ABSTRACT

THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS USED IN LANGUAGE THERAPY: AN ANALYSIS

By

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December 2014

Children with language impairments frequently benefit from language intervention which utilizes children's books. However, careful selection of the children's books by interventionists must be done, as these children are frequently delayed in narrative abilities. This research investigates the narrative level of children's books used in language intervention with three methodologies of narrative analysis. Results indicate that children's books have narratives that span across developmental levels; revealing that not all books are appropriate for all children in narrative terms. Clinical implications are discussed.

THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS USED IN LANGUAGE THERAPY: AN ANALYSIS

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Speech-Language Pathology

California State University, Long Beach

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology

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December 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The phrase “It takes a village to raise a child” has an uncommon adaptation: “It takes a village to bring a person through graduate school.” There are not enough thanks in this world to fully express how grateful I am to everyone who has assisted me in this journey. First, I must thank my amazing thesis advisor, Dr. Geraldine P. Wallach, for her inspiration, encouragement, and guidance through the process of writing a thesis. Committee member Dr. Lei Sun has been a valuable resource in completing this project, including the multitude of information she taught me about children with language disorders. Finally, I thank committee member Dr. Carolyn Conway Madding for volunteering her time and energy to assist me in this process.

My gratitude extends to all of my classmates in our graduate “cohort,” without whom I never would have made it anywhere in graduate school, let alone with a finished thesis. I am so grateful for all of you for your help, support, and all of the laughs we have shared the last couple of years. My friends outside of the program who encouraged me, inspired me, and even helped me edit this beast of a paper (Megan Grant), I owe you all a huge debt for everything you have done for me.

To my family--first, I must thank my amazing husband, Kevin Warner, for his unwavering faith in my abilities, his steady support through all of our relationship and especially graduate school, and of course his unconditional love—none of which I could have done this without. My wonderful parents, Mike and Bonnie Jones, who have

always loved me, supported me, and helped me in whatever way they could (including buying necessary children's books!) throughout my life—thank you for everything! My also wonderful in-laws, Richard and Leslie Warner, who are so supportive and believing in me, always offering an encouraging word when I am stressed. Finally, this is dedicated to my grandmother Mary Pilsecker, who bestowed a love of books (especially children's books) to me that I will eternally be grateful for.

My acknowledgements would not be complete without thanking God for His hand on me, saving me through His Son and making nothing impossible for those who believe in Him. I am living proof that anything can be achieved through hard work and faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE Page

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist
LI	Language Impairment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Shared storybook reading is a frequently used and effective method of enhancing language abilities in children with language impairments. Speech-language pathologists are equipped and encouraged to utilize storybook reading in their intervention sessions when targeting language patterns. Despite the plethora of literature, however, regarding the use and effectiveness of using children's books in language therapy, there are few studies relating to which books should be used. Frequently, professional advice columns (including the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association [ASHA] blog) suggest asking other speech-language pathologists (SLP) and creating your own list of children's books to use. Nonetheless, there are some guidelines available (see Owens, 2004; Paul & Norbury, 2012; Ratner, Parker, & Gardner, 1993), that provide short lists of books with their respective language targets. While some authors (e.g., those referenced earlier) provide examples of how they have analyzed selected children's books to facilitate specific language targets, there is limited information about the narrative structure of young children's literature.

Narrative structure is inherent in books; in shared storybook reading, the narrative provides the basis for the use of language. Despite this reality, very little is known about the narrative structure of the books used by speech-language pathologists. Thus, the goal of this research was to determine the narrative structure of children's books used in

language therapy in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the most effective books to choose when treating children with language impairments. Currently, and as noted, few references exist which indicate the narrative level of children's books that are popular choices for intervention. But even when information is available, it is the clinician's responsibility to cross reference suggestions from the literature with the language targets he or she may be working on. This study aims to compile a detailed list of books that may be used in therapy with their targets indicated, as well as their narrative levels, in order to guide and facilitate clinicians' choices.

Definitions of key terms and past research that relates to this project are detailed, followed by the methodologies and data that resulted, with a conclusion including the clinical implications and guidelines that arose from the information yielded.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narrative

Definition and Development

A narrative may be defined in its most basic form as "an account of experiences or events that are temporally sequenced and convey some meaning" (Engel, 1995, p. 19). Narratives have been described as a fundamental process of the human mind (Rosen, 1985) that enables humans to render actions and events meaningful (Lyle, 2000). Almost all children sequence their experiences verbally (Engel, 1995). The earliest roots of narrative development lie within a child's experience listening to and participating in narrative exchanges. The introduction of narratives is through parents co-constructing narratives with their children, providing maximal support to elicit participation in construction of the narrative, as well as the content (Boudreau, 2008; Eisenberg, 1985; Hudson, 1990; P. J. Miller & Sperry, 1988). Caregivers share many accounts and stories with their children so that by age 3, children are expected to appreciate and take part in narratives. Over time, support is faded, and the child is able to begin to engage in narratives of his/her own more independently.

Typically developing children generally start to label and describe their experiences at around 2 years old (Chapman, 2000; J. Miller, 1981). They produce additive chains predominantly, which are structures created when one sentence is simply

added to another. Story line, sequencing, and cause and effect are not yet present at this stage of development. At this point children frequently repeat sentences they believe are extraordinary (Owens, 2004). For example, the young preschooler might say "This is kitty. This doggie bowl." Around 30-36 months, a more sequenced version of events arises, though still without a true theme or plot. Events will follow a logical sequence, though cause and effect and causality are not evident (Chapman, 2000; J. Miller, 1981, Owens, 2004). The 3 year old might produce a narrative like this: "The dog eats food. The dog has a house. The dog lives with me." Themes arise around 36-42 months, and plots become more evident around 4-5 years old. A theme is the main idea or an underlying meaning of a story ("Theme," 2014). A plot refers to a literary term used to describe the events that make up a story or the main part of a story ("Plot," 2014). Causal chains are infrequent until ages 5-7 (Chapman, 2000; J. Miller, 1981; Owens, 2004). Narratives reflecting causality (i.e., causal chains) include descriptions of intentions and emotions of the characters in a story. As children progress, their stories contain more mental states and more initiation and motivation as causal links (Kemper & Edwards, 1986). With causality comes a more "true" sense of story, including a central theme, climax in the story, and resolution at the end. Gradually, simple plots are elaborated into a series of problems and solutions. At around 7 years of age, stories may contain complete episodes with internal goals, motivation, and reaction of characters; goal directed stories are prevalent (Chapman, 2000; J. Miller, 1981; Owens, 2004). As the child continues to progress beyond the basic story structure, more complex, embedded, and interactive episodes emerge, with the narratives getting longer and more involved (Chapman, 2000; J. Miller, 1981).

Narrative skills can be defined separately, as the ability of telling stories or personal experiences with sufficient details, temporal sequence, characterization, and so forth. Many researchers consider narrative ability to be an aspect of pragmatic language (e.g., Hedge, 2006), with advancing pragmatics facilitating narrative comprehension and production. Pragmatic skills are essential in the production of narratives and narratives influence children's interpersonal interactions, reading, and writing (Boudreau, 2008). Indeed, early narrative skills may predict later academic performance, including children's reading comprehension and written expression abilities and need for future intervention (Bishop & Edmundson, 1987; Catts, Fey, Tomblin, & Zhang, 2002; Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Fazio, Naremore, & Connell, 1996; Feagans & Appelbaum, 1986; Griffin, Hemphill, Camp, & Wolf, 2004). Thus, researchers have been interested in children's comprehension and production of spoken narratives in the fields of linguistics, psychology, education, and speech-language pathology for years.

As part of this cross-disciplinary interest, many different methods of narrative analysis have been proposed. These methods include macrostructural and microstructural analysis. The aspect of macrostructural form of narratives typically focuses on children's inclusion of story grammar components and the coherence of episode structure (Dawkins & O'Neill, 2011). Microstructural aspects of narrative consider the lexical and grammatical structures within the narratives and focus on internal linguistic structures (Shapiro & Hudson, 1991). Macrostructural analysis methods are the focus of this project. A description and discussion of three of the most utilized macro-level approaches in narrative analyses follows.

