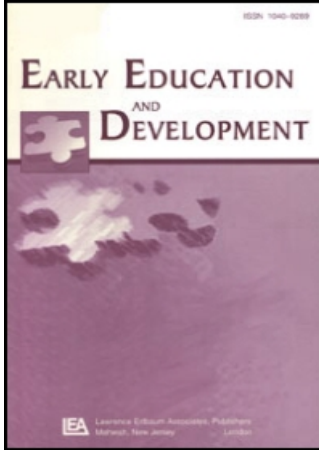


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Use of Decontextualized Talk Across Story Contexts: How Oral Storytelling and Emergent Reading Can Scaffold Children's Development

Stephanie M. Curenton ^a; Michelle Jones Craig ^b; Nadia Flanigan ^b

^a National Institute for Early Education Research, Graduate School of Education,
Rutgers University,

^b Family and Child Sciences, Florida State University,

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Use of Decontextualized Talk Across Story Contexts: How Oral Storytelling and Emergent Reading Can Scaffold Children's Development

Stephanie M. Curenton

*National Institute for Early Education Research,
Graduate School of Education,
Rutgers University*

Michelle Jones Craig and Nadia Flanigan

*Family and Child Sciences,
Florida State University*

This study examined 33 mothers' and preschoolers' oral language skills (decontextualized discourse) across an emergent reading, shared reading, and oral storytelling interaction. The sample comprised primarily African American families from various socioeconomic backgrounds, ranging from Head Start families to middle-income families. Two measures of decontextualized language were assessed—literate language features and type of talk (i.e., a coding scheme categorizing comments/questions on a continuum from contextualized to decontextualized talk). Mothers used more decontextualized language during the oral storytelling interaction versus the other interactions, but children used more during the emergent reading interaction. Mothers with advanced literacy skills were more likely to make decontextualized comments/questions and use mental/linguistic verbs during the interactions. Results are discussed in terms of implications for parent–child home literacy interventions.

THEORETICAL CONTINUUM OF ORAL DISCOURSE

The purpose of this study was to examine how young children learn to use a sophisticated form of oral language called *decontextualized discourse*. Language can be viewed as spanning a continuum that ranges from contextualized to decontextualized discourse. Contextualized discourse is used to talk about situations and objects that are part of the immediate context, whereas decontextualized language is used to talk about the past or future and to share information about abstract objects and events that are not part of the present environment. In contextualized discourse meaning is conveyed through gestures, environmental cues, and shared experience among the speakers (Cochran-Smith, 1985; Pellegrini, 1985; Westby, 1991), but in decontextualized discourse meaning is conveyed via grammatical devices, specific vocabulary, and explicit comparisons that require higher order reasoning.

Although both contextualized and decontextualized speech are part of the continuum of oral language, it is only decontextualized discourse that sets the foundation for school achievement and literacy (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Norris & Bruning, 1988; Reese, 1995; Snow, 1991) because it promotes higher order thinking, such as reminiscing and planning, and requires children to use their imagination and memory to think about abstract ideas that are outside the immediate environment (Cochran-Smith, 1985; Sigel, Stinson, & Kim, 1993). The production and comprehension of decontextualized language may be the oral language skill that underlies the association between oral language and literacy (see National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2005; Snow, 1991). In a study of 12 kindergarten children, Davidson and Snow (1995) found that early readers have more advanced decontextualized language abilities compared to later readers.

ASSESSING DECONTEXTUALIZED DISCOURSE

Decontextualized discourse can be measured via a variety of mechanisms. One mechanism is to examine the grammatical structure and sophistication of speech, such as *literate language features*. Literate language features comprise grammatical devices that increase the specificity of speech, such as adverbs, conjunctions, elaborated noun phrases, and mental/linguistic verbs (Curenton & Justice, 2004; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001). Each of these literate language features functions to specify the meaning of discourse. For instance, adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs and describe manner, time, degree, or frequency. Examples include "She thought *quickly*" or "That coat is *too* ugly" (see Justice & Ezell, 2002). Conjunctions, specifically coordinating (e.g., *and*, *or*, *but*) and correlative (e.g., *both*, *either*, *if*, *then*), provide information about connectivity, whereas subordinat-

ing conjunctions typically provide information about time or causality (e.g., *after*, *because*, *so*, *as*). Elaborated noun phrases (see Curenton & Justice, 2004; Justice & Ezell, 2002) contain a noun or pronoun that is modified by possessives (e.g., *my*, *her*), demonstratives (e.g., *this*, *that*), *wh*- words (e.g., *what*, *which*), and/or adjectives (e.g., *red*, *tall*). Mental/linguistic verbs provide information about speech acts and cognitive states, and examples of these include verbs like *think*, *believe*, *hollered*, and *said* (see Curenton, 2004; Curenton & Justice, 2004; Pellegrini, Galda, Bartini, & Charak, 1998; Pellegrini, Galda, Flor, Bartini, & Charak, 1997).

The use of literate language features makes decontextualized talk more grammatically sophisticated than contextualized speech. To date, there only have been two studies that specifically examined children's use of literate language features in narratives. Greenhalgh and Strong (2001) found a difference between typically developing and language-impaired school-age children's use of literate language features in that the typically developing group used more conjunctions and elaborated noun phrases in their stories. On the other hand, Curenton and Justice (2004) found that during the preschool period, the literate language features associated with age-related change are conjunctions and mental/linguistic verbs. Other researchers have looked at similar grammatical features of preschoolers' language, without specifically using the term or all of the categories of literate language features. For instance, Dickinson and Tabors (1991) measured the percentage of adjectives, locatives, and verbs used by children during a picture description task. They found the grammatical features they measured were related to another measure of decontextualized discourse, *type of talk* (see DeTemple & Beals, 1991).

Type of talk is a second mechanism used to measure decontextualized discourse. The extratextual comments made during a story interaction can be classified in relation to a continuum of contextualized versus decontextualized language (for similar coding schemes, see Neuman, 1996; Pellegrini, Brody, & Sigel, 1985; Reese, 1995; Sigel et al., 1993; van Kleeck, Gillam, Hamilton, & McGrath, 1997). Specifically, utterance-level coding that examines the type of talk considers the level of abstractness (van Kleeck et al., 1997), or distancing (Sigel et al., 1993), of speakers' comments. Contextualized talk would consist of descriptive labeling or observations, such as "What is that" or "Point to the boat," respectively. On the contrary, decontextualized talk would be characterized by explanations, formal definitions, elaborations, or comments that bridge real life to content or details in the story. Evidence suggests that mothers use a diverse array of comments during story interactions (Haden, Reese, & Fivush, 1996; Reese, 1995; Shapiro, Anderson, & Anderson, 1997; van Kleeck et al., 1997; van Kleeck, Woude, & Hammett, 2006).

