDING.

E Uhuh.

C {C waves hands in emphasis} AND IT WILL SAY IN THE BOOK (WHAT) WHAT HAPPENED TO PECOSBILL.


C THEN (HE) HE'LL GET THE {C sweeps hands} WHOLE[M] EARTH.

E Uhuh.

C (S*) BECAUSE[A] THE EQUATOR GOES {C sweeps hands in large arc} ALL[L] AROUND THE EARTH.

E Right.

C IF[H] HE COULD[H] GET IT LIKE THAT {C puts right arm up as if holding lasso rope}>

C (And it) AND IT CAN'T[N] BE (LIKE UM UH) TWO FEET (S* UM) SHORTER THAN THE EQUATOR (BE*) THEN (HE COULD) IT COULD[H] GO UP TO THE MOON AND GET THE MOON.

E Uhuh, that's true.
C *BUT IT'S WEIRD!*

E Hm.

C *THAT'S SO [G] WEIRD {C raises right arm as if using lasso} going [V] yoho zoom!*

E {E laughs}.

C *AND HOW COULD HE GET 3S [E] WIFE?{C puts hand to chest} FOR ME?*

C *I DON'T [N] UNDERSTAND HIS WIFE.*

C She's like {C makes a pouty face} she get/3s mean.

E Xy.

C She's like [V] yes I can, (I can draw I can) I can ride everything with four leg/s.

C *THAT'S WEIRD (FOR MINE), {C puts hand to chest} FOR ME?*

C And so (Pe* um uh) his wife %SUEFOOSUE?

E SlewFootSue.

C *IT'S A WEIRD NAME.*

C It is a weird name, I agree.

C And so {C makes representative finger motions on the tabletop} she get/3s on (h*) PecosBill/z bronco <> (and) and {C makes kicking motion with right leg} kick/3s it with her shoe.

E <Uuhhuh>.

E Uhhuh.

C *HOW THEY CALL THEM [EU]?

C I DON'T [N] KNOW HOW THEY CALL THEM [EU].*

C So (um uh) the horse didn't need it for a kick, he'll {C flings arms up and out} just[G] jump [EU]!

E Uhhuh.

C (It will uh) it won't[N] jump <> it will throw her <it will> throw her {C points back over shoulder with right thumb} from her[EW: it's] back.

E <Uuhhuh>.

E Yeah.

C {C puts hands out palms up as if matter of fact} it can/n't[N] jump (because[A] no horse) because[A] they'll break their leg <> because[A] they're skinnier than mine {C lifts up own leg}.

E <Uuhhuh>.

E Uhhuh.

C *THEY'LL BREAK THEIR LEG AND THEY'LL BE LIKE [C waves right arm around from elbow like a broken limb] WITH A BROKEN LEG AND THEY COULDN'T [N] EVEN [G] WALK.*

E Uhhuh.

C And when I SAY 3S that he meets those wild stuff <> THAT {C shakes head no} can/n't [N] happen.

E <Uuhhuh>.

E Oh.
C (Like) IT COULD[H] HAPPEN BUT NOT[N] USUALLY IT WOULDN'T[N] HAPPEN SO[G] FAST.
E <Oh, oh I see>.
C (They it can'n't) HE CAN'T[N] SEE ONE ANIMAL THEN THE OTHER ANIMAL (LIKE)
IN {C WAVES ARM IN RAPID ARC} A SECOND.
C And he can'n't[N] see those>
C AND NO[N] PEOPLE CAN BE SCARED OF SOMETHING THAT WAS C USES BOTH
HANDS TO DEFINE A SPACE THAT.
C {C puts hands out in matter of fact manner} IT COULD[H] BE (LIKE) JUST [H]
FUR.
C WHY DID the man {C quivers}[V] I was the boss now you can[H] be?
E {E laughs}.
C (That's how I o*) THAT'S HOW I USUALLY GET WHEN I GET SCARED, <WHEN MY
BROTHER SCARES ME>.
E <Oh, I see>.
C SO HE COULD[H] SAY (UH) {C WAVES ARM IN WHO CARES GESTURE}[V] IT'S
ALRIGHT YOU CAN[H] BE THE (L*) BOSS <-AROUND HERE.
E <Uhhuh>.
C BUT NOT[N] GUNS (C ACTS AS IF UNHOLSTERING A GUN) CAN SHAKE.
E Uhhuh.
C {C makes a shaking gun with right hand} THEY COULD[H] SHAKE IF[H] YOU
HAVE IT IN YOUR HAND AND YOU'RE LIKE THAT <<< BUT NOT[N] BY ITSELF.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Oh, ok.
C {C waves left hand emphasizing} YOU SEE, YOU UNDERSTAND?
E Yeah.
C SO WHAT I WOULD DO (is) {C traces out in hand motions on tabletop} IS TURN
AROUND AND JUST[G] HAVE A {C PANTOMIMES A SLINGSHOT} SLINGSHOT <- {C
WAVES HANDS EMPHATICALLY} SOMETHING <TO KILL THE ANIMALS> FOR [EW...SO]
THEY CAN'T[N], YOU KNOW, BOTHER YOU AND YOUR WIFE SOMEWHERE.
E <Uhhuh>.
E <Oh, ok>.
C And (when) when>
C DID I ALREADY SAY[EW SAY] THIS?
C When PecosBill/*z horse get's on[EW in] a hole?
E Yeah.
C IS IT A HOLE?
E Yeah.
C IS IT A HOLE?
E Yeah, it's a hole.
C <Because>>
E <Yeah> you said that.
C (C*) BECAUSE[AW] USUALLY HORSE/S IF[H] THEY GET IN THERE, THEY'LL GET
Text 14 is clearly replete with evaluation. The narrator shares with her listener her perspective on nearly every aspect of the narrative—from her subjective judgements as to the prudence and/or believability of the characters’ actions, to her suggestions as to how she would handle the reported circumstances, to the justification of her perspectives on the events through the provision of narrative external information about her own life experiences. In directing her focus almost exclusively towards the evaluative aspects of narration, however, this narrator appears to expend minimal effort towards the presentation of referential material. Up to line 48, the narrator demonstrates a balanced focus, presenting both referential and evaluative information. In the 292 lines that follow, the storyline is nearly buried by the deluge of evaluation. For the adult raters
(who were familiar with the events of the text from listening to multiple re-tellings) it
was presumably possible to follow the narrative to some extent, as the narrator does
reference (even if indirectly) the majority of the events from the text. Yet, their scores
and written comments are telling. Notice that the final, averaged score received by Text
14 was a 2.67*, placing it in the marginal category. The three scores received were 2.0,
2.0, and 4.0. The adults who assigned the lower ratings provided the following
comments:

Rater 1: “??? All opinion!!! Very entertaining, but so off track.”

Rater 2: “Interest was there, but no story.”

The adult who rated the text a 4.0 stated the following:

Rater 3: “Dramatic, good contrast, relates to own life. Difficulty following actual
storyline.”

As their comments reveal, all of the raters possessed a dual focus. They
considered both referential and evaluative features in their assessments of narrative
skill—but the value they placed on these two aspects differs. The two raters who assigned
Text 14 the lower scores found the narrative entertaining, but rated the narrator on the
lower end of the skill scale due to the ineffective presentation of the referential
information. For these two raters, the possession of narrative “skill” in a 4th grader is
strongly tied to the child’s ability to clearly communicate the referential material. In
contrast, Rater 3, who judged Text 14 a 4.0, appears to focus more on the presentation of

54

Recall that the “*” designates narratives whose three received scores displayed a spread of greater than 1.0
on the 1.0-5.0 rating scale, essentially indicating a fair amount of disagreement among the raters.
evaluative information by the narrator. For Rater 3, the concept of “skill” is more closely linked with the evaluative/affective aspects—that is, a “good” narrative is one that holds its listener’s attention, that entertains. Rater 3 agrees with Raters 1 and 2 that the storyline was “difficult to follow,” but for this rater, the dramatic presentation style, and the constant creation of perspective through the parallels which the narrator drew with her own cognition and experiences largely compensated for the unorthodox presentation of the referential material.

Text 14’s divergent scores reaffirm that even as members of the same linguistic and cultural group, individuals will differ to some extent in their expectations. Furthermore, they support the conclusion that the relationship between the various aspects of narrative is flexible. In the end, the overall, averaged score received by this narrative places it in the marginal category. As further analyses demonstrate, Text 14’s assignment to the lower end of the skill scale seems fitting, as it does not meet what appear to be the minimum (adult) expectations for a 4th grader regarding the communication of referential information.

To further probe the interaction between referential and evaluative aspects, we now turn to Text 15, which contains a narrative that is fundamentally the opposite of Text 14. Produced by a 4th grade, English speaking male, Text 15 is essentially devoid of evaluation, devoting its efforts to a correct, concise summary of the referential material

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55 In some sense, it is not possible for a narrative to be “devoid of evaluation” since the absence of evaluation is, itself, evaluative by indicating that the narrator him/herself is uninterested, confused, etc. The phrase “devoid of evaluation” should be understood in this context as an absence of the evaluative features examined in the research.
(Subj. 4md5, 10 yrs., 0 mos., Score = 3.33):

**Text 15**

7 C OK (UM) I REMEMBER THAT PecosBill fell out of the wagon.
8 E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
9 C A coyote came and pick/ed him up <> and took him to his house.
10 E <Uhhuh>.
11 C And then a cowpoke came and pick/ed him up and took him to a ranch[M].
12 E Uhhuh.
13 C And they got him all clean/ed up AND THING/S.
14 C And then he hear/ed about the Hell/zGateGang.
15 E Uhhuh.
16 C (And) and he (st*) head/ed that way.
17 C And on his way (he hear/ed) his horse broke an ankle.
18 E Uhhuh.
19 C He fought a fifty foot snake.
20 E {E laughs} uhhuh.
21 C And he wrestle/ed (um) a mountain lion.
22 E Uhhuh.
23 C (And and) and he also saw SlueFootSue.
24 E {E laughs} ahha.
25 C {C laughs} and (uh) he rode a cyclone.
26 E Uhhuh.
27 C (He) PEOPLE SAID his rope was just[G] as long as the equator[M].
28 E Uhhuh.
29 C And SOME[H] PEOPLE THOUGHT that it was two feet shorter.
30 E Uhhuh.
31 C (Um) and he also got married to SlewFootSue.
32 E Uhhuh.
33 C And they got stuck[M] on the moon[M].
34 E {E laughs} alright!

Text 15 received two 3.0s and a 4.0, resulting in a final, averaged score of 3.33, placing it in the *adequate* category. The two raters who assigned the narrative 3.0s provided minimal additional input. One gave no written comment—which was interesting in itself as this was one of only three narratives (out of 25 scored) for which she provided no written remarks. Apparently, she either did not feel the need, or could not give an
explanation for her assessment. The other rater who assigned the narrative a 3.0 tersely commented: "Summary." Neither positive nor negative, this remark aptly reflects the rater's reaction to the narrative—that is, on a scale of 1-5, this rater ranked the narrative precisely at the midpoint. It is neither a great narrative, nor a terrible one, it simply summarized the events of the story. Finally, the rater who judged Text 15 a 4.0 commented, "Good use of transition words. Linear, but with good connections." The mention of "linear" is interpreted as making a similar point to that of the rater whose comment was "summary"—that is, both of these raters note of the lack of evaluative detail. Unlike the other raters, however, the adult who assigned Text 15 a 4.0 goes on to mention that although the narrative is sparse, it is still, "well connected." This comment, in addition to her remark on the skilled use of "transition words" seems to indicate that this rater, while aware of the lack of detail, still considers the narrative highly successful based on the competent manner in which the referential information was relayed.

Taking into consideration both the scores and comments for Texts 14 and 15, we reach the conclusion that, for the 4th graders, the communication of referential information is generally of primary importance to the adult raters. Text 14, which is replete with evaluation, does a comparatively poor job of communicating the referential material. The narrator certainly understood the text, as she offers her perspective and interpretation on a myriad of points, however, she seems to be more engrossed in her own interpretative activity than in relaying the referential information, or in monitoring her listener's ability to follow the events. As a result, her narrative receives a low score which places it in the marginal category. Text 15, which makes use of a minimal
amount of evaluation, but which very clearly presents the referential material is able to score in the *adequate* range with a 3.33. Though this narrative is not as entertaining/interesting as some of the others, the adult raters appear reluctant to judge the narrative too harshly, as it “clearly” and “correctly” relates the events of the text.56

When we compare the 4th grade results from above with those of the 2nd grade sample, a slightly different scenario evolves. Recall that in the opening discussion of this section, Text 9 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4), which was produced by a 2nd grade, English speaking male was mentioned as illustrative of the fact that, in some instances, the skilled use of evaluation appears to counteract deficiencies in the communication of referential information. Although the narrator of this text presents the referential material in a manner which is both disordered and incomplete, he still received a final, averaged score of 4.67 from the raters—placing his narrative high in the *best* category. The only plausible explanation for this narrator’s success would appear to be his high level of skill with respect to the presentation of evaluative material. He makes extensive and effective use of both of the pivotal evaluative features of *character speech* and *mental activity*. Unfortunately, however, none of the three adult raters provided additional written comments explaining their assigned scores of a 4.0 and two 5.0s.

The hypothesis that adult expectations for the older and younger narrators differ is further confirmed, however, by the examination of some of the lower scoring 2nd grade texts. Recall, for example, Text 1 (see, Chapter 3, Section 3.0). Collected from a

56
See Section 5.1.4 for related discussion.
bilingual, 2nd grade female, this narrative was essentially a summary of the events of the story. Though it was basically referentially accurate, it contained little in the way of evaluative information, and received a final score of 1.66, placing it in the poor category. The following text, collected from an English speaking, 2nd grade female (Subj. 2fg1, 7yrs., 8 mos.) again employs minimal evaluation, though it does evidence a more polished presentation of both the referential and evaluative material than Text 1:

Text 16

C (Um) DoctorDeSoto (he put up) he (um) was a dentist.
E Uhhuh.
C And he would work for %aminal/s he would'n t work with (um) cat/s or fox/s or dangerous %aminal/s <> to him.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And one day a fox came.
C And (he s*) his tooth was hurt/ing and it was rotten.
C And they pull/ed it out {C puts hand to jaw}.
E {E laughs} Uhhuh.
C And then (the ne*) the next day they said that they had (um) to put in a new tooth at eleven sharp.
E Uhhuh.
C And then, they put in the new tooth.
C And they put a (f*) {C puts hand to mouth in painting motion} special formula (in h* on e*) every tooth.
E <Uhhuh>.
C {C points at own mouth} And his wife was point/ing to every single spot.
C And (th*) then he said shut your mouth for one[M] full[M] minute[M].
C And (he) the fox did.
C And he could'n t open his mouth again because they glue/ed it together[M].
E {E laughs}.
C {C laughs}.
E Good job!

The narrative in Text 16 received a final score of 3.66*, placing it in the adequate range. Compare the raters' scores and comments on Texts 1 and 16:

Rater 1:
Text 1 = 2.00  No written comment.

Text 16 = 4.00  No written comment.

