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Participation Structures in a Reading Lesson with Hawaiian Children: Analysis of a Culturally Appropriate Instructional Event[1]

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It was hypothesized that the reading achievement of a group of young Hawaiian children was increased because the participation structures in their reading lessons had become more similar to those of talk story, a major speech event in Hawaiian culture. A sample reading lesson was analyzed to test this notion. The lesson was found to contain nine types of participation structures, some found in conventional classroom settings but others much like those in talk story. More than half the sequences in the lesson were conducted in this second type of structure and involved a high degree of joint performance among the children. HAWAIIANS, PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES, READING.

It has been hypothesized that many of the school problems experienced by minority culture children may be attributable to "sociolinguistic interference" (Hymes 1971a). Reports by classroom ethnographers indicate that some minority children may be unresponsive, acting as if they are unwilling or unable to answer the teacher's questions (e.g., Boggs 1972; Dumont 1972; Philips 1972). The teachers in such classrooms face a difficult task because their ability to convey content is seriously impaired by the absence of positive feedback. Students, too, suffer from the lack of learning opportunities which speech production provides. Under such circumstances, the efficiency and effectiveness with which teaching can be conducted is drastically reduced.

Perhaps there is need for greater awareness that minority children often come from a different "speech economy"; each speech economy has its own ground rules for speaking performances consistent with its total pattern of culture (Bauman and Sherzer 1974). According to Gumperz (1977), "co-occurrence expectations" and "contextualization expectations" are developed in the course of the individual's interactions with others, as part of his linguistic knowledge. Gumperz emphasizes that these expectations are highly culture-specific and can be upset by subtle variations in speech.

In this regard the concept of "context" or "participation structure" is a useful one (these terms will be used interchangeably here). Briefly, what (or when) is a context? According to Erickson and Shultz (1977: 6):

> Contexts are not simply *given* in the physical settings . . . nor in combinations of personnel. . . . Rather, contexts are constituted by what people are doing and where and when they are doing it.

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Interactional contexts are defined both verbally and nonverbally. At the verbal level they may be distinguished by differences in rules governing speaking, listening, and turntaking. A lesson may be comprised of only one kind of context but more often will be made up of several. For example, Bremme (1976) showed that "first circle" in a kindergarten-first grade classroom involved two different contexts, "teacher time" and "student time." Different kinesic "positionings" marked the contexts in the reading lesson studied by McDermott (1976).

A context is inappropriate for a certain group of children if its construction violates their cultural norms. Since groups differ greatly in the rules governing their interaction (Hymes 1971b cites many examples; an instructive case study is provided by Reisman 1974), it would not be surprising to find many examples of inappropriate contexts in classrooms with minority children.

Inappropriate contexts for learning may contribute to the poor academic performance of minority children by functioning to decrease the amount of context (number of propositions or idea units) that will be present in a lesson (Au 1978). It may be the case that minority children receive less academic material than mainstream children throughout their school careers. It might be argued that the teacher could use a lecture method, thereby ensuring at least some presentation of the curricular content. A higher degree of lecturing has, under certain circumstances, positive effects (Dunkin and Biddle 1974; Francis 1975). But few conscientious elementary school teachers would feel comfortable, or be capable of, lecturing at length in the absence of positive verbal feedback from their students, particularly if these are younger children.

An important question, then, is that of how the verbal responsiveness of young, minority children may be increased (or channelled appropriately) in classroom learning contexts. There is much evidence to suggest that their lack of responsiveness is highly situation specific. With Native American children a general pattern of findings is emerging in studies across a range of different groups (the work of Boggs (1972) with Hawaiians; Dumont (1972) with Cherokee and Sioux; Philips (1972) with Warm Springs Indians; Erickson and Mohatt (1977) with Odawa; and Van Ness (1977) with Athabaskans). Children in all the classrooms observed were likely to respond less well in situations in which they were singled out to recite before the group, with their answers being subject to public evaluation by the teacher. These studies show that the children may in no way be characterized as nonverbal or linguistically handicapped, although there are settings in which they may appear so.

Labov provides further clues about variables which may inhibit children's verbal productivity. In an early effort (Labov 1966), he showed that young, supposedly "nonverbal" Black children would demonstrate a high degree of verbal productivity given the proper circumstances, in this case the task of hiding a rabbit in a room adjoining the classroom. Labov (1970) later found that verbal productivity could be greatly increased if the interactional setting were changed from that of a formal interview to an informal gathering. Hall et al. (1977), examining preschool children's speech when on a trip to the supermarket and in the classroom, discovered quantitative differences favoring the supermarket setting: mean number of words uttered, percentage

of questions attended to, and mean number of words per response were all greater.

An important conclusion to be derived from the work of Labov and Hall et al. is that the kinds of factors affecting children's verbal productivity are subject to manipulation. It would not be beyond the capability of a willing teacher to change her classroom in ways which would tend to increase academically constructive verbal productivity by her students.

It has not been conclusively demonstrated that children learn more in classrooms where they speak more. Evidence on this point is lacking (Dunkin and Biddle 1974), although the findings of Hays, Kantor, and Goldstein (1971, cited in Dunkin and Biddle 1974) suggest a positive relationship. However, it is not simply amount of talk by the children that needs to be assessed, but the instructional event in its totality. There is a need to examine the extent to which different contexts promote a ready exchange of ideas among teacher and students. If interaction with an adult has positive value for young children's learning (Vygotsky 1962; Wertsch 1978), then ways in which such interaction can be structured to promote mastery of academic content must be explored.

Although minority children may best be taught with other than conventional methods in their first years in school, such conditions need not necessarily be present throughout their school careers. Instead, it would seem that appropriate instructional contexts, if present at the early stages of schooling, would both 1) facilitate the learning of basic academic skills and content and 2) facilitate the adaptation to conventional school situations. If minority children are not given the opportunity to become proficient in responding in mainstream contexts, they may be permanently handicapped educationally, socially, and economically. It is important to consider the potential for changes in instructional contexts to exert both these types of facilitative effects.

