

JOINT CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE IN GOONIYANDI

William McGregor

A disaster was coming near. I almost asked Faurson how he could have committed such a serious oversight, but I restrained myself, to keep from spoiling his story. In fact, just as there is an art of storytelling, strictly codified through a thousand trials and errors, so there is also an art of listening, equally ancient and noble, but as far as I know, it has never been given any norm. And yet every narrator is aware from experience that to every narration the listener makes a decisive contribution: a distracted or hostile audience can unnerve any teacher or lecturer; a friendly public sustains. But the individual listener also shares responsibility for that work of art that every narration is: you realize this when you tell something over the telephone, and you freeze, because you miss the visible reaction of the listener, who in this case can only express his interest through an occasional monosyllable or grunt. This is also the chief reason why writers, those who must narrate to a disembodied public, are few. (Levi 1988:35)

1. INTRODUCTION¹

It is a truism that all discourse occurs in some socio-cultural and interpersonal context. Even so-called monologues typically involve more than a single interactant, and are in important senses the joint product of a dialectic between at least one narrator and at least one non-narrator (cf. Schegloff 1982; see also section 3 below for a discussion of these terms). Firstly, monologues normally function as moves within larger interactive contexts; and secondly, unless the narrator takes his/her audience or intended audience into account s/he will be unable to construct an intelligible and effective text. As academics and teachers we are all familiar with this phenomenon.

Let me elaborate on these two points.

As to the first, as has just been mentioned, monologues do not arise within social vacuums; they always occur within definite socio-cultural contexts of situation. In some cultures, for instance, the performance of certain texts requires quite elaborate and specific conditions (see e.g. Tedlock 1983:14). More to the point of the present paper, it would seem that in no culture would the occurrence of any particular text type — specifically, a monologue — be equally likely in all circumstances, irrespective of the interpersonal relationship between the

¹ The initial impetus for this *paper came from discussions* with Shirley Gollagher in Halls Creek and Kununurra in 1986. We both experienced similar misgivings about various simplistic notions being expressed by educators and educational theorists concerning Aborigines which we felt should be publicly challenged. The result was a projected joint paper which would compare joint construction of narrative in Gooniyandi and Kriol. However, this plan never came to fruition, and the present paper presents just one side of the original project.

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interactants, and their respective roles.² Whether or not one of the interactants takes on the role of narrator, that is, will depend on a variety of contextual factors. A brief illustration may be useful: the field interview situation between the author and certain Gooniyandi people had become formalised to the extent that certain conditions functioned as cues to the interviewee to begin narrating a text. However, when I interviewed a former police inspector in Perth, these cues (which I had myself internalised and overgeneralised) failed to produce the narratives I had hoped for. (Indeed, I suspect that the structure of that interaction as an INTERVIEW would have militated against that person narrating a story.)

In regard to the second point, particularly in the case of face-to-face interactions, the speaker is able to gauge the responses of the listener and modify his/her style accordingly. This is possible mainly by taking account of cues given by the latter. Even when monologuing, narrators look for and expect to find cues that the members of the audience are still attending; such cues may include eye contact, head nodding, paralinguistic responses such as laughter, grunting, and so on, and linguistic responses such as interjections, questions and the like — see for instance Muecke (1983:v), Schegloff (1982:73-74) and Tedlock (1983:66). Indeed, the absence of such cues may rapidly lead to the speaker concluding his/her turn and abandoning the floor, or actively seeking a response from the audience — for instance by asking whether or not they are still listening.

We may summarise the above discussion in slightly different terms as follows. There are two main ways in which monologues may be regarded as JOINT CONSTRUCTS of a narrator and a non-narrator: (1) initiation of the process of narration is a joint dialectic between a would-be narrator and a would-be audience; and (2) keeping the process going is a joint effort involving both the narrator and the non-narrators who constitute an audience. I use the term 'joint construction of narrative' to refer to these phenomena. This usage must be distinguished from another possible sense of the term: the phenomenon whereby a single narrative is constructed as the joint effort of two (or more) narrators, who speak in turns, each telling a part of the story.

This paper begins an investigation of joint construction of narratives in an Australian Aboriginal language, Gooniyandi, which is a non-Pama-Nyungan language (Dixon 1980:2 1) spoken by about 100 Aborigines living in the vicinity of Fitzroy Crossing, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. My main purposes are: (a) to identify the main types of audience input to narrative monologue, leading to (b) an understanding of the structure of discourse as an interactive event; and (c) to examine the implications (and limitations) of these findings to cross cultural communication. We will be suggesting that the repertoire of strategies used by Aborigines to initiate and keep narrative texts going is identical with the repertoire used by whites. There are, however, differences in the contexts in which particular devices predominate, and, presumably, their effectiveness in terms of continuing the narrative.

The present investigation represents a small part of a project of research into Gooniyandi discourse the ultimate aims of which are: (a) to understand and describe the organisation of monologic texts; (b) to describe the processes of conversational exchange; (c) to understand the modalities of information exchange in Gooniyandi society (and more generally, in Aboriginal society in the Kimberley region), leading eventually to possible applications to education and the study of cross cultural communication; and (d) to identify and understand the links between language, text and ideology. One of my motivations for investigating the

² This is as true of writing as it is of speech; we write papers for academic journals with a particular audience in mind, and our style of writing differs from the style we would employ in writing a textbook on the same subject, in an informal letter on the subject to a colleague, and even for different journals.

specific phenomenon of joint construction of narrative is that it straddles the first three of these four major goals. Furthermore, the object of study — including (I would expect) not only its form, but also its context, which includes amongst other things the goals of the interlocutors — is somewhat more tractable than either conversation or information exchange in general, while at the same time it represents a specific type of each.

The paper is organised as follows. In section 2 I discuss the circumstances surrounding the occurrence of the texts used as the primary corpus for this study. In section 3 I attempt to identify the various (non-institutionalised) roles which are, or may be taken up by the speech interactants within the limited range of discourses investigated. Then in section 4 I make an initial attempt to analyse the narratives as interactive events involving (in this case) three interlocutors. This part of the investigation is informed by the theoretical frameworks of systemic linguistics (see e.g. Halliday 1985) and a variety of exchange analysis (see e.g. Coulthard & Brazil 1981, Stubbs 1983:84-146, and the systemic refinements of e.g. Berry 1981 and 1987, Halliday & Plum 1985, Turner 1987 and Martin 1985), which it attempts to develop in a limited way. The short fifth section looks at possible framing exchanges for monologue texts: moves directed towards getting someone to narrate a story. Some remarks on the structure of monologue texts in terms of sequences of exchanges are included in section 6. Focus changes in the following section (section 7), where I propose a complementary analysis of the interaction in terms of goals of the interactants; here the continuation of a narrative piece is regarded as an achievement (cf. Schegloff 1982:73-74). Some possible applications of the research are discussed in section 8, where some cautions concerning trivial interpretations of the results of the research as recipes for successful communication are also carefully outlined. The paper ends with a brief conclusion which summarises the results of the investigation and suggests some future directions for research.

2. THE TEXTS

The present investigation is based primarily on half an hour of spoken language recorded on cassette tape during an interaction between two old Gooniyandi men, Jack Bohemia and Bigfoot *Jagadda*, and the writer.³ The half hour segment selected for examination was the second half hour of recorded interaction. (The first half hour has been examined cursorily.) The entire hour of recording was transcribed in 1982 shortly after the event, with the help of one of the speakers (Jack Bohemia). More recently (1987) I have retranscribed it in Melbourne, mainly for the purpose marking in important features which were omitted in the original transcription, notably pauses, intonation units, and interjective responses by the audience. However³ some errors of omission were also detected in the original transcription, and corrected.

The verbal interaction took place in 1982, during my second period of fieldwork on the language,⁴ on the banks of the Margaret River, at the Fossil Downs Crossing, about 2 kilometres from Mulurrja, a small community in which one of the men (Bigfoot Jagadda)

³ Ideally, the interaction should have been recorded on video-tape; however, financial constraints precluded this. Because of this limitation, I am unable of course to say anything about the non-linguistic aspects of the interaction, such as eye contact, personal orientation in space, and so on.

⁴ The relevance of this observation is that by this time I had known each of the men for some time, and had gained some small facility in the language, including a reasonable passive understanding. In the absence of each of these conditions, I think the scenario would have been more difficult, if not impossible, to set up. In particular, the sharing of goals by Bohemia and the author (see below) is contingent on considerable and intimate personal interaction.

lived. The old men were the primary speakers, and they spoke mainly in Gooniyandi, but with a certain amount of switching to the post contact language which they controlled (McGregor & Thieberger 1986, McGregor 1988a).⁵

The interaction itself was not spontaneous; it had been planned some time previously by two of the participants. Prior to the trip from Fitzroy Crossing (where they lived) to Margaret Crossing and Mulurrja, Bohemia and McGregor had discussed various matters of mutual interest, which they wished to raise with Bigfoot. In particular, both wanted to obtain some mythological texts from him, elicit some information on Captain Cook (who is widely held to be the first white person in the Kimberley region — see Kolig 1980, and Rose 1984), and stage a conversation in the mother-in-law variety. (Like many Aboriginal languages, Gooniyandi has a distinct variety of speech reserved for talking to, and in the presence of certain proscribed kin, notably the mother-in-law — see for example Dixon 1980:58-65 and McGregor 1984:9-12.)