**Rater 4:**

Text 1 = 1.00  “Flat, uninteresting, ambiguous pronouns, no detail.”

Text 16 = 2.00  “Little detail or story.”

**Rater 5:**

Text 1 = 2.00  “Dull style and disjointed in terms of presentation of the events.”

Text 16 = 5.00  “Short, but mentioned all the important points. Great sense of narrative, good flow.”

Rater 1 does not explain her assessments, but does judge there to be a clear difference between the two narratives, placing Text 1 near the bottom of the rating scale and Text 16 near the top. Rater 4 does not judge there to be a great deal of difference between the two narratives, assigning Text 1 the lowest possible score, and Text 16 only 1 point higher on the rating scale. Both of her comments mention the lack of detail (Text 1 = “no detail” Text 2 = “little detail”), but her remarks on Text 1 make additional note of the low affect (absence of evaluation) and syntactic deficiencies. Hence, the difference in Rater 4’s scores appears to be based on both slightly higher affect, and a slightly more competent presentation of the referential information. Due to the lack of “detail,” however, she still rates both narratives as unsuccessful overall. Rater 5 distinguishes and even greater difference between the two narratives than Rater 1. She rates Text 1 as a 2.00, commenting that it is both low in affect and disordered in its presentation of the referential material. She rates Text 16 as a 5.00—the highest possible score—noting that
although it is a relatively brief narrative, it mentions all the important facts and is easy to follow.

Taken together, the raters' assessments of skill regarding the 2nd grade narratives reveal significant variation in the bases for judgement which the adults used in scoring the 2nd grade narratives. Unlike the 4th graders, for whom the thorough and accurate communication of the referential information is (with the exception of one adult rater) a must, the 2nd graders are granted more leeway, or at least encounter a more diverse/flexible range of adult expectations. For 2nd graders, the communication of both referential and evaluative material remain important, but the adult raters do not appear to be as focused on the presentation of referential information as they were with the 4th grade subjects. A 2nd grader who does a competent job of presenting the referential material but who does not evaluate may still score in the top half of the skill scale, but as demonstrated by Text 9, a 2nd grader who does a better job with the evaluation than with referential information may outperform those in the opposite group by scoring in the best category. These conclusions differ slightly from those of Quasthoff (1997), in which it was noted that adult expectations become increasingly more demanding with the age of the child, as adults expect older children to manage both referential and evaluative features. In this sample, it appears that the increase in adult expectations regarding the older narrators is centered upon referential information, and that a dualistic focus is adopted in the assessment of both the older and younger age groups, though as Quasthoff notes, its standards (especially regarding referential information) may be less stringent for younger narrators. Essentially, both types of information play a role in the narratives
of both age groups—the extreme presence and absence of each having been used to demonstrate the manner in which the narratives are affected when a normative balance between the two is not maintained.

### 5.2.2 Evaluation and the Creation of Affect

At the outset of this analysis, the evaluative features were distinguished as those (numerous) elements within a narrative that answer the question “So what?” As has become clear through the more than twenty texts referenced as examples, it is these same features which, in answering that question, can render a narrative both interesting and engaging for the listener. This sensation of involvement and/or amusement is what is meant by “positive affect,” and can be contrasted with the sensation of boredom and/or apathy (“negative affect”) which listeners experience in list-like narratives devoid of evaluation.57 The examples in the preceding section have demonstrated that, especially for the older narrators, affect alone cannot (usually) carry a narrative, but rather, must work in conjunction with the referential information.58

While it is admittedly the case that the positive affect created by the skilled use of evaluation contributes greatly to the perceived success of the narratives on an

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57 As noted above, it is impossible to construct a narrative “devoid of evaluation,” since the very absence of evaluative features is, in and of itself evaluative (by indicating that the speaker is uninterested in/unconcerned with the information). From this perspective, “negative affect” might best be described as that which the listener experiences in the absence of evaluative features, rather than in the absence of evaluation per se.

58 Davis (2000) comments that the essential difference may lie in where affect occurs. That is, the 2nd graders place affect within the characters (within the narrative), while the 4th graders tend to locate more of the affect within themselves as the narrators (external to the narrative), where it is, perhaps, less effective.
“emotional” level, the substantial, substantive role of the evaluative features that create affect must not be overlooked. Recall Texts 15 and 16 from above, both of which are relatively devoid of evaluation, and both of which scored in the adequate range. As these two narratives demonstrate, a story which contains little evaluation can be “successful” in so much as it is capable of coherently relaying information. But as the scores indicate, this ability to catalog events is only part of the picture. Texts 15 and 16 are “adequate” in that they recount, in a comprehensible manner, the occurrence of a set of related events. In the absence of evaluative features, what they do not achieve is that which constitutes the consummate success of narrative. That is, the communication of the significance and/or meaning of the reported events is missing. The narratives contained in Texts 15 and 16 furnish the listener with almost no indication of the importance of the events beyond the fact of their occurrence. The necessity of going beyond the indexing of information is tied to the conceptualization of narrative presented at the beginning of this analysis. That is, narratives play a central role in the development of the self, and in the creation and maintenance of communities (see, e.g., Goffman 1974, Halliday 1976, Hymes 1975, Scollon and Scollon 1981). This role is achieved not only through the cataloging of events, but (perhaps mainly) through the interpretation and assignment of a “shared meaning” to those events. As noted, it is the evaluative features which are primarily responsible for communicating this “shared” level of meaning.

The inability to assign/interpret culturally condoned meanings is perhaps most evident in situations where cultures collide. Volumes of research have been filled in fields such as anthropology, education, linguistics, literary analysis, etc. in which the
differences between cultural perspectives on events and information are examined in
exacting detail. The existence (not to mention the importance) of this level of
understanding is somewhat difficult to recognize within our own language/culture as it is
so pervasive and so ingrained that its constant employment is largely involuntary. This is
the level of intuition—it is the automatic set of assumptions with which we approach all
interpretive tasks. Perner (1988, p. 288-289) points out the unconscious nature of this
level of knowledge in his discussion of young children as “effective intentional
communicators”:

The suggestion that an intentional communicator has to represent mentally
these complicated intentions contradicts the unreflective ease with which
we use language to communicate (Clark and Marshall 1981, Evans and
McDowell 1976)... In regular usage we need not pay attention to mutual
intentions, but can rely on the “fossilized” meaning (Blackburn 1984) of
our linguistic conventions... Only when trying to communicate by
nonconventional means (“one-off predicament,” Blackburn 1984, Chapter
4.1) does careful attention have to be paid to the intended receiver’s
ability to recognize the sender’s communicative intention... Children do
not have to develop their own communicative conventions but are
socialized into an existing system. Thus there is no need for them to
engage in sophisticated intentional analysis from the beginning [emphasis
added].

Essentially, as communicators within a culture, we do not function by constantly
analyzing our belief in others’ beliefs, but rather, on the absence of doubt as to the fact
that others’ beliefs match our own. From this perspective, the employment of evaluative
features is not aimed at constantly communicating the novel and unanticipated viewpoint
of the speaker, but rather, achieves the more subtle task of conveying information on
perception and interpretation which is, in the majority of cases, an act of reinforcing
shared beliefs rather than of communicating unfamiliar information. It is, of course, true
that as development progresses, children come to recognize that others may work from beliefs and assumptions which are different from their own. Eventually, they become capable of understanding how and when these divergent perspectives result in communicative breakdowns (deceptions, mistakes, etc.). This understanding of higher order beliefs can then be used in a socially cooperative manner to aid communication (Perner 1988, p. 289-290). Nonetheless, in the normal exchanges of day to day talk, both children and adults function largely on the basis of the absence of doubt as to our shared assumptions.

In acknowledging the fact that it is the evaluative features of narrative that communicate “culturally shared aspects of meaning,” while simultaneously recognizing that this shared level of meaning is automatically assumed in most communication, it quickly becomes clear how the absence of evaluative features may prove detrimental. As demonstrated in the narrative re-tellings from this sample, by choosing not to reaffirm their espousal of culturally assumed perspectives on the reported events through the use of evaluative features, the young narrators produced re-tellings which were comprehensible but low in affect. This resulted in varying levels of dissatisfaction on the part of the adult listeners (not to mention the assignment of low skill scores). While the young narrators’ failure to employ evaluative features in this context may have resulted from a lack of interest in the material (?), in other more complex contexts, the absence of evaluative features may indicate a lack of comprehension on the part of the narrator, and/or may result in the inability of the listener to comprehend the referential information, or to interpret why said material is being reported. Thus, the appropriate
use of evaluative features is of extreme importance, not simply because it creates the positive affect that keeps the listener engaged, but also because it indicates the speaker’s perspective, and in so doing, guides the listener’s understanding of how the speaker wishes the events to be perceived.

5.2.3 Summary

As the preceding analyses have demonstrated, the evaluative forms are those elements which answer the question of “So what?” within a narrative. In so doing, they are also primarily responsible for the creation of “positive affect.” That affect plays a role in the adult raters’ assessments of skill cannot be denied. The role of the evaluative features, however, reaches far beyond that of inciting a “positive/pleasant emotional response” from the adult listeners. The primary responsibility for conveying the individual and cultural significance of the reported events is borne by the evaluative aspects of narrative. Like all other narrative components, affect is but one piece of the complex puzzle that is narrative. Yet in order for a narrative to achieve it’s fullest potential of both reporting and interpreting related events, the skilled inclusion of evaluative features is essential.

5.3 Variables Affecting the Use of Evaluation

In previous research, the manner in which numerous individual variables affect the shape of narrative has been explored—e.g., Peterson and McCabe (1983) examine both age and gender differences in the use of evaluative features, Minaya Portella (1980),
Gutierrez-Clellen, et. al. (1995), Shiro (1997), and Melzi (1998) explore the effects of language and culture on structural, referential, and evaluative aspects of narrative. Labov's (1972) early work examined the effect of both cultural and socio-economic differences on narrative development, etc. In this analysis, differences in the use of evaluative features which are related to the age of the subjects were revealed, but differences related to other variables, such as gender, socio-economic status (SES), and language/cultural background have not yet been discussed. This section explores these variables in relationship to the results of the analyses in order to assess whether any significant interactions occurred.

5.3.1 Gender and Socio-Economic Status

The results of this research are largely in agreement with those of Peterson and McCabe (1983) in that few differences in either the form or function of evaluative features that were related to gender were discovered. T-tests were conducted on both the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} grade samples, and confirmed the lack of significant differences in usage related to gender. In the few instances where a correlation was indicated, the relationship was extremely weak, and involved features which did not play a large role in either the qualitative or quantitative analyses (e.g., 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade females were slightly more likely than 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade males to use emphatic pronunciation). As for overall performance, it was mentioned at the outset that the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade females performed slightly better overall than the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade males. Early language development in males typically lags somewhat behind that of females however (see, e.g., Hoff-Ginsberg 1997), and this difference in
overall skill has disappeared by the 4th grade.

The analysis of SES, like the analysis of gender, showed no strong relationship with the use of particular evaluative components. In addition, SES showed no strong relationship with overall narrative scores. Though SES has often been cited in linguistic and educational research as a factor which strongly influences development, there are discernable reasons why this was not the case in the present sample. As explained at the outset, the site from which the data was collected is a public elementary school which has received multiple government grants to fund its unique language programs. Many of the students who attend the school were enrolled there by their parents because of these language programs. As this is a public school, the programs are free of charge and the open enrollment creates a linguistically and economically mixed student body. At the same time, participation in the programs requires an "above average" level of dedication on the part of both parents and teachers—from driving the students to and from school each day as bus service is not available to those outside the immediate neighborhood, to participation in additional training, and in some cases, home visits to support the goals of the programs. In this sense, many (though not all) of the low SES students in this sample are probably not representative of the typical low SES child who lacks access to educational resources, and for whom linguistic and educational performance so often lag behind. 59

59  An additional point of note is that, given the large number of universities and medical schools in the immediate area, many of the low SES students at the site of study are classified as such because one or both parents are currently graduate or medical students. Though the family incomes of these subjects classify them as "low SES," the well-educated parents of these subjects are yet another feature that is atypical of low SES children.
5.3.2 Language

Recent research that has examined the influence of language/culture on the development of narrative has described both differences and similarities across groups. Especially relevant to the present study, analyses of narrative development in various sub-groups within the Hispanic culture (e.g., Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias 1992, McCabe 1996, 1997, Melzi 1998, Shiro 1997, Signorini and Borzone de Manrique 1988) are said to challenge the conclusions of earlier work on narrative, the vast majority of which was conducted on Anglo-American speakers of English. Many of the researchers studying narrative development among Latino children conclude that when the narrative structure/style of the native language does not match that of the educational setting, limited English proficient (LEP) students (here the Spanish dominants) may experience difficulties in both communication and comprehension, and may also be the target of unfair negative assessment on the part of teachers/administrators who interpret differences in narrative form as indicative of developmental delay (see esp., Gutierrez-Clellen, et. al. 1995, and McCabe 1996, 1997). On the other hand, many of these same researchers also note that child subjects who are fully bilingual evidence advanced skills in comparison to monolingual children of the same age and background (see, e.g., Minaya Portella 1980). Interestingly, the scenario which is outlined by these researchers is not wholly reflected in the present data.

Recall that the sample population in this study was made up of native English, native Spanish, and Spanish-English bilingual students (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3, for charts detailing a breakdown of the three language groups) who were enrolled in either
the dual-language, English only, or ESL tracks. As noted in Chapter 2, the determination of a student’s language classification was based on both standardized assessment measures (e.g., Language Assessment Scales [LAS] scores) and teacher evaluations. Comparing the percentage of subjects in each language group in both grades reveals some interesting patterns:

1) The percentage of native English speakers remains relatively constant ($2^{nd} = 60\%$ $4^{th} = 58\%$)—Though this sample includes numerous native English speakers enrolled in the DL track, the vast majority have not made the transition to “bilingual” by the time they are nearing completion of their elementary school years.

2) The percentage of Spanish speakers decreases ($2^{nd} = 22\%$ $4^{th} = 15\%$), while the percentage of bilinguals increases ($2^{nd} = 18\%$ $4^{th} = 27\%$)—The majority of those students who make the transition to “bilingual” are native Spanish speakers who become fluent enough in English to receive the designation “bilingual.”

The patterns demonstrated in the sample are reflective of the overall patterns seen at the site of study. The three language tracks from which this sample was derived aim to produce either fluent English speakers, or fluent bilinguals—none of the three tracks focuses solely on the development of fluent Spanish speakers. Given the circumstances, one might posit that those Spanish speaking students who have not achieved the designation of “bilingual” by the end of their elementary school years may be experiencing multiple academic difficulties.\(^60\) Indeed, several findings reenforce this

\(^60\) This scenario is likely regardless of the reason why the student has not achieved the designation of “bilingual/FEP” (i.e., recent enrollment in the program, long-term participation in the school’s program which has not resulted in the acquisition of the requisite language skills, etc.).
hypothesis. Among the school’s LEP population, for example, standardized test scores in reading and language, though well above district-wide averages, show a steady decline from the 1st to 5th grades (see Graph 1, page 20). This trend towards diminished achievement among LEP students is again observed among the Spanish dominant subjects on the oral language task examined here. Among the native English speaking and bilingual subjects in both grades, 50-78% received skill scores which placed them in one of the top two categories (best and adequate). Among the subjects designated as native Spanish, only 36% (4 out of 11 total) of the 2nd graders manage to score in one of the top two skill groups. By the 4th grade, an even smaller percentage (29% = 2 out of 7 total) of those still designated as native Spanish manage to score in the top two skill levels. Those native Spanish speaking students who have not yet made the transition to bilingual by the 4th grade appear to be falling increasingly behind. As mentioned above, earlier research on children from multiple linguistic backgrounds indicates that: 1) Difference is often mistaken for deficit when a student’s language background does not match that of the educational context, and 2) Bilinguals often demonstrate (esp. linguistic and abstract thinking) skills that are advanced in comparison to monolinguals of the same age. The performance of these two groups (the native Spanish speakers and the bilinguals) is examined below, allowing us to explore whether the aforementioned assertions are born out in this data.