The ultimate goal, then, is to be able to create culturally appropriate instructional events for minority children. According to Jordan and Au (1979), an appropriate event of this sort would have to meet three criteria: 1) it would have to be comfortable for the children, 2) it would have to be comfortable for the teacher, and 3) it would have to promote better acquisition of basic academic skills. The rationale for each of these criteria is discussed more fully in Jordan and Au, within a framework postulating a process of mutual adaptation by teacher and students.

The Reading Lesson and the Talk Story Hypothesis

The videotaped reading lesson analyzed here is one of the few examples identified to date of a culturally appropriate instructional event for minority children, meeting the three criteria stated above. The analysis is an attempt to substantiate the claim that the lesson is in fact culturally appropriate. In order to provide warrant for this claim, it will be demonstrated that the reading lesson bears important resemblances to a speech event from the children's culture, and that the rules governing speaking and turntaking in the lesson are to a large degree consistent with the rules in their own speech economy.

The lesson was taped at *Ka Na'i Pono*, the laboratory school of the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP), Honolulu, Hawaii. Students in the KEEP school are blindly selected from a population of children who normally score as a group at no better than the second stanine on tests of reading achievement. Following the introduction of a new reading curriculum in the KEEP school in the fall of 1976, the picture changed dramatically. The reading achievement of the KEEP students improved to levels near (and in some cases slightly above) the 50th percentile. One major difference between the new reading program and the program formerly in use is that the small group lessons presently are devoted largely to the teaching of comprehension (the understanding of what is read), while before the emphasis in these lessons was on phonics (the learning of sound-symbol relationships) (Tharp 1979).

Many alternative explanations for the success of the KEEP reading program have been suggested (e.g., Tharp et al, 1978; Gallimore and Au 1979). The possibility considered here is that it is primarily attributable to the cultural congruence of the reading lessons taught within the program. Although the reading lessons themselves are only a part of the total program, it can be argued that they are its key element. Young children at the age of the KEEP students (5 to 8 years old), particularly if they are poor and from minority backgrounds, usually do not have a great deal of intrinsic interest in learning to read. Even if they do become motivated to do so and are given access to reading materials, there is little reason to believe that they will be able to learn by themselves with little or no adult guidance. If the children must be carefully instructed in order to learn to read, then the teacher-directed reading lessons are probably the key to the success of the KEEP program.

In the reading lessons, groups of about five children meet with the teacher for approximately 20 minutes of daily instruction, almost always centered on a story from a basal reader. Lessons are composed largely of rapid interactions between the teacher and the children, the teacher asking questions and the children answering. There is much interaction among the children, who complement and build on one another's responses. Au (1979a) suggests that the reading lessons have three component parts (*E*, *T*, and *R* sequences), which represent a specific instructional strategy used by the teachers. Thus, lessons are introduced by the teacher with reference to the *experiences* (*E* component) of the children which are related to the topic of the story. For example, in the lesson analyzed here, the story to be read is entitled "Freddy Finds a Frog," and the teacher begins by asking the children what they would do with a frog. The teacher then assigns the children a page or two of the story, which they are to read silently in order to answer questions. Following these periods of silent reading, of which there are usually several in a single lesson, the teacher asks questions which assess the children's understanding of the information in the text (*T* component). Finally, the teacher attempts to draw *relationships* (*R* component) between the material in the text and the children's own experiences.

This constant interweaving of text-derived information with personal experience and existing knowledge establishes the cultural congruence of the lesson at one level, that of content. The more difficult problem, however, is to establish cultural congruence at the level of context.

A conceptual framework for establishing congruence at the contextual level has been suggested by Au and Jordan (in press). The basic notion is that the lessons taught in the KEEP reading program are similar in some respect to talk story, a major speech event in Hawaiian culture. According to Watson (1975: 54), talk story is "the local term for a rambling personal experience narrative mixed with folk materials." Au and Jordan argue that there are several ways in which the reading lessons resemble talk story: 1) in the receptive role of the adult (Boggs 1972), and the social relationships among the participants; 2) in the mutual participation characteristic of both (Jordan 1978); and 3) in the phenomenon of co-narration (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). They further suggest that the reading lesson may be viewed at once as both a school learning and informal learning event (as defined by Scribner and Cole 1973), depending on whether one takes the perspective of the teacher or the child. Because the KEEP reading lesson represents an interaction between school and informal learning, it is possible, in Wallace's (1961) terminology, for the teacher and the children to have different cognitive maps which nevertheless imply the same equivalence structure. In other words, the nature of these lessons is such that they can be viewed differently, yet compatibly, by teacher and child. An effort is now made to provide empirical evidence in support of the talk story hypothesis developed by Au and Jordan, through the analysis of participation structures in a sample reading lesson.

Background Information
Videotaping Procedures

The videotape was made in the second grade classroom in the KEEP school. The teacher was told that the investigator was interested in taping lessons being taught as part of the new reading program, and that these lessons should come close to exemplifying the "ideal." The teacher notified the investigator when she thought she would be teaching a near-ideal lesson.

The lesson was taped with a remote controlled, ceiling mounted camera. A condenser microphone suspended from the ceiling was used for sound. The children were probably unaware that they were being videotaped, since both the camera and microphone were permanent fixtures in the classroom.

Classroom Settings

Although the camera was focused only on the teacher and the four children who were in the reading group, there were approximately 20 other children in the classroom at the time. These students were assigned to work at a variety of learning centers located throughout the room. As a general rule, the teacher discouraged interruptions from the other children which might interfere with the reading lesson.

The Actors in the Reading Lesson

The teacher was herself Hawaiian and an extremely capable reading instructor. The children in the lesson were in the second highest of five homogeneous reading groups in the class. They were representative of the

blackboard

T.

S.
(only boy)

tables

C.

