
THE ROLE OF TALK DURING
INTERACTIVE STORYBOOK READING
IN A KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

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Background of the Study

TALK DURING STORYBOOK READING EVENTS SCAFFOLDS CHILDREN'S LEARNING about written language. As they interact with adults while reading, children construct meaning by linking life to text and text to life (Cochran-Smith, 1984) in addition to developing key knowledge and an expanded vocabulary (Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Snow & Goldfield, 1983). This knowledge provides a base for school-based literacy knowledge (Wells, 1986).

Reading the same stories on multiple occasions has also been shown to have a positive influence on literacy learning. Yaden (1988) reported that the kinds of questions asked by his kindergarten-aged son changed over the six readings of the same storybook. Questions about the meaning of words did not occur until the middle readings of the book. Martinez and Roser (1985) discovered that four year-old children's responses had greater understanding as they listened to the same story, and this was true whether they heard the story at home or in school. Pappas and Brown (1987) found that children's retellings more closely approximated the language of the storybook with additional storybook readings. They concluded that hearing and reading stories more than once helped children learn story discourse patterns.

Not all children have rich reading experiences prior to school entry. Studies of lap-like storybook reading in a school setting indicated that such experiences are especially important in supporting the literacy learning of children who have had limited opportunities to hear stories read aloud prior to school entry (Martinez, Cheney, McBroom, Hemmeter, & Teale, 1988; Morrow, 1988; Strong, 1988; Wells, 1986). Morrow investigated the impact of revisiting the same storybook on young children's responses. She found that those children who revisited the same story during interactive storybook reading responded in qualitatively different ways from children who had heard the story read to them a single time.

In a kindergarten program for at-risk children, Martinez, Cheney, McBroom, Hemmeter, and Teale (1988) read the same stories frequently so that familiarity with stories would support children's own emergent readings. Strong (1988) documented the literacy learning of a small group of first grade boys who had been identified as at-risk of reading failure. According to Strong, talk during storybook readings indicated that children were attending to both the literary elements of the story and the details of print.

This study builds on previous research by describing and analyzing the talk of a group of urban, kindergarten children as they engaged in a series of interactive storybook reading events. The study was designed to answer the following questions: (a) What is the nature of talk during multiple storybook reading events? and (b) Is there a relationship between the genre of a storybook and the nature of talk?

Methodology

This study involved a yearlong investigation of a kindergarten classroom. Children who had been identified as at-risk of school failure based on a standardized test were given the opportunity to participate in a federally funded kindergarten program which was based on a holistic reading and writing curriculum.

Data Collection

Sources of data included daily field notes, audiotapes of all read-aloud events, and videotapes of all interactive storybook reading events for a six-week period in the spring of the year.

Data Analysis

Transcripts from 14 interactive storybook reading events centering around the reading of two teacher-selected stories were analyzed. Seven transcripts document the interactive storybook readings of the predictable pattern book, *How Many Bugs in a Box?* (Carter, 1988) and seven transcripts record the initial reading and revisiting of the folktale, *The Three Little Pigs* (Galdone, 1970). One hundred thirty-seven pages of transcription (32 pages of transcription from *How Many Bugs in a Box?* and 105 pages of transcription for storybook readings of *The Three Little Pigs*) were analyzed to determine terms of the nature of teacher and child talk during these interactive storybook reading events.

Data were analyzed in two ways. First, the conversations during the first, middle (fourth), and last transcripts of both the predictable pattern book and the folktale were analyzed for the function of talk and whether the speaker was the teacher or a child. Nine categories emerged from the analyses. They were:

