DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 834 FL 017 648

AUTHOR Pappas, Christine C.
TITLE Exploring the Generic Shape of "Information Books": Applying Typicality Notions to the Process.
PUB DATE Aug 87
NOTE 42p.; Paper presented at the World Conference of Applied Linguistics (8th, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, August 16-21, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Books; *Childrens Literature; Comparative Analysis; *Content Analysis; Literary Criticism; *Literary Genres; Picture Books; Readability; *Research Methodology

ABSTRACT

A study examined the general structure of children's information books and their use of language. A corpus of over 110 information books was examined for (1) obligatory elements of the genre, (2) optional elements, (3) iterative or repeating elements, (4) elements with fixed orders of occurrence in relation to other elements, and (5) elements with an optional or variable order of occurrence in relation to other elements. The analysis identified six global elements: topic presentation, description of attributes, characteristic events, category comparison, final summary, and afterword. The first three are obligatory, and the second three are optional and varying in frequency. Despite some patterns in elements, many of the books were not easily differentiated as belonging to the information book or the story-book genre, a problem attributable to the book's topic presentation and semantic properties. It is concluded that the notion of "typicality" is useful in examining and describing book genre, and may also suggest some new approaches to creativity in language use and to the question of the general nature of genres. (MSE)

Exploring the Generic Shape of "Information Books": Applying 'Typicality' Notions to the Process

Christine C. Pappas
University of Kentucky

Paper presented at 14th International Systemic Workshop, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, August, 1987

The present paper focuses on my recent preliminary attempts to describe the generic shape or global structure of "information books" written for young children (young children defined here as preschool and primary or early elementary age children). It is important to note that this task to provide an outline for this information book genre is part of my general research inquiry exploring the ontogenesis of the registers of written language--that is, first and foremost this general investigation has a developmental focus. As a result, although this present paper on the information book genre is primarily a linguistic one, it is frequently influenced by certain developmental issues, so that when relevant, these issues will be addressed or alluded to in the paper.

The paper has been organized into four parts: The first part briefly reviews the rationale for my study of information books. The second part covers the methodology and some of the tentative results of the study to identify the characteristics of the generic structure potential for a corpus of information books (110+). The third part of the

paper describes some of difficulties that emerged in exploring the global structure of this information book genre and how notions from the 'typicality' model of categories or concept formation are used to address these difficulties. And, the last part of the paper considers if these typicality notions applied to the generic structure of information books can have any utility or relevance to the issue of genre agnation or linguistic descriptions of genres in general.

Introduction/Rationale

There is very little research on young children's understanding of written non-story genres. There is research (Bissex, 1980; Schickedanz, 1986) indicating that children do acquire a rudimentary awareness that writing is used for different purposes at early age. For example, Harste, et al. (Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1983; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) have noted that the preschool children in their study appeared to possess some notions of different written genres because of the ways they could identify particular genres. Although young children may have an embryonic sense of written genres, studies with older children suggest that specific knowledge about the organization of the message aspects of non-story genres may develop later than story competence. For example, Hidi and Hildyard (1983) and Langer (1985), who have examined older elementary students' competence regarding narrative versus

expository discourse forms, have reported that these students have less control of expository ones.

It has been suggested (Langer, 1985; Spiro & Taylor, 1987) that the control of expository discourse forms may be due to less experience with written non-story genres at an early age. This is an appealing hypothesis because relatively few non-story books like information books were written by authors of children's literature around 10-15 years ago. There is, however, another side of this hypothesis. Since story episodes are similar to those of narratives of personal experience, it could be that the schema of story are being developed in very young children as they participate in everyday conversations. The recent work done by Katherine Nelson and her colleagues (1986) during the past decade or so on preschool children's acquisition of the knowledge of familiar events or "scripts" also bears on this argument. That is, knowledge of scripts for everyday experiences (for example, getting dressed scripts, birthday party scripts, restaurant scripts, and so forth), which specify obligatory and optional actors, actions, and props or objects relevant to particular goals and circumstances, contributes significantly to children's understanding of story, and exposure to other genres may never equal this "story-like" influence.

To understand stories children clearly draw on what they know about both the 'people world' and the 'object world,' to apply terminology and distinctions made by

Karmiloff-Smith (1979). I have argued (Pappas, in press) that the acquisition of the sense of the written story genre also includes children's constructive interaction with their 'language world,' or, more specifically, the 'language world of the written story genre.' As Karmiloff-Smith has argued,

> Whilst very general, common cognitive mechanisms may underlie the children's interaction with all three 'worlds', linguistic developments are not simply the outcome of non-linguistic cognition. Emphasis must also be placed on language-specific developments. (p. 19)

While there are critical differences among them, there are story schemes developed by Hasan (1984a, 1984b), Mandler and Johnson (1977), Stein & Glenn (1979) and Rumelhart (1975, 1977) that are available and have been used to investigate children's interaction of the story genre problem-space. In contrast, we know very little about young children's acquisition of the "book language" or the registers of written non-story genres. And, a major reason for this lack is because very few text-analytic schemes are available to explore specifically the structure and properties of these types of genres. Those who do explore genre differences usually use a general prose analysis system like Meyer's (1975) and apply the scheme on any and all types discourse investigated in their particular study. However, this practice may mask another possible explanation for children's apparent lack of ability in using expository or non-story discourse--namely, <u>perhaps</u> the nature of the structure of such an expository genre (like information

books) is a factor in children's difficulty with the genre. Thus, the rationale for the present inquiry--namely, to describe the global structure of the information book genre and more closely analyze the textual properties of this genre--is to try to provide a means or analytic tool which will ultimately contribute to investigations of children's interactions with another kind of linguistic problem-space.