A.   L.

←—— other children ——→

↙   ↘
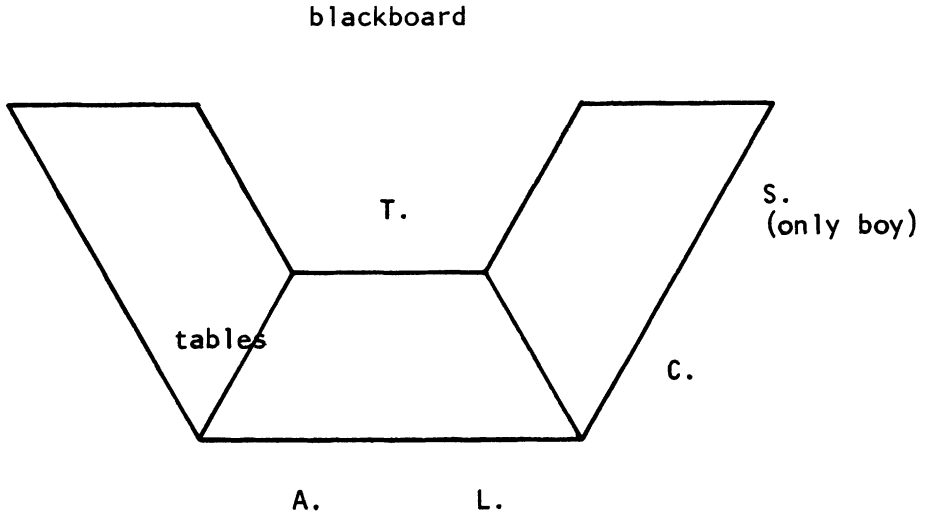
Figure 1. Seating Chart

population of children from which the KEEP students were drawn. In brief, most of the KEEP children were part-Hawaiian, native speakers of the local dialect, from families on welfare, and lived in urban Honolulu, often in public housing projects near the KEEP school (for more information on the children's backgrounds, see Weisner 1978). The seating of the actors in the reading lesson is shown in Figure 1.

Analysis

Overview of the Analysis

The lesson was approximately 20 minutes long. It can be divided into three major parts: an introduction, in which personal experiences are shared and speculations about the story are made; a period of silent reading; and a follow-up discussion in which the details of the text are examined and then related to the children's experiences. There are 66 sequences or turns in the lesson, which fall into one of nine different categories of participation structure: 1) transition, 2) chorus, 3) single, 4) single/joint, 5) single/open, 6)

joint, 7) joint/open, 8) open, and 9) "damaged" transition. In addition, it is possible to identify five different types of single turns (category 3).

It will be argued that these nine participation structures lie on a continuum, as shown in Figure 2. Some of the participation structures are those of the conventional classroom recitation setting, as described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Mehan (1979), and others. The typical pattern of interaction there involves the asking of a question by the teacher, a response by a student, and an evaluation of the student's response by the teacher. Other participation structures are more like talk story, or the classroom approximation to it.

Examples of talk story as a speech event in a non-school setting are presented in Watson (1975) and Watson-Gegeo and Boggs (1977). According to Watson (1975), characteristics of the event are the following:

> In contrast to the usual view of narrative, both talk story and joking conversation among Hawaiian children are cooperatively produced by *two or more* speakers. More specifically, both narration and joking take the form of a contrapuntal conversation. . . . The effect of this structure overlaid on the already musical contours of Hawaiian English, is to create a speech contour which resembles chanting, and the kind of alternation which occurs in cooperatively produced texts resembles responsive reading. (p. 54)
>
> It is the underlying social rules governing these speech events which produce such a musical and rhythmic routine. A primary rule here is the conversation rule for taking turns. . . . Turn-taking functions as a major structuring device for group interaction. Participants have flawless memories as to whose turn it is, often carried over from one session to another, and sometimes past intervals of more than one week. At the same time, one test of social status and power is the ability to wrest the turn away from another, with the approval of the whole group.
>
> Yet turn-taking does not imply individual performance. Rather, the speakers most successful in keeping the audience disposed in their favor are the speakers most apt to encourage a partnership in performance. Sometimes the result is that two or more speakers alternate (as in swapping personal experiences or insults), and at other times it is contrapuntal or joint performance. (pp. 54–55)

This analysis will center on the ways in which the different types of turns are mutually constructed and managed by the actors in the reading lesson. It will be seen that more than half of the turns (39 of the 66) are not single turns with only one child speaker, but turns in which cooperation and precise synchronization of talk among two or more children and the teacher are required. The criteria for distinguishing among each of the nine different participation structures will be presented, in terms of 1) the number of child speakers and 2) the roles of the different speakers. Examples of the more talk story-like participation structures, taken from the transcript of the lesson, will be presented (the full transcript is available upon request). The analysis will begin with the types of turns which are more conventional and proceed toward those which are more talk story-like (moving from left to right in Figure 2). Both descriptive and criterial statements about each will be made. A further discussion of single turns is presented at the end of the analysis section.

