Responses of young children to storytelling and story-reading: an investigation into language and imagination

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Field of Education

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This degree was undertaken under the auspices of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.
Declaration:
This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.
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This thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.
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Acknowledgements

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Summary:

This largely qualitative study had two main aims: to investigate the language young children used in their retellings of traditional tales told and then read to them in picture book form and to gauge their responses to these different modes of story. The hypothesis was that children experienced more vivid visualisations after storytellings, having to create images for themselves rather than being presented with an artistic interpretation through picture books.

Data were gathered in two large, inner city, multiethnic schools over a period of seventeen months from one hundred and forty nine children aged between five and seven. They retold stories they had heard orally or from picture books and were then questioned about their visualisations during these story experiences. These recalls and interviews were conducted audio-taped and transcribed with individuals. Initial analysis confirmed that older children were more adept at using language in this way, and richer data were available by concentrating on children aged six and seven. Subsequently, in depth analysis concentrated on a core of sixteen children in this age range.

Retellings were coded and given a score for identifiable events when compared to original texts. They were further examined for examples of repeated or 'created' story language directly representative of original texts, oral or read. 'Created' language was seen as a product of imagination. In semi-structured interviews directly following retellings children were questioned about visualisations they had experienced during story sessions. Visualisations were categorised into strands reflective of either direct story-based imaging or invented images. This revealed that imaginative responses to oral stories were greater than those related to picture book readings.

Investigating visualisations of this type was not an area widely researched in the field of education so this study contributes to our understanding of the inner worlds of children and how they perceive stories.
List of acronyms:

DfEE : Department for Education and Employment

NACCAE : National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education

UKLA : United Kingdom Literacy Association

NC : National Curriculum

NLS : National Literacy Strategy

QCA : Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
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Chapter One

Introduction and background to this study

1. Introduction

We all begin our paths to literacy in different ways which affect our attitudes to literacy and literature. Although this study began in earnest in 2000 the seeds of it were planted years before when, as a child, I spent many a happy hour listening to my father telling stories. As I listened to his voice I was swept away to magical lands where fantasy became reality for a time and where both giants and the ‘wee people’ lived, worked and played tricks on ordinary mortals. Storytelling became a part of my inner repertoire of literary events and my earliest literacy memories.

As a teacher, oral storytelling and story-reading became in integral part of my craft and were the means to engage and educate children in my care. Having observed how children listened and responded more attentively when I told stories, I started to develop a more systemic approach to assessing what was happening in my infant classroom by audio-taping children retelling favourite stories to each other in groups. About the same time I came across Fox’s (1993) book based on her doctoral thesis and those early seeds started to grow. I sought more information about language and meanings related to the stories children listened to in school. Fox’s work was based on home-based storytelling. By examining in detail the oral stories of five young children she became aware of the influence of storybook language in ordinary, everyday stories among her young subjects. I wished to study this phenomenon in school and was aware that although Fox’s findings were important my investigations were operating
under different conditions. I started to deliberate over influences on both children’s use of language and their imagination in relation to both stories told and read to them. Questions about how stories had an effect on their ability to imagine and what language they used when retelling familiar tales led me to look closely at them in the classroom. These early thoughts and investigations eventually led to this study, the aims of which are explained further in the next section.

Story is central to most people’s lives. Through telling and retelling of personal events we come to terms with joys and disappointments of life and are able to deal more easily with those which are traumatic. We all tell stories and listen to others as they express concerns and worries, successes and triumphs, in episodes of their life stories. Daily news bulletins, for all that they purport to be factual, are also narrative bound, as are television dramas and cinema films. In this sense I refer to narrative in its widest meaning as in effect, a story. Mallett (2002: 185) described a narrative as events in the past tense, qualifying this by stating that ‘when the events are from the imagination we tend to call the narrative ‘a story’.’ Throughout this study the words story and narrative are used almost synonymously, while acknowledging that narrative may have different connotations for some people. In fact, one uses the metaphor of narrative in many different ways throughout every day. Barthes (1997: 88) described narrative as ‘international, transhistorical, transcultural.’ Children’s understanding of story in relation to characters, events and narrative structure are, therefore, a crucial part of their learning to deal with the complexities of life. By relating their own lives to those they meet in fiction they are able to make sense of their experiences and see these in the context of the world they live in. Story enables
children to develop imagination and make connections in many different ways. Maguire (1998) believed that storytelling helps to improve relationships as well as enhancing communication. In the 21st century ability to communicate effectively, in different mediums, is increasingly important and story is one way to achieve this.

2. Aims and hypotheses

The study had two main aims:

i) to investigate the language of pupils retelling stories; and
ii) to examine imaginative responses of children to different modes of ‘storying’ (Rosen: 1988)

The work of Fox (1993) who had shown how children’s storytelling language was reflective of stories they had heard was central to the first aim. Children borrowed words and phrases from stories they had heard, both in play and in retellings of these stories. They often proved themselves to be aware of rhythms and tones of language, using character voices to enhance retellings and stressing important features of story structure, such as important events, openings and closures. As an experienced teacher I had witnessed similar phenomena in infant classrooms and wished to investigate them further.

My second aim was related to the nature of visualisation and imaginative responses to stories. Young children experience literacy in school mainly through the medium of picture books and respond enthusiastically to this visual medium. I had observed how children listened more attentively and responded imaginatively when exposed to oral storytelling. Sharing different things
imagined when listening, following oral stories, allowed class members to realise how each had an individual response. My hypothesis was that children experienced more vivid visualisations after storytelling than story-reading as during the latter they would be exposed to an image that was simply someone else's interpretation of events. Beck, (1999: 49), a writer and illustrator, related his role as 'manipulating the reader, the audience – however subliminally or blatantly – with your choice of colour, positioning and scale of figures', implying that all visual texts already represent another person's interpretation. In oral stories, although storytellers have to 'rewrite' them in their own mind, interpretation is through aural means. These tensions between different modes of storying are further explored in Chapter Two. The idea of storytelling and story-reading creating imaginative inner worlds and the nature and composition of those worlds in the minds of young children was an area central to the investigation.

3. Setting the scene: the literature

The National Literacy Strategy (1998: 46) expects children to be able to 'explore similarities and differences between oral and written storytelling', which should form part of the diet of literature that children enjoy in the primary school. There are similarities and differences between storytelling and story reading. In story reading, interpretation has partly been given by the writer. Words are finely crafted and illustrations are enhancement of the story; in some cases they even tell a different one (Hunt, 1991). Picture books are the medium through which young children have access to story-reading in schools. They are presented with bright and lively illustrations to engage their visual senses while listening. In
storytelling, tellers use voice, gesture and eye contact to paint pictures in words. Wilson (2006b) regarded voice as the most important dynamic when storytelling. Through this dynamic, without illustrations to distract listeners, they are encouraged to form impressions in their own minds.

Arguments for both modes of story exist in the research literature, and are expanded in the following chapter. Therefore, in a rather ambivalent position despite a personal passion for oral stories and a conviction that they elicit more active listeners, I was, and am, also an avid reader and collector of picture books. I believe that children should experience the delights of good quality picture books as well as oral stories, an idea supported by others (Phinn, 2000, Weir, 2001). This may seem to have been a rather indecisive frame of mind in which to approach an investigation intended to examine the impact of oral storytelling on children’s imaginations. I would have preferred to call it open and receptive; all research requires analysis and in qualitative research it is, by its very nature, interpretive. Riessman, (1993) regarded subjectivity as inevitable in qualitative research, such as is exemplified in this study.

Chapter Two examines attempts to delineate the essence of storytelling although, as Wilson (2006b) pointed out, even storytellers have difficulty explaining how they exercise their craft. Oral practices are still maintained in what is essentially a literate society (McEwan and Egan, 1995) and many stories have their roots in orality. Stories used in this study were all chosen because they were based on traditional folk tales, having strong storylines. (See Appendix One) The choice of books is explained in Chapter Two and a rationale for this choice further explored in Chapter Four on Research Methods and Design. Grainger, Goouch and Lambirth (2005) examining writing with older
pupils, found that traditional stories had greatest impact. These have survived the centuries and are retold again and again, due to the strong messages about life that they portray. Chapter Two also explores story-reading and use of illustrations in children's storybooks, before weighing up differences and similarities between the two modes of storying. Daily story-reading in the infant classroom has long been regarded as normal although recent campaigns by the Children’s Laureate, Jacqueline Wilson, (2006) have indicated that this may no longer be the case. One tends to take for granted that most schools should be equipped with lively, bright picture books for children to access, both as part of the curriculum and for pleasure. The work of Hunt (1991), Doonan (1993) and Arzipe and Styles (2003) has shown clearly how children examine, dissect and create their own meanings from illustrations in picture books. Writers and theorists are aware of different layers that may be created by illustrations (Hunt, 1991, Durant, 1999, Beck, 1999, Blake, 2000) and arguments exist for the importance of illustrations in developing narrative skills, pre-reading skills and imagination. (Graham, 1995; Watson and Styles, 1996) These considerations were important in exploring imaginative response from children in the study when presented with picture book texts designed to engage and interest them. Those chosen were all highly illustrated so as to engage and excite the young children who were the subjects of this research.

In Chapter Three the slippery nature of imagination, creativity and visualisation is considered in order to reach some understanding of their nature and inter-relatedness. These terms are often used synonymously such that it was necessary to separate them then decide what each meant, singularly and together. In defining creativity I am not looking at it in a broad sense of covering
whole curriculum content. Creativity has become high on the agenda for change and educationalists are being encouraged to be more 'creative' and innovative. Some regard creativity as being part of the more expressive arts such as drama, music and art. More recently the National Primary Strategy and QCA have viewed creativity as innovative approaches to learning and teaching and encouraged teachers to be more inventive in their teaching. Documents, such as *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2004) encourage what is termed 'creative thinking'. Creativity, Barnes (2003) suggested is the involvement of 'imagination and activity in the production of something which is both original and of some value.' Fisher (2004: 2) defines creativity as lying at 'the heart of what it means to be human.' A secure and definitive qualifying term is, therefore, not readily available. Throughout this study creative factors, in terms of language, were identified in children's responses and seen as products of imagination. Visualisations were also examined for examples of imaginative response in terms of creative influence. This process is more fully explained in Chapters Five and Six. Duffy (1998) thought that when we imagine we draw upon different visual, aural or tactile experiences, enabling us to utilise our impressions and build upon those impressions to create new experiences or images. Children in this study were exposed to different ways of interpreting similar versions of stories and encouraged to express their responses to these differing modes in terms of their visualisations. These visualisations were regarded as indications of creative response through imagination.
4. Choice of methods

Research Methods and Design are outlined in Chapter Four and rationale given for choosing different methods for both data collection procedures and analysis. Riessman (1993: 65) claimed that 'traditional notions of reliability simply do not apply to narrative studies' and that validation relies on 'trustworthiness'. As an experienced teacher, used to working with young children, I had a practical background on which to base a research project of this kind. Furthermore, my interest in both storytelling and story-reading, both pragmatically and theoretically, gave strong foundation on which to build the study. By explaining procedures and outlining results and reasons for interpretations of data I sought to provide a transparent account as the basis for 'trustworthiness' in this study whose results, hopefully, provide some pragmatic use for future research and classroom practice.

The context of this study was two large, inner city, multiethnic schools where data were collected over a period of seventeen months, during 2000 – 2001, over two school years. The one hundred and forty nine children involved varied in age from five to seven and were grouped in six classes. It had been originally intended to cover a representative sample (Bell, 2005) of infant school children and some preliminary data analysis was undertaken with information from the whole group, in terms of story structures, to ensure depth as well as breadth in this study. However, much of the analysis was focused on a core of sixteen children. A fuller explanation for this is given below and in Chapter Four.

My original plan had been to follow a three-week cycle of investigation: week one, tell a story; week two, read the same story; week three, collect
personal stories. Data collection did not follow this neat pattern, however and was divided into two phases. The first, in Albert Square, was, for reasons explained in Chapter Four, discounted in the final analysis. Due to restrictions imposed by timetabling and availability of children data collection was, at times, unsatisfactory. My carefully planned timetabling did not fit in with the pattern of the school day and often information was collected during short periods squeezed into afternoons. Impressions gained in this part of the study helped to form other methods and procedures for use in the second school, Victoria Place. Throughout this study names of schools and participants have been changed to preserve anonymity.

In both schools throughout the data collection process I acted as both storyteller and story reader. Following storytelling or story-reading children came, individually, to record their versions on to an audio-tape. After each retelling children were interviewed about visualisations related to that particular story version. Brief field notes were made at the time, or immediately afterwards to augment these recalls and aid analysis. My original oral versions of stories were also recorded for comparison with children's versions. As each storytelling is in essence a unique event this was necessary to judge which words and phrases were taken by children and which were their own inventions. Picture books were used in a similar manner, to check the language that children used in their stories against original texts.

Original plans of a three-week cycle had to be changed to ensure that children had a longer gap between telling and reading enabling them to 'forget' the former and so dilute its influence on retelling picture book texts. Personal stories were collected in both schools, but not used in analysis. As will be
explained in Chapter Four, capture of these stories was for purposes of maintaining goodwill in schools and for possible use in future research.

In Victoria Place structures for data collection were more formalised. I negotiated with teachers to carry out either storytelling or story reading at the beginning of the school day so that I was able to capture retellings from individual children immediately afterwards. Data collection was spread over a whole academic year, enabling memories of original oral stories to fade before being presented with a picture book version. This also enabled preliminary analysis of data to establish trends and themes. Structures of narratives, in terms of openings and closures, were a common feature and fluency and confidence increased with the ages of children. These were features considered as important to the basis of this study.

During an academic year some children will move schools and be subject to illness so not all were present for every storytelling and story-reading session. More than five hundred recalls were accumulated on approximately one hundred hours of audio-tape. As my intention was to capture four recalls from each child not all could be used for analysis as data were incomplete for some classes. Either children were not available during my designated research days or other factors, (see Chapter Four) prevented full capture from all children in the original sample. In addition, moreover, in depth scrutiny would have proved impractical with this amount of data. Preliminary impressions were that older children in this study were able to provide more coherent and insightful comments in relation to stories so that analysis finally settled on a core of sixteen individuals, aged six and seven, from one class in Victoria Place.
5. Analysis

Analysis was in two separate parts. Chapter Five concentrates on analysis of language used in recalls and defines the source or influence on words and phrases used by children. Children were encouraged to 'just make up' any events they had forgotten to encourage inventiveness. Fox (1993: 21) advocated this practice of retelling versions of read stories as a way to 'liberate children from the facts.' What had to be remembered throughout was the verbal capacity of children of this age.

A structure for analysis was devised using Applebee's (1978) framework with influences from Walsh (2003). Applebee used a model for analysis which included formal beginnings, endings and events, as well as actions, characters and fantasy. Using this basic structure and Walsh's simple but effective grid referencing system I devised my own method of recording and analysing stories. My original tales and picture book stories were divided into events and each child's version compared with these. Children's stories were scrutinised for openings, closures and significant events and coded accordingly. This was completed painstakingly with reference to original story transcripts or printed texts. In this way I was able to ascertain if children had used language which they had heard, or were more inventive in their versions. I divided these into two sets, repeated or created language. By created language, in this sense, I refer to children introducing different words, or phrases, into recalls and by repeated language that which children had taken directly from oral or read texts. The language children used, was then examined for further influences using methods as explained in Chapter Five.
Chapter Six refers to interviews following story recalls when children were questioned about the nature of their visualisations following both storytelling and story-reading. While storytelling is essentially an aural experience, visualisations may be created by imaginations and memory of this experience may be affected by the impact on individual minds. Children may make more connection with one story than another. For example, stories about the seaside will not have the same impact on a child who has never experienced it. Picture books presented a different form of visualisation as children had to construe meaning from illustrations and words. Interpreting the basis for these visualisations was challenging. Given vocabulary constraints children are generally not able to express themselves to the same extent as adults and trying to explain their inner worlds as outer meanings was not an easy task for some.

On first examining this section of data I used Gee's (1999) approach to discourse analysis. Examining interviews in this way gave a different insight into how relationship interactions affected responses. However, it did not address my research aims and hypothesis so that a different method of analysis was sought. This proved problematic, as most research in the field of visualisation is science based on laboratory type experimentation. Riessman (1993) advised researchers in narrative analysis that all methods were problematic and methods of interpretation were the prerogative of individuals. Indeed, there appeared to be no set model to follow so that the model devised from Applebee (1978) and Walsh (2003) for analysis of story language and events was further adapted for analysis of visualisations. Dividing visualisations into strands provided a method and structure on which to base analysis and they were examined for evidence of
story-based or created imagery, in a similar manner to the method used in Chapter Five.

As no one may look inside another’s mind sharing visualisations became a rare opportunity for all children to succeed and to be ‘right’ in their answers. I found that some children’s visualisations were nebulous or non-existent for reasons which are explored in Chapter Six. Visualisations were then examined, coded and scored for evidence of both story-based influences and imaginative influences, as denoted by the creation of a new element or use of language. This was exceptionally demanding as, although some influences were readily categorised, a number were difficult to place in either category and could have been a mixture of different influences. Results were placed in a score table and then further examined and discussed in Chapter Six.

6. Conclusions

Finally, in Chapter Seven, the threads are drawn together and conclusions reached with regard to findings, implications and classroom practice. These reflect on an over-stretched curriculum which affords little time for teachers and pupils to engage in meaningful discourse.

Language analysis revealed a variety of influences at work when children retold stories. Not only did they use storytelling and storybook language but also drew inferences from visual means, as displayed in both language and use of gestures. Children demonstrated understanding of story structures and conventions, such as use of openings and closures and presented retellings that reflected the gist of stories they had heard. Several children were aware of the
performative nature of storytelling, using character voices to enhance their retellings and maintaining eye contact.

Visualisations following these retellings were of significant interest as they revealed the impact of oral tales on the quality of imaginative responses received. Despite the fact that visual elements bombard us in our society and environment, having to listen and produce their own mental pictures when listening to oral stories resulted in a greater incidence of creative response. I have tentatively explored some reasons for this and reflected on possible explanations.

This has been an eventful personal journey travelling through different areas and learning about many diverse and interesting aspects of research, both within and outside education. The journey continues as conclusions have provided new questions to answer, as outlined in the concluding chapter of this study.
Chapter Two

Storytelling and story-reading

1. Introduction

Stories, like dreams, may take us to places we have never seen, activities we have never experienced, events we have not witnessed and introduce us to people we have not met. Through narrative there is potential to escape the everyday, the mundane, and travel to a land of new experiences, 'an alternative reality' (Grugueon and Gardner, 2000: 99). Alternatively stories may help to make sense out of lived experiences 'and to give a coherence to our lives – through talk' (Grugueon, Hubbard, Smith and Dawes, 2001: 35). This chapter will deal mainly with theories related to oral stories and story-reading. They are intertwined in many ways and are examined separately before theories related to both are explored.

Booth (1994: 31) regarded story as central to life and especially to children whom he says speak almost entirely through story and use it as a framework for learning. We all use narrative in our everyday lives, whether we are aware of it or not, that helps us to shape our emotions and experiences, as well as enabling exploration of dreams and fantasies, a mental journey most people would describe as imagination (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999). Storytelling is one way to develop not only imagination but also 'children's intellectual, emotional, linguistic and creative development' (Kirby, 1995: 31).
Storytelling is often used as a blanket term to cover both oral stories and their written counterparts. Writers are described as good storytellers when what is meant is that they are able to write a story convincingly. While Gillard (1996: 31) contended that books are 'one writer's retelling of an original folk story,' clearly not all stories come from folk origins so that this is too generalised. For example, Zipes (1996: 163) talks about the importance of family narratives:

after all, we keep family together through story, all types of stories. We circulate these stories to remember and to be remembered. Our hope for immortality lives in story.

The need for narrative does appear to be reflected in many aspects of life from ancient cave paintings and manuscripts to the soap operas that are so popular in television culture. They all have a common thread in attempting to make sense of the human condition. We all use narrative in our everyday lives recounting details of our working days or leisure pursuits to families and friends.

2. Characteristics of storytelling

Storytelling is often linked with drama as it requires many of the same performance techniques and, while engaging in storytelling and drama, 'learners can develop and transform their perspectives' (Grainger, 2003: 106). Storytelling requires much from the performer – the teller. Enabling children to become storytellers encourages them to improvise and become more creative and gives them ownership of story. In retelling a story tellers have poetic licence to change and adapt. This permits freedom from the constraints of the printed word and enables storytellers to alter or exaggerate different parts of stories according to their audiences.
Gruegon and Gardner, (2000: 2) claimed that ‘telling a story is a unique and personal performance.’ Through telling and retelling stories children develop key skills for communication and self-confidence. Active listening and audience response are encouraged and allow children to extend and explore narrative in unique and personal ways. In this study where children were asked to re-tell stories they had heard they used narrative format but were free to embellish and extend its basis if they wished.

Storytelling by its very nature is ephemeral. No two storytelling sessions are likely to be exactly the same as tellers adjust to the needs and reactions of audiences adding suspense by a pause or question, drawing it in by action and gesture, possibly being almost at one with it within the story. Interplay between storytellers and their audiences are essential ingredients of such processes (Haggarty, 1996). Tellers invite this interchange as storytelling ‘relies so much on audience response’ (Howe 1997: 50). Just as storytellers give something of themselves to audiences so they also ‘feed’ on the intangible but palpable energy coming from it. Listeners become integral and intimate participants in story, simultaneously involved but distant. Corden (2000: 147) believed that storytelling can help to make explicit differences between spoken and written language as, by telling and retelling to each other, children begin to understand how language works. The same idea is reflected by Prentice (1998: 96) who postulated that the more teachers tell stories to children, the better they become at learning how to capture the children’s attention with the tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. The children emulate these techniques and experiment with them when sharing stories with each other.

This indicates how storytelling may be an educative tool in advancing knowledge about language and story performance.
3. Performance

Storytelling demands reaction, interaction and participation from audiences as it depends very much on use of voice, gesture and eye contact. It is a shared experience where through active listening audiences are transported to different worlds. One could argue that story-reading achieves the same objectives but the dynamics used vary, as will be explored further below. Smyth, (1989: 38) expressing ideas about storytelling, claimed that:

It is an activity which brings enjoyment, colour and warmth; it stimulates language and speech, develops understanding, and it is, by its nature, a shared experience, a means of communication.

Response to the oral mode is, therefore, different to that of story-reading, as storytellers and listeners work together to create atmosphere. Eye contact and other non-verbal signals between both tellers and listeners help to establish such communication and make this collective experience.

Collins (2000: 55) believed that storytelling is important in giving children equal status within their peer group as their contributions may be as valuable as 'the most experienced storyteller'. Even passive listening indicates to storytellers that a story might be having some effect. Listeners reflect in their own ways on words and images presented by stories and each of these impressions will be unique. Storytelling may be one way to ensure this reflection and how children may become more creative. By listening, then retelling, stories children come to learn the value of improvisation and creative thought. Having ownership of a story may enable them to become more effective, powerful learners. Gillard (1996: 141) regarded storytelling as beneficial in helping children to frame stories
for themselves and thought it an ‘act of creating as well as recreating’. This creative aspect of storytelling is to be investigated in the course of this study.

Storytelling may be viewed from many different angles. Wilson (2006a: 7) maintained that storytelling has many different connotations, is not static but changing and ‘reinventing itself.’ He examined in detail connections between storytelling and acting as both are, to some extent, performances. This element of performance was evident in retellings given by some children in this study.

In addition to development of imagination, creativity, communication and social skills storytelling has also been advocated as a means of healing and therapy. Counselling allows people to face problems by talking them through, telling personal tales and coming to some sort of self-acknowledgement. Similarly the use of storytelling as therapy has gained some credence. (Cattenach, 1998). Zipes (1996: 224) commented that storytelling may be used as therapy but unless one is a psychologist or therapist it is ‘extremely difficult to know exactly what an individual child is recognizing during the telling or enacting of a tale.’ In many ways this comment reflects problems encountered when trying to establish the impact of storytelling on imaginations of young children in this study examined in Chapter Six.

4. Children as storytellers

With the curriculum becoming formally expanded to include personal, social and emotional development and citizenship it becomes essential to deal with personal issues in a sensitive manner accessible to all. Oral storytelling,
with its emphasis on life experiences, is the ideal medium for this. Teachers may approach sensitive subjects through narrative and children, too, may become adept at telling stories. Through story they can weave in other elements and explore problems of life in a safe, non-threatening manner. Fox (1993: 22) found that the young children in her study dealt with grave issues, such as ‘abandonment, punishment, pain and death.’ Storytelling was almost a game that enabled them to feel secure in dealing with ‘big issues’ in this form. Children who have the ability to tell stories can rationalise personal events in their lives and relate them in a digestible form. Mixing the fiction of story with the facts of life can help them to reduce, or possibly come to terms with, those fears. Storytelling has a unique position and part to play in building oral literacy. By listening to stories children learn about the structure of narrative, the complexity of characterisation and the development of traditions and cultural differences (Smyth 1989).

Ralston (1993: 13) advocated the use of folklore as ‘the narratives introduce students to global cultures and help children recognize that people all over the world are moved by the same emotions.’ Some stories can be traced through a number of different cultures and the same story, in different forms, appears in many different guises throughout the world. The story of creation is one example of this. Although it is essentially the same theme, it varies from country to country and culture to culture, for example from the biblical to the West African tale of *The Fire Children* (Maddern, 1994). Stories from different cultures help children to realise that their main themes, such as love, fear, hatred, jealousy and happiness, are the same from whatever corner of the earth one originates. In a multicultural society this is important if all children are to feel
valued. Story is ‘the essential culture builder and learning tool of any society or family or classroom’ (Paley, 1995: 93).

This reminds one that story can mean different things to different children. Gregory (1996: 25) contended that the ‘difference concerns both the purpose for which a story is used and the manner in which it is told.’ Perceptions of story differ from group to group and depend on the life experiences and cultural backgrounds of children involved. As Bruner (1990: 138) claimed ‘human minds and lives are reflections of culture and history as well as of biology and physical resources.’ In my study responses from children of different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds revealed varying responses, as will be examined in Chapters Five and Six. Alhberg (2002) said that we all have memories that can be conscious or subconscious that will have some influence on how we perceive the world. Just as different cultures have their own versions of stories, treatments of others can vary to appeal to home and cultural experiences of children, even though their roots may be the same. Consider how the story of The Gingerbread Man is similar to the tale of The Runaway Chapatti. In essence these are the same story in different settings. In the latter the main character, the chapatti, is more familiar to Asian children, reflecting their home experience. Changes provide a new version of the same story with appeal to a wider and ethnically diverse audience. Consideration of social equality suggests that we should represent such diversity in storytelling. Although this diversity is becoming more widespread characters in children’s picture books still tend to be predominantly those who do not reflect our multicultural society.
Children, too, have their own agenda when it comes to talking about story. For example, Beame (1998) talked about two children, Sonnyboy and Emily who had different cultural experiences and expectations. The former, a traveller and an accomplished storyteller in oral mode, was changing and adapting stories to suit audiences. In contrast, Emily insisted that a story must be written down, demonstrating that she knew the difference between an oral tale and that which is printed on the page. This same insistence is reflected upon in Chapter Six, where some children regarded only read versions of stories as 'real'. Bauman (1977) recorded how stories change over time, even if told by the same teller. Although Bauman was discussing personal stories the same is true of many other types. In Rosen's (1991: 20) terms one adjusts to time, place and audience in what he described as 'the creative judgement of the storyteller.' Each telling will have a slightly different emphasis depending on tellers, tales and listeners.

Children who listen to oral and read versions of stories also learn that it is the print version that does not change. It would appear from Bearne (1998) that Emily has learnt that lesson and working with children on oral stories demonstrates for them the fluidity of narrative. By changing and adjusting elements they learn to redraft orally (Jones, 1988) and come to realise that the same story may have different printed and oral versions. Grainger, Goouch and Lambirth (2005) reflected on the impact of telling and retelling stories before writing when working on the 'We're Writers' project with primary aged pupils in London. Freeing children from the constraints of writing to a formula produced writing with more 'voice and verve.' My study was concerned with oral responses only but, as oracy is the bedrock of both reading and writing, improvements in it
impact on these other, more discernible and more easily assessed, aspects of literacy. Rehearsing stories orally it enables children to form and reform structure, settings and character reactions. Verbalising inner thoughts is a cognitive activity, as demonstrated by some responses to interview questions, discussed in Chapter Six.

The fact that a story can change is an important fact to remember. As Corden (2000) pointed out a story may be told many times with embellishments and elaborations, or alternatively, simplified to meet the needs of an audience. With literacy so focused on books children do not always have experience of the unique pattern of oral texts (Whitehead, 1997). With oral storytelling children learn about language but also realise that they are experiencing something different and special – something that can never really be recaptured. A story may be retold to them, or they may recount it to their peers but that particular storytelling, like a will o’ the wisp, has disappeared, never to be completely regained. In this study children were asked to retell what they could remember of stories and these versions were compared and contrasted with the original heard and read versions. The versions retold by children were analysed in different ways by looking for evidence of creative language or narrative form and reflections of storytelling or story-reading language. This will be examined in Chapter Five.