The present study included two measures of decontextualized language. This two-pronged approach to assessing decontextualized language is distinct from other studies that have typically examined only one approach (see Curenton & Justice, 2004; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Pellegrini, Perlmutter, Galda, & Brody,

1990; Reese, 1995), with work by Dickinson and Tabors (1991) as an exception. The use of two measures advances understanding because it characterizes decontextualized discourse as being distinct from contextualized discourse in terms of *word usage* (literate language features) and *reasoning* (type of talk). The purpose of this study was to investigate how mothers and children use these two measures and how the two measures are related to each other.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN DECONTEXTUALIZED DISCOURSE

Children are introduced to decontextualized language through many home activities (Davidson & Snow, 1995; Snow, 1991), but *shared reading* is the most common way of studying decontextualized discourse because it provides the opportunity for parents and children to use information from the book to talk about objects and events that are not in the immediate setting (Rosenquest, 2002). Reese (1995) explained that the degree of decontextualized language mothers use during shared reading may vary as a function of the type of comments and questions; for example, comments that ask the child to recall events in his or her own life or comments about print/story conventions are more decontextualized than comments that ask the child to locate pictures in a book. Morgan and Goldstein (2004) believed that shared reading may facilitate children's ability to comprehend decontextualized language.

Oral storytelling is another context that can be used to study decontextualized talk. In oral narratives multiple sentences are structured in a logical sequence around a theme, and typically oral narratives provide decontextualized talk about specific events, where and when they occurred, and who or what was involved. Oral storytelling, particularly conversations about past events, requires listeners and speakers to access a body of information not immediately available (see Reese, 1995; Snow, 1983). Listeners and speakers must access this information through event recall, linking new ideas with the current context through bridging, and including specific details to convey meaning and descriptions. Oral storytelling not only allows children to use decontextualized talk, but it also allows them to listen to decontextualized speech, which in turn facilitates children's comprehension skills.

Just like shared reading, mothers' use of decontextualized discourse during oral language interactions, such as conversations about the past, promotes children's literacy skills (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Reese, 1995; Snow, 1983). Reese even found that mothers' comments during oral storytelling were a stronger predictor of children's emergent literacy skills than were their comments during shared reading, and such findings provide an impetus for researchers to continue to systematically study mother-child interactions across different story contexts.

A third narrative method for studying decontextualized discourse is children's "reading" (or storytelling) using picture books, often referred to as *emergent reading* (Elster, 1994; Sulzby, 1985). To date, other researchers have not used emergent readings to examine decontextualized discourse specifically. Nonetheless, detailed investigations of studies on emergent reading reveal that some children generate decontextualized discourse during these story interactions. Elster found that during emergent reading children sometimes created "written-like narratives," which are narratives that use story conventions (e.g., "once upon a time" or "the end") and temporal and casual language in the form of conjunctions and dialogue markers (e.g., "he said"). Features of these written-like narratives function as mechanisms of decontextualized discourse like literate language features or type of talk. Thus, in the present study the stories children created through emergent readings were included as a story context in order to investigate how children use discourse when they are provided the opportunity to lead a story interaction.

It is important to investigate the development of decontextualized language during emergent readings because this is a context in which the child is leading. Unlike the other two contexts when children have the opportunity to *hear* decontextualized language, the emergent reading context provides them with an opportunity to *generate* it. Children's ability to use decontextualized language in narratives is important because the stories typically valued by educators are those that are characterized by decontextualized speech (Heath, 1982). Using decontextualized discourse features during narrating makes the story comprehensible to listeners by providing richer detail about the setting in which the story takes place, the characters' motives, and themes about how the story relates to real life or the current situation.

In the present study decontextualized discourse was examined across three story contexts—an emergent reading (Elster, 1994; Sulzby, 1985) interaction led by the child, a shared reading interaction in which the mother read, and an oral storytelling interaction in which the mother told a personal narrative. Throughout the study the three contexts are labeled *Story-creating*, *Story-reading*, and *Story-telling*, respectively. We were interested in whether the story context moderated the speaker's use of decontextualized language. We hypothesized that mothers would use more decontextualized talk than children in the Story-reading and Story-telling contexts, but that children would use more decontextualized talk during the Story-creating context. Furthermore, we expected that mothers would produce more decontextualized talk during the Story-telling context versus the Story-reading context because the act of creating a story is more decontextualized than that of sharing a story from a picture book.

The Contribution of Mothers' Literacy

Various researchers have indicated that children from families of low socioeconomic status (SES) have difficulty using decontextualized speech because they are

not exposed to this type of language during their home activities (Hart & Risley, 1992; Heath, 1994). DeTemple and Beals (1991) found that low-SES mothers used decontextualized talk less than 20% of the time during shared reading interactions. Although such studies have consistently reported socioeconomic influences (as measured either by education level or income status) to be related to mothers' use of decontextualized language, mothers' literacy skills were never actually measured. Aram and Levin (2001) found that maternal literacy is significantly correlated with family SES ($r = .63, p < .001$), so the variance attributed to SES often found in studies of language and literacy development is confounded with mothers' literacy skills. When low-SES mothers' literacy skills are measured, it is found that those with higher literacy levels (per their self-report of their literacy skills) used more decontextualized language strategies than those with lower literacy levels (Neuman, 1996). It was hypothesized that a mother's literacy ability would be related to the amount of decontextualized talk she used during the interactions.

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 33 mothers and children (14 mother–daughter and 19 mother–son dyads). The average age for mothers was 30 years ($SD = 5.44$, range = 23–44) and for children was 51 months ($SD = 8.65$, range = 36–66).¹ The children experienced a variety of early care and education arrangements. Twelve children were enrolled in a Head Start, 18 attended private child care centers, 1 attended a pre-kindergarten in a local elementary school, and 2 were not enrolled in an early

¹Other research on shared reading interactions has reported that mothers make more extratextual comments with younger children than they do with older children. However, we were precluded from conducting age-related analyses because our sample failed to yield meaningful age group distinctions (e.g., 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds) because cell sizes were unbalanced. In an attempt to examine this phenomenon, a preliminary multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) including mothers' input for literate language features was examined across the contexts. There was no main effect for age group (i.e., those children less than 4½ versus those older than 4½), Wilks's $\Lambda = .54, F(15, 17) = .96, ns$. In terms of type of talk, there was a main multivariate effect for age, Wilks's $\Lambda = .09, F(24, 8) = 3.55, p = .03$. However, this effect only was evident in the Story-reading context and for two codes, picture description and print/story conventions. Mothers talked about the pictures more with younger ($M = .32, SD = .14$) versus older preschoolers ($M = .12, SD = .15$), and mothers talked about print/story conventions more with older children ($M = .21, SD = .19$) than they did with young children ($M = .09, SD = .07$). These findings help to normalize our sample by demonstrating that parents are behaving in ways that are similar to what is found in other populations. However, because age differences were not found in the other contexts, and because our sample size did not afford us the power to include another degree of freedom, we chose not to include age as a variable in the analyses. Future research with larger samples should explore issues using our three-story context design with age as a variable.

care and education arrangement. Children were recruited for the study via letters from the investigator that were sent home with the children.