Applebee's Narrative Stages

Applebee introduced the idea of a developmental sequence of narrative stages that typically developing children go through from basic, unconnected components (heaps) to true narratives in children ages 2 years to 5-6 years old (Davies, Shanks, & Davies, 2004). The foundation of these levels grew out of Vygotsky's (1962) stages of concept development in children. He created conceptual levels of development by observing children's play with blocks and other objects. Utilizing a set of 350 stories told by 2 to 5 year old children (Pitcher & Prelinger, 1963), Applebee analyzed their utterances in order to generate six stages, or levels, of basic narrative development.

Two organizational devices were introduced by Applebee as essential components to the true narrative that develops gradually across the six stages. The first is called *the centering strategy* (Applebee, 1978, 1980). At the surface, it is the main theme of a story but this also may be explained as a central element that is constant throughout the story that all other elements relate to in the story. The other structural organizational device is called *the chaining strategy*. Chaining involves a cause-effect sequence, in which one event leads to a second event, which then leads to a third event, etc. At its most basic level, chaining can be described as how the events in a story are linked to one another (Applebee, 1978, 1980). Centering and chaining together are essential in creating a tight narrative organization in which the events follow logically from one another and in which the whole sequence is focused around a single point, situation, or theme (Applebee, 1980). The two organizational devices are developed separately through early childhood and are evident in his six levels of narrative development (in developmental order):

heaps, sequences, primitive narratives, unfocused chains, focused chains, and true narratives (Applebee, 1978; 1980).

Heaps, the first narrative stage, are the most primitive mode of organization. Heaps are a collection of unrelated ideas with no apparent relational or organizational strategies (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). *Sequences* are the second stage of pre-narrative development. The elements are linked together by arbitrary commonalities but are not related causally. Sequences represent the first instance of the centering strategy, although it is in a limited form. Sequences may include the macrostructure elements of a central character, topic, or setting (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). *Primitive narratives* are the third stage of pre-narrative development. Similar to sequence stories, they contain a central character, topic, or setting. However, this form reflects a more sophisticated form of the centering strategy, a concrete core. Some cohesive techniques may be used in these early narratives (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). Also distinguished in this stage is discussion of characters' facial expressions or body postures (Hutson-Nechkash, 2001). The next stage, the *unfocused chain*, does not contain a central character or topic (lack of the centering strategy). There is a sequence of events (using the chaining strategy) linked in logical or cause-effect relationships (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). This type of narrative is seldom seen because, as soon as sequential relationships appear, children begin to tie the story elements together and to a central theme (Westby, 1984). *Focused chains* are comprised of a central character and a sequence of events. It is the first case of narratives having both the centering strategy as well as the chaining strategy. Focused chains are unique in that these structures do not contain a "true" ending and the

end must be interpreted by the listener (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). The final stage in Applebee's narrative stages, a *true narrative* is the most advanced form these developmental narratives. There is a central theme or moral, true plot, character development, and logical sequence of events. The presented problem or issue is resolved in the end of the story and both the centering and chaining strategies are seen (Applebee, 1978; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001).

Though narratives continue to advance in content and complexity throughout a child's development, the basic organizational features remain as they evolved into during early childhood (Applebee, 1978). Applebee's stages provided a developmental narrative hierarchy that is still being used in early childhood education and speech-language pathology today (Paul & Norbury, 2012), as well as in research in those areas (Klecan-Aker & Kelty, 1990; Paul, Hernandez, Taylor, & Johnson, 1996).

Stein and Glenn's Story Grammar Sequences

Glenn and Stein (1980) suggested a developmental taxonomy for the acquisition of story grammar skills. They developed this system based upon the components they proposed as part of a story grammar. Hedberg and Stoel-Gammon (1986) defined story grammars as "goal-based definitions of stories in which a major character, the protagonist, is motivated to achieve a goal through engaging in some type of goal-oriented action" (p.64). The prototypical story grammar structure as described by Stein and Glenn (1979) consists of seven major components, six of which are applicable to children's narratives. The first is the *setting* statement, which describes characters and their habitual actions and provides the social, physical, or temporal context for the story. Next is the *initiating event*, which causes the protagonist to react in some way. It may be

a natural occurrence (a rainstorm), an internal response (character desires to go somewhere), or the action of a character. The third component is the *internal response*, which describes the reaction of the protagonist. An *attempt* to attain the goal is the next component, consisting of the character's overt actions. The *consequence* is the statement of the outcomes of the actions, or whether the character succeeds in attaining their goal. The final category is the *reaction*, or the emotional, cognitive, or active response that show how a character feels about their accomplishments (Glenn & Stein, 1980; Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990).

In studying average children's story constructions, Glenn and Stein (1980) found seven major structural patterns which vary in complexity from the most simple to the most complex. Each level contains all of the components of the previous levels with one additional component added (Glenn & Stein, 1980; Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990). The first is called the *descriptive sequence*, which is comprised of descriptions of characters, surroundings, and typical actions of the characters. In this level, no causal relationships or temporal constraints are present. The second level is the *action sequence*, which consists of events in a chronological order, but does not contain any causal relationships. The *reactive sequence* is the third stage, in which there are causal relationships, certain changes automatically cause other changes. There is no goal-directed behavior in this stage. This is followed by the *abbreviated episode*, consisting of an implied goal, even though it may not be explicitly stated. There is either an event statement with a consequence or an internal response with a consequence during these stories. Further, the actions of the characters may seem to be

purposeful, though not as premeditated as in following episodes (Glenn & Stein, 1980; Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990).

The fifth level is called the *complete episode*, which describes an entire goal-oriented behavioral sequence. Further requirements of this stage are a consequence, as well as two of the following three components: initiating event, internal response, and attempt. *Complex episodes* are the sixth stage, and are an elaboration of the complete episode, with an additional partial or complete incident embedded in the episode, multiple plans are activated to attain the goal, or both. The highest level in this analysis category is the *interactive episode*, which consists of two characters that have separate goals and actions which influence the actions of the other (Glenn & Stein, 1980; Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990).

This system of analysis is frequently used in academic settings particularly in elementary schools and in speech-language pathology research (Allen, Kertoy, Sherblom, & Pettit, 1994; Petersen, Gillam, Spencer, & Gillam, 2010).

Stadler and Ward's Narrative Levels

Stadler and Ward developed a narrative level system based upon Applebee's (1978) and Glenn and Stein's (1980) levels systems. They developed their system further by analyzing the original and retold stories of children aged 3-5 years. Part of their purpose in creating their own narrative taxonomy was to combine the two previous established systems of narrative development and to name them clearly to reflect their descriptions. The Stadler and Ward (2005) system is comprised of 5 levels, starting with the most primitive level of labeling and ending with the most advanced narrating level.

Labeling is the first level. In this level, stories consist of nominal labels and repetitive syntax with no real purpose or sequencing. This level is followed by the *listing* level. Here the stories sound like a list with a central topic. Stories at this level may contain perceptual attributes or character actions, without any temporal or causal relations. Next is the *connecting* stage. In this stage, there is a central topic with accompanying character actions that link to related characters or events. Once a child is able to utilize correct temporal sequencing and cause and effect consistently, they have moved to the *sequencing* stage. The stories in this stage contain sequenced actions and a main character. The final and highest level is called *narrating*. This level contains all of the components of the previous levels as well as developed plots with evidence of planning to meet goals (Stadler & Ward, 2005).

Due to the relative newness and repetitiveness of these narrative levels, there has been more limited use of this type of analysis than those analyses of Stein and Glenn's and Applebee's in research and language sampling in children (Hill, Glover, & Colbung, 2011).

Narrative Abilities and Children with Language Impairments

The term "language impaired" (LI) may be used to describe children who are not acquiring language as expected for their chronological age for whatever reason--a genetic disorder (e.g., Down's syndrome), neurological disorder (e.g., a traumatic brain injury), developmental disorder (e.g., Autism spectrum disorders), a language delay, or specific language impairment (SLI); (Paul & Norbury, 2012). Because language impairments indicate a difficulty in acquiring the language abilities that are typically learned in development, it would not be surprising to assume (with caution) that children who have

language impairments will struggle with narrative language. Research supports this assumption and demonstrates that children with language and learning difficulties frequently have difficulty understanding and producing narratives (Bishop & Adams, 1992; Boudreau & Chapman, 2000; Fey, Catts, Proctor-Williams, Tomblin, & Zhang, 2004; Gillam & Johnston, 1992; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Newman & McGregor, 2006; Scott & Windsor, 2000). Unlike conversational discourse and other modes of communication, the telling of a narrative relies entirely on the linguistic production of the narrator for the listener's comprehension (Petersen et al., 2010). Narrative tasks require the use of various skills including but not limited to organization, sequencing, establishing the main idea, and perspective taking (Hutson-Nechkash, 2001). Further, if the construct of the narrative is a concept not easily understood by the listener (e.g., story grammar and cause-effect clauses), then the listener will not be able to understand the story being told since narratives provide much fewer contextual cues than other modes of discourse.