The Generic Shape of the Information Book Genre

What Are "Information Books"?

Information books are illustrated books that are usually on one topic, that topic typically identified by the title. For example, Tunnels by Gail Gibbons (1984b)--who is a prolific author of information books--is a book which describes many kinds of tunnels, how they are made, and how they are used; Squirrels by Brian Wildsmith (1974) is one which tells all about the characteristics and behaviors of squirrels; and Big City Port by Betty Maestro and Ellen DelVecchio (1983) is a book which reports on the things and doings at a port of a big city. The text of the first few pages of each of these three books clearly indicates that a non-story genre is involved.

Insert Table 1 about here

Procedure

The attempt to describe the global structure of the information book genre involves trying to get an explicit

idea of what does or does not count as an information book. In this task, I have relied on Hasan's work on the definition of genres (1984a, 1984b, 1985a, 1985c, in press). The inquiry consists of the construction of the overall plan or the outline of this certain discourse type. Now this outline--this generic structure--is not a rigid one, one without variation. Instead texts belonging to the same genre can display variation within a limit that is specified by what Hasan (1985a, 1985c, in press) calls the generic structure potential. The investigation of describing this structure involves asking five questions (after Hasan, 1985a, in press):

1. What elements must occur in every text to be regarded as belonging to the genre? That is, what are the obligatory elements that all information books must contain?
2. What elements may or may or not occur in every text in the genre? That is what are the optional elements that may be found in information books?
3. What elements may occur iteratively? That is, what are the elements that can repeat or occur more than once?
4. What elements have a fixed order of occurrence in relation to other elements? That is, is there a certain sequence for some elements?

5. What elements have an optional or variable order of occurrence in relation to other elements? That is, is there an optional sequence for some elements?

Results

It is by answering these five questions about a corpus of individual information books (in the present case, approximately 110+) that the global structure comes about. In the preliminary analysis--with 'preliminary' underlined--has tentatively--'tentatively' also underlined--six global elements have been identified--three obligatory elements and three optional ones--Table 2 lists them.

Insert Table 2 about here

As Hasan (1984b) argues, any discussion of the realization of textual structures involves at least three types of abstraction: (1) an abstraction of each element of a generic structure potential; (2) crucial semantic attribute(s) of each element; and, (3) the lexicogrammatical patterns capable of realizing these crucial semantic attributes. In this paper four things are attempted. First, the six global elements are be described by considering primarily only the first type of abstraction, but sometimes alluding to the other two types of abstractions. Then the features of the first global element, the Topic Presentation element, are covered in more

detail. Here the other two other types of abstraction are dealt with more specifically. Next, a current approach to concept formation--the 'typicality' model of categories--is discussed. It will be argued that a genre is like a "macro-concept." That is, our understanding of a particular genre and the ability to distinguish it from others rests upon our ways of abstracting its features across many instantiations of its use--in the same way that we form concepts of cat and dog, etc. Finally, these 'typicality' notions are applied to cope with difficulties that have arisen in trying to describe the generic structure of information books. In addition, the utility of these typicality notions for viewing the nature of genres in general are considered.

General Description of the Generic Structure Potential for the Information Book Genre

The six global elements listed on Table 2 are briefly described below.

Topic Presentation. The Topic Presentation (TP) element is an obligatory element that presents or announces the topic of the book. This element is always the first element of the book, but this information may either precede a subsequent element as a distinct or "discrete" element or it may be interspersed in a subsequent element. (Note that what that subsequent element is has not as yet been stated. In fact, as will be indicated later, the features of interspersion and variable order of elements appear to be more prevalent in the information book genre than that of

the nursery tale, or storybook genre, for example, that has been described by Hasan (1984a, 1984b). In addition, although there is no research as yet to document this, there may be consequences regarding these two factors of the generic structure potential.)

Discrete Topic Presentation elements can be short--one sentence (or clause)--or may be longer stretches of text. Table 3 provides some examples of discrete Topic Presentation elements.

Insert Table 3 about here

Discrete Topic Presentation elements appear to be more frequent than this interspersed type of Topic Presentation elements. Table 4 show some examples of this interspersed type of Topic Presentation. (Note that these may be difficult to visualize until the other global elements are described below.)

Insert Table 4 about here

Description of Attributes. The Description of Attributes (DA) element is also an obligatory element. As the label implies, this element describes attributes of the class of animal (squirrels), object (tunnels), place (department store), process (flying) that the information book is about. Sometimes this information is "blocked"

together, that is, it is like a discrete Topic Presentation element. An example from Squirrels (Wildsmith, 1974)--See Table 5--illustrates such a realization.

Insert Table 5 about here

As you can note, clauses in the Description of Attributes element consist mainly of relational processes--attributive or identifying processes, or what Halliday (1985) terms processes of being. In many other books, this Description of Attributes information is interspersed into other elements--in the Characteristic Events element or the Category Comparison element. Although the Topic Presentation element has a fixed order--always the first element--the Description of Attributes element has a variable order. This is also an iterative element in that it may repeat within an information book.

Characteristic Events. The Characteristic Events (CE) element is an obligatory element that is usually the longest element in information books. In this element characteristic or habitual or typical processes/events are expressed. For example, in books about animals, the element expresses what animals typically do--where and how they live, their behaviors (like squirrels scamper up and down trees, leap to trees, scurry along boughs, etc.), how they give birth to young, what they eat. In books about objects--such as trucks, machines, tunnels--the

characteristic events involve how humans use these objects, or what these objects do for us or to us (like germs in the book Germs Make Me Sick! (Berger, 1985), or how objects are made (such as tunnels in the Tunnels book (Gibbons, 1984b). In books on places--like Big City Port (Maestro & DelVecchio, 1983) or Department Store (Gibbons, (1984a)--the processes deal with what goes on at that type of place and frequently what goes on for a particular time span, such as what happens on a typical day. Like the Description of Attributes element, this element has a variable order, is iterative, and can either be discrete or be interspersed in another element.