1. Talk about the reading process/mechanics of reading;
2. Talk about literacy concepts such as story structure, plot, theme, book language, book formats;
3. Talk that indicated an affective response to the story such as “Ooooooh” or “That’s scary;”
4. Talk that seemed to indicate a child’s intellectual search (Tizard & Hughes, 1984). This category included questioning about how a flap worked, requesting information relative to something within the story, linking the story to one’s own life experiences, and making links to other books and rhymes such as a child who heard the word *merry* and began to recite “Mary had a little lamb;”
5. Child and teacher talk that centered around management. This category included directions given by the teacher and children and comments by children about not being able to see the book;
6. Talk that indicated a confirmation of a preceding response such as when the speaker agreed with a remark. This category also included the teacher’s invitation to confirm a prediction by saying, “Let’s read and see what happens;”
7. Talk that involved predicting something, usually an event in the story;
8. Talk in which the primary purpose was to inform. This usually involved teacher talk, either as a response to the children’s questions of intellectual search or as an explanation of something that she felt children might not know; and
9. Talk in which the speaker was seeking clarification. Examples of teacher and child talk are included later in this article.

Procedures for Coding Topics

Transcriptions of talk during the interactive storybook readings of these two books were also analyzed in terms of the topics that emerged within individual readings as well as topics that reappeared across readings of the same storybook. The topics were defined as at least four exchanges among conversational partners (i.e., turns) about a particular subject. The topics were identified as either child initiated or teacher initiated. For example, in the first reading of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, a child commented that she saw the letter *b*. Her comment led to a discussion of words that begin with *b*. That discussion was classified as a child initiated discussion of print. In the same interactive storybook reading, the teacher read a sign on a box on the last page which said, “Open if you dare,” and then asked the children, “Do we dare?”

Because the teacher and children engaged in this game-like interaction during every reading, it was classified as a teacher initiated theme that developed across readings.

Results

Categories of Talk in the Predictable Pattern Book

Results of the analysis of talk during the first, middle, and last readings of each of the two storybooks according to nine categories of talk are represented in Tables 1 and 2. The results for each of the nine categories are expressed as percentages of the total number of coded comments for that transcript. A percentage is given for both the teacher and child talk coded for a particular category. The number of teacher and child utterances was then added to determine the total percentage of talk related to a specific category. The proportion of teacher to child talk is represented by the percentages in the last columns of Tables 1 and 2.

Analysis of the transcripts indicates that in 13 of the 14 storybook readings, children had more conversational turns than the teacher (i.e., the percentage of coded child comments was greater than the percentage of coded teacher comments). The one exception occurred during the fourth reading of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* During that reading, the teacher had more conversational turns than did the children—a ratio of 49 percent to 51 percent (child to teacher talk). In that particular reading, the teacher directed children to watch her point to the text as she read and pointed out the label for and function of the question mark.

Utterances classified in Category III (affective utterances) reflect response to story meaning, derived from either the text or illustrations. In the first and third readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, Category III (affective response) had the highest percentage of total utterances for both students (40 percent) and teacher (21 percent). In all three transcripts, most child talk occurred in Category III. The pattern for teacher talk was different. During the first and middle readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, the greatest percentage of teacher utterances was in Category I (attention to print and the mechanics of reading).

Categories of Talk in the Folktale

Figures 1 and 2 depict the ratio of teacher to child talk across the three readings of each of the two storybooks. In both the multiple readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* and *The Three Little Pigs*, the proportion of teacher to child talk is almost equal in the middle (fourth) readings. The first and last transcripts of each storybook contain a greater percentage of talk by children. According to the data presented in Table 1, the middle readings of both the predictable pattern book and the folktale were also the readings in which the greatest amount of talk about the mechanics of reading occurred (Category I).

Of the total number of utterances, the highest proportion (44 or 28 percent) for the first reading of *The Three Little Pigs* occurred in Category VI (confirmation). For example, the teacher confirmed a child's prediction by saying, "Terry says, 'Here comes the third little pig.' I think she's right." A child confirmed his own prediction that the wolf would not eat the pig when he was in the apple tree by saying, "I told you he wouldn't." Most of the utterances were confirmations about their predictions of the outcome of events in the story.

