

Stanza 3 can be delineated on the basis of this structural pattern. A temporal adverbial (and the next day) serves as an orientational statement for this stanza. Then, the events occurring in the church are recounted. At one point in her narration, Allison trails off midstream (and walked away with ...), so that it becomes difficult to determine the precise segmentation of this stanza. However, I have interpreted two evaluative statements, referring to the gang's thoughts, as representative of a stative ending to Stanza 3. It is interesting that the events in this particular evaluative statement are again presented as the internal cognitive states (thoughts) of characters. Recall that in the narratives of Brenda and Sherrie there were numerous references to the internal states of characters: what characters wanted, felt, etc. The presentation of characters' internal states from the perspective of what they *thought* is a unique facet of Allison's text.

In Stanza 4, a shift in topic can be seen in the topicalized subject (and the boy) which is marked by rising intonation. This stanza functions thematically as a backdrop to the critical events in Stanza 5, in which the gang of boys grab the balloon. I have interpreted the postposed adverbial (*leaving the balloon outside*) as the final line in Stanza 4, in accord with the structural patterning already seen in Stanzas 1 and 3. With this postposed adverbial phrase, Allison presents a state of affairs which serves as a type of closure to the set of events in the stanza. Stanza 5 appears to be a rapid rendition of the critical stealing scene in the film. In a series of three completive phrases, Allison provides a climactic conclusion to the events detailed in Stanzas 1-4.

In Stanza 6, Allison presents a detailed description of the boy's reaction to this crisis situation. In this stanza, she makes extensive use of adverbials to narrate the protracted nature of this search. As was the case in Stanza 2, I have interpreted Allison's use of a temporal adverbial (*and the little boy # when he came out*) as indicative of the beginning of a new stanza. I have interpreted her use of an additional adverbial phrase (*after a little while*) as the end point of this stanza. Certainly the events in Stanzas 6 and 7 are closely related, since in both stanzas Allison describes the boy's search for the balloon. Stanza 7, however, appears to represent a turn in events. After searching for a protracted period of time, the boy stopped, turned back, and saw the balloon. Thus, thematically speaking, Stanza 6 is a description of an extended search whereas Stanza 7 is a statement of a resolution to that search. Interestingly, the line that I have designated as the end point of Stanza 7 (*taking it from the bullies*) is again a postposed timeless adverbial. This particular type of construction was seen in Stanza 5 and is again seen in Stanza 8.

In Stanza 8, Allison narrates events occurring in a long chase scene. As I noted above, the end point of this stanza is, in my view, marked by a postposed adverbial (*the rest of the bullies still^ after him*). The chase scene is then continued in Stanza 9, in which the backdrop to a critical event in the film is presented. Although Allison does not make use of a postposed adverbial in Stanza 9, the line which I have designated as final in this stanza represents a state of affairs: the balloon is devoid of helium. In Stanza 10, one finds once again the structural pattern that seems to

permeate Allison's narrative telling. The opening line in the stanza is a contingency statement presented in the form of a temporal statement (when it was down on the ground). This line is followed by a couplet of lines in which complete events are narrated. Then, an evaluative statement follows, in which the boy's reaction is described. Of interest is the form in which this evaluative statement is presented. Rather than simply stating the boy's internal emotional state (e.g., he was sad), Allison presents the boy's reaction to the balloon's demise as his response to a physical state:

and the boy felt like crying
but he didn't

Thus, the narrator perspective which Allison assumes in Stanza 10, as well as in Stanzas 2 and 3, is one which is more distanced from events.

The temporal adverbial *finally* provides an orientational beginning to Stanza 11, in which a resolution to the unhappy state of affairs in Stanza 10 is provided. A series of narrative clauses follows, in which the boy's flight with balloons is described. The line that I have interpreted as final in this stanza (*and over rooftops and over things*) may be viewed as a repetition of the position-final adverbial phrases seen in additional stanzas in Allison's text. In a final couplet, Allison enters a different narrator perspective, one in which the speaker has stepped out of the action to provide commentary on a possible subscript to the film.