The families in this sample were both ethnically and socioeconomically diverse. The majority of the children were African American ($n = 23$), 8 were European American, and the remaining 2 were either Latino American or Asian American. All of the Head Start families were considered to be in poverty based on their enrollment in a program designed to serve children in poverty, but an income-to-needs ratio was calculated in order to determine the other families' poverty status. An income-to-needs ratio is calculated by dividing the family's annual income by the poverty threshold for its family size. This ratio has been widely used in other studies to assess family SES (see Bradley & Whiteside-Mansell, 1997; Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Maritato, 1997; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2001) and has been used as an eligibility indicator for federal and state public assistance programs. As a result, 13 of the families were considered to be in poverty (ratios of ≤ 1), 4 were considered to be near poverty (ratios of >1 to $=2$), and 16 were above poverty (ratios >2). In all, 48% of the mothers in the sample had bachelor's degrees or beyond ($n = 16$); 30% ($n = 10$) had some college, such as an associate's degree or college course work; 18% ($n = 6$) had high school degrees or graduation equivalency degrees; and 1 mother had less than a high school degree.

Procedure

All the Head Start children were visited in their homes as part of the first author's research study conducted in Virginia, and all the non-Head Start families' visits took place in a campus laboratory as part of the first author's research study in Florida. Despite these differences in location, the procedures were the same for all of the participants. A pair of ethnically diverse research assistants visited with families for approximately 60 minutes.

During the first portion of the visit (approximately 45–50 min), mothers and children were tested individually in separate rooms; during the last portion of the visit (approximately 10–15 min), the dyad was videotaped engaging in three story interactions. At the end of the mother's individual portion of the visit, the experimenter read the following instructions to her:

Now we are going to ask you to read some stories with your child. For the first story, your child will "pretend" to read to you using a book that the other interviewer just read to him/her. For the second story, you will be asked to read to your child. Please feel free to make yourselves comfortable. There is no right and wrong way for you to do this. Do whatever it is you two would usually do if you were reading a story together. The purpose is for us to get a sense of what you and your child do when you two read together. For the third story, we would like you to tell your child a story

about a time when you were little and you got in trouble for doing something bad. You two should be free to make it into a conversation. Just talk the way you normally would if you were telling your child a story about when you were little.

First, the dyad engaged in a Story-creating interaction, in which the child participated in an emergent reading (Sulzby, 1985) using the storybook *Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962). During the first portion of the home visit, the experimenter had read this book to the child. *Snowy Day* is a story about a boy's adventures in the snow; while the character is out playing in the snow, he makes a snow angel, drags a stick through the snow to make a track, avoids a snowball fight, and makes a snowball that eventually melts in his pocket. This is a popular children's book that has been used in various other studies to assess children's narrative abilities (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Reese & Cox, 1999; Snow, Tabors, Nicolson, & Kurland, 1995). Because of its popularity, the vast majority of the children (89%) admitted having seen the book when asked by the experimenter "Have you seen this book before?"

Second, the dyad participated in a Story-reading interaction in which the mother read a book to the child (a shared reading). Each mother read *Peter's Chair* (Keats, 1967), a book about a boy who struggles to accept the birth of his younger sister. The plot provides opportunities for mothers to make comments about emotions (e.g., by talking about Peter's feelings of anger and jealousy), misbehavior (e.g., Peter decides to take his belongings and run away), and resolution (e.g., when Peter decides to allow his furniture to be passed down to his younger sister). This book also has been used in other studies that have examined children's narrative skills (Reese & Cox, 1999), and because it was a book from the same author it contained the same main character.

Third, after reading the story, each mother was asked to tell her child a story about a time when she was little and got in trouble for doing something naughty (an oral story/conversation about the past). Each mother was told to feel free to make the story into a conversation and talk the way she normally would if she were telling her child a story. A specific request for a naughty story was chosen because such stories would consist of a one-time event that fits a routine (see Reese, 1995, for such guidelines) and because the event would evoke an emotional memory with a strong socialization theme.

Mother's literacy. A trained research assistant assessed mothers' literacy skills using the Reading/Word Decoding subtest of the Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (Wilkinson, 1993) during the mother's individual portion of the visit. For this subtest, mothers were asked to read a list of words ranging in difficulty. The mothers in the sample had varying degrees of literacy as indicated by their reading grade level ($M = 8.97$ [approximately ninth grade], $SD = 2.02$, $n = 32$). Across the sample, mothers' reading skills varied from fourth grade to post-high school lev-

els, with the 67% of the sample ($n = 22$) achieving a post-high school level of literacy.

Narrative Transcription and Segmentation

Transcription. Three research assistants individually transcribed the interactions verbatim into the Child Language Analysis (CLAN) program (MacWhinney, 1994). Another research assistant independently listened to the tapes and checked the transcripts for accuracy. Corrections to the transcripts were made when discrepancies were observed.

After the interactions were transcribed and checked for accuracy, the first author and a graduate assistant deleted repetitions and irrelevant remarks (e.g., questions to the experimenter about the procedures, repetitions within utterances, filler words, and comments not related to the story). For the Story-reading interaction, only the mothers' and children's extratextual comments were included as is standard protocol (see Morgan & Goldstein, 2004).

Reliability for the deletion procedure was determined for 30% ($n = 10$ per story context) of the transcripts across the contexts. Interrater agreement was calculated by dividing the total number of agreements by the total number of item comparisons and multiplying by 100. For Story-telling, interrater reliability averaged 92% (range = 60%–100%) for deletion; for Story-reading, interrater reliability averaged 92% (range = 91%–100%); for Story-creating, interrater reliability averaged 98% (range = 89%–100%). The range for oral narrative deletions contained a low score of 60%. This disagreement was about whether words like *mmh* should be considered filler words when used as an answer to a question or to follow up a comment. The decision was made not to delete these words, and the deletion procedures were amended based on this decision. All further disagreements were resolved and resulted in 100% agreement after discussion.

Segmentation. Next, the transcripts were segmented into communication units (C-units; Loban, 1979). The guidelines for segmenting the narratives are described in Curenton and Lucas (2007). Typically, a C-unit must adhere to a clausal structure, meaning it must contain a subject and a verb. Given that the story interactions take place in the form of a conversation, and that people sometimes do not adhere to a clausal structure when speaking in a conversation, allowances were made for including utterances that did not follow a clausal structure yet contained key information about the story or the story interaction. Reliability ($n = 8$ per context) averaged 96% (range = 88%–100%) for Story-telling, 97% (range = 91%–95%) for Story-reading, and 98% (range = 92%–100%) for Story-creating. All disagreements were resolved via conferencing. CLAN was used to calculate the number of C-units and the mean length of C-unit (MLCU) for the mother and child, resulting in an individual score for each. To control for inevitable differences in story length

across contexts, all analyses of decontextualized talk (i.e., literate language features and type of talk) were measured as a rate of occurrence per C-unit.