The greatest percentage of talk (35 percent) in the last reading of *The Three Little Pigs* occurred in Category IV (intellectual search). Ten of the 30 utterances made by children were comments in which the child linked something in *The Three Little Pigs* to another book or rhyme. For example, they linked the donkey with a load of sticks on his back to the donkey in *Tingalayo*.

Table 1**Number and Percent of Child and Teacher Turns in Each Category of How Many Bugs in a Box?**

CATEGORY	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	TOTAL
First Reading										
TEACHER	11	2	1	3	3	1	-	4	-	25
CHILD	2	7	24	2	3	-	-	-	-	38
TOTAL	13	9	25	5	6	1	0	4	0	63
TEACHER	17%	3%	2%	5%	5%	2%	0%	6%	0%	40%
CHILD	3%	11%	38%	3%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%
TOTAL	21%	14%	40%	8%	10%	2%	0%	6%	0%	100%
Middle Reading										
TEACHER	9	0	0	1	4	2	0	3	-	19
CHILD	4	0	7	0	0	1	2	4	-	18
TOTAL	13	0	7	1	4	3	2	7	0	37
TEACHER	24%	0%	0%	3%	11%	5%	0%	8%	0%	51%
CHILD	11%	0%	19%	0%	0%	3%	5%	11%	0%	49%
TOTAL	35%	0%	19%	3%	11%	8%	5%	19%	0%	100%
Last Reading										
TEACHER	0	1	2	0	3	3	0	0	1	10
CHILD	4	2	5	3	1	2	6	0	0	25
TOTAL	4	3	7	3	4	5	6	0	1	35
TEACHER	0%	3%	6%	0%	9%	9%	0%	0%	3%	30%
CHILD	12%	6%	15%	9%	3%	6%	18%	0%	0%	70%
TOTAL	12%	9%	21%	9%	12%	15%	18%	0%	3%	100%
Total Readings										
TEACHER	20	3	3	4	10	6	0	7	1	54
CHILD	10	9	36	5	4	3	8	4	0	79
TOTAL	30	12	39	9	14	9	8	11	1	133
TEACHER	15%	2%	2%	3%	8%	5%	0%	5%	1%	41%
CHILD	8%	7%	27%	4%	3%	2%	6%	3%	0%	59%
TOTAL	23%	9%	29%	7%	11%	7%	6%	8%	1%	100%

Note. I = Forms and functions of print
 II = Literacy response
 III = Affective responses
 IV = Intellectual search
 V = Management
 VI = Confirmation of a previous response
 VII = Prediction
 VIII = Talk to inform
 IX = Clarification

Table 2**Number and Percent of Child and Teacher Turns in Each Category of The Three Little Pigs**

CATEGORY	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	TOTAL
First Reading										
TEACHER	5	10	2	7	6	16	6	6	0	58
CHILD	2	2	24	16	2	25	27	0	0	101
TOTAL	7	12	26	23	8	44	33	6	0	159
TEACHER	-	6%	1%	-	4%	0%	10%	4%	0%	36%
CHILD	-	1%	15%	10%	-	0%	-	-	-	64%
TOTAL	-	8%	16%	14%	5%	0%	26%	4%	0%	100%
Middle Reading										
TEACHER	36	20	3	9	11	39	1	15	23	158
CHILD	41	54	10	31	10	13	11	11	3	184
TOTAL	77	74	13	40	21	52	12	27	26	342
TEACHER	11%	6%	1%	3%	3%	0%	11%	5%	7%	46%
CHILD	12%	16%	3%	9%	3%	3%	4%	3%	1%	54%
TOTAL	23%	22%	4%	12%	6%	4%	15%	8%	8%	100%
Last Reading										
TEACHER	5	1	2	11	6	13	1	1	1	41
CHILD	4	10	13	30	11	3	5	1	0	77
TOTAL	9	11	15	41	17	16	6	2	1	118
TEACHER	4%	1%	2%	9%	5%	1%	11%	1%	1%	35%
CHILD	-	8%	11%	25%	9%	4%	3%	4%	1%	65%
TOTAL	5%	9%	13%	35%	14%	5%	14%	5%	2%	100%
Total Readings										
TEACHER	46	31	7	27	23	68	8	23	24	257
CHILD	47	66	47	77	23	44	43	12	5	362
TOTAL	93	97	54	104	46	112	51	35	27	619
TEACHER	7%	5%	1%	4%	4%	11%	1%	4%	4%	42%
CHILD	8%	11%	8%	12%	-	7%	7%	2%	0%	58%
TOTAL	15%	16%	9%	17%	7%	18%	8%	6%	4%	100%