Not only was the interaction planned, but so also were the individual texts. Before turning on the tape recorder, we discussed in some detail what was going to be spoken about. (Although it would have been preferable to have recorded the entire proceedings, this did not meet with the old men's approval.) When they were ready to talk, they signalled me to turn on the recorder, and immediately began.

The half hour of speech falls naturally into four relatively distinct texts, each bound by a brief period in which (at the request of the old men) the tape recorder was switched off. The first text (from the second half hour) was a constructed mother-in-law text, a narrative describing a trip undertaken by a man, his wife, and her mother. At the conclusion of the text, I turned off the recorder, then switched it on again shortly afterwards to record another, much shorter text, also a narrative regarding mothers-in-law. At the conclusion of this text also the recorder was switched off for a short period of time. The third segment recorded was a discussion of contemporary marriage practices, and the circumstances of the interactants' marriages. This discussion suddenly took a turn, and Bigfoot began to talk about some information he had given recently to a historian working in the area, and the topic changed to the early days. Again the recorder was turned off, and it was decided that Jack Bohemia would tell a story about a leprosy patrol he had been on to the northern Kimberley during the 1940s when he worked as a police tracker (see McGregor 1988b). A lengthy narrative text was then recorded. To facilitate their identification, I will refer to the texts as, respectively, Mother-in-law-1, Mother-in-law-2, Marriage-3, and Patrol-4.

Of the four texts, three (namely Mother-in-law-1, Mother-in-law-2, and Patrol-4) are narratives, in at least the minimal sense that they all relate sequences of events. They are probably also narratives according to the structural definition as laid out in McGregor (1987). Certainly, Patrol-4 is without a doubt structurally a narrative; in fact, it is indistinguishable in terms of its internal textual organisation from any purely monologic police tracker story (McGregor 1988b). Why do I include Marriage-3 in the corpus, granted that it is not a narrative, and should probably properly be regarded as a conversational piece? For three main reasons. Firstly, within it are the only instances in the corpus of attempts by one of the

⁵ It is difficult to categorise the non-traditional speech of the two old men. From their age, one would expect that they should be speakers of a Pidgin English, the precursor of the creole language spoken today by younger Aborigines in the region, which is generally referred to as Kriol (Hudson 1983). However, although there are some uniquely Pidgin features in their speech, there are also some quite un-Pidgin like features, such as the sibilant *s*. Because the lexicon is predominantly English, it has been decided to refer to the non-traditional varieties as English-based, English-derived, or Aboriginal English, without any intention of prejudicing the question of classification.

interactants to elicit a narrative from another; secondly, it provides a useful additional piece of data against which my hypotheses may be evaluated; and thirdly, it is something with which narrative may be contrasted. (Needless to say, examples cited will, where possible, come from the three narrative texts.)

3. PARTICIPANT ROLES

It is obvious from even a cursory inspection of the texts that the interactants take on different roles at different points in the interaction. For example, the most obvious interactant roles are speaker and hearer, and these are frequently interchanged among the interactants.

It is also useful to distinguish the roles narrator and non-narrator. These roles are independent of the speaker and hearer roles, with both of which they freely conflate. Their usefulness in the present context resides in the fact that in monologues one of the interactants is primarily responsible for the development of the text, and the direction that it takes. This interactant will be referred to as the narrator (following normal usage, we do not necessarily restrict this to narrators of narratives); the other, as the non-narrator. The non-narrator is responsible for far less than the narrator. Normally s/he does not control the global direction in which the text moves (though sometimes s/he may control local directions), and his/her linguistic contribution is usually significantly less. For example, overall, the first two narratives show Jack Bohemia (JB) as responsible for about a third of the gross linguistic output, Bigfoot Jagadda (BF), the narrator (NAR), for two thirds; however, as will be seen later (see page 000), most of the non-predictable information is in fact provided by the narrator (BF). The fourth text is more strongly the work of a single narrator (JB); the contribution of the non-narrator is considerably less, and is largely restricted to interjections and a few echoic responses (see also below). By comparison, in the third text, the conversational piece Marriage-3, each interactant contributes approximately the same quantity of linguistic matter.

The roles of narrator and non-narrator, as distinct from speaker and hearer, thus tend to be associated with particular interactants over longer stretches of speech, typically over entire monologue texts. However, there are instances in the corpus in which, at least locally, the interactants appear to interchange the roles of narrator and non-narrator. For this reason, it may be useful to distinguish between primary and secondary narrator in circumstances in which for a short while the non-narrator takes on the narrator's role. However, the secondary narrator is a relatively marginal phenomenon in the four texts discussed here, and for reasons of convenience I will normally use the label narrator (NAR) to refer just to the primary narrator.

The primary narrator in the present texts also invariably takes on the role of primary knower (Berry 1987:49 and Martin 1985:261). Indeed this might be taken to be a necessary correlate of the role of primary narrator, were it not for the very real possibility that a narrator may be prompted by a non-narrator, who tells him/her what to say (and I have seen instances of this type). My main reasons for distinguishing this role here, however, are somewhat different. Firstly, it focuses on the interactant's status as possessor of information, rather than on his/her contribution to the development of the text. And secondly, the primary knower is readily distinguished from the narrator: as we will see, in two of the texts the non-primary narrator briefly takes on the role of narrator, even though he is unable to take on the role of primary knower. In addition, it might be added that this role forms a natural contrast with the role of information seeker, which I now discuss.

How can we account for the quantitative differences we have mentioned in the narrator's contribution to Mother-in-law-1 and Mother-in-law-2 versus Police-3? The most likely factor seems to be that in the first two texts Bohemia took on a very positive role as information

seeker (see also below). BF was, in these texts, the primary “knower” from whom information was being actively sought by JB. This may perhaps be partly due to BF’s natural reticence, and apparent unwillingness to take on the role of narrator; it may also be that JB is unwilling to relinquish full control of the narrative process to BF. (I will return to this point again in section 7.) On the other hand, in the fourth piece JB was primary knower and narrator, and BF was interested and attentive non-narrator — he did not, however, take on a strong role as information seeker.

We may compare these narrative pieces with the conversational piece. In the latter, JB and BF took on more equal roles as conversationalists; neither was primary knower, and neither took on a strong role as information seeker.

We summarise these observations in table 1.

Table 1: *Roles of interactants and gross characteristics of the texts*

Text	Role of interactant	Contribution to the text
1 & 2	JB: secondary narrator; active seeker of information	contributes about a third of the total lexical content
	BF: primary narrator and primary knower	contributes about two thirds of the total lexical content
	WM: onlooker, and passive seeker of information	virtually no linguistic contribution
3	JB & BF: equal status as conversationalists (no narrator, primary knower, or information seeker)	each speaker contributes about the same lexical quantity, and about the same amount of information
	WM: onlooker	no significant linguistic contribution
4	JB: narrator and primary knower	contributes virtually all of the lexical content of the text
	BF & WM: non-narrators	contribute very little to the development of the text; most of their contribution is in the form of interjections

4. TYPES OF EXCHANGES WITHIN TEXTS

In one sense we may regard the entire interaction which occurred between Jack Bohemia, Bigfoot Jagadda and William McGregor at the Fossil Downs Crossing on that particular day in 1982 as constituted by a number of subcomponent TRANSACTIONS, in roughly the sense of Coulthard & Brazil (1981). Although these writers do not attempt an explicit definition of the transaction, they point to such correlates as topic units, the marking of boundaries by “frames” or moves realised (in English) by a closed set of items such as ‘OK’, ‘right’, ‘well’ etc., and intonational phenomena. The transactions constituting the Fossil Downs Crossing interaction have beginnings — the majority of which were not recorded — as well as middles and ends, which were recorded. Typically the ends are marked by the element *wila* ‘OK, finish’, and possibly in addition by a non- linguistic signal to switch off the cassette recorder.

(As a rule, these framing elements mark both the end of the narrative segment itself, and the end of the transaction.) For our present purposes, the transaction may be regarded as the (essentially) monologue text, within its “frame” of occurrence. Thus, ill defined as it may be, the notion of transaction would seem to be useful to an investigation of the present type.

Just as the interaction as a whole consists of transactions, these in turn consist of smaller units, which are referred to as EXCHANGES (see e.g. Coulthard & Brazil 1981:88 and Berry 1981). Again, precise characterisations of exchanges seem to be lacking in the literature (see e.g. Coulthard & Brazil 1981, Martin 1985, Berry 1981, and Berry 1987). It does seem, at minimum, that an exchange must involve a change in the roles of speaker and hearer. (In fact, as we will see (section 4.1), this formulation is not unproblematic, in as much as it is sometimes difficult to determine whether the roles have been switched, and if they have been, to be certain that the new speaker has actually taken the floor.) Thus, the exchange itself will consist of utterances by both the narrator and the non-narrator; following the literature, I refer to these as MOVES (Coulthard & Brazil 1981).