5. The curriculum

Baker and Greene (1977: 23) advocate using oral stories for many reasons: the interpretation of life; to create inward images; to please the ear and
encourage listening skills; to support the curriculum; to preserve cultural heritage; and to give ‘dramatic joy’ to children and ourselves. This provides a strong argument for storytelling as part of school life, to give breadth and added meaning to educative experiences. The justification for storytelling is apparent but tension still exists between demands of the curriculum and what is perceived as playful activity. Even though the National Curriculum states that children should ‘be given opportunities to talk for a range of purposes, including storytelling’ at Key Stage One and ‘telling and enacting stories’ at Key Stage Two teachers find it difficult to deal with lack of physical evidence that oral work involves (Howe, 1997). Hewitt (2003: 22) asserted that listening practices in the National Curriculum ‘are severely limited’ and advocates a widening of the ‘oral literature’ that pupils receive in school to include family narratives, rap and dialect poetry as well as more ‘traditional’ choices in oral literature.

If oral stories are used in the classroom some teachers believe they need to have a written follow-up to prove their benefit, so that emphasis in school shifts to skills of reading and writing. Storytelling is ephemeral, difficult to capture and difficult to assess.

As teachers we ought to encourage children to listen rather than just hear. Oral storytelling often succeeds in producing more active listeners, possibly because it appeals to a wider range of learning styles and may be regarded as a social activity. Maddern (2004: 20) claimed that, ‘sharing a tale with a group is more of a communal activity than reading a book or watching the television is,’ having referred to activities such as silent reading or watching television that are part of school life that tend to be individual, rather than shared
experiences within a group. Everyone may be engaged in similar activities but it constitutes passive rather than active listening. His argument would be that these group activities lack interaction as required by an oral storytelling event. Although a degree of interaction may be required to read or watch television it does not have the same intangible frisson of excitement that oral storytelling may produce.

6. Ways of learning

Knowledge about how children learn seems to be focal in many debates about learning styles. Gardner, (1993), among others, has advocated different ways of teaching more effectively using more varied and multi-sensory strategies. Shaw and Hayes (1998: 121) claim storytelling to be a useful tool in the classroom for ‘communicating with pupils at a conscious and non-conscious level.’ It is one of the oldest forms of teaching and a ‘brain-friendly’ method of learning as ‘stories engage emotions, they offer multi-level communication and they can elicit useful states of learning.’ Following this argument, engaging children in processes where they will become emotionally involved, as in listening and connecting with a story, should encourage learning (Maguire, 2002). This emotional aspect of storytelling seems to be a theme identified in much of the literature. Different learning styles met in auditory, visual, kinaesthetic and emotional ways through storytelling. People may relate at more conscious levels with oral rather than read stories because more of their senses are engaged. They are invited by storytellers to enter different worlds and explore them through their emotions and imaginations. Oral stories are painted in words rather than pictures and individuals experience different mental reactions, either through
visualisation or auditory means. Zipes (1996: 11) reminded us that stories are transmitted in a number of ways, including radio, television, films and computer screens while Powling (2000: 23) argued that:

language permits a much more individual and customised imagery than any camera, easel or Pc programme. It also permits some responses which only words can bring about.

Investigating the nature of visualisations and how children perceive story is one of the strands to be deliberated upon in the course of this study and further explored in Chapter Six.

Beame (2000: 158) maintained that the challenge in schools today 'is not so much to develop children's listening skills as to develop their awareness of how to pay attention.' Involving children in meaningful and interesting listening activities to grip their attention is important. Baker and Greene (1977) argued that storytelling encourages the art of listening, presupposing listeners who play an active part. The complexity of the fundamental skills of speaking and listening can often be lost in current emphasis on reading and writing. Effective oral communication is at the basis of society and without an ability to make their thoughts and ideas clear to others children may be at a disadvantage. It seems extraordinary that oracy is almost a sleeping partner in literacy processes or, as Alexander (2003: 28) believed, 'at best a poor relation' in Britain. Through telling and retelling stories children can develop effective communication and self-confidence and be encouraged to extend and explore narrative in unique and personal ways.

The oral tradition seems to be eroding, even in places where it once dominated cultural practice, such as Ireland (Weir, 2002). Such desertion of the
oral is a common problem, Depree & Iversen (1994) observing that oral tales are neglected in favour of reading stories. Teachers may feel that they have little time to prepare for oral storytelling that Graves (1990) noted is required if it is to extend and enhance teaching. This is not to say that story-reading is denigrated in any way. The joy of owning and using books and having favourite stories to read over and over again is something that we have all experienced. Young children do not hold the familiar in contempt but enjoy the anticipation that arises from knowing what comes next. What we have to remember is that traditional stories stem from oral traditions and it is the manner in which these stories are told that breathes life into them (Crossley-Holland, 1998). The following section reviews the tradition of story-reading and examines the use of picture books in this process.

7. Characteristics of story-reading

The previous section examined the art of storytelling looking briefly at the similarities and differences between the two modes of ‘storying’ (Rosen, 1986). One part of this study examines children’s oral retellings after listening to stories read from a book. While the investigation was classroom based it is acknowledged that home literacy experiences play a vital part in the development of the child (Marsh, 2003). The purpose of this study was, however, confined to examining the responses of children to particular classroom literacy experiences. In infant classrooms picture books have prominence, especially the ‘big book’, and the practice of story-reading is part of everyday experience. Literacy hours begin with a shared text and children join in as they develop confidence. Story sharing and examination of narrative are integral parts of everyday literacy
teaching. Ralston (1993), while advocating oral stories, also highlighted the many benefits of reading aloud and even says that some stories are best read aloud, commenting that books model for children how a writer may use language to create atmosphere, mood and imagery in a story.

Clark (1994) stated that reading stories has an important part to play in helping children to learn to listen as well as stimulating their imaginations. Helping children to develop their speaking and listening skills, as already mentioned, is essential to learning across the curriculum and for communication. Ralston (1993) also believed that pictures in a book can give children ideas and may be used as a stimulus for talk. Certainly young children exposed to attractive illustrations in picture books examine them in some detail and often notice small features unobserved by adults. Illustrators are aware of this and acknowledge the importance of detail in the drawings to accompany stories (Blake, 2000), Hughes (1997) claiming that 'a picture book text is unthinkable without the illustrations.' While some picture book texts may stand alone most are intended for elaboration through illustration. Some picture books encourage close scrutiny, for example the popular Where's Wally? series (Handford, 2002). Books of this type, as well as encouraging close observation, also provide children with a focus for communication with others. Talking about illustrations can provide children with the chance to develop ideas and opinions and share them with others although, as Graham (1998) warned, this type of verbal collaboration also requires skills that young children may find particularly difficult. The enjoyment of sharing books may help young children to develop literacy skills by talking through their ideas and feelings (Fisher, 1996; Coulthard, Arzipe and Styles, 2003; Mercer, 2003).
Phinn (2004) stressed that having access to exciting, imaginative and well-structured stories is essential for children who are learning to read. Good picture books that encourage interaction with text are important for them to develop a love of literature. Sharing and talking about picture books with children is invaluable to an understanding of literacy. Parents, as the first educators, are important in this development (Marsh, 2003) but the roles of teachers should not be underestimated. Marriott (1991) believed that teachers who display a love of reading are likely to instil the same values in youngsters. Work by Poulson (2003) also indicated that teachers who have knowledge and love of children's literature have beneficial effects on their literacy development. Teachers who read to children and display enthusiasm encourage not only speaking and listening but also pre-reading and reading skills. Both Wade (1989) and Mason (1992) emphasised that familiarity with books and stories has a direct impact on children's later reading ability. By listening to stories children become familiar with structure in narrative, rhythm of words and are able to make predictions about what could possibly happen next. This helps them with implicit understanding of how narrative is formed and of benefit when they begin to write their own stories. Interaction with texts and the ability to access them is bound to have some impact on their responses, an element examined in the personal histories of those in this study, although not as a central issue. Children were asked about their previous knowledge of stories and who read and told them at home which formed part of a separate piece of research stemming from this study (Harrett and Benjamin, 2005).
8. The language of storybooks

In Sections Two to Seven of this chapter the advantages of oral storytelling were highlighted but story-reading has many advantages too, especially from storybooks with illustrations. Lewis (2001: 102) explained this link by stating that:

the words and pictures that make up a picture book are bound within covers, are arranged sequentially, together comprise a text that is frequently, though not always, narrative in kind, and which is intended to be read.

The term storybook covers a wide range of books from almost wordless baby books with simple pictures to more complicated texts that appeal to older children, such as the popular novels of J. K. Rowling or Phillip Pullman. In this study I shall be examining responses of young, infant-aged children, between the ages of five and seven, to picture storybooks. During the first phase of data collection The North Wind and the Sun by Brian Wildsmith and Monkey Tales by Laurel Dee Gugler and Vlasta van Kampen were read to them. Two other books, What Made Tiddalik Laugh? by Joanna Troughton and The Owl and the Woodpecker by Brian Wildsmith, were also used and formed the focus for the core analysis of this study. All these storybooks were attractive and brightly coloured for it was imperative that they appealed to children so as to ensure interest and response. Choice of books was an important factor and deliberated over at length as I wished to ensure personal appeal through stories based in oral tradition which I could feel comfortable telling. The rationale for the choice of texts used in the study is further explained in Chapter Four.

Children can enjoy books from an early age. Novelty books and even waterproof books for bath-time are now sold all over the world. Children develop
their own opinions about their preferred stories and often will read and reread favourites. In this case familiarity does not breed contempt, rather the reverse. Through knowledge of the story and awareness of what comes next children delight in their acquaintance and knowledge. Clark (1994: 52) believed that something else children learn from rereading of favourite stories is one of the ‘crucial features of print, that it says exactly the same thing on each occasion’ highlighting its permanence in contrast to the changes prevalent in oral tales. This permanence and almost predominance of print was a feature of some responses, as explored in Chapter Six.

Bettleheim and Zelan (1982) advocated choice of texts to use with children as important, given that they should develop vocabulary and curiosity as well as stimulating the imagination. Through stories children learn the rhythm of words and patterns of stories. They soon understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end and that their main characters will usually have problems to overcome in the course of the tale. They can also have the pleasure of sharing a picture book with friends and recounting their favourite parts of the story while examining its illustrations.

Reading aloud to children is essential to enable them to hear the rhythms of language and appreciate how tone, voice and pace can affect engagement with the writer’s voice. Goodwin and Redfern (2000: 8) explored many reasons why children should be read to every day, claiming the learning potential of literature to be enormous. Among other things children learn to ‘appreciate the power of images and share secrets with authors and delights, fears, hopes with fellow readers.’ In story-reading of a picture book children are presented with
images created by the illustrator and that powerful images may have direct influence on their imagination will be further explored in Chapters Three and Six.

The language of storybooks is usually patterned and simple so that young children may attempt to read themselves, either through memorising words or by recognising them. They are especially designed to appeal to two different audiences: adults who buy the books and children who listen to, or read, the stories. As adults we may delight in intertextuality within a story, implicit references to other stories with which we are familiar, and have fond memories. Many of our popular authors for children are experts at this. Alhberg, (1999) in the Jolly Postman books managed to engage both adults and children with intertextuality and through the multi-levelled way the story is written. By referring to other stories within his story he invites readers of all ages to make connections, so encouraging inferential reading. Making connections is essential to appeal to young children and the choice of stories to be used for this study took this into consideration. It was of central importance that children should be able to relate to and engage actively, where possible, with stories told and read to them. As will be examined in Chapter Five, themes in the stories involving conflict, fear, friendship and resolution all gave children a basis to connect with their characters.

Not all authors for young children display the same talent as Alhberg but many of them use a repeated refrain to encourage children to share reading or to try to read books for themselves. Martin Waddell, another significant children's author, used this device in many of his picture books for young children. For example, in The Park in the Dark each page ends with, 'me and Loopy and Little
Gee, we three'. It is similar to repeated refrains in many oral stories, encouraging children to feel part of a story by engaging in interaction with the reader. This style of refrain also has echoes of spoken grammar. In this example from Waddell we see a substantial use of connectives and what Carter (2003) terms a tail – ‘we three’. Although this style tends to be more connected with oral stories it is effective and its purpose in this story is quite deliberate, ensuring that children have something that may be repeated in unison with the reader, so giving a sense of satisfaction in the ability to ‘read’ the text, frequently a feature of the shared reading section of the Literacy Hour.

One of the many benefits of books is the durability. They may be treasured and visited time and time again and then pages explored in more detail each time, not only words but pictures encouraging children to read. Oral stories cannot, by their nature, perform the same act. To encourage literacy ownership of books is also significant and several schemes, such as Bookstart, help parents to realise its importance by giving them to children ensuring access by giving every child a bag containing picture books at their nine-month medical check-up, at eighteen months and, again, at three years old. Other key projects run by Bookstart encourage parents to read to their children, to share books with them and to join libraries. More and Wade (1998) have researched the efficacy of the project and agree that sharing books in pre-school years improves children’s concentration.

Reading to children introduces them to texts that they would not be able to access themselves and extends their vocabulary. When young children are learning how to read they obviously need access to texts at their level of
comprehension but having a story read to them expands their knowledge. Clay (1993: 203) stated that to encourage children to read the teacher needs to ’help the child to build some kind of useful interactions with books, print and writing.’ We must acknowledge that storybooks are an essential part of the literary diet of the young.

9. The place of illustration in storybooks

‘Most of us learn to read through picture books and initially the visual and verbal share prominence.’ (Clark, 2002) Clark highlighted the importance of picture books in enticing children to become interested and literate. Picture books also help children to fill in what Watson and Styles (1996: 2) term ‘the readerly gap’, that is the gap between words and pictures or, indeed, the complexities of pictures or narrative voice. Pictures frequently complement stories or even tell another one. If one examines Rosie’s Walk (Hutchins, 2001) or Come away from the water, Shirley (Burningham, 1992) it is obvious that their pictures are telling a different, sometimes more complex, story than the words. Pictures demand to be ‘read’ in their own way and can often ‘take over’ from the story (Doonan, 1993: 58).

Graham (1995) concurred, pointing out that pictures have been used to tell stories from the very first cave drawings and that their illustrations add to understanding of how narrative works. Even though we realise that writing holds the meaning in a story illustrations in a picture book are more or less carefully drafted to fill the ‘readerly gap’. With young children who have limited experience of life picture books help to develop such pictorial image. A child who has never
been to the seaside may be able to capture something of that experience from book illustrations, although this will never be the same experience as a visit to the sea. As Hughes (1997) pointed out much of the ‘characterisation, the humour and the action are there to be discovered in the pictures.’ As a writer and illustrator Hughes places emphasis on the ‘discovery’ element as a shared delight for adult and child. It could also be argued that books give an alternative version of life as in many of these books for young children main characters are not people but animals who mimic human form by standing upright instead of on all fours, display human and humane feelings and even sometimes wear clothes. Children suspend disbelief in such cases and begin to develop their own ideas about what makes a story and what is real and believable.

Picture books are important for children when acquiring literacy according to Bennett (1997). They can listen to stories before accessing books themselves using pictures to reconstruct their own story. Alternatively children may use pictures in unfamiliar books to build, create and even enact their own narratives. They use pictorial clues to piece together an understanding of stories, as they see them. Reading pictures is a significant part in learning how to read and beginner readers will frequently use picture cues to help them understand the storyline. Mixing the visual and verbal helps children to understand how texts work and may help them when they are expected to write their own narratives (Kress, 1997).

Often, first introductions to books are through basic, wordless, picture books where the action, the story, is told through illustrations, although teachers tend to read stories with a printed text rather than weave a story around an
illustration. Many pre-readers in current use, such as the popular Oxford Reading Tree, have very clear illustrations through which children are able to see story themes. Referring to wordless picture books Graham (1998) contended that a verbal interpretation of pictures is extremely difficult for some young children who will often give simple descriptions of what they can see rather than analyse pictures in any depth. It may be that they are unable to interpret what is expected from them, or that they simply do not have sufficient verbal fluency and one difficulty faced up to during this study was the relative inexperience of some children, both in terms of language development and literacy experiences that influenced final samples for analysis. Chapter Four further explores this issue.

Anderson, Kauffman and Short (1998: 147) deliberated on the use of illustrations, commenting that because of the ‘visual culture’ which surrounds them children have become much more ‘visually orientated’ although they are ‘often unable to analyse and think critically about those images.’ As Duffy commented (1998: 59), ‘from birth children are exposed to visual images.’ Even those who think that television has been detrimental to children’s learning cannot stop the amount and content of viewing that is common practice in many households in the country. Television ensures that even children who do not spend much time outside their homes, or in reading books, are exposed to colourful images of varying natures. Children are surrounded by visual images and have an understanding of how differently they work, not only on paper but also within television, video, DVD and computers (Paine and Farmer, 2004).

In America there is a growing trend to educate parents to view television more critically with their children so they can learn how to discuss and interpret
media. Considine (2004) believed that giving children the ability to ‘think critically about the composition of the picture’ will enhance ‘their ability to read words and worlds’. In fact, Johnson (1998) pointed out that somewhere in the region of seventy percent of information in society today is communicated through visual means. Illustration is one part of this visual communication.

Thomas (1998: 24) claimed that some stories are best told but agrees that ‘for younger children, time taken over a picture’ can set the foundations for understanding more difficult texts as they mature. Interpretation of the visual is an important element in understanding what books are all about. Hughes (1998) also stressed the importance of the visual, linked to text, and how young children use pictures to tell a story when learning how to read but are often told to concentrate on the text. Visual literacy is a term used frequently to explain how deduction from the visual is important to the reading of a text. In schools today there seems to be little time to spend on developing visual literacy in relation to story-reading, concentration being laid on written text. This seems strange in view of the visual nature of our technological age where pictures and print surround us everywhere we go and the increasing importance of an emphasis on ICT throughout the curriculum. The importance of images is one of the elements that Wyse (2003) felt was needed to bring creativity back into classrooms. Images come in different forms. In this study I shall be examining the responses of children to images presented by bright and lively illustrations in picture books read to them.
10. Text and common themes in storybooks

Illustrations in picture books are not the only element to appeal to children. The text itself is important. Children look for storylines that appeal to them in terms of content, characters and action. Meek (1988) acknowledged the importance of the texts that children engage with and Barrs and Thomas (1991: 4) stated that ‘favourite books which children return to again and again are often a major factor in their learning.’ Although they are referring to children learning about reading it could be argued that those who develop a passion for words and a deep knowledge of one familiar text could transfer that knowledge to others. In other words, when children realise that a text has a pattern – the main character has a problem and the story unfolds as the character solves the problem – they acquire transferable skills; story structure and theme may be examined in other texts of a similar nature.

Jordan (1996: 49) insisted that, ‘picture books develop children’s thinking’ for the reason that storytelling can be so powerful. ‘They deal with important human issues. Their themes include those areas of life, which concern adults as well as children: jealousy, anger, fear, friendship, family relationships and death.’ This almost seems like an echo of Fox’s (1993: 22) comments on oral tales and strong stories that deal with ‘major fears, such as abandonment, punishment, pain and death, the anger of the parents, the jealousy of siblings, loneliness and helplessness.’ One sees similarity between these two modes of story. As one saw in the section on storytelling, ‘big’ themes are those which are often most popular with children. Children do not shy away from these topics but try to explain and extend their understanding of life by encountering these aspects.
through story. Many picture books for children now cover topics, such as bereavement and, of course, many traditional stories were based on such 'difficult' themes.

One of our most familiar fairy stories, Red Riding Hood, stems from a French story, *le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, published by Perrault in 1697. It is likely this came from an oral tale from Southern France and Northern Italy. According to Zipes (1991), in Perrault's version the girl, of sinful nature, meets the wolf and makes a wager with him to see who will arrive at the grandmother's house first. The wolf arrives first, devours the grandmother and takes her place in bed. The girl arrives, gets into bed and asks the wolf questions about his unusual appearance before being eaten by him. In 1812 the Brothers Grimm added their own variations, sanitising the obvious sexual aspect of the original. Since then many versions have been written and told throughout the world. Red Riding Hood is still a popular story today although the ending usually involves Red Riding Hood and Grandma being saved from danger. Through such stories children can 'explore and solve some of their own fears and problems at a safe distance' (Clark, 1994: 43). Through interaction with them children may be encouraged to extend their experiences of life (Kirby, 1995: 29). Rosen (1985: 181) concurred, describing storytelling as 'one of the ways we have of putting into words what we make of our experience of the world.' Those connections children make between their emotional experiences and those experiences offered by stories are potentially very useful learning tools. Whether words are spoken or read, it appears that the influence of narrative is powerful.
11. Performance in story-reading

Oral stories, while sometimes magical in the interaction they demand, are never quite as polished or crafted in the same way as final versions that writers have worked on many times. Malachy Doyle, (2006) acknowledged that his first published picture book required one hundred and eighty-seven drafts. The written word may be honed to perfection with every comma, full stop letter and illustration playing a significant part in the story. Not only authors but also editors and illustrators have inputs. It takes many months to reach publication and during that time changes are made to ensure marketable quality. It could be argued that reading stories is just as important as writing them and that every reading is different depending on the reader. Reading itself may be regarded as an interpretation of words through which stories come to life. Reading with fluency and expression is part of a performance element of reading aloud, enabling listeners to become lost in the story.

Ralston (1993: 28) also indicated that story-reading, if performed properly, requires just as ‘much care and preparation as does telling a story.’ In fact the interpretation of a written story, where its performance indicates different voices and atmospheres, may demand much from teachers and may produce an equally active response from listeners. Kirby (1995: 7) suggested that ‘as story-readers we need to be more aware of our audience and to make explicit our own thoughts and feelings through storying’, for:

Through our modelling we can also bring life, interest and excitement to story-book reading. As we share story-books with children our feelings, expressions of voice and interests can all clearly be shown.’ (p. 19).
Teachers, it would follow, need to be aware of both implicit and explicit roles demonstrating not only skills and fluency of ‘expert’ readers but also displaying interest and personal connection with stories read to children. To be a ‘reader’ in Meek’s (1993) view was to possess much more than the ability to decode the words on the page, requiring a desire for reading for pleasure. This would indicate that story-reading, to be effective, requires a degree of emotional involvement from readers. A passive, monotonous delivery of stories can deprive listeners of delights to be shared. Presentation of stories depends very much on their readers and their interpretations.

With young children it is especially important to include an element of performance in story-reading. As Dowling (1992: 86) stated ‘Children will learn only gradually to take on the role of audience and to listen quietly to a story.’ Egan (1998) deliberated upon the power of stories to engage and stimulate imaginations and enlarge experiences, sympathies and understanding. Through stories children learn about other people and other ways of life, explore other experiences and are transported to another world before being brought back to reality. Reading aloud to children encourages them to share in a special type of communication and allows them to ‘concentrate on the internal imaging and inner voices conjured up by the story’ (Goodwin and Redfern, 2003: 7). Many similarities, therefore, exist between storytelling and story-reading although there are also obvious differences. In the next section I shall explore some of these.
12. Storytelling and story-reading

Although the oral and the written are intertwined in many ways, it is important to make a distinction between these two discrete forms of storytelling and story-reading. Oral storytelling uses voice as the main implement of delivery, although other aspects, as already discussed, are important. With story-reading the main implement is a written text, sometimes a picture book with attractive illustrations. The common factor in both cases is the story. The fiction of story could be a reflection of the realities of life, or pure fantasy as an escape from those realities. Grainger (1997) regarded narrative, both oral and written, as ‘central to early learning and thinking’ across the curriculum. This is also explored by Hurst and Joseph (1998: 32-34) in talking about the role of stories in ‘enabling children to make sense of their current experiences and to construct forecasts of what is likely to come’, stressing the idea of story as ‘personal communication’ shared between people offering ‘emotional security amid the many changes and uncertainties that children experience’. Sharing stories about personal experiences helps children to empathise with each other and develop important personal, social and communication skills. This type of interaction is not possible with a book, although a book may prove to be a catalyst for children to talk about life experiences. Many modern authors are not afraid to tackle sensitive topics and do so in ways that are accessible to youngsters.

Both storytelling and story-reading are literacy events and may work in harmony rather than opposition to one another. Weir (2001) believed that storytelling should co-exist with story reading; the one complementing the other. Understanding the constraints and devices used in both modes of story may
enable literacy development to be enhanced and enriched. Weir (2001) advocated telling or reading of stories as an everyday activity in every classroom making little distinction and seeing no conflict between them.

Chambers (1984) regarded storytelling and story-reading as both formative and essential to literacy education and arguments for both exist in the research literature. Oral storytelling is important for development of speaking and listening skills and when children are invited to become storytellers it may become ‘an effective way of improving oral fluency’ (Maddern 1992: 28). In a similar vein Edwards, Gandini & Foreman, (1996: 6) considered that story-reading introduces children to literature that they may not be able to access for themselves, increasing vocabulary, imagination, early concepts about print and relationships between print and the spoken word. They believed that reading aloud to children is important indicating skills teachers demonstrate ‘such as expression and interpretation’, exposing children to new language patterns and introducing them to different authors and genres. They also emphasised how important it is to talk about books and stories so as to enable children to examine more closely their structures, narrative conventions and personal interpretations. Chambers (1984) also advocated that children should talk about different responses to books as a means of interpretation. Through sharing thoughts and ideas children may develop deeper comprehension of authors’ intentions. In like manner this study examines responses of children to stories read to them and oral stories in order to investigate language used in their responses.
13. Differences between storytelling and story-reading

The National Literacy Strategy (1998: 46) expects children to be able to ‘explore similarities and differences between oral and written storytelling’, so that Grugeon and Gardner’s (2000: 2) comment on the difference between written and oral stories is worth reflecting upon:

perhaps that is the difference between reading and telling; reading is a process of sharing and interpreting a text that someone else has produced but telling a story is a unique and personal performance.

Maddern (1992: 28) regarded storytelling as a more ‘complete form of communication’ with ‘neither the careful polish of literature nor the rehearsed spectacle of drama’ but, instead, an ‘unique form of improvisation created in the moment through the interplay of audience, storyteller and story.’ Smidt (1998) asserted that telling stories is completely different from reading them, as they are evolving or changed to suit the mood of audiences, a difference also explored in Tann (1991). Perhaps it is the ephemeral nature of oral stories that make them so appealing to listeners. Realising that each performance is unique, distinctive, exclusive and elusive adds a certain expectation and excitement to storytelling events.

Certainly the uniqueness of oral stories cannot be denied. Almost tangible tension and a distinctive relationship between tellers and listeners in a successful narration make each storytelling a singular event, never to be repeated in exactly the same way. It could be argued that the same principles relate to story-reading, as every situation, or audience, may be different. Anyone who works with children will be aware that no two days are the same. However, reading performances depend on the permanence of written text which remains
unchanging, despite different interpretations by different readers. In oral stories the skeleton remains essentially the same but tellers are free to change names, places and even events to some degree. Changing a written story into an oral story also requires time, consideration and interpretation. Winston and Tandy (2001: 21) advocated storytelling claiming that:

> even if a story is learned off by heart- and it is often better if it isn’t – there is an apparent improvisatory quality in the telling which has something of the immediacy of dramatic speech.

Reading stories aloud requires some degree of interpretation in terms of use of voice but certainly does not have the ‘immediacy of dramatic speech’ that Winston and Tandy mention.

Mallen (1991: 5) deliberated at length on the differences between the two modes of story:

> With storytelling, the interaction is creative, as both teller and listener create the story. Words are used to create mental pictures of the story. The storyteller’s face, voice, body and personality help to convey meaning and mood. During storyreading both listener and reader are conscious of the book.

Colwell (1992) would agree, expressing the belief that readers are tied to books while tellers are freed from such restriction and can watch listeners’ reactions while speaking directly to them. This idea of creativity and the formation of mental pictures is one of the themes I wished to explore in the course of this study and the next chapter examines the literature relating to imagination, visualisation and creativity. Many storytellers comment on the need to ‘see’ the story before telling it to an audience and some even draw pictures to help them to remember its main features. Hughes (1997) reflected on the need to ‘see the story unfolding visually in your head.’ As a writer and illustrator the viewpoint
Hughes holds is interesting in its similarity to the 'visuality' required by oral storytellers.

Interaction between tellers and listeners is an important, indeed essential, element of the uniqueness of oral stories. Mallen (1991: 5) commented on the mental images created through words and manner in which they are transferred which is important to 'meaning and the mood.' This would indicate that the skills of storytellers are important parts in these processes. Successful storytellers have to be able to engage the hearts, minds and imaginations of audiences in order to achieve complete involvement in stories.

These differences between the oral and the written are also explored in Ong (1982: 82), who defined oral speech as natural while 'writing is completely artificial'. Both modes of storytelling are privileged in their own way for 'without textualism orality cannot even be identified; without orality, textualism is rather opaque' (p.169). He points out that writers are usually absent when readers read while, in oral communication, speakers and listeners are present. Effective communication depends on a variety of elements and exceedingly rich non-verbal signs are an essential in oral storytelling, (Ong, 1982) as exemplified in non-verbal gestures that children made during their retellings throughout this study.

Street (1995: 166) discussed Ong's theories and what he describes as 'literary myths' involving differences between written and spoken language, commenting that:
the implications of these differences are that speaking exhibits greater attention to the involvement of participants, while in writing there is greater emphasis on the content of what is said. (p. 168)

What we are looking at is really the differences between the two conventions of speech and writing. Speech is more immediate, less sophisticated and dependent on listeners who will participate either by responding verbally or by listening actively. Writing is more laboured, polished to a higher standard, whose readers who are possibly unknown to writers. With speech thoughts and words are almost spontaneous while writing is a longer, more thoughtful process requiring careful analysis of the balance of words and their sounds and rhythms when read aloud.