61 The designation of LEP includes students of all language backgrounds who have not yet achieved the level of English language competence necessary to receive the designation of “Fluent English Proficient” (FEP).
5.3.2.1 Use of Evaluative Features: Spanish Speakers

Recent research on numerous sub-groups within the Latino population has examined various aspects of children’s narrative development using both English- and Spanish-language data. Those findings that are most relevant to this research indicate that:

⇒ Compared to European North American children, Latino children focus on evaluative information (descriptive, orienting information, often about personal relationships) over action sequences in their personal narratives. In addition, their narratives often combine multiple experiences rather than centering upon a single experience. (McCabe 1996, 1997)

⇒ For Venezuelan Spanish speakers in the 1st and 4th grades, an increase in the amount of evaluation is related to both narrative genre and SES of the child. The use of references to cognition in particular increased drastically in conjunction with both age and SES. Evaluative devices were distributed throughout the narratives, with some evidence of clustering near the high point. Age-related increases in the diversity of evaluative devices employed also occurred, regardless of SES. (Shiro 1997)

⇒ For Argentinian Spanish speaking 3rd graders, the inclusion of characters’ internal responses in narrative re-tellings is dictated by the semantic content/centrality of the information—that is, mentions of such items may be critical to understanding (and thus, included for mention) in some stories more so than in others. (Signorini and Borzone de Manrique 1988)

⇒ Puerto Rican children’s re-tellings of a short film indicate that 8 year-olds’ stories contained more references to the mental states of the characters than 4 year-olds’ stories. In addition, 8 year-olds were more likely to explicitly state the cause and effect relationship between thoughts and actions, while 4 year-olds left such relationships implicit and/or left unstated the initiating or resulting actions or changes in state. (Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias 1992)

⇒ Among 7-9 year-old Peruvian Spanish speakers, evaluations were the most frequently occurring and widely distributed category (from among Labov’s narrative components—see Chapter 1) in narratives of personal experience. Similarities to American English narratives regarding both the form and function of evaluation (as well as other narrative components) were noted. (Minaya Portella 1980)
As this sample of findings makes evident, there are both similarities and differences between the present data and other research. Before turning to specifics, however, it is useful to note the general manner in which such findings are applied.

Though there are exceptions, recent trends have tended to pair psychological and linguistic research on schema theory (see, e.g., Dube 1982, Harris, et. al. 1988, Invernizzi and Abouzeid 1995, John and Berney 1968, Pritchard 1990) with findings such as those cited above in an effort to point out that for linguistic/cultural minority populations (esp. in educational settings) the influences of the native language/culture are so pervasive that they will almost necessarily prevail over the influences of the context, resulting in multiple potential disadvantages for the minority speaker. This perspective is undoubtedly true to an extent, but appears, in light of the data from this sample, to paint all too bleak a picture of potential achievement for the minority language student.

In the present sample, steadily declining skill scores and the lower overall achievement among the native Spanish subjects was noted. The question which arises for this analysis is whether or not this diminished achievement can be linked to differences in the manner in which the Spanish dominant subjects reconstruct the texts, particularly with respect to their use of evaluation. Consider the following narrative from a Spanish dominant 2nd grade male (Subj. 2mg12, Score = 2.67):

Text 17

7 C (Doc*) DoctorDeSoto said that (he he) he is the dentist.  
8 C And he go[EW] with (no) no[N] dangerous (a*) animal/s <> like[H] cat/s and cow/s <> and horse/*s <> like[H] that [EU].
E <Uhuh>.  
E <Ahha>.  
E <l see>.  
C (And and she) then the fox came.  
C And then he say/3s {C puts hand to jaw} [V] oh my poor mouth <is killing me>!  
E <{E laughs}>.  
C And then DoctorDeSoto say/3s that he will let it[EW:him] came[EW:come] in.  
C (Then) then he came in (and then and then) and then (she said she he s* he s*) his teeth the nXt one is (like like) brown.  
E Uhhuh.  
C And then (she the) he get[EW:got] gas and then he was sleep/ing.  
C [V] mm <mm mm I want to taste them like[H] with sandwich> [EU].  
E <{E laughs}>.  
C (Th* then) and then (she she he) he {C pulls on own tooth} (um) take[EW:took] (uh) a thing and then {C pantomimes pulling out a tooth} get[EW:got] out these teeth.  
C And then he put the gold teeth in.  
C And then he say/3s at the night he come/3s at the five thirty [EU].  
E Uhhuh.  
C And then (at the n*) at[EW] the other day (s* ca*) he came and then (he hook) he put {C points to own mouth} something wet in[EW:on] his teeth.  
E Uhhuh.  
C And then he said that (wa* you have to clo*) he has[O] to close his mouth <for one minute>.  
E <Uhuh>.  
C And then he try/ed to open up but he can not[N] open up.  
C And then he say[EW:said] [V] do do do do he said!  
C (And then) and then he (said) see/ed[EW:saw] the mouse/s kiss.  
C (Him) him don't[N] know that they're like this {C pretends to kiss} [EU].  
E {E laughs}.  
C And then he go (off) go/*3s down the stairs.  
E Uhhuh.  
C And then he go/3s the[EW] out.  
C And (then then that) then DoctorDeSoto (d*) kiss/3s no[N] more come/ing [EU].  
E Good job!

The Spanish dominant narrator makes numerous grammatical errors of the variety which are typical of LEP speakers (e.g., problems with tense, reference, articles,
difficulty retrieving the correct lexical item, etc.) and his pronunciation is marked by a heavy accent. Overall however, the referential information he presents is accurate, complete, and structured in a manner that is analogous to the narratives of the native English and bilingual subjects. As for the narrator’s use of evaluative features, a compulsion word is used in line 28, hedges occur in lines 2, 3 and 17, and negatives are found in lines 2, 31, 34, and 39. References to speech are distributed as follows: direct = lines 8-9, 17, and 32 indirect = lines 1, 11-12, 23, and 28-29. References to mental activity occur in lines 2-3, 8, 11, 17, 31, and 34. The references to cognition in lines 8 and 17 are embedded in direct speech, and the reference in line 11 is embedded in indirect speech. Overall, this narrator uses one or more of the evaluative features examined here in 11 out of 20 utterances (55%). References to speech occur in 7 utterances overall (35%), and 3 of the 7 references to speech (43%) contain embedded references to mental activity. Essentially, the form, function, frequency, and distribution of the evaluative features that this Spanish dominant narrator displays are analogous to that demonstrated by both the native English and bilingual subjects. The most striking feature of this narrator’s performance is, in fact, how similar it is to that of the non-LEP subjects. Though this narrative scored in the marginal range with a 2.67, it would appear that (all other factors being equal) it was the narrator’s lack of fluency that was a major factor in influencing the adult raters’ scores. (In fact, in terms of the amount of detail provided, as well as the use of evaluative features, this particular subject’s performance

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62 Raters 1 and 6 provided the written comment that they found this narrator’s speech difficult to understand.
looks quite like those of native speakers scoring in the *adequate* range. Had it not been negatively affected by his fluency, this narrative might well have placed in the top half of the skill rankings.)

Comparison of Text 17 with other narratives from Spanish dominant subjects in both the 2nd and 4th grade seems to confirm that fluency (rather than an inability to perceive and reproduce contextually condoned forms) is in fact the key. That is, there does not appear to be a great deal of difference in the manner in which either referential or evaluative information is conveyed in the majority of the narratives produced by Spanish dominant subjects. Rather, differences in the English language fluency of the narrators appear to parallel the received scores. If indeed it is fluency which is the issue, rather than unbridgeable schematic differences between languages and cultures, then the scenario for potential achievement is much brighter than that which is so often held forth for minority language students. This point is addressed again in section 5.4. At present, the main implication is that, though the Spanish dominant subjects are not yet fluent in English, they are still able to interpret and perceive the contextually condoned forms to the extent that it allows them to reproduce the information in a manner that is analogous to that of the FEP subjects. The LEP children are bright and perceptive participants in the context at hand, and they possess the cognitive flexibility that will enable them (especially with supportive interaction) to accommodate the demands of the English language educational setting.

Bearing in mind the above discussion of the manner in which cultural/linguistic differences among minority language students are often viewed, we now return to
discussion of the findings of other researchers as cited at the outset of this section. The conclusions of McCabe (1996, 1997), which note that Latino children's English language narratives focus heavily on evaluative information, and tend to avoid the reporting of single experience action sequences as preferred in the English language narratives of North American Caucasian children, were not demonstrated in the data. In this sample, the Spanish dominant subjects adopted the linear, action sequence narrative form which was repeatedly presented to them by the text, and did not appear to place a greater emphasis on the evaluative categories or on orientation than the native English subjects. The differences between McCabe's findings and the present data may be attributable to genre. McCabe's data consisted of 1st person narratives of personal experience as opposed to the 3rd person text re-tellings examined here. As noted at the outset (Hemphill, et. al., 1994), patterns of evaluative development in narrative have been found to vary across genres. While Latino children's 1st person narratives may differ in form from those of North American Caucasian children, their 3rd person text re-tellings in the classroom setting displayed both formal and functional properties which mirrored those of the FEP subjects (the similarities across groups likely being at least partially attributable to the enriched, repeated presentation of the material).

Regarding the findings of Shiro (1997), Signorini and Borzone de Manrique (1988), and Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias (1992), the results of this analysis are largely in agreement. Each of these researchers notes the central role that evaluation in general, and references to cognition in particular, play in the Spanish language narratives of Latino children. Shiro's (1997) findings describe patterns which are similar though not
directly parallel to those demonstrated here. Like Shiro’s work, this research found that evaluative devices tend to be distributed throughout the narratives, and that they play a central role in the construction of narratives. One of the main differences, though, is that Shiro’s quantitative analyses indicate several differences in use which correlate with SES—a pattern which did not appear in the present sample. As explained above, however, the low SES group in this sample is likely not representative of the “typical” low SES child in terms of access to educational resources, parental involvement, etc. Hence, in the population of study examined here, the “high” and “low” SES groups are not necessarily exceedingly stratified. By contrast, Shiro was careful to point out that her research was conducted among two highly and increasingly stratified social classes in Venezuela. Half of her subjects were selected from private schools in the wealthy suburbs of Caracas, the other half from public schools situated inside the city’s burgeoning slums. Given the extreme differences in background and resources which are represented in her sample, it is understandable that her research uncovered relationships/disparities related to SES that the present analysis did not.

The findings of Signorini and Borzone de Manrique (1988) cannot be wholly compared with those of the present analysis as their research contrasted patterns of re-tellings between narratives, while this study examined re-tellings of a single text for each of the two grade levels. However, Signorini and Borzone de Manrique found that various factors, such as the use of quoted speech in the original text, explicit mentions of objectives, familiarity with the particular type of text, etc. made varying demands on processing, and, depending on the text, were of variable importance in maintaining the
semantic integrity of the story during recall. In so much as their findings indicate the central role that mention of the character's intentions and/or the use of dialogue may play in the reconstruction of coherent, well-motivated narratives, their conclusions are mirrored in the present analyses.

The results of Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias (1992) parallel those of the present research in that they demonstrate that mentions of mental states among older narrators are likely to be presented in causal statements, while younger narrators do not tend to explicitly mark causal relationships, and may even omit initiating or resulting actions or changes in state from mention. Though Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias' data were collected in Spanish, and though the ages of their two sample groups did not quite match those of the present sample population (Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias = 4 year-olds vs. 8 year olds, while this sample = 7 year-olds vs. 9 year-olds), the patterns their research uncovers correspond in part with those discovered here. Though this study did not find that its younger narrators failed to mention initiating or resulting actions, it did find that its younger narrators (who were significantly older than those in Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias' study) often declined to mark causality explicitly. In addition, it was noted that the older narrators in this sample (who were mostly within 1 year of age of those in Gutierrez-Clellen and Iglesias' study) frequently used causal constructions to explicitly mark cause and effect in references to mental states. Both studies seem to have discovered the same phenomenon, but in two languages and among two slightly different (but not incongruous) age ranges.

Finally, Minaya Portella's (1980) conclusions are echoed in the present analyses,
though from a slightly different perspective. Minaya Portella’s data consisted of Spanish
language 1st person narratives, upon which Labovian analyses (see Chapter 1, Section
1.1) were performed in an effort to uncover the extent to which Spanish language
narratives of personal experience might differ from earlier data on English language
narratives of the same type. Her conclusions that widespread similarities in both form
and function were present, and that the use of evaluative features in particular was
comparable between the two groups, parallel the findings of this work. As the present
data demonstrate, the Spanish dominant speakers generally produced English language
re-tellings of 3rd person narratives whose formal properties and evaluative features were
analogous/highly similar to those found in narratives produced by fluent speakers of
English.

Overall, we see that the narrative patterns demonstrated by native Spanish
speakers in this research are largely the same as those of the FEP subjects. The
difference between high and low scoring Spanish dominant subjects cannot be linked to
cultural/linguistic differences in the structure and/or the presentation of evaluation in the
re-tellings. Rather, issues pertaining to fluency, and patterns of deterioration regarding
the communication of both referential and evaluative information which parallel those of
the FEP subjects appear to account for the differences in skill scores.

Previous research has described narrative patterns among native Spanish speakers
that are both similar and dissimilar to those displayed by English speakers. In those
instances where differences were demonstrated, these variances either did not affect the
genre examined here, or their influence was not robust enough to outweigh the influences
of the context. Though recent research has focused on cultural/linguistic differences in narrative style as a potential source of disadvantage for language minority students, the present data indicate that the Spanish dominant subjects, having been immersed in a largely English-language educational setting, are generally capable of both deciphering and employing the contextually condoned forms. For those Spanish dominants who rated poorly on this task, the central issue appears to be related to larger concerns of fluency, rather than their inability to employ the appropriate features.