Let us now take a look at the types of exchange which occur in these texts. On informal grounds they fall into seven main types, as follows:

- (1) continuatives: these use items which indicate that the hearer is attending;
- (2) open ended prompts: prompts which are not specific as to what can reasonably follow;
- (3) echoic responses: some or all of the previous utterance is repeated;
- (4) suggestions: here the non-narrator makes a guess as to what happened next;
- (5) elaborative comments: remarks which function to clarify more precisely what the narrator has just said;
- (6) summaries: here the non-narrator summarises one or more of the previous propositions;
- (7) probes: prompts for specific pieces of information.

Note that labels have been given according to the nature of the non-narrator’s move, in terms of its form, and also according to the relationship between its form, and the form of the previous move by the narrator. This is because the non-narrator’s move appears to be criterial in that it characterises the exchange in which it occurs.

It is not claimed that this constitutes a complete list. It does, however, seem to cover the full range of types found in the texts investigated. Furthermore, at this stage it is not claimed that these types are either linguistically or pragmatically significant. Indeed, some may have, at some level, the same pragmatic function — echoic responses may apparently function like probes, etc. (We will return to this point below, in section 7). It remains an issue for further investigation whether some or all of these types are theoretically justifiable.

I discuss the seven types in order in the following subsections. In the final, eighth subsection of the section, I conclude with a summary of the exchange types and an attempt to formally characterise each.

4.1 Continuatives

These may be divided into two main types, linguistic and para-linguistic. (i) Linguistic continuatives include interjections such as *yoowayi* ‘yes’, *mangaddi* ‘no, not’, and expletives such as *waddiwaddi* ‘sorry’ (used to express sorrow at hearing an inappropriate or unpleasant remark). (ii) Para-linguistic continuatives are the so called ‘back channel’ devices (e.g. Yngve 1970) such as *?n?n* and *nn* ‘affirmation, continue’, and also laughter, grunting and eye contact — cf. Schegloff 1982:81, who suggests the term “continuers” for items of this type.

(Vocalizations such as *nn* are taken to be paralinguistic because they are not full words in their own right, and never occur in citation. They are of course language specific. Eye contact, on the other hand, might better be regarded as non-linguistic, since it involves no vocalisation; in any event, we will be ignoring it here.) Examples of type (ii) are to be found in the responses of BF in example (1):

- (1) JB/NAR: *booddoonggoo* *baryiddi* / *milamilayinmiwiddangi* /
north north we:climbed we:looked:out:for:them
BF: *nn* /
m m
JB/NAR: *yaanya* *gamba* *winthi* /
other water soak:water
BF: *nn* /
m m

Free translation

JB/NAR: We climbed up the north (side of the range) looking out for them.

BF: Mm.

JBINAR: (There was) another soak water there.

BF: Mm.

Of course, it might reasonably be objected that at least laughter, grunting, and eye contact should not be taken as moves in exchanges, since absolutely no case could be made that the role of speaker had been taken by the non-narrator. Even in the case of vocalisations like *nn* and *?n?n* there is room for argument, since even if their use is interpreted as an act of taking over the role of speaker, albeit briefly, frequently this does not at the same time necessarily involve taking the floor (see Schegloff 1982:81). Evidence for this consists in the fact that like eye contact, these vocalisations frequently overlap with the narrator's monologue.

4.2 Open ended prompts

By "open ended prompt" I mean a prompt which is quite non-specific as to what may reasonably and felicitously follow it. Open ended prompts do not, that is, make any significant restrictions on the content of the narrator's response. The most common example of this type is use of the words *niyinhingi* (that-from) 'after that', and *niyajinhingi* (this-from) 'after this'. (These words are frequently used in narratives as conjunctive elements — see McGregor 1984:124). Here the non-narrator is prompting the narrator to continue with the narrative, but, as in 4.1, not attempting to direct or modify what the narrator actually says in terms of content. (2) is a typical example:

- (2) JB: *niyinhingi* /
that:from
BF/NAR: *gindiwa* *doonggoowadda* / *miniwaddangaddi* /
upstream we:will:go Miniwaddangaddi

Free translation

JB: Then

BFINAR: "Let's go upstream to Miniwaddangaddi" (they said).

(Note that BF's response here is in the form of a quotation, representing the spoken words of one of the main participants in the story.)

(3) is another example of this sort of prompt:

- (3) JB: *boonggayanhingi* /
 from:boonggaya
 BF/NAR: *ngoonyiyayoo* / *doonggoowadda* /
 where-to we'll:go

Free translation

- JB: From Boonggaya?
 BFINAR: “Where will we go?” (they said).

The difference between (2) and (3) is that the prompt in the latter mentions (rather than just refers to by relative location) information obtained from the previous utterance of the narrator. (Compare echoic responses, which are discussed in the next section.)

Note that, as (2) and (3) indicate, open ended prompts are typically followed by moves by the narrator which constitute full clauses (at minimum). Granted that this much is predictable, nothing of the content of the narrator’s subsequent move is predictable. (Compare for instance questions in English, in which a single piece of information is sought to “complete” a proposition — see also 4.7 below).

On the other hand, it should be equally obvious that there are strong restrictions on the places in which an open ended prompt may occur within a narrative. They typically occur at places in which the forms *niyinhingi* ‘from/after that, then’ occur as conjunctive elements in strict monologue narratives. That is, they occur at the ends of complete sentences, rather than within them, and typically following a pause.⁶ Thus, an open ended prompt does not normally overlap with the narrator’s prior move.

4.3 Echoic responses

In this type of exchange, the non-narrator repeats some or all of the information contained in the narrator’s immediately previous move. (4) is a typical example, in which just one piece of information is repeated:

- (4) BF/NAR: *gindiwa doonggoowadda* / *miniwaddangaddi* /
 upstream we:will:go Miniwaddangaddi
 JB: *miniwaddangaddi* /
 Miniwaddangaddi
 BF/NAR: *?n?n* /
 mhm

Free translation

- BF/NAR: “Let’s go upstream to Miniwaddangaddi” (they said).
 JB: Miniwaddangaddi.
 BF/NAR: Mhm.

In (5), on the other hand, the whole referential content of the narrator’s previous utterance is echoed, although using different words:

- (5) BF/NAR: *marlami* / *ngirndawanggoo* *warangbadda* /
 no dwellers:of:this:place we:will:sit
 JB: *ngirndiya wamba warangbadda* /
 Here still we:will:sit

⁶ As Susanna Cumming has pointed out to me (pers.comm.), this may suggest that one of the functions of pausing is to solicit a response from the non-narrator (see also Schegloff 1981:79).

Free translation

BF/NAR: “No, lets stay here, as denizens of this place.”

JB: “Lets stay here for good.”

Consider also (6), which comes from another text (which was not in the corpus):

(6) JB/NAR: *thithi -rna wardjiddi /*

going -then we:went

BF: *thithi wardginggiddi /*

going you:went

Free translation

JB/NAR: Then we got going.

BF: You got going.

As (4) indicates, the echoic move of the non-narrator is frequently followed by a confirmatory move by the narrator. Echoic responses are thus often three move exchanges, in contrast to continuatives, which normally have no more than two moves.

4.4 Suggestions

In another quite frequent type of exchange the non-narrator makes a suggestion or guess, usually as to what happened next. This is typically an intelligent guess based on what the narrator has just said. For example, in (7) JB guesses what happened when the persons referred to reached Miniwaddangaddi (this exchange follows directly after the exchange in example (4) above).

(7) JB: *niyajiya middagnyaliwiddani /*

there they:camped:again

BF/NAR: *yoowayi / ngoonyiyayoo doonggoowaddayi / niyi gamalgbiri / marlara /*

yes where:to we:will:go that you:tell girl

Free translation

JB: They made camp there too.

BF/NAR: Yes. “Where will we go”, tell me that, girl,” (said the old woman).

A slightly different type of suggestion is illustrated in (8). Here what is suggested is not a subsequent action, but rather, a previous one. The non-narrator is picking up on a matter on which he wants confirmation, an issue which the narrator has omitted to mention — that is, whether or not he (JB) had tied up the people before going on:

(8) JB/NAR: *niyinhingi wardjiddi /*

that-after we:went

BF: *mirdginggidrimi /*

you:tied:them:up

JB/NAR: *ye mirdjiddrimi:: jangajangaya /*

yes we:tied:them:up with:chains

Free translation

JBINAR: Then we went on.

BF: You tied them up?

JBINAR: Yes, we tied them up with chains.

It will be noted that this second type of suggestion naturally implies a break in the process of narration, not implied in the first type.

As in the case of echoic responses, the non-narrator's contribution may be followed by a move in which the narrator accepts this contribution — see the third move in the two above examples.

4.5 Elaborative comments

It is not easy to draw the line between suggestions (discussed in the previous subsection) and elaborative comments. I use this term to refer to input from the non-narrator which serves to make what the narrator has said more precise. This input functions to make clearer or more precise (or apparently precise) what the narrator has just said; in doing this the non-narrator must build on what the narrator has already said, and this means that some guesswork must be involved. Thus the only difference from suggestions resides in the nature of the guess: in effect, whether it constitutes a part of the preceding clause (in which case it is an elaborative comment) or a full new clause (in which case it is a suggestion). Compare, for instance, (8) with (9), which is an example of an elaborative comment.