Causal relationships are central components of mental models for narrative and texts. Children with language impairments may be deficient in this area (Westby, 2002). This problem with causal relationships influences the understanding and use of narratives. Struggles with other language areas, including semantics and syntax (micro aspects of analysis) also influence the comprehension and use of narratives. Children with (LI) have been shown to demonstrate difficulty with both literal and inferential comprehension in narratives (Bishop, 1997; Letts & Leinonen, 2001).

The narrative structure of the stories produced by children with language disorders is shorter and less mature with fewer mature episodes than those of age-

matched peers developing typically (Lu, Cheung, & Chaou, 2003). Westby (2005) articulated that children with reading disabilities (which often overlap with language impairments) are not as knowledgeable of, or as efficient in, using narrative structure to tell, retell, or understand stories. In general, children with LI tell shorter, less complete, less organized stories; they comprehend and remember less information from stories, and they make fewer inferences about stories (Westby, 2005).

The stories told by school-age children with language impairments tend to include fewer propositions, main story ideas, or story grammar elements (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Merritt & Liles, 1987; Reilly, Losh, Bellugi, & Wulfeck, 2004). They also contain fewer cognitive state terms, such as feeling state terms (e.g., sad, happy), or words like "know" or think" (Bishop & Donlan, 2005; Manhardt & Rescorla, 2002). Roth and Spekman's data indicates that school-age children with LI have difficulties with several aspects of spontaneous story production, including problems with story grammar development (macrostructure) as well as difficulty in use of cohesive ties, a microstructural component of effective narratives (Norris & Bruning, 1988).

Narrative difficulties experienced by children with language impairments are persistent (Fey et al., 2004; Wetherell, Botting, & Conti-Ramsden, 2007). Children with a history of early language delay continued to perform more poorly than typically developing peers on narrative retelling tasks in kindergarten and first grade (Paul et al., 1996) but, interestingly, group differences had disappeared by second grade. Moving up the continuum of language learning and language disabilities, Wetherell et al. (2007) compared narrative abilities in adolescents with a current diagnosis or a history of language impairment and found that narrative performance continued to differentiate the

group with current or history of language impairments from typically developing peers. In Fey et al.'s (2004) study, the typically developing children performed significantly better on measures of narrative abilities than either group of children with a diagnosis or history of language impairments. Merritt and Liles (1987) found that older children with LI produced fewer elements of story structure than their age-matched peers; however, Liles, Duffy, Merritt, and Purcell (1995) did not find a difference in the macrostructure of the narrative of children with LI from typically developing peers when controlled for microstructure elements (such as vocabulary). Therefore, not all research points to difficulties in narrative macrostructure over time when controlled for microstructural elements such as semantic complexity. Nonetheless, the preponderance of research indicates ongoing difficulties with narratives but also recognizes the changes in language ability among heterogeneous populations across time, task demands, and narrative content (Sun & Wallach, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, difficulty with narrative discourse can adversely affect academic progress (Bishop & Adams, 1992; Boudreau & Hedberg, 1999; Gillam & Johnston, 1992). Narration, both written and spoken, predominates in the school settings to impart information and assess comprehension (Petersen et al., 2010). Teachers in the classroom often utilize stories to teach or elaborate on lessons and, frequently, give assignments that include producing stories related to themes currently focused on in class (e.g., World War II). Further, the Common Core Standards currently being implemented in the majority of states mandate several requirements utilizing narrative, including "Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council

of Chief State School Officers, 2010; English Language Arts, Reading: Literature 1.2). The academic requirements that include mastery of narrative text present a challenge for children and adolescents with LI. Clearly, narratives provide a particularly critical context for language assessment and intervention for speech-language pathologists, literacy specialists, and other educators (Botting, 2002; Norbury & Bishop, 2003; Westerveld, Gillon, & J. F. Miller, 2004).

Storybook Reading

Definition and Use in Therapy

Shared storybook reading is the interaction that occurs between a child and an adult when they share a storybook (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Most frequently, this interaction occurs between a parent and child but research has shown that this technique is also utilized widely in classrooms and therapy rooms to enhance language learning and concept teaching. Shared storybook reading provides a high-quality context for embedding language targets, providing a comfortable background for building new skills, and introducing new concepts. Picture books are of interest to children and are a natural, familiar format for adult-child interaction. Picture books serve as an ideal basis for bringing new ideas and language targets to a child's attention within a comfortable setting. Books also have the potential to keep many (not all) children from being overwhelmed with new information. The idea of limiting competing resources in language intervention is frequently discussed in language intervention research (Lahey & Bloom, 1994). With the established routine of storybook reading with an adult, as most children have been exposed, and the familiar cadence of the oral reading of the story, the

child's mind is free to be exposed to new information of the language within the book being read.

Many researchers have investigated the effects of using shared storybook reading as a strategy in language intervention. To detail all of them is outside the scope of this project but a brief summary of the benefits of joint book reading as a context for language therapy follows.

Book reading has been shown to promote joint attention and interest that are necessary for effective discourse and for providing a framework for semantic contingency (Ratner et al., 1993). The bold colors, animals, and pictures within children's books encourage participants to be active and to engage in responsive interactions, an ideal situation for speech and language intervention sessions (Dickinson, Griffith, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2012). Although there are different methodologies for using storybook reading in therapy, including the embedded-explicit approach (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004), script therapy (Olswang & Bain, 1991), explicit print referencing (Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka, & Hunt, 2009), and dialogic reading strategies (Whitehurst et al., 1988); they all share the context of employing shared book reading to enhance language abilities in children.

Research has demonstrated that shared book reading can promote many language targets. Lefebvre, Trudeau, and Sutton (2011) found that in a shared storybook reading with preschoolers, vocabulary, print awareness, and phonological awareness could all be targeted and enhanced simultaneously. Storybook reading led to an increase in mean length of utterance (MLU), fluency, vocabulary diversity, formal ending, and use of narrative in typically developing 3-4 year olds (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance,

2004). Shared storybook reading is the appropriate context to target print awareness and improve print awareness skills (Justice & Ezell, 2000, 2004; Lovelace & Stewart, 2007; van Bysterveldt, Gillon, & Moran, 2006). Book reading sessions with a print focus on print awareness in preschool children from low-income households led to an effective increase in awareness of words in print, print recognition, and alphabet knowledge, as well as overall print awareness (Justice & Ezell, 2002). Shared storybook reading can increase phonological awareness (Ukrainetz, Cooney, Dyer, Kysar, & Harris; 2000). Reading storybooks offers the opportunity to hear new vocabulary embedded in varied grammatical sentences (Dickinson et al., 2012). This may promote vocabulary acquisition in children (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst, & Epstein, 1994; Kotaman, 2008; Senechal, 1997; Wasik & Bond, 2001), as well as grammatical development (Bradshaw et al., 1998; Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, DeBaryshe, Valdez-Menchaca, & Caulfield, 1988; Yoder, Warren, & Hull, 1995). Additionally, studies have shown that shared storybook reading enhances social communication (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1999; Stanton-Chapman, Kaiser, & Wolery, 2006) including using storybooks as a part of therapy for topic initiation and maintenance in conversation (Hedge, 2006).

Finally, shared book reading may be used to strengthen narrative abilities in children (Paul & Norbury, 2012). Children's opportunities to engage in reading and talking about storybooks are critical to their narrative development (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Morrow & Gambrell, 2002). Petersen et al. (2010) describe a narrative intervention approach using storybooks and asking for story retell using pictures and verbal scaffolding. Results showed a significant increase in children's use of narrative macrostructure. Westby (2005) advises using books that match children's narrative

skills, reading to children, and asking them appropriate questions to facilitate narrative abilities. In keeping with a child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is the distance between a child's current level of independent functioning and potential level of performance (Levykh, 2008; Schneider & Watkins, 1996; Shepard, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978), one must keep the narrative structure of the books being used to a child's current narrative level or one level above his/her current abilities.