Note. I = Forms and functions of print
 II = Literacy response
 III = Affective responses
 IV = Intellectual search
 V = Management
 VI = Confirmation of a previous response
 VII = Prediction
 VIII = Talk to inform
 IX = Clarification

Comparison of Talk Across Genres

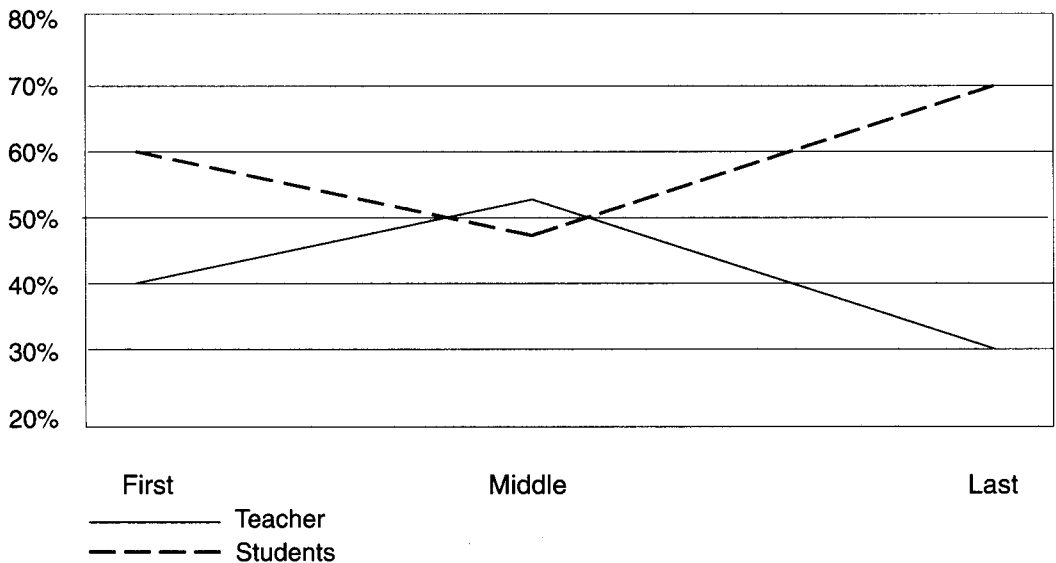
Data presented in Tables 1 and 2 illustrate that the ratio of teacher to child talk was almost identical across the first, middle (fourth), and last readings of each of the two storybooks. The first and last transcripts of each storybook reading contain a greater percentage of conversational turns by children. The middle readings of both storybooks were also the readings in which the greatest amount of talk about the mechanics of reading occurred (Category I). Figures 1 and 2 are graphic representations of teacher and child conversational turns in the first, middle (fourth), and last readings of the two storybooks.