- (9) BF/NAR: *marlami ngirndaji garndiwiddja middagbaddani /*
 no this twice we:will:lie
 JB: *thambalngoo /*
 place, day
 BF/NAR: *?n?n /*
 mhm

Free translation

- BF/NAR: “No, we’ll camp here two (nights).”
 JB: (Two) nights.
 BF/NAR: Mhm.

Again, as this example illustrates, this exchange type often consists of three moves, a final acceptance by the narrator of the non-narrator's contribution.

4.6 Summaries

Just as elaborative comments may be seen as special cases of suggestions, so also a special type of echoic response may be distinguished in which what is echoed is not the previous utterance (i.e. full clause) or part of the previous utterance, but rather a larger segment of the preceding text. (10) is an example of this type. Note that this follows directly after (9), and summarises the content of both BF's and JB's previous moves (i.e. the first and second moves in (9)). Note also that JB's move is followed by a confirmation by the narrator BF.

- (10) JB: *niyajiya garndiwiddja middagbiddi thambalngoo /*
 there twice they:lay place, day
 BF/NAR: *yoowayi /*
 yes

Free translation

- JB: They camped there two days.
 BF/NAR: Yes.

4.7 Probes

Gooniyandi has, according to McGregor (1984), no grammatically distinct class of interrogative clauses. Requests for both information (WH (who, when, what, where, which etc.) “questions”) and for polarity (yes/no “questions”) are not grammatically distinct from

statements (declaratives). (Thus Gooniyandi constitutes an exception to the universality of questions as a grammatically distinct class — cf. Sadock & Zwicky 1985:178.)

Information requests are made indirectly by asserting a proposition expressed by a clause which leaves something indefinite, namely the thing, time, place or whatever, whose identity is being sought. The grammatical ‘place’ of this indefinite is marked not by a WH word (there is nothing of this type in the language), but rather by one of a set of indefinite determiners, including *ngoorndoo* ‘someone, some name’, *ngoonyoo* ‘something (from a closed set of possibilities)’ and *jaji* ‘something’, as well as the indefinite adverbials *yiniga* ‘somehow’, and *yaningimi* (literally ‘now-indefinite’) ‘sometime’. The indefinite word is typically a marked focus of information in the clause — it receives the intonation centre of the tone unit in which it occurs, and this is marked in the sense that it does not fall on the final constituent of the tone unit (see McGregor 1986 for details). This may be because questions are pragmatically marked (see Goody 1978b), and typically involve presuppositions that the predication holds true for at least one entity, place, time, etc. (see McGregor 1986 for further discussion of this point). Presumably there is an expectation that assertion of a clause containing one of these indefinites will elicit a response which fills in the “blank” of the indefinite.

Requests concerning polarity are expressed by the assertion of a proposition. One part of it — the part about which the speaker is least certain — is selected as the information focus, and made the intonation centre of the clause. In addition, the indefinite enclitic *-mi* — *-ma*, which indicates roughly the same type of indefiniteness as the indefinite determiners and adverbs mentioned in the previous paragraph, may also be added to the focal constituent. (For further details, see McGregor 1986.) Again, this is presumably done in the expectation of eliciting the hearer’s agreement or disagreement.

It is important to note that although the language lacks a grammatical distinction between declarative and interrogative moods,⁷ this does not mean that speakers are unable to ask questions. In fact they frequently do, using means described in the previous two paragraphs. To avoid confusion between grammatical categories — the terms question and interrogative are each frequently used in reference to grammatical categories — and pragmatic function, I will refer to utterances that are clearly used in the same way as questions to elicit either information or polarity, and which involve indefinite words or enclitics, as PROBES. What characterises probes, and distinguishes them from the devices discussed above is that they are directed towards a specific element in the proposition. Thus they are identifiable only when both form and function are taken into consideration, and as a consequence they do not constitute a grammatical category.

An example of a probe is provided by (11):

(11) JB:	<i>malngayanhingi</i>	<i>giddbiyi /</i>	<i>ngoonyiya /</i>
	Malngaya-from	he:went	somewhere
BF/NAR:	<i>galmaddjoowa /</i>		
	Galmaddjoowa		

Free translation

JB: From Malngaya he went where?
 BF/NAR: (To) Galmaddjoowa.

⁷ It may be thought that an interrogative mood could be defined by the placement of information focus on the indefinite word in the case of information requests, and on the

It will be noted that the probe elicits a response from the narrator which provides the information sought after.

4.8 Structural descriptions of the exchange types

If we are to attempt to provide structural descriptions of the various exchange types, the first issue that needs to be addressed is that of identification of boundaries: where do exchanges begin and end? Each of the types we have discussed involves some type of input from the non-narrator; this is, in the simplest cases, always directly tied down to the previous utterance by the narrator. (There are some complications which I will not deal with just yet, but will leave until section 6.) The non-narrator's move — in exchanges other than continuatives and open ended prompts — depends on the content of the previous move by the narrator. (For the non-narrator to ignore that content would mean that his/her move was inappropriate or incomprehensible.)

The upshot of this discussion is that the first move in each exchange will be the narrator's contribution, which is normally in the form of a proposition having, we may assume, a narrative function. And this is irrespective of (and independent from) the type of exchange: as has been mentioned, it is the initial move of the non-narrator, not of the narrator, on the basis of which the exchange is classified. Let us refer to this initial move as a NARRATION. (For reasons of comprehensibility, I depart from normal usage of exchange theorists, and spell out the labels for the moves in full, rather than abbreviate them to a single letter; see e.g. Berry 1981 and 1987, etc..)

The exchange types may now be given structural formulae as shown below. Note that order is predictable (it is indicated by the symbol '^'): the narration always occurs first.

word to which the indefinite enclitic *-mi* is attached in the case of requests of confirmation. However, this will not work since the focus can fall on these items without any suggestion that information or confirmation is being sought.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| (1) continuatives: | narration ^ acknowledgement |
| (2) open ended prompts: | narration ^ conjunctive ^ completion/narration |
| (3) echoic responses: | narration ^ echo ^ acceptance |
| (4) suggestions: | narration ^ suggestion ^ confirmation |
| (5) elaborative comments: | narration ^ elaboration ^ acceptance |
| (6) summaries: | narration ^ summary ^ acceptance |
| (7) probes: | narration ^ probe ^ completion |

(It is likely that some of the move types listed above are not obligatory in the particular exchange type; however, the matter of obligatory or inherent versus optional moves has not yet been investigated, and I do not here wish to commit myself here.)

Evidently the elements in these formulae are a mixed bag. It is presumably the case that the narration constitutes a distinct functional category, identifying the functional role of the narrator's move in the discourse. However, the other labels refer not to the function of the move within its wider context (the exchange), but rather to the linguistic FORM employed, and in some instances, its relationship of that to the form of the preceding move. It is worth pointing out that, whether or not it is possible to identify these forms as grammatically significant categories, it is at least the case that the sets of linguistic forms that may occur in each 'place' are not identical, although they may overlap. Thus, although *?n?n* can be an acknowledgement in (1) and a confirmation in (4), there are differences in that non-linguistic phenomena such as eye contact, can occur in the former, but not the latter instance.

Let us now briefly discuss the exchange types again, in the light of these structural descriptions. Narration is, as we have already mentioned, the only move which is constant throughout; it is typically realised by a full proposition, expressed by a clause. Accordingly, I will not discuss it in each instance.

(1) In continuative exchanges, the acknowledgement is the non-narrator's move; it is typically realised by some sort of particle, or para-linguistic device. In effect, the non-narrator is acknowledging that he/she has received the information, and is attending to what the narrator is saying.

(2) In open ended prompts the non-narrator's move has been referred to as a conjunctive since, as we have already mentioned, it is typically constituted by a linguistic item which normally functions as a sentence conjunction in narratives. The completion/narration represents the narrator's response, in effect, his taking up again the role of narrator. Since this move represents both the completion of the non-narrator's prompt, and simultaneously the taking up of the narration, I have represented this move as a complex one, involving conflation of the completion and narration.

(3) In echoic exchanges, the non-narrator's move is referred to as an echo, since it echoes information contained in the previous move by the narrator. As we have seen, this move is normally followed by a move by the narrator, in which he/she confirms the validity of the echo; this move I have labeled acceptance.

(4) In suggestions the information provided by non-narrator is not derivable from the information already provided by the narrator; it constitutes a suggestion as to what may have happened, and hence the label. This move is normally followed by a move by the speaker attesting to the validity of the suggestion. I have referred to this move as a confirmation, as distinct from an acceptance (as found in echoic exchanges and elaborative comments) because there appears to be a difference in the items which typically realise the two move types. Narrator's responses to suggestions tend to be linguistic items (e.g. *yoowayi* 'yes'), rather than paralinguistic items (e.g. *?n?n*). Note that the texts do not contain instances in which the narrator DENIES the validity of the non-narrator's suggestion — although one would expect such moves to be possible.

(5) In the fifth type of exchange, elaborative comments, the non-narrator suggests information which elaborates on the information provided in the previous narration. This move, the elaboration, is normally followed by an acceptance by the narrator.