Assessment of Decontextualized Language

Literate language features. The frequency with which mothers and children used the following literate language features was coded: conjunctions, mental/linguistic verbs, adverbs, and elaborated noun phrases (both simple and complex). Use of conjunctions and mental/linguistic verbs was examined using CLAN by creating computer files of word lists (see Curenton, 2004; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Pellegrini et al., 1997, for a list of words). Adverbs and elaborated noun phrases were coded by hand using definitions and guidelines set forth in previous research (Curenton & Justice, 2004; Greenhalgh & Strong, 2001; Justice & Ezell, 2002; Kolln, 1991); however, certain modifications were made.

For elaborated noun phrases, the only determiners considered were possessives (e.g., *his, hers, Peter's*), demonstratives (e.g., *this, that, those*), quantifiers (e.g., *every, each, some, all*), appositives (e.g., *the boy, Peter*), relative clauses that modified a noun (e.g., *the boy that made the snow angels*), *wh-* words (e.g., *the boy who threw the snowball*), prepositions that modify nouns that were directly preceding or following the prepositional phrase (e.g., *the boy with the glove*), and true adjectives that were linked to nouns (e.g., *tall, blue, happy*). In addition, these modifiers were counted only if the noun was actually present in the C-unit; therefore, utterances like "red" in response to the question "What color is the traffic light?" were not counted.

Definitions in Justice and Ezell (2002) and Kolln (1991) were used to form the coding guidelines for adverbs. Words were counted as adverbs if they functioned as adverbs (meaning they modified verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs that were within the utterance) and they have traditionally been considered to be adverbs (meaning they were defined as adverbs either in the dictionary, in Kolln, 1991, or in Justice & Ezell, 2002). Each instance of an adverb was counted; therefore, the utterance "He is over there" counted as two adverbs (*over* and *there*) rather than one adverbial phrase. Finally, because *not* is a negation adverb, both the word itself and contractions formed using *not* were counted as adverbs.

Type of talk. Two independent raters coded the utterances within the transcripts using categories of talk spanning a continuum from contextualized to decontextualized discourse. This continuum of talk was based on a compilation of previous research examining mothers' use of discourse during shared reading and oral storytelling interactions (see Heath, 1982; Morgan & Goldstein, 2004; Pellegrini et al., 1990; Reese, 1995; Sigel et al., 1993; van Kleeck et al., 1997). The appendix contains a description of these codes.

Speaker utterances were rated within context, meaning that the rating for each line was dependent on the rating for the line that came before it. For example, if the mother said, "You thought he was there, didn't you?" (which was rated as a reflection/evaluation) and the child responded, "I didn't know," then the child's comment also was rated as a reflection/evaluation. However, if the mother said, "What color is it?" (description) and the child said, "I don't know," then the child's comment was rated as description.

Approximately 25% ($n = 8$) of the transcripts for each context were checked for reliability of utterance coding. Interrater reliability was 84% (range = 64%–100%) for Story-telling, 79% (range = 61%–100%) for Story-reading, and 91% for Story-creating (range = 68%–94%). The low scores resulted from a transcript in which the mother used numerous tag questions (viz, "Ok?" or "Right?") that one rater miscoded as reflections/evaluations. Because of this error, all of the transcripts were examined a second time to ensure no other errors had been made.

RESULTS

Preliminary

Because each story context represents a repeated observation of a dyad, within-subjects repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data (see Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000) in order to account for repeated observations within contexts and within individuals. Within-subject designs are associated with increased statistical power because the variance associated with stable individual performance does not contribute to the error term; thus, more powerful analyses can be done with smaller samples (Judd, Kenny, & McClelland, 2001). Furthermore, a repeated measures ANOVA can handle data that may be correlated, such as scores between a mother and child or a child's scores across contexts.

Number of C-units. A within-subjects repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine whether story context (Story-creating, Story-reading, Story-telling) was associated with mean differences in the number of C-units by speaker (mother, child). Results indicated a significant multivariate effect for story context, Wilks's $\Lambda = .27$, $F(3, 30) = 27.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .73$. Follow-up ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect for speaker within the contexts ($p = .02$ to control for Type I error). Results indicated a significant difference in the number of C-units between mothers and children in the Story-telling context, $F(1, 32) = 76.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .71$, and the Story-reading context, $F(1, 32) = 33.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .51$, but not the Story-creating context, $F(1, 32) = 1.42$, $p = .24$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The descriptive statistics for each context, presented in Table 1, indicated that mothers used

TABLE 1
 Mean Number of C-Units and Mean Length of C-Unit (MLCU) by Story
 Context ($N = 33$)

<i>Context</i>	<i>Mean C-Units (SD)</i>	<i>MLCU (SD)</i>
Story-telling		
Mother	41.45 (25.08)	6.49 (1.68)
Child	12.56 (10.52)	2.94 (1.63)
Story-reading		
Mother	39.27 (32.31)	3.82 (1.00)
Child	16.06 (12.36)	2.62 (1.06)
Story-creating		
Mother	44.70 (29.41)	3.29 (0.79)
Child	39.61 (20.62)	3.97 (1.29)

Note: C-unit = communication unit.

more grammatically complex talk than did children during the Story-telling and Story-reading contexts but not during the Story-creating context.

Paired samples t tests were run to compare each speaker's amount of talk across the contexts ($p = .02$ to control for Type I error). For mothers, there were no significant differences in the number of C-units across the story contexts, meaning that mothers created approximately equal numbers of utterances in all contexts. For children, there was no significant difference in their number of utterances in the Story-telling and the Story-reading contexts, but there was a significant difference between the Story-telling and Story-creating contexts, $t(32) = -7.91$, $p = .001$, indicating that children talked more during the Story-creating context than they did in the Story-telling context. Similarly, there was a significant difference between the Story-creating and Story-reading contexts, $t(32) = -6.35$, $p < .001$. Table 1 illustrates that children talked more when they were creating a story versus in the other two contexts, but mothers talked equally across the three contexts.

MLCU. A one-way within-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine whether story context was associated with mean differences in the length of C-units per speaker. There was a significant multivariate effect for story context, Wilks's $\Lambda = .27$, $F(3, 30) = 27.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .73$. Follow-up ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect for speaker within the contexts. To control for Type I error the minimum significance for the p value was divided by the number of comparisons; the resulting value needed to be less than or equal to .02. There was a significant difference between mothers' and children's MLCU in the Story-telling context, $F(1, 32) = 56.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .64$, and Story-reading context, $F(1, 32) = 19.87$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$, but not in the Story-creating context, $F(1, 32) = 5.47$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .15$. The descriptive statistics for each context are presented in

Table 1 and indicate that mothers used longer MLCU than children in the Story-telling and Story-reading contexts.