Topics of Discussion in the Predictable Pattern Book

Analysis of the talk in the seven readings of the predictable pattern book, *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, represented six categories: (a) illustration, (b) print, (c) game-like routines, (d) links to life (Cochran-Smith, 1984), (e) links to books, and (f) affective response. The number of topics initiated by the teacher and children was approximately the same. The teacher initiated 14, or 54 percent, of the topics while the children initiated 12, or 46 percent, of the discussions about a topic. Table 3 displays the number and type of topics generated by the teacher and children in each of the seven storybook readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*

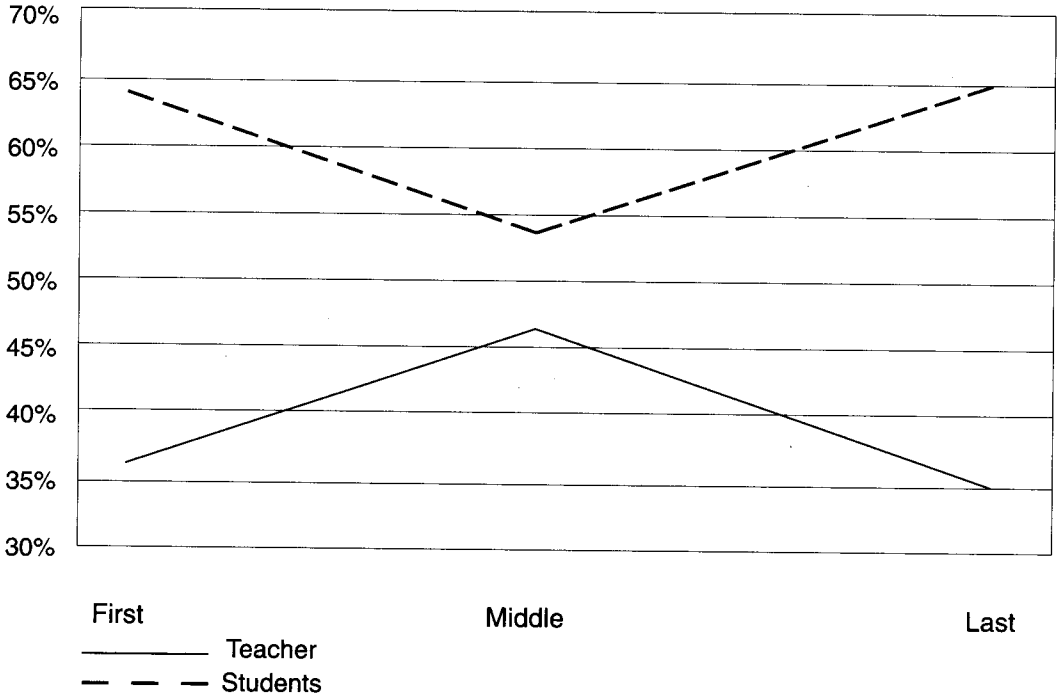
Miss P chose to highlight *How Many Bugs in a Box?* in her read-aloud program because the repetitive pattern and text layout supported children as they began to make connections between the oral language of the storybook reading and the print on the page. Analysis of her talk during the seven storybook readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* shows that Miss P initiated topics that drew attention to print in four of the seven storybook readings.

Figure 1. The ratio of child to teacher conversational turns in the first, middle, and last storybook readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*



Although her primary purpose in selecting this book was to draw children's attention to print, she also began discussions about other topics. She pointed out how Carter (1988) used his knowledge of the real world when he created the bugs in his illustrations. For example, the frog bugs had long sticky tongues so they could catch flies just like real frogs do. She also began the game-like routine that developed around whether or not they should dare to open the box that had saw bugs in it.

Figure 2. The ratio of child to teacher conversational turns in the first, middle, and last storybook readings of *The Three Little Pigs*.



The only topic that emerged in every reading was the game-like routine initiated by the teacher in the first reading of the storybook. Following is the transcription from the first reading of the book. The text from the book is in uppercase letters.

Miss P: Listen to this page. Listen. HOW MANY BUGS ARE IN THE WOODEN BOX?
Oh, oh! There's a sign that says, OPEN IF YOU DARE. Do we dare open it?

Children: No!

Miss P: Oh, let's dare. Let's dare.

Roy: No!

Children: [Loud laughter]

Miss P: (Miss P has opened the flap.) It says, TEN SAW BUGS. CAREFUL. DON'T LET THEM OUT! Let's close it up so they don't get out.