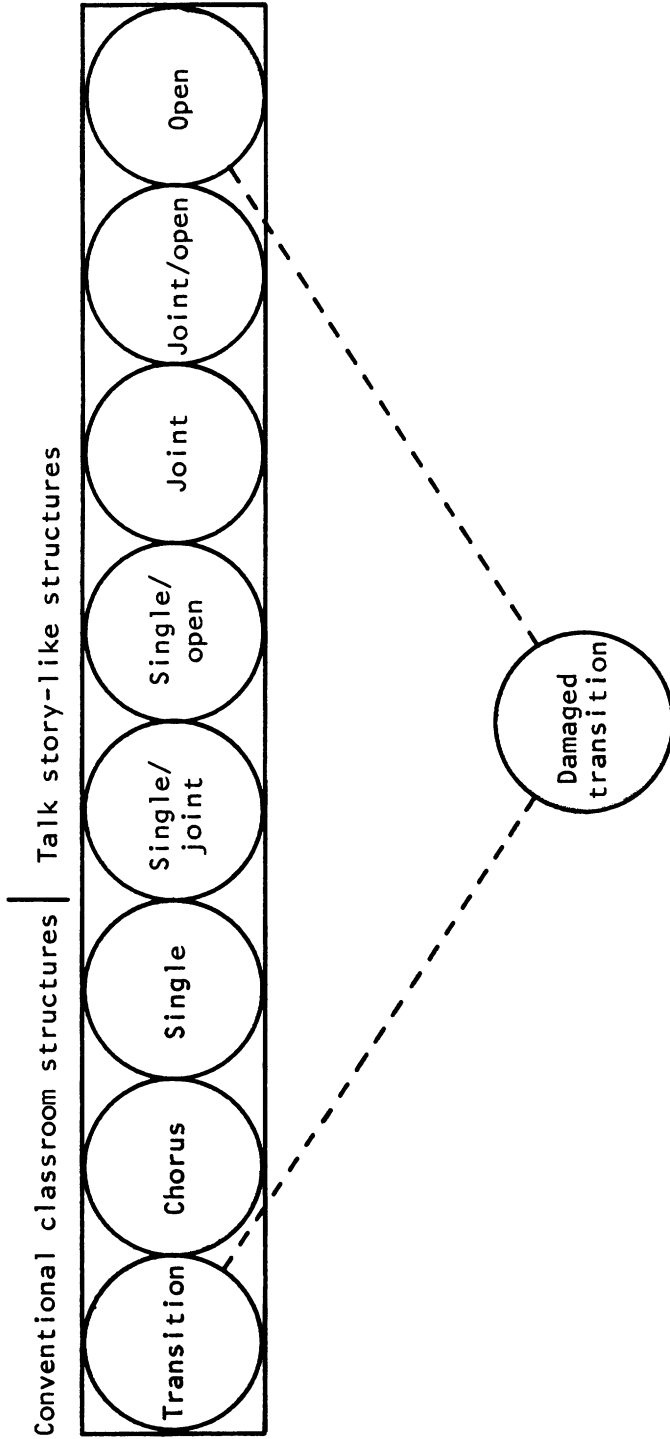This report is necessarily incomplete, due to space limitations. Relation-

Figure 2. Continuum of Participation Structures

ships between participation structures, lesson content, and teacher strategy (the *E-T-R* process described earlier) are discussed elsewhere (Au 1979b).

Division of the Lesson into Sequences

The distribution of the various participation structures throughout the lesson is shown in Table 1; Table 2 indicates the number of instances of each type of turn. The lesson was divided into sequences on the basis of changes in the composition of the group doing the talking and changes in the roles among the speakers. Frequently these changes were clearly marked by teacher behavior, e.g., the teacher would pose a question and then select a child to answer it, who would be a different child from the one who had been the dominant speaker in the immediately preceding sequence. Some of these changes coincided with topical shifts but many did' not.

Table 1. Distribution of Participation Structures Across the Reading Lesson

Phase	Sequence #	Type
Introduction		
	1	Joint
	2	Single/Joint
	3	Single
	4	Single
	5	Joint
	6	Single
	7	Open
	8	Chorus
	9	Joint
	10	Chorus
	11	Single/Open
	12	Single/Joint
	13	Single
	14	Damaged Transition
	15	Joint
	16	Transition
	17	Joint
	18	Transition*
	19	Joint/Open
	20	Chorus
	21	Damaged Transition
Silent Reading		
Follow-up Discussion		
	22	Single/Open
	23	Single**
	24	Joint/Open
	25	Chorus
	26	Single/Joint
	27	Single
	28	Single
	29	Single
	30	Joint/Open
	31	Single
	32	Single
	33	Single

Table 1. Distribution of Participation Structures Across the Reading Lesson (*continued*)

Phase	Sequence #	Type
	34	Single
	35	Single
	36	Chorus
	37	Single
	38	Single/Joint
	39	Damaged Transition
	40	Single
	41	Single
	42	Chorus
	43	Single
	44	Single
	45	Single
	46	Single/Joint
	47	Single
	48	Single
	49	Chorus
	50	Single
	51	Single/Joint
	52	Single
	53	Chorus
	54	Joint
	55	Single
	56	Transition
	—	Interruption
	57	Single/Joint
	58	Single
	59	Joint
	60	Single/Joint
	61	Chorus
	62	Single/Joint
	63	Single
	64	Single
	65	Open
	66	Damaged Transition

*Teacher views this as a transition, but A views it as a single turn.
**Teacher views this as a single turn, but A views it as a joint turn.

Table 2. Total Occurrence of Different Participation Structures

Type of Participation Structure	Number of Instances
Transition*	3
Chorus	9
Single*	27
Single/Joint	9
Single/Open	2
Joint	7
Joint/Open	3
Open	2
Damaged Transition	4
Total	66

*Based on teacher's interpretation

Overview of the Participation Structures

The nine types of participation structures are differentiated in two ways, according to the number of child speakers and their roles, as shown in Table 3. By "number of child speakers" is meant those who are, by group consensus, allotted one of the designated roles in a given participation structure. There are instances when a child attempts to assume a role but is denied it by either the teacher or the other children. There are also instances of accidental intrusion resulting because a child is not paying attention or makes an involuntary utterance, or because a misunderstanding occurs. While in these cases the number of child speakers in a turn may vary from that listed in Table 3, the reason for the deviation is easily seen.

The Participation Structures

Transitions. This participation structure is a teacher turn, used to move the group from one type of activity to another (e.g., from discussion to silent reading) or from one topic of discussion to another. Only the teacher should talk. When she gives directions, the children are to comply silently. The teacher may ask a rhetorical question to which no reply is expected. If a child speaks during a transition, he is overridden by the teacher.

 Chorus. The teacher may be lecturing, explaining, or demonstrating. She will then ask a known answer question, using a rhetorical tone of voice, to which the children should reply in unison, as a group. The children use exaggerated pronunciation in their choral response. The teacher's questions require single word responses and often are of the yes-no variety. The chorus turn seems to function to highlight information the teacher especially wishes to emphasize. It may be used in cases where information has been mis-understood by the children, in order to help them to draw the proper inferences. Some minor counterpoint by the children is permitted as long as it is parallel to the obvious answer expected by the teacher. A variant of the chorus turn is a teacher question which requires a nonverbal response, such as handraising, from the group.