Certainly in writing a book there are many stages before arriving at final text while oral tales are the sole responsibility of speakers. In everyday speech, as may be seen in transcription, participants use a different type of spoken grammar where sentences are left unfinished and listener knowledge is assumed (Carter, 2002). In oral storytelling this is not the case as the format of a story dictates the types of contribution required from participants. For example, stories may contain a repetitive refrain. During storytelling sessions which were part of my data collection, the reactions of children were important in the development of spoken text. Although the same stories were told in different classes, words and pace varied, indicating the uniqueness of every story. On listening to these storytelling sessions it became clear that more conjunctions were used in oral stories than in reading written texts. Carter (2003: 12) explained this by describing spoken English as 'spontaneous' with a variety of 'chains' of 'clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions'. He regarded these as often functioning to 'coordinate rather than subordinate information in a dynamic and listener-
sensitive way.' The grammar of oral stories is different, one could argue more fluid in ways, as it has to adjust to listeners. Interaction between storyteller and audience is crucial to delivery of story. In contrast, although in reading a book one may change pace, tone and pitch of voice, grammar is fixed.

In the context of storytelling and story-reading the line between the two modes can sometimes appear nebulous. In infant schools both entail performances using voice and expression necessary to engage children. Children may then retell stories, copying the tones and rhythms of their teacher. Speaking and listening skills are aided by this performance element. Griffiths (2001) supported a concrete approach to story by providing props and scenery to bring story time to life and to encourage children and adults to participate in a mutually beneficial and uninhibited re-enactment of stories read to them. Story-reading is aided by a visual prop, the book, although some storytellers also use other props or costumes to enhance tales. Use of books is the main difference between the two modes of story and, in the case of my study, those used were colourful picture books, with bright, attractive illustrations designed to appeal to infant aged children. This visual element may, or may not, enhance particular children's experience.

14. Similarities between storytelling and story-reading

Although there are differences between storytelling and story-reading there are also similarities. These were indicated by Graham and Kelly (1998: 73) who stated that both modes of story contain a 'patterned narrative', major characters and 'inform, entertain, create new worlds, make sense of experience,
develop empathy and even morals. Both give us the same opportunities to contemplate, store images and rework feelings.' Not everyone would agree with this. Thomas (1998) believes that some stories can only really be enjoyed if they are heard, needing the extra magic that arises from the sound of the dialects and phrases that punctuate oral folk tales. This extra magic would seem to depend very much on the skill of the storyteller, although the strength of the story is also important. The stories selected for the purpose of this study were all based on oral tradition and deemed to provide a strong storyline combined with attractive illustrations, as indicated in Section Eight above. In this way I hoped to provoke responses from both storytelling and the story-reading sessions.

Many contemporary tales stem from oral tradition and have survived through the years by virtue of the power of the message they convey. Tales from oral tradition are life related stories on strong themes, such as fear or death. Garbarino and Stott (1992: 162) believed that telling them is an advantageous way of communicating with children as it helps them to deal with possible feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety or fear in a manageable format. They 'do not avoid the difficult.' Themes in the stories used in this investigation varied and were emotive enabling children to empathise with characters. In What made Tiddalik Laugh? animals were afraid that they would not be able to survive without water. In The North Wind and the Sun pride and competitiveness were emphasised. In The Owl and the Woodpecker themes of pride, jealousy and friendship were explored and in Monkey Tales anger was the main emotion expressed.
Kirby (1995), while advocating reading with children, also promoted
storytelling and suggested that strong characters and clear plots were essential.
Similarities in the two forms also depend on tellers or readers. The power of
voice to create atmosphere and mood are also significant. This is also important
when reading aloud to children. The ability of readers to evoke atmosphere
depends on using an interpretive voice. It is for this reason that I acted as both
storyteller and story-reader during the data collection process in this study.
Maddern (1992: 29) said that ‘when stories are written down they may gain a
certain refinement but they lose the raw vitality of the living word.’ Bringing a
story to life in the reading depends on an understanding of the message the
author is trying to convey and using elements of the oral, such as emotion and
dramatic pause, to enhance meaning for the listeners. Interpretation of stories
through tone and pace of voice was recognised as central to both modes of
story.

The two modes can be seen to evoke different responses. Graham and
Kelly (1998:73) indicated that both styles of story have similar outcomes in that
they ‘inform, entertain, create new worlds, make sense of experience, develop
empathy and even morals. Both give the same opportunities to contemplate,
store images and rework feelings.’ If we examine these words the phrase ‘store
images’ immediately invites questioning. If story is presented in two different
ways, one with pictures and one without, storing of images will be different. In
one mode images will be entirely personal, private, and unexposed for, even
through drawing or description, one is unable to look inside another mind to see
them. In images stored from pictures, it is easier to see what this is likely to be
primary and shared; even if detail is not remembered the broad sweep tends to be obvious.

Doonan (1993: 58), in contrast, examined differences between texts and illustrations and says that readers use both elements to make up what she describes as 'composite text'. She emphasises that no two composite texts will be the same, given the way that they are inter-twined is in the heads of readers. This is an interesting notion that proved to be useful when examining responses to picture book stories. It suggests how picture book stories are important in developing images that children experience and may be used to develop imagination, a factor to be explored in the next chapter. One aspect is certain from both scrutiny of related literature and personal experience: stories are essential elements in education and a means of developing imagination and imaginative responses. In this study I set out to investigate how oral storytelling and story-reading impacted on the language and imaginations of children, as revealed in their responses. The following chapter relates to the complex issues of imagination, creativity and visualisation implicated in such processes.
Chapter Three

Imagination, creativity and visualisation

1. Introduction

Imagination, creativity and visualisation are nebulous, fascinating, intertwined and worth exploring. One question asked at the outset of this research was concerned with how young children perceive story in a visual sense. Many previous researchers and writers have discussed ways to encourage imagination and it is often assumed that everyone understands what this is. In similar fashion, visualisation is often mentioned but not often explored in depth in relation to different types of story form. Birch (2000) attested that being able to imagine is much more than simply visualising a story. She regarded imagination as more than a visualisation, rather as a storehouse for a variety of multisensory experiences, both real, such as memories, and imagined, like dreams. This study hopes to provide some insight into how young children perceive story and what influences those visualisations. Teachers frequently talk about children who have good imaginations, usually in relation to creative writing. In this study imaginative qualities of oral responses of children will be examined.

Creativity is now more highly valued in schools than formerly and there has been a resurgence of interest in creative arts. The Open Creativity Centre established by Anna Craft in 2001 has been working with partners to develop ways in which to ensure creativity is more involved in curriculum issues and ways of working (creative-partnerships.com). Divergent thinking and creativity are now outlined in the National Curriculum where it states that ‘the curriculum should enable pupils to think creatively and critically’ and, furthermore, it should, ‘give
them the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising' (NC: 11). The ability to think creatively may help with problem solving as children realise that there is more than one way to approach a problem. Although creativity is now, then, higher on the agenda for education there appears to be no firm definition of what this means and how it relates to imagination. Imagination seems to be regarded as part of creativity (Ofsted, 2003). These elements are so closely aligned that they seem almost synonymous and visualisation may also form part of this intricate pattern.

Relationships between imagination, creativity and visualisation are represented in Diagram 3.1.

![Diagram 3.1: Inter-relationships between imagination, creativity and visualisation](image)

Imagination feeds creativity by enabling extension of thoughts and ideas. Creativity is, therefore, a product of imagination or can be represented as 'using imagination' (NACCCE, 1999: 29). Creativity can, by use of divergent thinking,
allow minds to develop further, in turn enhancing imagination and vice versa. Imagination may lead to visualisation, such as scenes from, or characters in, stories. In, for example, acts of visualisation, imagination is given fuel to make stories more vivid. In similar ways, visualisation may lead to creativity. If one is able to 'see' a situation it is easier to create a different one in the mind's eye. Creativity may also require visualisation in acts of producing original things. It has been said that Einstein used visualisation to imagine solutions to problems related to physics so visualisation may lead to creativity.

The following sections will examine some of these complex issues in relation to the literature and seek to more adequately define the terms imagination, creativity and visualisation. The first two sections will explore imaginative response and how that may be defined in terms of creativity. The third section will look at reflective responses to visualisations and their relationship to creativity.

1.1 Imagination

Though imagination can be related to any of the senses, or emotions, it is generally associated with imagery. In poetry, for example, one often expects some evocation of place by visual or sensory means. Sartre (1983) defined two types of imagery, the precise memory of something one has experienced in some way and the creative, as in visualising something unknown. For example, in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (Rowling 2000: 87) there is a description of hippogriffs:
They had the bodies, hind legs and tails of horses, but the front legs, wings and heads of what seemed to be giant eagles, with cruel, steel-coloured beaks and large, brilliantly orange eyes. The talons on their front legs were half a foot long and deadly-looking.

To create an image of the hippogriff in Sartre's terms one would use the 'precise images' of both an eagle and a horse and combine them in one's mind to produce a totally new 'creative image' of the strange creature. The ability to perform this type of feat would be defined by most teachers as an act of creative imagination.

In her discussion of imagination Warnock (1980) deliberates on perceptions of imagery and questions whether they are something like mental pictures or representations on a page. She comments that although one may form pictures as an effect of exercising imagination, perception in imagination may not involve such activity. One does not have to form an actual mental picture but just be aware that this is possible. If, for example, one was asked to imagine the tallest and most garishly decorated building in the world, one would not necessarily have to have a fully formed image in mind. The ability to realise that this is a possibility may be enough to say that it is imaginable. The actual image may be nebulous, indefinable, perceived but not tangible. Belief in the possibility of an imaginable object may be a part of perception. 'Thus the imagination is the power to produce images, and the possibility of image-forming is, in an underlying way, a part of perception' (Warnock 1980: 140).

Garbariono and Stott (1992) studied memory and perceptions in children and linked their ability to represent events mentally with development. In other
words, the abstract world of imagination would develop with age. Certainly, the ability to verbalise their perceptions and to explain ideas in terms of expanded vocabulary is something that develops as children progress through school. Whether this is due to developmental maturity and should occur naturally, or as a result of direct teaching, would be difficult to determine. It is possibly a combination of different elements. Young children are restricted by lack of vocabulary and often depend on gesture to engage their listeners. They have to be taught how to ‘incorporate relevant detail in explanations, descriptions and narratives’ (National Curriculum: 8). In a similar fashion, Benelli, Belacchi, Gina and Lucangeli (2006: 75) found that ‘metalinguistic skills increase with cognitive development and are linked to formal instruction.’ This ability to verbalise more precisely in attempting to explain thoughts and images was an attribute whose presence I sought in analysis of children’s responses. This point is elaborated in Chapter Four.

However, one must be careful not to regard imagination simply as a series of memories enhanced by visual representation. Huston (1991: 177) reminded us that ‘visual memory is not to be confused with the term visual imagery which includes imagining how a character might look from the author’s description, or the setting of a particular story, or following a play heard on the radio with mental pictures of the action.’ Visual memory would be the mental recall of something already experienced in some way, either through art, photography or televsual means. In this study I shall be exploring both visual memory related to picture-book texts and visual imagery of children while listening to oral stories. Visual imagery can be thought of as new creations based on personal thoughts and images produced by the stimulus. The theory that
and 'illuminate the verbal text.' (p153) Evidence of this will be further explored in Chapter Six.

Gopnick, Meltzoff and Kuhl (1999: 210) discussed how our brains adjust to different information, for example, how our reactions to a story vary depending on whether we have read the book, seen the film or heard it first. They state that our brains keep changing our pictures of the world, evolving new pictures as our experiences demand. It would follow from this argument that imagination is not static but ever changing, growing and evolving as we expand our experiences. Brice-Heath (2000: 124) talked about 'stored experience' and how the 'visual arts' help to bring memory to external form and develop language. Her recent work on the relationship between brain, vision and cognitive processes sheds some light on connections between the visual and the verbal that 'reinforce one another in the sustained and adaptive learning necessary to increase learning from the theories of others and to build strength in one's own theories.' All experiences, either remembered or forgotten, will have some impact on one's reaction to a book or film.

1.2 Creativity

In All our Futures (NACCCE, 2000: 29) it claimed that 'imaginative activity in our terms is not the same as fantasising or imaging' and, further, that it is not the process of 'simply producing mental representations of things that are not present or have not been experienced.' Creativity is described as something more than the piecing together of different ideas and images. Eysenck (1996:199) denoted it as 'a person's capacity to produce new or original ideas, insights inventions, or artistic product.' Boden (1996: 75) defined a creative idea
as something that 'is not only new, but interesting.' This raises the question of whether something new and creative could not just be a combination of old ideas but represented in a different form, producing a fresh approach. Creative ideas are often ways of looking at things in a different light or 'thinking outside the box' in recent terminology. Imagination for Beetlestone (1998: 3), in connection with originality, was ‘making unusual connections.’ This ability to connect and transfer knowledge from one area to another may also help with problem solving, allowing the ‘problem solver to come up with different and less obvious solutions.’ Goodwin (2004: 19), using Bruner’s term, postulated that: ‘creativity is the ‘effective surprise’ that occurs when unpredictable connections of otherwise unrelated bits of knowledge or experience spark new insights and understanding’, believing that it occurs in engagement with the arts but also during problem solving and articulation of fresh ideas.

Making connections between different aspects of the curriculum helps children to make progress in their learning. Baker (2003) claimed that bi-lingual people are more capable of making these types of connections as they have wider vocabulary and conceptions of different aspects of life, giving the example of the word ‘kitchen’. In English it represents a room where one cooks. In French, the word is ‘cuisine’ which has much wider associations. Making these links between one idea or concept and another may lead to more divergent thinking and a broader base on which to compare ideas. Taking this a step further, it could be argued that bi-lingual people are potentially more creative. A small number of the children in the study were bi-lingual enabling this area to be taken into consideration during analysis, although, as the subjects were very young, they had not fully developed their language capacities.
The concept of creativity is, like imagination, open to different interpretations. As Beetlestone (1998: 2) pointed out 'not everyone, of course, has the same definition of creativity', constructing her own explanation of it in terms of six strands: 'creativity as a form of learning; representation; productivity; originality; thinking creatively/problem solving; universe/creation-nature'. She explored each of these strands, regarding creativity as central to learning. Using imagination is regarded as a product of creativity along with accomplishments, such as 'creating, composing, authorship, musical skill, performance', among others. In this way the stories children told in my study could possibly be seen as products of such imagination. Some children took story plots and structures as a basis for developing their own versions and performing them in their own ways. Beetlestone (1998) constantly blended the words 'creative' and 'imaginative' together; imaginative is that which is concerned with images perceived in the mind in visual, auditory or tactile ways and is subtly different to creativity which could have an end product, such as a piece of art. Perhaps Beetlestone's comment on one connection between the two areas of imagination and creativity is significant, when she says that imagination is a 'driving force behind creativity'. Following this argument it could be said that the two areas are not only inter-related but also inter-dependent. To be creative, one would also need to be imaginative and this imaginative element would manifest itself in some discernible way. Isaksen, Murdock, Firestien and Treffinger (1993: 126) would agree with this impression of creative activity as leading to 'creative products.' In common with Warnock (1980) Beetlestone also believed that concepts may be acquired through interaction between received knowledge and inner perceptions. Ideas formed and informed by previous experiences help to create new concepts and ideas when given sufficient time and stimulus.
Duffy (1998: 23) also interlinked creativity and imagination and defines creativity as ‘about representing one’s own image, not reproducing someone else’s.’ She deliberated on the differences between creativity and imagination at length:

Creativity is about connecting the previously unconnected in ways that are new and meaningful to the individual; imagination is about internalising perceptions and ascribing objects and events with new meanings. Creativity and imagination may be hard to define but they are part of what makes us uniquely human.

It is possible, then, to see creativity as a product of imagination and imagination as a requirement for creativity. Ralston (1993: 11) believed that children develop ‘their imaginative powers through the visualisations they create in their own minds’, believing that oral stories are important as children who listen to them are free to imagine scenes for themselves. Establishing what children visualised while listening to stories was an important part of my research and will be analysed in Chapter Six. Creative elements in their visualisations were taken to be examples of imagination.

2. Stories

Imagination is frequently linked to narrative and ability to become immersed in settings, plot and characters of a purely fictional world. Tough (1977: 194) discussed teachers using imaginative teaching to help children to project themselves into the ‘imaginary world of the story’ and so empathise with the emotions of its characters. This is echoed in Meek (1991) whose insistence on the need for imaginative play is again being highlighted. In a recent report Rich (2004: 10) expressed concern that the ‘highly time-tabled and structured world’ of many young children does not give them either the time or the space ‘to
be creative, to test out theories and ideas and to be in control of their actions, play-themes and story-lines.' Bruner (1990: 55) commented on the use of stories as social instruments as even true stores are 'midway between the real and the imaginary.' It may be assumed that Bruner meant that every time a true event is recounted it may change slightly in the telling. Although core events will remain the same other aspects may change. This is reflected in Bauman's (1977) accounts of stories he heard and his comments on changes made to them as they were recounted over time. Falassi (1980) reported a similar phenomenon and although both were discussing changes in stories told by adults, we know that children will also adjust stories which they tell through play (Jones, 1988).

Story is important in many ways to help us to think about the world and our relationships within it. Witherell, Tran and Othus, (1995: 40) stated that a good story engages and enlarges the 'moral imagination' leading to new understanding of ourselves, and others. Through narrative we explore our world and try to make sense of the inconsistencies and traumas of everyday existence.

Rosen (1985: 185) comments that 'imagination is an act of the imaginer' so that it becomes more difficult to give universal definition to this personal and private activity. Imagination in one person may be more visual than another. Intangible and difficult to define, Mallen (1991: 2) postulated that:

the power of children's imagination as an intellectual force for learning has not always enjoyed the same degree of academic research and respectability as more tangible outcomes of cognitive ability.

We see tension between the desire to stimulate imagination, and an inability to prove in any measurable way that we have done so. Mallen (1991:2) called for
children and teachers to 'engage in creative and imaginative learning.' What constitutes creative learning and how teachers learn about ways to fuel imagination are often complex, as has been shown. Duffy (1998: 20) thought that when we imagine we draw upon different visual, aural or tactile experiences, enabling us to utilise our impressions and build upon them to create new experiences or images. What one saw in relation to the literature examined in the previous chapter was the power of both oral storytelling and story-reading in developing children's knowledge about the nature and structure of stories. Evidencing how stories impact on imagination and creativity of children is difficult to measure in conventional terms, that is in terms of scores on attainment tests, although research has shown that books children read have an influence on their writing, which is measurable. Barrs and Cork, (2001) investigated the impact of literature on writing with Year Five children. Their study of effective practice demonstrated how interaction with high quality texts had a direct effect on teacher assessments of children's writing, as identified on the CLPE Writing Scale 2. Chapter Six investigates how listening and responding to oral and read stories impacted on children's imaginations.

2.1 Visualisation

Beame (1998a: 228) indicated that psychological tests have shown a variety of ways of visualising which would be no surprise if we adapted Gardner's (1993) contested view that there are different ways of learning. Although referring to spelling, the comments that Bearne makes may be relevant to all visualisations. Spelling is, after all, a visual representation of language and depends not just upon auditory discrimination but also iconic memory. She says
that people visualise by having: a photographic image; a partial mental image; colour-coded images; patterns within images; or little visual imaging. The language here is close to language used when talking about imagination, though Beame is relating images to previous knowledge of some sort. In spelling there is no space for imagination. A word is either spelt correctly or incorrectly and the only creative spellings accepted in school are those of developmental writers, in the early years of education.

Baker and Green (1977: 20) talk about effects on imagination of children listening to stories. Visualisation is, they assert, the basis of creative imagination:

Hearing stories told gives children practice in visualization. As children listen they create the scenes, the action, the characters. The ability to visualize, to fantasize, is the basis of creative imagination. It also appears to have a positive effect on social and cognitive development.

This idea was echoed by Gillard (1998: 21) who made connection between visualisation, imagination and creativity, regarding visualisation as a means of exercising the memory and imagination as a type of ‘looking within’ saying that, ‘when children close their eyes or look off into space and “go inside” they practise thinking creatively.’ Gillard firmly believes that visualisation demonstrates to children that ‘their minds and creative powers are under their control.’ The NACCCCE report All Our Futures says that ‘creative pupils ‘imagine, seeing things in the mind’s eye’ and also ‘visualise alternatives’ (p. 29). The use of visualisation techniques may also aid memory, as Shaw and Hawes (1998) attested. Creating a mental picture of something may make it more memorable. Memory techniques often include visualisation and narrative to enable participants to remember lists of seemingly disconnected words. Some people
are more adept at this type of 'creativity', if it may be termed such, than others. Accelerated learning techniques (Smith and Call, 1999) and mind mapping (Buzan, 1993) also call on different ways to use the mind to aid learning and to use its more 'creative' powers.

3. The value of play

The role of play in the development of young children is often expounded as a means of developing not only social skills but other, more creative qualities (Hurst and Joseph, 1998; Moyles, 1989; Bruce, 1997). By exploring the world and its complexities in a concrete form through play, and especially role-play, young children learn how to manipulate their thoughts and interact with others. Meek (1991) deliberated on the use that children make of characters from stories in their play and how this process aids their visualisations and development of imagination. By taking on the role of another person and fantasising how that person talks, acts and feels young children develop understanding. If children are able to visualise, either by the formation of mental pictures or in more nebulous form, what might happen to a character in a story, then they are learning how to expand their understanding of narrative and the wider world. Visualisation is important in developing empathy and perceptions about characters in stories and people in real life.

Colwell (1992: 17) suggested that creative imagination is one quality of storytellers who can bring 'life and colour to a story.' Storytellers need to see stories in their imagination and to make them part of their own personal experience by familiarity with characters and settings. Again, we see how the
threads of imagination, creativity and visualisation have close relationship to each other. This technique is familiar to Grainger (1995) who uses storytelling and drama activities to enhance the visualisations of children and to broaden their perspectives. Neelands (1998: 7) also felt that the world of 'make-believe' helps to develop imagination and storytellers talk of 'seeing' the story. Visualisation appears to play a strong part in their capacity to deliver their tales. (Wilson, 2006)

4. The influence of experience

Not everyone has the same depth of visual experience. Quinn (1997: 93) said that: '(S)ome children are clearly visualisers,' indicating that other children may not visualise in the same ways. Pinker (1998: 89-90) explained that the visual is just one 'format of representation' used by the brain, others being phonological, grammatical and 'mentalese, the language of thought'. Mentalese enables us to acquire some impression of the information we have gained, without perhaps its detail, so enabling us to paraphrase what we have heard. We translate what we have heard into memorable sections remembering the facts, or the skeleton, what is commonly known as the 'gist'. Of course, although several people may all listen to the same story the memory of it will be shaped by previous experiences and personal recollection. Something that is important to one person may have no connection for another. In many ways this could be compared to eye-witness accounts of accidents. Although all witnesses will have been present they are likely to have slightly differing memories of an accident, depending on mental state and physical position in relation to the scene. This
idea of connections with experiences is an area that will be explored in analysis of responses of children in Chapters Five and Six.

Bromley (1996: 107), when talking about children drawing pictures, claimed that some educationalists think that too many picture books 'could hinder children's ability to use their own imagination.' She believed, however, that children simply use illustrations as a basis on which to build their own interpretations and does not see this as restricting 'their ability to conjure up pictures in their own minds.' Johnson (1998: 188) concurred and believed that picture books help children to grow intellectually, where 'pupils have drawn on the mind's resource of stored images.' This view was based on project findings where children were asked to draw pictures to tell a story. Their drawings reflected illustrations seen in picture books indicating that they used stores of images in their memories to draw upon and utilise to form new and different visions. This idea is reflective of Sartre (1993) and the concept of creative images based on using known images to form new ones. Johnson (1998: 188) called this 'the intervention of the imagination' as stored images are used but reformed in different ways.

Although the ability to visualise is an abstract, rather than a concrete, concept several people have tried to define how the process is linked to creativity. Stine (2001: 146) talked about studies demonstrating that creativity disappears by the time children are seven, due to the stifling atmosphere in schools where children learn to conform. She related work of psychologists who believe that all humans fantasise and are creative in transforming inner and outer worlds demonstrating inter-connectedness of the conscious and subconscious.
and the ability of mind to utilise the latter. Our conscious thoughts and actions may be affected by subconscious influences and our ways of conceiving of how this occurs are difficult to express.

5. Communication and the visual

Our ways of communicating our inner worlds are limited to language and visual representation in two and three-dimensional ways, even though those inner worlds may be multi-sensory. Sword (2000: 96) commented on painting with words and building images for children:

with words we paint, mine, weave, pot and carve; we create environments and ceremonies; our words have to remake experiences to enable children to make sense of what they see’ (...) ‘imagination, our personal manipulation of experiences, depends on an acute and fierce relationship with the flimsy boundary between external and internal reality, the same border that is explored and made concrete in visual works of art.

The use of art may be seen, therefore, as both a representation of one person’s imagination and as a means of stirring imagination in others. It is, in a sense, a tangible representation of visualisation. With young children illustrations in their picture books are an art form that may feed imagination. Graham (1995: 84) believed ability to visualise in young children may be directly fed by use of picture books. She is adamant that illustrations help aid interior visualisations and breadth and variety of illustrations help children to see other worlds. ‘All art creates for the audience an imaginary world which, because it is more ordered, is at once more dynamic, more complex, more surprising than reality.’ Picture books have a dual role to play. They enable children to have experience of language: oral, as they listen to the story being read; and written, as they see the connection between the oral and the shapes on the page. Picture books also
provide an art form for children to study and reflect upon. Doonan (1993) posed the idea of a composite picture where children blend visual images they can see on pages with visual images they have made in their heads, the two separate elements merging to produce new and unique visualisations in their minds. What children 'see' in an illustration depends on their experiences and the emotional reaction to features of the illustration. For example, a picture of a train may cause excitement and a flood of multi-sensory reactions in a child who has travelled on a train while, to a child devoid of that experience, it would not evoke the same reaction.

Stone (1984: 13) also discussed images and expounded the theory that they do not have to be purely visual. Although acceding that the most common images are visual, like Hooper (1976) and Johnson (1998) attested, Stone claimed that, '(We) can have images of sound (auditory), of movement (kinaesthetic or motor), of touch (tactile), etc.' He asserted that most people form some sort of image in the mind's eye, although this may not be something they realise, as it is an intrinsic part of their lives. He regarded mental pictures of tremendous importance as, 'imagery has one important feature over a simple picture of an object. It can be creative.' (p. 104). This assertion is echoed in the work of Abbs (1989: 123) who concurred that:

image-making propensity lies at the very heart of our biological nature. Images, we might say, form the first language of humankind. We are taught how to speak, but we are not taught how to dream.

This presupposes that everyone has a visual imagination that mirrors the semi-reality of dreams and experiences dreams in the same way. Some people may have vivid dreams involving all sensory experiences, not just visual and auditory while others may have less dramatic dream experiences. It poses many
questions about the nature of visualisation and whether visualisations change, grow and adapt according to our growing experience. If imagination was fed through use of strong visual images and other sensory aspects it should follow that visualisation would broaden, or become more acute, as we develop these senses.

6. Words and pictures

In storytelling and story-reading impressions are created in different ways. Relationships between the auditory and visual and how one complements and opposes the other are important in this study. In storytelling, although emphasis is on the oral, storytellers also engage the senses by involving their audience. With young children this involvement may be visual, with the use of props, or kinaesthetic, engaging actions and/or repetitive refrains. In story-reading with a picture book the visual plays an important part in unfolding story and written is different from spoken text in that it is fixed and more formal in grammatical structure. Often pictures expand the story and make visualisation easier. In the story, What Made Tiddalik Laugh?, a platypus is described but illustration makes the complex creature accessible and complements description. Although impressions are created differently in storytelling and story-reading each format demands something of listeners. They must process experiences, attempt to make sense of them and relate knowledge to previous, and possibly, imagined experience. Eco (1994:131) postulated that fiction ‘offers us the opportunity to employ limitlessly our faculties for perceiving the world and reconstructing the past.’ Whether this reconstruction is visual, verbal or a sensory mixture depends on individuals. De La Garanderie (2001: 130) believed there is a close relationship between the two and that many people need to translate their visual
evocations into verbal to aid cognition. Similarly, others take the verbal and
'contrive some schematic view of it in order to identify its essential features.' De
La Garanderie (1991) realised that 'creative imagination needs to be cultivated' in
order to expand perceptions (p. 132).

The strands of imagination, creativity and visualisation are closely linked
though for the purposes of this study it was necessary to examine them
separately to a certain degree so as to unlock and analyse images that children
encountered while listening to stories. As Bruce (1997) acknowledged this was
not an easy task. Questioning them about their visualisations was an integral part
of this study affording illuminating insight into their minds and powers of
imagination. Deliberation on this aspect forms the basis of Chapter Six where
visualisations are examined for examples of both memory-related, story based,
and creative characteristics.
Chapter Four

Research Methods and Design

1. Introduction

Data were collected over a period of seventeen months between 2000 – 2001, over two school years. One hundred and forty nine children from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds formed the initial focus of the study. Despite this variation in backgrounds, and languages understood and spoken by these children, distinctions, in terms of categories, were not made during analysis. Results and analysis, as will be expounded in subsequent chapters, considered these factors implicitly rather than explicitly. Although school populations had high numbers of children with English as an additional language, this did not have a discernible impact on results as will become apparent in tables of results. In a similar manner there was no reason to suppose that preferred learning styles (Gardner, 1993), as explored in Chapter Two, was central to results. These elements were examined in relation to individuals and encompassed in overall themes during analysis rather than evolving into discrete areas for further investigation. All children who participated were between five and seven years old, in formal education and had experienced story, in some form, as part of everyday school life. A rationale for their selection is given in Section 3, below. It was thought that such a number would lead to findings of some interest and significance. This age range was chosen as I wished to keep close to the age that Fox (1993) had used in her study where she had evidence of storybook language in oral storytelling from her young subjects. I hoped to ascertain if the same factors were present in children engaged in formal
schooling. Moreover, my recent experience as a teacher of infants gave me some insight into the type of stories that would appeal to them. As a teacher I had witnessed how young children emulated story structures, their expectations of story and some apparent influences. As a researcher I was in a different position, seeking more empirical evidence of the phenomenon previously observed but wishing to achieve this evidence in naturalistic settings.