(6) The non-narrator's move in a summary summarises information provided by the narrator in previous moves; this too is typically followed by an acceptance by the narrator.

(7) In probes the non-narrator's move constitutes an attempt to elicit specific information from the narrator, thus the label probe. In all instances in the data, this is followed by a move by the narrator which provides this information, typically in the form of a single phrase, which functions as a completion of the non-narrator's utterance.

In many respects continuative exchanges are exceptional. It seems appropriate to conclude this section with three further observations which attest to the uniqueness of this type. Firstly, it is the only exchange which CANNOT have more than two moves — a following move will always by definition belong to the next exchange. Secondly, it seems *that, as a rule, the second move — the non-narrators move — is characterised by rising intonation*. This is, in Gooniyandi, associated with the notion of incompleteness, that there is more to follow. The only consistent class of exceptions to this generalisation are acknowledgements: these are not normally uttered on a rising intonation contour. Thirdly, acknowledgements frequently

overlap with the narrator's utterance, or at least follow very quickly after a pause in speech. As a rule, the other types of move occur only after somewhat longer pauses.

5. TYPES OF INITIATING EXCHANGES

Initiating exchanges — exchanges which have the purpose of eliciting monologic texts — are barely represented in the corpus. However, for the sake of completeness, we mention the three types that are represented: suggestions, statements of lack of knowledge, and statements of desire. I deal with these briefly in the following three subsections. The tentative nature of this discussion should be borne in mind — not only are there few examples available, but also none was actually successful in terms of eliciting a monologue. Furthermore, all available examples are in Pidgin/Kriol (sometimes with Gooniyandi borrowings) rather than in Gooniyandi.

5.1 Suggestions

Here the person trying to elicit a narrative mentions the subject matter, in the hope that drawing it to the knower's attention, the narrative may be elicited. (There are no examples of this type suitable for citation here.)

5.2 Statement of lack of knowledge

An example of this occurs in the conversation of the third text, Marriage-3, where JB attempts to elicit a story about the exploits of Pilmer, a police constable responsible for many massacres in the Fitzroy Crossing region late last century and early this century. (12) occurred shortly after the name Pilmer had been introduced (by BF):

(12) JB:	<i>ai</i>	<i>neva</i>	<i>bin</i>	<i>gedim</i>	<i>properly</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>word /</i>
	I	not	PAST	got	properly	that	story
BF:	<i>no</i>	<i>aa</i>	<i>bin</i>	<i>gedim</i>	<i>thadan</i>	<i>right</i>	<i>word /</i>
	no	I	PAST	get	that	right	story
JB:	<i>eel</i>						
	mm						

Free translation

JB:	I wasn't told the full story (about Pilmer).
BF:	No, I have the full story.
JB:	Oh.

It will be noted that JB was unsuccessful in eliciting the story — BF responds by simply stating that he had been told the full story, and leaves it at that! His initial 'no' is presumably in agreement with the content of JB's previous utterance. JB's next move is an acceptance of this, and of BF's revaluation of what appears to be a polite request as a statement (see also the discussion of section 7 below). A short time later the name Captain Cook was mentioned, and JB again tried to get a story using the same technique. He was foiled again, this time with the disclaimer that BF had already told the story to a relative of the present author, a few days earlier.

5.3 Statement of desire

The following is an example of a statement of the speaker's desire to hear a song (presumably the same strategy could be used to request a spoken monologue):

(13) JB: *ony / ony we wandim joonba now /*
 only only we want song now

Free translation

J13: We only want a song now.

(Note that this move was unsuccessful in eliciting a response from BF; in fact, it was followed by a second move by JB.)

It should be mentioned in conclusion that there is one initiating move type that I have NEVER heard — it is not represented in the corpus of the present investigation, nor have I ever heard a Gooniyandi person employing this strategy to get someone to tell them a story. What I am referring to is a direct request or command to tell a story.⁸

6. EXCHANGES IN TEXTS

We have now identified and discussed the main types of narrative-constructing exchanges represented in the corpus. In this section I will attempt an initial description of the text as a sequence of exchanges, pointing out some problems in the structural descriptions of section 4.8. I will also comment on the relative frequencies of the various exchange types across the range of texts being examined. This section is very preliminary and tentative, and further research of these issues is planned.

6.1 The text as a syntagm of exchanges

It would seem reasonable to hypothesise that a monologue text of the type that we have been discussing here has the structure of a sequence of exchanges, each of which follows one after the other, with perhaps brief pauses in between. This hypothesis needs to be tested against the available facts. In fact, it is not sustained.

Nevertheless, it seems to be not only a reasonable initial hypothesis, but also to account for a good deal of data. For instance, the bulk of *Police-3*, can be accounted for as a syntagm of continuative exchanges. The only problem in that text concerns a few instances in which acknowledgements (particles, interjections, and so on) occur WITHIN what appears to be a single narration move. It seems, however, that in general such acknowledgements typically occur at pauses following the main verb, in which the following material is primarily in the nature of elaborative description. Presumably, then, they can be accounted for as instances of misunderstandings by the hearer of the function of that particular pause — i.e. the hearer takes the pause to be response eliciting, rather than merely the marker of the end of an information unit (see also McGregor 1986).

Where significant problems arise is where the non-narrator's move follows not a narration, but an acceptance, confirmation, or completion move by the narrator. There are a number of examples of this type in *Mother-in-law-1* and *Mother-in-law-2*, including the following extended segment from the first of these narratives.

⁸ There is no distinct imperative mood in Gooniyandi. However, just as we can distinguish a notional class of questions in the absence of a distinct interrogative mood, we can distinguish a notional class of commands or directives in the absence of a distinct imperative mood. This class would be characterised by the choice of plain future tense with second person Actor.

(14)	BF/NAR:	<i>n: middagbadda niyajiya /</i>	NARRATION
		mm we'll:all:lie there	
	JB:	<i>niyajiya middagbani /</i>	SUGGESTION ⁹
		there he:lay	
	BF/NAR:	<i>?n?n /</i>	ACCEPTANCE
		mm	
	JB:	<i>malngayanhingi giddbiyi / ngoonyiya /</i>	PROBE
		Malngaya-from he:went somewhere	
	BF/NAR:	<i>galmaddjoowa /</i>	COMPLETION
		Galmaddjoowa	
	JB:	<i>galmaddja /</i>	ECHO
		Galmaddja	
	BF/NAR:	<i>?n?n /</i>	ACCEPTANCE
		mm	
	JB:	<i>niyajiya middagnyaliwani /</i>	SUGGESTION
		there he:lay:again	
	BF/NAR:	<i>yoowayi I</i>	CONFIRMATION
		yes	

Free translation

BF/NAR: We'll camp there.
 JB: He camped there.
 BF/NAR: Mm.
 JB: From Malngaya he went where?
 BF/NAR: (To) Galmaddjoowa.
 JB: Galmaddja.
 BF/NAR: Mm.
 JB: He camped there too.
 BF/NAR: Yes. –

Here JB's probe follows an acceptance of a suggestion by the narrator. How can we best account for examples such as this? One reasonable possibility would be to take a part of the first exchange — that is, the second and third moves of (14) — as constituting an initial narration in the second exchange. To do this, of course, implies that we recognise JB as the secondary narrator, the one responsible for developing the text locally. It follows that a suggestion^acceptance sequence, part of a suggestion exchange, may be reevaluated in the following exchange as a narration.

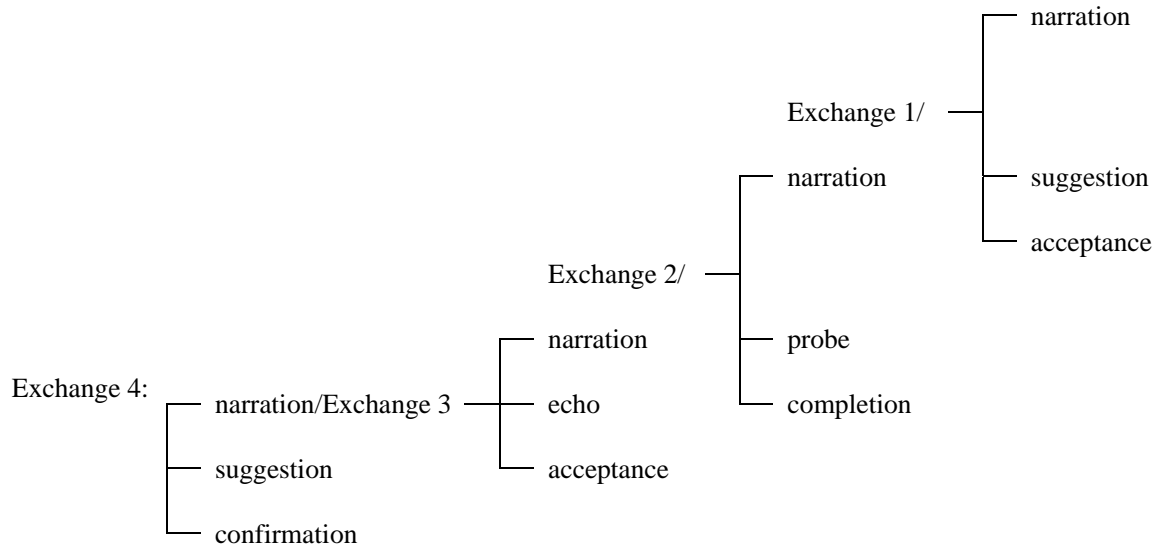
Turning attention to the penultimate move in (14), we find again that the suggestion has no preceding narration move by the primary narrator. Furthermore, in this instance it would seem that we should regard the entire previous exchange (i.e. the fourth move to the seventh move) as the initial narration of the final exchange. Here again the non-narrator is largely responsible for the narration.