Table 3. Summary of the Key Features Distinguishing the Participation Structures

Type	Number of Child Speakers	Role of Child Speaker(s)
Transition	0	None—teacher only allowed to speak
Chorus	4	Respond in unison
Single	1	Sole speaker with teacher
Single/Joint	2	1 lead speaker, 1 commentator
Single/Open	3–4	1 lead speaker, 2 or 3 commentators
Joint	2	2 co-equal lead speakers
Joint/Open	3–4	2 co-equal lead speakers, 1 or 2 commentators
Open	4	4 co-equal speakers
Damaged Transition	1–4	Teacher serves as lead speaker, children as commentators only

Single turns. There are five different types of single turns (to be discussed later), but they have in common the criterion that a single child is speaking with the teacher. If another child begins to enter the discussion, the teacher may stop that child from speaking. For example, at one point when she has called on C to respond, the teacher touches A's hands to signal that she is not to say any more (sequences 2 and 3). Occasionally another child will offer an opportunity for the child speaker to change the single turn into a joint turn, but if the offer is not accepted, the second child makes no other overtures. In one example (sequence 28) L suggests some relevant information, the title of the book, to A but is ignored. Thereafter she is silent and A continues to interact with the teacher.

Single/joint turns. This participation structure requires a dominant child speaker, and a second child speaker who essentially augments the words of the first. The role of the first child is in some cases upheld by the teacher. This child addresses himself to a question the teacher has posed. The second child may contradict the first, supply a missing word, or simply make brief comments. In the following example, although the teacher has nominated C, A persists in expressing her own opinion as well as in remarking upon C's responses. C, however, is not deterred by A's participation but continues to speak, with support from the teacher. The teacher holds the dominant role in this turn for C both by attempting to quiet A, although not very forcefully, and by reinforcing C's answers but not A's.

```
T:  Okay, let's think if we could do anything
    else with it.
    (Looks at A and L.)
    (A puts her hand up, holding one arm.)
    (L raises hand straight up, quickly.)
    What would you do, C?
    (Points and looks at C.)
    What would you do if you had a frog?
    (A puts down her hand.)
A:  I wouldn't ⌈poke da legs.
C:            ⌊You could put
    it in a bucket.
A:  Y ⌈uck.
T:    ⌊Sh-h-h.
    (Turns, looks at A, puts finger over lips.)
    You would put it in a bucket.
    (Looks at C.)
    Okay, that's something different.
    (Nods head positively. Looks at L, who
    still has hand up.)
    What would you do with
   ⌈it?
C:⌈   (I would eat the legs—inaudible)
A:⌊   Y a h?
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        (Turns head towards C.)
        You eat the legs?
    T:  Okay.
        (Points to C.)
        C might even eat it.
        (Looks at L, then back to C.)
        Good. You can eat frog, can't you?
        (Nods head in agreement.)
    S:  Uck!
        (L puts down one hand, raises other arm,
        holding it with hand.)
    A:  Yah, da legs.
        (T looks at her, then back to C.)
        (sequence 2)
```

S's single interjection, "Uck!", seems to have been quite involuntary and he makes no other statements.

Single/open turns. In the single/open turn there is one dominant child speaker who is supported in his role by two (or possibly all three) other children. It is clear who has the floor, although anyone else may add a brief comment or two. Again, the teacher may help the dominant speaker to keep his role, although she does not necessarily discourage others from entering the discussion. The dominant speaker generally adheres closely to the teacher-chosen topic, although the other child speakers may not.

```
    T:  What did it feel like,⌈ L?
        (S and L put hands down.)
    C:                    ⌊ Even Su.
    L:  When I wen—
        My—my—my brother, you know uh—
        across the street?
        There—there's some ones and he went down
        by the river
       ⌈   and catch um tiny ones.
       │   (T looks at her.)
    S: ⌊Oh, I nevah, I nevah, I nevah.
    L:  an caught big ones and I wen try pick up
        the tiny one in my hand and—an every
        time I wen try to squeeze um but, I couldn't
        cause it—uh—wa—was slippery and wen
        just wen sli' out.
        (Gestures with hands throughout, non-iconic.)
        (C, S, and A look at her.)
        (L finishes and leans back in chair.)
        (C and A look back at T.)
    T:  A a a a⌈h h h.
            │(T looks at C and S.)
    C:      ⌊Even Su. she g ⌈ot—
    S:                      ⌊Ye-e-es.
        (sequence 11)
```

Joint turns. In the joint turn there are two speakers who contribute almost equal amounts of talk, even though one child may have been nominated by the teacher while the other was not. A joint turn is not necessarily concluded because the teacher has intervened to silence one of the children. As in the single/joint and single/open participation structures, the other child may continue to speak and the child silenced may decide to speak again anyway. The speakers may be either cooperating or competing with one another; thus, the information supplied may be complementary or contradictory.

T: Where do you think a frog might g-go,
    if you put it in the grass, L?
    (Slight head turn to A, looks back at S,
    then back to L.)

A: ⌈All over.

L: ⌊It would hop,
    ⌈it would hop around. (Hands gesture hopping
    │movements.)

A: ⌊It—it—it would run a-
    way.

T: It ⌈would hop a r o u n d (points and looks
       │at L, then turns
       │head to A.)

L: ⌊If you—if you—if you
    were ⌈gonna—

A: ⌊It would run
    away.

    (sequence 5)

It is interesting to note in this example that the teacher nominates L, but yet does not stop A from speaking. In fact, the teacher supports the joint turn by reiterating first L's response to her question and then A's.

Joint/open turns. The joint/open participation structure requires that there be two co-equal speakers, as in the joint turn, but in addition there is some commentary provided by at least one of the other children.

T: If you use it for bait, what do you have to
    do to the frog,
    A. ⌈——?
       │(T glances across the rest of the group,
       │then back to the front, notices that A has
       │her head down on desk, resting on hands. T
       │then centers attention on A.)

S: ⌊Put it—(Had lowered his hand.)
    (Pause)
    (A's head is still down.)

T: If you're gonna use it for bait, what do you
    have to do with that frog?
    (Orients body and face towards A, gazes at

her, glances momentarily to the side at
distraction.)
You just throw it in the w a t e r ?
(A finally raises her head.)