The study was mainly qualitative research with a quantitative element, which Gorard and Taylor (2004) maintained was inevitable claiming that 'all methods of analysis use some form of number' (p 6). Searching for a methodological framework as a basis on which to build proved more problematic. It was difficult to place this study squarely into any of what Creswell (1998) termed the five traditions of research such as: biography, ethnography, case study, phenomenology and grounded theory. In many ways it had elements of each of these theories. It documented my journey from teacher to researcher so was partly autobiography; as a former teacher I was, to some degree, a participant observer, as in ethnographic studies; the phenomenon studied was the children's responses and details about those children in the final focus group formed mini-case studies. Although part of this study examined and expanded on an existing theory, that of Fox (1993), it was also involved in theorising about the nature of visualisation and evolving ideas on the nature of these visualisations and cognition. In this way the study fell more closely into the bracket of grounded theory where theory emerged from what Glaser (2004) termed a 'systemic interrogation of data'. The design emerged from the data, rather than starting from an imposed structure and analysis was 'interpretative' calling for 'flexibility in design' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 34). When in doubt
about what or how I should construct the framework for further analysis I always returned to the data for answers to questions and so became involved in a zigzag process where the data dictated the emerging design of the final study.

At the outset the objective was to obtain six stories from each child, two retellings of oral stories, two from picture books read to them and two personal stories. The stories were to be collected on audiotape for transcription at a later date. The study had two main aims:

i) to investigate the language of pupils retelling stories; and

ii) to examine imaginative responses of children to different modes of 'storying' (Rosen: 1988).

My initial hypothesis was that children would have more vivid visualisations when simply listening to oral stories, without the influence of illustrations. In a highly visual environment one may be influenced by the visual. Once a visual representation has been experienced, it is difficult to disassociate it from any other mental representations. Sometimes experiencing the visual, as in a film, after a personal mental image through written text, can result in disappointment. In fact, Beame (2000: 149) commented that 'adults often assert that a visual representation of a text prevents the full play of the imagination' and that this 'recontextualisation' of a text is 'distasteful to some readers' (p. 153) arguing that at times visual text can, in fact, enhance verbal text, a comment also reflected in Tough (1977). Both sides of the argument have weight but, as I wished to gather visual impressions that were, as far as possible, free from external influences, oral tales had to come first. These were versions of picture book stories. Smidt (1998: 59) regarded this practice as important as, when
children hear a story told and, then hear the same story read, they realise that 'it is the print that makes the story exactly the same' every time it is read.

2. Choice of stories

As the same story was to be presented to children at different times of the year in both oral and picture book format the choice of stories was important. As an experienced teacher of this age range I had three main criteria when selecting stories to tell or read for this study. Colwell (1981) emphasised the importance of choosing stories that storytellers feel comfortable with and, bearing this in mind, my criteria were that:

i) I had to have a personal engagement with the stories so that I would feel confident in their telling;

ii) stories had to stem from oral tradition; and

iii) their picture book version had to be bright and attractive to appeal to young children.

Taking these factors into consideration, the stories chosen were What Made Tiddalik Laugh?, The North Wind and the Sun, The Owl and the Woodpecker and, in the case of one of the classes, Monkey Tales. As I wished to know whether children had prior knowledge of any of them, each child was asked, as part of the data collection process, if they had seen or heard the relevant story in any form before, for familiarity with them might have had some influence on the fluency of their recounts.
The framework for analysis of children's stories had two main elements: use of language, both repeated and created, and structure; and the visualisations described in subsequent interviews. Critical interpretation of the stories was essential, Eco (1990: 57) describing it as reading 'in order to discover, along with our reactions to it, something about its nature.' Interpretation is, of course, subjective as readers have their own ideas on what is perceived.

A journal was used to keep notes on dates of visits to the schools and further information, such as: the topic being studied by the class; children's posture and attitudes during taping; their intonations and gestures while they retold their stories; the setting; and environmental influences. These were regarded as important in displaying whether respondents were confident in the storytelling contexts that I had arranged for data collection.

3. The settings

Two inner-city, multiethnic primary schools in Cardiff were selected for the variety of backgrounds of their children, my familiarity with them and their ease of access. This was essential as data collection was to be spread over one and a half years. Six classes were involved in the research. For reasons of anonymity the names of schools, pupils and teachers have been changed.

The schools had many common features. They were large, Victorian and Edwardian, terraced housing, although some children lived in semi-detached and detached housing close by and others were from outside the catchment areas. Both schools had children from a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, typical of many inner-city schools today. The first school, Albert
Square, had 250 pupils on roll, plus 26 nursery children. The number at Key Stage One, my specific focus, was 54, in two classes of 27. Approximately 15% of pupils on roll were entitled to free school meals, rather below the authority and national average, and 48% had English as an additional language, according to official school records. The second school, Victoria Place, was rather larger, with 336 on roll, plus 52 nursery children. There were a total of 95 Key Stage One pupils in four classes of 25, 27, 19 and 24. Approximately 12% were entitled to free school meals and 46% had English as an additional language. All six of these classes, across the two schools, were involved in the study.

The schools had a mix, typical of many inner cities, of those children with English as an additional language, special needs or above average ability. Their diversity was a further reason why they were selected. As Kirby (1998) claimed, storytelling is not always easy for all children and depends on various factors, including age and mother tongue. The nature of the pupil composition of these schools gave opportunity to consider responses across a range of age and academic ability. Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke (2000: 56) indicated that 'the task of learning English as an additional language is a long-term one' and children participating in the research, both from the indigenous population and those from differing ethnic groups, were at various stages in language development. Setting the research in such schools was not to identify particularly any trends with regard to second language learners but to provide a diverse range of learners. Although set in an inner city in Wales this investigation could equally have been placed in any school in the country.
Victoria Place was familiar to me, as I had previously worked there as a teacher, Albert Square less so, although I knew some members of staff. I approached the headteacher in Albert Square and explained the purpose of my study in order to gain access. I also approached the headteacher in Victoria Place to conduct my research in the school. I received permission, in *locus parentis*, from both to work with children. The research study began, in effect, in March 2000 in Albert Square where I spent some time observing and working with children in groups in both classes before starting to collect data. I felt that earning the respect of both children and staff prior to data collection would alleviate difficulties that might arise from an unknown figure trying to elicit information in an unfamiliar way as once data collection started I was working with individuals and recording children’s voices on audio-tape. Data collection in the form of recalls and interviews started in March after the first storytelling. Although children in schools may have been used to listening to audiotapes, and occasionally being recorded, working with an adult on a one-to-one basis while being recorded was outside the norm. In addition, asking children to explain their thinking in detail, as I was doing, was something a class teacher would not have time to do, especially with large class sizes so maintaining good relations with everyone was essential. From these data collection sessions I also produced observation notes for speaking and listening assessments of all fifty-four children in the classes for teachers. I also made available to teachers copies of some audiotapes that provided evidence of oral work that children had completed.

Although both involved a great deal of time, in terms of goodwill these observation notes appeared to be worth the effort. Teachers reported that they found the notes supportive in helping them to establish assessment portfolios for
every child. While listening to the recalls of children and writing immediate impressions that were different to the deeper analysis that would be required by the study, it was, nevertheless, interesting as it gave opportunity to gain overviews of the classes and particulars of each child. Making notes helped refresh my memories of the sessions. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1989) would regard this as a ‘holistic approach’ to interpretation for, instead of recording only the basic information that I required in relation to the recalls of the children, I was able to gain a wider set of data from my field notes by recording thoughts about the speaking and listening skills, taking a teacher viewpoint, rather than that of researcher. These were to be used by class teachers and needed to be related to curriculum requirements, such as taking turns in speaking and listening. (See Appendix)

Once I became a regular figure in Albert Square the children called me the ‘storytelling lady’ and appeared happy for me to work with them. Formal data collection in Albert Square’s two classes then took five months, over two academic terms, March to July, 2000. It involved making twenty-two visits to the school and took place in classrooms, the deputy head’s office, a utility room and the hallway. The first wave of data collection took place on Friday afternoons. This proved to be unsatisfactory as the first class with which I worked had physical education half-way through the session, so that the number of children who could be interviewed was minimal. It required four storytellings and readings to collect recalls from all the children in the class, resulting in lack of parity between collection procedures in the two classes concerned, one of which had more storytelling experience than the other. This type of anomaly could occur naturally as some teachers employ oral storytelling and storybook reading more
frequently than others but for the purposes of the research it was a concern.
Later in the year it was agreed that I could start storytelling or story-reading in the
morning and collection of data proved easier and less disruptive. As end of term
approached it became possible to visit more frequently as my work commitments
became less restrictive and the school was preparing for the summer holiday,
resulting in a more relaxed interpretation of the timetable.

In Victoria Place, working with four classes, collection was spread over
the whole academic year from September 2000 to July 2001. As I had worked
there previously I was conversant with both staff and pupils and a period of
acclimatisation was not necessary. I made twenty-six research visits and
collected information in classrooms, corridors and the canteen. My experience in
Albert Square was an important factor when negotiating times for data collection
in Victoria Place, where all storytellings or story-readings took place first thing in
the morning, with the whole class, before their class teacher settled to the
business of the day. After the storytelling or story-reading each child was taken
individually to record their recounts and be interviewed. Interviews were informal
and more akin to a literacy conference session than a set question and answer
format. This is further expanded in Section 4, below. The time I was able to
allocate to visits varied according to my work commitments and class timetables.
Half a day was usually assigned to story collection although occasionally I was
able to spend a morning and part of the afternoon. Recordings in Victoria Place
often spread into the afternoon. This had the advantage that a greater number of
retellings of one story could be collected in one day. On the other hand, children
could lose the immediacy of the story as the day progressed and forget details
or, indeed, the converse could be true and they could expand on their knowledge

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through discussion with others. Although these points were considered, there seemed to be no discernible difference in stories retold during the morning or afternoon sessions in terms of length or detail.

To reduce one possible source of variation I acted as both storyteller and story-reader in all classes in both schools. The method of collection of data was the same, although its location varied from school to school, class to class and even day to day. This resulted in more naturalistic data, set in real time. I became part of the setting, to a degree and a familiar figure to both children and teachers which, I believe, helped in obtaining data. Both schools were supportive and class teachers as accommodating as possible in terms of allowing access to their classrooms and withdrawal of children.

4. Methods of collection

My original plan was relatively simple. I intended to tell a story and ask children, on an individual basis, to retell it. During the following session, a week later, I planned to read the picture book version of the same story and ask them, on an individual basis, to retell it again. Initially I hoped to collect personal stories from each child on the third week. This procedure: oral story; storybook; and personal story, collected at weekly intervals was to be repeated twice with each class. This should have resulted in a total of six stories from each child, collected over the same time interval. All stories were to be audio taped for transcription and analysis. Immediately following the retellings children were to be interviewed about visualisations and responses to the stories told or read. This interview process was semi-structured in terms of questions asked of the children. In
general the opening question after storytelling was, 'Did you see anything when you listened to the story?' This was followed by other questions mainly springing from responses of individual children, although questions generally focused on similar themes (Appendix Two). After story-reading, questions related to illustrations and children were asked to describe their favourite picture, or character (Appendix Three). Although questioning had some focus, it was not rigidly adhered to. Ensuring that children felt comfortable in an interview session, so maintaining a conversational tone, was important. I did not want them to regard these as the usual question and answer sessions which they would have experienced in class, in case this produced difficulties for them (Crystal, 1976).

However, my original plan had to be adapted and changed once data collection started for practical reasons concerning timetables and children's absences and because I realised that greater time needed to elapse between storytelling and story-reading to allow short term memories to fade. Collection of recalls from oral stories was still made first as I wished to analyse children's visualisations without prior influence of picture books. D'Arcy (2002) stated that once an image is presented it influences visualisations in the future and Alhberg (2002) agreed that, consciously or subconsciously, we are all influenced by stories, personal or otherwise, we have experienced. This could be to do with the nature of memory. Cassells (1991: 11) explored different types of memory including 'recognition', which is when something seems familiar. One may be aware of this phenomenon when meeting someone one has not seen for a long time or when one hears a piece of music. In these circumstances one may be conscious of some recognition while, at other times, there may be no conscious memory of people, places or events that have been experienced. Lee and da
Gupta (1995) asserted that short-term memory capacity increases with age, although they also postulate that young children may have the same capacity but cannot make full use of it because they do not possess adult strategies for memory recall. My argument here is that, once experienced, iconic memory of a book would have some influence on visualisations of children, a factor I wished to avoid, where possible.

In the same way it could be argued that hearing a story before having it read aloud could influence children's recalls. At this young age auditory memories can fade quickly. Children have a number of different texts presented to them through the normal school day and home reading which could easily lead to forgetting a story they had just heard and regarding it as a transitory experience. Bearing this in mind I adjusted my original framework to permit time to elapse, to allow short-term memories to fade, before reading the picture book text. In Albert Square this meant a gap of between two weeks and three months. In Victoria Place, working in more classes and having more time to conduct the research, the time between storytellings and story-readings was between four and five months, except in one class where, due to the illness of a member of staff, data collection was restricted, as explained in Section 8. I told all oral stories first in all classes and then collected personal stories before reading picture book versions.

Oral stories often have a strong moral basis with discernible characters and rhythm. Tellers can adjust stories according to the apparent needs and response of audiences. Eye contact and gestures are central to stories bringing into focus issues of story, style and teller (Wilson, 2006). In contrast, written
story has restrictions. Words are permanent, fixed in time and space and, even though readers are able to give interpretations of those words by using tone of voice and expression, there are limitations. Readers can embellish a story with tone of voice, pace and facial expression but cannot change written texts.

During oral versions I made some changes to written formats of stories. Deliberate changes helped to avoid explanations, such as describing a platypus. I also wanted to see if any of the language, or characters that I used in the oral versions were echoed in recalls. In *Who made Tiddalik laugh?* I substituted a platypus with ants who tickled Tiddalik to make him laugh. In this story Tiddalik drank all the water in the world and the animals had to make him laugh so that the water would come out again. Tiddalik was not amused by any of the animals’ antics but when he saw Platypus he laughed so much all the water burst from him like a waterfall. The oral version omitted Platypus but had an army of ants who climbed up Tiddalik’s body tickling him so much he could not stop laughing.

(Illustrations from *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* by Joanna Troughton (1994) ©Joanna Troughton are reproduced by permission from Penguin Books Ltd.)
As may be seen from these illustrations attempting to describe a platypus prior to storytelling would, arguably, have been problematic and possibly destroyed the flow of storytelling.

*The North Wind and the Sun* was embellished with similes, such as 'the ships sank like stones to the bottom of the harbour'. The reason for the argument between the wind and the sun, basically a power struggle, was omitted. In the third story, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, beavers came to the forest to gnaw at Owl's tree.

(Illustrations from *The Owl and the Woodpecker* by Brian Wildsmith (1999) ©Brian Wildsmith are reproduced by permission from Oxford University Press)

Illustration 3 The beavers gnaw at Owl's tree

In the oral version a man who was going to chop down the tree, until a storm forced him to leave, replaced these creatures. For those children in Albert Square who had a fourth story, Dan, the peddler in *Monkey Tales*, was described simply as a hat seller. This was a tale about a peddler who had all his caps
stolen by mischievous monkeys. Although the tale was uncomplicated in structure the word ‘peddler’ is rarely heard nowadays so it was simpler to replace it instead of beginning the story with an explanation. The basic story remained the same.

5. Outline of data collection process

5.1 Albert Square and Victoria Place

My first visits to Albert Square had taken place on Friday afternoons. The first few visits were observational to familiarise myself with routines, children and staff. Once data collection started I spent an average of one morning or afternoon a week in the school and toward the end of term I sometimes spent a whole day with the children.

In a whole class setting children listened to a story either told or read to them and then they collectively recounted orally the main events of the story. With picture book texts this recapping of events was aided by a further view of the illustrations. This type of sequencing in whole class sessions was a familiar routine for children and helped them to remember main story events. As soon as possible following this class session individuals were taken to a quieter area for recording of their story recall, on a one to one informal basis. Each pupil was introduced on the tape recorder before telling their story, usually away from distractions and other background noises that might hinder transcription. It was essential to ensure that children felt at ease with me and the equipment. Taped stories and interviews varied in length from about 3 –15 minutes depending on each child’s fluency and ability to communicate clearly.
Enabling each child to give a version of the story without interference from others was paramount. Recordings were made initially in a corner of the class but this mostly proved to be too noisy so that I was permitted to use the office or utility room when they were empty. On a couple of occasions I sat in the hallway with children. Some children found this situation unusual and reacted in different ways. Some were curious, others nervous, shy or overexcited. Sometimes we were disturbed by other children or adults, either by accident, or because the recording area was in a thoroughfare used by everyone in the school.

The order children came to me was random, as directed by teachers in the first instance. I used a simple tick list, in the form of a grid, to note who had told their stories and were absent. It may have been simpler to have used register order but that would have given an age and gender bias as children were arranged by date of birth with the eldest first and boys followed by girls. Random selection by teachers ensured a mixed order and was less troublesome for them. Teachers organised their classes into working groups and sometimes wished to work with a particular group, so that the removal of children from such a group would have been disruptive. Occasionally children would not be available during my visits, either due to absence through sickness or because they were receiving special help from the support teacher. For these reasons I was able to collect a full set of six recalls from only forty-four of the fifty-four children in Key Stage One.
Personal stories were collected following a slightly different procedure in groups of between four and six gathered together in the office. It was felt that a wider audience was needed for this type of storytelling and that children might relate events more freely to a peer group audience. However, although Lewis (1992) advocated this type of format with young children it may have had an inhibiting influence on those in this study. Lewis used group interviews as a research tool and thought they produced 'greater depth and breadth in responses' (p. 414). She thought that in some cases children might be less intimidated by small group work. I envisaged this as being similar to the 'news time' sessions often witnessed in infant classrooms. These were in contrast to the one to one sessions conducted after storytellings and story-readings. I thought that giving children an opportunity to work with others in a small group would encourage them to talk more freely. Repeating a story already heard was a different focus from sharing personal anecdotes with an adult, familiar or otherwise, so that it was hoped this procedure would give them more confidence. I asked them to think of something that had happened to them that they would like to share with the group. To begin I told them of some incident that had occurred in my life over the preceding days and embellished the facts a little to make it more exciting. For example, an incident where the car had run out of petrol was turned into a drama with driving rain and the break-down truck, complete with flashing lights, arriving to tow it away. They had a few minutes to think before the round of stories began. A signal, usually a toy, was used to indicate storytellers, who introduced themselves by name and then told a personal story. When their story was finished the toy was passed to the next person. All stories were recorded on audiotape. My impression was that they
lacked the rich language and plot structures of retellings and initial analysis of a sample of them indicated a paucity of imagination (Harrett: 2001). For these reasons it was decided that the main focus of the study should be confined to retellings of storytellings and story-readings. Moreover, collection of data was to concentrate on gathering only four stories from each child; two retellings of oral stories and two from picture book stories, collected at different times of the year.

In Victoria Place there were four classes at Key Stage One, two of twenty five and twenty seven at year one and two of nineteen and twenty four, respectively, at year two, where the same procedures for storytelling and story-reading were followed although the collection of data was spread over a greater length of time. Recordings were made in the corridor, classroom or the canteen.

5.2. Aims and procedures: storytelling

5.2.1. Investigation of language

The procedures used in storytelling, story-reading and selecting responses to personal stories are laid out in terms of the aims given in Section 1 of this chapter. The first concerned the investigation of language. As each oral storytelling is unique, sessions were recorded and transcribed so that the finer details of each story could be identified. Children sat in a circle and were told they would have to listen carefully as I had no pictures to show them and they would have to imagine events for themselves. They were also told that I would be asking each one to retell the story on tape afterwards so that I could hear their versions, a tape of which would be given to their teacher. On reflection, this may have had an inhibiting effect on the ability of the children to improvise when they
could not remember details of the story. After storytelling we recapped and sequenced the main events, working together as a group. Cassells (1991) reported how successive recounts of a story can result in fewer parts being omitted. Children then recorded their stories individually. Teachers again decided in which order they came to me, depending on which class activities had been planned for the day. Sometimes I was able to request individuals but this varied from day to day and class to class. Children were asked to recount the story when they were ready or to make up their own version if they were unsure and notes were made contemporaneously on the use of gesture, expression, eye contact and any other significant features of the retelling. In some cases, where children maintained eye contact, notes were made immediately afterwards. I did not wish to distract these children or jeopardise their story recalls by disrupting the flow of narrative.

5.2.2 Responses

The second aim was to establish children's responses to the mode of 'storying'. Immediately following their recount children were questioned about their visualisations while listening to the story. The questions had a loose framework as the direction depended very much on individual response (Appendix Two). Tough (1977: 194) maintained that, 'the dialogue with individual children that follows a story or a poem can lead children to explore their experiences more fully in a number of different ways.' Bower (1997) argued that evaluating stories leads to greater personal understanding of meanings and events recounted. Both were evident as children responded in various oral modes. Some, when time allowed, drew pictures, either with me or in class
afterwards. Inclusion of data of this type would not have enabled me to maintain a focus on language usage although it may have been useful in exploration of imagination and visualisation. Rabey (2003: 117), a teacher and an art expert with experience of interpreting drawings, asserted that children's drawings helped them to 'think aloud' and enabled adults to view the metacognitive process. Although an experienced teacher my expertise did not include art, except at a level expected from any primary practitioner, so that I was not altogether confident at exploring this sort of response. In addition, given time restrictions, collection of drawings was not possible with all pupils and was not included in analysis. (Some examples of children's art are included in Appendix Four).

Some children found improvisation difficult as they were used to 'getting things right' in school and were sometimes unsure of its purpose. They had to be assured that adding their own features to a retelling was permitted, indeed, encouraged, as every oral tale is different. Gillard (1996) commented on the fact that children are restricted in school and soon learn to recognise the types of behaviour and answers required of them in the process of becoming a pupil (Dowling, 1989). Bernstein (1996) delineated a complex web of regulative discourse upon which both pupils and teachers depend for engagement with instructional discourse. Children soon perceive that when teachers ask questions they are expecting a certain type of answer and this can result in reluctance if they feel that they do not know what that is or what form it should take. Oral storytelling requires them to 'think outside the box' and some find this complicated, outside some of their normal school experiences. As both teacher and researcher I was enabling these children to experience something outside
the usual schooled experience. I had no preconceived ideas of what they were going to say and encouraged them to create what they could not remember. My role had a certain duality. As a teacher I was facilitating their learning by encouraging them to extend their thinking and as a researcher I was listening and closely observing their modes and methods of delivery of stories. It was an interesting position and enabled me to reflect on experiences from different viewpoints. This had advantages and disadvantages, further explored in Chapter Seven.

5.3 Aims and procedures: story-reading

5.3.1 Investigation of language

Procedures were very similar to those for storytelling. To begin with, all children sat facing me so that they had a view of the picture book. The books used were standard size so some children inevitably had a better view of pictures than others. They were told they would be asked to retell the story afterwards and encouraged to listen carefully as what they would see and hear might be slightly different from the previous story I had told them. After reading the story we recapped the main events, this time with the help of pictures. Each picture was held and rotated so that every child could see and the sequence of events discussed. This had advantages and disadvantages. The view that some children had of the pictures could have been restricted. Although I rotated the book and held it forward so that everyone would have an opportunity to look carefully I was using ordinary sized texts, not the big book format that children were used to and which would have provided everyone with an opportunity to see more detail in the illustrations. The reasons for this were that the texts used
were not available in big book format and using the smaller version indicated that this was an experience that was for pleasure, not the usual shared reading format prescribed in the Literacy Hour where use of the big book is essential. The children also had experience of story-reading by their teachers when a smaller book was used, usually at the end of the day, so that this was not outside their experience. Recounts were then recorded on an individual basis, using the same procedures as in storytelling, to enable comparison of the story language that children used with the original text.

5.3.2 Responses

The semi-structured mode of interview that I used was more restricted than that which was employed following storytelling, as I was asking for responses to pictures and story, trying to elicit how children had reacted to this stimulus. In such a highly visual society one cannot help but be influenced by visual experiences. Arzipe and Styles (2003) examined this in detail and concluded that scrutiny was essential for understanding pictorial text and giving children time to reflect produced extraordinary responses. Although children in my study did not have this dedicated time to study, in depth, illustrations presented to them they were, nevertheless, able to engage immediately with them and make some connections with their learning, as will be further demonstrated in Chapter Five. I also asked about their preferred mode of listening to story – whether oral or read. Subsequent research, in collaboration with a colleague from another institution resulted in a complementary small-scale investigation into perceptions of story that young children hold (Harrett and Benjamin, 2005). In my study several children expressed preferences for stories
from picture books, as told stories were not 'real' stories. They enjoyed the colours and humour employed by the artists. Some children needed these pictures to help them to form ideas about stories presented to them and these factors are also considered in Chapter Five.

5.4 Audio tape-recording

At the beginning of data collection I had not long been out of the classroom as a full time teacher so those in both schools regarded me as fellow teacher, as much as researcher. Realising that I knew about the natural ebb and flow of any school day was advantageous as relationships and conversations between us were relaxed and I was able to ask for details, such as dates of birth, without appearing intrusive. Teachers identified pupils receiving help in school either because they had English as an additional language or special educational needs.

During individual recording each child sat beside me with the tape recorder on a table in front of us. Each child was asked to speak clearly so that the machine could pick up their voice. They were first asked about prior knowledge of the story then introduced, by name, on the tape, before their recall and interview were recorded. The machine was then switched off. Sometimes the child switched off the machine at my request. If a child paused for more than a minute during recording, or expressed concern in any way, either by word or facial expression, the tape recorder was switched off and started again when the child was ready to continue.
While, as I explained in Section 4 I changed parts of some stories by omitting points or adding other details, as a deliberate ploy to aid understanding and to serve as reference points for language comparisons some teachers 'helping' the process caused a few difficulties. In the middle of one taping session I discovered that a class teacher had been repeating the story with children and 'filling in' the part I had deliberately omitted, obviously helping some to recall its patterns. I did not know about this until later and was unable to note at the time which children were affected. As far as I am aware this only occurred in Albert Square.

It was clear to children that they would all have a turn at retelling their versions of the story, though exactly when was decided by their class teachers. While it might have been better to have seen children in alphabetical, or register order, to facilitate record keeping but, as a guest in the schools, it was essential not to disrupt the running of classes more than was necessary and, as noted above in Section 1, a more uniform collection order could have influenced my perceptions of response. As it was, I still had to contend with the possibly confounding effects of the sequence of children's appearances. Those who came 'first' or 'early' had the advantage that the story was fresh in their memory but the disadvantage was that they would not have had time for reflection. The random sequence, decided by teachers, at least ensured variability, rather than the same individuals coming 'early' or 'late' in the interview order, which in this case was regarded as advantageous to the research.
All children had opportunity to demonstrate their storytelling skills and providing the tape was clear and the retelling was not completely scaffolded by questioning on my part, their contributions formed part of the analysis. However, some children needed a great deal of scaffolding, either prompted by questions, or supplied with words or events, or by being allowed to use the pictures in the books. If my prompts were proportionately greater than stories recounted by children it was deemed that these stories were, not sufficiently the total product of those children and most were discounted at final analysis, though some were included, as will be further explained in Chapters Five and Six, which concentrate on analysis of data collected.

Children’s reactions to being recorded on tape varied enormously. Some found it inhibiting, or even embarrassing at first while others were obviously excited. I tried to make it as normal as possible by using the tape machine in an obvious and very matter of fact way. If children seemed nervous, when time allowed, I permitted them to listen to themselves straight after recording. Inhibition vanished and generally gave way to giggles and even requests to record another story straight away. The Rosens (1973: 53) discussed this problem and commented that although it is often assumed that children will change for the worse it:

is also possible that the tape recorder sometimes adds incentive to their efforts and the fact that their words are not going to vanish into the air places a higher value on them.

Even though children may be used to listening to audio tapes in school and at home it is unusual for children to be recorded on a regular basis. Beame (2000: 140) asserted that ‘because talk is necessarily a thing of the moment, it’s
difficult to capture; and when we do capture talk on tape, sometimes the very act of taping alters the context and so affects the talk itself.’ Although audio taping was bound to have an influence on the performance of children when retelling their stories, it was deemed the most reliable and convenient method of gathering data over such a long period and in different recording environments. Labov (1972: 209) claimed that ‘the only way to obtain sufficient good data on the speech of any one person is through an individual tape-recorded interview’ which were used extensively in his work. While technology has changed in the course of time since Labov’s statement I wished to make sessions as natural as possible, without compromising ethical concerns. Using a hidden video would have undoubtedly produced a fuller form of data collection. Ogden (2000) used this successfully with young children as she postulated that gestures and expressions used at this age were required to support communication. Mackey (2003) also found video an invaluable tool when assessing children’s responses to picture books. Although acknowledging the benefits of video this would have been both difficult to set up on a regular basis and would not have been ethical in terms of subjects being unaware of my intentions. In reality, using a video, even openly, would have required the help of a second person in this situation. I had to rely on field notes and memory to aid interpretation. It is difficult to judge how taping affected the performance of these children. The machine used was large and very visible for I felt that they should be aware of the process and that a dictation machine, although more compact, would be more distracting as it would have to be hand-held, either by myself or the child.