5.3.2.2 Use of Evaluative Features: Bilinguals

While the current perspective on language minority students paints a bleak portrait of nearly unbridgeable gaps, much of the contemporary work on bilingualism points to the ability to manipulate two linguistic systems (the native language plus a second) as resulting in not only linguistic, but general cognitive advantages (see, e.g., Arnberg 1981, Baker 1993, Bialystock 1987, 1991, Cummins 1977, Doyle, et. al. 1978, Kessler and Quinn 1982, Peal and Lambert 1962, etc.). According to Cummins (1977, 1980, 1981, etc.), bilingual development is an additive process—the progression of second language abilities builds upon the general linguistic system which is already present as a result of the native language, rather than “starting from scratch” to construct a completely separate system. In studies of multilingual educational environments, cognitive/academic language proficiency of L1 has been shown to be significantly related to proficiency of L2 (Cummins 1980, p. 88), verifying the assertion that such higher-level proficiency is the manifestation not of a particular language (of “channel”) but of the
unitary linguistic system formed on the basis of generalized linguistic knowledge. Yet by the same token, this assertion of interdependence must be kept in check by factors such as age of L2 acquisition. Studies show that older children, whose cognitive/academic language proficiency in L1 is more developed at the time of acquisition of L2 will acquire similar skills in L2 at a more rapid pace (see, i.e., Genesee 1978, Krashen, et. al. 1979). Thus, though a certain amount of interdependence exists between advanced cognitive functioning in L1 and L2, the more developed these skills are in L1, the better off the learner will be. In addition to being interdependent, these skills have also been shown to be cumulative. As Troike (1979) points out, the full benefits of a bilingual education may not completely surface until the fifth or sixth year of instruction—the implications for this research being that narrative abilities in both languages may not appear in full until approximately grade 5.

Other studies point to more general advantages of a bilingual education. Feldman and Shen (1971) studied the effects of early childhood bilingualism and found that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals on Piagetian object constancy tasks and tests of metalinguistic knowledge. De Avila and Duncan (1980) found that proficient bilinguals out-perform all other test groups in terms of superior development of perspective taking, ability to re-organize a 3-D display, the separation of parts of organized fields from the whole, and the development of level of articulation of bodily concepts (self/non-self segregation [keeping things separate], or breaking things into sets [the precursor of higher order restructuring of sets of functions]). Cummins (1980, p. 97-98) finds that in the later elementary grades, the majority language literacy skills of bilingual students
increase so substantially as to equal and often surpass those of mono-lingual students.

Regarding the production of narratives in particular, Doyle, et. al. (1978) found that bilinguals tended to demonstrate an overall superiority in their ability to relate stories and to express concepts in those stories when compared with monolinguals of similar ages and backgrounds. Minaya Portella (1980), whose work on children's Peruvian-Spanish narratives was cited above, found that her bilingual subjects consistently outperformed her monolingual, Spanish speaking subjects when children's 1st person narratives were analyzed using a Labovian framework (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1). In the present analysis, the bilingual subjects do demonstrate some evidence of advantage over both the English monolinguals and the Spanish dominants. The extent of their advantage, however, is not entirely clear given the present findings.

As noted above in the discussion of Spanish dominant subjects, the percentage of students designated "bilingual" increases between the 2nd and 4th grades—primarily due to the transition of former Spanish dominants into the bilingual group. In the 2nd grade sample, 18% (9/50) of the subjects were designated bilingual, while in the 4th grade, 27% (13/48) of the subjects were included in this group. While the percentage of students designated bilingual increases by a full 50% during this two year period, the percentage of students within this language group who score in the top half of the skill scale decreases from 78% (7/9) to 62% (8/13). If we compare the performance of monolingual English speakers during the same period, we find that 50% (15/30) of the 2nd graders score in the top two skill groupings, and that this proportion has increased to 64% (18/28) by the 4th grade. That is, the advanced performance demonstrated by the bilinguals as a
group in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade has disappeared by the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade, where the performances of the bilinguals as a group and the monolingual English speakers as a group are approximately equal.

Statistical analyses (ANOVAs) revealed that both 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} grade bilingual subjects used slightly more evaluative features across the board than either the native English or Spanish dominant subjects, but the differences in usage were so slight that none were statistically significant. Qualitative comparison of the narratives of both 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} grade bilinguals with those of the other subjects also revealed few differences. Compare, for example, the high-scoring Text 2 (examined in Chapters 3 and 4) from a 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade bilingual female, with that of Text F (see Appendix B) from a 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade English speaking female. In both cases, we find comparable use of the seven evaluative features initially examined, as well as the frequent occurrence of references to mental activity embedded within direct character speech—both of which were noted to be the hallmarks of the most successful 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade re-tellings.

Essentially, the bilingual subjects do not demonstrate “different”/“more advanced” usage of the evaluative features under consideration. Rather, a larger proportion of the bilingual subjects display “skilled” patterns of use at an early age (2\textsuperscript{nd} grade). The proportion of bilinguals displaying skilled patterns decreases with age such that, by the 4\textsuperscript{th} grade, the percentage of the most skilled bilinguals is approximately equal to that of the monolingual English speakers. The size and duration of the present study limit its ability to offer generalized conclusions as to the long-term differences between bilinguals and monolinguals. In fact, the data invite more questions than are answered.
For example, what does the high proportion of skill found among the younger bilinguals mean? Is it indicative of some sort of developmental advantage among the younger bilinguals that is lost/evened out by the time these students reach the 4th grade? If this is the case, why would such advantages not persist?, etc. The current findings appear to contradict many of those cited at the outset of this section. However, they correspond with the conclusions of (a minority of) other researchers who find that the generalized cognitive advantages of bilingualism may be predominant in younger rather than older children, with monolinguals catching up in the later years (see, e.g., Balkan 1970, Ben-Zeev 1977).

5.3.3 Summary

Overall, the anticipated differences between groups with respect to the use of evaluative features and overall skill were not found. While 2nd grade females demonstrated slightly higher skill scores as a group than 2nd grade males, this sex-linked advantage had disappeared by the 4th grade. The minor differences in the use of evaluation that were found between the sexes revolved around features that played a relatively insignificant role in both the qualitative and quantitative analyses, such as the slightly increased use of emphatic pronunciation among 2nd grade females. Differences related to SES were similarly absent, though the unique make-up of the sample population was suggested as a possible explanation for the homogeneity.

Though much of the current literature which examines narrative forms among different linguistic and cultural groups focuses its discussion on the differences therein,
the present data did not reveal any notable differences among the language groups examined here with respect to the use of the relevant evaluative features in the re-tellings. This finding should not be used to assert that differences do not exist—especially in the spontaneous production of narratives in more naturalistic settings (e.g., 1st person narratives of personal experience, etc.). However, these results do indicate that in an enriched setting, where the contextually condoned forms are explicitly, repeatedly practiced, the likelihood that speakers from all backgrounds will be able to interpret and adopt such models/patterns is significantly increased.

5.4 The Relationship Between Oral Language Skills and Academic Achievement

In their 1980 research, De Avila and Duncan state that although oral language proficiency is one of the strongest predictors of academic success, “The effects of oral English language proficiency on school achievement and cognitive development have not been empirically studied to any great extent,” and English language achievement (skills learned in a structured setting such as the classroom) is often not distinguished from English language proficiency (more generalizable skills that are not necessarily dependent on specific instruction or content). This distinction is an important one because language achievement is more likely to be dependent on language proficiency than the reverse.63 In the two decades since De Avila and Duncan’s observations were

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63 Recall the discussion of the Spanish dominant subjects whose performance scores on this task, as discussed above, appear to have been negatively affected by issues of fluency.
made, several studies have explored the connection between oral language ability and academic success, especially in relation to the acquisition of literacy (see, i.e., Catts and Kamhi 1987, Dickinson 1990, Heath 1996, McCabe 1996, 1997, Meadows 1993, Michaels 1990, Notari-Syverson and Losardo 1996, Roth and Spekman 1986, Stillman and Wilkinson 1991). The general conclusion drawn from this research is that, with the exception of cases where pathologies are present, oral language and literacy develop simultaneously and in relationship with one another, as both involve the activities of symbolic representation and meaning-making (Meadows 1993, Sawyer 1991).

More recently, an interest in the connection between academic achievement and narrative abilities in particular has developed (see, i.e., Bamberg 1987, Bishop and Edmundson 1987, Dickinson 1990, Dickinson and McCabe 1991, Fordham 1985, McCabe 1996, 1997, Michaels 1990, Minaya Portella 1980, Norris and Bruning 1988). Positing a connection between the two seems logical given the understanding of narrative espoused above. If narrative truly functions as an integral part of human sense-/meaning-making, well-developed narrative skills ought to be connected with advanced cognitive abilities. As Bamberg (1987, p. 99) points out, the type of metalinguistic/decontextualized skills which are necessary in the production of narratives (i.e., management of cohesive devices such as anaphora, manipulation of perspective, temporality, etc.) are the same sort of metalinguistic/decontextualized skills which are required in the development of reading and writing—that is, both processes require "the ability to reflect

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64 For a definition of "decontextualized language," see Footnote #5, page 12.
uppon language as a system in and by itself” (see also, Wimmer 1982, p. 127).

Unfortunately, much of the research on narrative language in educational settings concludes that narrative is a resource which is overlooked at worst, and misinterpreted at best (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3). As work by McCabe (1997, p. 168) confirms that true narrative delay is predictive of delayed acquisition of literacy, it is imperative that we refine our understanding of how oral language abilities are linked with academic achievement. As noted at the outset, it is likely that certain oral language skills are more crucial than others when it comes to achieving success in academic settings—and it is those students who have mastered the crucial skills who are perceived as most capable, and thus create for themselves an educational environment conducive to success. By exploring the relationship between narrative abilities and previous academic achievement, this research hoped to gain insight into the connection between oral language skills and academic success, as well as to examine the implications of the findings for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

5.4.1 Assessing the Relationship Between Perceived Narrative Skill and Academic Achievement

In order to explore the relationship between narrative ability and academic performance, the narratives of individual students were compared with prior measures of student achievement (i.e., standardized test scores, teacher grades). This analysis undertook to answer the following questions:

1) Do correlations exist between performance on the narrative task and other
measures of academic achievement?

If so:

2) Do low-achieving students typically share/lack certain narrative characteristics?

3) What are the narrative characteristics that high-achieving students typically share?

The preliminary hypothesis with respect to the connection between narrative abilities and academic achievement was that a one-way relationship would exist between the level of linguistic proficiency (as evidenced in the production of oral narratives) and overall academic achievement. Specifically, those students who evidence high levels of overall academic achievement should also exhibit high-level linguistic capabilities, although the reverse relationship (high-level linguistic capabilities → high levels of academic achievement) may not always hold, due in part to external factors such as behavioral traits, motivation, home environment, etc.65

Correlations were run to assess the relationship between the scores on the narrative task, Stanford 8/966 scores, and teacher grades. Tables 12 and 13, below, display the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for both the 2nd and 4th grade samples:

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65 Though the size of the data set will only allow limited generalizations to be drawn in answer to the above questions, it was hoped that it would provide enough evidence of patterns across groups (high vs. low achievers) for initial conclusions to be drawn.

66 The Stanford test is a standardized achievement test which all students take on a yearly basis. The numbers 8/9 designate the two different versions of the test which are used with FEPs and Spanish-dominant LEPs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Scores</th>
<th>Stanford Scores</th>
<th>Teacher Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Scores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford Scores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.63*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 42
* = correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

**TABLE 12 – 2\textsuperscript{nd} Grade Sample Correlation Matrix: Average Narrative Scores with Stanford Scores and Teacher Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Scores</th>
<th>Stanford Scores</th>
<th>Teacher Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Scores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford Scores</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 41
* = correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

**TABLE 13 – 4\textsuperscript{th} Grade Sample Correlation Matrix: Averaged Narrative Scores with Stanford Scores and Teacher Grades**

As Tables 12 and 13 reveal, only Stanford scores and teacher grades (marked with an “*”) evidence a significant relationship with one another in both the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} grade samples. Performance on the narrative task does not display a significant relationship with the other variables in either grade. This result was puzzling, especially in light of earlier research in which empirical findings point towards the existence of a unitary factor of “deep language proficiency” (see, i.e., Oller 1980, Oller and Perkins 1980). This deep-level proficiency is thought to be most fully displayed in naturalistic discourse...
settings, and pervades all number of cognitive tasks—implying that, on the cognitive level, linguistic ability is not simply an isolated indicator of language function, but serves as a broader reflection of general cognitive aptitude.

There are several possible reasons why the present findings did not demonstrate a relationship between the narrative skill scores and other measures of academic achievement. First, it may be that the task assessed did not adequately represent a “naturalistic discourse setting” as referred to above. What this designation means is not entirely clear from the literature (e.g., Is “naturalistic” defined by the context, or does it indicate the presence of certain ubiquitous traits?, etc.), and while every effort was made to render the subjects as comfortable and familiar with the requested task as possible, it may still be the case that the conditions of a “naturalistic discourse setting” were not completely met. This being the so, the subjects might not have had an opportunity to demonstrate the sort of “deep-level proficiency” which is reflective of and can be linked to general cognitive aptitude.

What seems more likely, however, is the possibility that the narrative task and the standardized tests are assessing two very different types of aptitude, and that, insomuch as there are increasing pressures being placed on teachers to “teach to the tests,” the teachers’ assessments of student achievement are more reflective of the type of aptitude required on the standardized tests than of the sort of aptitude necessary to perform well on the narrative task. In order to fully understand this point, it is necessary to possess some perspective on the history and current use of standardized tests in educational settings.
The modern-day origins of standardized testing in the United States can be traced to nineteenth century concerns with the identification and classification of the mentally retarded. Since that time, a myriad of tests, applicable to a multitude of purposes, have been developed (Anastasi 1988). The field in which standardized testing has been most widely exploited is unquestionably that of education. Over the course of the past two centuries, western educators have struggled to develop and/or procure measures of assessment which are widely applicable (and thus informative about the success/failure of curriculum in general), yet still precise enough that they can be used to appraise the aptitude of individual students for the purposes of placement, assessment of deficiencies, prediction of academic potential, etc. Government funding of many educational programs—some of which is allotted on a competitive basis—has only proliferated the need for the development of standardized measures for comparison of student achievement (Cummins 1980), not to mention the fact that it encourages curriculum and instruction which are aimed at performance on a single, decontextualized measure, rather than at the application of higher-level skills in a variety of contexts.

Of specific relevance to this research, the assessment of language abilities through the use of standardized tests has proven a particularly difficult task. The success of such pursuits has, in some respects, fallen short of expectations. This is due in part to the fact that, unlike other skills (such as mathematical problem solving), language does not usually occur in a decontextualized, multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil setting, in which an isolated individual is solely responsible for the construction and interpretation of meaning—all of which are necessary conditions for the administration of standardized
tests which must assess large numbers of students in a relatively brief amount of time. Additionally, as Archbald & Newmann (1988) point out, failures are due in part not to the tests themselves, but to a widespread misunderstanding of the applicability and interpretation of such measures. A brief review of the literature reveals innumerable examples of standardized testing being abused, misinterpreted, and misapplied (see, e.g., Anastasi 1988). Scores on IQ tests have been mistakenly interpreted as measures of an unalterable genetic trait, rather than immediate indicators of the complex and dynamic system of human cognition. Scores on standardized tests which were administered in languages unfamiliar to test subjects have been used to place said subjects in remedial programs due to low scores/diagnoses of cognitive deficiencies—in effect destroying the subjects’ chances of realizing their true potential.67 Translated versions of tests have been mistakenly assumed to be precise equivalents of the original versions, though in actuality the contents of the translated versions were far more advanced in terms of their lexical, syntactic, and conceptual content, causing test subjects to produce significantly lower scores on the translated versions than their counterparts who took the test in its original language. Standardized tests have been used with subjects for whom, culturally speaking, the concept of a timed, convergent measure of “intellectual ability” is essentially anomalous. It follows that they put forth a minimal effort, generally resulting in a low score and an inaccurate indication of ability.