Category Comparison. The Category Comparison (CC) element is a very frequent, but optional, element. This element compares or discusses the different members of a class or category the information book is about. Thus, this element will talk about red squirrels and gray squirrels (like in the book The Squirrel (Lane, 1981)) or about the different kinds of tunnels--tunnels made by animals and people, or the rock, soft ground, underwater, and cut-and-cover tunnels described in the Tunnels book (Gibbons, 1984b). Or books may discuss the types of machines, trucks, cars, train whistles, germs, and so forth, that exist. This element also has a variable order and is iterative, and its information can be discrete or interspersed.

Final Summary. The Final Summary (FS) element is also a frequent optional element in information books. It is

sort of a summary statement(s) about the information covered in a particular book. Table 6 contains examples of this element. Sometimes the element is very short (one or two sentences) and sometimes it is longer. This element has a fixed order--it is always follows the elements already discussed.

Insert Table 6 about here

Afterword. The Afterword (A) element is an optional element. It is not a frequent element, and it seems to be a preferred element of certain authors. It is always at the very end of the book. It is unlike the Final Summary element is that it does not summarize aspects discussed in the text, but instead it adds extra information about the topic. Moreover, in the pilot work I have done, it is information which many teachers/parents frequently omit when reading to young children. Although other authors do include this element in their information books, Gail Gibbons frequently does, so an example from one of her works (Tunnels) will illustrate this element--see Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Summary

Table 7 summarizes the generic structure potential or outline for the information books based on my preliminary study of the books in my corpus.

Insert Table 7 about here

The round parentheses around an element indicate that the element is an optional one--in this scheme they are the Category Comparison (CC), Final Summary (FS), and Afterword (A) elements. Obligatory elements are Topic Presentation (TP), Description of Attributes (DA) and Characteristic Events (CE). The angled brackets around an element indicate the possibility that the element can be interspersed in other elements--four elements can do this--Topic Presentation, Description of Attributes, Characteristic Events, and Category Comparison. However, the carat after Topic Presentation indicates that although it may be interspersed in any of the other three elements enclosed by the brackets, it must be first. The raised dots between Description of Attributes, Characteristic Events, and Category Comparison indicate that these elements have variable order so that if Topic Presentation is interspersed in an element, it could be included in any of these three--the first one--realized in the book. The angled brackets also indicate that the Description of Attributes element may be interspersed in Characteristic Events or Category

Comparison (if that element is realized in a particular book), or Characteristic Events may be interspersed in Description of Attributes, or Category Comparison, and so forth. The curved arrow above the Description of Attributes, Characteristic Events and Category Comparison elements indicates that these may be iterative.

At this point, it might be useful to consider certain speculations about the effects of the characteristics of this general text structure potential on literacy development. Admittedly, a major factor in children's understanding information books is children's prior knowledge of the topic a particular information book is about. However, another important factor that might influence children's comprehension of particular information books could be how these particular information books realize the general structure potential. For example, a book like Squirrels by Wildsmith (1974)--versus The Squirrel written by Lane (1981) on the same topic--might be an "easier" book for children to understand because Wildsmith's Squirrels book does not include the optional Category Comparison element whereas Lane's The Squirrel book does. In addition, in Wildsmith's Squirrels, the Description of Attributes and Characteristic Events elements are discrete elements, not ones interspersed in other elements, but interspersion is the case for Lane's The Squirrel. In other words, this property of interspersion and the feature of variable order of elements, both of which seem to be more

prevalent in the information book genre than in the nursery tale or storybook genre, may be relevant factors regarding children's learning about the registers of the genre in general.

More on the Topic Presentation Element

In order to cover more about the two other types of abstractions that are involved in describing a genre--namely, those having to do with semantic attributes or properties and their lexicogrammatical realizations--a closer look at the discrete Topic Presentation Element will be made. Refer again to Table 3. I will suggest that the 'crucial' (Hasan, 1984b) semantic property relevant to this element is what I will will call 'class particularization.' In other words, this semantic property implies that some class--of objects, processes, places, etc.--is being singled out to be reviewed and discussed. This property seems to be involved in two major types of processes. It can be related to an existential or relational process, as in the Trucks, Train Whistles, and Fossils Tell of Long Ago books, or a mental process, as in the Squirrels, Flying and Germs Make Me Sick excerpts. When the class being particularized consists of objects or places, the participant is achieved in two ways: it can be done by a noun modified by the indefinite article, as in a squirrel and a fossil. It can also be realized by a plural noun, as in real trucks, train whistles, and germs. When the class that has being particularized is a process, that process seems to be

accomplished as part of a hypotactic verbal group complex, as in have...wanted to fly.