For oral storytelling I recorded myself telling stories and class commentaries before individual retellings. Class commentaries were difficult to
distinguish as the machine did not pick up all the voices and children were
difficult to identify. Not all members of the classes contributed to discussion so
these commentaries were not included in data analysis.

5.5 Transcription procedures

I started with tapes from Albert Square. Representing oral script in written
form is a difficult thing as it has little, obvious punctuation. The process of
transcription can, in itself, become a form of interpretation so that great care had
to be taken to ensure that it was as close an approximation of the original as
possible. In the first instance it was necessary to listen to stories to determine
whether they could be used. Stories that were inaudible, due to background
noise or the voice levels of children, were reluctantly omitted. Wells (1986) also
found this to be a problem. As the objective was to collect a number of stories
from each child by the end of the collection period those who had been absent
and for whom full data was unavailable were also discounted for full transcription.
This meant that a total of ten children from Albert Square were not used, leaving
full data collection for forty-four.

Fox (1993) did not wish to interfere with the stories her young children
told by adding punctuation and this seemed a good model to follow. However,
some hesitations needed to be made obvious in written form. Sometimes this
was simple, as the child would say "er" or "eh" but often the child would just stop
mid-sentence. Repeated phrases or words used were included in transcripts, as
were self-corrections and part words. Garbarino and Stott (1992: 197) asserted
that a transcript 'should represent the actual features of speakers – pause,
interruptions, false starts, non-lexical expressions (um-hm) and unclear speech.' Inclusion of these illustrated the fluency of storytelling and some indication of how children were thinking or organising thoughts related to stories. Notes made during retellings became research diary entries, used to illustrate intonation of voice, gestures or facial expressions, as these would not always be obvious from transcriptions. Hesitations of less than ten seconds were indicated by ellipsis, longer pauses by (p). Punctuation was not added to transcriptions as this would immediately add fluency, or lack of it, to the oral text produced by the child. Stories were transcribed as heard and extra basic notes about external features, such as eye contact, added either in the margin or at the end of the story, where relevant, using research diary notes.

The transcription process was long and laborious so that the help of a secretary was enlisted. Listening to tapes again, while reading a hard copy of the transcription, helped to ensure accuracy and further familiarity with the data. Initial analysis of these stories enabled me to gain impressions of trends to be followed in analysis of stories from Victoria Place.

During the second phase of transcription, following data collection at Victoria Place, procedures followed a similar pattern. Forty-seven, from the original ninety-five in Key Stage One from Victoria Place were also reluctantly omitted giving full data collection from forty-eight children, a total of one hundred and ninety-two stories and a further sixty stories from the remaining forty-seven children for whom full data was not available. Reasons for omissions were numerous and are further discussed in Sections 4 and 8. They mainly involved absences, some long term and inaudible tapes produced by some children new
to the school for whom English was an additional language. Following transcription of Albert Square tapes and listening to those from Victoria Place I realised that analysis of all of them, in the depth required for a study of this type, was impractical and I needed to decide on a final study focus, as described in section eight.

Data from this final focus group was categorised and coded for influences relating to language use. The process was similar to that described by Richards (2005) where topic coding was followed by analytical coding. The categories were dictated by both my research questions and by the data itself. I had thought to identify words and phrases, which were clearly repetitions from original texts. Examination of stories revealed new ideas and led my thinking in different ways. This was in agreement with the assertions of Strauss and Corbin (1998: 66) who stated that 'it is the data that are relevant'. Categories related to influences on language are further explained and examined in Chapter Five.

6. Methods of story analysis

Story analysis was to cover language used for retellings, with reference to the original texts, and creative or imaginative response. Sentence length was considered as a marker but Crystal (1976) described the complexities of measurement when related to language and length of sentences, raising several questions to refute its usefulness. In her analysis of storytelling Fox (1993) used T-unit analysis to determine the length of stories as a measure of development. A T-unit is essentially an independent clause which, if punctuated, could stand as a sentence. T-units increase in length as children mature. This process indicated
in detail the components and complexity of the stories her young subjects were
telling. Fox used their everyday storytellings as the basis for her research and
was interested in how these children used the language of story in their everyday
recounts. Length of stories varied from child to child and also from day to day
and the length, in T-units, of these utterances provided an important indicator of
involvement with these narratives and the development of the children as
storytellers.

This method of analysis was considered for my study but, as the stories
my children were telling were recounts, not original stories, it was deemed
inappropriate. Length of recount depended very much on length of original story,
so a measure of this type would not have been a fair indicator of use of language
and the influence of story language. Some of the stories used in the research
were longer than others, so that responses to them would tend to be longer, and
possibly more detailed, than others. For example, retellings of What Made
Tiddilik Laugh or The Owl and the Woodpecker would naturally be much longer
than those of The North Wind and the Sun. I decided to use fluency, in terms of
coherence and cohesion in stories and attention to details, such as events, as
markers in analysis. These are indicated in the rest of this section.

Labov (1978) also devised a methodology for analysis of stories which
indicated that all stories have a framework. Labov's work is still referred to by
researchers today (Laughame, 1998) so this was regarded as a possible
structure for analysis. The steps in this framework are sequential and follow a
pattern: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result or resolution
and coda. This framework was considered but once again, this was intended for
the analysis of original stories so could not be applied to the retellings that children in this study produced.

Bauman (1977: 55) gave a pattern to oral stories: introduce the character and set the scene, the events and the punch line. Using this framework for analysis is suitable for oral stories of a personal kind, not recounts of stories already heard, although all the stories did, indeed, contain some of these elements, if the conclusion could be regarded as the punch line. Bauman's work was based on anecdotal stories of adults and he analysed the different types of stories his subjects told. His work was more of a study in social behaviour and the relative sophistication of these tales would not compare with stories children retold, so this method was considered equally unsuitable.

Applebee (1978) and Walsh (2002) devised other ways of recording the elements of story that I followed in devising my own system for analysing the language used by children. Applebee used structures related to Vygotsky's (1962) stages of concept development termed heaps, sequences, primitive narratives, unfocused chains, focused chains and narratives. This method was unsuitable for analysis of recounts as they were recalls of narratives, not personal stories invented by the children, as in Applebee's study. Nevertheless, some of the measures used for further analysis by Applebee proved useful in composing a model for mine. Taking elements from each mode of analysis, as detailed in his supplementary tables (pp. 160–173) which included markers, such as formal beginnings and endings, a number of distinct incidents, actions, characters and a degree of fantasy, I devised a model for analysis of recalls. This model involved distinguishing between different elements of stories as indications
of attention to detail. In the first instance structure was examined followed by a closer inspection of language for evidence of repeated or created words and phrases. I decided that a discernible opening and ending for a story and a basic understanding of plot structure was important. Beame (2003: xv) reflected on text grammars related to fairy tales describing them as 'very recognisable' and structured so that 'even very young children know how they begin and end'. Brief preliminary analysis of two hundred recalls, from both oral and read versions of stories revealed that seventy-one percent of children used discernible story openings and sixty-five percent distinct endings so this was indicative of a realistic measure to use. Peach and Burton (1995: 66) regarded plot as important and commented that 'all narratives consist of essential elements upon which their structure depends.' The sequencing of all story events was not regarded as important, as long as it was broadly correct in that the beginning, middle and end were all in order. Some of the stories were quite complex and it was felt that imposing a strict structure in terms of sequencing events correctly would detract from the main purpose of defining the language and creativity of the recalls. For example, in Who Made Tiddalik Laugh? the animals try all sorts of things to try to make Tiddalik laugh, as illustrated below.

(Illustrations from What Made Tiddalik Laugh? by Joanna Troughton (1994) ©Joanna Troughton are reproduced by permission from Penguin Books Ltd.)
Illustration 4: Telling jokes
Illustration 5: Making funny faces

Illustration 6: Nasty tricks
Illustration 7: Funny Dances

Illustration 8: Singing songs
As may be seen from these illustrations each event is separate and does not depend on any other. Any of these events could appear before, or after, any of the others, or even be omitted without detracting from the main storyline.

Using the original text, spoken or written, I gave a point for every recognisable event identified in the original and compared this with children's accounts. Elaboration of these events in any form also scored a point. Any element added by a child, not in the original text, was counted as something innovative and, therefore, a mark of creativity or indicator of imagination. None of these additions were regarded as irrelevant as the purpose of the exercise was to allow children to improvise if they wished. This was recorded on a grid sheet so that results would be easily identified and was similar to Walsh's (2002) system where she used a tick list to indicate if children in her study were referring to words or pictures. In this way it became clear who had obtained the highest scores for both remembering the story and who had displayed some creativity when they told their versions. Jennings (1991) commented that a successful retelling will rely on recall of the plot outline but will use higher level thinking skills to make a story more exciting. Language used for retellings was examined for evidence of repeated or created language. Repeated language referred to words or phrases children used directly related to original texts, oral or read, and created language when they had embellished a story, either by inventing a new character or scene or by using different vocabulary.
7. Methods for analysis of visualisations

As stated in Chapter Three identification of visualisations of young children was challenging. Description of visual imagery required a degree of verbal communication that demanded much from my young subjects. I investigated different methods for analysis of interview transcriptions considering different approaches, such as text and discourse analysis (Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter, 2005) and decided to concentrate on in-depth analysis loosely based on Gee’s (1999) tools of inquiry. As I realised that this would require a deep interrogation of transcriptions I decided to narrow the focus still further. I identified six children whose responses I studied in greater depth, analysing the interaction between each child and myself as researcher. While this provided a reflective way of exploring the data, and provided further insight in these relationships, I realised on completion of analysis that it had not addressed the aims of my research study. Analysis of this aspect had to begin again.

D'Arcy (2002) stated that people respond to oral story in different ways, some seeing story cinematically as they have a vivid visual response, while others absorb the story theme through feelings as a reaction to what they are hearing. This reflects the iconic or echoic sensory register described in Cassells (1991). Research into different learning styles (Gardner, 1999; Smith, 1991) has sought to demonstrate that we all learn in different ways and have preferred learning styles. Bearing differences of response in mind, analysis of responses to original texts, oral or written, had to be defined. I had to consider and devise a method that would be in keeping with my study and focus on my hypothesis that oral stories would evoke more vivid visualisations. This method was based on
the same structure used as the basis for analysis of language. Each transcription was coded for evidence of visualisations related to original texts, oral or read, and utterances were sub-divided into different sections, story based or creative. A tally was also conducted to compare these responses and recorded on a grid.

The degree to which children were visual in their responses was measured by the depth of information they volunteered during interviews following retellings. Marks for originality were scored so that children who gave long and detailed responses of an original nature were more likely to obtain a high creativity count. Some children gave quite vivid descriptions of characters or places in the story in response to questioning, relating minute details of dress or physical characteristics. Responses were defined as being story-based or creative, depending on whether they referred to a specific point related in either oral or book text. In some cases references were difficult to categorise as they could have had multi-meanings or been related to previous knowledge. This is further explained in Chapter Six on analysis of visualisations. Children who stated that they did not have visualisations were questioned about their responses and often then described visual features of the stories but some children were adamant that they did not ‘see’ anything and simply remembered the words. This appeared to be consistent with Birch’s (2000) comments that ability to imagine should not be regarded as solely visual and that to some people sound was more important than vision. As will be further explored in Chapter Six some children in this study depended on aural memories. Smith (1996: 54) referred to this type of sensitivity to words as ‘linguistic intelligence’
where some people learned through a particular ability to relate to the sounds, rhythms and rhymes of words.

Most children were able to give some visual response to texts but others obviously reacted in a less than visual manner. For this section of analysis visual responses were analysed. For children who responded only to the aural and who were unable to articulate any visual interpretation this method was inappropriate. Questioning more deeply usually elicited some response, but it was difficult to ascertain if I was leading these children to respond in a certain way. As Rosen, (1988: 185) said, 'imagination is the act of the imaginer' so qualifying responses to questioning was the most challenging part of this research analysis.

8. The final study focus

Following data collection for the second part of the study in Victoria Place, full analysis of all story recalls in the depth required was becoming unrealistic as the number of stories recorded totalled more than five hundred, excluding those personal stories collected, and involved more than a hundred hours of audio tape. A selection process was needed. I decided that analysis of stories collected in Albert Square, the first stage of the data collection process, was required before continuing to transcribe and analyse further. This proved to be beneficial as several factors became apparent.

Labov’s (1999) comments about fluency increasing with the age of the child appeared to be correct. Analysis of the tapes from Albert Square showed
that, in general, older pupils were more secure in their storytelling abilities and also more capable of explaining choices and visualisations. There are always exceptions but my research diary reads: ‘the older children were more confident.’ Although there were a few exceptions, the general trend was for Year Two children to produce more coherent and structured retellings and also to be more forthcoming about their responses to stories. This would appear to be opposed to the idea that children’s creativity is suppressed by the narrowness of the school curriculum, which is what I had thought when listening to their personal anecdotes. It was an interesting dilemma. These difficulties with parity of experience as well as other problems within the data, as detailed in Section 5.3, led me to regard its collection as a formative experience, and the first phase of the research.

To ensure that my impressions of the data collected in Albert Square were not isolated I listened to tapes from Victoria Place. Recounts from younger children, again with a few exceptions, were short accounts of stories without much elaboration. Some children were obviously unfamiliar with telling stories and uncertain about my motives for wanting to record their voices. It could also be that lack of familiarity with stories caused some anxiety. Young children tend to rely on them when learning to read and asking them to recount a story without visual cues is quite a difficult task. Jordan (1996: 49) indicated that young children ‘rely on visual images for most of their understanding.’ Although she was generally making reference to televisual and environmental images she also stressed that the process of understanding these images is the same as that for illustrations in books. This was important in considering the focus of my study. As I wished to explore visualisations in the minds of young children it was
essential that these skills were developed enough for children to be able to
understand and verbalise their inner worlds.

The same age or experience related factors, then, dominated materials
from Victoria Place. These and the need to revise the total amount of material to
be subject to detailed analysis led to a decision to concentrate on children from
Year Two in Victoria Place only. As stated in Section 3, there were ninety-five
children in Key Stage One at Victoria Place. Forty-three of these children were in
year two. However, as indicated in Section 4, one of the Year Two teachers was
unfortunately away on long term sick leave for much of the year which restricted
access to her class until the third term of the year, meaning that children in it had
rather different experiences to others in the school and full data was not collected
from them. Parity of experience would have been impossible under the
circumstances and, although I was investigating in a naturalistic setting, these
children had experienced a very disruptive year with three different teachers.
Collection of data, under similar conditions to those experienced by the other
class was not possible. Bearing all these factors in mind it was finally decided to
concentrate in-depth analysis on children from the other class of Year Two
children. The register for the class had twenty-four pupils and full data, that is,
four recounts at separate times in the year, was available for sixteen of them.
This set of sixty-four stories and subsequent interview data, including discussion
of visualisations, form the core of the rest of this study and will be examined in
the following chapters.
9. The children

These portraits are built from notes made for the teachers on the abilities of children in the final study focus group to retell tales and take turns at speaking and listening (see Section 3 above) and from a further, separate, piece of research (Harrett and Benjamin, 2005) where some small details of their personal literacy backgrounds were gathered. In addition, I drew upon knowledge gained earlier as a teacher at the school of older siblings of three of them. Ages are given as at commencement of the study and children appear as in order of tables presented in Chapter Five.

Richard

Richard was six years and nine months old at commencement of data collection. He was very aware of audience, smiling, nodding and maintaining eye contact through retelling stories. Richard was a good listener responding appropriately to others and enjoying being the centre of attention. He was a confident, lively and enthusiastic member of the class who was able to speak about stories and explain his visualisations.

Trevor

As one of the youngest in the class, six years and two months, Trevor was shy and retiring. He required constant encouragement to tell stories and prompting was sometimes frequent. He found group situations difficult preferring to work on a one to one basis with other children. Trevor made little eye contact and was so quietly spoken it was sometimes difficult to hear him. His teacher said he lacked confidence and this was obvious from his demeanour.
David

David was one of the oldest children in the class, with a September birthday, at seven years and one month old, a confident and outgoing child who said he preferred picture books to oral stories. He said he had no visualisations when listening to stories. He retold stories in sequence and with confidence, was aware of audience and could ask pertinent questions from others in group sessions. David said that his father told him stories at home but no one read to him.

Simon

Simon at six years and seven months old was also confident at retelling stories and used gestures to elaborate points he was making. During group sessions he could be restless and needed to be prompted but his questions indicated he was listening to other children. He was aware of audience, using character voices when retelling stories and enjoyed talking about them. He stated that he found it easier to remember stories that were told although he liked being read to as well. Simon said that he was not told stories at home but his brother read to him.

Martin

Martin was also six years and seven months old and a confident member of his class. He enjoyed being the centre of attention but found it more challenging to listen to others although he interacted well with his peer group. Martin said he had no visualisations and his retellings of book versions of stories were more animated and fluent.
Don

At commencement of data collection Don was six years and six months old and a lively character. He found it difficult to sit during his recall and was looking all around as he spoke, smiling on occasion. He found description after oral stories difficult as he said he had no visualisations. Prompts were required at times and Don used 'and' repeatedly when retelling some stories although he was able to remember the main points of a story.

James

James was six years and ten months old and a confident storyteller who obviously enjoyed telling tales as he elaborated and used gestures to dramatise his recalls. Listening skills were not so highly developed in group situations and his oral work was less confident following story-reading. He preferred picture books because of the colourful pictures and was receiving some Special Needs support.

Peter

Peter was just seven years old. He was on the Special Needs register as his reading and writing competencies were below that expected for his age group. Peter was enthusiastic in his storytelling, if unsure at first. He relied a great deal on gestures to elaborate points and sometimes paused, as if thinking. When working in a group he reacted strongly to his audience and waited at times for interaction from that audience. He sometimes found it difficult to concentrate on listening, preferring told stories. No one told or read stories to him at home.
Megan

Although Megan was relatively young in the class at six years and four months, she was able to recount stories in a vivid manner using gestures and sounds to full effect and aware of audience. She was able to talk about her visualisations although in group situations Megan was easily distracted. Picture book recalls were more basic in content even though she said she preferred picture books.

Tracey

Tracey was quietly spoken and six years eight months old when data collection started. She was hesitant and needed prompting at times by questioning. She used gestures in retellings to elaborate points or explain her meanings in some ways. Tracey appeared to listen carefully in group sessions and responded to questions. She could recall the main points of stories but sometimes lacked detail although she said her mother told her stories at home.

Annabel

At just seven years old Annabel was one of the oldest children in this focus group. She was a capable speaker with a clear voice but she liked things to be ‘right’ and subsequently, at times, her recalls were hesitant. Annabel was aware of audience, using gestures and character voices to enliven her stories showing knowledge of the performance role of storytelling. She was a confident child in many ways, eager to please her teacher.
Sadie

At seven years and one month old, Sadie was the oldest child in the study, just twenty days older than David. I had taught her older sister, so that she had seen me in a ‘teacher’ context before commencement of the study. She was able to retell a story in sequence and with vivacity, showing concentration and using gestures to emphasise points. She said she was embarrassed about retelling her stories to me but enjoyed the group sessions where she was quite dramatic at times and seemed at ease when asking and answering questions. Sadie preferred oral stories although no one told or read stories to her at home as she read to herself competently.

Claire

Although she was one of the younger members of the focus group at six years four months old Claire was very confident and co-operative in terms of responding to questions and working with others in groups. She was aware of audience, smiling and using actions when she deemed it necessary. She listened quietly and could remember sequences in stories, preferring oral stories to those read. Claire’s older sister spent time with her reading and talking about books.

Saleema

Saleema at just seven years was a competent and confident storyteller, using gestures, facial expressions and different tones of voice to make her stories lively and interesting. In group sessions she appeared to be hesitant at first but listened carefully to others and tried to prompt by responding to
comments made, showing good listening skills. She enjoyed picture books and liked to write down stories. Saleema reported that no one told or read stories to her at home and her first language was Urdu.

Meera

Meera was six years and three months old, of mixed Pakistani and Caucasian race and spoke both English and Urdu. The predominant language of her home was English. She was very confident at retelling stories and made steady eye contact, smiling throughout and using gestures to add to the story. When working in a group Meera was very aware of her audience and spoke for a long time, appearing to be listening carefully to others and responding to their conversations in an appropriate manner. She said she preferred to listen to oral stories and that although no one told stories at home both her mother and sisters read to her.

Rima

Although she was one of the oldest in the group at six years and eleven months Rima was not always confident in her oral recalls resorting to gestures to explain and sometimes viewed as having difficulty concentrating. Her first language was Bengali and she sometimes lacked confidence when speaking in a group. She required the book as a prompt, preferring picture book stories, and made frequent use of connectives when retelling stories.
Chapter Five

Analysis of recalls

1. Introduction

Results and analysis in this chapter are presented chronologically, in the same order as collection of data, with storytellings preceding story-readings. Analysis in this section is of one class of sixteen children for whom full data were available. It focuses on four stories they had retold on audiotape and examines their responses to storytelling and story-reading. Retellings were of two stories, presented first in oral form, then picture book version. This chapter examines structure of recalls, language used in them and creativity within it. In analysis of retold conversational stories Norrick (2000: 68) postulated that ‘retold stories bear interest both for the study of narration and for research on repetition in discourse.’ I intended to examine children’s repeated language and their created language, used to embellish stories in some way, as outlined in Chapter Four, Section 5, as was choice of stories (Section 2).

I wished to use tales from oral traditions with strong storylines with which I felt comfortable. They also had to be suitable for a young audience and capable of providing something with which children could connect. Individuals can create their own response to hearing a story, Ward (2001) maintaining that even young children could apply images to aid understanding of their own world and that use of rhythm in language helped to develop memory, citing the use of oral storytelling in Steiner classrooms as exemplification.
Full responses for all sixteen children were available for What Made Tiddalik Laugh? and The Owl and the Woodpecker and a method was devised for systematic analysis for both when read and told. Radnor (2001) described the process of analysis as both structured procedure and interpretive process where 'authenticity and creativity go hand in hand', (p 68) leading to coding of data. This chapter examines how each recall was examined in more detail for evidence of certain features of language and creativity, repeated language and created language. Repeated language refers to language that echoes that of original stories, either oral or read, while created language indicates some innovation introduced by children, either in the way language is used, vocabulary, events or characters.

2. Model for Analysis

A model based on Applebee's (1978) method of analysis was evolved incorporating Walsh's (2003) approach to analysis of children's responses to picture book texts where she examined oral responses of children and categorised them by references to words or pictures. My model was adapted from both these sources to examine recalls in two phases. The first phase concerned structures of stories: beginnings, endings and events and this was related to Applebee's (1978) model where he detailed whether children had used formal openings and closings, as well as numbers of characters, incidents, degrees of fantasy, words and T units. As the stories I was examining were based on existing tales not all of this was appropriate so that a basic structure of formal openings, closings and events was devised as a method of measuring
responses. The second phase explored use of language in recalls for repeated and created language. Transcriptions were colour-coded accordingly for evidence of either mode enabling a second layer of analysis to be conducted. One marker Applebee (1978) found in children’s stories was consistent use of past tense, increasing with age. All children in my study used past tense to tell their stories.

The process of analysis used may be represented as Diagram 5.1

```
Recall
  ↓
Structure
  ↓
Analysis Phase 1
  Beginning  Events  Ending
  ↓
Analysis Phase 2
  Language
  Repeated  Created
```

Diagram 5.1: Structure for analysis of language in children’s retellings

First the structure of stories was examined. Most need to have a beginning, middle, and end, both Labov’s (1978) and Bauman’s (1977) models followed this structure, though both added details, as outlined in Chapter Four,
Section 6. In my data stories were examined for discernible beginnings and endings and events were categorised. An event was defined as an occurrence basically the middle of the story. What I was looking for in beginnings and endings was an indication of notable openings and closures. In many traditional stories this may be characterised as 'Once upon a time,' and 'happily ever after'. Stories used in this study did not have those particular beginnings and endings but did have indicators for both, a feature examined in more depth later in this chapter. The events themselves were the markers in stories – significant actions that occurred during them. When storytellers learn new stories they reduce them to skeletons, that is to say, they build them around their most significant actions. In this way What Made Tiddalik Laugh? may be condensed into a few sentences: Tiddalik was thirsty. He drank all the water. The animals were thirsty. They tried to make him laugh. When he laughed all the water came out. Both oral and storybook versions of Tiddalik added to this skeleton framework by stylistic elaboration. Comparison between teacher and child versions was carried out to examine language use and repeated or created elements of children’s recalls.

3. Storytellings
3.1 What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

What follows is a transcript of my oral version of What Made Tiddalik Laugh? as told to the sixteen children in the focus group. This is included as a reference point for comparison between the original oral text and those reproduced by children. The recordings that children made were transcribed without imposition of punctuation whereas my retellings included punctuation to give text more meaning. As the author of this spoken text I felt justified in doing
so, as I was aware of the implications of my tone of voice and nuances of delivery.

This is a story you have heard before. It's the story of Tiddalik the frog and Tiddalik the frog was a little frog who lived in Australia and as you know Australia is a very, very hot country. Tiddalik was very a little frog. He was so little he could sit, just there, in the palm of my hand. Although he was a little frog Tiddalik was very, very thirsty because it was so hot. So, he hopped down to the water hole and he drank all the water in the water hole... slurp, slurp, until there wasn't a drop left. And Tiddalik wasn't a little frog any more. He was a big as a cat.

Tiddalik was still thirsty so he hopped down to the stream that trickled down the mountainside and bent over and he drank slurp... and he drank, slurp... and he drank slurp... until he had drunk all the water in the stream; nothing left except a little silver trail in and out through the stones. And Tiddalik was not the size of a cat any more he was a big as any of you.

Do you know what? Tiddalik was still thirsty so he hopped down to the big wide river that runs down to the sea and bent over and he drank slurp... and he drank slurp.... and he drank slurp.... until he had drank all the water in the river and there was nothing left except the mud at the bottom of the river. Ahhhhh.

And Tiddalik was not the size of you but as big as me, maybe even bigger. But, do you know what? Tiddalik was still thirsty so he decided to hop down to the lake. And he hopped to the lake and he bent down and he drank slurp.... and he drank slurp.... and he drank slurp... until he had drunk all the water in the lake and there was nothing left except a tiny little pool and all the fishes in the pool were jumping on top of one another trying to keep wet.

Well, Tiddalik wasn't thirsty any more but he wasn't a little frog any more. He wasn't the size of me. He wasn't the size of you. He was so big he would have filled this classroom and his tummy was so full of water he decided he would lie down and have a sleep in the sunshine. But, can you imagine? All the water was gone and all the animals, all the other animals were thirsty. And they got together and they said, "What are we going to do? Tiddalik has drunk all the water in the world and it's so hot and we are so thirsty. What shall we do?"

So they went to the wise old owl and they said, "Wise Owl, what shall we do? Tiddalik has drunk all the water in the world and we are so thirsty."

"Mmmmmmm," said the wise owl, "I know what you must do. You must make Tiddalik laugh."
"Laugh," said the animals, "What good is that?"

"Because when he laughs the water will come out," said the wise old owl and he went to sleep.

So the animals decided they would get together and see what they could do to make Tiddalik laugh. They went over to where he was sleeping and they shouted at him and then the snakes did a funny dance. Tiddalik opened one eye. He looked at the snakes, closed his eye and went back to sleep. Then the kangaroos did gymnastics and leapt about and turned around like cartwheels. Tiddalik opened one eye and he looked at them, not a flicker of a smile not even a giggle, closed his eye and went back to sleep again. The parrots came along and started telling jokes. All the animals were laughing but Tiddalik just opened one eye, looked at the parrots closed his eye and went back to sleep. Then some ants came along, crawling along the ground.

"What is all this noise?" they said.

"Haven't you noticed?" said the animals. "Tiddalik has drunk all the water in the world. We are so thirsty. We are trying to make him laugh so that when he laughs all the water will come out."

"Mmmmm," said the leader. "Follow me boys!"

And they started and they crawled up his legs. By the time they got half way up his legs he was fidgeting, moving around and he had opened one eye. By the time they got to his tummy he had opened both eyes and he was wobbling about. By the time they got to his neck Tiddalik started to giggle, hee hee, and then Tiddalik started to laugh. He chuckled and he laughed and laughed and when he laughed the water came flowing out of his mouth. All the water that filled the water hole. All the water that filled the stream. All the water that filled the river and all the water that filled the lake again. The animals were very pleased because they could have a drink. And all the flowers and all the trees were growing again. And do you know, Tiddalik wasn't a big frog any more. He wasn't as big as this room. He wasn't as big as me. He wasn't as big as you. He wasn't as big as a cat. He was so tiny he could sit there, in the palm of my hand.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the language that children used in their recalls, requiring comparison of this original text and those produced by children. While the story did not have a beginning and ending in traditional manner there are still markers in which tone of voice was important. The opening, 'This is a story you have heard before' was given in a conversational tone while the ending, 'He was so tiny he could sit there, in the
palm of my hand' was whispered and I displayed my open palm as a gesture to finish. In this way children were aware that the story had ended as it echoed the start of the story where Tiddalik was described as 'so little he could sit, just there, in the palm of my hand.' As may be noted from this transcription the oral story was not always grammatically correct and had sentences beginning with and frequent use of connectives. Sentences and phrases are repeated for dramatic effect. The transcription, of course, cannot indicate the tones of voice and expressions that are paramount in telling, and reading stories, to young children (Carter, 2003; Phinn, 2000). The table below identifies events in this story that were used as markers when assessing recalls made by children.