67 A 1972 study by Zirkel states that the verbal (English) portions of standardized intelligence tests underestimate the intellectual ability of certain groups of pupils, and may account for the disproportionate number of language minority (particularly Hispanic) students in tracks designed for the “educable mentally retarded.”
Of more recent concern is the question of exactly what type of abilities standardized tests actually measure. At one extreme, standardized test scores are viewed as accurate indicators of general knowledge, intellectual ability, potential for future success, etc. On the other extreme, critics argue that standardized tests measure little beyond the ability to take such tests, and that they should not be viewed as demonstrative of general intelligence or as predictive of future achievement. The fact that most educators (who often have full access to the test results of individual students, and who may use such information to make placement decisions, form presuppositions about student ability, etc.) are not trained to recognize the limitations of standardized tests, much less to understand the difference between such detailed distinctions as percentage and percentile, etc. only compounds these problems (Archbald and Newmann 1988, Aguero 1998). 68

In attempts to address the above concerns, recent research has proven that a limited correlation does exist between scores on standardized tests and grade point

68 Standardized tests, explain Archbald and Newmann (1988, p. 52-61), are constructed such that the scores of any given representative student population will produce a normalized distribution (a bell-shaped curve, in which 68% of students will fall between a certain score above and a certain score below the mean). To achieve this normalized distribution, test writers must select as test questions only those items which, in pilot studies, were missed by half the students—that is, a well-written standardized test insures that at least half of the students taking the test will score 'below average' (will have a percentage score which places them below half [percentile] of all those taking the test). In addition, it is important to realize that the normalized scales upon which most standardized tests are based do not consist of uniform intervals. Because one is dealing with increments on a curve, the number of questions a student must answer correctly/incorrectly to move a given increment on the curve depends on where they stand in the overall percentile rankings. The further toward either extreme a student falls, the less useful (sensitive) standardized tests become in measuring changes in performance. Thus, standardized tests provide an accurate measure of individual student abilities relative to the norming population, and should generally be limited in their application to simple comparisons between students, schools, districts, states, etc.
averages, yet much of this same research is also quick to caution that there are certain types of achievement and ability which most standardized tests fail to assess (see, i.e., Archbald & Newmann 1988, p. 55-58). One area in which these general cautions are heavily underscored is that of language testing. The “paper-and-pencil,” timed, discrete-point setting of most standardized tests, in which an isolated individual must process a decontextualized chunk of linguistic input in order to arrive at the “correct” answer, is unarguably a distinctly different setting from that in which most of our language usage occurs and/or linguistic knowledge is applied. As noted above (Wells 1985), other factors, such as preschool experience with books (note the relation to narrative development!), have proven to be more apt predictors of future academic success than the sort of sentence-level language assessment measures typical of standardized tests (see also, Cochran-Smith 1984, Goldfield and Snow 1984).

Though pains have been taken to improve the accuracy of standardized tests, and to lessen their cultural biases, the general tenor of recent discussion leans toward the development of forms of (esp. language) testing which are more accessible to teachers in the classroom, more individualized, and are carried out in a more natural setting (discourse as opposed to discrete point). All of these changes are aimed at obtaining

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69 On a scale of 0-1.0, .5 if the correlation is obtained at the time of testing, dropping to .35 if the correlation is assessed 1 year after the administration of the test (Linn 1982).

70 Many tests are now available in multiple languages, contain items which have been deemed less culturally biased, or allow students to re-test in their native language those items which they miss in English. Additionally, a small number of tests for generalized intelligence which are completely non-verbal have been developed. See Mercer and Lewis 1979 for research on the statistical biases of standardized tests.
more accurate assessments of student abilities/potential. Indeed, many theorists argue for discourse-based testing over discrete-point tests on the basis of empirical findings which point toward the existence of a unitary factor of “deep language proficiency,” as mentioned above (see, e.g., Oller 1980, Oller and Perkins 1980). Studies show that this “global language proficiency factor” can single-handedly account for the majority of reliable variances across tests (for varying constructs) and thus challenges the basic assumptions upon which most popular methods of testing—which seek to separate and assess multiple factors of proficiency—are based.

A former teacher at the site of study offered the following insights (Moon 2000):

Most of us don’t use the standardized test scores unless we are looking at them for an ARD71 meeting... But we do tend to teach to the tests, though less so here than at other schools. Partly it’s because we have to if you look at the rubrics for the district, and also it’s easier. A lot of our stuff is product-based, but at the same time it’s not asking the students to transfer knowledge across content areas, or to be creative... You start out the year with the best intentions [about meeting the differing needs of individual students], but eventually you have to answer to parents and administrators, so it’s just easier to make everybody do the same thing, fill in the same blank with the same answer... Even with writing where they are supposed to produce something, we tend to grade based on some standard thing like spelling or grammar rather than content...

As her comments make clear, there is a definite tendency to focus teaching on the type of skills necessary to perform well on standardized tests, as well as to standardize assessment, even within the smaller-scale of the classroom. Reading between the lines, we infer that the type of accountability to which teachers are increasingly being held is

71 ARD stands for Assessment, Referral, Dismissal. These meetings are held to determine student placement and/or the need for remedial assistance in specific content areas.
one that calls for them to meet the standards of decontextualized assessment measures, in many cases overlooking the complex, contextualization of knowledge and the needs of individual learners. In so much as this is the case, it supports the above assertion that the reason the narrative scores displayed no significant relationship with other measures of achievement is that they are assessing a different type of ability. This scenario would be acceptable were it not for one fact—that is, the type of knowledge assessed in discrete-point measures is, essentially, gained through participation in a context of shared assumptions—the very thing which the practice of narrative allows us to construct. This point will be taken up below in the discussion of implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. At present, let it suffice to note that the absence of narrative (and furthermore, the absence of the ability to evaluative within narrative) from educational settings is hazardous for at least two reasons. First, as children transition in the later grades into the acquisition of knowledge (as opposed to the early grades, which focus more on the acquisition of basic skills—e.g., the mechanics of reading, writing, counting, etc.), their attainment of the goals of the establishment (understanding the given information in a given manner) is left to question if they do not employ evaluation when reconstructing information. That is, "students" by definition are expected to acquire information, and also to assign that information a meaning. The apprehension of the intended meaning cannot be assured in the absence of any indicators to that effect. A second potential pitfall of the absence of narrative is that, as we communicate largely on the assumption of an absence of doubt as to our shared perspectives (see Section 5.2 on Perner 1988), the manner in which information is expected to be interpreted may be left
implicit more often than it should be—especially in educational settings. In some sense, the educational context the child is faced with is akin to that of another “culture” whose perspectives, unless they are made explicit, may well remain unclear to the child. Thus, both sides (the teacher and the student) may be working from an erroneous assumption of shared interpretations, when in fact, no such bases for shared interpretation actually exist. The danger of these circumstances will usually be played out primarily upon the student, when the inability of both sides to recognize the lack of shared assumptions eventually results in a failure on the part of the child (e.g., flunking a test, a failing grade on a research paper, etc.).

While the preceding discussion has answered the first of the three questions posed at the outset of this section (Is there a relationship between narrative performance and other types of achievement?), it is difficult to answer the last two (Do high and low performers on other measures share narrative patterns?). Given the circumstances, in which there are no strong relationships between the scores received on this task and other measures of academic achievement, it is nearly impossible to discern “patterns of performance” among either high or low academic achievers. Of note, however, is the fact that there is a reasonable amount of agreement at the extremes. Many of those who ranked in the best category with respect to narrative skill also fared well on the Stanford exam (80th percentile or better) and on teacher grades (most were designated as A/B students). By contrast, many of those who ranked low in narrative skill (marginal or poor) also performed poorly on the Stanford exam (50th percentile or below) and on teacher grades (most were designated as C students or worse). Nonetheless, there were
several cases which did not follow this pattern. Recall, for example, Text 9 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4). The young male narrator of this text scored a 4.67 (best) on the narrative task, and was cited as an example of the manner in which evaluative skill could sometimes overcome deficiencies in the communication of referential information. His teacher grades him as a D/F student and his standardized test scores place him in the lower 1/3 of the test population. Several similar cases occurred within the sample (subjects scoring high or low on this task scored the reverse on the Stanford test and on teacher grades). Like the narrator of Text 9, these subjects often demonstrated peculiarities which likely affected their narrative skill scores. For example, one female subject, who performed extremely well on the Stanford exam, and whose teacher graded her an A/B student, scored on the lower end of the marginal category on the narrative task. Though her recounting of the referential events was thorough and clear, and though she made appropriate use of evaluation, her rate of speech was an incredibly slow 76 words-per-minute (as compared to 115+ on average for the rest of the sample). All three of the raters included written comments as to the fact that, though she related the story very clearly, they were extremely bored and could hardly wait for her to finish! The meticulous, methodical pattern which apparently serves this student well on tests and in the completion of classroom assignments proved detrimental in the narrative context. Another example, several students (mostly 2nd grade males) initially provided re-tellings which were not recognizable as the same story that was presented in the text in class. These “amended versions” often contained some of the same characters or scenes as the original text, and when provided with more specific instructions (i.e., “Do you remember
the version we read in class? Can you tell me that one?”), all of the subjects provided a re-telling which essentially matched the text version. Perhaps these subjects simply misunderstood the prompt (i.e., “Can you tell me the story of Doctor DeSoto? I want to hear your best version!”), but it is of interest to note that the subjects who provided the aberrant re-tellings are typically low achievers with respect to both teacher grades and test scores, despite the fact that they were perfectly capable of accomplishing the task in the manner expected when provided with further guidance. Finally, a handful of 2nd grade subjects who earned extremely high teacher grades and test scores produced exceptionally brief re-tellings of a dozen utterances or less in which they correctly, concisely summarized the events of the narratives, providing little if any evaluation. These subjects all received narrative skill scores which placed them in the bottom half of the rating scale. While their “poor” performance on the narrative task at first appears surprising in light of their extremely high scores on other measures, the seeming contradiction might be explained by the fact that what these subjects possess is a different type of skill—one that is strongly encouraged in educational settings. That is, these students provided a summary of the main points of the text, and it is likely that this ability to distill information down to a basic, standardized form is, in part accountable for their excellent performance on other measures such as standardized tests. Like the high-achieving female whose meticulousness did not serve her well in the context of narration, these subjects’ tendency to condense information down to the basics proved detrimental.

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72 See also, Section 2.3 for discussion of Karmiloff-Smith’s (1986) findings regarding variability of individual performance on language tasks among this age group.
on this particular task.

Though specific patterns of narrative and/or evaluation cannot be generalized to either high or low academic achievers, it is notable that the majority of subjects at the extremes displayed either consistent performance across measures, or evidenced irregularities which were exceptional enough to affect the scores received on the narrative task, and hence to explain the extreme differences between their performance on this task and other measures. Essentially, this discussion supports the credence afforded the adult judgements from the outset. The aberrant texts having been accounted for ("explained away"), we are left once again with a data set that patterns largely as expected: 1) high oral skills are paired with high academic achievement, and 2) low oral skills are paired with low academic achievement. While the lack of a correlation for the sample as a whole emphasizes that there are multiple means of achieving success, the pattern that remains when the exceptions are accounted for underscores the contention that a relationship between oral language skills and overall achievement exists.

5.4.2 Implications for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The relatively recent emergence of the field of "applied linguistics" has generated a widespread interest in the ways in which language theory can be employed in everyday settings. The field of education is one of several outside disciplines which has begun to pay cautious attention to the work generated by applied linguists. As a result of certain inaugural collaborations, it was recognized that the link between oral language skills and academic ability must be further explicated, and that this knowledge must be
disseminated among practitioners—from speech therapists, to primary and secondary educators, etc.—rather than remain exclusively within the domain of theoretical linguistics (see, i.e., Bamberg 1987, Crystal 1981, Cummins 1977, Dickinson 1990, Edwards 1990, Green 1986, Michaels 1990, U. S. Gov./OBEMLA 1997). This final section will discuss potential applications of the present research in educational settings, highlighting the various ways in which the findings might inform curriculum, assessment and instruction.

The research conducted in this study, though limited in scope, offers several suggestions as to initial changes which might be encouraged. Regarding curriculum and instructional design, this research suggests that repeated, interactive exposure to forms/concepts is highly effective (recall the earlier discussion of Vygotsky’s approach to assessment), even among younger elementary-aged students of multiple cultural/linguistic backgrounds. There appear to be two factors, however, which were crucial to the students’ ability to internalize the forms/concepts: reciprocal interaction\textsuperscript{73} and explicitness. Reciprocal interaction refers to the collaborative manner in which the information was introduced. Rather than presenting the texts from beginning to end with the tacit assumption that their significance/meaning was of a single form shared by the group, I as the instructor paused frequently and encouraged questions, comments, and hypothetical thinking on the part of the students.\textsuperscript{74} Typical discussion included

\textsuperscript{73} Cummins and Swain (1986) uses this term in a similar manner.

\textsuperscript{74} See Destefano (1984) for a discussion of “tacit rules” and the “powerful hidden curriculum” of schools.
questions/comments such as: Why do you think X-character did X-action? If you were X-character, what would you do/think/feel/say, etc.? What do you think will happen next, and why? What does X mean?, etc. Undertaken as a group, these activities allowed, and indeed necessitated that the students participate in constructing the meaning of the texts. Under this approach, the instructor functions not as a "pump, filling up the students with...ready-prepared bits and pieces of knowledge" (Vygotsky 1997), but rather, more like a conduit or a sculptor, directing and shaping the flow of knowledge, which the students themselves share in generating. This leads us to the second factor of explicitness—a term which is meant to indicate that the role of the instructor, in helping to direct and shape the development of knowledge, is to aid students in deciphering not only "what," but also "why." Rather than assuming the shared significance of information, the instructor must help the students arrive at and directly state said significance. As demonstrated here in the context of narrative, knowledge of "what" (e.g., referential facts) without knowledge of "why" (e.g., evaluative information = the meaning/significance) is of limited value/use. By designing curriculum and instruction in a manner which requires students to participate in the construction of meaning, and to think about and express the relationships between particulars, as well as the significance of those

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Recall that the purpose of this research was to assess the evaluative aspects of children's narrative retellings, and that the experimental methods adopted were those of Vygotskian/"dynamic" assessment, according to which rich, contextualized exposure to the material to be tested is a necessary prerequisite. See Brown, et. al. (1984) for a detailed discussion of comprehension-fostering activities in interactive learning situations.

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Romaine (1984, p. 167) states, "In school...communication does not always proceed against a background of shared assumptions. Children must learn to appreciate what part of their assumed communicative knowledge must be expressed explicitly in any particular situation."
relationships, we can foster the advanced development of higher-order mental processes.