V: Uh-uh (negative).

A: Put it on a hook.
(Still leaning forward over desk.)

T: Oh n-o-o-o ! (grimaces)
He's gonna have to stick it on a hook.
(Gestures hooking something with hands,
glances at S, then back to A.)

L: And den go like dat, an den dat.
(Gestures casting a line.)
(S and C glance at her.)

T: And throw it in the water,
 ⌐ and, (also makes gesture of casting)
 | (Glances to S at end of word.)
 | (A puts her head down again.)
L: ⌐En den, en mi ⌐ght (?)
S: └The
fish
 ⌐might come and eat it.
A: └Da fish might come
and eat it.
(Raises head.)
(All look at her.)

(sequence 24)

A has been nominated by the teacher but is joined by L as a co-speaker. S
starts to speak, then stops as he realizes that the teacher is making a special
effort to draw A into the discussion. He enters later, though, to make a
comment which also serves as a cue for A's last contribution.

Open turns. The criteria for open turns are that at least three of the
children speak and that they seem to share an equal status as speakers. In the
example below the teacher has nominated S. In keeping with the pattern that
had been followed up to that point in the lesson, he should have had a single
turn, as C and L had had. But when S replied, "I don't know" to the teacher's
question, in effect refusing his turn, she drew the other members of the group
into the discussion. This type of situation was described by Boggs (1972): A
Hawaiian child may become unresponsive if he feels that he is being put on
the spot, but he may suddenly reply later when it is technically no longer his
turn.

T: What if I came to school and I had a frog
and I said, "Here S, you can have it."
(Looks at L and C, gestures giving frog
to S, looks back at him.)

      What would you do with it?
      (S does not answer.)

A: Boy-y-y, he would drop it!
    I'd be scared to hold it.
    (T turns to look at A.)

T: You would be scared to hold it.
    (S sits up to table, looks at A.)
    Why? What does it feel like when you hold
    it?
    (Puts hand in front of her body and gestures
    holding something.)
    (Looks at A, rubs her hands together in front
    of her chest.)

L(?): Yuc ⌈ky!

C: ⌊Slippery.

T: Might feel slippery.
    (Points at S.)
    (Looks briefly at C.)
    (Looks at A and L.)
    (L raises her hand.)
    (T glances at her, then looks at A.)
    (L puts down her hand.)

A: It spits! Da ting ⌈spit—

S: ⌊Maybe
    you might wanna give it to somebody
    ⌈else.
    │(T glances at him.)
A: ⌊It'll spit at you.

    (sequence 7)

The teacher seemed to accept S's "I don't know" with equanimity, encouraging the other children to respond to her question instead. S finally did answer her original question, but by then the discussion had progressed so far in another direction that his answer was ignored. Apparently S was not discouraged by the lack of acknowledgement, since he immediately contributed to the development of the new "spitting" theme (sequence 9).

Damaged transitions. The damaged transition occupies a special point in Figure 2, in which it is depicted as a bridge between the opposite ends of the continuum. Because it shares certain features with both the transition and the open turn, it is an anomaly, impossible to position on the continuum itself. It seems to serve the same kind of function as the transition, i.e., to signal a change in activity or topic. As in the transition, the teacher does not invite the children to speak, but as in the open turn, all four of the children are provided an opportunity to participate. According to the rules governing the transition, no one but the teacher is permitted to speak, yet here is a similar context which allows everyone to have a say without being reprimanded by the teacher. This paradox is perhaps best explained with reference to the concept of "extenuating circumstances." The teacher and children seem to have a

Table 4. Single Turns

	A	L	C	S	Total
TN - T	2	0	3	1	6
TN - O	—	—	—	—	—
HR - T	1	3	1	1	6
HR- O	0	3	0	0	3
VE - T	1	2	1	6	10
VE - O	1	0	1	0	2
Total	5	8	6	8	27

TN = Teacher nomination
HR = Handraising
VE = Verbal efforts
T = Teacher topic
O = Own topic

common understanding of events which may be defined as extenuating circumstances because their occurrence prevents the lesson from progressing properly; there is some problem which must be addressed before events can proceed in their normal way. In the following example the teacher began to ask the children to open their books, forgetting that the books had not yet been passed out.

T: Would you open your books now—

S: I no more.

L: I ⌈no more.

A: ⌊We no more.

(sequence 14)

All of the children except C issue a joint protest. Following this outburst the teacher commenced passing out the books.

Further analysis of single turns. The 27 single turns occurring in the lesson were further analyzed as to 1) the manner in which the turn was obtained, 2) the topic addressed, and 3) the distribution of the turns among the four children. Each single turn, even if it involved the use of verbal efforts to usurp another child's turn, was always legitimated in some way by the teacher, either by saying the child's name, by otherwise acknowledging him verbally, or by facing him. Turns were obtained in three basic ways. First, the teacher could nominate a child (TN) who had in no way been bidding for a turn. Second, the child could raise his hand (HR), signalling to the teacher that he wanted a turn. Finally, a child could use verbal efforts (VE) to take the floor from another speaker or to indicate to the teacher that he wished to speak next. Cases where a child used a combination of handraising and verbal efforts were coded as VE, since these instances were few and the handraising was apparently a mere adjunct to the verbal efforts. The topic addressed could be either the one chosen by the teacher or another introduced by the child himself.

The results obtained in categorizing single turns on each of these three dimensions are shown in Table 4. Six turns were assigned by teacher nomination alone, while nine were obtained through handraising and 12

through verbal efforts. The children spoke on the teacher-selected topic 22 times and on their own topics only five times. The distribution of turns among the four children was S, 8; L, 8; C, 6; and A, 5. While some of the children received more turns than others, no one was allowed to dominate the discussion. From viewing the tape and studying the transcript, it was apparent that the teacher was not strictly controlling turntaking during most of the lesson, although she was nominating and recognizing the speakers.