Certain 'elaborative' (Hasan, 1984b) semantic properties seem to be present in the more complex Topic Presentations--see the bottom three examples in Table 3--but I have not as yet worked out the details regarding them. However, these elaborative features seem to be analogous, in some sense, to the optional 'frame' in the Initiating Event element of the nursery tale or storybook genre described by Hasan (1984a, 1984b), but perhaps they might be best labelled here as different types of an 'introduction' to the realization of the class particularization. What is interesting about these introductions is a feature of their texture. Generally speaking, in information books (in constrast to storybooks), there is a smaller proportion of identity chains and a larger proportion of chains where members are related in terms of co-classification. In my initial texture analysis of information books, there has been an attempt, therefore, to distinguish chains in which members are related through co-referentiality (identity chains), through co-classification (co-classification chains) and through co-extension (Hasan, 1985b). Now if you will refer to the three excerpts on the bottom of Table 3, you will note that identity chains, albeit short ones, can be established in each of the little introductions of these complex discrete Topic Presentation elements. Then, in each example, there appears to be a "switch" from co-

referentiality to co-classification. This issue of co-referentiality/co-classification appears to be a significant one in the task of identifying the information book genre and will be addressed again in a latter section of the paper, after typicality notions are covered.

'Typicality' Notions in General

Traditional approaches to concept formation (e.g., Bourne, 1968; Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin, 1966) have assumed two general characteristics about categories: They are well-defined and their attributes can be specified arbitrarily. Current views, developed from research on concept development and semantic memory, has departed from this traditional approach by emphasizing natural categories. From this new perspective, several "prototype" approaches have evolved, which make two alternative assumptions about categories. First, categories or concepts in natural languages rarely have well-defined boundaries. Second, following from the first, the process of differentiating one category from another involves underlying probability principles. Briefly, a typicality model of categories is a schema or analog, rather than a digital, view in which natural categories are characterized by an "internal structure" or "core meaning" (Rosch, 1975). The prototype, as the clearest cases or the best examples of a particular category, is seen to reflect this "internal structure." Other category members, then are seen to "surround" this prototype; they are of decreasing similarity to the

prototype, which results in a corresponding decrease in their degree of membership. The prototypes or internal structure of categories, in this view, reflect what Rosch (Rosch et al., 1976) has termed a 'basic object level' of abstraction. In other words, according to Rosch (Rosch, et al., 1976) certain members of a category at this level of abstraction "reflect the redundancy of structure of the category as a whole" (p. 433). Thus, these particular members--these prototypical members--of a particular category are seen as having an exaggeration of structures, and it is at this level of abstraction that most boundaries are established. That is, it is here at which categories are most differentiated from one another. In sum, a sharp contrast exists between the prototype approach and the traditional category approach. The prototype view is a schema or analog representation of categories where certain members, the prototypes, are better examples of a particular category so that membership in a category is a "matter of degree." In contrast, the traditional view is a digital representation of categories where each instance of a particular category reflects a criterial set of all the possible attributes of that category so that each is equal in membership--that is, membership here is an orthogonal or "all-or-nothing" matter. (See Pappas, 1987, for a more detailed account of the typicality approach to concept formation.)

Applying Typicality Notions to the Identification of the Information Book Genre

The above discussion regarding the identification of the information book genre may have left an impression that the process was fairly clear cut one. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Many books in my corpus were not easily analyzed or categorized. In other words, the process of differentiating the information book from another genre, or setting its boundaries was a complex venture fraught with many difficulties. Typicality notions seemed to be useful. If the typicality notions described above are applied, "fuzzy" or matter-of-degree boundaries, not well-defined, all-or-nothing differentiation between the information book genre and, for example, the nursery tale or storybook genre, (both genres being written for young children) should be expected. But, what is the nature of this "fuzziness"? To explore this issue let us focus again on the discrete Topic Presentation element and further examine the nature of semantic properties.

Table 8 presents the beginnings of two books (the first five pages of Mouse (Stein, 1985) and the first four pages of Panda (Bonners, 1978) which I believe fall on the the very fuzzy edges or boundaries of these two genres. By considering them, we can begin to tackle some of the difficulties inherent in the process of describing a genre.

Insert Table 8 about here

As you review these texts, consider the following questions: Are these information books? Are these stories? Let us first approach each text as an example of the storybook genre. In doing so, it appears that the first four pages of Mouse and the first three pages of Panda (dotted lines mark pages on Table 8) are discrete Placement-like, and that the last page for each book excerpt is Initiating Event-like. That is, these text "chunks" seem to similar to the global elements of the storybook genre described by Hasan (1984a, 1984b). (Much of the discussion in this section assumes an understanding of Hasan's (1984a, 1984b) work on the nursery tale or storybook genre--details of this work cannot be covered here due to space restrictions.) Moreover, in this quasi-Placement, you could make a case for certain semantic properties (Hasan, 1984, 1984b)--'character particularization' and for instances of 'habitude' and perhaps for 'attribution,' in the case of Panda. Also, there appears to be sort of a 'frame' in each quasi-Initiating Event and a suggestion of a 'main-act' in each book, each having to do with the birth of an offspring. In each book, identity chains for mouse and panda could be established, and there does not appear to be any switch to co-classification chains in either book.

Now consider each text as an instance of the information book genre. One may make the case that the first page of each book is Topic Presentation-like, and the second page of each book begins the second global element. In the Mouse book, the second element appears to be the Characteristic Events element, whereas in Panda, the element might be either the Description of Attributes element with the Characteristic Events element interspersed in it, or the other way around (the Characteristic Events element interspersed with Description of Attributes information). Should we consider the noun group a mouse or a giant panda a realization of the 'class particularization' semantic property? Neither occur in relational or mental processes. In fact, these two texts "feel" more like like stories than stories, but our hesitation to identify them definitely as stories seem to be influenced by the fact that the processes in these texts are for the most part in the present tense, which is the predominant verb tense use in the information book genre. In other words, if we changed the processes to the past tense, and perhaps add a realization of 'temporal distance' so that, for example, the book, Mouse, read..."Once upon a time a mouse lived in a dark closet where the family never saw her. She used to make her nest of soft things she found in the closet--white stuffing, blue wool, red cloth..." we would be more confident in our decision to claim that the text belongs to the storybook

genre. However, where in the text can we find a them about human conflict that characterizes verbal art (Hasan, 1985d)?