The final storytelling narrative that I would like to examine is that produced by Jessica. In her text shown in its entirety below, Jessica, like Allison, provides a detailed rendition of the events occurring in the film. She moves through the events shown in the film scene-by-scene, in the manner of an eyewitness report. Jessica also, however, provides evaluative commentary on events, particularly in reference to the balloon's magical qualities. The stanza structure in her text is best delineated on the basis of Jessica's use of temporal connectives (*and then*), discourse markers (*well*), and pausing in the opening lines of stanzas. In addition, the final lines of some stanzas are evaluative in nature. Thus, the stanzas in Jessica's text often have the form: a) a temporal form/discourse marker, b) a series of narrative lines, (optionally) c) an evaluative statement. This patterning of stanzas strongly resembles that seen in Allison's narrative.

Jessica: Storytelling Narrative

Stanza 1

and so he climbed up the rail // well the post thing that it [balloon] was on
and # he # untied it
and brought it down

Stanza 2

and then # well he had to go to school

except there were no balloons allowed on the bus
so he made the balloon follow him
'cause it was magic!

Stanza 3

and uhm # well # he saw the man washing windows
and then he went to church with his mo / mother
and the red balloon followed
and he went in // and they both went in
and they got kicked out of church for a day

Stanza 4

and uhm # then the little boy went to a pastry shop
and heeee # uhm had something that he really liked
and it cost // and he had enough to uhm buy it [a pastry]
so he told his balloon to wait right there
'cause he was // 'cause it was magic!

Stanza 5

so then he went inside
and then all these mean! boys came along
and stole! the balloon
and they / and they took it back to the hideout
and they uhm tried to // they were uhm shooting slingshots
but they always missed

Stanza 6

'and uhm then he // and then the litle boy from a wall saw his red balloon
and he's // and he was saying
"red balloon come here!"
and # then # he untied it
but the boys were pulling on the string
'cause they couldn't see the balloon anymore

Stanza 7

and # then ## uhm # well all the boy // well he ran away with the balloon
and then all the boys started running after him
and thennnn ## and then they uhm cornered him
and then // but he escaped

Stanza 8

and then what happened was # they surrounded him on top of a hill
and one of 'em hit it
and it was sharp
and it made a tiny hole
and it bursted

Stanza 9

and all! of a sudden # all of these balloons were uhm flowing out of the sky
as if there was a party going on
except it was a funeral!
and ## you can take over [looks to E]

Deborah
don't you want to finish the <story>?

Jessica
ok [<overlap]

Stanza 10
and then they flew towards him
and he grabbed all the strings
and they took 'im for many new adventures
the end

In Stanza 1, Jessica provides a narrative continuation of the opening script used for the task. In response to my opening lines, she describes the boy's actions of getting the balloon down from a lamp post. Stanza 2 illustrates a structural patterning within stanzas which appears frequently in her narrative. In the first line of this stanza, a temporal adverbial (*and then*) followed by a discourse marker (*well*) and pausing marks a shift in topic. Then, a series of lines follows, the end result of which is an explanatory/evaluative statement ('cause it was // the balloon was magic!). Stanza 2 is unique, however, in that it consists almost entirely of lines which are evaluative in nature. Stanza 2 seems to function thematically in Jessica's story as a backdrop for the events to come. The boy wants to take the balloon with him (= friendship) and the balloon follows the boy because of its magical qualities.

Stanza 3 can be demarcated, in my view, on the basis of the discourse marker *well*, along with pausing, in what I have interpreted as the first line of this stanza. In Stanza 3, Jessica narrates a series of complete events associated with the church scene in the film. The end point of these events is indicated by the temporal adverbial phrase *for a day* in the final line of Stanza 3. This adverbial shifts the temporal locus of the action from a series of punctuated events to an extended time period. Another shift in the action is marked by a temporal form (*and uhm then*) which I have interpreted as the beginning of a new stanza (Stanza 4). This shift in temporality is also linked to a shift in the location of events. The boy moves from the church, where he has been kicked out for an extended period of time, to the pastry shop. In Stanza 4, Jessica presents a series of evaluative statements about the boy's ill-fated decision to leave the balloon outside the pastry shop. As was the case in Stanza 2, nearly every line in Stanza 4 functions as an evaluative statement. As was also the case in Stanza 2, Jessica in Stanza 4 ends with a statement of the balloon's magical qualities ('*cause it was magic!*'). This emphasis on the balloon's magical abilities appears to be a continually reoccurring theme in her narrative.