Choosing Books for Therapy

In utilizing storybooks for therapy, speech-language pathologists must carefully select books that contain the language patterns being targeted. Not just any good children's book will be effective, but many classic pieces of children's literature do contain repetitive semantic and syntactic forms that are common goals in language intervention. Choosing what to read with a child is an essential element in storybook reading as part of therapy (Trelease, 2001). The question becomes, then, what book is "right" for the child (my client)? Ideally, a speech-language pathologist (SLP) would have a list with all of the books with appropriate targets and their levels in order to be able to carefully select the appropriate one. However, as mentioned in the introductory section of the discussion, there are few resources which provide guidance in the selection of books.

Ratner et al. (1993) offer a resource list of books to use with preschoolers with a description of the structures and features that are contained in the books. Owens (2004) also has a list of children's literature he advises SLPs to use in the preschool classroom detailing the language use contained in the book as well as the theme of the story. On the subject of reading aloud, Trelease (2001) has a list of the books he personally

recommends based on the stories (but not on the language components in the books). Based upon Ratner et al.'s (1993) review as well as Owen's (2004) suggestions, Paul and Norbury (2012) assembled a more comprehensive list of children's books containing target patterns.

These recommendations may be helpful in selecting books solely for their language patterns but what of the books' levels? What books are appropriate for the individual child who has difficulty in understanding language? (Unfortunately, there is no resource that combines the semantic and syntactic patterns contained in a book with their narrative or comprehension level.) Paul and Norbury (2012) provide a list of book suggestions solely based upon the stage of narrative macrostructure development (adapted from Wallach, 1989; Westby, 2005). Yet, currently, there is no list or review that combines the two vital areas of language (narrative and semantic/syntactic patterns) within the children's books available to the SLP.

Ergo, the purpose of this study is to create a taxonomy that combines a more in-depth description of the areas of language that are necessary to be mindful of when selecting books to use in language intervention. A narrative analysis of books that were recommended for their target patterns was conducted (details below). It is hypothesized that the narrative macrostructure of books commonly used in language therapy would vary between all levels of narrative, making them inappropriate for all children with language impairments. Clinicians would need to engage in a careful consideration of the narrative level as well as the semantic and syntactic structures contained within.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The methods section of this study will describe the study design, procedures, and analysis methods used on the collected data.

Selection of Books

In order to identify books to be included in the study, the researcher explored past researchers' works on the choices that were recommended as appropriate intervention materials. Websites regarding speech-language pathology were reviewed, as well as academic search engines, including the ASHA website and blog. Findings were few and far between, with no references to specific language targets contained within books that were recommended. Finally, specific targets with accompanying children's books titles were found in the work of Ratner et al. (1993) and Owens (2004). Both resources were reviewed for recommended books for language intervention. However, upon discovering Paul and Norbury's combined and comprehensive table containing children's books with language intervention targets, the researcher decided to utilize their list in selecting books for the analysis.

In order to be included, the books had to be children's books with pictures. The books also had to be recommended for use in the language intervention setting. From the table provided by Paul and Norbury, further consolidation and selection occurred. Within their table, there is a language target, books which contain the target pattern, and an

example of the language pattern occurring within the book (see Paul & Norbury, 2012, Appendix 9-2, p. 388-392). There are a total of 165 listings within the table, including duplicates of the same book title which has multiple target patterns. Based upon calculations made by the author, there were 136 separate titles of children's books in the table. The goal was to analyze the books with a high likelihood of being used in therapy. Thus, for this study, the researcher looked for books that had multiple target patterns identified within them. This would, theoretically, increase their chances of being used more frequently in language intervention. Five (5) books containing three (3) or more language targets were included in the study. These included the following: "Are You My Mother?" by P.D. Eastman, "The Little Red Hen" by Margot Zemach, "The Runaway Bunny" by Margaret Wise Brown, "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Suess, and "Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?" by Bill Martin Jr.. Three more books were also found to have three language targets, but were unavailable in the public libraries in the Los Angeles and Long Beach areas, as well as unavailable through popular booksellers such as Barnes & Noble. These books were "Peek-a-Boo" by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, "Where Does the Brown Bear Go?" by Nicki Weiss, and "Whose Footprints?" by Masayuki Yabuuchi. It was determined, then, to not include these books, as it would be unlikely for them to be used when one could not obtain copies of the book. Since these criteria (at least 3 language target patterns) yielded only 5 books for the study, the researcher expanded the search to books which were listed twice, for two language patterns in the table. This expanded criterion yielded 15 additional books, more than this project could analyze. Therefore, the books needed to be further limited. A decision was made to consolidate the choices based on availability and familiarity

(Recognizing the title of the book). This was to ensure the books would be able to be used in the language intervention room.

Description of Books

A total of twelve (12) books were selected to be included in the analysis. Table 1 provides the list of books included in the study in alphabetical order by author's last name. All books were picture books recommended for children in preschool years. All books had at least two (2) semantic or syntactic language patterns that might be targeted in language intervention. Of the twelve books, eight (8) of them had main characters which were animals, two of them contained main characters that were unidentified creatures, one of them had an inanimate object as the main character, and only one book had a human (child) as the protagonist. The books were published between 1942 and 1989 (original publishing dates). The number of pages ranged from 26 pages to 64 pages, with a mean of 38.5 pages.

Methods of Analysis

Once the books were compiled, a method of analysis needed to be chosen. It was determined to analyze the books' narrative macrostructure, as when using shared storybook reading for language intervention, narrative comprehension is most linked with macrostructure (Westby, 2005). Further, Westby's assertions of enhancing understanding and development of narrative all involve narrative macrostructural components. When judging a child's narrative abilities, the speech-language pathologist should analyze both aspects, but in regards to storybook reading to target other linguistic features (e.g., pronouns), selection should be based on macrostructural elements (Paul & Norbury,

TABLE 1. Books That Contain Multiple Targets

1.	The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree by Stan & Jan Berenstain
2.	The Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown
3.	The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
4.	Are You My Mother? By P.D. Eastman
5.	Henny Penny by Paul Galdone
6.	The Gingerbread Boy by Paul Galdone
7.	Jump, Frog, Jump! By Robert Kalan
8.	Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? By Bill Martin, Jr
9.	One Was Johnny by Maurice Sendak
10.	Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Suess
11.	Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
12.	The Little Red Hen by Margot Zemach

2012). In order to be useful, the researcher determined to choose more than one (1) different type of analysis. By providing multiple analyses, clinicians may more easily match the narrative level to the level of the child being treated. Clinicians have multiple options of ways to analyze narrative produced by children, and no one way is more correct than the others. Therefore, having multiple analysis methods of the books in this

study would make the results more applicable to more clinicians. It was decided that all methods of analysis should be developmental in order to have a consistent, useful way of determining whether a book would be appropriate for a child. Language impaired children, although they may be delayed in language development, frequently still follow traditional milestones (though later than typically developing children) and hierarchies of learning in development; thus, a developmental method of analysis is appropriate but always used with caution. Language impaired children frequently follow traditional developmental milestones, but it is not always the case, and holding any child (or intervention strategy) strictly to developmental normative data would not be appropriate. A clear hierarchy of varying levels that build on one another would also be necessary in order to expedite analysis and be understood within the research.

Initially, the Applebee system of analysis (1978) was chosen, as it is a well-established, frequently used, developmental approach of examining narratives. His introduction of the six stages of narratives in a developmental hierarchy is still used in speech-language pathology today (Klecan-Aker & Kelty, 1990; Paul et al., 1996; Westby, 2005). Applebee initiated developmental narrative hierarchies and his work continues to be viewed as a valid and useful way of analyzing narratives. Therefore, it was determined to be an appropriate process of analyzing the books in a clinically applicable way. In further assessing the different methods of narrative analysis, Stein and Glenn's (1980) story grammar patterns appeared frequently as a technique utilized in speech-language pathology and linguistics (Allen et al., 1994; Petersen et al., 2010). Although quite different from Applebee, their approach has also been widely recognized as an effective way to analyze narratives and to facilitate narrative acquisition. As a more

modern method, Stadler and Ward's (2005) system of analysis was added. Given that they used both Applebee's work and Stein and Glenn's work in order to develop their own hierarchy, it seemed appropriate to include their work, although it has not been as widely accepted and utilized as the other two methods. All three methods are developmental with levels that build upon one another, which makes the appropriateness of a narrative for a child more evident.