Children: [Loud laughter]

Child: Read that again.

Analysis of the transcripts shows that the last two times Miss P read *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, the only lengthy conversation involved this game-like routine that revolved around the last illustration in the book.

Table 3
Frequency of Child and Teacher Initiated Topics Across Seven Readings of How Many Bugs in a Box?

Topic	Number of Storybook Reading Events													
	1st		2nd		3rd		4th		5th		6th		7th	
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C
Illustrations	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Print	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Game	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	
Link to Life	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Link to Books	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Affective Response	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Note. T = Teacher; C = Child

Topics of Discussion in the Folktale

During the seven interactive storybook readings of Galdone’s *The Three Little Pigs*, children initiated the greatest number of conversations. They started 77 percent of the topics that were discussed. Except for the last reading of *The Three Little Pigs*, children also initiated the majority of topics the class talked about each time the story was read. For example, children began a discussion around the topic of building materials. They discussed why they thought a brick house would be more sturdy than a straw house (link to life). They also wondered about what it meant to *seek their fortune* (literacy) and looked through books to see if the titles of books were always located in the same place (print/reading). The number and type of topics initiated by the teacher and children during the interactive storybook readings of *The Three Little Pigs* are displayed in Table 4.

Most of the topics discussed during the readings of *The Three Little Pigs* fell into the category labeled *literacy*. Children talked about the characteristics of the pigs and wolf, predicted the plot, and interpreted the illustrations. Although print was mentioned during short interactions in all seven readings, it did not become the focus of extended discussions until the fourth and fifth readings when children initiated a discussion of the similarity in the spelling patterns of *huff* and *puff*.

The following is an analysis of the talk surrounding the reading of the first page of Galdone’s (1970), *The Three Little Pigs*. It illustrates the way children constructed different meanings across multiple readings of the first page of the book. Galdone set the plot for the story on the first page when the mother sow sends her children off to seek their fortune. In order to set the stage for the story, the teacher drew attention to the illustration of the mother sow crying as her children leave home. The text from the story is indicated with upper case letters.

Table 4**Frequency of Child and Teacher Initiated Topics Across Seven Readings of *The Three Little Pigs***

Topic	Number of Storybook Reading Events							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
	T C	T C	T C	T C	T C	T C	T C	
Literacy	3 1	- 2	1 9	3 8	1 2	- 2	- 2	
Print/Reading	- -	- -	1 1	1 3	1 4	- -	- -	
Link to Life	- 2	- -	- 1	1 1	- 1	- 2	- 1	
Management	- -	- 2	- -	- -	- -	- -	2 -	

Note. T = Teacher; C = Child

Miss P: ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS AN OLD SOW WITH THREE LITTLE PIGS. SHE HAD NO MONEY TO KEEP THEM, SO SHE SENT THEM OFF TO SEEK THEIR FORTUNE. Why is she crying?

Nate: She don't got no money.

Miss P: She doesn't have any money. Why else is she crying?

Jordan: Because the piggies are going away.

Miss P: Because her children, her pigs, are going away. She's sending them away and she's very sad. She doesn't want them to leave.

Phinney: But they're coming back!

Sara: My mom cryin' cause she got no money.

After this initial teacher initiated discussion, nothing more was said about the reason for the pigs leaving home nor was any mention made of the phrase, *to seek their fortune*, until the fifth read-aloud event. Instead, children paid attention to the phrase Galdone used to begin the story, *Once upon a time*. They linked the words used to begin this story to the opening phrases in other folktales. The following excerpt from the first storybook reading illustrates the way children made links between this tale and others they had heard. The conversation begins when one of the children, Phinney, says, "Once upon a time."

Phinney: Once upon a time.

Miss P: You're right! That's exactly how it starts. That's exactly how it starts.

All Children: (All children are talking at once and begin to get up to get other folktales they had read by Galdone.)