Against the backdrop of the ill-fated decisions in Stanza 4, Jessica relates a series of critical transitional events in Stanza 5. In a series of complete statements in which adverbial and verbal forms are stressed, she narrates the gang's stealing of the balloon. Interestingly, as was the case in

Stanza 3, the final line in this stanza represents a protracted event. After the gang has stolen the balloon, they take it to their hiding place (an old construction site) and shoot at the balloon for an indefinite period of time. During this indefinite period of time, they continually miss as they attempt to slingshot the balloon. These protracted events bring closure to Stanza 5, as the protracted nature of the boy's expulsion from church also bring closure to Stanza 3.

As was the case in the preceding stanzas, the opening line of Stanza 6 is marked by a temporal form (*and uhm then*). As a whole, this stanza represents a primarily evaluative statement about the boy's attempts to recover his balloon. The boy's efforts are presented through character dialogue (*and he was saying, "red balloon come here!"*), through a completive statement (*he untied it*), and finally through a statement of the protracted action on the part of the gang of boys. The inability of the gang of boys to maintain their hold on the balloon is recounted through a causal statement, in which Jessica explains that the boys continued pulling on the balloon because they could not see that it had already been recovered by its owner. It is very interesting to note the similarities between the structure of this stanza and that of Stanzas 2 and 4. All three stanzas contain a series of evaluative lines, ending with an explanatory statement. This particular format appears to alternate with Stanzas 1, 3, and 5, in which a series of completive event statements are followed by a protracted event. Thus, one finds in Stanzas 1-6 an alternation of primarily narrative and evaluative stanzas.

Stanzas 7 and 8 deviate from this pattern of alternation, in that the two successive stanzas are both primarily non-evaluative. In Stanzas 7 and 8, Jessica presents the critical events occurring near the film's end. In a series of completive statements in Stanza 7, Jessica narrates the chase scene. These events terminate in a partial resolution: the boy escapes for the time being. In Stanza 8, however, this partial resolution proves futile. The boy is surrounded and his balloon is destroyed. Both Stanza 7 and 8 are demarcated by an initial temporal connective (*and then*) followed by either a discourse marker (*well*) or a statement of sequence (*what happened was*). Neither stanza has a statement of evaluation or protracted action in final position. Thus, these two stanzas stand out as being structurally distinct and thematically critical for the story as a whole. They suggest a critical turn of events.

The resolution to this critical turn of events is presented in Stanza 9 and 10. Because Jessica breaks her narration at Stanza 9, asking me to take over, it is difficult to determine the precise boundaries between these final stanzas. However, I would interpret the shift in topic, along with marked stress, which follows the balloon's bursting (*and all! of a sudden # all of these balloons ...*) as indicative of the beginning of a new stanza. Stanza 9 functions partially as a presentation of new events (more balloons come out of the sky) and partially as a metaphor describing those events. Because the events in the first line of this stanza are presented as ongoing events, I would interpret Stanza 9 as primarily evaluative in nature. The state of affairs narrated in

Stanzas 7 and 8 changes dramatically in Stanza 9, and this change is presented through a descriptive metaphor. Finally, Stanza 10 brings closure to the story, through a couplet of event clauses followed by a timeless statement. Thus, the final two stanzas in Jessica's text appear to reestablish the earlier pattern of alternating (primarily) evaluative and (primarily) non-evaluative groupings of lines.

The narrative texts produced by Allison and Jessica represent individualistic ways of representing events seen in a silent film. However, their texts also share certain similarities. First, both children narrated the film's events in extreme detail. Events were related in a scene-by-scene fashion, matching the sequence of events in the film. In this sense, the narratives produced by Allison and Jessica represent what I would term a reportive, eye-witness, perspective on events. Allison's narrative, in particular, exemplifies an attempt to narrate events in as much detail as possible.