Analysis Procedures

The first analysis followed Applebee's method, utilizing his work from 1978 ("The Child's Concept of Story: Ages 2 to 17"), and additional sources that elaborated on the requisites of each narrative stage (Hutson-Nechkash, 1990, 2001). All twelve books were read multiple times, examined for key features (e.g., centering, chaining, ending), and then placed in the stage that matched a developmental level. A method of identifying the key elements of each developmental level was determined, finding the major elements (i.e., character states in Primitive Narrative), and subsequently looked for in each book. Similarities between plot structures between different books were identified (i.e., a lack of definitive ending in "Jump, Frog, Jump," and "One Was Johnny"—a feature found in Focused Chains) and further utilized in deciding which level the books belonged to. Each book was read multiple times, the author utilizing notecards with the various levels that were being used and placing the corresponding books on that notecard as a visual reference tool (e.g., "The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree" were placed under Applebee's True Narrative category).

Then, Stadler and Ward's (2005) method of analysis was used. Given that their methodology is largely based of Applebee's hierarchy, only their article was utilized in

determining the requirements of each level in the analysis, with an additional read-through of each book to determine which level the books fit the best. Again, the methods of identifying important elements in the definition of the various levels (central topic and cause and effect) were used to determine where a book should be categorized. Referencing the Stadler and Ward (2005) article, the author further determined similarities between their definitions of developmental levels and Applebee's definitions, so comparisons of initial categorization under Stadler and Ward's ideology to the results of the placements already done for Applebee's methodology were conducted in order to affirm that the classification was correct in Stadler and Ward's terms.

Finally, Stein and Glenn's model was utilized. Since their methodology was completely different from that of Applebee and Stadler and Ward, multiple sources were employed in order to label each book within their model of story grammars (Glenn & Stein, 1980; Hedberg & Stoel-Gammon, 1986; Hutson-Nechkash, 1990). The additional resources were used in order to help clarify the essential components of the different developmental levels. The most important aspects of each definition were identified and searched for in each book to help determine which developmental level the books belonged with (i.e., the implied goal in the Abbreviated Episode is unique among the Stein and Glenn stages, and can be found in "The Little Red Hen"). Books were read once again to examine what key factors, in this method of analysis, were present and which were absent. Constant references to the definition and key factors in each narrative level took place during all three analyses to ensure the categorization of each book was correct. The placement of each book to the narrative levels (according to the

three methodologies) was ascertained several times in order to confirm the results, which are below.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examined the narrative levels of books utilized in language intervention to meet semantic and syntactic goals. Narrative levels were ascertained using the work of Applebee (1978), Stein and Glenn (1980), and Stadler and Ward (2005). Reported data include: (1) the narrative levels of each book according to the three analysis methodologies; and (2) ways that the labeling of levels of difficulty correspond across the three methodologies.

Applebee's Narrative Levels

Three methodologies were utilized in the analysis of the children's books. The first, Applebee's narrative stages, consists of six narrative levels in a structured developmental hierarchy. (For further explanation, please see the Literature Review.) All twelve books were evaluated to determine the level to which they belonged. Table 2 contains the results that are detailed below.

None of the books used in this study was found to be in the Heaps stage of narrative development. Three of the twelve (12) books, or 25%, were found to be a part of the Sequences stage of development. These three books were *The Gingerbread Boy*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *Henny Penny*. This means that they contain elements that are slightly linked together, using the centering strategy. There are, however, no causal linkages in the Sequence narratives. For example, in *The Gingerbread Boy*, the

gingerbread boy encounters a horse after he ran away from the cow but there is no causal relationship between the boy encountering the horse and his running away from the cow. One book of the twelve, or 8%, was determined to be a Primitive Narrative. Higher in narrative development than Sequences, the Primitive Narrative contains emotions, body postures, or facial expressions, as well as a concrete core (some may call it a theme). An example of the statements included in the one book that was a Primitive Narrative, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*, was when the narrator stated "I hate Lima Beans". The concrete core of the book was Alexander's terrible day. However, none of the events that happened in the story were causally linked, nor was there any true ending.

One book was identified as an Unfocused Chain (8%). This book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* failed to have any central characters or topics. Within the book, there is a switching of characters on every page, but the book contains sequences of events (i.e., going from animal to animal speaking about what they see) so that the book demonstrates the use of a chaining strategy. Four of the twelve (12) books, or 34%, were Focused Chains, including *Jump, Frog Jump*, *The Runaway Bunny*, *The Little Red Hen*, and *One Was Johnny*. These books contained the centering and the chaining strategy that includes a central character and a sequence of events. The difference between these four books and the ones that are True Narratives is that these books do not have a true ending. For example, in *Jump Frog, Jump*, the frog jumps to escape the basket he was trapped in on the last page but the reader is left to guess whether he made it to safety. Three of the twelve (12) books, or 25%, were True Narratives. These three books, *Are You My Mother?*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Berenstain*

Bears and the Spooky Old Tree, contain all of the elements of a basic narrative, including a central theme, a logical sequence of events with a true ending, a true plot, and character development. Both the chaining and centering strategies are seen in these books.

TABLE 2. Books with Applebee's Narrative Levels

Title	Applebee Narrative Level
The Gingerbread Boy	Sequence
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Sequence
Henny Penny	Sequence
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Primitive Narrative
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Unfocused Chain
Jump, Frog, Jump	Focused Chain
The Runaway Bunny	Focused Chain
The Little Red Hen	Focused Chain
One Was Johnny	Focused Chain
Are You My Mother?	True Narrative
Green Eggs and Ham	True Narrative
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	True Narrative

Stadler and Ward's Narrative Stages

Stadler and Ward's (2005) narrative levels were determined next, utilizing their five-level developmental hierarchy. The results below are summarized in Table 3. None of the twelve books was found to be a part of the Labeling stage. Three of the twelve books, or 25%, were characterized to be part of the Listing level. These three books were *The Gingerbread Boy*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *Henny Penny*. Stories at this level may contain attributes or character actions with logical connections but without any

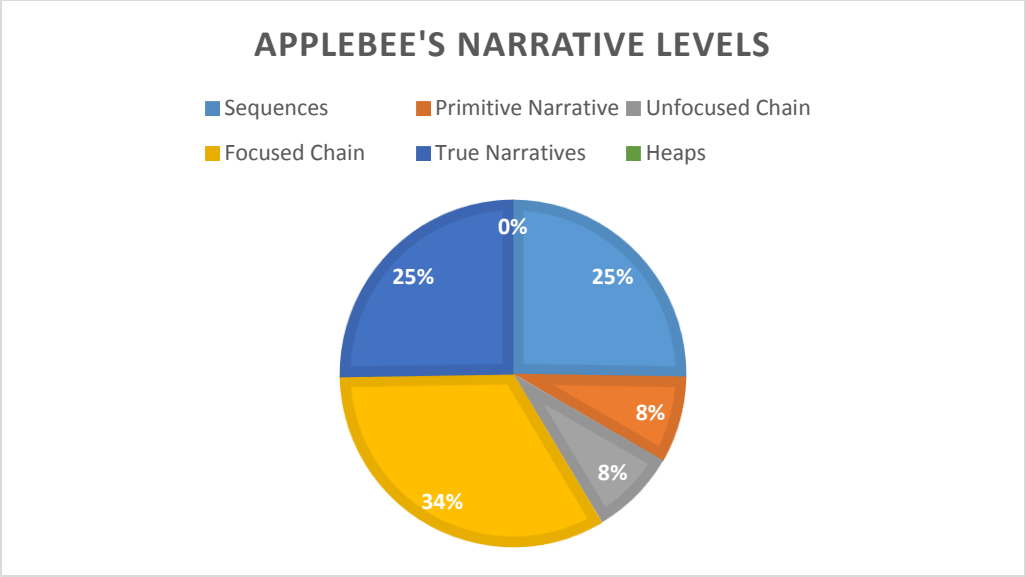

FIGURE 1. Percentage of each narrative level (Applebee) across book sample.

temporal or causal relations. Two of the twelve (12), or 17%, were part of the Connecting stage, which meant these books had a central topic (of sorts) with related events. For example, Alexander's day contains a series of events that are all horrible to him in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*. The two books which fit these characteristics (i.e., central topic and related events) were *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day*, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*. Four of the twelve, or 33%, were determined to be a part of the Sequencing stage—these books were *Jump, Frog Jump*, *The Runaway Bunny*, *The Little Red Hen*, and *One Was Johnny*. The books were comprised of a sequence of events and a main character- such as Johnny and the progression of creatures entering and leaving his house in *One Was Johnny*. A developed plot and evidence of attempts to reach goals are evident in the three of the twelve books (25% of the books) discovered to be under the

Narrating title for narrative level. There was a clear beginning and ending with a central topic and temporally related statements within *Are You My Mother?*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree*. One can clearly see Sam I Am attempting to reach his goal of getting the unnamed character to try eating green eggs and ham using persuasion throughout the book of *Green Eggs and Ham*. This book ends with the character trying, and liking, green eggs and ham.