Table 5.1 Storytelling events based on What made Tiddalik Laugh?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Number</th>
<th>Description of event/mini-event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tiddalik very small - in hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drinking from waterhole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tiddalik as big as a cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Drinks from stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tiddalik child sized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Drinks from river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tiddalik adult sized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Drinks from lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>As big as the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Animals thirsty – get together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Go to owl for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Snakes dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kangaroos do gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parrots tell jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ants climb up Tiddalik – legs, tummy, neck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Tiddalik laughs – water comes out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Tiddalik is small again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seventeen events were identified in this oral version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh* as indicating its main points and were used as the basis for scoring children's recalls. Some events did not necessarily need to be sequenced. For example it was immaterial in which order Tiddalik drank, although the growth sequence was important. In a similar manner, events twelve to fourteen could have been rearranged without detracting from the main thrust of this story.

### 3.2 The Owl and the Woodpecker

Transcription of the second story, told to children in the final focus group, displayed many similar characteristics to the oral language, identified in the story of Tiddalik, although it had a more defined opening and closing and more conversation between main characters.

A long time ago in a forest a long way away from here lived a woodpecker. All day long the woodpecker would tap, tap, tap, he went against the tree. One day an owl came to live near the forest and the owl decided to live in the tree next to woodpecker's. Now as you know, woodpeckers work all day but owls sleep all day. All day long while owl tried to sleep woodpecker went tap, tap, tap against the tree. After a while owl became very tired of all this because he couldn't sleep. Every time he tried to go to sleep all he could hear was tap, tap, tap and you know what it's like if you don't get your sleep. Owl became very, very, very bad tempered. His screeching and hoots went right around the forest. He made so much noise that all the animals in the forest came running to see what was the matter. The bear came along.

"Owl, what is the problem? What is all this noise?" And Owl looked at him.

"I can't sleep. All day long tap, tap, tap against the tree. I really do need to sleep."

"But woodpecker has been here a long time and that is Woodpecker's work," said the bear.
"Well, I don't care," said Owl, "I think he should go somewhere else."

"Woodpecker was here first. Maybe you should go somewhere else," said the bear. But owl was not happy.

"I like this tree. I don't want to go anywhere else." And so he stayed.

Day after day woodpecker went tap, tap, tap against the tree and owl got more and more bad tempered and the noise in the forest was so dreadful all the animals decided they would have to do something about it. At night when Woodpecker went to sleep they went to Owl's tree and they pushed and they pushed and they pushed but they couldn't move the tree.

The next day someone strange came to the forest. It was a man with a huge saw he went up to owl's tree and felt its rough bark.

"Ummmm, this is a good strong tree," said the man as he took his saw and started to cut down the tree. Swish, swish, swish, swish, swish. He was cutting into the tree when something started to happen. It started to rain. Drip, drip, drip. And the rain got heavier and heavier and the man took his saw and left the forest. The wind blew and blew. The rain came down there was a huge storm with thunder and lightning. Because it was so wet Woodpecker stopped tapping and Owl was asleep. Woodpecker could hear a strange noise - screech, screech. Owl's tree was swaying in the wind from side to side and it looked as if it was going to fall over. Woodpecker realised there was danger so he went to owl's tree. Tap, tap, tap... tap, tap, tap. Owl came out.

"What is going on here? Can't I get some sleep?"

"Owl," said woodpecker, "Come now, come now, you're in danger." Owl looked out and could see that his tree was swaying around. Owl and Woodpecker together flew up into the sky to a safer part of the forest just in time because a few minutes later CRASH! Owl's tree fell to the ground but Owl and Woodpecker were safe and when the storm was finished they became the very best friends.

Owl found a new tree to go and live in at the other side of the forest so now everything is quiet because one side of the forest woodpecker is there all day going tap, tap, tap and at the other side of the forest his friend owl spends all day sleeping.

That's the end of the story.

The first thing to be noticed about this transcript was its brevity and that, in some ways, it was less complicated than the story of Tiddalik. It also had
more interactive phrases where children could participate with both words and actions making it more of a shared social activity (Phinn, 2000). Holdaway (1979) regarded this involvement with story as of great importance since it allowed children to see language in an expressive mode, as well as enabling them to see the functions of language.

Table 5.2 Storytelling events in The Owl and the Woodpecker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event number</th>
<th>Description of event/mini event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Woodpecker taps (introduction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owl comes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Owl screeches (bad temper)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Animals run to speak to him</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Animals try to push tree</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Stranger comes to the forest</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Starts to cut down tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rain and storm</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Tree swaying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Woodpecker warns Owl (taps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Owl and Woodpecker fly off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tree crashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Owl and Woodpecker are friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirteen events were identified in this oral version of The Owl and the Woodpecker. They are more sequential so that order in recalls was more important to the storyline. As with the tale of Tiddalik this series of events was identified as a basis to construct categories for managing data. This story was less ‘eventful’ than that of Tiddalik as it had fewer complicating features: Owl had a problem, which he made into a problem for the other animals. They tried to solve the problem but a stranger to the forest inadvertently helped them to do
so by chopping the tree. During a storm Woodpecker saved Owl's life. They became friends.

Oral stories contained much the same basis as their picture book versions. When compared the oral version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* had seventeen as opposed to fifteen events in the picture book. *The Owl and the Woodpecker* had thirteen events in the oral version and fourteen in picture book format. Illustrations from both books are reproduced in Section 8 of this chapter.

4. Structure of analysis

Following this phase of analysis into story structures; beginnings, events and endings, language used in recalls was explored in more depth. I was looking for evidence of both repetition of story language and innovation in language used. In both I wished to further examine possible influences on repeated or created language in the hope of establishing children's responses to different modes of 'storying' (Rosen: 1988).

I examined stories and colour coded them according to whether they displayed evidence of book language or oral language and whether language used was direct repetition or an innovation of some description. Language was further analysed for influences. Although children were encouraged to invent and tell their own versions of these stories they had been long enough in school to have such an invitation framed by what they regarded as usual teacher expectations. In consequence, many of them struggled to be as accurate or 'right' as possible in their retelling, either not recognising or ignoring the invitation.
to 'tell their own versions'. Smith and Call (2000) recognised this phenomenon which made it impossible to judge how much influence it had on the creativity of retellings. Even though children were given time (Hall and Martello, 1996) and encouragement to tell their versions of oral stories it was obvious that some of them were trying to maintain retellings as close as possible to the original texts.

The process of analysis was layered, beginning with structure and then examining language and strands within language analysis. This was one way of establishing common themes and patterns between different members of the group and identifying unexpected occurrences in language use.

This exploration of different elements of retellings provided a range of responses. Unsworth (2001: 10) postulated that all texts need to be read multimodally, that is, using pictures and text and that we need to be able to interpret different dimensions both separately and interactively. He talked about 'visual and verbal grammar' that helped to make meaning. Recent research by the QCA (2004, 2005) demonstrated that children were very aware of visual texts and made full use of this experience in their written work. Smith and Call (2000: 39) stated that our capacity to 'store and recall visual information [...] is more powerful than our capacity to store and recall patterns of sound.' Following this argument one would have expected recall of events to depend upon internal visualisation, rather than words used in storytellings. This aspect of visualisation was investigated through analysis of interviews with children recorded immediately after recalls and is discussed in Chapter Six.
Creativity, defined as producing something original or establishing a new way of looking at something by making connections, was another dimension to be explored by examination of transcripts for evidence of created aspects of language. Just as Clark (1994: 47) encouraged children to retell stories to help them to develop narrative structure and thought that it helped them to separate the 'theme from the detail', I reviewed stories for evidence of innovations examining detail that children had added to make their stories more imaginative.

5. Responses to Storytelling

Each of my storytellings was different, although all children in the final focus group experienced the same version. Bauman (1977: 38) emphasised that 'all performances are not the same, and one wants to be able to appreciate the individuality of each.' The 'same' story may take on different emphases, depending on the audience and its interaction or reaction to the tale and the teller. Bauman (1977: 67) regarded storytelling as a speech event containing metalinguistic and paralinguistic elements, using the term 'metanarration' to 'refer specifically to narrative performance.' Although Bauman's theory was based on findings of thirty years ago, it is still of relevance today. A certain fluidity of storyline is inevitable although most stories use beginnings and endings as an 'interpretative framework' (p. 71). However, as each storytelling was unique, in the context of this research I ensured that I taped each oral version of the stories that I related. This was so that comparisons could be made between words from oral versions and words that children used in their retellings.
Rosen (1985: 32) criticised researchers for looking at 'what is remembered but not why it is remembered.' My analysis encompassed both by investigating various elements of stories children recalled in response to storytellings. Rosen went on to expound the differences between narrative discourse and narrating. He described narrative discourse as the 'framed text' and narrating as the 'actual process of fashioning the discourse'. The theme of intertextuality is also referred to and these different modes will be referred to in the following pages. Over ten years ago the work of Fox (1993) reported that even young children were aware of book language and used this type of language in their personal storytelling. The study Fox conducted provided the focal theory behind much of my primary thinking on this topic. This part of the study investigated how children used story language in their recalls of oral stories to which they listened. The language they used was compared to these oral stories and scanned for evidence of repeated and created language use.

5.1 The stories

For the reasons given in Chapter Four, Section 4, both oral stories were adjusted to remove any difficult language that would require interpretation and could have interrupted the flow of stories. These changes are described further below. However, they still contained the essential elements of narratives, as described by Gudmundsdottir (1995): 'A story has characters; a beginning, a middle and an end; and is held together by a series of organized events, called plots.' The plots in these stories remained, fundamentally, the same and formed a basis for comparison between original and child versions.
5.1.1 What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

The story told to children was a version of the storybook with some additions and omissions to make it more accessible. It would have been possible, for example, to introduce the character of Platypus in an oral version of *Tiddalik* but it would have either required a verbal explanation at the beginning or in the middle of storytelling and this would have been a distraction. A photograph of a platypus could also have been used but this would rather have defeated the object of asking children to use their imaginations and to conjure up their own responses to what they heard. In a similar fashion, introduction of a wise old owl instead of a wise wombat ensured that creatures, or characters, of which they had no experience, did not puzzle them. I had assumed knowledge of owls, as I was aware that *Owl Babies* was one of the 'big books' in the Year One curriculum. While readings of both stories were, of course, restricted to the written text, in oral versions I was at liberty to exaggerate and extend them. The performance element also played a part as children were invited, by gesture, to imitate the 'slurp, slurp, slurp' of Tiddalik drinking.

The oral version of *Tiddalik* was longer than the written text by just over three hundred words and contained a number of repetitive phrases. This may have had a positive or negative effect on those listening. By using repetition children were aware of rhythm and structure; there was a sense of expectation when 'Tiddalik was still thirsty' or 'he opened one eye' and repeated phrases helped them to become engrossed in the story to an extent. However, these repeated phrases also made the story longer which could have made the
storyline more difficult to follow for some children. As will be seen in the rest of this chapter, some found it difficult to remember its events.

5.1.2 The Owl and the Woodpecker

In the oral version of this story a new character was introduced in the form of a woodcutter. I had thought that children would not be very familiar with beavers, as in the picture book story, so changed scenes accordingly. Afterwards, following story-reading with the picture book, boys assured me that they knew all about beavers as some of them belonged to a pre-Scout movement actually called 'The Beavers'. However, a woodcutter proved to be a useful persona in terms of analysis, especially when interviewing children after recalls, as will be examined in Chapter Six. Onomatopoeic language was also introduced with accompanying actions to engender kinaesthetic learning. Gardner (1993), Smith, (1998) and Buzan (1993) have contended that children have different learning styles and it was hoped that movement accompanying repetitive, onomatopoeic phrases would help some to internalise the story. Although children were familiar with the story of Tiddalik from the Year One curriculum they had never heard The Owl and the Woodpecker and I intended that their first experience of it would be a memorable one, both in terms of visual gestures and aural experience. The oral version of this story was marginally shorter, by thirty-four words, than the storybook version.

5.2 Story structure

When examined for sequences of events, as described earlier in this chapter, my oral stories contained more events. In Tiddalik a total of seventeen
was identified, two more than in the picture book version for, while in the picture book version Tiddalik drank from various places and became swollen before having a rest, in the oral version this was exaggerated and comparisons made at each stage. The oral story starts with Tiddalik who was ‘so little he could sit just there in the palm of my hand.’ When Tiddalik ‘had drunk all the water in the stream’, he was ‘not the size of a cat any more he was as big as any of you.’ When he had drunk all the water in the lake he became ‘as big as the classroom’. Inclusion of these added elements was intended to relate the story more nearly to children’s experiences by suggesting visual comparison to things within their environment. This sort of exaggeration is not unusual in oral tales. The Iron Man, a children’s classic by Ted Hughes, was reputedly built on an oral story he told his own children as is evident in some of the descriptive phrases used.

5.2.1 Analysis of children’s retellings of the oral version of What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

As may be seen in Table 5.3, some degree of clustering of children’s recalls was obvious. Events ten, eleven and twelve were acknowledged by most, points in the story when animals were thirsty, sought guidance from the wise owl and then proceeded to attempt to make Tiddalik laugh. As pivotal points in the story, it is not surprising that they were remembered. Other important events occurred when the ants climbed all over Tiddalik, he laughed and released all the water. Only one child, Peter, failed to mention this release of water, although he did say ‘he started to laugh.’ Perhaps by implication Peter was saying that the water was released, as he continued by describing how Tiddalik became small again. Annabel recalled these events in detail although not always in correct
sequence and her retelling contained some interesting echoes, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Sixteen children were included in analysis of events identified on the following table. Out of a possible two hundred and seventy two events they identified one hundred and fourteen overall. This may be further divided by gender. Boys identified fifty-five of these events and girls fifty-nine; an average score of seven point one and seven point five respectively. This was not regarded as a significant difference.

Table 5.3 Children's recall of events in *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* by storytelling

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As may be seen from this table almost all children were able to remember events fifteen and sixteen when the ants tickled Tiddalik and he laughed, so releasing all the water. Don referred to a platypus, an influence from his
knowledge of the picture book text and Peter said 'he started to laugh then he wasn't as big as a cat' omitting the release of water. Just over half the children began their stories in a similar manner to my oral version but only four closing phrases reflected the ending. Further details are examined in the section on language analysis.

5.2.2 Analysis of children's retellings of the oral version of The Owl and the Woodpecker

In the oral version of The Owl and the Woodpecker the number of events was reduced slightly. In the picture book version each double spread was regarded as an event, or part of an event, whereas in the oral version, these mini-events were sometimes condensed into one. For example, in the picture book version animals met to discuss what needed to be done and then, on the next page, tried to push the tree over. In the oral story this was compressed to 'the animals decided they would have to do something about it. At night when woodpecker went to sleep they went to Owl's tree and they pushed and they pushed and they pushed but they couldn't move the tree.' In this way two events became one, the meeting of the animals not being detailed enough to warrant becoming an event in its own right. Children were able to identify more events overall as illustrated by Table 5.4. Out of a possible two hundred and eight events one hundred and sixty three were identified overall. Boys recalled a total of seventy-two events, girls sixty-one giving an average score of nine and seven point six respectively. This showed an increase in the average number of events recalled by boys in comparison with those in the oral version of Tiddalik. It was not the only difference between the two stories and this will be examined later in this chapter and in the following chapters.
Table 5.4 Children's recall of events in *The Owl and the Woodpecker* by storytelling

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The significant rise in events recalled in this story was surprising in view of the fact that it was unfamiliar to them, in contrast to *Tiddalik*, with which they were familiar. Annabel, for example, not only identified all thirteen events, but was also able to elaborate on them. Her story will be analysed in more detail in the creativity section below. A clustering of events around numbers six, seven and eight showed the point where the stranger came to the forest and started to cut down the tree in which Owl lived. Both Richard and Simon repeated twelve out of thirteen events and other children were aware of the story sequence even when making adjustments to it. As Goldhawk (1998:13) said 'children will learn many ways of using their own language to tell stories,' and these children had
moulded stories to suit themselves, whether deliberately or otherwise. In some cases the language that they used illustrated how words or phrases had been altered to encompass understanding.

Further reason for higher level of event recall could have been that *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was more action packed than *Tiddalik*, with the inclusion of movements, such as the woodpecker tapping, sawing of the tree, the storm and the tree swaying and crashing. Ralston (1993), a Canadian authority on children’s literature, commented that the most suitable stories for oral storytelling usually depended upon action. Action need not necessarily refer to physical movement but may simply mean an action-packed plot and Ralston also talked about ‘participation stories’ where children join in words and actions. The Rosens (1973), twenty years earlier, had advocated drama as a way to help children with learning difficulties, movement in drama sessions proving to be efficient in improving concentration. More recently Baldwin (2000:15) has projected learning through ‘movement and through more tactile, emotional teaching’. It appeared that the incorporation of more physical interaction in this story may have had a positive effect, particularly on boys, the average event recall for girls changing only from seven point five to seven point six, slightly more than in *Tiddalik*.

6. Children’s Recalls of Texts: Analysing Oral Story Retellings:

What follows in this next section is analysis of children’s retellings of two oral texts. This reflects the chronological order in which stories were recounted to children in this study and the order described in Chapter Four.
6.1. Repetition in the oral version of *What made Tiddalik Laugh?*

6.1.1 Beginnings and endings

The first aspect of language looked at in examining retellings was the structure of narratives and whether they had discernible beginnings, middles and endings. I did not start with a traditional opening of ‘once upon a time’ or ‘one day’ but introduced this story by relating it to their previous experiences:

This is a story you have heard before. It’s the story of Tiddalik the frog and Tiddalik the frog was a little frog who lived in Australia and, as you know, Australia is a very, very hot country. Tiddalik was very a little frog. He was so little he could sit just there in the palm of my hand.

This opening illustrated how spoken language varies from written language (Carter 2003). In written format, it would have tended to be much more formal, with sentences demarcated more clearly, or different connectives used to give variety. Smidt (1998: 57) also pointed out how oral language and book language are different; book language is ‘more complex, more poetic and has its own conventions – things like ‘Once upon a time,’ or, ‘They all lived happily ever after.’” My informal beginning was reflected in the manner in which children began their stories. None of them began with ‘once upon a time’ and only two started with ‘one day’. Eight began to tell the story with variations on, ‘there was a little frog’ or ‘Tiddalik was thirsty’, indicating that they had listened and were consciously or subconsciously imitating my opening paragraph. The sequence of stories more or less followed the pattern of the oral narrative, although in some Tiddalik visited the various watering places in a different order. Although Bruner (1990: 44) regarded sequentiality as ‘indispensable to a story’s significance and to the mode of mental organization in terms of which it is
grasped,' variation of such particulars cannot be regarded as significant in this study. It would have been difficult for children to remember such an exact order after only one listening experience. In common with most narratives, the story presented a character, a problem and then resolution. As Peach and Burton (1995: 66) posited 'all narratives consist of essential elements upon which their structure depends.' Finer details of which watering place came first were not regarded as essential or central to the main plot which was largely reproduced in recalls.

Changes children made to the language of stories demonstrated the repetitive nature of their storytelling although some changes were to ensure their understanding of stories rather than any creative element. Some children said 'shoulder' instead of 'neck' and others used 'belly' instead of 'tummy'. Nine children included a pond in their stories. I believe that it was included as a word they were familiar with and knew referred to a body of water. As 'pond' does not occur in the storybook I surmised that its use indicated some common knowledge rather than a deliberate attempt to create something different. The school was close to a park where a river formed a small pond close to the road. With this in mind and with over half the group using the same language this seemed a reasonable assumption to make.

Despite the fact that the oral story ended in much the same manner as it began, with Tiddalik shrinking, 'he was so tiny he could sit there in the palm of my hand', four children actually said 'the end' when they had finished their stories. Others ended in different ways, either when Tiddalik laughed, or when
the animals had a drink, although three children, Tracey, Peter and Annabel, did refer to his diminished size.

6.1.2 Influences on language

When searching for evidence of influences on these retellings it was difficult to judge exactly what would have had impact. In an oral story words produce pictures in some minds but to a certain extent the performance element must also have some influence. I read the retellings with this in mind, referring also to notes made on children's demeanour as they spoke. Garbarino and Stott (1992) stated that 'it can be very difficult to interpret a child's statement without seeing his non-verbal communication' and advocate the use of notes that 'record key visual aspects'. Tracey, in particular, used gestures to show the size of Tiddalik, especially at the beginning and end of the story. Peter also gestured and almost drew pictures with his finger as he attempted to recount his version, using many phrases from my oral account, especially in the second half of his story. Duffy (1998:11) would have regarded this as 'predictable' as she posited, 'when we are engaged in reproduction we use a single source of information.' Words in bold reflected those that were taken directly from my original tale in Peter's version of this story.

the ants says what's all this noise and then they climbed up his went to climb up his legs and then they climbed up everywhere and when they reached his neck then they then he then they then he started to open his one eye then he opened his both eyes then he started to giggle a little bit then he started to laugh then he wasn't as big as a cat he wasn't as big as a dog and he wasn't as big as even you he was small as big as the size of my hand (gestures)
Although not obvious from the transcript, Peter maintained eye contact and was aware of me as his audience during this retelling. His gestures were an indication of the impact of story performance. Bromley (1996: 110) stressed the ‘importance of body language [...] in supporting the meanings that readers make from texts.’ Although Bromley was referring to picture books the same could be said of oral texts. In fact, oral texts rely more heavily on the use of gesture and body language and Peter was obviously aware of this. It was also noticeable how Peter’s story was connected by frequent use of ‘then’. ‘Children early start mastering grammatical and lexical forms for ‘binding’ the sequences they recount – by the use of temporals like ‘then’ and ‘later’ (Bruner, 1990: 79).

Transcripts of retellings also provided indications of previous knowledge of the picture book. The cover of What made Tiddalik Laugh? showed a fountain of water emerging from Tiddalik’s mouth, filled with all manner of water creatures. At the end of her story Sadie referred to this as ‘laughed and all the fish and water came out.’ In the oral story I said the water had ‘filled the stream’. Megan changed this to ‘and then the fishes went back to the stream.’ The inclusion of ‘the fishes went back to the stream’ indicated a reference to the same picture to which Sadie referred, as fish were depicted in this illustration.

While sequencing of events was not regarded as crucial to this narrative, the picture book story began at the lake. Annabel, when describing the route Tiddalik took to quench his thirst, started with the lake. By itself this does not necessarily point to prior reading of the book but later in her story Annabel referred to ‘lizards started to make jokes.’ The oral story had no mention of lizards but the picture book had an illustration of chameleons dancing (Event 9).
indicating that this picture was what she was alluding to at this point. Annabel had the ants asking about noise 'up here' which is reflective of words Platypus used when emerging from underground. Meera also started her story with the lake but made no further reference that could be attributed to the picture book version. However, the most significant evidence of prior knowledge of the picture book and its visual impact came from Don. 'Then a platypus came and Tiddalik opened both eyes and started giggling and laughing and all the water came flying out with all the fish.' Introduction of platypus is proof that Don was referring to the picture book version of the story, as was his reference to fish in the water, also found in the stories of Sadie and Megan. He was repeating language but not that from the oral version at this point.

Aural influences were more obviously identified, every retelling containing aspects of the oral story. As well as references to the size of Tiddalik, as touched upon previously, several oral phrases were repeated. Surprisingly few children used the onomatopoeic 'slurp, slurp, slurp' or the repetitive phrase 'he drank and he drank and he drank'. Phrases in common use were 'still thirsty', 'opened one eye' and 'What's that noise?'

Trevor told a very short story, scaffolded by questions. He was very reticent at first and almost inaudible.

T. What did you tell me? Tiddalik was so tiny...he was...

Tr. He was the size of a cat because he drank some water and he drank some more and he was nearly the size of us and he drank some more and then he was big and he was nearly the size of you and he drank some more and he was nearly the size of the class and (p)

T. And what happened then?
Tr. Then someone else came and then they tickled him and then all of the water came out.

Despite the brevity of this retelling Trevor had obviously listened and related to the oral story. Although he did not talk about where the water came from he made connections with the growth of the frog and explicitly used several phrases from the oral tale. His lack of confidence in speaking and listening was demonstrated in this extract but the aural influence is clear. Garbarino and Stott (1992: 42) found that young children had difficulty with memory tasks especially those involving ‘the deliberate recall of past events’ and Trevor may have been demonstrating this difficulty by his inability or unwillingness to recount finer details of the story.

David also made direct and explicit use of the oral story he had just heard. Words used in oral storytelling are highlighted in bold, while those underlined are re-workings of phrases or words when he used a pronoun instead of a word or if the meaning was the same but the wording slightly different. For example, on lines three and four of the transcript David said, ‘not even a tiny drip’ while actual words used were, ‘there wasn’t a drop left’, the same meaning despite slight variation in wording.

There was a little frog called Tiddalik and he lived in Australia so he went to the waterhole and he had a drink of water but instead of having a little bit he drank the whole of it and there was nothing left not even a tiny drip but he was still thirsty and he was the size of a cat so he went down to the lake and he drank all the water but he was still thirsty and all that was left was a little silver trail between going in and out between the stones and then he was the size of anybody so he went to the stream and he was still thirsty and he drank all the water and there was no water left in the world all the animals were cross and he was as big as a classroom so all the animals asked a wise owl what shall we do the wise owl said make him laugh and when he laughs all the water will come out of his mouth so the snake started doing funny dances he
opened one eye and he looked at them but then he fell asleep again so the kangaroos did gymnastics doing cartwheels and jumping about. He opened one eye, woke up, looked at them and he closed his eye and went back to sleep and then the ants came up from the ground and said what’s all this noise and they said we are trying to make Tiddalik laugh so that all the water in the world to come back out of his mouth so the ants crawled up his legs and by half time Tiddalik opened one eye and by the time they were at the top of his leg he opened both eyes by the time they were on his tummy he was giggling and when they were on his neck he started to laugh and all the water came back and filled the waterhole the stream and the river.

A high incidence of words used from the oral story indicated that David had good listening skills and a highly aural memory. Iddon and Williams (2003: 21) stated that, from a neuropsychological point of view, when we recall information our memory will make associations but that it is ‘personal knowledge, motivation and the meaning of things’ that aid it most. Such processes, as well as repetitive elements in the story may have been reasons why David had such good recall, using his ‘acoustic code’ (Iddon and Williams, 2003: 13). As well as recounting the gist of the story he was able to remember much of the vocabulary and produce a retelling containing many elements of the original. An assessment of this recount would have shown good skills in speaking and listening but little creativity, though a few children displayed elements of created language in their oral stories.

6.2 Creativity in the oral version of What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

6.2.1 Beginnings and endings

Little creativity was in evidence in these recalls. Children who did not repeat the opening from the oral version either started with ‘Tiddalik was very thirsty’ or began at a different point in the story. For example Richard’s story started with a list, ‘First he drank the pond and then he went to the lake.’ Trevor
had to be prompted to start and then said 'he was the size of a cat.' The only notable differences were geographical; Sadie placing the story in America and Simon in Austria. Whether these changes were deliberate or accidental is impossible to determine.

Although only four children repeated the ending of the oral tale by referring to Tiddalik becoming small again there was evidence of created language use when closing stories. Annabel was perhaps the only one to add a touch of creativity to her ending by saying, 'he wasn't as big as Miss Harrett he was a tiny tiny frog.' By including my name in the story she had added something of her own. Annabel's story is further analysed below.

6.2.2 Influences on language

A creative event or description entailed creating a new image for the listener. Authors of spoken text would have to use some new or different descriptive language to qualify as a producer of created language. This was a tall order and produced few examples. Annabel introduced an interesting play on words with her description of the reaction of Tiddalik to ants crawling up his leg. 'Tiddalik began to shiver giggle and wriggle about and by the time they got to his tummy he was really giggling and wriggling.' The 'giggling and wriggling' was obviously repeated for effect and indicated that Annabel was aware of how to use rhythm in words. Following this she also added a new image, 'Tiddalik wasn't as huge as a huge toad.' This was, I believe, not an error on her part but a genuine desire to add an extra dimension to her story. She was aware of the fact that
Tiddalik was a frog, as evidenced at the beginning of and end of her story, but she wished to elaborate and did so by the inclusion of a toad.

Don also introduced an extra character to his story, 'then a monkey came and the monkey was dancing funny'. This was already referred to when looking at influences of repetition in retellings. Don was the child who had demonstrated his familiarity with the book by mentioning Platypus but the story, set in Australia, had neither text nor pictures containing a monkey. It must be conjectured that this was a different character invented by Don to colour his story and make it more interesting. James had animals go to the king to ask for advice. This has shades of *Chicken Licken* about it. Possibly James was regarding Owl as king because of his great wisdom or it could have been simply that he could not remember to whom the animals applied to for help and thought 'the king' was a good guess. Rima introduced spiders climbing over Tiddalik instead of ants. As a second language speaker she may not have been familiar with the word 'ants' but the actions (fingers climbing as in the action poem *Incy Wincy Spider*) included in the storytelling may have cued this relation to her own experience. This intertextuality in both stories and one that Annabel told, analysed below, was inevitable, according to Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000: 23) who postulated that 'every text relates both synchronically and diachronically to other texts, and this is the only way it achieves meaning.' It is readily apparent from these stories that children were using a range of experiences, text based or otherwise, to add meaning and dimension to their stories.