In addition to this eye-witness perspective, Allison and Jessica made use of temporal adverbial phrases and evaluative statements in similar organizational ways. In their texts, one could discern a pattern in which stanzas were segmented through the use of adverbials (*and then, finally*) in initial position and the use of evaluative statements, or statements of protracted events, in final position. It would be a huge leap from the data to conclude that this type of organization within stanzas represents a style found among all speakers in a particular community. However, this shared pattern may represent various overlapping narrative traditions within the community of middle-class speakers to which Allison and Jessica belong. In particular, a focus on the *sequence* of events, marked through an extensive use of temporal adverbial forms, may be a trademark of mainstream middle-income white communities (Gee, 1986; Heath, 1982; 1983).

Conclusions: Narrative Skills and Literacy Learning

The findings from a detailed analysis of the narratives produced by two groups of first graders call into question a characterization of either group as representative of an intrinsically more "oral" or more "literate" style of narration. Both the low-income African-American and the middle-income white children in this study produced narratives which were topic-centered (centered on one unified as opposed to several successive topics), logically organized, and engaging. All four of the children presented information sufficient to derive the basic plot structure of the film. All of the children provided causal explanations for events. I see no evidence to support an interpretation that one set of texts is more decontextualized or logically-connected than another.

The findings from the study, however, point to a distinction between the two groups of children which is somewhat more subtle. If one considers these children to be representative of their respective communities, it may be the case that children from the different communities bring a different interpretative *stance* to the task of telling a story. The African-American children in this

study appeared to narrate events in the film more from the vantage point of one who is intimately concerned with the internal states and motivations of characters. As a result, their narrative texts displayed an extremely rich and complex evaluative structure. The white children in this study appeared to narrate events more from the omniscient stance of an onlooker, a reporter of events. Although both children provided extensive evaluative information, this information was more concentrated on states of affairs (*'cause they couldn't see the balloon anymore*) than on character internal states (*'cause they wanted it to be their friend, too*). Thus, it may be an interpretative stance with respect to events, rather than the thematic connections between events, which best distinguishes the narrative styles of children from these two sociocultural communities.

Another way of viewing these differences in discourse styles is to think of such differences in terms of the range of narrative genres which children bring to their classrooms. It is clear from the research on the development of narrative skills that all children bring to their classrooms a range of ways of representing events through narrative (see the earlier review section). Children from different communities also acquire distinct "ways of telling". In fact, the linguistic representation of events in a reporter-like sequence may be more a trademark of middle-income white children (Heath, 1982; 1986). The findings from the present study suggest that, even though both groups of children in the study were ostensibly given the task of telling a story, the interpretations of this task were quite different among groups. In other words, the differing interpretative stances seen in this study may represent the unique range of narrative genres which children within communities experience in their primary language learning environments.

The evidence presented in this analysis, however, flies in the face of some disturbing social problems. Although low-income African-American children bring to their classrooms a sophisticated set of narrative skills, these children are unfortunately more likely to experience difficulty as they make the important transition to producing and comprehending written texts. This problem is one that Gee (1989) has termed the "failure problem". In other words, why is it that children who have in their possession an extremely sophisticated range of narrative skills are more likely to fail at tasks which are structured as simply as possible: tasks such as decoding words from a beginning reader or locating a specific word from a list? This is an extremely complex problem, and one that I can only begin to address in the context of this study. However, the findings that have emerged in my analyses may provide some preliminary information relevant to this issue.

Scollon and Scollon (1981) have commented that full participation in literacy entails the ability to adopt an author's stance, a "fictionalization of self" with respect to events. In the case study which gave rise to this conclusion, Scollon and Scollon observed and audio-taped their two-year-old daughter, Rachel, as she narrated fantasy stories. They uncovered a type of distanced, author-like stance which emerged in these narrative tellings, which they felt to be representative of

a literate tradition. Britton (1982) has in a similar vein differentiated between *spectator* and *participant* roles in discourse. According to Britton, communication in a spectator role is more typical of literary discourse, in that the speaker/writer takes on the role of an onlooker who is more removed from events.