What the precise form of the new tools should be, and the optimal manner in which they can be manipulated in order to focus on the requisite skills, are specifics which will emerge from the collection and analysis of data from further studies. Such work may conclude, for example, that even simple adjustments, like the inclusion of more opportunities for students to produce and explore extended stretches of discourse such as that produced in show-and-tell time, etc. are sufficient to support the development of higher-level linguistic and cognitive abilities of the type necessary in academic settings. Alternately, such work may show that much more intricate and explicit adjustments to the language curriculum are required (e.g., Nicolopoulou 1997 finds that after a single year of socially-structured practice in the classroom, 4-5 year-olds were capable of producing complex plot structures containing clear initiating events, dramatic problems with resolutions, internal points of view, and formal ending devices—contradictory to other research such as that of Haslett 1986, Hudson and Shapiro 1990, and Peterson and McCabe 1983, which claims that children are not capable of manipulating/fully integrating such devices until at least 8 years of age.). As the findings of the present study indicate that even the language minority students demonstrated the ability to adopt the presented patterns after only a few months of contextualized practice, it seems likely that the potential for the successful use of such instructional techniques among both native and non-native speakers is extremely high. In addition, it would be of interest to know whether or not the use of instructional techniques which focus on the reciprocal, explicit construction of meaning would also result in improved performance
on decontextualized measures such as fill-in-the-blank/multiple-choice exams and standardized tests. Finally, the mere act of informing both teachers and administrators about the patterns outlined here may benefit both curriculum and instruction. First, this awareness might help teachers to better understand their own subjective responses to individual students. Second, a deeper understanding of the manner in which students at different grade levels approach the reconstruction of information/the construction of individual meaning could prove extremely beneficial in guiding the selection of materials and informing instructional techniques.

Turning to assessment, the current findings indicate that the inclusion of discourse-based measures would not only allow for the evaluation of skills not explicitly captured by standardized, discrete-point measures, but might also add a more individualized, accessible component to the overall assessment scenario. Unlike most standardized tests, oral language tasks such as that employed here allow students to produce and interpret information in highly contextualized settings. The performance of individual students is easily compared (e.g., through the use of video or audio tape), allowing teachers to track and analyze student progress on local and/or individual levels (see NCBE 1990, p. 2). As a teacher who served as one of the eight adult raters commented, “When you watch the tapes one after another, you really start to see the differences between the kids. You can point out things that you wouldn’t otherwise notice in individual students.” (Moon 1999). Even in the current absence of any strictly delineated protocols, the use and comparison of oral language abilities among students may prove informative by helping teachers understand the manner in which their students
attempt to (re)construct knowledge. Like the Vygotskian approach to assessment discussed above, the strategy proposed here is aimed at understanding/evaluating not only the product, but also the process of student learning. By shifting the focus of assessment towards such a dual orientation, educators may be able to refine their understanding of the various difficulties that individual students are experiencing since they will now be focusing on the processes which are often the root of the flawed/inaccurate products.

5.4.3 Summary

At the outset of this proposal, the need to further explore the connection between oral language abilities and academic success was presented and the analysis of oral narratives was advanced as a fitting means of examining this link. The research discussed above supports the necessity of these pursuits, and furthermore, clarifies the manner in which the achievement of the stated goals will produce results that are useful and informative in the fields of both linguistics and education.

In Section 5.4.1, the assertion that standardized test scores and oral narrative scores seem to measure different abilities was discussed. As noted, the ability to orally reconstruct information, and to evaluate within that reconstruction supports the formation of agreed upon interpretations of the sort which discrete-point assessments often seek to measure. Both teachers and students should be encouraged, therefore, to use oral language to reciprocally, explicitly construct interpretations that fit the pedagogical goals. To foster this shift in approach, linguistic research that concentrates
on the development of higher-level language skills in the context of academic settings must continue. From such research, we may be able to develop new, discourse-based assessment measures which can be used separately and in conjunction with the discrete-point measures we currently possess. Once an understanding of the “normal” developmental patterns in the given context is reached, we can begin to design the sort of curriculum that will attend to the presence or absence of these skills, and that is accessible to the chief practitioners of language assessment and instruction—the classroom teachers. A vast amount of data will need to be collected and analyzed in order to produce a complete picture of the highly diversified student population of today’s schools.

Transforming the results of linguistic analyses into classroom tangibles is no small task, however. Before assessment and instructional tools can be re-placed, we must understand those which are in place, and the implications they hold. That is, it is assumed that those skills which are emphasized through current practices of testing and instruction are those which are of central concern/viewed as essential. As the above discussion of current issues indicates, there may exist a wide disparity between the traditional view of language competence (as evidenced in discrete-point testing) and the cognitive/functional linguistic perspective (as evidences in discourse-based testing) as to what sort of language abilities are necessary to achieve academic, and thus (it is implied) “real world” success. Should such a disparity exist, it will be necessary to broaden educators’ views of what linguistic competence entails. It is only by changing their perceptions of language ability, and strengthen their understanding of language
development, that the potential benefits of incorporating narrative activities for assessment and instruction will become clear—hopefully resulting in the eventual reorientation of language activities in the classroom. In either case, the support of educators, born of their thorough understanding of the issues, is a necessary precursor to any hope of change.

The conclusions of this research regarding the implications of its findings for the classroom are perhaps best summarized in Sizer’s (1992, p.167-168) discussion of Bruner’s (1963) approach to education:

Jerome Bruner’s oft-quoted and liberating assertion that “any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development” (33) carries with it the obligation for the teacher to ascertain at what level of intellectual abstraction a student is and how to move him forward. “What is most important for teaching basic concepts is that the child be helped to pass progressively from concrete thinking to the utilization of more conceptually adequate modes of thought. But it is futile to attempt this by presenting formal explanations based on a logic that is distant from the child’s manner of thinking and sterile in its implications for him.” (38). One cannot succeed at something totally beyond one’s experience, beyond one’s grasp. One is interested in that at which one succeeds. Thus, a clever teacher sets a student’s work, and the expectations for it, at a level where some modicum of legitimate success is possible. However, because “experience has shown that it is worth the effort to provide the growing child with problems that tempt him into next stages of development,” (39) an effective teacher keeps the subject of study at an arm’s length from the student, but no further. The joy of success comes especially sweet when that which was mastered had earlier seemed unachievable.

5.5 Conclusions

The findings of this research indicate that the 2nd and 4th graders approach the task
of constructing the narrative re-tellings quite differently, and that their use of evaluative features is reflective of their contrasting approaches. For the 2nd graders, the construction of the narrative re-tellings is an act of pretending in which the recreation of the characters is the central means of reconstructing the narratives. In order to accomplish their re-tellings, the most skilled 2nd graders employ two evaluative features in combination with one another—character speech and references to mental activity. In the highest rated-texts, character speech—largely of the direct variety—is used throughout the narratives. These speech references are often accompanied by paralinguistic gestures and changes in vocal quality. In addition, references to mental activity are frequently embedded within the speech segments. As a result of this approach, it is primarily the characters’ “voices” which both motivate and report on the events of the narrative. The 2nd grade narrators do not present the narrative as an object separate from themselves, but rather, become participants in the text by adopting the various “voices”/perspectives of the characters as they move through their recreation.

As skill scores decline among the 2nd grade sample, the percentage of use of character speech diminishes, and the preferred form of speech moves away from direct, toward indirect and free. In addition, references to mental activity occur more frequently outside of separate from speech references, and in the lowest scoring narratives, may be completely absent. As the aforementioned features diminish and/or disappear, the “voices” of the characters are overtaken by that of the narrator, and the events of the narrative often begin to seem less motivated and/or less connected with one another. In the worst cases, the listener is left with little more than a “laundry list” of happenings for
which they must infer both the motivation and the significance.

For the 4th graders, the re-tellings are the reconstruction of that external artifact which is "the" text, as well as an undertaking for which they as individuals will be judged, based on their ability to serve as accurate and reliable information sources. The 4th graders rated as most skilled again employ frequent use of direct character speech throughout their narratives. Unlike the 2nd graders, however, all of the 4th graders (both skilled and unskilled) tend to place references to mental activity outside of/separate from speech segments, often in causal constructions which explicitly link/pair the occurrence of mental activity with resulting actions/events in the tangible realm. In addition, the 4th graders provide numerous "text-external" comments as to their personal opinion of the events/characters, as well as to mark those points within the re-telling where they are aware that they are not providing a precise recreation of the original text. 4th graders also make recurrent reference to "text-external" third persons as information sources, especially at those points within the reconstruction of the text at which they themselves are uncertain or dubious. As a result of this approach, the 4th graders become either omniscient narrators, or blameless reporters of information for which (they assert) they can not be held responsible. Though the "voices" of the characters are still present in the higher scoring narratives, it is not the creation of characters, but the reconstruction of the text which is of central concern to the 4th graders. As omniscient narrators, the 4th graders themselves present both the events of the text, as well as the motivations for those events, rather than allowing the "voices" of the characters to present this information.
As skill scores decline among the 4th grade sample, the percentage of use of *character speech* diminishes, and the form of speech employed again moves away from *direct*, toward *indirect* and *free*. References to *mental activity*, which were noted to occur most frequently outside of/separate from speech references, also decrease. As these features disappear, the motivation for and/or significance of the events of the narrative becomes less clear. In the lowest-scoring 4th grade narratives, not only were these features absent, but the events themselves were often unclear and/or reported in an incomplete manner. As the 4th grade task of the re-telling seems more focused on the recreation of that unique object which is the text, their ability to clearly, correctly, and completely report the referential material seems to be of more central concern.

It appears that by making the cultural/linguistic patterns of English language narratives explicit through the use of rich, repeated, mediated/collaborative exposure, students of all language backgrounds (English monolinguals, Spanish dominants, and Spanish-English bilinguals) were able to interpret, internalize, and to some extent reproduce narratives whose structural and evaluative properties reflected those of the original texts. The lower performance of the Spanish dominants in comparison to the other two language groups was largely attributable to general fluency issues rather than the construction of disparate/divergent narrative forms. These findings were contrary to expectation, as many earlier studies in both linguistics and psychology indicate that cultural/linguistic schemas so strongly shape our interpretation and presentation of information that their influence will result in the reshaping of information which does not match our expectations such that it better fits our antecedent schemas.
Though earlier research posits that oral language skills are one of the strongest predictors of general academic success, overall performance on the narrative task did not demonstrate a significant relationship with other measures of achievement such as standardized test scores and teacher grades. While it is possible that the type of oral language task assessed in this research did not examine the sort of “naturalistic discourse skills” that are predictive of academic success, it appears more likely that, given an understanding of the state of standardized testing and of the “test-driven” atmosphere of the current context, that the oral language task examined here is assessing a different type of skill than that which is evaluated by standardized tests and in teacher grades. Additional research is needed, however, to clarify the relationship between the different measures.

Further research, conducted on larger, more diverse sample populations should help to determine the extent to which the deliberate directing of attention to cultural/linguistic forms may result in the adoption of those forms (and the meanings they signify) by both native and non-native speakers. Moreover, the application of the current findings in actual classroom settings should prove both beneficial and additionally informative in that it would provide more complex and individualized insights into student ability as well as offering further, more detailed information on the role that oral language skills may play in the attainment of academic success.
REFERENCES


dimensions of giftedness.” *Educational Horizons, 11.* pp. 41-47.


Appendix A:

Transcription Conventions

The transcription conventions listed below follow the guidelines of the SALT 6.0 software (Miller and Chapman 1999) used in transcribing and coding the texts:

- The child narrator's utterances are indicated by lines beginning with: C
- The adult examiner's utterances are indicated by lines beginning with: E
- Coding symbols may be listed preceding the texts on lines beginning with: +
- Within the body of the texts, codes are enclosed in square brackets: [x]
- Bound morphemes and verb contractions are indicated by a slash: xxx/ed, xxx/ing, xxx/n't, xxx/3s  (Note: /s = plural /z = possessive /3s = 3rd person singular)
- Mazes (filled pauses, repetitions, and reformulations) are enclosed in parentheses:
  (And so, um uh, and so, um) so then...
- Overlapping speech is enclosed in angle brackets: <xxx>
- Idiosyncratic forms consistently produced by a speaker are not coded as word errors, but rather, are marked by a percentile sign: %achetooth
- Time markers may be inserted in the middle of or between two utterances to indicate pauses of 2 seconds or longer: :07 (= seven second pause)
- Omitted words and morphemes begin with an asterisk: He *was laugh/ing.
- Incomplete words end with an asterisk: transcr*
• Undecipherable words/portions of words are indicated by an X: Then he X/ed it.

• Abandoned utterances end in a single angled bracket: So then he>

• Interrupted utterances are indicated by a carrot: DoctorDeSoto wanted^

• Proper names are entered as a single word: DoctorDeSoto

• Non-verbal information entered within the text is enclosed in scrolled brackets: {C makes sad face}

The following transcription conventions do not follow the SALT conventions, but were added to accommodate the needs of the analysis, and to facilitate the readers’ parsing of the texts. Note that these features may overlap/coincide within the texts:

• References to speech are bolded: Then he yell/ed, “Howdy!”

• References to mental activity are italicized: He remembered he was a cowboy.

• Causal constructions are underlined: He took him because[A] he felt sorry.

• Text external comments (the narrator’s subjective judgements, deference to a 3rd person “other”) are shaded and in small capitals: THINK THAT HE IS CRAZY!
APPENDIX B:

Additional Texts

TEXT A

Subj. ID: 4FD3

Age: 9 yrs., 7 mos.