Miss P: Chrissy, Chrissy, bring me the Galdone book (*The Three Bears*). Mitchell, hand me the Galdone one (*The Three Billy Goats Gruff*). Thank you. Now.

Peter: And another one.

Miss P: Thank you, Chrissy. Now, somebody said that this starts 'Once upon a time,' also. (She begins to read the first page of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Galdone.)

But in the fifth reading, one of the children, Phinney, became intrigued with the meaning of the phrase *to seek their fortune*. The following is an excerpt of that conversation.

Phinney: What does it mean—seek their fortune?

Miss P: To seek their fortune means she sent them off to see if they could make a living; if they would figure out a way to live.

Phinney: [Unintelligible]

Miss P: To find a house to live in.

Phinney: I would, I would still stay here [excited, emotional tone of voice]

Terry: That's their house.

Miss P: I'll bet that is the mother sow's house.

Terry: Why they have to leave?

Miss P: Well, because she didn't have any money to keep them. That means she doesn't have enough money to buy food for them.

The discussion continued with the children talking about what they would pack in a bag if they were going off to seek their fortune. During the sixth reading, Phinney asked again about the meaning of the phrase to seek their fortune.

Phinney: What does that mean?

Miss P: What did we say that meant?

Jordan: She couldn't keep them.

Miss P: She couldn't keep them. She didn't have enough money to get food for them so she sent them off to seek their fortune. It means she told them to go ahead and go out and see if they could find a way to live on their own.

Jordan: I'm never leavin'.

Child 2: I'm never movin'.

Miss P: You're never moving? Wow! Your mom and dad will be surprised. Will you live there forever and ever?

Phinney: I'm movin'.

Miss P: [To child 2] How about when you're grown up?

Child 2: I'm gonna be movin'.

Phinney: I'm gonna get me a car!

Miss P: You're gonna get a car? You know what, Phinney? You're gonna be like the three little pigs. You're going to go out and find a way to make some money by yourself.

Discussion

The Role of Talk in How Many Bugs in a Box?

Talk served different purposes for the children and teacher during the seven readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* The category with the most child talk in the predictably patterned book, *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, was Category III of Table 1 (affective response). There was a close match between the teacher's talk and her purpose for selecting this book. The category with the most teacher talk across the three storybook readings was Category I (attention to print). The teacher had stated that she selected *How Many Bugs in a Box?* because the simple repetitive pattern of the text and large print enabled her to demonstrate the early reading strategies of left-to-right directionality, return sweep, and word-by-word matching. The language pattern, which was in the form of a question, gave her an opportunity to introduce children to the question mark as a form of punctuation.

The teacher's purpose for choosing this book is also reflected in the kinds of topics she chose to bring up for discussion. Miss P initiated discussions about print related topics in four of the seven storybook readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* Three of those discussions focused on the identification and purpose of the question mark.

On the other hand, children usually initiated discussions about topics that were related to illustrations in the book. They wanted to know why the fleas moved when the flap opened and

why frogs ate flies. The only topic that emerged in every reading of the story was the game-like routine initiated by the teacher in the first reading of the storybook. Her playful interaction developed into a ritual that was included in every interactive storybook reading of *How Many Bugs in a Box?* just like parents and children develop rituals around the readings of a particular storybook at home. The children reacted effectively to the opening of each flap, sometimes anticipating what they would see with a comment like, "It's gonna be scary!"

Role of Talk in The Three Little Pigs

The teacher chose *How Many Bugs in a Box?* as a *text to teach*, but she chose *The Three Little Pigs* as a *text to stretch* children's literary understandings (Huck, 1983). Most of the conversations that evolved during the seven interactive storybook readings of *The Three Little Pigs* focused on making sense of the story either by talking about the plot and characters or linking it to other tales they had heard.