TABLE 3. Books and Corresponding Narrative Level According to Stadler and Ward

Title	Stadler and Ward Narrative Level
The Gingerbread Boy	Listing
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Listing
Henny Penny	Listing
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Connecting
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Connecting
Jump, Frog, Jump	Sequencing
The Runaway Bunny	Sequencing
The Little Red Hen	Sequencing
One Was Johnny	Sequencing
Are You My Mother?	Narrating
Green Eggs and Ham	Narrating
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Narrating

Stein and Glenn's Story Grammar Sequences

The final approach of analyzing narratives of the twelve children's books used was Stein and Glenn's (1980) grammar sequences. Stein and Glenn developed seven major structural patterns using their story grammar taxonomy. In this analysis procedure,

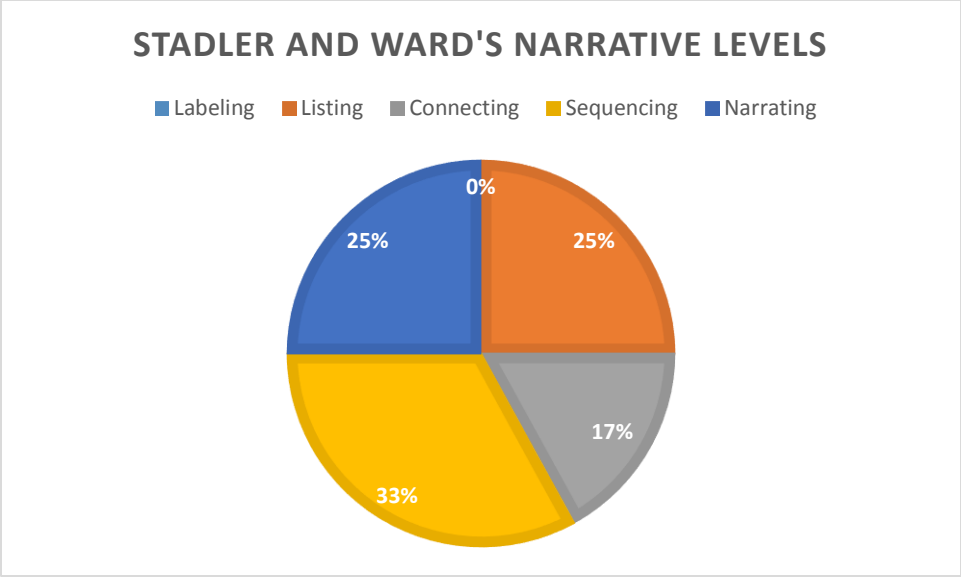

FIGURE 2. Percentage of each narrative level (Stadler & Ward) across book sample.

the books only aligned to five of the seven stages they detailed in their work. One note to be clarified is that in this taxonomy, all levels contain everything in the previous level, plus added characteristics. The results of this analysis are summarized in table 4. Three of the twelve books (25%) were found to be Descriptive Sequences. These books were *The Gingerbread Boy*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *Henny Penny*. The Descriptive Sequence books contain descriptions of characters, surroundings, and actions of the characters but did not reflect any causal or temporal relationships. For example, in *Henny Penny*, Henny Penny's friends (such as Goosey Poosey) have no real reason to join Henny in her travels but they join her anyway. Two books (17%) were Action Sequences which means they have a sequence of events (added to the above description of the descriptive sequences) but the books still lack representation of causal relationships. The books that fit this description were *Alexander and the Terrible,*

Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*. As noted previously, neither book has causal events stated within the narratives but arbitrary sets of events are described within the books (e.g., the Brown Bear sees the redbird, which sees the yellow duck, etc.).

One book of the twelve, *Jump, Frog Jump*, was a Reactive Sequence (8%). In the reactive sequence, there is no goal-directed behavior (the frog does not have any goals in the story), but there are causal relationships (for example, a boy lets the frog out of the basket, so he is able to jump to freedom). Three books were Abbreviated Sequences (25%), which involved events and their consequences, as well as the characters working towards implied goals. The books that fit this description were *The Runaway Bunny*, *The Little Red Hen*, and *One Was Johnny*. In *The Little Red Hen*, the hen is working towards feeding herself and her family through the growing of wheat (and following actions); one can see the consequences of actions when in the end, her friends want to partake of the bread she has worked so hard to make, but are not allowed, because they did not help her in any of her work. The final stage of narration in the Stein and Glenn taxonomy that was categorized with the sampling of books is called Complete Episodes. Three books (25%) fit this description. The books that matched the complete episode's description are *Are You My Mother?*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree*. These books include an entire goal-directed behavioral sequence and a consequence, along with either an initiating event, attempt, or internal response. In *The Berenstain Bears* book, the bears are trying to go through and explore the spooky old tree. As a result of dropping the flashlight, it becomes darker (a consequence). Descriptions of their reactions to elements in the tree, such as the twisty staircase with

alligators underneath, makes them shiver with fear (internal response). Nonetheless, they continue through the tree (attempt) to further pursue their goal of exploring the tree. Therefore, the book corresponds with the descriptions of the complete episode. None of the other books in this study conformed to the descriptions provided by Stein and Glenn for Complex Episodes or Interactive Episodes.

TABLE 4. Books with Corresponding Stein and Glenn Narrative Pattern

Title	Stein and Glenn Story Grammar Sequence
The Gingerbread Boy	Descriptive Sequence
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Descriptive Sequence
Henny Penny	Descriptive Sequence
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Action Sequence
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Action Sequence
Jump, Frog, Jump	Reactive Sequence
The Runaway Bunny	Abbreviated Sequence
The Little Red Hen	Abbreviated Sequence
One Was Johnny	Abbreviated Sequence
Are You My Mother?	Complete Episode
Green Eggs and Ham	Complete Episode
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Complete Episode

Comparison of Methodologies

When utilizing different procedures of analysis, comparisons between the levels of narrative development are noted. During this analysis, it became clear that several of the different levels in the separate methods of analyzing children's literature

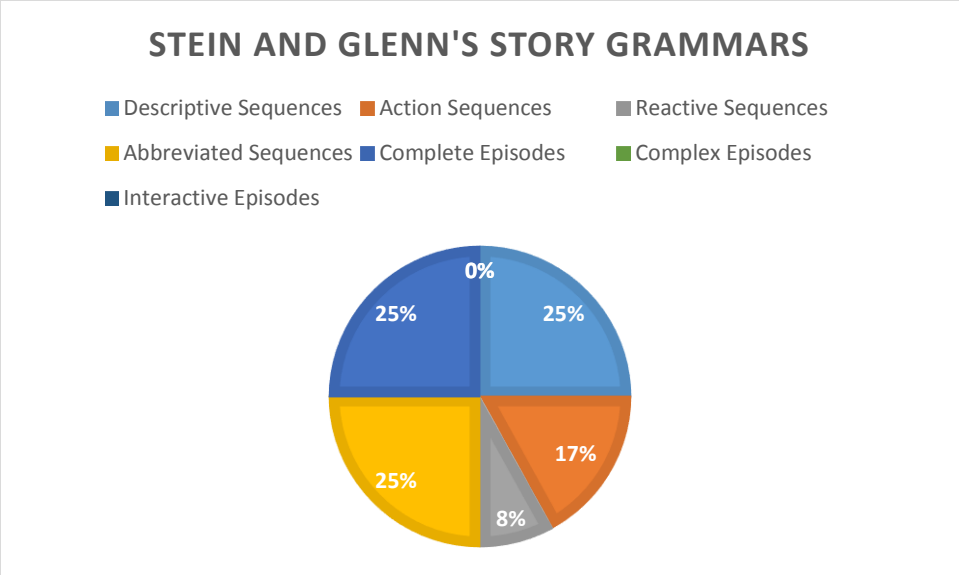

FIGURE 3. Percentage of each narrative level (Stein & Glenn) across book sample.

corresponded fairly closely. Table 5 presents a summary of the three research approaches. Given that all the taxonomies were developmental and hierarchical, it was not surprising to see similarities among them. Data suggested the following. The books *The Gingerbread Boy*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *Henny Penny* are always in the same category, that is, the most basic level of narrative development. The books contained a main character and some sort of description of events (Applebee's Sequence, Stadler and Ward's Listing, and Stein and Glenn's Descriptive Sequence). Stadler and Ward's Connecting level and Stein and Glenn's Action Sequence are also similar enough to have the same books within them-- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*. The selection of books contained in Applebee's Focused Chain is the same as those in Stadler and Ward's Sequencing stage (*Jump, Frog Jump*, *The Runaway Bunny*, *The Little Red Hen*, and *One*

Was Johnny). Finally, the last stage the books belong to-- Applebee's True Narrative, Stadler and Ward's Narrating, and Stein and Glenn's Complete Episode-- all consist of the same books (*Are You My Mother?*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree*). In numerical data, 50% of the books (six out of twelve) are in the same levels across the three different approaches in this study.