Thus there seem to be two major types of exception to the generalisation that a text will consist of a sequence of exchanges one after the other. One is that some of the moves of an exchange may be grouped together and re-evaluated as a single entity in the following

⁹ Note that this move may at first glance appear to be an echo, in that it repeats the lexical verb of the immediately preceding move. However, it does more than that: it makes in fact a specific suggestion about one of the referent individuals, a suggestion which is not actually implied by the narrator's previous move.

exchange. The other is that exchanges may be embedded in moves within other exchanges. In each of these exceptional instances, we will be forced to regard the narration as a complex move; we will return to this issue briefly below. If these suggestions are justified, (14) will have the following structure:

(15)



where / indicates conflation.

Finally, it would be useful to get at least a rough idea of the typical size of units we are dealing with. Since we have already seen that the non-narrator's moves are usually very short, and normally no larger in size than a single clause, what our problem amounts to is to determine roughly the amount of material that may fall into the narration. To begin with, it seems reasonable to assume (and this is backed up by the data) that a narration must consist of at least one full proposition. One possibility worth pursuing is that a move consists of no more than a single sentence-sized unit — such a unit has been proposed elsewhere in McGregor (1986), where I have developed criteria for their identification. This would make it possible to regard the narration as potentially realised by a sequence of moves by the narrator (cf. Schegloff 1982:75) — in some instances by the narrator and non-narrator (see above). If this is the case, each such move should be a potential place for a turn-taking act.

Perusal of the three narrative texts reveals different patterns. The first two texts, *Mother-in-law-i* and *Mother-in-law-2*, show on the whole relatively shorter narrations than the final text, *Police-3*. Whereas the former have narrations frequently consisting of a single proposition/move, narrations in the latter are often constituted by more than one proposition/move. Usually it is in the range one to five; there are certainly no instances of more than ten propositions/moves in a single narration, and we may take this to be an upper limit. Thus, it seems that some form of verbal acknowledgement from the non-narrator will occur at minimum every five clauses uttered by the narrator.¹⁰ These (admittedly preliminary) remarks should give some idea of the frequency of turn taking.

¹⁰ How frequently non-verbal responses (such as eye contact, head-nodding, and so on) occur cannot be said, in the absence of video recordings of the interactions. It may be expected that if they were included, they would imply a further reduction in the length of the narrator's move.

6.2 Distribution of exchange types across the texts

In texts 1 and 2, as we have already mentioned, the narrator, BF, was responsible for roughly two thirds of the total lexical content, the non-narrator JB being responsible for about one third. This quantitative statement, however, fails to reveal important distinctions. The vast majority of moves by JB in texts *Mother-in-law-1* and *Mother-in-law-2* are lexically “full”: open ended prompts, echoic responses, suggestions, elaborative comments, and summaries; there are also a few probes. Clearly only suggestions and elaborative comments potentially add something new; the other moves only repeat what has already been said. However, investigation of the texts reveals that even the suggestions and elaborative comments nearly all present information which is predictable from the discourse. This is clearly true of the elaborative comment in (9) above, and equally of the guess in (7) — the previous clause had mentioned that the family had arrived at a particular place, and places mentioned in narratives are usually temporary termini, where people make camp. Thus, in real terms, JB’s information contribution to texts 1 and 2 is quite minor.

The fourth text shows important differences in terms of the types of device used by the non-narrator. As has already been mentioned, this text is quite clearly the work of a single narrator, and the overwhelming majority of moves by the non-narrator are continuative devices. There are just a couple of instances of echoic responses, one or two suggestions and one probe.

How are we to make sense of the differences in interactive organisation of the first two texts and the last one? I suggest that in *Mother-in-law-1* and *Mother-in-law-2* JB has, by assuming the role of information seeker, been able to wrest some of the control of the direction of the narrative from BF. In fact, he has been able to do this in such a way as to conceal the fact that he is seeking the information — thus concealing his lack of detailed knowledge in this domain. By contrast, in *Police-4*, BF has been content to allow JB to control the narration, and to fill the role of listener himself. We will return to these points again in the next section.

Finally, for the sake of comparison, we make some brief remarks on *Marriage-3*, the conversational piece. In this text BF does take on an active role as a conversationalist, and does himself initiate a number of the exchanges, as does JB. This text is characterised by a strong usage of continuative devices and echoic responses.

This information is tabulated in table 2 below.

Table 2: *Contributions of each interactant in the texts*

Text	Individual	Type of contribution
1 & 2	JB:	Strong use of open ended prompts, echoic responses, suggestions, elaborative comments, summaries, some prompts; all information offered predictable
	BF:	contributes most of the unpredictable information; utters a number of confirmatory responses
	WM:	one or two interjections
3	JB:	continuative devices, echoic responses
	BF:	continuative devices, echoic responses
	WM:	couple of interjections
4	JB:	nearly all of narrative
	BF:	considerable and consistent use of continuative devices, and some echoic responses; one prompt (unheard and unheeded)
	W M:	some continuative devices and other interjections and agreement markers.

7. HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS

It is well known that mismatches between linguistic form and pragmatic function frequently occur in languages (see for instance Levinson 1983:263ff, Halliday 1984:14ff, Butler 1985:150, Brown & Levinson 1978:273ff and Hurford & Heasley 1983: 234, 244). Typical examples include phenomena such as the indirect use of questions (more specifically, clauses in interrogative mood in English) and statements (more specifically, clauses in indicative mood) to get someone to do something. In other words, interrogatives and indicatives may be used as commands, instead of the more normal (or “straight”) mode of expression of the latter (in English) by clauses in the imperative mood. For instance, instead of an imperative command *Open the window*, one might hear an interrogative question *Could you open the window please*, or an indicative statement such as *It’s stuffy in here* or even *The window is closed*.

In terms of the end result — that is, getting something done (getting the window open in the above example) — commands, questions and statements may all be effective in particular circumstances. However, it is not simply that they are in free variation in English; rather, the choice between them carries pragmatic meaning of a somewhat different type. *Could you open the window please* is more polite than *Open the window*, for instance. It seems that these phenomena may be explained in a principled way as follows. Expressing a command — a request or demand that someone do something — by means of a statement or question permits the addressee to treat it as such. This permits the addressee, in his/her following move, to refuse more easily, without threatening the face of the person who made the request (see e.g. Brown & Levinson 1978 and Rumsey 1982). A clear illustration of this may be found in exchange (12) above.

Turning now to the Gooniyandi narratives, it seems reasonable — in the light of the introductory comments in section 1 — to suggest the following two major pragmatic functions for non-narrator’s moves (which may of course have been elicited by the narrator):

- (i) **Initiate.** Here the function or purpose of the move is to get a potential narrator to begin a monologue.
- (ii) **Continue.** Here the move functions to encourage the narrator to continue narrating.

This is not to say that in any interaction a non-narrator will perform both, or even either of these functions. Narrators may begin of their own volition, and not in response to a non-narrator’s move; they may, as has already been said, continue narrating even in the absence of listener feedback; non-narrators may wish the narrator finished his/her turn; and so on. Here, however, we are restricting attention to those limited contexts in which all parties in the interaction are assumed to be cooperating in the mutually shared goal of constructing a narrative. What I am saying then is that in this context a move by a non-narrator will typically perform one of the functions, (i) or (ii), or otherwise the narrator may not (continue to) narrate. No matter what else the non-narrator wants to achieve in his/her move, he/she will not want to encourage the narrator to cease or fail to begin narrating.

On the face of it, we might reasonably expect that these two functions would be most directly or congruently (Halliday 1984:14) — and hence, presumably, most usually — realised by imperative clauses, or at least by clauses which could be notionally identified as commands. However, none of the moves discussed in sections 4 and 5 of this paper are of this type at all. In other words, the moves achieve these functions indirectly or incongruently. We can

summarise the connections between the move types identified in sections 4 and 5 above and the general functions discussed in this section as follows:

<u>Move type</u>		<u>Function</u>
suggestion	}	Initiate a monologue
statement of lack of knowledge		
statement of desire (to hear the story)		
continuative	}	Continue a monologue
open ended prompt		
echoic response		
suggestion		
elaborative comment		
summary		
probe		

(It will be noted that the moves appear, on the basis of the limited present evidence, to be associated with different primary functions. This would seem to lend some linguistic support to the identification of these two as distinct functions. Suggestions are the only move type which appear to occur in both functions.)