If one considers literacy to be the ability to adopt the perspective of an author, or spectator, with respect to events, then clearly both groups of children in the present study produced narratives which were highly literate texts. All of the children in the study demonstrated their skill in adopting a variety of perspectives on events as they moved between narrating mainline events and providing evaluative commentary. However, it may be the case that many classroom literacy events are based upon a specific kind of authorship with respect to events: the reporter stance which appears to be more characteristic of middle-income white children. Although fictional stories form the basis for much of reading instruction, the oral discourse of literacy instruction appears to be based more upon a factual rendition of "what happened". In small reading groups, children are often asked to report on specific sequences of events in a story. In fact, one entire method of reading instruction, the Language Experience Approach, is based upon a group oral discussion of "what happened next". Thus, children from some African-American communities may be at a disadvantage due to the unique discourse of literacy instruction.

Certainly the factors which play into what Gee terms the "failure problem" go beyond cultural differences in narrative styles. The research on emergent literacy suggests that mainstream middle-income caretakers may enter into book-related activities which prepare their preschoolers for school-based literacy tasks. It is not my goal in this paper to discount these important factors related to literacy learning in the classroom. It is rather my goal to suggest that low-income African-American children bring to their first grade classroom narrative skills which are, in every respect, equally as sophisticated (topic-centered, decontextualized, literate) as those of mainstream white children. If it is the case that cultural differences in children's discourse styles are part of the failure problem, then, as Michaels (1981) and Michaels and Collins (1984) point out, this problem is a function of the discourse of literacy events in the classroom rather than a function of a language deficiency on the part of African-American children.

If educators are to meet the learning needs of children from a variety of social communities, then it may be necessary to make alterations in our current means of literacy instruction. Literacy education in a pluralistic society must somehow accommodate the language skills particular to more than just mainstream middle-income communities. At present, literacy curricula based upon "whole language" instruction offer one means of allowing children from diverse communities the opportunity to celebrate in the classroom their particular ways of telling (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983). The success of these curricula, however, depends upon the abilities of educators to adopt an ideology allowing for diversity in children's ways of expressing events through narrative.

1 The research described in this paper was made possible through a Spencer Dissertation Year Fellowship for Research to Education (Harvard University) and through a General University Research Grant (University of Delaware). I would like to thank Catherine Snow and Dennie Wolf for their input into this research project. I would also like to acknowledge James Paul Gee for his valuable comments and suggestions at various stages of research and writing. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the first grade children, and their teachers, who so graciously participated in the project.

2 The transcription symbols used in the excerpts from children's narrative texts are derived from the CHILDES coding system for child language analysis (see MacWhinney and Snow, 1985). The following key to these symbols may facilitate the reading of narrative texts in this paper:

#	pause
##	long pause
/	retracing
//	retracing with correction
!	phonological stress
^	rising intonation
_	falling intonation
^_	rising-falling (sing-song) intonation
<>	marking of text (often to indicate overlap)

Appendix

Eventcasting Task

This is (child's name) and Deborah, sportscasters, and we're gonna say everything we see happening in the film. I'm gonna start off and then (child's name) is gonna take over.

(I start re-playing a three-minute segment from the film).

The little boy and the red balloon are going past a church steeple. And they're coming to a bakery shop. The little boy is looking inside the bakery shop. Now he's checking in his pocket to see if he has enough money to buy something to eat. Looks good. Now he's walking into the bakery shop.

Can you take over and be the sportscaster?

News Reporting Task

This is (child's name) and Deborah, and we're gonna be news reporters and tel what we saw happen in the film. I'm gonna start off and then (child's name) is gonna take over.

News Headlines: Boy Seen Flying Over City! The first thing that I saw happen was: a little boy found a red balloon on his way to the bus stop. He was seen walking with the balloon to a bus. He got on the bus, and the balloon followed behind.

Can you be the news reporter now and tell what you saw happen?

Storytelling Task

This is (child's name) and Deborah, and we're gonna be storytellers and tell the story of "The Red Balloon." I'm gonna start off and then (child's name) is gonna take over.

(I hold in my lap a "storybook" which has on the front cover a picture from the film but which has neither words nor pictures inside)

The Red Balloon. Once upon a time there was a little boy who lived in Paris, France. One day, on his way to the bus stop, he found this big beautiful red balloon. He wanted the balloon to be his friend.

Can you take over now and be the storyteller? (I pass the storybook facsimile to the child)

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