Score: 5.00

1 C When PecosBill was a child he wrestle/ed with his brother/s and sister/s <> and
2 instead[N] of play/ing with teddy bear/s he play/ed with grizzly bear/s {C laughs}.
3 E <Uhhuh>.
4 E Ahha {E laughs}.
5 C And one day his pappy came run/ing from the field/s and yell/ing [V] Hey Maw
6 pack it up!
7 E {E laughs}.
8 C [V] (Them) {C waves hand like oh shucks} some[G] neighbor/s are come/ing
9 in fifty mile/s away <> it's get/ing too crowded here!
10 E <{E laughs}>.
11 E Uhhuh.
12 C (And then he went into the) then his family went into the wagon <> and it was
13 scorch/ing[M] hot.
14 E <Uhhuh>.
15 E Hm.
16 C And then (PecosBill BabyB*) BabyBill he was so[G] hot that he start/ed
17 wrestle/ing[M] <with some of his brother/s>.
18 E <Uhhuh {E laughs}>.
19 C (Then soon) then soon (his) all of the children were just[G] {C waves hands
20 around chaotically} <wrestle/ing and fight/ing> (when) and PecosBill fell out of
21 the wagon.
22 E <Yeah>.
23 E Uhhuh.
24 C Kerplop[M] {C laughs}!
25 E {E laughs}.
26 C (And um) and then all the other brother/s and sister/s were fight/ing and
27 fight/ing so[A] they did/n't[N] notice (that some*) that someone[M] or
28 somethin[M] was miss/ing.
29 E Uhhuh.
30 C And so[A] they just[G] kept on drive/ing along.
31 E Uhhuh.
C And Pecos Bill just [G] sat there in the scorch/ing desert.
C And then an old coyote came up to him.
E Uhhuh.
C And Pecos Bill said [V] googoo [M] {C laughs}!
E {E laughs}.
C And sure enough (the coyote um) the coyote knew that he was (like) say/ing
glad to meet you!
C So [A] he {C lifts up with right hand} pick/ed him up and went back to his den.
E Uhhuh.
C And he had such [G] a good time with the coyote/s all run/ing around naked [M]
<and {C smiles} all that>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C One day a cowpoke came up to him and the cowpoke said [V] what are you?
E {E laughs}.
C (And the) and then the cowpoke said again [V] what are you <I said>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And then Pecos Bill said, in a hoarse voice [V] varmint.
E {E laughs}.
C And then the cowpoke said [V] you ain't [N] a varmint!
C (And then the) and Pecos Bill said [V] yes I am a varmint!
E {E laughs}.
C (And then [V] I got) and then Pecos Bill said [V] I got flea/s don't [N] I?
E {E laughs}.
C And the cowpoke said [V] every Texan/s got flea/s <> (the only thing that you
got that varm* that varmint ha*) the only [G] thing that you don't [N] got that
varmint/*s have is a tail!
E <{E laughs}>.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C And Pecos Bill said [V] (I do) I do too have a tail!
E {E laughs}.
C (And and then Pecos*) and the cowpoke said [V] show me!
E {E laughs}.
C So then Pecos Bill look/ed at his behind and said [V] dang [M]!
E {E laughs}.
C First time in his life he realize/ed that he did/n't [N] have a tail.
C And so [A] he went with the cowpoke to become a cowboy.
C And he was/n't [N] like a regular cowboy, (he) not [N] (like) keep/ing clean and
all.
C He'd just [G] {C motions as if splashing own face} splatter some [G] water all
over his face and walk around all day like a wet [M] dog [M] {C laughs}.
E {E laughs}.
C (And people sai*) and other cowboy/s made fun of him by say/ing that he had a
ten dollar hat (with) on a five cent head.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C And then one day all the cowpoke/s were talk/ing about the Hell/zGateGang (like) they're really[G] nasty <> and they can kick a hot coal with their bare toe/s.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C <And then (um)> PecosBill said [V] who are these feller/s they sound like my kind of people!
E {E laughs}.
C And he went off to find them.
C And he went on his horse and went to find the Hell/zGateGang.
E Uhhuh.
C And his horse step/ed into a hole and broke it/s ankle.
E Uhhuh.
C And he said [V] dang!
E {E laughs}.
C And (lift) {C tosses hand over own shoulder} put him on his shoulder and they went along.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And they> saw a rattlesnake (and he) and then Bill just[G] punch/ed him {C makes a punching motion} crosseyed like {C punches own forehead and then make a crosseyed face with tongue out}.
E {E laughs}.
C And he said, wait>
C And then he took him {C pretends to wrap own arm} on his arm, wrap/ed him around his arm and they went on.
C And then he saw a mountain lion.
E Uhhuh.
C (And um) and then PecosBill call/ed *to it [V] don't[N] jump on me you mangy fleabag!
E Uhhuh.
C (And um) and then (the panth*) the mountain lion {C makes jumping motion with right hand} pounce/ed on him.
C (And there was) and then PecosBill wrestle/ed <> and there was {C tosses hand to the side} so[G] much hair fly/ing everywhere that the sky turn/ed dark.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C And then the mountain lion was really[G] embaress/ed <and> PecosBill felt sorry for it.
E <Uhhuh>.
C So[A] he {C makes jumping motion with hand} jump/ed on top of him and they went along the trail.
C They went about a hundred mile/s to the Hell/zGate canyon.
E Uhhuh.
C And the Hell/zGateCanyon[EW:Hell/zGateGang] heard so[G] much noise that
they almost[N] fainted.
C They dropped their dinner plates and their faces turned white as ghosts.
E Uhhuh.
C And then when PecosBill reached (the) their campfire he said [V] hey who's
the boss around here?
E {E laughs}.
C (And then the boss) then a nine foot fella came up with {C motions around own
waist} ten pistol/s at his side and (like) said [V] I was the boss <of the
Hell/zGateGang> but from now on you will be <the boss>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And then PecosBill said [V] well thanks partner!
E {E laughs}.
C [V] {C flings hand out to side} I don't[N] want to interrupt your dinner so[A]
keep on eating.
E {E laughs}.
C (And the) and he taught the Hell/zGateGang {C makes lasso motion} how to
rope.
E Uhhuh.
C And people exaggerated that it was as long as the equator <but> other's
argued that it was just[G] two feet shorter.
E <Ah>.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C Which is {C waves hand} really[G] not[N] that real.
E {E laughs} ok.
C {C smiles} it's impossible[N]!
C (And um and then one day) and then it was a really[G] big drought <in Texas>.
E Uhhuh.
C And the Hell/zGateGang and PecosBill had [O] to lasso water from the
RioGrande.
C And then (it) that got emptied so[A] they {C makes lasso motion} had [O] to
lasso water from the Gulf of Mexico.
C But that got empty.
E Uhhuh.
C Now one day a cyclone came and PecosBill {C makes hand jump} jumped
right on the back of it.
C And he {C makes squeezing motion} squeezed out all the water and it
flooded.
E Uhhuh.
C And it all flooded.
C And then, he landed in California and he made Death Valley.
E Uhhuh.
C (And) and then he said [V] that little watering should do it {C smiles}!
E {E laughs}.
C And from that day on no[N] horse was too wild for PecosBill.
C And he found a colt.
E <Uhhuh>.
C <And> he was {C flings hand out} really[G] wild.
E Uhhuh.
C And he name/ed it WidowMaker and they had so[G] much fun together.
C And one day while they were ride/ing <> by the PecosRiver {C laughs}.
E <Uhhuh>.
E {E laughs}.
C They saw a girl ride/ing on the biggest[M] catfish they ever saw.
C And (like) PecosBill ask/ed her [V] what's your name honey?
E {E laughs}.
C And she said [V] my name's SlewFootSue what's up with you {C laughs}?
E {E laughs}.
C And then from that point on PecosBill really[G] want/ed to see SlewFootSue
<> again.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And finally he found her little cabin, all lonesome.
E Uhhuh.
C And he went right up to her window and just[G] [V] hoow[L] <right at her>
say/ing that he really[G] love/ed her.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And then (um) SlewFootSue had some[G] coyote in her so[A] she start/ed
howling too.
C And then they decide/ed to get married.
E Uhhuh.
C And (when they got) when the wedding time came, (she um) SlewFootSue was
dressed up in white with (um) {C motions around waist} a spring thing <> on her.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And PecosBill came with {C points down} buckskin pants <and {C points up}
wear/ing that shirt>.
E <Uhhuh {E laughs}>.
C And SlewFootSue really[G] want/ed to ride on WidowMaker, <but> PecosBill
wouldn't[N] let her.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C And then she just[G] decide/ed to {C flings out hand} go on him.
C And she kick/ed her spur/s {C makes kicking motion} <like that>.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (And) and then he buck/3s[M] her up {C flings up hand} into the sky and then
(when she) she flip/ed {C makes large arc with hand} right over the moon.
C (W*) but when she came back down she just[G] {C moves hand up in arc}
went right up again.
E Uhhuh.
C And PecosBill try/ed to lasso her back, but instead[N] she lasso/ed him back
<|like|> {C smiles}.
E <Uhhuh {E laughs}>.
C And they land/ed up on the moon.
C And people say that they stay/ed on the moon {C flings out hand} because[A]
they never[N] ever came back to Earth.
C And people say that if you’re by the PecosRiver and if you hear some[G]
thunder <that’s just[G]> PecosBill and his family have/ing a good laugh.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C And if you see (some) something {C moves hand rapidly across body}
streak/ing across the night sky, that’s just[G] PecosBill and SlewFootSue ride/ing
on some[G] shooting star/s.
E Wow!

TEXT B

Subj. ID: 4MR7

Age: 9 yrs., 1 mos.

Score: 4.00*

1  C Well, PecosBill/z story was about (a man a little) a little baby.
2  C And in that season that (he) he was a baby <> (it was too) there was too much
3  heat.
4  E <Uhhuh>.
5  E Uhhuh.
6  C So[A], they had[O] to move.
7  C And while the wagon was go/ing it was too hot.
8  E Uhhuh.
9  C They were all fight/ing *so <that> that they forgot {C extends right arm out to
the left} (that) that PecosBill was lay/ing down <on> the ground and he just[G]
saw them go.
12  E <Uhhuh>.
13  E <Uhhuh>. 
C And so *then came (um) I think[H] it was a varmint, something like[H] that.
E Uhhuh.
C And he came and see[EW:saw] him (you know) \{C waves right arm in circular motion\}.
C And then sniff/ed him and you know, (try) try/ing to know (which one was) if he was good.
E Right.
C And \{C waves right arm in circular motion\} he just[G] forgot (what it what it) to be a human.
E Uhhuh.
C (And he) and he got to be like[H] a bear <> and he thought he had a tail.
E <Uhhuh>.
E \{E laughs\}.
C And so seventy year/s later <> came a cowboy.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And then (he tol*) he ask/ed him what he was, <> and he said he had a tail (that every thi*), all the detail/s about him.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C (And that he had) and he was (a a varmint, some* um) a bear, something like[H] that.
E Uhhuh.
C (And he said) and he said he had a tail.
C Well (the m* the) the cowboy did/n't[N] saw[EW:see] a tail so[A] he said [V] show it to me!
E Yeah.
C And (he) he look/ed at his back (he had no[N] tail.
C So[A] he said \{C shrugs\} [V] what am I then?
E \{E laughs\}.
C (He said, the other said) the other one said (he w*) he was (uh) a cowboy.
E Uhhuh.
C (So he) so[A] (he start/ed) he better start/ed[EW:start] act/ing like[H] one.
C \{C repeatedly hits left hand with right fist\} and so[A] he learn/ed and learn/ed and, \{C makes circular motion with right hand\} (you know) hop/ing around (like a like) a dog <something like[H] that>.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And so (he he had he want/ed to he saw) he want/ed to be (you know) a cowboy like[H] (the) the best one/s.
E Uhhuh.
C (And one) and (one) one day (he was) he was eat/ing (some*) something, (like a f* like) some[G] friend <> (he saw) he heard (you know) howl/ing (like you know) weird cowboy/s.
57 E <Uhuh>.
58 E Uhuh.
59 C And the other one told him they were the meanest cowboy/s (in) in the whole
town.
60 E Whoa.
61 C And so[A] he said [V] whoa, (maybe th*) maybe[H] those cowboy/s (could)
could[H] show me some[G] <thing/s>.
62 E <Uhuh> <{E laughs}>.
63 C (<So>) so on his way there was a hole (and his and hi*) and his horse (broke)
break/ed[EW:broke] (his his) his half of knee [EU].
64 E Uhuh.
65 C (And so) and so[A] (he said) he carry/ed it, and (h*) he keep/ed[EW:kept] on.
66 C And then he heard (like) a snake.
67 E Uhuh.
68 C And out came the snake (like you know) prepare/ed to fight.
69 E Yeah.
70 C But he did/n't[N] want/ed[EW:want] to fight!
71 E Uhuh.
72 C (So so he just but the o*) but the snake (cu*) came to him and it was (like)
attack/ing him.
73 E Uhuh.
74 C So[A] he just[G] (pul*) punch/ed him (in the in) in the white eye.
75 E {E laughs}.
76 C And he said [V] I like your fur!
77 C So[A] he {C makes a grabbing motion} take/ed[EW:took] him on.
78 E Uhuh.
79 C And then he heard a howling.
80 E Uhuh.
81 C (That) that was (uh) a tiger.
82 E Uhuh.
83 C But he said [V] don't[N] jump, don't[N] jump!
84 E {E laughs}.
85 C But, of course if you say (n*) don't[N] jump, of course (y*) he'll jump.
86 C So[A] {C points down and in with right index finger} he jump/ed in.
87 C (And) and (he {C makes gripping motion with right hand} he wrap/ed around
his neck) he wrap/ed him around (and he said) until (you can on*) he could
only[G] (say like you know <talk>) talk a little[G] bit>.
88 E <Uhuh>.
89 E Uhuh.
90 C (So) so[A] he felt a little[G] sorry, so[A] (he) he hunt down the tiger and (he)
he kept go/ing.
91 C And he got there and all of them (were) were (this) the sniff/ing and everything
[EU].
C And so (they) they got out (and) and saw PecosBill {C points around own
neck} round (by a) by a snake <> and then a tiger.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And so he said [V] who's the (ba*) boss around here?
E Yeah.
C And the other guy said (he) he was the boss but from now on he was go/ing to
be the boss.
E Uhhuh.
C So (he he) he (invent/ed) invent/ed thing/s (and) and all thing/s were go/ing
good.
C But one day (he he was) while he was ride/ing (he) he found (um) a woman
ride/ing (<on a> on the wildest) on the biggest tiger he ever have[EW:had]
saw[EW:seen].
E <Uhhuh>.
C Uhhuh.
C (And the) and then, you know he {C tilt right hand in sort of motion} kind[H]
of like/ed her.
E Uhhuh.
C And past everything and they got married.
C Until one day, that day she said she want/ed to ride his bronco.
E Uhhuh.
C But he said (he can on* he) he[M] can only[G] ride his bronco because[A] it's
too wild.
E Uhhuh.
C Well (she she she want/ed a l*) she want/ed to do that[A] a lot that she got onto
the bronco <> and (kick kick/ed him in the) kick/ed him {C makes little forward
bouncing motions on tabletop with right hand} so[A] he could (you know) run.
E <Uhhuh>.
E Uhhuh.
C But {C shakes head no} (he di*) he did/n't[N] need even[G] to[EW:a] kick to
run.
E {E laughs}.
C So[A] he got wild[EW:wilder] and wild[EW:wilder] (and he) until (he) she {C
flings right hand up} jump/ed out[EW:off] of the bronco and {C uses right index
finger to trace an arc up and then down} howl/ed[EW] up up up over the moon
down.
E Uhhuh.
C But (instead of) instead[N] of stop/ing (he) she {C bounces right fist up and
down} boing/ed and boing/ed.
E {E laughs}.
C PecosBill grab/ed her with his rope <> but instead[N] of stop/ing her {C traces
up and down arc again with right hand} he boing/ed <up and down up and
down>.
E <Uhhuh>.
E <[E laughs]>.
C Until (they) they stop/ed at the moon <> and that was the end.
C (They could/n't) they never[N] came back again.
E You did a great job!

TEXT C

Subj. ID: 4FD7

Age: 9 yrs., 3 mos.

Score: 3.50

Throughout the narrative, C has elbows on the table with hands up by face, waving them up and down and back in forth in rhythm with the story/her statements.