Given the first two dimensions, one with three categories and the other with two, there are a total of six possible types of single turn (i.e., read number 1 as: the child was nominated by the teacher and spoke on the teacher's topic): 1) teacher nomination, teacher topic; 2) teacher nomination, own topic; 3) handraising, teacher topic; 4) handraising, own topic; 5) verbal efforts, teacher topic; and 6) verbal efforts, own topic. Of these six, only five possibilities actually occur. There was never a case in which a child who had in no way sought a turn was called upon by the teacher and subsequently spoke on a topic of his own choice. The most commonly occurring type of single turn is that which the child gains through verbal efforts, in order to speak on the teacher's topic. It may be that the use of verbal efforts, the most frequent means of obtaining a turn, functions partly to signal to the teacher and the rest of the group that the child has an important contribution to make to the discussion. Verbal efforts are seldom used to seize an opportunity to speak on one's own topic, almost as if this would be an "illegal" use of the method, analogous to issuing a false alarm.

The function of teacher nomination (except at the very beginning of the lesson, when S was called upon; see sequence 7) appears to be that of equalizing the number of turns for those children, A and C, who are somewhat less successful in competing for turns on their own. In some cases the teacher seems to wish to assess the understanding A and C have of the text, while in other cases she apparently is trying to draw them into the discussion. While complex, the system for allotting turns seems to operate in a fair and efficient manner.

Discussion

The discussion will center on the making of comparisons, indicative both of similarities and differences, between the participation structures identified in the reading lesson and in talk story in non-classroom environments, as described in the work of Boggs and Watson-Gegeo.

There are major obvious differences between the reading lesson and talk story outside the classroom. Much of the content of the reading lesson is drawn from a story in the children's basal reader, and there is little likelihood that the most popular story topic identified by Watson-Gegeo and Boggs (1977), sex, would ever be discussed. The reading lesson is clearly academic in purpose, and the teacher must make certain that instructional goals are achieved. Her role is very different from that played by Boggs and Watson-Gegeo, who were generally interested in securing narratives from the children on topics of the children's own choosing.

Perhaps the major similarity to be noted between the reading lesson and

talk story is that both entail a high degree of joint performance. Even given the controlling influence of the teacher, and sometimes because of it, the children engage in many forms of joint performance: single/joint, single/open, joint, open, damaged transition, and (to a certain extent) chorus turns. All involve cooperative production among different combinations of children. Speakers may assume a number of roles. For the children, these roles probably differ in several ways from those in talk story sessions. Watson states that "[e]ven in joint performance, one of the participants will be the lead speaker, who in the case of talk story, will have the final decision on the topic and development of the narrative" (1975: 55).

In the reading lesson it does not appear that there must always be a lead speaker among the children, since in joint, joint/open, and open turns no single child takes the lead. This may be because some of the lead speaker's functions, as described by Watson, are assumed by the teacher. Although the children may divert the discussion somewhat, they never subvert it, and the general direction of the lesson remains under the teacher's control. Thus, in joint performance during the reading lesson, there may or may not be a lead speaker among the children.

Although the reading lesson resembles talk story in that its dominant participation structures involve joint verbal performances, the nature of these performances involves subtle differences. In addition to the absence of a lead speaker in certain participation structures, the reading lesson contains far less co-narration. It had initially been hypothesized that co-narration would be a common occurrence in the KEEP reading lessons (Au and Jordan, in press), but few instances were found (see sequence 24 for a rare example). However, overlapping speech and comments upon the statements of others do appear with considerable frequency. This difference between the reading lesson and talk story serves to emphasize the complexity of the relationships between the two; while similarities may be found, they may not take the form of identical elements present in both.

There are specific contrasts in the roles of the adults during the reading lesson and talk story sessions. This set of differences between the reading lesson and talk story are in keeping with the third criterion for a culturally appropriate context for learning, that it promote the development of basic academic skills and knowledge.

The nature of the teacher's role is extremely complex. It is evident that she must be in tune with the children in order to maintain a role which makes it possible to exert control over the topic of discussion without completely inhibiting the children's responsiveness. In a conventional school setting, in which the teacher plays a highly directive role, it is to be expected that Hawaiian children will perform very poorly (Boggs 1979). Yet, paradoxically, the reading lesson shows both a high degree of teacher control and a high level of appropriate student participation. Perhaps the teacher's accomplishment is better appreciated if it is seen in contrast to some of the talk story sessions which Boggs and Watson-Gegeo tried to organize:

> . . . what repeatedly happens is that the child who is first offered the microphone often seems to have nothing to say even though he or she was at first eager for the

chance to record. But as soon as another child begins to talk, nearly everyone in the group tries to talk at once. . . . Challenges from members of the group are answered by verbal and nonverbal responses directed to the challenger. It is pandemonium, and the larger the group the greater the tangle of voices.

The first and overriding problem in recording performances in a group, therefore, is to organize turns. Extensive experimentation by Boggs and others at KEEP, plus Watson's experience, indicate that an adult's attempts to control turn-taking in such a setting are absolutely futile. (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977: 86)

The present analysis shows the reading lesson to be extremely orderly, with only two sequences in which there is some confusion between the teacher and the students about the nature of the turn (in both cases, these involved A). Even these problems were easily solved, and the smooth and rapid flow of talk quickly resumed.

The reading lesson seems to strike a delicate balance between the conventional classroom setting and the talk story session. The former is characterized by a kind of control which would be perceived by Hawaiian children as too restrictive, while the latter can easily turn into a free-for-all. In the first case there would be little or no speech by the children, and in the second too much all at once. The fact that the reading lesson appears to incorporate a wide range of different participation structures, from the transition to the open turn, suggests that it is neither exactly like a conventional classroom context nor like a talk story session, but a hybrid setting which incorporates features of both without ever becoming identical to one or the other.

The role assumed by the adult is probably critical in promoting verbal productivity in the reading lesson, as it is in the talk story sessions (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). In the reading lesson the role of the adult is made particularly difficult because of the necessity for promoting the children's academic learning. By definition the reading lesson must involve instruction, and the teacher must exert some authority over the group to ensure that the verbally productive talk story-like contexts are channelled toward academically constructive ends.