Paired samples *t* tests were run to compare each speaker's grammatically complex talk across the contexts ($p = .02$ to control for Type I error). Mothers' use of MLCU was more complex during Story-telling than during Story-reading, $t(32) = 7.98, p < .001$, and Story-creating, $t(32) = 10.01, p < .001$. Also, mothers used more grammatically complex talk in the Story-reading than in the Story-creating context, $t(32) = 2.83, p < .01$. For children, there was no significant difference in MLCU when Story-telling versus Story-reading. However, there was a difference in children's MLCU between the Story-telling and Story-creating contexts, $t(32) = -3.35, p < .01$, indicating children used more grammatically complex talk when creating a story themselves versus when listening to their mothers' oral stories. Similarly, children used more grammatically complex talk when they created a story in comparison to when they participated in shared reading, $t(32) = -5.45, p < .001$.

Literate Language Features

In order to examine the use of literate language features dyads used across the three story contexts, a within-subjects, repeated measures ANOVA with story context (Story-telling, -reading, and -creating), speaker (mother, child), and literate language feature (conjunctions, mental/linguistic verbs, adverbs, simple elaborated noun phrases, and complex elaborated noun phrases) as variables was conducted. First, results revealed a multivariate main effect for speaker, indicating that mothers used more literate language features than did children, Wilks's $\Lambda = .29, F(3, 30) = 24.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .71$. Second, there was a main effect for the literate language feature, Wilks's $\Lambda = .17, F(12, 334) = 25.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$. Third, there was a significant interaction effect for speaker by literate language feature, Wilks's $\Lambda = .53, F(12, 334) = 7.59, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$.

Further testing for speaker effects, follow-up ANOVAs, based on the estimated marginal means, illustrated that mothers ($M = .41, SE = .02$) used more literate language than did children ($M = .14, SE = .02$) in the Story-telling context, $F(1, 32) = 68.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .68$. Also, mothers used more literate language features than did children in the Story-reading context, $F(1, 32) = 9.44, p < .01, \eta^2 = .23$, with estimated marginal means of $.20 (SE = .02)$ and $.12 (SE = .01)$ for mothers and children, respectively. However, unlike the results for the prior two contexts, the Story-creating context provided an opportunity for children ($M = .31, SE = .06$) to use more literate language than mothers ($M = .14, SE = .01$), $F(1, 32) = 10.12, p < .01, \eta^2 = .24$.

Testing for the literate language feature main effect, follow-up ANOVAs indicated the dyads used different amounts of literate language features across the story contexts. Table 2 shows the statistics for these analyses along with the esti-

TABLE 2
Usage Rate of Literate Language Features Across Story Contexts ($N = 33$)

<i>Feature</i>	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Story-telling		80.17	(4, 128)	<.001	.72
Conjunctions	.56 (.04) ^A				
Mental/linguistic verbs	.14 (.01) ^B				
Adverbs	.40 (.03) ^C				
Simple elaborated noun phrase	.19 (.02) ^B				
Complex elaborated noun phrase	.07 (.01) ^D				
Story-reading		25.95	(4, 128)	<.001	.45
Conjunctions	.23 (.03) ^E				
Mental/linguistic verbs	.07 (.01) ^F				
Adverbs	.26 (.03) ^E				
Simple elaborated noun phrase	.20 (.02) ^E				
Complex elaborated noun phrase	.05 (.01) ^F				
Story-creating		28.43	(4, 128)	<.001	.47
Conjunctions	.38 (.06) ^G				
Mental/linguistic verbs	.10 (.01) ^H				
Adverbs	.40 (.06) ^G				
Simple elaborated noun phrase	.21 (.02) ^I				
Complex elaborated noun phrase	.04 (.01) ^J				

Note: For Story-telling, A > B, C, D; B > C, D; C > D. For Story-reading, E > F. For Story-creating, G > H, I, J; I > H, J. Bonferroni comparisons were used to test these effects.

mated means and standard errors for each of the literate language features by story context.

Testing for the interaction effect, follow-up ANOVAs revealed that mothers and children used different literate language features during the Story-telling context, $F(4, 128) = 20.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .39$, and the Story-creating context, $F(4, 128) = 6.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Table 3 details the estimated marginal means and standard errors for these interactions. In the Story-telling context, mothers produced more conjunctions, mental/linguistic verbs, simple elaborated noun phrases, and complex elaborated noun phrases than did children. However, children produced more conjunctions, adverbs, and simple elaborated noun phrases than mothers during the Story-creating context. There were no difference between mothers and children in terms of their use of literate language during the shared-reading context. Descriptive statistics for these interactions are presented in Table 3, and Figure 1 illustrates the interaction across the Story-telling and Story-creating contexts.

Type of Talk

In order to examine the type of talk mothers and children used across the three contexts, a within-subjects ANOVA with story context (Story-telling,

TABLE 3
Means (*SE*) of Context × Speaker Interaction for Literate Language Features (*N* = 33)

<i>Context</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Literate Language Feature</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>		
Story-telling	Mother	Conjunctions	.79 ^{A1}	.06		
		Mental/linguistic verbs	.22 ^{B1}	.02		
		Adverbs	.65 ^{C1}	.05		
		Simple elaborated noun phrase	.26 ^{D1}	.02		
		Complex elaborated noun phrase	.12 ^{E1}	.02		
	Child	Conjunctions	.33 ^{A2}	.06		
		Mental/linguistic verbs	.05 ^{B2}	.01		
		Adverbs	.15 ^{C2}	.03		
		Simple elaborated noun phrase	.12 ^{D2}	.04		
		Complex elaborated noun phrase	.02 ^{E2}	.01		
		Story-reading	Mother	Conjunctions	.25	.04
				Mental/linguistic verbs	.10	.01
Adverbs	.32			.04		
Simple elaborated noun phrase	.25			.02		
Complex elaborated noun phrase	.07			.01		
Child	Conjunctions		.21	.04		
	Mental/linguistic verbs		.04	.01		
	Adverbs		.19	.03		
	Simple elaborated noun phrase		.16	.03		
	Complex elaborated noun phrase		.03	.01		
Story-creating	Mother	Conjunctions	.22 ^{A1}	.03		
		Mental/linguistic verbs	.08	.01		
		Adverbs	.24 ^{B1}	.03		
		Simple elaborated noun phrase	.13 ^{C1}	.01		
		Complex elaborated noun phrase	.02	.00		
	Child	Conjunctions	.54 ^{A2}	.11		
		Mental/linguistic verbs	.11	.02		
		Adverbs	.56 ^{B2}	.12		
		Simple elaborated noun phrase	.30 ^{C2}	.04		
		Complex elaborated noun phrase	.06	.02		

Note: For Story-telling, A1 > A2; B1 > B2; C1 > C2; D1 > D2; E1 > E2. For Story-creating, A1 < A2; B1 < B2; C1 < C2. Bonferroni comparisons were used to test these effects.