The only other child to create a different image was Peter, towards the end of his story describing how Tiddalik became small again when he started to
laugh: 'Then he wasn't as big as a cat he wasn't as big as a dog.' In this way
Peter made connections by comparing Tiddalik to creatures within his own
experience.

Creativity in terms of aural influence could be seen as children added
elements, ensuring their ownership of tales. The story Annabel told was worth
further examination.

A: Tiddalik was a tiny frog and he could sit on the end of our hand one
day Tiddalik was very hungry thirsty so he so he went to the lake and he
drank and he drank and he drank until the lake there was nothing else in
the lake but he was still hungry then he went to the pond and he drank
and he drank and he drank until all the fish were bobbing up and down
trying to keep wet but he was still hungry so he went to um I forgot...

T. It doesn't matter. Just make it up.

A: Um...

T: Where did he get water from?

A: ...a stream he went to a stream and he drank and he drank until there
was only the mud left but he was still hungry and by then he was the size
of a cat well he was the size of Miss Hanett but he was still hungry so be
went to a different pond and he drank and he drank until he was the size
of the whole of our classroom but Tiddalik wasn't hungry thirsty any more
and he went to sleep then everyone wondered what they could do to get
the water out of his mouth and they went to the old wise owl and said
what can we do to get the water out of Tiddalik's mouth and the old wise
owl thought for a minute and then said make him laugh cause then when
he opens his mouth all the water will come so all the animals tried to
make Tiddalik laugh the snakes did a funny dance the kangaroos did
gymnastics and the lizards started to make jokes but Tiddalik didn't laugh
then some ants came up and said what's all the noise and then the
animals said we are trying to make Tiddalik laugh and then all the water
will come out of his mouth and then the ants crawled up his leg and by
the time they reached the middle of Tiddalik's leg Tiddalik began to shiver
giggle and wriggle about and by the time they got to his tummy he was
really giggling and wriggling about and by the time they got to his
shoulder Tiddalik was laughing and then all the water came out of
Tiddalik's mouth and then Tiddalik wasn't a huge as a huge toad he
wasn't as big as the classroom he wasn't as big as Miss Harrett he was
tiny tiny frog.
Annabel started by describing how Tiddalik was tiny and could sit 'on the end of our hand'. She talked about Tiddalik being 'hungry' at three points in the story. It is not certain whether this was deliberate or not. In the original oral story fish in the pool were 'jumping on top of one another trying to keep wet'. Annabel changed this slightly describing how he 'drank and he drank and he drank until all the fish were bobbing up and down trying to keep wet.' She had used aspects of repetition but given it a different slant by the use of the word 'bobbing'. When the animals were faced with the problem of what to do about the dry earth she effected another slight change. The animals went to the wise old owl and asked, 'What can we do to get the water out of Tiddalik's mouth?' The original stated, 'What shall we do?' and immediately after this she said, 'the old wise owl thought for a moment'. This evokes the language used in Waddell's *Owl Babies* where the text reads, 'all owls think a lot.' As the story of *Owl Babies* was one the children would have encountered during their infant schooling she may have been remembering that story. This use of storybook language from different sources would tend to verify Fox's (1993) research demonstrating how children take the language of the stories they have heard and blend them into their own narratives.

6.3 Conclusions of analysis of oral version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*

From this evidence of children's retellings it is clear that many children were aware of conventions of story opening and closures. Even where words from the oral text were not repeated most children managed to begin their stories with a notable opening. Endings were less pronounced possibly reflecting this
particular oral text, which depended on tone of voice, as much as words, to indicate closure.

A number of influences were at work when children retold oral stories they had heard. Not only were the sounds and rhythms of language they had listened to repeated but other influences were also apparent. From examination of these stories several strands were clearly defined. Aural influences were possibly the easiest to determine with comparisons between original texts and recalls showing points where children had repeated, word for word, what had been said. Even where language had not been repeated directly the meaning was clear by substitutions children made to enable them to remember and respond to stories, making connections in their minds as they did so. Scollen and Scollen (1984: 193) commented on the way children in their study restructured original tales in retelling, attributing their commonality to the abstract created by the 'sense of the story', as much as the wording. Prior knowledge of this particular text was obvious in a few cases where children actually mentioned pictures or characters from the book. The words and phrases children used in recalls also indicated influences from other books and rhymes.

A performative element was demonstrated by a few children who used gesture to establish meaning between them, as storytellers, and myself, as listener. These gestures could have been, and in some cases were, repeated elements of the oral story but were also a unique part of storytellings given by those individuals. Smith and Call (1999) thought that movement aided memory and perhaps this helped some children to recall parts of this story. Evidence for
this was also found in *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, as detailed later in this chapter.

Created language was not as easily identified as repeated language. Few innovations were made to enhance or embellish stories. Annabel’s story was noticeably richer than others in this respect with her innovative use of language and repetition of her own invented phrase, demonstrating her ability to play with words. These elements were also investigated in retellings of the second oral story, which follows.

6.4 Repetition in the oral version of *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

6.4.1 Beginnings and Endings

The story of the Owl and the Woodpecker began in a more traditional form than that of Tiddalik. ‘A long time ago in a forest a long way away from here lived a woodpecker.’ This opening must have had some effect on children as seven of them began their stories with a traditional style opening, ‘one day’ and a further five began, ‘there was’, or ‘there was once’ although only one child, Peter, used the words, ‘a long, long time ago.’ Mason (1996: 9) asserted that ‘many stories begin with ritual words or gestures to encourage an anticipatory mind-set’. It would appear that these young children had, from their experiences, realised this and were very aware of setting the scene for their storytelling. Although they were not repeating the actual words of the story they were relating the message of the story as reflected by this formal opening sentence.
In contrast to the ending of the oral version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh*, where the story finished with shrinking of the frog, a reflection of the opening passage in this story, *The Owl and the Woodpecker* had a more pronounced closure. When I had told this tale I paused slightly before announcing, 'That's the end of the story.' Many storytellers used a ritual ending and Mason (1996: 11) called this a signal for 'time to return to the real world.' Five children also used this device when they had finished their recalls, signalling the completion of the tale.

In both oral stories the narratives took place in the past and this was reflected in children's retellings. They were aware that these imagined events were placed in some unspecified time and past tense was a constant feature of my oral stories. Dowling (1995: 72) distinguished between a script and a story. She regarded a script as 'a timeless account recounted in the first person, whilst a story is told in the past tense, provides specific characters, presents a problem and its solution and is likely to have a formal means of starting and ending.' Although some children were more mature than others, both in terms of ability and chronologically, all were able to maintain the past tense in their retellings. All their stories were also in the third person with the first used only when characters were talking. As Dowling (1995) has commented, stories have beginnings and endings and problems to be resolved somewhere in the middle. Most children in the study demonstrated that they understood this principle by repeating the story structure and, in many cases, the type of openings and closures.
6.4.2 Influences on language

The Owl and the Woodpecker depended on aural and physical cues to aid retellings as none of the children had had prior knowledge of this story and had not seen the picture book. Events, such as animals trying to push Owl's tree, the tree swaying and crashing and even actions of Woodpecker tapping on his tree were accompanied by movements. As might be expected, Woodpecker tapping on the tree was common to all stories, a central theme essential to the plot. It would have been unusual to find this scene omitted. Not all children used the words of the story but made their meanings clear by referring to actions, some children describing the woodpecker as 'pecking' or 'knocking' on the tree. This produced the same image using different vocabulary, demonstrating in their spoken texts the 'communicative aspect' (Bearne, 2000: 148), which shaped and shared their ideas and experiences. Not all children mentioned animals trying to push the tree over, suggesting that this had less impact on their visual memories. This might have seemed surprising as the phrase 'they pushed' was repeated three times with growing emphasis and accompanied by a pushing action. However, as this was closely followed by the storm sequence it possibly faded into the subconscious of many of them. The storm sequence involved using body percussion to evoke a rising storm and, as children joined in with this during storytelling, this may have had more impact on memories. They may have established an image of kinaesthetic or motor movement (De La Garanderie, 1991) that helped them to retain this part of the story. David said that rain 'started to come down it came heavier and heavier', indicating the build up to the storm created by words and actions.
Also, as might be expected, the introduction of a woodcutter into the scene was an image included in every story. Typically he was introduced as a man who came along to the forest to cut or chop down the tree. Some children mentioned a saw, Meera said a sword, David an axe, although several children made no comment on the instrument used. No description of the man was given, although children generally had an image of the character. This aspect will be further examined in Chapter Six on visualisation.

Use of character voices was a common feature of their stories. Several children, Richard in particular, were adept storytellers and aware of the need to engage their listener by use of voice as well as gesture. This was a feature of the original oral storytelling as I portrayed Owl as having a deep voice and emphasised the ‘oo’ sounds. Using character voices for both storytelling and story-reading is not an uncommon tool for infant teachers, and some parents, to exploit in order to engage their listeners but it was interesting to witness this feature being reflected in the stories the children told.

Although few children used onomatopoeic phrases when telling the story of What Made Tiddalik Laugh? it was noticed that many more used one or more of them in their versions of The Owl and the Woodpecker, for example half of them using ‘tap tap tap’ to describe the sound that Woodpecker made. Two also imitated the ‘swish, swish, swish, swish’ of the original oral story; Megan made a ‘Sh sh sh’ noise and Meera said ‘whoosh, whoosh’ to indicate the sawing of the tree. One sentence that recurred through all their stories was ‘What’s all this noise?’ usually in an interrogative tone to indicate that it was a character speaking. Many of the stories stemming from our oral traditions contain phrases
intended to add to the rhythm of stories in some way, as in *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Gingerbread Man*. Some words were to emphasise a point or an action. For example, in my storytelling, Owl was 'very very very bad tempered' reflected in Saleema's story when she said 'Owl was in a very very very bad mood', to stress the point she was making.

Central to the story plot was the tree crashing and Woodpecker saving Owl from destruction. Claire was one of the children who omitted to make this explicit in her story:

There was once an owl and a woodpecker and um the owl was trying to go to sleep and um the woodpecker was going tap tap tap tap tap so he couldn't get to sleep and then he got a temper and then he all the animals came running and the bear said what's all this noise and the owl told me that the woodpecker is being very loud so I cant get to sleep so when it was morning they tried to push and push and push to tree but it couldn't move then somebody came to the forest and he felt the... what's it called again... the mmmmm... bark bark and he said this is a hard one so I can cut it down and then um he cut half of it down and he and then it started to rain and then it started to thundering and lightning and the woodpecker decided to go home so the woodpecker saw that his um tree was shaked so he did so he went and then it woke the owl up and then the owl saw what was wrong he saw his tree swaying side to side and it he changed off the tree and then they came back

Although she repeated main points of the story sequentially, Claire formed her own 'mental reconsideration and restructuring' (Misson 1998: 111) of the story. Perhaps the impact of Owl's tree crashing to the ground was unimportant to her understanding of this story or she may have implicitly indicated the disaster that was about to befall in 'his um tree was shaked'. She also used the onomatopoeic 'tap tap tap' to explain why owl had difficulty in sleeping and why 'he got a temper'. The hesitation over 'bark' and the punctuation of the text by 'um' indicated that she was desperately trying to
remember the story rather than add to it in any way but her aural memory was insecure. Lack of experience or confidence in storytelling may also have contributed to her competence in retelling, as young children generally become more competent as they mature (Grugeon and Gardner, 2000). Claire's story was firmly rooted in the tale she had heard, even though some of the language was reconstructed, for example 'the owl was trying to go to sleep' is almost the same as 'while owl tried to sleep' in the original.

Grammatically these stories showed awareness of the working of past tense in the construction of some of the verbs. For example, David said the owl 'slept all day' and the noise 'spreaded around the forest', Trevor also said the owl 'sleped' and Richard said that the owl 'kepted on snapping' and 'they flyed out together'. The sense of the words was obvious and a reflection of the original story but displayed immaturity in terms of spoken grammar.

6.5 Creativity in The Owl and the Woodpecker

This story was completely new to these children whereas they had previous experience of listening, talking and writing about Tiddalik. Teachers in this study were equally unaware of this text. This had the advantage of being able to gauge influences on retellings, in terms of language but could have been disadvantageous as children were being asked to recall an unfamiliar story after just one listening experience.
6.5.1 Beginnings and endings

Investigating stories for evidence of imagination produced little in the first instance, the stories adhering very closely to the main threads of the original and it was mainly through the use of character voices and actions that children made creative impact. However a few examples of innovation did occur, Saleema, for example ending her story in the following way:

then the next day the owl was on the other side of the forest and the woodpecker was on the other side of the forest and the man came again and then he started chopping but there wasn’t storm no thunder it was sunny. The end.

The original story ended with Owl and Woodpecker becoming friends and living at opposite ends of the forest but Saleema had been captured by the image of the woodcutter and thought it a more satisfactory ending for this character to return. She changed the weather too. It may have been that Saleema was disturbed by the thought of a storm and wished to make it clear that it had finished. Perhaps she did not like storms and preferred the ‘sunny’ end to the story, thereby also illustrating her knowledge of how traditional tales usually end. Mason (1996: 7) asserted that ‘happy endings provide closure’ so perhaps Saleema was intent on providing a happy ending in the traditional manner. Despite conflict, danger and fear most of these stories ended in a satisfactory manner, justice being seen to be done and all being well. Claire invented a similar feature when she said that they ‘changed off the tree and then they came back’. Simon also added an extra scene by improvisation. It appeared that he had forgotten the thread as he hesitated and repeated part of the story, ‘in the mom in the morning there was a storm the man came after the storm had
finished and he sawed by then the storm had started again so he went'. Simon was aware of the sequence of the story and that the man had left the forest because of the rain, so he added and improvised to ensure the correct sequence of events.

Don showed empathy with the predicament of Owl at the end, 'and the tree fell over and the owl and the woodpecker were so sad they made friends'. Owl had lost his home and Don provided a solution in the friendship of Woodpecker. Don also had Owl 'next to the tree' where Woodpecker lived at the end of this story, reflecting its beginning and also, possibly, pointing to their newly formed friendship and physical closeness, as well as personal affinity. The differences between the two birds had been put aside because of the tragedy (tree falling down) that they had both witnessed. Gopnik, Meltzoff and Kuhl (1999) postulated that we adjust our ideas of stories to relate to our previous experiences so one wondered if Don had experienced a loss of this sort himself, perhaps moving house, allowing him to be able to understand the sadness the two birds may have felt.

6.5.2 Influences on language

Children adjusted some events in this story to help them make connections with characters and situations. David's story adjusted perspectives slightly where 'all the animals in the forest were arguing about all the noise', a rather different view on the problem. He continued, 'so they were saying the owl should move out and the woodpecker should stay in and the owl said I will stay the woodpecker should move out'. In this way David was exaggerating the
problem caused by noises Owl was making and regarding these noises as the source of disagreement between the animals. This is contrary to what happened in the story where the animals worked together in seeking a solution. This may have reflected David’s experience of how problems result in conflicts of one sort or another. He moved the problem of personal conflict between the two birds to a more universal one between the animals, resolved by the tree crashing to the ground.

In a similar fashion, Peter enlarged events where the animals came running in reaction to noises that Owl was making:

all the animals could hear him and the bear came up what are you for and he said I can’t get some sleep and then when he went off they still banged and he shouted again and then all think... all the animals came

Although parts of this seem somewhat confused the idea of two separate events is evident. Bear was sent to deal with the problem but the noise of Woodpecker’s tapping carried on, ‘still banged’, so that all the animals were forced to become involved. This variation on a theme could have been deliberate on Peter’s part or simply his attempt to organise his thoughts as he was telling his story. When telling a story finer details are sometimes added at different points and it is likely that Peter forget to involve the animals with Bear during retelling and decided to create a different scene to make sure they were added. The result, deliberate or otherwise, is an innovation on the main plot.

Variations on storytelling language used were expected as children translated what they were hearing into their own language. It was inevitable that they would use words like ‘angry’ instead of ‘bad-tempered’ and such changes
demonstrated their comprehension and how they had internalised the main story points. James displayed insight into how he thought Owl could have been feeling by his use of the word ‘panicked’, as in ‘the owl was getting angry and he panicked.’ Why Owl panicked is not made clear but this one word gave a different dimension to his character, adding variation to the story. Instead of seeing a selfish and autocratic character we would be more inclined to empathise with his predicament if we regarded his situation in this way.

The humanisation of these characters was apparent in some other stories. Megan talked about a ‘grumpy voice’ and Tracey about Owl shouting. This was unsurprising as many children’s stories, both classic and contemporary, have animals as main characters with human traits and feelings. In this manner many hopes and fears of human existence become palatable to a young audience and oral traditions depend greatly on this device. Some children were also concerned about the man and added to their stories by sending him home rather than simply depicting him as leaving.

While empathy with characters in the story has been illustrated above, Sadie really showed her ability to think about the story in her final sentence, ‘Where was he living before he moved into the forest?’ This question demonstrated her ability to think beyond immediate impressions and to become more fully involved in the experience. I asked her where she thought he had been living and she replied that she had no idea but it was clearly something that interested her and made her think more deeply about the character. It was a searching question of the sort one should hope children would raise in response to a story as it illustrated her engagement with the oral text. Wilson (2001: 43),
when discussing reading texts, commented: ‘to be a good reader means to set up a dialogue with the text inside one’s own head, with the words the writer has provided sparking off pictures, ideas, comparisons and so on.’ I would speculate that Sadie had made this type of connection with the oral story inside her head and this was why she posed such an open question.

Crossley-Holland (1998) asserted that expression and gesture enacted a story while words told the tale. Several children were aware of this and Annabel and Richard, in particular, used character voices when telling their stories. What follows is the transcript of the story Richard told. Words in bold indicate a difference in vocabulary while words underlined show a similar idea said in a different syntax.

One day the woodpecker went was going tap tap tap on one tree and then the owl swooped down and said I want to come on this tree so he went on that tree and he said... and he tried to sleep but it always went tap tap tap and then he couldn’t sleep and then he got madder and madder and more bad-tempered so he kepted on snapping then he was yelling so so now so the animals so the animals come and and the bear came and said why are you yelling yowling and and the owl said because the woodpecker is yowling tapping and then and so then he said he should move the owl said and the bear said you should move but the woodpecker was here first so you should move and then so he said I don’t want to move this tree cos I like it and the next day a man came along with a saw and was cutting down the tree and it was bend and then it was raining and then it was raining even harder and then lightning struck and then the tree what owl was sleeping in was rocking and rocking seeing as like it would fall over and then the woodpecker woke up and the woodpecker was tapping and he because and then the owl woke up and he said why do you have to wake me up and then he said em you’ve got to come over so they flewed out together and then on any flight and the it there was a giant wind and it blew the whole tree over and the tree fell over and they were flying away and then they one... one of the person woodpecker went on one side... of the forest and the owl went on the other side of the forest then they were both friends.

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Richard had good understanding of the basic story and delivered it in sequence. His delivery was animated and he used his voice to indicate characters and to build up tension. His use of vocabulary added a certain depth to the story. The owl 'swooped down' was both a verbal and visual addition and he built tension over the frustration felt by Owl with 'madder and madder and more bad tempered.' The confusion of Bear was highlighted by 'why are you yelling yowling.' This may have been deliberate on Richard's part but, more likely, he was trying to find the right word to convey sounds that Owl was making. At times during his recall he hesitated slightly, although most of the story was delivered at top speed and used connectives to maintain pace. The storm was particularly evocative, with the lightning 'striked' and the tree 'rocking and rocking like it would fall over.' It was surprising that Richard did not use more onomatopoeic words or even the word 'crash' to show the final fall of Owl's tree after the 'giant' wind blew it over. Mallen (1991: 63) commented that children 'incorporate into their oral stories many features of language they have heard or read from other stories.' This intertextuality was apparent in many of the children's oral stories. Once again we had an illustration of the validity of the work of Fox (1993) as mentioned above, whose work demonstrated how young children weave storybook language into their play and oral stories. This indicated that children were able to listen to and use the language of oral stories and incorporate into their retelling of those stories features of storybook language, spontaneity and audience awareness.
6.5.3 Conclusions of analysis of oral version of *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

Retellings from *The Owl and the Woodpecker* revealed many characteristics similar to those identified in retellings of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* Sequencing in storytelling was more obvious with children making fewer adjustments to the main threads of this story. As it contained fewer events and was more sequential this should have been expected.

Past tense was used consistently throughout these stories, a factor also present in former retellings. Use of story opening with, ‘Along long time ago’ may have helped children to set this narrative in a different time and place as nearly all children used a traditional style beginning to their retellings.

In *The Owl and the Woodpecker* onomatopoeic words were used, accompanied by gestures and this was reflected in stories where children repeated ‘tap, tap, tap’ from the oral text. Children also used character voices to add dimension to their stories and to show awareness of the performative element of storytelling.

Although this story was unfamiliar to them children engaged with the problems involved and empathised with characters. As Smith and Call (1999: 57) attested, ‘listening involves thinking’ and by engaging with problems experienced by characters in this story children demonstrated how this was so. Intertextuality was also apparent in some stories and children were able to use
features of storybook language, not only from this tale but from previous experiences.

7. Summary of language analysis related to storytelling

From examination of these stories it was apparent that even young children were capable of using language effectively. Their growing confidence as storytellers and use of eye contact, gestures, character voices and storybook language demonstrated sophistication in verbal communication that was in some cases quite surprising for such young children. It must be remembered that most children in the study were only six years old at the outset. Even though I was an experienced teacher of this age group and a familiar figure I was not their class teacher and so the bonds formed were tenuous in some cases. Trevor, for example, was an extremely shy and withdrawn individual in the class and very unsure of himself. I was able to form a working relationship with him by conversing informally about the rest of his family, including his older brother whom I had taught, and this seemed to help put him at ease. Throughout the study I was very aware of my dual role, that of teacher and researcher.

It was noted that retellings of the oral version of The Owl and the Woodpecker, as will be observed in storybook versions, tended to be more cohesive and fluent than stories about Tiddalik. In the case of oral stories I conjecture that this was due to the interactive nature of the storytelling as children were invited to engage in more kinaesthetic movements. During data collection in Albert Square one child, new to the school, who had not spoken before, volunteered her version of this story, accompanied by actions. This
indicated that actions had a powerful effect on listeners. During the story of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* all children were involved in actions throughout and these movements may have been the reason they were able to repeat more of this story. The story was shorter than *Tiddalik* and shorter stories obviously equate with less to remember so facilitating recall. Repetitive language, rhythm and rhyme also helped (Palmer, 2004).

A further factor considered was that these children were not completely new to storytelling. The class teacher used storytelling on occasion and their teacher in Year One was also an advocate for storytelling and said he frequently told stories to his class. In this way most of the children in the class had been exposed to oral and picture book stories as a matter of course and had, therefore, been exposed to a range of narratives. It was apparent that they had 'a repertoire of story language' (Goodwin and Redfem, 2000: 6) that they were able to use in their recalls of stories that they had heard.

8. Children’s recalls of texts: Analysis of Story-reading

8.1 The Books

Picture books selected, as detailed in Chapter Four, Research Methods and Design, were chosen because they had characteristics of the oral tradition and were 'eye-catching and the illustrations visually stimulating' (Bennett, 1997: 7) so as to appeal to children. *What Made Tiddalik laugh?* was described by the author, Joanna Troughton, as 'A dreamtime story from Australia'. The story told of how a giant frog drank all the water in the world so that the earth dried up. The other animals decided to make him laugh so that all the water would come
out again. Although they tried all manner of activities it was not until Platypus arrived that Tiddalik laughed. The story ended by explaining that giant frogs no longer existed in Australia but some frogs were able to drink, and conserve, water for a dry day. This folktale was a 'particular myth explaining the world' (Wells, 2003: 23).

*The Owl and the Woodpecker* described a conflict between two birds. Woodpecker worked all day but Owl wanted to sleep. Other animals tried to help without avail. One day a pair of beavers gnawed at the base of Owl's tree. A storm followed and Woodpecker saved Owl's life. Owl and Woodpecker made friends and remained friends from that day on. The story was pertinent to experiences of children as it had themes of tolerance and friendship to which they could relate.

Whitehead, (1997: 74) claimed that 'early encounters with stories and books support language study by introducing children to distinctive language and narrative patterns, such as beginnings, threats, challenges, solutions and endings.' The purpose of this study was to examine children's responses to stories in terms of language used and elements of creativity that it displayed. It must be remembered that Whitehead (1997: 107) also argued that features, such as, 'vocal tone, pitch, rhythm, facial expressions, gestures and body language' were important in story-readings so that children would have to listen carefully in order to be able to respond to all the available cues.
8.2 Story-reading

8.2.1 What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

The format of picture book versions of stories followed similar patterns although events were dictated more by illustrations in the story. As may be seen from direct comparison many events were the same. The oral version was adapted with comparisons to enable children to connect with their own experiences. For example, Tiddalik became a big as a cat, a child, an adult and a classroom. In this way children were able to access some vision, or idea, of differing sizes of Tiddalik at various points in the story. Words were accompanied by gestures to guide understanding.

Picture book events were easier to identify. Nearly every page, or double page spread, was numbered as an event. The author’s note was counted as Event 1. This is not reproduced below, as it was text imposed on a mainly blank background. My rationale for including this was simple. It was included in reading to children and it placed the story in a particular context geographically. Most other events related to double page spreads in the book.

(Illustrations from What Made Tiddalik Laugh? by Joanna Troughton (1994) ©Joanna Troughton are reproduced by permission from Penguin Books Ltd.)
Event 2: Tiddalik was a giant frog.

Event 3: Tiddalik drinks until he is swollen

Event 4: The land dries up

Event 5: The playabout

Event 6: Some tell jokes
Event 7: The animals pull faces

Event 8: Some play nasty tricks

Event 9: Funny dances

Event 10: They sang silly songs

Event 11: Platypus awakens
Event 12: Platypus speaks

Event 13: Tiddalik laughs

Event 14: The earth is restored

Event 15: No more giant frogs

Most events covered double page spreads but single pages, in general, have been reproduced here to give a flavour. The other side of each page was similar in illustration. Events are recounted in Table 5.5 below.
Table 5.5. Events from storybook *What made Tiddalik Laugh?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Number</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Author’s note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Giant frog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Drinks until he is swollen with water</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Land dried up</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Animals meet – decide on playabout</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Animals tell jokes</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Pull faces</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Play nasty tricks</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Funny dances</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sing silly songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Platypus awakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>She speaks to Tiddalik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tiddalik laughs – water comes out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Everything back to normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>No more giant frogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table lists a total of fifteen events, two less than the oral version of this story recounted to the children.

Although children in the study were not actively engaged in reading this text as a shared text they were invited to use illustrations in their interactions with the book. Brueggeman (1996) in her study of parents and children reading together found that interaction with a story provided a great motivating factor for children in their learning about literacy. Interaction with a parent on a one to one basis would, of necessity, be different from that in the classroom. Children in classrooms still expect to be able to see illustrations in texts read to them which is why picture books were rotated during, and after, story-reading sessions.
8.2.2 *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

The second picture book read to children in the study was a very vividly illustrated tale by Brian Wildsmith (1999). Wildsmith is noted for his illustrations so their impact was investigated in questioning the children about their reactions to pictures in the book. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, one illustration in particular, the storm, certainly played a part in helping children to remember storybook events. In a similar fashion to *What made Tiddalik Laugh?* each double spread in *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was numbered as an event.

(Illustrations from *The Owl and the Woodpecker* by Brian Wildsmith (1999) are reproduced by permission from Oxford University Press)

Event 1: Introduction/Woodpecker

Event 2: Owl moves in next door
Event 3: Tapping wakens Owl who complains

Event 4: (double spread) Animals come running

Event 5: Animals discuss problem (with Owl)
Event 6: Owl swoops on the small animals

Event 7: Owl talks to the bigger animals

Event 8: Owl becomes more bad tempered
Event 9: The animals meet

Event 10: The animals push the tree

Event 11: The beavers gnaw the trunk
Event 12: The storm

Event 13: Birds reconciled

Event 14: Peace and quiet/good friends

Event 14 was a single page at the end of this book. Table 5.6, below, lists events in *The Owl and the Woodpecker*. 
Table 5.6 Events from *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction/ Woodpecker working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owl comes next door</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tapping wakens Owl</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Animals come running</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Animals discuss problem</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Owl swoops on small animals</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Owl speaks to bigger animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Owl becomes more bad-tempered</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Animals meet</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Try to push down tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Beavers start to gnaw the trunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Owl and Woodpecker reconciled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Peace and quiet/good friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these events are similar to those in oral versions. Giving children access to different texts and different versions of texts helped them to learn about structures of stories. Barrs and York (2001) investigated the impact of reading quality texts to Key Stage Two children and found that hearing and talking about different books helped children to understand and remember the rhythm and feeling attached to a text. This in turn helped children with their writing. In my study I examined how story might have had an effect on children's oral language. They were from various backgrounds and their retellings reflected their progress as literacy learners.
9. Story events and structures

Graddol, Cheshire and Swann (1994: 215) discussed memory for meaning and described how people 'do not normally remember words and sentences verbatim' but instead 'form a general memory'. The gist of the story was what most children produced in their retellings (Pinker, 1998). These retellings were analysed for evidence of influences with regard to language and creativity. Woodward (1993: 8) used retellings of stories as one way to construct an idea of children's abilities where:

analysis concentrates on the construction of meaning (including for a story) understanding the gist of the plot and the sequencing of events, and being aware of major characters and their traits and role within the story.