The data also indicate that children focused their attention on different aspects of the story during the seven interactive storybook readings. For example, print captured their interest during the middle readings of the storybook and book language intrigued them in the later readings. The shift in talk during these storybook readings followed the same patterns described by Martinez and Roser (1985), Morrow (1988), and Yaden (1988) in their studies. These authors also found that talk during multiple readings of the same storybook changed as children continued to construct new understandings of the story.

Comparison of Patterns and Content of Talk Across Storybook Readings From Two Genres

The data presented in Figures 1 and 2 and Tables 1 and 2 indicate identical changes in patterns of teacher/child turn-taking across storybook readings. The same pattern emerged in multiple readings of books from two diverse genres. Children had a greater number of conversational turns in the first and last readings of both *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, a book with a predictable pattern, and *The Three Little Pigs*, a folktale. The number of conversational turns for the teacher and children are more nearly equal in the middle (fourth) readings of both books.

The content of talk may have played a role in the amount of teacher and child talk for each storybook reading. Talk during the first and last readings of both storybooks focused on the story itself. For example, in the first reading of *The Three Little Pigs*, children predicted the plot. In the last reading, they thought of their own lives in terms of the story, talking about the stance they would take if they were asked to leave home. They also talked about the sensibility of building homes from straw. During the first and last readings of *How Many Bugs in a Box?*, children delighted in and talked about what kinds of bugs Carter put in each of the boxes.

In contrast, talk during the middle reading of each storybook focused more intensively on print. Much of the print-related talk during the fourth (middle) read-aloud of *The Three Little Pigs* was related to a discussion of the words huff and puff. During the third storybook reading, the teacher had written the words *huff*, *puff*, and *Blow your house* in enlarged print on a piece of chart paper. She printed the text so that the word *puff* was written directly under the word *huff*. Every time those words appeared in the story, she would point to the words on the chart and the children would read with her. Her choice of text, the layout of the text on the chart paper, and the drawing of the class's attention to the print by having the children engage in a shared reading of that bit of text may all have contributed to the children noticing the similarity and differences in the writing of the words huff and puff.

During these conversations about print, there tended to be a shift to more traditional teacher-student interactional patterns, similar to that described by Mehan (1979). For example, when Miss P directed children's attention to the question mark, she asked them what it meant and had a predetermined answer in mind. When the children heard the word *merry* in *The Three Little Pigs*, she wrote it down and then compared it to the girl's name, Mary, showing them how the two were different.

The analysis of the nature of talk during the reading of the first page of *The Three Little Pigs* also demonstrates that multiple readings allow children to attend to different aspects of the text. In these readings, children first made intertextual ties based on book language and patterns of three in other folktales with which there were familiar. Only then did they notice the more unfamiliar language that appeared on that page (to seek their fortune), inquire about its meaning, and respond to its meaning in terms of their own lives.

Conclusion

The interactive storybook readings described in this study were part of a print-rich instructional program this kindergarten teacher developed to foster literacy learning of her at-risk students. Just as an adult scaffolds a child's learning during lap reading experiences at home, Miss P extended her students' understandings of written language—from the discourse structure of narratives to the details of print—as they conversed during storybook reading events.

Miss P also read the same story on multiple occasions. The variety of talk and changing student-teacher interactional patterns across readings suggest that revisiting storybooks may play an important function in literacy learning both in and out of school. The opportunity to hear the same story more than one time created an opportunity for students to respond to the story in multiple ways and at multiple levels. They internalized the story structure and language patterns of both books, reflected on links between the story being read and others they had heard, and made links between the storybooks and their own experiences.

Most of the more lengthy topics of discussion were initiated by children as they made sense of the story or the world of print. For example, Phinney's inquiry about the meaning of *to seek your fortune* in the fifth reading of *The Three Little Pigs* led to long discussions in which Phinney and the other children related the experiences of the pigs leaving home to their own lives. Jordan's discovery that *huff* and *puff* ended in the same letters developed into a discussion of print. Talk surrounding storybook readings in this classroom promoted the development of literacy by encouraging the development of literate thinking.

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