In sum, these texts fall on the fuzzy boundaries between the two genres. Figure 2 attempts to depict that fuzziness. If genres are seen as macro-concepts that are probabilistic in nature, relations between genres and sub-genres (or genre agnation) can be viewed in more active, dynamic terms (as Martin (1985) and Ventola (1984) insist genres must be viewed). But, how should these macro-concepts be characterized? More specfically, what text features should be considered to in this typicality scheme? Hasan's work (1985c) suggests a direction--namely, the obligatory elements of generic structure potentials of various genres might serve as major criteria for typical instances of a genre.

Insert Figure 2 about here

In our two genre examples, those texts realizing the three obligatory elements in their respective genre structure potentials--the information book genre and the storybook genre--would be the most typical cases of each genre. In other words, each set of prototypes would reflect the "internal structure" or "core meaning" of each genre. It is here where the two genres would be most differentiated. Other genre members--those having only two of the obligatory elements, or just one of them, as Figure 2

shows--would then surround the prototypical cases. These would reflect a decreasing similarity to the prototypes, and as a result, would indicate a decreasing degree of membership in each respective genre. In this view, the texts, Mouse and Panda would lie in the area of extreme fuzziness because of the uncertainty in both cases to even decide which obligatory elements--those from the storybook genre structure potential or those from the information book genre structure potential--to assign.

Clearly, Figure 2 must be seen as a very simplistic depiction of what this typicality view of genre might be like. What has to be imagined is a complex multi-dimensional space of overlapping genre probability curves. Such a conception is necessary to further investigate the issue of sub-genres. Admittedly, the present analysis of the generic structure potential of the information book genre at this point has been at a very general level of delicacy. That is, in this initial analysis it has been possible to include texts covering a range of topics (or fields)--objects (tunnels, machines), animals (squirrels, pandas), processes (flying, making a movie, a road, or glass animals), places (a department store, a library, big city port), and so forth--as typical members of the genre. It is possible that an analysis at a more delicate level might result in a set of sub-genres (perhaps differentiated along different topic lines), thereby modifying the preliminary results reported here. Or, perhaps it might be the case

that some features of less typical texts will tend to overlap, not with the storybook genre, but with a different genre--for example the "how-to" genre.

In any case, a scheme that views genres in terms of typicality notions has been useful for dealing with the complexity of the present task of describing the information book genre. Such a scheme may also suggest new directions to deal with the creativity of language use and the general nature of genres--how genres are unique and at the same time possess common features with other genres, how new genres are formed and old genres are altered or modified to do some job in our culture.

References

Bissex, G. L. (1980). Gnys at wrk. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourne, L. E. (1968). Human conceptual behavior. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bruner, J. S., Goodnow, J., & Austin, G. (1966). A study of thinking. New York: Wiley.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). An introduction to functional grammar. London: Longman.

Harste, J. C., Burke, C. L., & Woodward, V. A. (1983). The young child as writer-reader and informant. Final Report No. NIE-G-80-0121. Bloomington, IN: Language Education Departments.

Harste, J. C., Woodward, V. A., & Burke. C. L. (1984). Language stories and literacy lessons. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hasan, R. (1984a). The structure of the nursery tale: An essay in text typology. In L Coveri (ed.), Linguistica testuale (pp. 97-114). A publication of Societa Linguista Italiana. Rome: Bulzoni.

Hasan, R. (1984b). The nursery tale as a genre. Nottingham Linguistic Circular, 13, 71-102.

Hasan, R. (1985a). The structure of a text. In M. A. K. Halliday & R. Hasan, Language, context, text: Aspects of language in a soical-semiotic perspective (pp. 52-69). Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Hasan, R. (1985b). The texture of a text. In M. A. K. Halliday & R. Hasan, Language, context, text: Aspects of language in a soical-semiotic perspective (pp. 70-96). Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Hasan, R. (1985c). The identity of the text. In M. A. K. Halliday & R. Hasan, Language, context, text: Aspects of language in a soical-semiotic perspective (pp. 97-116). Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Hasan, R. (1985d). Linguistics, language, and verbal art. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Hasan, R. (in press). Situation and the definition of genres. In A. D. Grimshaw (Ed.), Perspectives on discourse: Multi-disciplinary study of a naturally occurring conversation. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Hidi, S., & Hildyard, A. (1983). The comparison of oral and written productions in two discourse modes. Discourse Processes, 6, 91-105.

Karmiloff-Smith, A. (1979). A functional approach to child language: A study of determiners and reference. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Langer, J. A. (1985). Children's sense of genre: A study of performance on parallel reading and writing tasks. Written Communication, 2, 41-52.

Mandler, J. M., & Johnson, N. S. (1977). Remembrance of things parsed: Story structure and recall. Cognitive Psychology, 9, 111-151.

Martin, J. R. (1985). Process and text: Two aspects of human semiosis. In J. D. Benson & W. S. Greaves (Eds.), Systemic perspectives on discourse, Volume 1: Selected theoretical papers from the 9th international systemic workshop (pp. 248-274). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Meyer, B. J. (1975). The organization of prose and its effects on memory. Amsterdam: North Holland.

Nelson, K. (1986). Event knowledge: Structure and function in development. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Pappas, C. C. (1987). The role of "typicality" in reading comprehension. In R. J. Tierney, P. L. Anders, & J. N. Mitchell (Eds.), Understanding readers' understanding: Theory and practice (pp. 129-145). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Pappas, C. C. (in press). Acquiring a sense of the story genre: An examination of semnatic properties. In J. Gibbons, M. A. K. Halliday, & H. Nichols (Eds.), Proceedings of the 8th World Congress of Applied Linguistics. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rosch, E. (1975). Cognitive reference points. Cognitive Psychology, 7, 532-547.