We must now raise the question: why use these indirect means rather than more direct means? A partial answer has already been suggested in my discussion of exchange (12) in section 5.2. I suggested that the use of the strategy of stating the speaker's lack of knowledge was a matter of politeness, which permitted the addressee (here the potential narrator) to refuse relatively easily, and without loss of face to either interactant. The former will not lose face by being confronted with a refusal; and the latter, by being threatened by the more direct move, which constitutes, as it were, an attempt at exercising control over him/her.

I suggest that a similar explanation may be provided for the use of the second set of seven move types in the function of keeping the process of narration going. They indicate that the non-narrator is attending to what the narrator is saying. This extends over a range from the plain back-channeling devices signaling that the non-narrator is attending, through various other move types which indicate attention by showing that the non-narrator is able to repeat what the narrator has just said, make hypotheses, or formulate questions. Thus by implication, the narrator should continue. This is a far less threatening way of achieving this end than a direct request or command to do so would be.

So far, we have considered the function of the non-narrator's moves in terms of their contribution to getting the narrator to do something — that is, to narrate. At the same time, it is clear that a process of information exchange is going on, whereby the primary knower is imparting information to the other interactant(s). Thus, we could add a third major potential function of the non-narrator's move:

(iii) **Elicit information.** Here the non-narrator's move functions to encourage or invite the narrator to provide him/her with information.

Clearly this could be seen as at least a secondary purpose or goal for each of the non-narrator/non-primary knower's moves. Thus, a single move may serve two major discourse functions — and it is difficult, if not impossible on this level to distinguish clearly between the two functions (cf. Halliday 1984).

(iii) may combine with either (i) or (ii), depending on the quantity of information being sought. In fact, obtaining information is a natural consequence of the success of (i)

and (ii). On the other hand, the success of a move to elicit information does not necessarily imply the successful accomplishment of either initiating or continuing a narrative. The process of information elicitation, that is, may interfere with the progress of a narrative monologue — a not unfamiliar phenomenon. What this means is that the goal of eliciting specific information may conflict with the goal of continuing a narrative.

I suggest that something of this nature can be observed in the use of probes in the present corpus. Observe that although JB is successful in the second exchange of (14) in getting BF to provide the information he desired, he was NOT successful in at the same time getting BF to retain the role of narrator. In fact, at this point in the development of the discourse BF is forcing JB to do more and more work constructing the narrative himself, despite the fact that the latter is not the primary knower. It seems reasonable to account for this as the result of the strategies JB uses at this point. That is, in this particular portion of the interaction JB makes heavy use of suggestions and probes, in preference to continuatives, open ended prompts and echoic responses. These, I suggest, constitute role conflicts, and result in less cooperation by BF.

The use of suggestions — in form if not in terms of actual content — may be construed as conflicting with JB's role as non-primary knower (cf. Turner 1987:86). The use of probes may likewise be construed as conflicting with JB's role as non-narrator/non-primary knower, and BF's role as narrator and primary knower, and hence interactant in control of the direction of the narration. This may be in part due to the association of power or control with questioning (see e.g. Goody 1978b:39). It may also be due to the fact that as we have seen (section 4.7) there is no grammatically distinct class of questions in Gooniyandi, and that probes (like suggestions, elaborations, and possibly even echoes) may be construed as statements asserted in the hope of eliciting comment. In other words, in terms of their form, probes, like suggestions, do have significant information content— in fact, they carry the quantity of information of a full proposition.

What I am suggesting is not so much that the use of a suggestion or a probe is likely to disrupt a narrative. Rather, it could seem to be more a matter of frequency of exploitation of the device. BF uses the occasional suggestion and probe in Patrol-4 without, however, interrupting JB's control of the narration. But where JB begins to use sequences of these moves they effectively constitute a challenge to the narrator's role — a challenge which BF neatly side-steps. He does not reject JB's right to challenge, but forces him to do more and more work in constructing the narrative which he does not know the details of

There is also another important difference between BF's suggestions and probes and JB's, which may in part account for the differences in their effects on the narrator. That is, whereas BF's moves of this type are directed towards eliciting information relatively tangential to the narrative itself, JB's are directed towards eliciting information which properly belongs to development of the narrative. In this way also, JB's use of these move types more effectively challenges the narrator's role as narrator.

These are just some illustrations of the fact that it is obviously not the case that a non-narrator's use of ANY of the seven move types listed above will be equally effective in terms of in keeping a narration going, in all circumstances. Indeed, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that non-narrator's moves which are not followed by accepting moves by the narrator will be more effective in terms of keeping the narration process going — this is because such moves by the narrator break his/her control of the narrating function. For this reason, it might be expected that continuatives and open ended prompts are likely to be more effective (other things being equal) than the other move types which are typically followed by a narrator's accepting move (see section 8.1).

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to suppose that languages and cultures may differ in terms of the types of non-narrator participation in the process of text construction that are most commonly employed and that will be most effective in given contexts. For instance, it has been reported that Aborigines in Northeast Arnhem Land, and Southwest of Western Australia use eye contact to a lesser extent than non-Aboriginal Australians do (Harris 1984:169, Davies & McGlade 1982:100). Overuse and underuse alike of a strategy such as making eye contact may lead to the cessation of a speaking turn, or cause disfluency in the speaker.

However, the discussion immediately above views the interaction too much from the point of view of the narrator, his/her face, and the function of keeping him/her narrating. There is in fact no reason to suppose that the latter is always the constant and primary goal of a non-narrator; other factors may intervene. For instance, JB's use of suggestions and probes in (14) may be motivated in part by his desire not to appear a non-knower (in the presence of his "student" WM). That is, it may be that JB's strategies are motivated by the need to save his face, not so much in front of the narrator, but in front of another non-narrator. Thus it seems to me that in general interactants are faced with conflicting goals and motivations, and the type of move they select in any particular instance is a realisation of their strategy for resolving these conflicts.

8. IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

In this section I want to discuss some implications, and possible applications of this investigation to Aboriginal (specifically Gooniyandi) education, and to the study of cross-cultural communication.

8.1 Aboriginal literacy

It is not uncommon to hear teachers in Kimberley schools commenting on the lack of verbal ability of their Aboriginal pupils. They seem to be referring to both inability to perform orally in expected ways in the classroom, and poor performance in written composition. That these observations have a solid basis in fact cannot be doubted. The conclusion that these facts are the result of some lack or deficit in language ability is a hypothesis that must, however, be subjected to empirical scrutiny.

In fact, it seems that the evidence does not support the language deficit hypothesis. Shirley Gollagher, in the course of her research into the Kriol (see e.g. Hudson 1983) of Fitzroy Crossing Primary School children in the early 1980s, undertook an investigation of the phenomenon (Shirley Gollagher, pers.comm.). Gollagher experimented with various tactics for getting the children to speak, and (once started) keeping them speaking. She discovered that use of open ended prompts such as 'after that' (uttered on a rising intonation contour) was a particularly effective means of encouraging the children to continue telling a story. They were far more effective than use of questions, which tended to give rise to speech disfluencies and confusion. In fact, by steering clear of direct questions, Gollagher was able to demonstrate that the Aboriginal pupils suffered no language deficit — and in fact, she found it difficult to stem the flow of their speech (Shirley Gollagher, pers.comm.)

It seems, from Gollagher's research, that the problem may lie more in the way in which teachers typically use language to get their pupils to do things than in any innate deficiency in the pupils' language. And this may be as true of writing as of speech — since the writing context in the classroom is in principle, in important respects, not different to the interview situation. In both contexts one interactant — the teacher in one context, and the interviewer in the other — is demanding a predominantly monologic text from another interactant. This

indicates the need for more concern about the way in which the teacher intervenes as the student is involved in the process of speaking (monologuing, in particular) or writing, and for the way in which the teacher goes about getting the children to begin either. Furthermore, it suggests the need for increasing teacher's awareness of the issues, including (possibly) differences between Aboriginal children and white children. A beginning could be made through the introduction of appropriate courses into teacher education programmes in colleges, particularly those which are preparing teachers for schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal pupils. However, I say this with a certain degree of hesitation. To date so little research has been undertaken in the area that one would need to be very cautious of including such a course until the topic had been researched more carefully and systematically.

This is not the place to make practical suggestions as to which strategies might be expected to be most successful in the classroom, and in any case, I have strong misgivings about such trivialisation of the interactive process. (For instance, is the primary and over-riding purpose of the teacher-pupil interaction to always get the pupils to speak or write, or do other considerations sometimes' come to the fore?) However, at the risk of such trivialisation, it seems clear that, other things being equal, (i) open ended questions have a better than average chance to keep a narrative monologue going, whereas (ii) direct requests or commands have least chance of getting a monologue going, or keeping one going once it has started. To this, we might add the important qualification that this and other investigations (see e.g. Eades 1982:69) suggest the need for the teacher to tread warily, and not to continually ignore student's wishes not to speak on certain topics. In other words, it must ultimately be accepted that individuals have the right to remain silent on certain issues, and that no linguistic technique will be successful in getting them to change their minds (see also below).