-reading, and -creating), speaker (mother, child) and type of talk (each category of the decontextualized language codes) as variables was conducted. First, results revealed no main effect for speaker, indicating that mothers and children were not different across the three contexts. Second, there was a main effect for type of talk used across the interactions, Wilks's $\Lambda = .14$, $F(3, 30) = 29.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .48$. Follow-up Bonferroni tests ($p < .02$) were conducted for each context, and Table 4 shows the estimated means for each category of talk by context. Third, there was a significant within-subjects in-

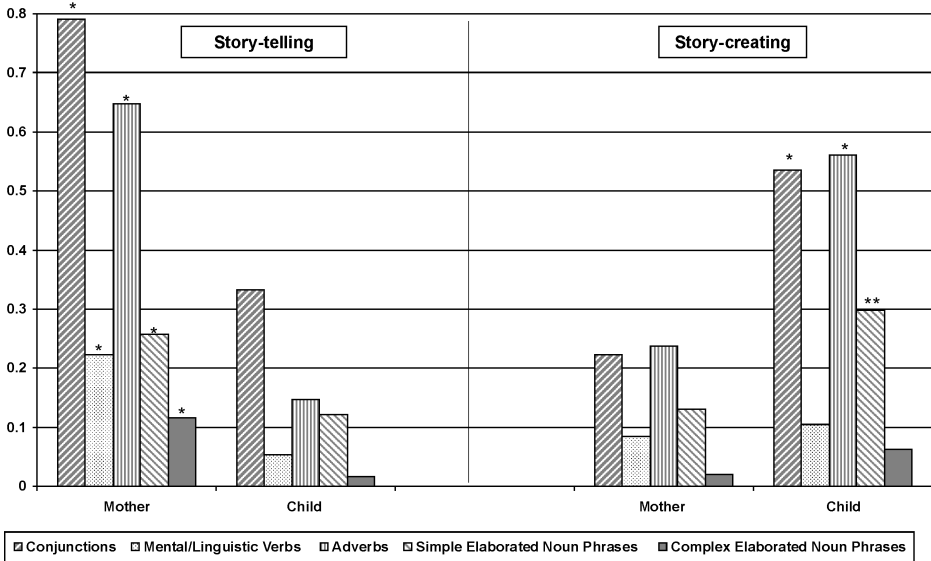


FIGURE 1 Mean usage rate for literate language by speaker for Story-telling and Story-creating contexts. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

TABLE 4
Estimated Marginal Mean Usage Proportion (SE) of Type of Talk by Story Context

Variable	Story-Telling	Story-Reading	Story-Creating
Transactional	.24 ^A (.03)	.33 ^A (.03)	.31 ^A (.02)
Description	.24 ^A (.02)	.24 ^A (.03)	.48 ^B (.05)
Print	.02 ^B (.01)	.10 ^B (.02)	.06 ^C (.01)
Bridging	.06 ^B (.01)	.06 ^B (.02)	.02 ^C (.01)
Psychological states	.03 ^B (.01)	.01 ^D (.00)	.02 ^C (.01)
Meaning	.01 ^B (.00)	.01 ^D (.00)	.01 ^D (.00)
Predictions	.18 ^A (.03)	.12 ^B (.02)	.06 ^C (.01)
Reflections	.10 ^C (.02)	.04 ^C (.01)	.01 ^D (.00)

Note: For Story-telling, A > B, C; B < C. For Story-reading, A > B, C, D; B > D. For Story-creating, B > A; A > C, D; C > D. All are Bonferroni comparisons and are significant at the .05 level or less.

teraction effect for speaker and type of talk, Wilks's $\Lambda = .41$, $F(3, 30) = 10.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$.

Follow-up ANOVA tests for the interaction effect revealed that mothers and children used different types of talk during the Story-telling context, $F(7, 224) = 11.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$, and the Story-creating context, $F(7, 224) = 30.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .58$.

.001, $\eta^2 = .49$. In the Story-telling context, mothers talked more about bridging/recall, psychological states, descriptions, and print/story conventions, but during this context children used more transactional comments. In the Story-creating context, children used more picture description than mothers, but mothers used more transactional comments. In the Story-reading context, mothers and children were not different from each other. Descriptive statistics for these interactions are presented in Table 5, and Figure 2 illustrates the interaction across the Story-telling and Story-creating contexts.

Dimensions of Decontextualized Language and Mothers' Literacy

Table 6 shows the correlations between the two dimensions of decontextualized language (literate language features and type of talk) averaged across the three story contexts and mothers' literacy skills.² First, results from bivariate Pearson correlations indicated that some literate language features and categories for type of talk were significantly related to one another. The use of adverbs was related to mothers' use of description comments, suggesting that mothers who were very descriptive during the story interactions used more adverbs in their speech. Mothers' use of mental/linguistic verbs was related to both their use of bridging/recall and prediction/explanation comments. There were several categories of type of talk that were significantly related to mothers' literacy levels. Mothers with higher literacy levels used more bridging and prediction comments as well as comments about the characters' psychological states. In contrast, mothers with lower literacy levels were more likely to describe the pictures and the setting of their stories.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of decontextualized discourse in a diverse sample of mother-child dyads by investigating the differences between mothers' and preschoolers' use of decontextualized talk across three story contexts—Story-telling (an oral narrative), Story-reading (a shared reading task), and Story-creating (an emergent reading). A secondary goal was to examine how two dimensions of decontextualized discourse are related. Lastly, the association between mothers' literacy and their use of decontextualized discourse was examined.

²Not surprisingly, mothers' literacy level was highly correlated with her education level ($r = .68, p < .001$) and family poverty status ($r = .61, p < .001$); however, the associations between mothers' literacy level and decontextualized language were all stronger than the correlations between decontextualized language and education level or poverty status. Because we were specifically interested in how mothers' actual literacy skills influenced their behavior in the interactions, we chose to use mothers' standardized scores on the WRAT as the variable of investigation.