Rosch, Mervis, C. B., Gray, W. D., Johnson, D. M., & Boyes-Broem, P. (1976). Family resemblances: Basic objects in natural categories. Cognitive Psychology, 8, 382-439.

Rumelhart, D. (1975). Notes on a schema for stories. In D. Bobrow & A. Collins (Eds), Representation and understanding: Studies in cognitive science (pp. 211-236). New York: Academic Press.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1977). Understanding and summarizing brief stories. In D. LaBerge & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), Basic processes in reading: Perception and comprehension (pp. 265-303). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schickedanz, J. A. (1986). More than the ABCs: The early stages of reading and writing. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Spiro, R. A., & Taylor, B. M. (1987). On investigating children's transition from narrative to expository discourse: The multidimensional nature of psychological text classification. In R. J. Tierney, P. L. Anders, & J. N. Mitchell (Eds.), Understanding readers' understanding: Theory and practice (pp. 77-93). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stein, N., & Glenn, C. G. (1979). An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In R. Freedle (Ed.), New directions in discourse processing (pp. 53-120). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Ventola, E. (1984). The dynamics of genre. Nottingham Linguistic Circular, 13, 103-123.

Information Book References

Aliki. (1972). Fossils tell of long ago. New York: Thomas T. Crowell.

Althea. (1980). Making a book. Illustrated by T. Hunkin. Cambridge: Dinosaur Publications.

Berger, M. (1985). Germs make me sick! Illustrated by M. Hafner. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Bonners, S. (1978). Panda. New York: Delacorte Press.

Gibbons, G. (1984a). Department store. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Gibbons, G. (1984b). Tunnels. New York: Holiday House.

Gibbons, G. (1985). Check it out! The book about libraries. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, & Javanovich.

Gibbons, G. (1986). Flying. New York: Holiday House.

Haldane, S. (1984). The see-through zoo: How glass animals are made. New York: Pantheon Books.

Hoffman, M. (1984). Panda. New York: Random House.

Lane, M. (1981). The squirrel. Illustrated by K. Lilly. New York: The Dial Press.

Maestro, B. & DelVecchio, E. (1983). Big city port. Illustrated by G. Maestro. New York: Scholastic.

Rockwell, A. (1984). Trucks. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Rockwell, A. (1986). Big wheels. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Sattler, H. R. (1985). Train whistles. Illustrated by G. Maestro. New York. Scholastic.

Stein, S. B. (1985). Mouse. Illustrated by M. Garcia. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, & Javanovich.

Wildsmith, B. (1974). Squirrels. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Table 1

Excerpts of Typical Information Books

Tunnels

Most tunnels are long holes dug underground. Very small tunnels are dug by ants and worms. They live in them. Moles, chipmunks and prairie dogs dig bigger tunnels. They dig their tunnels with their front feet.

[Gibbons, G. (1984b). Tunnels. New York: Holiday House.]

Squirrels

It is easy to recognize a squirrel. He is a furry, small animal with a long, bushy tail, two strong back legs, two small front paws, two large tufted ears which stick up, and two big front teeth. He looks happy and mischievous.

[Wildsmith, B. (1974). Squirrels. Oxford: Oxford University Press.]

Big City Port

A big city port is a busy place. Boats and ships come into the port to load and unload. It is a safe place for them to dock. Freighters, tankers, and passager liners are large ships that come into the port. The smaller tugboats, ferryboats, and fishing boats come, too.

[Maestro, B., & DelVecchio, E. (1983). Big city port. (Illustrated by G. Maestro). New York: Scholastic.]

Table 2

Preliminary Identification of Global Elements for the Information Book Genre

Element		Status
Topic Presentation	TP	Obligatory
Description of Attributes	DA	Obligatory
Characteristic Events	CE	Obligatory
Category Comparison	CC	Optional
Final Summary	FS	Optional
Afterword	A	Optional

Table 3

Discrete Topic Presentation (TP) Element Examples

* It is easy to recognize a squirrel.

[Wildsmith, B. (1974). Squirrels. Oxford: Oxford University Press.]

* There are toy trucks and real trucks.

[Rockwell, A. (1984). Trucks. New York: E. P. Dutton.]

* People have always wanted to fly.

[Gibbons, G. (1986). Flying. New York: Holiday House.]

* Wooooooooooo, wooooooooooo, woo, wooooooooooo
A train is coming down the track.
Again and again the whistle blows.
Wooooooooooo, wooooooooooo, woo, wooooooooooo
Each time the train thunders toward a crossing the engineer blows the warning signal. Train whistles are signals, a kind of language. Each signal means something special.

[Sattler, H. R. (1985). Train whistles. (Illustrated by G. Maestro). New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.]

* You wake up one morning. But you don't feel like getting out of bed. Your arms and legs ache. Your head hurts. You have a fever. And your throat is sore.
"I'm sick," you say. "I must have caught a germ."
Everyone knows that germs can make you sick. But not everyone knows how.

[Berger, M. (1985). Germs make me sick! (Illustrated by M. Hafner). New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.]

* Once upon a time a hugh fish was swimming around when along came a smaller fish. The big fish was so hungry it swallowed the other fish whole. The big fish died and sank to the bottom to the lake.
This happened ninety million years ago. How do we know? We know because the fish turned to stone. The fish became a fossil. A plant or an animal that has turned to stone is called a fossil.

[Aliki. (1972). Fossils tell of long ago. New York: Thomas Y Crowell.]