1  C He fell off a wagon.
2  E Uhhuh.
3  C (Um) he was born with coyote/s.
4  E Uhhuh.
5  C (Um) :06 a cowboy came.
6  E Uhhuh.
7  C He said [V] (wh*) what are you do/ing?
8  E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
9  C PecosBill said I'm %vermint.
10 E Uhhuh.
11 C He said [V] you ain't[N] %vermint you a cowboy!
12 E {E laughs}.
13 C (Uh) {C laughs}.
14 C He said [V] I got flea/s.
15 C (Well he s*) then the cowboy said most[G] people got flea/s.
16 E {E laughs}.
17 C And %vermint people got tail/s.
18 E Uhhuh.
19 C (Um) PecosBill said [V] I got a tail too.
20 C And then the cowboy said [V] show me!
21 E Uhhuh.
22 C He turn/ed around and show/ed him his rearend.
23 E {E laughs}. 
C (Um and then he said thank that's not a uh that's not a) that's not [N] a
25 tail <> that's your rearend [M]!
26 E <Uhhuh>.
27 E {E laughs}.
28 C (Um) {C stares at E}.
29 E You're doing a good job.
30 E <You're make/ing me laugh>.
31 C <{C laughs}>.
32 C (Um) he said [V] you a cow*>
33 C Ok I said that part.
34 C (Um) I can't [N] think of no [EW: any] [N] more.
35 C But I'm still think/ing [H].
36 E Ok.
37 C Ok then he went to a farm.
38 E Uhhuh.
39 C (Then he hâ* some people think) some [H] people said PecosBill was wear/ing
40 a ten dollar hat on a five cent head.
41 E Uhhuh.
42 C And then (um) they start/ed to talk about the Hell/zGateGang.
43 E Uhhuh.
44 C And he hear/ed the racket so [A] he went down.
45 E Uhhuh.
46 C (And then) and (he we*) he came acr*>
47 C (Uh) the horse fell in a hole <> broke it's ankle.
48 E <Uhhuh>.
49 C He came across a rattlesnake.
50 C He said (um um uh) go away (you) you>
51 C (I can ma* I can make s*) I can put something in.
52 E Ok.
53 C You MichealJackson want to be <bulldog> {C laughs}.
54 E <{E laughs}>.
55 E Hm, ok, must be bad.
56 C And he {C makes a punching motion} knock/ed him out with a boot.
57 C So he said [V] don't [N] worry fellow you can [H] come along.
58 C He {C makes wrapping motion} wrap/ed him right around his (uh) arm.
59 C He came across (uh) a mountain lion he said [V] don't [N] jump you two
60 time/ing %vermint!
61 C (S*) but still the lion jump/ed.
62 C (He) he {C makes hitting motion} whack/ed him again.
63 C He said [V] ok fellow come on.
64 E {E laughs}.
65 C So [A] he jump/ed on and came to the Hell/zGateGang.
66 C Then he said [V] who's the boss around here?
Uhhuh.
And then the boss came.
(A ten) yeah I think a ten foot man came out saying I'm the boss, but you can be boss now.

E {laughs}.

And he said ok, so get on with your dinner {laughs}.

E {laughs}.

And before he knew it (a dr*) a drought came along and then (he s*) he saw (um) a (cycl*) a cyclon[EW:cyclone] coming.

Uhhuh.

He battle/ed it, he wrung all the rain *out then he (c*) came across.

SlewFootSue.

Uhhuh.

They got married.

Uhhuh.

He[EW:she] want/ed to jump on (uh he v*) Bill/z horse but Bill try/ed to talk her out of it.

She jump/ed on, hit it with her (brow) bruise/s[EW:spur/s].

(And then and they) you did/n't[N] have[O] to tell (um) the horse twice.

So[A] he just[H], he start/ed rattle/ing.

Uhhuh.

And then (he) {C makes lasso motion} he lasso/ed his little rope and caught her.

(And they hit) she bounce/ed up and down over the moon an back up {C points up}.

And they land/ed on the moon.

Every time you hear howl/ing (it's) it's PecosBill his wife and his children.

Uhhuh.

And (when the dark night i* is here and the um) when the dark night and you hear stuff <(you h*)> it's PecosBill and his wife and children.
The end {C opens hands palms up and smiles at the camera}.

E {laughs} well that was pretty good!
Subj. ID: 4FJ2
Age: 9 yrs., 3 mos.
Score: 3.00*

C Ok, he was very[G] crazy {C nods}.
E Uhuhh.
C I think[H] everybody know/3s that.
E Uhuhh.
C And his (gi*) parent/s did/n't[N] really[G] (um) care about him.
E Uhuhh.
C He was the strongest {C nods} baby on the earth <probably[H]>.
E <Uhuhh {E laughs}>.
E Sure.
C (Um) SlewFootSue sure like/ed him {C smiles}.
E Yes, very much so.
C And it's very[G] impossible[N] for some[G] thing/s that he's done <in the
story> [EU].
E <{E laughs} ok, ok>.
C (Um just like fly/ing um) fly/ing to the moon.
E Uhuhh.
C (And hm if) and (he was very) he thought he was a %vermint <> and he
really[G] was/n't[N].
E <Uhuhh>.
E Yeah.
C And once he found out (he wa* he was like) he was (like) sorta[H] think/ing
[V] all this time I've felt like[H] I was a %vermint <> but I'm a cowboy.
E <Uhuhh>.
E Uhuhh.
C And (um) he was the best cowboy on Earth.
E Uhuhh.
C (And he could ride) and his girlfriend SlewFootSue could ride (um) anything
that was (um) from the water that could fly.
E Uhuhh.
C And he could ride a bronco that would only[G] let him on it.
E Yeah.
C And he wore (um) that buck suit to his wedding <> and SlewFootSue wore a
nice white dress.
E <{E laughs} uhuhh>.
E Yes {E laughs}.
C And that's all.
E Great!

TEXT E

Subj. ID: 2FW1

Age: 8 yrs., 11 mos.

Score: 1.83

=C repeats herself over and over, especially towards the end.
1  C DoctorDeSoto was (um) a dentist.
2  C And he was help/ing all the animal/s with their tooth[EW:teeth].
3  C And he was wear/ing his rubber boot/*s.
4  C (And) and he was help/ing other animal/s and the animal/s did not[N] feel
5  a[EW:any] pain.
6  E Uhhuh.
7  C And (they did/n't) they did/n't[N] just[G] cry, so[A] the animal/s were brave.
8  C (And they um) DoctorDeSoto write[EW:made] a sign that *said cat/s or any[G]
9  dangerous animal/s should[H] not[N] be allow/ed in the dentist.
10  E Uhhuh.
11  C Because[A] (there are so um) there are so[G] many.
12  E Uhhuh.
13  C They eat them, <> animal/s.
14  E <Uhhuh>.
15  C And he help/*ed a fox because[A] his tooth[M] was hurt/ing and (um)>
16  C He was help/ing a fox {C motions with right hand palm up as if stating a fact}
17  because[A] he saw a black tooth.
18  C And he said {C points to own teeth} [V] oh yuck that tooth has[O] to come out!
19  E Uhhuh.
20  C And he was think/ing to[EW] eat the DeSoto/s [EU].
21  C Then they yank his tooth out.
22  E Uhhuh.
23  C And they made a new *tooth.
24  C It was gold and they put it into his teeth.
25  C And then they put glue on his teeth and he want/ed *to open it up.
26  E Uhhuh.
C And they just[G] kiss/ed each other.
C And (they just ru*) they just[G] do something.
C (At) and they yank/ed his tooth out {C waves right hand palm up as if stating a
fact} and put a new one on it.
C (Then he) then he put it (right beside {C points to own mouth} where the)
where the yucky tooth were[EW:was] <> and put it {C points to own mouth}
inside/ed[EW:inside] it.
E <Uhhuh>.
C (And he and he just) after then[EW:that] he put glue on it
E Uhhuh.
: 0:03
C And then they both kiss/ed each other and they love each other because[A] they
got the fox out of the dentist.
C And they put glue (on too*) {C points to own teeth} on the teeth all around it.
C And MrsDeSoto was {C points upwards} (put/ing uh) point/ing (where uh)
where[EW:to] the spot/s he miss/ed.
E Uhhuh.
C And then he told them to close his mouth {C moves hands toward one another,
palms in} (a lo* a lo* um) harder so[A] he could not[N] open his teeth and eat
something.
E Uhhuh.
C And (he) he help/ed other animal/s with a little chair and other animal/s had[O]
to sit on the floor.
C And *he got a ladder and he yank/ed it out.
E Uhhuh.
C And with his rubber boot/s and his hand/s that he had[O] to took[EW:take] it
out.
E Uhhuh.
C And then he has[O] to put in>
C Then the fox came and then *he saw his tooth.
C Then {C pantomimes bandana around own jaw} he put/3s a bandana around his
tooth and said[EW:say/3s] [V] my tooth is {C grabs own jaw} kill/ing[M] me.
C (And he) and he and his wife said [V] could[EW:should][H] we let that poor
fox in?
C And then (she) she push/ed the button for[EW:to][A] let him (in) in [EU].
C And then, he fallen[EW:fell] to his knee/s and told them that they could[H]
have[O] to take their teeth out.
E Uhhuh.
C And they yank/ed it out <> and they put a new one *in.
E <Uhhuh>.
C And {C motions as if painting own mouth} he put glue all over it.
C And he said (come) {C points at own mouth} close your mouth for one[M]
minute, harder[M].
C And he try/ed to open his mouth and he could/n't[N] say [V] thank you.
C And he got down (from the) from the ladder.
C And they were kiss/ing[M] each other[M].
C (And the fo*) and the other[M] animal/s they suppose/ed to be come over here
to take their tooth out.
C And the big animal/s they had[O] to sit on the floor.
E Uhhuh.
C And DoctorDeSoto, he was try/ing very[G] very[G] hard[L] work.
E Uhhuh.
C And he yank/ed the tooth out.
E Hm.
C Then the fox like/ed the golden tooth.
C He try/ed it and he said (that it was) that it was a (beautiful um) beautiful
tooth[M].
E Uhhuh.
C And then they put it on to him, and they put glue on it.
C (So he[L] said[L]) {C waves hands palms up as if stating a fact} he got a jar
from[EW:of] glue[M] and stick it on his teeth {C points to own teeth}.
C And say/ed[EW:said] for one minute {C waves right fist emphatically} just[G]
cover your mouth really[M][G] hard[M].
E Uhhuh.
jaw} glue all over[M] his teeth[M].
E Uhhuh.
C And he try/ed to say thank you.
E {E laughs}.
E All done?
C {C nods}.
E Good job!
C Well, DoctorDeSoto (wa*) was work/ing at a dentist and the big animal/s
would sit on the floor and the little animal/s would sit in the little chair that he
got.
C And his little hand/s were very[G] dainty {C amiles}.
E Uhhuh {E laughs}.
C And he would work in big people/z mouth/*s, just[G] get in there.
C And then the fox came and said {C makes a howling sound} [V] (my) my tooth
is kill/ing me.
E Uhhuh.
C (And then the two little mice) well, DoctorD* said, [V] no[N] you can/n't[N]
come in here, I can/n't[N] treat you!
E Uhhuh.
C But he said, [V] have (mu*) mercy on me.
C So[A] they said, [V] well poor little fox, what should we do?
C And so they let him in!
E Uhhuh.
C But, when the (d*) DoctorDeSoto got in their[EW:his] mouth, <> the fox went
like [V] {C makes jaw quiver with sound}.
E <Uhhuh>.
E {E laughs}.
C And then DoctorDeSoto said, [V] keep your mouth open!
C [V] Wide open, said his (mife) I mean wife.
C And so, *the next day when the fox came back, he was think/ing, {C puts hand
to chin and makes a face} [V] hm, <(l'm not)> maybe[H] it should[EW:would]
be good to eat them.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And so, next morning he figure/ed it out, and he went back.
C And then he said [V] maybe[H] I should/n't[N] eat them.
C But he could/n't[N] help it.
C So when he did he/s like [V] hahaha, <just[H] joke/ing>.
E <{E laughs}>.
C And then (um, h*) they put the tooth in and he said maybe[H] I could do it with
my other tooth.
C (And so when he tri*) and so when they put it in (um, he s*, um, they said) he
said [V] thank you.
C And then DoctorDeSoto {C holds up index finger} [V] wait[M], I'm not[N] finish/ed yet!
C (And they hold*) he was hold/ing a big jug, (and then put it) and then put the stuff in his mouth.
C And then he said [V] keep you mouth shut for a whole[L] minute.
C And then when he did he was surprise/ed.
C (I c*) he could/n't[N] open his mouth and so[A] he could/n't[N] eat it[EW:them].
E Uhhuh.
C And then (d*) DoctorDeSoto and the wife kissed each other {C makes two kisses in the air}.
C And then the end {C laughs}.
E {E laughs} That was an awesome job!
APPENDIX C:

Statistical Data: 2nd Grade

Descriptive Statistics

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| CAUSAL           | .452 | .002     | .001 | .000 | .011     |
| EMPHATIC         | .000 | .421     | .000 | .000 | .000     |
| GRAT.            | -.    | .215     | .041 | .014 | .000     |
| HEDGE            | .215 | -.       | .262 | .000 | .071     |
| LENGTHEN         | .041 | .262     | .007 | .007 | .000     |
| COMP.            | .014 | .000     | .007 | .000 | .000     |
| CSP              | .000 | .071     | .030 | .000 | .000     |
| FM IN CS         | .081 | .204     | .386 | .452 | .348     |
| FM IN NS         | .285 | .419     | .216 | .064 | .078     |
| NSP              | .500 | .500     | .500 | .500 | .500     |

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| GRAT.            | 50       | 50   | 50   | 50   | 50        |
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c. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3

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a. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3

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b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), COMP., LENGTHEN, HEDGE, NEGATIVE, EMPATHIC, CAUSAL, GRAT., FM IN CS
c. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3
### Statistical Data: 4th Grade

#### Descriptives

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### Regression

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| CAUSAL             | .000     | .000     | .063  | .000  | .000     |
| EMPHATIC           | .004     | .008     | .091  | .003  | .000     |
| GRAT               | .026     | .000     | .000  | .000  | .000     |
| HEDGE              | .073     | .000     | .358  | .000  | .021     |
| LENGTHEN           | .001     | .001     | .021  | .000  | .000     |
| NEGATIVE           | .001     | .000     | .153  | .000  | .000     |
| COMP               | .021     | .153     | .003  | .062  |          |
| CSP                | .000     | .000     | .003  | .000  |          |
| FM IN CS           | .000     | .000     | .082  | .000  | .000     |
| FM IN NS           | .282     | .000     | .314  | .017  | .106     |
| NSP                | .239     | .000     | .340  | .006  | .057     |

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b. Predictors: (Constant), COMP, HEDGE, EMPHATIC, LENGTHEN, CAUSAL, GRAT, NEGATIVE, CSP
c. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3

### Coefficients

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#### Standardized Coefficients

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### Coefficients

#### 95% Confidence Interval for B

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*a. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3*

### Excluded Variables

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*a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), COMP, HEDGE, EMPHATIC, LENGTHEN, CAUSAL, GRAT, NEGATIVE*

*b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), COMP, HEDGE, EMPHATIC, LENGTHEN, CAUSAL, GRAT, NEGATIVE, CSP*

*c. Dependent Variable: AVG. 1-3*