TABLE 5. Books with Corresponding Narrative Levels Across All Analysis Methods

Title	Applebee	Stadler and Ward	Stein and Glenn
The Gingerbread Boy	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
Henny Penny	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Primitive Narrative	Connecting	Action Sequence
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Unfocused Chain	Connecting	Action Sequence
Jump, Frog, Jump	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Reactive Sequence
The Runaway Bunny	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
The Little Red Hen	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
One Was Johnny	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
Are You My Mother?	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode
Green Eggs and Ham	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to provide a detailed analysis of the narrative levels of children's books used widely in language intervention including clinicians' focus on many shared reading activities that promote familiarity with connected discourse and literate-style language. The results of this study supported the hypothesis that the books would span across various levels of narrative development within the different narrative analyses found in the research literature. The discussion will further analyze the data and discuss the clinical and educational implications of this information.

Applebee's Narrative Analysis

The information yielded from the analysis of the twelve books utilizing Applebee's (1978) narrative levels illustrated that the books were spread across the different levels within his hierarchy. However, no books were found to be a part of the Heaps stage. This result is understandable given that the Heaps stage is defined as unrelated statements that either label or describe, not a true basis for telling a story (particularly a written one).

Given that the books selected were recommended for preschool aged children, whose ages span a five year continuum across time, it is not surprising that the books would vary across levels of narrative development. Clearly, preschool aged children's narrative abilities are the most fluctuating at the earlier stages of language development,

changing and becoming more refined as they approach the school-age period. As we also know, there is tremendous heterogeneity within both average-achieving children and those with language disorders. Since the books' structures represent different levels of narration as the data indicated, it is up to the clinician to evaluate and make informed judgments about materials chosen for language-based literacy intervention. As noted, the books were spread fairly evenly across the different narrative stages. Again, this developmental variation is logical considering that these books were written for preschool children who are going through the stages of narrative in their language development during this time. When analyzing the results and percentages, it can be seen that only one book was found to be in the Primitive Narrative level (8%); only one other book was found to be in the Unfocused Chain level (8%). For the primitive narrative level, one might not find as many books in that level because the only differentiation between it and the previous level (Sequencing) is the expression of character's emotions and feeling states. The Unfocused Chain level is an in-between stage for children which usually either does not last long, or is skipped over in progressing to Focused Chains. As soon as sequential relationships start to occur in children's narrative productions, children begin to tie the story elements together in a central theme (Westby, 1984). Otherwise, as stated above (and represented in the numerical data), the books are placed in a fairly even divide between the different narrative levels—Sequences, Focused Chains, and True Narratives.

Stadler and Ward's Narrative Analysis

The results found for Stadler and Ward's (2005) methodology were incredibly similar to those found in Applebee's (1978). There were no books found to be in the

Labeling stage, which is almost identical to Applebee's Heaps stage. Because the Heaps and Labeling stages share the characteristics of lacking any organizational strategies, it is unlikely that a story book would consist of random statements without any clear relationships, especially considering the books in this sample are recommended for language intervention.

Otherwise, the books are fairly evenly distributed throughout Stadler and Ward's levels, which is consistent with their purpose to describe the different levels of narrative development that children go through, by analyzing young children's (ages 3-5) narrative samples. Using narrative samples, they developed this hierarchy through dividing and labeling the different narratives types for their work. Thus, it makes sense that the levels are evenly distributed throughout their stages apart from the labeling stage. The books used in this sample are recommended for the ages that Stadler and Ward studied in their formation of their narrative hierarchy; therefore the levels are consistent across the narratives told by the children in these ages and the narratives within the books read to them.

Stein and Glenn's Story Analysis

In the analysis utilizing Stein and Glenn's (1980) story grammars, the books follow a similar sequence to the labeling that arose from Applebee's (1978) and Stadler and Ward's (2005) methods of analysis. The largest difference that has not been discussed is that there was no "lower" level that was not found in the books (such as Applebee's Heaps and Stadler and Ward's Labeling), but two higher levels of narrative were not found in this sampling. Since the books used for this study were recommended for preschool aged children, it is logical that the books did not correspond to the two

higher level story grammars, which Stein and Glenn proposed to be a part of the narratives of elementary school aged children. These story grammars are more complex than the complete episode, and require higher language processes than the basic narrative (complete episode), thus being unlikely to appear in children's books aimed at younger children.

Comparison of Methodologies

As shown in the results, similarities in the categorization of books were found after the initial analysis had been completed (using the three different methodologies). Further analysis illustrates that the different procedures for analyzing narrative have many similarities, including almost identical descriptions for two of the different stages within each hierarchy: Applebee's Sequence, Stadler and Ward's Listing, and Stein and Glenn's Descriptive Sequence were all of the same books in this sampling, and all had similar descriptions (for further descriptions/ definitions of each level, see the Literature Review). The final stages found in the book sample used in this study were also quite similar, containing the same three books and again having homogeneous descriptions (Applebee's True Narrative, Stadler and Ward's Narrating, and Stein and Glenn's Complete Episode).

More similarities were found between Stadler and Ward's connecting level and Stein and Glenn's Action Sequence, having the same books and similar descriptions. Applebee's Focused Chain and Stadler and Ward's Sequencing also contain the same books within this sample and have congruent descriptions. Though not found in the books that were used in this study, a close similarity between Applebee's Heaps stage and Stadler and Ward's Labeling stage was found. Though the different analyses were

conducted separately, their similarities to each other could not be ignored, and this finding could be useful to further researchers or practicing SLPs when confronted with the different method than what they are using (if within these three methodologies). The Appendix by Stadler and Ward (2005) contains a Table with useful comparisons of the three hierarchies for further exploration.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study may be useful to SLPs when choosing books to use in language intervention. As stated earlier, children with language impairments (LI) frequently have deficits in their narrative comprehension and production abilities (Bishop & Adams, 1992; Boudreau & Chapman, 2000; Fey et al., 2004; Gillam & Johnston, 1992; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Newman & McGregor, 2006; Scott & Windsor, 2000). Thus, the SLP treating a child with LI should be cognizant of the narrative levels in the books he/she are reading with the child, particularly if they are being used to treat other language areas. For example, the clinician who is treating a child with a language impairment for wh- questions, but the child is also delayed in narrative development, should still be careful of the narrative level of the books used for intervention of wh-questions. If the narrative level of the book utilized in the intervention was too far above the child's current narrative development level (i.e., two levels or more above), then it is far less likely the book would facilitate their understanding of wh-questions, given the amount of effort (and likely confusion) associated with the book due to its narrative. It would be easier to simply choose a book based on the language targets that were in them-- but would detract from the child's learning if it was too far above his/her narrative level (more than one level above his/her current level, as stated by Westby, 2005). Given that

there is nothing published on the narrative levels of children's books, there is no evidence to base the practice of reading books within the correct narrative level to children with LI on. The current study initiated research that provided an initial narrative analysis of children's books that could guide SLPs in their choice of materials to be used with young children with language disorders.