Table 4

Interspersed Topic Presentation (TP) Element Examples

* The shopping day hasn't begun yet, but department store employees are already at work, tidying up the day before. At the back of the building, big trucks pull up to deliver the new merchandise order by the store.....

[Gibbons, G. (1984). Department store. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.]

* A red squirrel scampers though the treetops as safely as if it were on the ground. It is the acrobat and tightrope walker of the woods.....

[Lane, M. (1981). The squirrel. (Illustrated by K. Lilly). New York: The Dial Press.]

* Panda cubs are tiny when they are born. This one-day-old panda weighs about two ounces. She is one of two cubs born at the Madrid Zoo, in Spain.....

[Hoffman, M. (1984). Panda. New York: Random House.]

* The words for the book are typed on a keyboard like a typewriter. The words are stored on a computer disc which looks like a record.....

[Althea. (1980). Making a book. (Illustrated by T. Hunkin). Cambridge: Dinosaur Publications.

Table 5

Example of Description of Attributes (DA) Element from Squirrels (Wildsmith, 1974)

	Squirrels
Topic Presentation	It is easy to recognize a squirrel.
Description of Attributes	He is a furry, small animal with long, bushy tail, two strong back legs, two small front paws, two large tufted ears which stick up, and two big front teeth. He looks happy and mischievous. In summer-time the squirrel's coat is quite thin. But in winter-time it grows thick and strong. He seems to have little socks on his feet and warm fur-gloves on his front paws.
Characteristic Events	Squirrels live in trees.....

Table 6

Final Summary (FS) Element Examples

* A big city port is an important place.

[Maestro, B., & DelVecchio, E. (1983). Big city port. (Illustrated by G. Maestro). New York: Scholastic.]

* Big wheels are good. They help us every day.

[Rockwell, A. (1986). Big wheels. New York: E. P. Dutton.]

* The next time you hear a train whistle, listen carefully. Those blasts are more than noise-- they are a message in code. See if you can figure out what they are saying.

[Sattler, H. R. (1985). Train whistles. (Illustrated by G. Maestro). New York: Scholastic.]

* Next time you walk in the woods, if you are quiet and observant, you will perhaps see squirrels contented and busy. They might be jumping from tree to tree, frolicking on trunks and boughs, or possibly hiding a store of nuts for the winter.

[Wildsmith, B. (1974). Squirrels. Oxford University Press.]

* Germs do make you sick-- sometimes. But you can help yourself be as fit as a fiddle all of the rest of the time!

[Berger, M. (1985). Germs make me sick! (Illustrated by M. Hafner). New York: Harper & Row.]

* The library is the perfect place to learn about new things, to find the answers to questions, and most important, to enjoy the fun of reading!

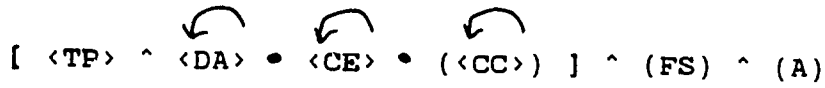
[Gibbons, G. (1985). Check it out! The book about libraries. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.]

* Watching craftsman shape common materials into something of beauty is always enjoyable, especially when speed and precision are part of the art. The glass animal maker possesses a rare skill, and with it he produces creatures that are all individual sculptures-- each one a unique member of the see-through zoo.

[Haldane, S. (1984). The see-through zoo: How glass animals are made. New York: Pantheon Books.]

Table 7

Generic Structure Potential for the Information Book Genre



Global Element	Characterisitics
TP = Topic Presentation:	Obligatory Fixed order Discrete or interspersed
DA = Description of Attributes	Obligatory Variable order Discrete or interspersed Can be iterative
CE = Characteristic Events	Obligatory Variable order Discrete or interspersed Can be iterative
CC = Category Comparison	Optional Variable order Discrete or interspersed Can be iterative
FS = Final Summary	Optional Fixed order
A = Afterword	Optional Fixed order

Table 8

Excerpts from Mouse and Panda

Mouse by Sara Bonnett Stein (1985)

P?	TP?	A mouse lives in a dark closet where the family never sees her.
	---	---
	CE?	She makes her nest of soft things she finds in the closet-- white stuffing, blue wool, red cloth.
		The outside of the nest is round, with a hole just big enough for a mouse to get through.
		The inside of the nest is hollow, just the right size for the mouse and her babies.
---		---
IE?		When the nest is finished, the mouse is ready to have her babies. Her belly tightens. She pushes out a wet, pink baby in a thin wrapper.

Panda by Susan Bonners (1978)

P?	TP?	In a mountain forest of southwestern China, a giant panda sits in a birch tree.
	---	---
	DA/CE?	Snowflakes fall on her back and white fur, but she does not look for shelter.
		She has lived in snow most of her life.
---		---
IE?		Early one autumn, she found a den in a rocky mountainside. There she made a nest out of broken bamboo stalks. While frosty winds blew thrc gh the forest, she gave birth to her cub.