TABLE 5
Means (*SD*) of Context \times Speaker Interaction for Type of Talk

<i>Context</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Type of Talk</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>
Story-telling	Mother	Meaning	.00	.00
		Bridging/recall	.08 ^{A1}	.01
		Prediction/explanation	.12	.01
		Psychological states	.04 ^{B1}	.01
		Reflection/evaluation	.11	.02
		Picture description	.36 ^{C1}	.03
		Print/story conventions	.03 ^{D1}	.01
		Transactional	.20 ^{E1}	.02
	Child	Meaning	.01	.01
		Bridging/recall	.06 ^{A2}	.02
		Prediction/explanation	.25	.05
		Psychological states	.01 ^{B2}	.01
		Reflection/evaluation	.09	.04
		Picture description	.11 ^{C2}	.03
		Print/story conventions	.01 ^{D2}	.01
		Transactional	.28 ^{E2}	.04
Story-reading	Mother	Meaning	.01	.00
		Bridging/recall	.05	.01
		Prediction/explanation	.11	.01
		Psychological states	.02	.01
		Reflection/evaluation	.05	.01
		Picture description	.23	.03
		Print/story conventions	.14	.03
		Transactional	.33	.03
	Child	Meaning	.01	.01
		Bridging/recall	.06	.02
		Prediction/explanation	.13	.03
		Psychological states	.01	.01
		Reflection/evaluation	.03	.01
		Picture description	.24	.04
		Print/story conventions	.07	.02
		Transactional	.33	.05
Story-creating	Mother	Meaning	.01	.01
		Bridging/recall	.03	.01
		Prediction/explanation	.06	.01
		Psychological states	.01	.00
		Reflection/evaluation	.01	.00
		Picture description	.27 ^{A1}	.03
		Print/story conventions	.08	.02
		Transactional	.46 ^{B1}	.04
	Child	Meaning	.01	.00
		Bridging/recall	.01	.01
		Prediction/explanation	.06	.01
		Psychological states	.03	.01
		Reflection/evaluation	.01	.00
		Picture description	.69 ^{A2}	.09
		Print/story conventions	.04	.01
		Transactional	.15 ^{B2}	.02

Note: For Story-telling, A1 > A2; B1 > B2; C1 > C2; D1 > D2; but E1 < E2. For Story-creating, A1 < A2; but B1 > B2. Bonferroni comparisons were used to test these effects.

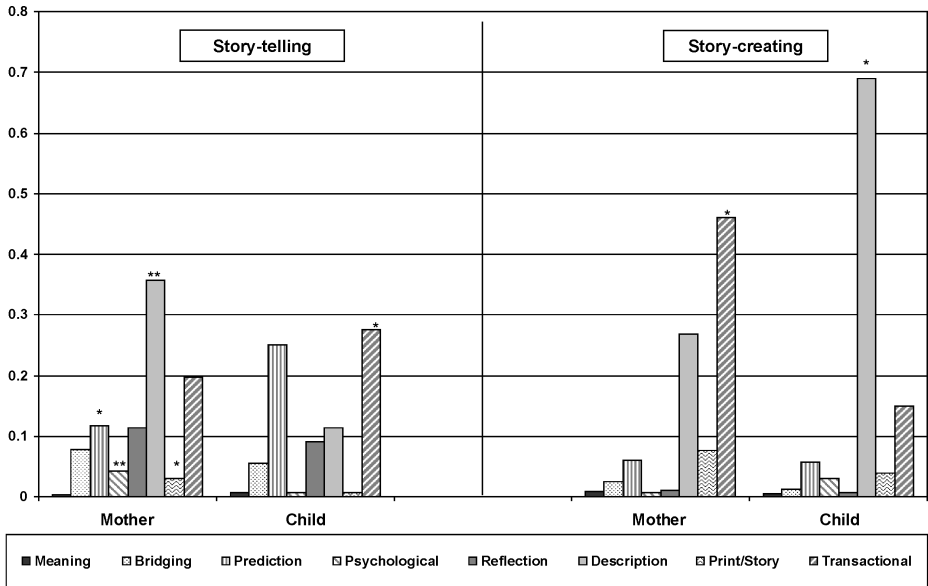


FIGURE 2 Mean usage rate for type of talk by speaker for Story-telling and Story-creating contexts. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Results revealed that mothers and children used different amounts of decontextualized discourse across the three interactions. As predicted, the Story-telling context presented the best opportunity for mothers to showcase their discourse skill, but the Story-creating context provided the best opportunity for children to demonstrate their oral language skills. Interestingly, in the Story-reading context, the amount of decontextualized speech the mother and child produced was not different. In sum, these results indicate a significant moderation effect for story context, indicating that the context in which an interaction takes place can enhance a mother’s or child’s contributions.

Furthermore, the results indicate that only certain components of the two dimensions of decontextualized discourse (literate language features and type of talk) are significantly associated. For instance, mothers’ use of mental/linguistic verbs, a literate language feature, was associated with their use of bridging and prediction questions, a type of talk code. It is logical to see the link between these two dimensions because mothers who use bridging and prediction talk are more likely to use terms such as *think* and *remember* by asking questions like “What do you think is going to happen?” or “Remember when your sister was born?” In addition, mothers’ use of adverbs was related to their use of description comments. The relationship between adverbs and descriptive comments suggests that mothers who are better at describing story scenes accomplish this by using adverbs. Other

TABLE 6
Correlations Among Mothers' Averaged Usage Rate of Decontextualized Discourse and Mothers' Literacy

Literate Language Feature	Type of Talk								WRAT Score
	Meaning	Bridging	Prediction	Psychological States	Reflection	Description	Print/Story	Transactional	
Adverbs	-.14	.13	.20	.12	.05	.39*	-.21	-.46**	-.09
Conjunctions	-.11	.21	-.04	.22	.22	.20	.16	-.36*	-.16
Mental/linguistic verbs	-.01	.40**	.37*	.26	.07	-.31	-.31	.18	.46**
Simple elaborated noun phrase	-.07	-.06	.10	-.04	.33	.07	.22	-.42**	-.03
Complex elaborated noun phrase	.18	.02	.09	-.03	.10	-.07	.30	-.16	.10
WRAT score	-.14	.51**	.64**	.48**	.16	-.53**	-.30	-.08	

Note: WRAT = Wide Range Achievement Test.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

interesting findings are the negative associations between mothers' use of transactional comments and forms of literate language features (i.e., adverbs, conjunctions, and simple elaborated noun phrases). Based on these results it appears that when mothers and children spend lots of time having to "manage" the story interaction, there is a dearth of complex grammar to which children are exposed.

Lastly, as hypothesized, mothers with higher literacy levels were more likely to use mental/linguistic verbs across the three contexts, but this was the only literate language feature (i.e., grammatical device) that distinguished mothers in terms of literacy. In contrast, several dimensions of type of talk were associated with mothers having higher literacy levels, such as use of comments/questions about bridging/recall, predictions/explanations, and psychological states. However, high maternal literacy was negatively associated with mothers' comments about pictures and general descriptions. The finding for mental/linguistic verbs is interesting because it is the only literate language feature significantly associated with mothers' literacy skills, which suggests that as mothers advance in literacy they may be more likely to include verbs that connote speech acts and character thoughts.

How Story Context Matters

The fact that mothers produced more decontextualized talk than children in the Story-telling context and the fact that mothers used more decontextualized talk during Story-telling versus Story-reading are related to findings from other studies. Reese (1995) found that mother-child oral story interactions were better predictors of children's literacy than shared reading interactions. Thus, the present results support her work in that they suggest that perhaps the reason why discourse during oral storytelling interactions is a stronger predictor of children's literacy than the discourse used in shared reading is because of the higher level of discourse mothers use in storytelling. Reese's results, along with the findings from the present study, suggest that perhaps oral storytelling can be used as a mechanism for enhancing children's literacy in addition to shared reading. Although shared reading is a fundamental and critical preparation for promoting literacy, a body of evidence is burgeoning that suggests that it is not the only type of parent-child interaction that can promote literacy.