Another issue to consider, then, is the nature of the authority which may be used by the teacher and accepted by the children. The form of adult authority most clearly understood by young Hawaiian children is that exercised by parents and relevant adults in the home (Boggs 1979).

I have never observed any recrimination for "tattling." In fact the concept does not seem to exist. Recrimination presupposes that children regard it as legitimate to defy adult authority. These children accept adult authority. While they violate rules, they do not think they have a right to do so. (1979: ms. p. 9).

But there are clear differences between the respect for adult authority as it is vested in parents as opposed to teachers. It has often been observed at the KEEP school that new and substitute teachers have a very difficult time establishing themselves in the role of authority figure which most teachers are accustomed to assuming (see for example, Tharp 1978). The respect for adult authority in the home is not carried over automatically to the classroom. Rather, it appears that the teacher must negotiate with the children to establish herself as an authority figure whose directives will be followed. One

of the reasons many teachers seem to experience difficulty in developing a role which will be comfortable for themselves and their students may be that the teachers have unrealistic expectations of what an adult authority figure may reasonably ask of Hawaiian children. For example, while adults in the home do not often expect children to obey verbal requests immediately, teachers do (Boggs 1979).

The teacher in the reading lesson, however, has established herself as an authority figure whose rights include the expectation of instant compliance, be it in requiring a child to answer a question or to open his book and read silently. There is absolutely no evidence of any kind of coercion, only of continuing cooperation among teacher and children. It may be speculated that the children's acceptance of the teacher's authority in directing the reading lesson stems, in the immediate context, from her adherence to at least two types of conditions: breathing room and equal time. Both of these conditions are consistent with the goals of the KEEP reading curriculum and with what is generally considered to be sound instructional practice.

The term "breathing room" refers to the teacher's willingness to let the children respond as best they can at the moment, without criticism that reflects on their abilities. The teacher makes few corrective comments during the lesson (for example, she does not attempt to disabuse the children of the notion that warts are caused by spitting frogs). Not listening to the question (giving a response not addressed to the question on the floor at the moment), though, is one type of behavior that the teacher does criticize. She only once corrects a child's use of words, when A uses "drain" for "sink." Responses given in Hawaiian Creole English are continually accepted, as long as their content is appropriate. The teacher seems to be concentrating on the goal of helping the children to understand the story within the framework of their own experiences. In the process she is willing to ignore many little foibles (such as S's "I don't know"), in return for the children's continued active participation in the comprehension task.

Central to the argument that breathing room is an important operating principle for the teacher is the idea that she permits and even encourages the use of talk story-like participation structures in the reading lesson. The children are permitted to comply with her implicit demands for answers in contexts which are comfortable for them. Although the content of their answers is often restricted to teacher-chosen topics, the form of their responding, including many types of joint performance, is much less restricted. A child may reply independently of other children, receive help from others, and comment on, contradict, or complement the answers of others. In terms of the cognitive content of the lesson, the complexity of the social interaction permitted by the teacher probably serves to promote the occurrence of a greater number of propositions or idea units in the lesson than if the permissible participation structures were fewer.

The second condition, that of equal time, is complementary to the first. Equal time is evident in the control exerted by the teacher in the allocation of turns and time given each participant to speak. Teacher nomination was used to equalize the distribution of turns among the children, and not in a coercive manner. Especially in viewing the tape, the impression is gained that the teacher is willing to let everyone have his say. It was particularly interesting to

discover that the longest single utterance in the entire lesson was the narrative told by L (sequence 26), and not a teacher lecture. The equal time condition, then, applies to the distribution of talk not only among the children, but also between the teacher and the children. The willingness of the children to continue to participate in the lesson, even when they have made mistakes or are not sure of the right answers, may well be partly attributable to the teacher's efforts to deal with them in a scrupulously fair manner. Their active responding is not restricted only to occasions involving the sharing of personal experiences or speculation, but extends to discussion of the text as well.

Conclusion

The characteristics of an appropriate context for learning for minority culture children were examined in the analysis of a reading lesson given by a Hawaiian teacher to a group of Hawaiian children. The reading lesson was judged by the teacher to be the "near ideal" form of small group instruction in the successful reading program developed at the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). Nine different participation structures were identified in the reading lesson, and these could be placed on a continuum ranging from those which more closely resembled the conventional classroom recitation situation, to those which more closely resembled Hawaiian talk story. The different participation structures were defined in terms of the number of child speakers and the roles of the various speakers. More than half of the turns in the lesson involved the joint performance of two or more children. Single turns were further analyzed to determine how they had been gained, whether through teacher nomination, handraising, or verbal efforts. When the reading lesson was compared to talk story sessions, it was found that both similarities and differences between the two could be attributed largely to the role assumed by the adult. It was concluded that the teacher used her authority to channel the talk story-like participation structures toward academic goals. However, it was suggested that the basis of her authority with the children might derive from her adherence to the principles of breathing room and equal time. The fact that the teacher permitted, and even encouraged, the use of talk story-like participation structures by the children was judged to be consistent with these principles.

The underlying assumption here was that interaction in reading comprehension lessons directed by an adult teacher would promote the academic achievement of young minority students, if the contexts in the lessons were structured in a manner consistent with the children's culture. In the case of KEEP students who received reading lessons of the type described for a period of two or more years, this notion was supported. When students with this background leave the KEEP school at the end of their third-grade year and enter public and private schools with conventional programs, their reading achievement scores on standardized tests at the end of fourth grade remain significantly better than those of controls (Klein in press).

The analysis is felt to be of particular interest because this reading lesson is an example of a culturally appropriate context for learning, one which is comfortable for the children, comfortable for the teacher, and also productive of academic achievement. It represents a hybrid setting, identical neither to a

conventional classroom situation nor a talk story session. Investigation of the characteristics of this reading lesson, and other classroom situations which also appear to be culturally congruent, may lead some day to the development of methods for creating appropriate contexts for learning where they do not already exist.

Endnote

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Correction

Volume X, Number 4 of the *AEQ* erroneously identified the university affiliation of Thomas J. LaBelle. His correct affiliation is with the University of California, Los Angeles.