8.2 Cross cultural communication

The literature on Australian Aborigines — both popular and academic — makes an enormous number of references to problems of communication between Aborigines and whites. Many nineteenth and twentieth century writers speak of problems in asking questions, especially leading questions. For instance, in her *The passing of the Aborigines*, Daisy Bates comments as follows:

In dealing with the Australian Aborigines, it is only too easy for the anthropologist to elaborate a fantasy based on theories and foreign logics of other native races, and then proceed to build it up in his field work. The Australian follows the line of least resistance with the white man. He will always respond as desired to a leading question, eager to please, whether he understands it or not. (Bates 1938/1966:105)

(Many far less flattering comments on the issue of asking questions of Aborigines can readily be found in the published journals of explorers, police and pioneers.)

Modern researchers are also well aware of such issues, and a number of linguists and anthropologists have written on this, and other problems in cross-cultural communication. Writers such as Eades (1982) and von Sturmer (1981) have recommended the use of strategies other than the question for eliciting information from Aborigines. (*Cf.* Durack 1969/1985:12, who recommends, on the other hand, that questions be retained, but that (in order to solve the problem of leading questions and bias) more than one person be interviewed at a time.)

This is not the place for a detailed critique of the literature, such as it is. However, the present investigation does point to certain inadequacies in other research on Aboriginal to white

cross-cultural communication. In the remainder of this section I will outline some of these inadequacies.

Firstly, it would seem to be a *sine qua non* of investigations into cross-cultural communication that they do not deal with communicative norms in just one of the cultures. Yet just this mistake seems to be not uncommonly made, especially when one of the cultures is the investigator's own. Thus Eades (1982) suggests that South East Queensland Aborigines have different attitudes towards information, and tend to go about seeking information in different ways to whites. There is, she argues, a strong tendency for South East Queensland Aborigines to go about seeking information not (as one might expect) congruently, by asking questions, but by the strategy of presenting information in the hope that the knower will provide confirmation or comment (Eades 1982:65). She goes on to say that direct questioning is not a strategy which is used frequently by South East Queensland Aborigines, nor a strategy which is particularly effective when used by whites for the purposes of eliciting information from Aborigines. The present investigation supports the first two claims in the context of Gooniyandi to Gooniyandi interaction, at least in the restricted domain in which the information sought is a narrative. As we have seen, Gooniyandi audiences (non-narrators) rarely use direct questions (i.e. probes). My own participant observations in the field support the claim that the strategy is not particularly effective when employed by whites.

However, Eades' careful investigation of communication in South East Queensland Aboriginal society is not backed up by a similar careful investigation of middle class white society, either by herself or any other investigator; in fact, it relies crucially on Eades' linguistic ideologies as a speaker of English. I would like to take issue here with Eades' explicit identification of questioning as a middle class white strategy of information seeking, and her identification of indirect information seeking by provocative statements as an Aboriginal (or at least South East Queensland Aboriginal) strategy (Eades 1982:65, 76).¹¹ Concerning the first point, there seems to be evidence that questioning, the so called middle class white strategy, can be less effective in eliciting information from middle class whites than the so called Aboriginal strategy of offering information for comment and elaboration. This suggestion is based on participant observation in both casual conversations, and interviews I have conducted with other middle class white people. The following exchange is an excerpt from an accidentally recorded conversation between myself and a friend (a nurse whose background was upper-class Melbourne):

(16) WM: *O: now the name of that pedia? pediatrician /*

 CB: *O: Jack B./*

On the other hand, there are circumstances in which in many Aboriginal cultures certain types of question are used which whites find offensive. Eades herself provides an excellent example on page 74 of her article, where she discusses what is a common mode of greeting across a range of Aboriginal cultures, the question "Where are you going?" Eades is

¹¹ I say this with two qualifications. (1) These associations may represent speaker's ideologies regarding themselves in contrast to the other culture. Eades' evidence suggests that South East Queensland Aboriginal people believe that their mode of information exchange differs from the predominant white mode in the way outlined by Eades. (2) It may be that the lack of a distinct grammatical category of questions in Gooniyandi means that it is always possible for either the speaker or the hearer to use the hedge that the utterance was in fact a statement pure and simple. And this grammatical fact is an iconic reflection of the cultural ideology. On the other hand, it is without a doubt true that whites (middle class whites in particular) believe that they get information by asking questions. But it is important to distinguish between such beliefs and the realities of how people go about seeking information.

doubtless correct in her assessment that this is an orientation question. However, Eades fails to acknowledge that whites invariably find it offensively inquisitive — certainly until they have had considerable experience of interaction with Aborigines.

I do not doubt that there are cross-cultural differences between Aborigines and whites in terms of their respective communication modalities — in how they do things with words. However, it seems to me then that these differences lie not in the range of “devices” — in the types of move — available to speakers, but rather in the frequencies with which they are used in particular interpersonal and social contexts, and their interpersonal or pragmatic meanings in these contexts. As a result, there may be differences in terms of the effectiveness of the moves in eliciting information.

Next, I would like to briefly raise the issue of recipe solutions to problems in cross-cultural communication. Unfortunately, works such as Eades (1982) and von Sturmer (1981) lend themselves to trivial paraphrasing as dos and don'ts of cross-cultural communication. Thus, there is now a fairly widespread belief in some quarters that Aborigines don't ask questions, and that one should never ask a question of an Aborigine. I believe these notions go back to a misinterpretation and trivialisation of the above two works (perhaps among a handful of others). Aside from the fact that such claims are simply false (as both my Gooniyandi data and Eades' data on South East Queensland Aboriginal society demonstrate), recipes and recommendations fail to take account of the fact that personalities are involved in interpersonal interactions. And even in the context of linguistic or anthropological fieldwork, other interlocutor goals and requirements may come to play which conflict with the global goal of the researcher to obtain information; the researcher would ignore these to his/her disadvantage.

Finally, it is important to appreciate that not all problems in specific cross-cultural interactions need be attributed to differences in communicative norms. The assumption that they are appears to be based on some version of the cooperative principle, whereby it is assumed that members of the different cultures will wish to cooperate with one another, that their goals (communicative and other) will coincide in particular instances. This principle seems to me to be contentious enough within a single culture, let alone across cultures. Journals of pioneers, police and explorers contain numerous instances in which whites have been misled by information obtained from Aborigines. To assume that this is all due to inappropriate methods of obtaining information would be ridiculous: it seems impossible to doubt that in many instances Aborigines were deliberately misleading whites, in order to keep them away from their waterholes, country or relatives. Indeed, the pioneers, police and explorers were normally under no illusions that they had not been deliberately misled.

In the context of the present investigation, what this means is that an individual may determine not to cooperate with a white researcher (or indeed with a member of his/her own group) by providing him/her with information. This decision may be adhered to despite the method employed to obtain the information. We have seen an example of this type in the exchange of (12) above, where the primary knower refuses to impart his information — but attempts to conceal this fact by deliberately misinterpreting his interlocutor's requests.

9. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have investigated processes of joint construction of narrative in Gooniyandi. I hope to have shown, more generally, that it is fruitful to view the process of constructing a narrative as an interactive process involving a narrator and at least one other interactant. Strict monologue is relatively unusual in that it is inherently asocial, perhaps even antisocial. What is usually referred to as monologue is in fact strictly speaking dialogue, albeit dialogue

of a particular type, in which one of the interactants holds the floor for a substantially longer period of time than any of the other interactants, and is largely in control of the development of the discourse.

More specifically, I hope to have shown that this interactive event or process may fruitfully be viewed in terms of speaker moves, which go together to form larger exchange units. This investigation then falls within the model of discourse referred to as exchange theory (e.g. Halliday 1984, Berry 1981, 1987, Butler 1985, Coulthard & Brazil 1981, Stubbs 1983). My major point of departure from that model is that I have suggested the need to incorporate considerations of the linguistic material that realises the interactants' moves, and the other speech functions that may be encoded by their choice of move. I have shown that, at least in one interactive circumstance, it is impossible to rely on (or assume as unmarked) congruent realisations of the major speech functions — since congruent realisations are not attested in the data. In dealing with this, I have borrowed notions of face and politeness from the theoretical work of Goody 1978, and Brown and Levinson 1978.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first systematic investigation of the phenomenon of joint construction of narrative in an Australian language.¹² Standard practice of Australianist linguists (as elsewhere — see Schegloff 1982:74) has been to treat the texts they record as pure monologues, ignoring the input of either themselves, or of other interactants in the speech situation. This is true, for instance, of von Brandenstein's transcriptions of Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi texts, which include only the main narrator's contribution. However, the field is ripe for immediate development. For not only does relevant published and readily accessible data exist for some languages, but also the tape recordings are also available (e.g. von Brandenstein 1970 and Coate 1970 have accompanying recordings). The material available would make both detailed investigation into particular languages, and a comparative survey feasible. Furthermore, as I hope to have shown, there may be important educational implications. I hope that this paper will encourage others to investigate the area.

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¹² A number of other investigators have, however, commented on various issues. These include, for example, Muecke 1983, and Benterrak, Muecke & Roe 1984, among many others. It seems to me that Muecke, in these two works, has perhaps overstated his case, by apparently claiming that Aboriginal narratives are very strongly products of narrator and audience, more so than we are accustomed to in the west. Certain facts conflict with this view, including the ability of many Aborigines to narrate long texts to someone in a language they know that person does not understand, with minimal input from the listener; see also Schegloff 1982.

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