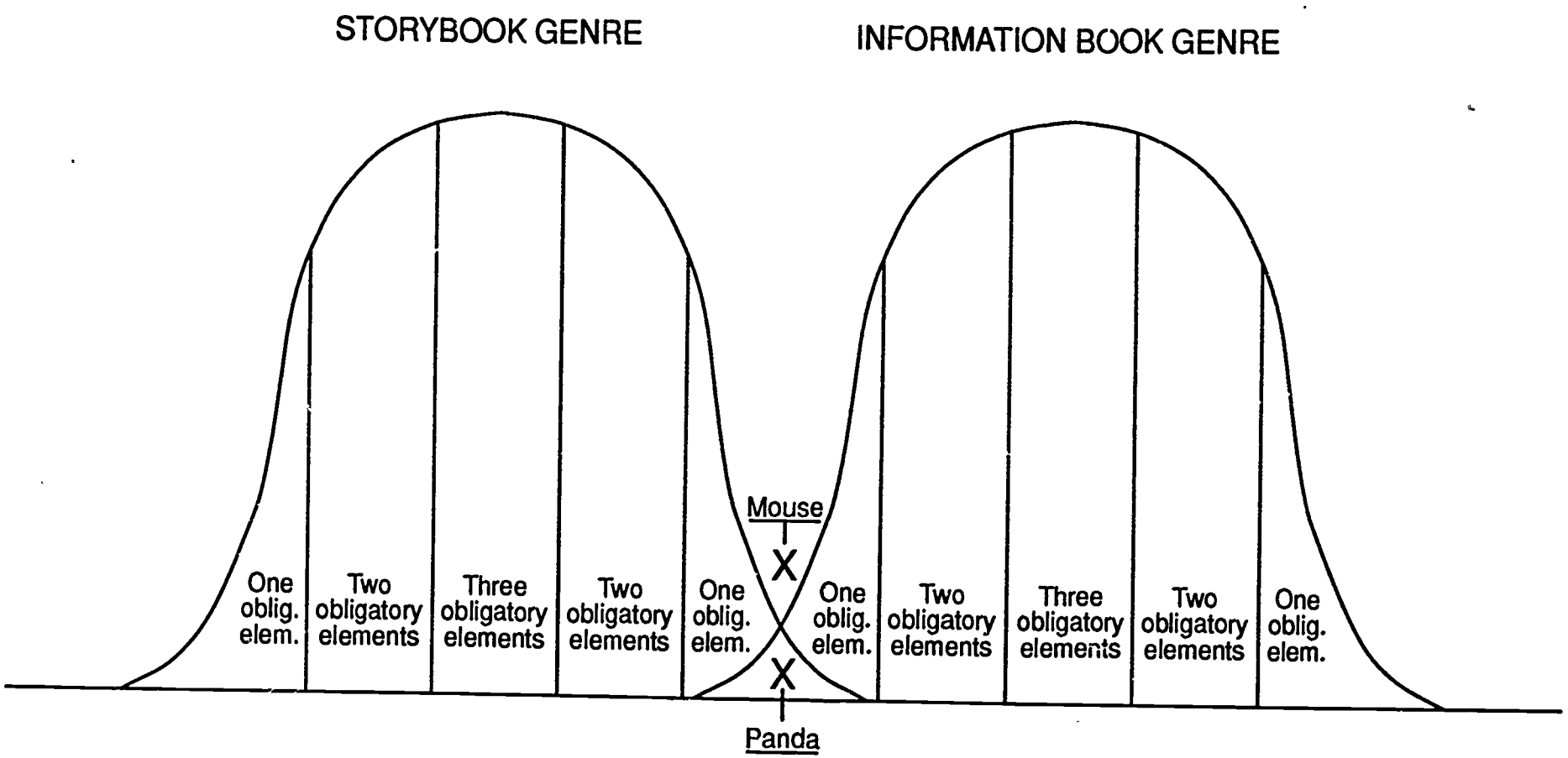
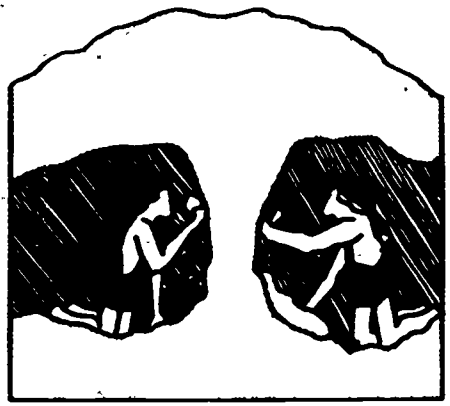


FIGURE 2: The typicality perspective applied to the Storybook and Information Book genres.

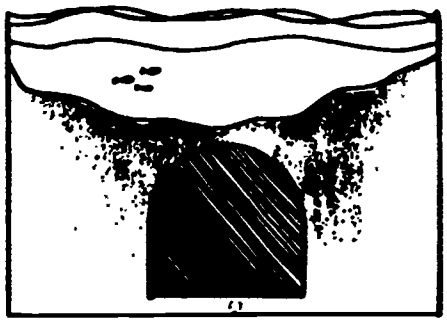
Figure 1. The Afterword Element from Tunnels (Gibbons, 1984b).

...tunnels.... tunnels....tunnels...

Cavemen dug tunnels to connect their caves.



The first big man-made tunnel was built under a river in Babylon over 4000 years ago.

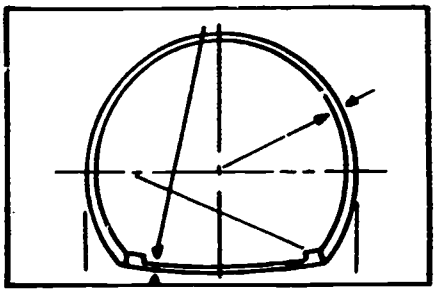


Many years ago, people dug tunnels under the walls of forts and came up to surprise the enemy.

Five great tunnels go through the Alps. They were blasted out of solid rock.

The first man-made tunnel in the United States was the Schuylkill Canal Tunnel in Pennsylvania. It was opened in 1821.

The Seikan Tunnel in Japan is being built under water. It will be 23 miles long —the longest tunnel in the world.



...tunnels.... tunnels....tunnels...