During shared reading mothers and children were more like partners in that they were not different from each other in terms of literate language or type of talk. This type of interaction fell in the middle in that mothers were not exposing children to the same level of language sophistication as they were in the oral story, and children were not able to boost their oral language skills by "pretending" to read. Only decontextualized oral language prepares children to read and succeed in school (Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Norris & Bruning, 1988; Reese, 1995; Snow, 1991). Thus, even shared reading interactions that are devoid of decontextualized talk might not result in children who are strong readers.

The moderation findings demonstrate that the emergent reading context enhanced children's contributions to the interaction. Children produced more decontextualized discourse during Story-creating versus the other two contexts. Although the findings demonstrate that overall mothers used more literate language than did children, this main effect was moderated by the story context in that children used more conjunctions (e.g., mostly connectives like the word *and*), adverbs, and simple elaborated noun phrases when they told a story than when they listened to their mothers tell a story. A similar moderation effect was found for type of talk. These moderation effects illustrate that when children were responsible for creating a story, they made more decontextualized comments than when they listened to their mothers tell a story because the responsibility of narrating fell on them, and they had to accommodate for this responsibility by producing specific and detailed talk. These findings demonstrate that when children are permitted to use their creative energy, they are actually able to express themselves in a sophisticated manner.

The change in children's behavior that occurred in the Story-creating context may be attributed to the fact that children were "in charge" of this interaction. It was evident from the videotape that many children were proud and excited about this responsibility as shown by the way they held the book. Some children even pretended to be the adult during the interaction by asking questions and by pointing to the pictures. These findings from the Story-creating context are inspiring because they demonstrate that using a book to retell a story provides an opportunity for children to practice using complex talk. Previously, emergent readings have not been investigated for decontextualized language (see Elster, 1994), but these findings indicate that emergent readings may be a promising venue for such work, and future studies should explore this.

Implications for Interventions and Future Research

This work makes a significant contribution to the literature because it is the first study to investigate how mothers and children use decontextualized language across various story contexts. Although the sample size was moderate ($N = 33$), the families were observed across three contexts, resulting in a total of 99 observations. Due to the labor-intensive nature of transcription and coding, sample sizes like the one in the present study are common, and other studies examining dyadic interactions have had sample sizes that were similar in nature (see Aram & Levin, 2001; DeTemple & Beals, 1991; Neuman, 1996; Reese, 1995; van Kleeck et al., 1997, 2006). Although the sample size for this study was moderate, the effect sizes for the literate language features and type of talk results were approximately .30 or greater, large according to Judd and McClelland (1989). Given the present sample size and number of independent variables, the statistical power is approximately .90, meaning that one could expect to find similar results 92% of the time in other samples (see Judd & McClelland, 1989). Indeed, our results are similar to those

found in other studies examining decontextualized language (see Curenton & Justice, 2004; Neuman, 1996; Reese, 1995; van Kleeck et al., 1997, 2006), which suggests that these results are valid and reliable.

Also, these results have several implications for how researchers investigate oral language. First, this study provides justification for examining decontextualized discourse across a variety of different story contexts. Second, this study makes a contribution by theoretically conceptualizing decontextualized language as consisting of two dimensions, a dimension of word usage and a dimension of reasoning. Lastly, this study contributes to the literature on parent–child narratives and decontextualized discourse because it is one of the few studies to include a socioeconomically diverse sample. Many studies examining parent–child reading interactions have focused solely on either a low-income sample (Neuman, 1996; van Kleeck et al., 2006; Whitehurst et al., 1994) or middle-income samples (Reese, 1995; van Kleeck et al., 1997). Unlike findings from other studies (DeTemple & Beals, 1991; Morgan & Goldstein, 2004) our results show that decontextualized language is observed in low-income families as well as middle-income families.

In the practical sense, these results have strong implications for the design of parent–child home literacy interventions. The key recommendation from researchers, educators, and policymakers has been “Parents read to your children.” Our results suggest that this advice should be augmented by “... and allow your children to pretend to read to you!” In addition, we need to start encouraging parents to share oral stories with their children because it is through this oral exercise that children are exposed to the most sophisticated talk. Therefore, future design of parent–child literacy interventions should encourage dyads to interact using various forms of story interactions, and future research should examine what questioning and comment techniques parents and teachers can use to scaffold children’s use of decontextualized language.

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APPENDIX
Contextualized to Decontextualized Continuum of Talk

Contextualized

(Talk that focuses on information present in the story or the immediate context)

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|-------------------|---|
| Description | Concrete information that is perceptually present (e.g., objects, events, or pictures in the book) or descriptions of objects or events in the story. Examples: <i>What is that? There's the picture of the baby. See his footprints.</i> |
| Conveying Meaning | Talk about the meaning of words by defining what a word or concept means or clarifying the pronunciation of a word. Examples: <i>Do you know what a car is? Not punched, punished. A frog hops.</i> |

Intermediate

(Talk that requires active reflection on the story using information that is not available in the immediate context but that is *linked* to the immediate context)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Bridging/Recalling Information | Connects to everyday, real-life events requiring the remembrance of objects, events, or characters that were previously mentioned or talk about similarities and differences. Examples: <i>What color is your blanket? What did Peter do when he saw the big boys? Do you remember when we went to granddad's house?</i> |
| Psychological States | Address a character's thoughts, feelings, or psychological states. Examples: <i>I was so scared! I wanted those puppies so bad! Peter tried to fool his mother.</i> |
| Reflections/Evaluations | Address morals (or repercussions for immoral behavior), judgments about behavior, and opinions. Examples: <i>Do you know how I tell you stealing is wrong? I didn't get a spanking for that. Did you like that book?</i> |

Decontextualized

(Talk that requires extrapolation from the story in order to justify or predict what will happen and talk about abstract concepts that cannot be tangibly perceived in the present)

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|--------------------------|---|
| Predictions/Explanations | Address children's cause-and-effect reasoning by probing for what and why something will happen next (in the future) or guesses about what and why something has happened in the story (in the past). Examples: <i>What do you think is going to happen? Because he wasn't big enough. Why did he run away?</i> |
| Print/Story Conventions | Instruct the child how to handle the book, highlight features of the book/reading conventions (such as reading the title, author, or illustrator), or point out features of print or narrative (e.g., opening the story with "Once upon a time" or ending with "The end"). Examples: <i>What's the name of this book? That's a p. One time ... [used to introduce the story].</i> |

Miscellaneous

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|---------------|---|
| Transactional | Used to maintain the flow of the interaction by providing task instruction, encouragement, or discipline. Examples: <i>Great job! Are we done reading yet? It's so hard for me to think of a story.</i> |
| Uncodeable | Do not make sense and cannot be classified. These comments or questions also can be about the procedures or surroundings. Examples: <i>Stupid. Look at the camera.</i>
[These comments were not included in the analyses.] |
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