As noted, the major goal of this research was to assist SLPs in their selection of books for language intervention by providing them with a list of books that narrative levels of development. This list may be helpful for anyone interacting with children with LI-- including teachers and parents. Depending upon which narrative analysis methods the SLP uses, he/she may consider the results of this study as a reference point for selecting books to use in intervention. Although far from comprehensive, this list aims to raise awareness of the different narrative levels at play in children's books. While a book may be useful in its facilitation of language targets such as morphological endings or syntactic structures, that same book may create a competing resource situation by having a narrative structure that is too complex. Therefore, SLPs may be reminded to evaluate the narrative levels of all of the books they are choosing when working with children with LI.

An example of this information in the clinical setting would be the case of "J", a 5 year old who has Specific Language Impairment. His SLP is targeting past-tense verbs through storybook reading, and initially selects "One Was Johnny" to expose J to this language pattern. However, J.'s narrative level is also delayed, only in the Connecting stage (according to Stadler and Ward). "One Was Johnny" is in the Sequencing stage, too high for J's comprehension, and he focuses on the story and continually questions

what is happening in the story, instead of focusing on the past-tense verbs as his clinician is trying to do. Considering his narrative language skills, in the next session J's clinician selects "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day", which is in the Connecting stage of narrative development. During this session, J is able to remain on target and begins to demonstrate understanding of the targeted past-tense verbs within the story, instead of fixating on the narrative itself. Furthermore, if the clinician were inclined to target J's narrative abilities at some point during intervention, he or she could select a book one developmental level above his current narrative level (i.e., "The Little Red Hen", in the Sequencing stage). Then, the clinician could scaffold and use the book to expand his narrative comprehension and production (Westby, 2005).

The data show that, although helpful in their facilitation of different target language patterns, these books would not necessarily always be appropriate for all children with language disorders. For example, a child who has a language impairment and with a goal of the facilitation of prepositions (e.g., in, on, etc.), whose narrative level is at the Focused Chain narrative would not necessarily benefit from all books that utilize prepositions. Use of the book "The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree" might be inappropriate, even though it has prepositions in it, as it is several levels above their narrative level. By contrast, using "Jump, Frog, Jump," would be a more appropriate choice. This book also targets prepositions, but is at the Focused Chain stage of narrative development. One would not want to place high demands on the child's comprehension when utilizing a storybook to teach target patterns. Instead, when attempting to teach a new language pattern (such as prepositions), the SLP would want to match the book being read to the child's current narrative abilities. As stated by Schneider and Watkins

(1996), one does not want to push a child too far out of their Zone of Proximal Development, so any children's book being read to a child with LI should be either within his/her current narrative level (as in the example above), or only one narrative level higher. Thus, if a child with LD is in the Descriptive Sequence level (Stein and Glenn), one would want to read books to him/her that are either at the Descriptive Sequence level (e.g., The Gingerbread Boy), or at the Action Sequence level, only one level above their current level (e.g., Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day).

Using books in intervention that are too far above their current narrative level could have a detrimental impact on their learning. In fact, instead of starting to learn a language pattern (such as Wh-questions), children could become frustrated and not be receptive to learning anything, as they cannot comprehend the story being told to them. The importance of having a book matched to the child's comprehension skills cannot be emphasized enough when facilitating language skills. Westby stated it perfectly when she said "If books are carefully matched to the child's narrative comprehension level…nearly every child will enjoy listening to stories." (p. 198, 2005). Part of the SLP's role is to promote literacy; and planning carefully and choosing books wisely to provide every opportunity for the child to learn to love stories and reading to the best of his/her ability should be within the SLP's daily routine.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study, as in all research studies. Primarily, the issue with a qualitative study is it's difficultly to replicate, as well as having questionable scientific validity. Although it was the only way to conduct this research and glean this

information, it must be acknowledged that there are inherent flaws in the methods used in this thesis. First, the books analyzed may not be the most up-to-date, given that the lists used to determine the books in this study were older books, albeit popular ones (Ratner at al., 1993; Paul & Norbury, 2012). There may be more recently published books which would be more appropriate for certain goals or books that are more widely available that were not found in the previous research. Books were chosen purposefully for this study to enhance the likelihood of being utilized in language intervention and were not selected randomly. This may preclude the ability to compare narrative levels across various books and genres, including more expository texts (which were not found in the above references).

Another limitation as far as the ability to find recommendations of specific books to use was definitely evident during the process of looking for books to analyze. As stated above, only three references were found that had specific titles with their language targets. Frequently, an article, book, or website would say something to the effect of asking other SLPs-- though an understandable statement, does not promote the scientific validity of different books being used in intervention. Further research in the field is necessary in order to build the scientific basis for selecting specific titles for use in language intervention. The books analyzed were all recommended for preschool aged children, so when treating children of older ages, and/or higher language abilities, the results from this study would not be valid. However, the books found in the resources available were all directed toward preschool aged children, so finding books for older children would have been an entirely different study.

This study only analyzed 12 books; given the number of children and different language targets that must be treated in an SLP's career, this is obviously not comprehensive. More time and materials would have been useful in expanding this study to more books, but unfortunately was not possible for this project. There was only one researcher analyzing the books, so any researcher bias could not be corrected for in the final results. Further analysis by other researchers to confirm or challenge the research results are both warranted and welcome to increase the validity of the scientific basis and use of the results of this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

The area of utilizing children's books in research, though not new, is still fairly undeveloped in the dimension of determining books that are appropriate. As the first study to do this particular kind of analysis, more research to confirm or challenge the findings is necessary. Further analyses of additional books would be useful in expanding the availability of knowledge of the narrative levels of books that may be chosen in language intervention. Research regarding children's attitudes towards books that are within and outside of their narrative abilities would be a valuable asset to this aspect of the field.

The American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) states that SLPs should incorporate evidence-based practice into their assessment and intervention decisions (ASHA, 2005). A main portion of this statement is the integration of current and high-quality research into the decision making process of a practicing SLP. Unfortunately, the limited amount of research in the field regarding the selection of books to use in language intervention with children with LI makes adhering to this suggestion

difficult. Hence, it is essential to build upon the past research and continue to conduct research regarding the choice of books when using them in therapy. A narrative analysis for books recommended for older children (elementary age and up) would be a useful addition to the language intervention research. However, first, books recommended for children elementary age and older need to be recognized and studied in order to determine their appropriateness and relevance to language intervention.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This project illustrates the narrative macrostructures of several children's books that may be utilized in language intervention. As hypothesized, the book sample is comprised of various levels of narrative development according to the analysis proceedings recommended by Applebee (1978), Glenn and Stein (1980), and Stadler and Ward (2005). Although there are limitations to this study, the results provide a preliminary guideline for SLPs who wish to utilize children's books in language intervention. Further analysis of children's books in light of their overwhelming use in language intervention is needed. It is recommended that clinicians remain cognizant of keeping the level of the book close to the level of the child's functioning in order to facilitate understanding and an appreciation for the story, as well as enhance the possibility of learning through reading.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SELECTED BOOKS WITH TARGET LANGUAGE PATTERNS

Books with Target Patterns

Title	Target Language Pattern
Are You My Mother?	Possessive Pronouns Present Tense Verbs Yes/No Questions
The Little Red Hen	Reflexive Pronouns Modal Auxiliaries Wh- Questions
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	Prepositions Do Insertion Questions
One Was Johnny	Past Tense Verbs Relative Clauses
Henny Penny	(be) (verb)ing Wh- Questions
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Subjective Pronouns Past Tense Verbs
The Gingerbread Boy	Negatives Have Auxiliary Questions
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Possessive Pronouns Past Tense Verbs
The Runaway Bunny	(be) (verb)ing Modal Auxiliaries If Clauses
Jump, Frog, Jump	Prepositions Wh- Questions
Green Eggs and Ham	Modal Auxiliaries Negatives Do Insertion Questions
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Objective Pronouns Prepositions Wh- Questions

APPENDIX B

BOOKS WITH NARRATIVE LEVEL: ALL ANALYSES

Title	Applebee	Stadler and Ward	Stein and Glenn
The Gingerbread Boy	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
Henny Penny	Sequence	Listing	Descriptive Sequence
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day	Primitive Narrative	Connecting	Action Sequence
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?	Unfocused Chain	Connecting	Action Sequence
Jump, Frog, Jump!	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Reactive Sequence
The Runaway Bunny	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
The Little Red Hen	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
One Was Johnny	Focused Chain	Sequencing	Abbreviated Sequence
Are You My Mother?	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode
Green Eggs and Ham	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	True Narrative	Narrating	Complete Episode

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