Having some idea of the 'big picture' was the first step to understanding children's responses before looking at finer details of language used. Its main feature required examination of story events and structure. Each event, as identified in picture cues, was given a number and a grid reference sheet used to mark which events children recalled. Some of the pages were double spreads and, in some cases, where events were similar, one event number was given to cover two double spreads. This gave fifteen 'events' for What Made Tiddalik laugh? and fourteen for The Owl and the Woodpecker. Peach and Burton (1995: 67) described events 'which are absolutely essential' as 'the 'nuclei' of narrative'. In contrast many pictures in storybooks were not totally essential to the core of the story. For example, in Tiddalik the animals tried in various ways to make him laugh. Although pictures illustrated these actions they could have been omitted; they served to add dimensions to stories that would have otherwise not have been available to children. Looking at responses to visual cues was part of this
study, which is why illustrations were important for analysis. Walsh (2003: 129) analysed children's oral responses to picture book texts and discovered that 'the pictures had a significant impact on their interpretations of the stories'.

The purpose was to gain some overall picture of how much emphasis children placed on visual cues for a story. Clark (1994: 47) stated that 'the child who is encouraged to retell a loved story (perhaps from the illustration)' is learning to 'appreciate the development and progression of a narrative.' In the process of data collection in this study, books were on a table in front of children but, unless they were experiencing difficulties in remembering, as was the case with Trevor and Rima, they were not encouraged to use the book as scaffolding for their stories. Although Arizpe and Styles (2003) found that children were able to gain much in the way of thought and discussion from examining picture books in depth, the focus of my study was to examine children's retellings from memory, as far as possible. Reasons for discouraging use of picture books in retellings were twofold. From previous experience of this sort with children I found that using picture books often resulted in descriptions rather than stories and that better readers used words to read the stories rather than using pictures to recall text. This will become clearer later in this chapter when the stories of Trevor and Rima are examined in more depth.
Table 5.7 Children’s recall of events in *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>1</th>
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Table 5.7 summarises each child’s recall of events but does not show how the depth of detail that they produced varied considerably. It is supported by insights that transcripts and research notes afforded. Event one was the author’s note at the beginning, which none of the children used explicitly. This is further examined below. On first glance it would appear, for example, that Trevor achieved significant recall but, as noted above, his retelling was scaffolded by having the book to refer to at times. He also required some prompting during story recall so that the fluidity of his story was, at first, interrupted by pauses and questioning. This was not due to lack of ability but the natural reticence for a child who was quiet and withdrawn. According to his teacher Trevor lacked
confidence in all school activities, whether whole class, group, or individual. Rima’s account was scaffolded in a similar manner, while other children used memory for their recalls. As may be seen from this table event thirteen, when Tiddalik laughed, was a significant feature of most retellings. Out of a possible two hundred and forty events boys scored sixty-two, an average of seven point seven, while girls scored sixty, an average of seven point five events identified in recalls.

Table 5.8 Children’s recall of events in *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

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The most striking feature of Table 5.8 was the clustering of events recalled. Most children concentrated their recalls on events occurring at the very
beginning and towards the end of the book, which was the most exciting part of this story. As in most narratives *The Owl and the Woodpecker* set the scene, introduced a problem and then showed the resolution of that problem. The real drama in the book was event twelve – the storm. Only Tracey omitted this scene. From a possible two hundred and twenty-four events one hundred and twenty were identified in retellings. On average girls made eight point two recalls and boys six point seven, although boys remembered the important features of the story, especially its more exciting episodes. This is in contrast to the oral version where boys' recalls of events were more than those of the girls'.

10. Children's recalls of texts: analysing storybook retellings

Children were making meaning from the cycle of listening, talking and retelling and this was reflected in language they used in their stories. Every story contained phrases directly connected to the written text but also phrases or words re-ordered to make more sense to the child. Arizpe and Styles (2003:58) stated that, 'readers become involved when they can form analogies between the text and their own experience' and retellings demonstrated various ways that children did this. For the sake of clarity the remainder of this chapter will examine this in the two stories separately. At this point in the analysis I examine retellings only, analysis of discussions with the children following in Chapter Six.
10.1 Repetition in picture book version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*

10.1.1 Beginnings and endings

Recalls were examined to ascertain whether children used traditional story openings such as ‘One day’ or ‘Once upon a time.’ The first story *What made Tiddalik Laugh?* was unusual as it began with an author’s note explaining possible origins of the story. The actual story began on page two with, ‘In the Dreamtime, there lived a giant frog called Tiddalik.’ This opening sentence was followed by, ‘One morning, when he woke’. Half the children, four boys and four girls, began with, ‘Once’ or ‘One day’. No one mentioned the author’s note, which indicated that they were aware it was not actually part of the story, so distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction. The information given at the start was occasionally woven into their stories. Annabel began, ‘One...once in Africa’. Although this was the wrong continent, it showed awareness not only of story language but also a need to contextualise. Trevor began his story with ‘Tiddalik was a giant frog in...’ and waited to be given the name of the place.

Closures and events were also examined for use of storybook language. *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*, ended with reference to the author’s note. ‘After Tiddalik there were no more giant frogs in Australia, only small ones. But like him, they can fill themselves up with water and save it for a dry day.’ Three children closed their stories with an emphatic ‘The end’ to indicate that they were finished but many more children referred to its informational content. Megan, when asked what had happened said, ‘He turned into loads of little frogs and there wasn’t any big frogs anymore’. This was a comment that could be interpreted in different ways. Was the information gleaned from the text which
stated that there were ‘no more giant frogs [...] only small ones’? The picture illustrating this page is of a number of little frogs, suggesting that she had used this visual cue but the reference that Tiddalik ‘turned into loads of little frogs’ also had shadows of the oral story where Tiddalik shrank in size at the end. Repetition in this example bears influences of both oral and storybook language.

10.1.2 Influences on language

As mentioned above the last picture (Event 15) showed a number of little frogs hopping about. This presented children with a visual representation of those frogs found in Australia nowadays, as well as an explanation for reasons why there were no longer giant frogs. Martin used a complexity of experiences to retell this part of the story: ‘he burst into little Tiddaliks and they and they still do it and keep er um save up water for um...save up water for a very very sunny day without no rain.’ Despite his hesitations he was utilising information and rephrasing it in his own way. His explanation was of Tiddalik changing into not one little frog, as in the oral version, but of bursting into ‘little Tiddaliks’ so explaining why the last page is covered with an illustration of little frogs and reflecting the information given in the text. Thirteen of the sixteen children stated that Tiddalik was small at the end of the story. Comments like, ‘he was small like all the other frogs ‘ explained why the last page was dotted with frogs, though some children stated that he became smaller at the end. David said, ‘He shranked.’ This was a strong indication of the influence of the oral story in which Tiddalik ended up as a very small frog. Barrs and Thomas (1996: 58) claimed that stories that are truly memorable are ones ‘that come out of an oral tradition’.
It would appear that children were internalising the roots of story by auditory, visual and kinaesthetic means and blending the elements together to form their own narratives, although the visual element may have been paramount for many children.

Towards the end of the story, when Tiddalik laughed, there was an illustration of a giant frog with a waterspout emerging from its mouth. (Event 13) This arc of water was filled with fish, turtles, water snakes and what looked like lizards. It particularly appealed to the children and was incorporated into some of their stories. 'It made him laugh so much that fish flied out of some water', stated Richard. David said, 'Tiddalik started to open up his mouth and all the water came out with all the fish' and Simon talked about the 'waterfall' emerging from Tiddalik’s mouth. Annabel commented that 'all the water and fish and all the things from the lakes and stuff came spilling out again'. In the book similar words are used, 'all the rivers and lakes and streams came swooshing out' but fish are not mentioned so it must be that their descriptions stemmed directly from the impact of the illustrations.

Claire made clear reference to the book while retelling her version of the story:

Tiddalik started to laugh and laugh and laugh cos he’d never seen an animal so funny like that but it wasn't really funny it was just hairy and then all the water just made a sort of waterfall shape and um on the next page it was Tiddalik so then he was laughing under a tree (laughing noise) and then the animals were so so glad the end

In this part of her story she made direct allusion to the book by saying, 'on the next page' demonstrating its visual impact. There were further influences to
be taken from this extract. The description of Platypus described him as ‘hairy’. This could have been taken from words used in the story, which say he had fur like a wombat, but were more likely to stem from illustrations showing a strange creature with a hairy body. Claire also described the ‘waterfall shape’ when Tiddalik laughed. This was a very visual description and directly related to the illustration already mentioned by Richard, David, Annabel and Simon. Tiddalik laughing under the tree was also a visual cue not referred to at all in the text. Graham (1995: 83) commented on how illustrators were able to display ‘a range of story-events with or without text which adds to the reader’s growing command and understanding of narrative’. This certainly appeared to be the case with Claire who had scanned the pictures to aid her understanding of the finer points of the story.

On occasion children did not have the vocabulary to describe fully what they wished to say. Platypus was a new creature for some of them and was described in different ways. Claire called it a ‘little antelope’ while Peter tried to make sense of the unknown: ‘what what was the was the little dog called again’. Both Trevor and Rima used the book, to some extent, to retell their stories. Very shy and retiring, ill at ease in the classroom and when working with adults, Trevor needed to feel secure before attempting to retell the story. For this reason he used the book to help him to anchor his thoughts for part of the story saying ‘I forgot’ when he came to record his version, and briefly glancing through the book before recall. Many of his hesitations noted in the transcript during the first part of the retelling were due to pages being turned:
Tiddalik was

There he is (pointing to book) Tiddalik was what?

Tiddalik was a giant frog in...

Australia

Australia...and he drank up the lakes...the river the billabong and he was still thirsty...(p)

What did he do then?

Then he went to sleep...and all the...trees and flowers and leafs died and the wombat thought of a plan to make him laugh...(p)

So can you remember what they did?

Um

Can you remember yourself some of the things the animals did?

From this point onwards Trevor did not look at the book but relied on his memory. As may be seen this resulted in a much more fluid story where even the tone of his voice was more confident.

Uh...so they did naughty funny tricks funny jokes funny dances funny songs funny faces and it still didn't make Tiddalik laugh and all the ponds and the rivers and the lakes they all filled up and all the trees and the flowers had grown...

Good, and what happened to Tiddalik in the end?

And he wasn't a giant frog any more he was a little one.

Trevor's story, although partly based on illustrations, was a narrative with a clearly defined sequence of events. The events that Trevor was able to remember without reference to the text were not in order but this was not important to the story line. Illustrations of funny dances, jokes, faces and so on
obviously had some impact on him as he was able to recall them with more ease and his commentary that 'all the trees and the flowers had grown' was both a reflection of the written words in the book and its illustration where 'The grass grew. The flowers grew.' appeared alongside a picture featuring a large tree with animals dancing and drinking water under it. (Event 14, see above.)

Rima used the book throughout her retelling as she had been required to leave during the class session for extra support from the EAL teacher. It was decided to include her story in the final selection as, despite the fact she was not present through some of the story-reading, she had recognised the book cover and could remember hearing the story read to her before. As with Trevor, her recall required some prompts. At first Rima tried to read the story but was told to just use the pictures to scaffold her tale.

R: He's laughing he's drinking water he's having lots of water there

T: Right what happened to him then?

R: He's getting fat...all the grass all the tree are getting...dying...all the animals are thirsty...they want to they are singing a song and ah they're talking...(Inaudible. Conversation with teacher)

T: Oh right ok

R: They are laughing they are dancing they're singing a song they one of the animals are going in the hole and they are talking... they are coming from his mouth all the water are back to normal

Although Rima had access to the book her story was more like a description than a narrative. It had closure where, at the end, everything was 'back to normal' but its expression was stilted. This could have been due to a number of factors. Although Rima was a confident child, recognised the book
and wanted to tell the story her use of English showed that it was not her first language. ‘All the grass all the tree’ indicated a lack of knowledge of plurals. Similarly, ‘one of the animals are going in the hole’ and ‘all the water are back to normal’ showed lack of agreement with subject and verb. Graham (1995: 26) asserted that illustrations ‘play an important role’ in the ability to ‘make interior visualizations’. As Rima did not have the opportunity to make the pictures part of her interior visual world before telling the story we may have begged the question of whether visual impact has to become part of the memory, or visualisation, of a story for it to be effective. The aspect of visualisation is discussed in Chapter Six.

Sadie’s story will be examined in further detail later in this chapter but she also demonstrated the influence of illustrations when she asked about the name for animals ‘like lizards’ who did ‘a funny dance’. (Event 9) She described the ‘naughty tricks’ animals played on each other, ‘stamping on them and hooking them with sticks’. Text for the page Sadie referred to said, ‘Some played nasty tricks. But Tiddalik did not laugh.’ The double spread illustration, however, showed an ostrich tripping up a fox and a mouse jabbing a kangaroo with a stick, as Sadie described. The same illustration also appeared in Tracey’s story: ‘they hurt each other and when a mouse hit hurt the kangaroo he said oww.’ The illustration shows a kangaroo leaping into the air and a speech bubble with ‘YEOW!’ in capital letters.

All children used both words and phrases from the book. ‘Billabong’ was a noticeable example with three of the boys using this unusual word correctly in their stories. Several children also used the phrases ‘all the water in the world’
and 'still thirsty', which were features of both oral and read versions. James sometimes used words from the text, 'nasty jokes', 'silly songs' 'funny jokes' but what was more significant was the way he paraphrased the text. While retaining some of the original wording, James succeeded in retelling in his own way. 'When the sun rose the next morning,' in the book became, 'night time was over the sun was coming up'. The storybook version, 'Flowers wilted in the heat,' was transformed into the more child friendly, 'flowers were dropping down'. This confirmed that James understood book language but was translating it into his own format. His engagement with the character of Tiddalik was indicated by his description of the meeting between Tiddalik and Platypus. In the book it said, 'He had never seen such a strange animal in all his life.' Echoes of this book language were apparent in the version James gave: 'Tiddalik thought I haven't seen an animal like this before.' James was telling the story from the viewpoint of Tiddalik, rather than the narrator, showing his involvement with the main character at the same time as his awareness of language used in the book version.

Sadie showed evidence of words and phrases directly linked to the text, indicating an aural influence. 'Blig' was an attempt to say billabong and the word 'playabout' was another word obviously heard in the story. 'What's all the noise' was a phrase frequently used by many children and Sadie repeated this with expression, using a character voice.

In a similar fashion Saleema's story was punctuated with sound effects, which confirmed the influence of the aural for her. 'Tiddalik went to the pond and went (slurping noise) and said I'm still thirsty then he went to the p..pond and
went (slurping noise) and drank it all'. This could be an echo of the oral story, which sought to engage children by encouraging them to join in with repetitive refrains. In a similar way to James she rearranged words used or used words comparable to those in the book, with emphasis on meaning. "Excuse me!" Platypus grumbled. "But I was trying to get some sleep!" was changed to 'there was an animal and it got out and said excuse me I'm trying to sleep,' Saleema ended her story with Tiddalik shrinking, as in the oral version. She also introduced a snoring noise when Tiddalik 'went fast asleep' which was not a feature of either oral story or picture book text. Saleema enjoyed eye contact during her recall and also used gestures to add to her narrative. This verified her engagement with the text and an ability to create atmosphere for her audience when storytelling. Wilson (2006b) identified this engagement with audience as a key feature of storytellers and although he was referring to professional storytellers it could be argued that Saleema was enacting the same qualities in her retelling.

10.2 Creativity in the picture book version of What Made Tiddalik Laugh?

Defining what would be regarded as creative in the recall of a story already heard at least twice, orally and then in written storybook language, proved to be challenging. As may be seen from analysis many influences were at work when the children recounted their versions of the stories. Any incidence of children adding to the story by introducing new characters or events was regarded as evidence that they were thinking creatively. What follows is an examination of these examples in story recalls of children.
10.2.1 Beginnings and endings

Little evidence of created language was to be found in retellings of this story. Megan started with, 'He drank everything in the every every everything...'. Although this was a reflection of what had happened in the book her repetition and extra emphasis on 'every' gave this story a different beginning with a cumulative effect, which was different from others. In a similar manner Saleema ended her story with Tiddalik becoming 'smaller and smaller and smaller each day.' Armstrong (1994: 125) argued that narrative 'obliges us to innovate even as we try to imitate'. From this point of view all these stories were innovations as they were the reconstructions of each individual but I was seeking more than just impressions by looking closely at the words and phrases used by children in the study.

10.2.2 Influences on language

Examining stories for evidence of created language proved less than fruitful in some cases. Although children used a variety of vocabulary in their stories, as will be seen in the following section, they adhered to the story format. The occasional extra element was introduced but these proved to be of little significance. For example, Annabel paraphrased the part of the story where the land dried up due to lack of water and continued, 'all the animals said we have to do something about this we need some fruit and leaves.' She had made a connection between the lack of water and subsequent lack of fresh food for the animals and in some part enhanced her story by the introduction of this extra element.
James also included a vision of night: 'and he went off to sleep under a tree all the it was night time the sun night time was over the sun was coming up and rised up the sun all the flowers were dropping down.' From this it was difficult to say whether James had deliberately added a new scene or whether he was just equating his personal experiences of sleeping with night-time. I suspect it was the latter.

Sadie, a very articulate child, seemed reluctant to tell the story at first, and stated 'I don't want to I feel embarrassed' so that we started the recording with the interview and led slowly into actual retelling. Her transcript communicates fluidity and expression, as well as some evidence of creativity.

S: He started off very big and very fat and he was very very thirsty and he started drinking all the water even drank a massive big (phonic representation of child utterance) very big (laugh) ... and he was still thirsty and then he drank all the other lakes and rivers and then he finally had a little rest and when the animals went to have a little drink they were looking around and there was nothing alive not even a single little flower and then they were like where's all the water gone and then they saw Tiddalik resting and they knew that it was all in his little tum (laugh) but how could he fit all that water into his tummy if he was so small Maybe he's got ten million layers of skin

T: I don't know

S: And it lets him grow and lets him grow (inaudible)

T: So what are the animals...

S: They all have a little play about and they started making funny faces and playing naughty tricks on each other stamping on them and hooking them with sticks and then the birds started to sing a little silly song and then um they all started making funny faces and then mm the little like what they called again like lizards

T: Chameleons
S: Yeah chameleons

T: Yes

S: And they started making a funny dance [sings ei ei yippee yippee ei and laughs] but Tiddalik would not laugh and then the platypus said what's all that noise and he came up and then he ... then he said what's all the noise and then he saw T and then he saw Tiddalik and said stop making a lot of noise and the animals were like well we were trying to make him laugh...and then when Tiddalik looked at the platypus he started laughing and laughing and laughing then all the water came out of his mouth into the rivers that'll be disgusting though because they all drank it from his mouth (laugh) well they're only animals (laugh) they don't know anything (laugh)

T: And what happened to Tiddalik then?

S: And Tiddalik was very very small like all the other flogs frogs frogs I was going to say flogs then

The first thing that one noticed about this retelling was this child's enjoyment. Despite her initial protestations that she was embarrassed she was obviously engaged with the story and her role as storyteller. The transcript did not do justice to the quality of Sadie's voice as she recounted the tale. The cadence of her voice changed frequently as she maintained eye contact, indicating that she was aware both of her audience and the purpose of the activity. On closer examination this text displayed not only the visual impact of the storybook but many examples of creativity. She had made the story unique by injecting it with personal comments and sound effects. Her text was punctuated with her own comments, questions and elaborations on both story and pictures, interpreting both a picture of a desolate landscape and the meeting of animals, 'When the animals went to have a little drink they were looking around and there was nothing alive not even a single little flower.' Her use of colloquial phrasing 'and then they were like where's all the water gone,' also displayed an awareness of language in common usage and the way oral stories...
may be familiar in their form. This showed a child who was mature in her ability to reflect and interpret story and turn it into something that had a personal quality. Guppy and Hughes (1999: 27) regarded story as 'essential to human experience' and said that 'its purposes in making sense of the world are literally vital'. In her retelling Sadie demonstrated how she made sense of the story by questioning and explanation, 'but how could he fit all that water into his tummy if he was so small...maybe he's got ten million layers of skin'. Her frequent laughter and inclusion of a song demonstrated clearly a child who was a powerful storyteller and confident learner.

Sadie did not just recount a story from memory but injected it with humour, interest and personal involvement. Even the denouement of the tale is interspersed with personal thoughts, 'all the water came out of his mouth into the rivers that'll be disgusting though because they all drank it from his mouth (laughs) but they're only animals (laughs) they don't know anything'. Guppy and Hughes (1999) believed that during the process of learning how to read children should be encouraged to use illustrations and make connections between their own experiences and books they are reading. Certainly, making connections was a form of creativity that helped children in this study to remember stories and to bring them to life.

Sadie said that she had seen the book and heard or read the story a few times, undoubtedly contributing to her confidence in retelling. Although other children, like Saleema, added elements of creativity and sound effects, the story that Sadie produced was outstanding in both fluency and content.
10.3 Conclusions of analysis of picture book version of *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*

Most of these children had managed to retell, with a degree of accuracy, the main points of the story. Their recalls demonstrated both use of storybook language and a degree of playing with words but more in the sense of using character voices and gestures than actual words to display their engagement and interaction with the text. Pictures certainly influenced storytellings as children were able to read the pictures and make interpretations from them. Evidence of creativity was elusive and few examples were found from these stories. Sadie's story was the exception, rather than the norm.

10.4 Repetition in the picture book version of *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

10.4.1 Beginnings and endings

*The Owl and the Woodpecker* began with the traditional ‘Once upon a time, in a forest far away, there lived a woodpecker’. Ten children used ‘once’ or opened with ‘One day’. Others who did not use these openings began with a clearly structured phrase. Megan’s story began, ‘There was an owl and there was a woodpecker’. David and Richard had similar openings. Trevor was also aware of the need to set the story in some sort of context, ‘In the forest there was a place in the woods’. Tracey was the only child who plunged straight into the action of the story without really attempting to give any introduction, ‘Well the woodpecker was pecking his tree’.
The number of children using storybook language in openings demonstrated a growing awareness of the formal nature of written language. It was a reflection of the actual story itself and also competence gained through constant exposure to narrative texts in school. Children learn 'orchestration' of the different skills that make up the process of reading and narratives through these shared experiences in school and often at home as well (Barrs and Thomas, 1996: 58).

_The Owl and the Woodpecker_ had a definite, happy ending. 'Peace and quiet returned to the forest and the Owl and the Woodpecker remained good friends all the rest of their lives.' Half the children closed with 'the end' or 'happily ever after' and all their story endings reflected the text. 'and they became best friends' was one example from Megan.

10.4.2 Influences on language

Book language was identifiable in every story although many children changed words or phrases to make it their own. In several stories the word 'tapping' was replaced by 'pecking'. This indicated previous knowledge of birds and their actions. When children learn about birds they are rarely described as tapping with their beaks and the word pecking would be a natural substitute for the movement that they make with their heads. 'Gnawing' was more frequently changed to 'nibbling', a word children would be more likely to use everyday and to be a part of their vocabularies. Substitution of these words signifies that they were making sense of this narrative and establishing meaning for themselves,
according to their own experiences. Another common usage was the phrase 'couldn't get to sleep', in place of the book phrase, 'kept awake.' Although both phrases had the same meaning the one that children used was that in the oral story version. This did not necessarily mean that the children remembered the oral version. They may have translated the meaning of the story into their own words so that it made more sense to them.

Aural influence was scattered throughout most of the stories by the use of onomatopoeic phrases. Saleema repeated the phrase 'tap tap tap' and the description of the tree 'going to one side to the other other side to the other'. In the oral version that I had told movements had accompanied these phrases. Body percussion was used to build atmosphere during the storm so children were involved kinaesthetically. That kinaesthetic learning may have had a subconscious influence on Saleema's memory of the story which came to the fore during her recall. In several other cases children repeated the 'tap tap tap' or 'tapping tapping' of the oral story. This repetition could have been for effect as they realised that repeating something would give it more emphasis. It helped to build the atmosphere of desperation Woodpecker felt as he tried to warn Owl about the storm.

As mentioned in the analysis of What Made Tiddalik laugh? Saleema was an accomplished storyteller who was aware of story structure, story language and audience engagement. Including sound effects and actions in story was natural for her. Her recall was punctuated by sound effects, such as knocking on the table and intonation in her voice to identify characters. These effects have been noted in the following excerpt:
One day once upon a time there was a woodpecker and an owl ... one day the woodpecker was tapping on the tree (knocking sound) then suddenly the owl woke up and said stop making that noise (deep voice) and the woodpecker said... said this is my tree and I can tap on it if I like to (high voice) and then the animals heard it and they came running up and said what's going on (interrogative voice) and they said and they and woodpecker said the owl thinks that the owl wants me to go from this tree because I'm tapping (noise) on it (high voice) so they made they were trying to think what to do and they were talking to the big (emphasis) animals and they and they said they just they said we don't have that idea then (emphasis) they had an idea aha (high pitched and elongated) I got an idea why don't we chop down the owl's tree (interrogative) they pushed they pushed they pushed (emphasis) but they gave up and they went home so one day these two animals called beavers came to the owl's tree and went ach ach ach ach (action and noise) and they went home and then there was a stormy (elongated) night the tree was going to one side to the other other side to the other and the woodpecker tap tap tap (noise) to try and wake up the owl so the owl woke up in the middle of the night and said whooo (elongated) is that and the woodpecker said it's me (high voice) I'm waking you up cos your tree is nearly going to fall and then he just went crash (emphasis and gesture) fell onto the floor and then the woodpecker and the owl finally found another part of the forest for the owl to live and sleep and tap at the tree and they and the woodpecker and the owl lived happily ever after the end (high voice, flourish) love the end

As before, Saleema varied her tone and incorporated sound effects and gestures to engage and ensure active listening. She repeated herself, on some occasions for effect, 'they pushed they pushed they pushed', at other times because she was trying to remember 'and the woodpecker said... said said' and used the repetition to gain time. Despite occasional repetition, her story was coherent, had a discernible structure and followed traditional patterns, with story openings and closures. She obviously enjoyed storytelling and her recall displayed clear understanding of the main points of the story and its issues, or moral. Her use of intonation was a clear sign that she had made some personal connection with the characters and was aware of the dramatic effect of voice.
Her attempt to make owl type noises ('Whooo' when Owl spoke towards the end of the story) could have been a reflection of modelling of story reading.

That the influence of the aural seemed to be more apparent in recalls of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* than *What made Tiddalik Laugh?* puzzled me. One would have assumed that if a more familiar text was retold then more of the storybook language would become incorporated in children's recalls. *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was a book none of the children professed ever hearing or seeing before. Teachers were equally unfamiliar with the story, so it was a mystery why the words and phrases from this story should occur so often in the stories children were recounting, especially when examination of all recalls revealed several common phrases. Children were obviously attracted by the opening few pages that set the scene where 'Woodpecker ... slept all night and worked all day' while Owl 'liked to work all night and sleep all day.' Most of them repeated these phrases either word for word or in a similar format.

Owl slept in the day and the woodpecker worked in the day. (Richard)

The Woodpecker worked all day and slept all night and the Owl slept all morning and worked all night. (Tracey)

The Woodpecker staying up all morning working and the Owl slept all morning and the Woodpecker work slept all night and the Owl worked all night. (Megan)

A Woodpecker who always keeps on working and an Owl that always seems to sleep. (Trevor)

The rhythm of the words was important in these recalls as the children had obviously been aware, subconsciously or otherwise, of the balance in the
original text and had tried to emulate it. Other common words and phrases were, 'next door', 'lost his temper', 'bad-tempered', 'bully' and 'swooped', which a number of children used in their recalls. Occasional, longer, identifiable clauses like 'something had to be done' and 'what was the matter' were taken directly from the book.

Another part of the story where repetition was evidenced was when the animals tried to push the tree down in the night. The written text reads, 'they pushed and puffed and panted'. Megan obviously wanted to stress how difficult this was by her emphasis, 'in the night they were pushing and pushing and pushing on the tree and it still wouldn't move so they tried they tried and tried and tried and tried'. Her constant duplication of the words made their struggle to push the tree down seem even more impossible and one could sense the anticipation and effort involved. Sadie used repetition for effect with Owl 'sleeping softly softly' and the 'very very very quiet bit of the forest'.

10.5 Creativity in The Owl and the Woodpecker
10.5.1 Beginnings and endings

David's ending 'then the owl flew away with the woodpecker' actually referred to previous pictures in the book but could still be regarded as a proper closure to the story. Simon showed empathy with the moral behind the story, 'and they were best friends as owl realised what woodpecker had to do'. This indicated a thought process relating to the relative situations of both main characters. It displayed what Arnold (1986:119) described as 'an active engagement with the text' and, although Arnold was referring to children reading,
the same process was demonstrated by Simon’s thoughtful response to the story read to him. The final illustration in the book showed Owl in a tree by himself with his eyes closed. This visual element was also reflected in some of the endings, ‘woodpecker found a nice place for owl to sleep in’, said Claire, and Peter commented 'so he could have a sleep'.

10.5.2 Influences on language

Most children adhered closely to the story with few deviances, although events were not always totally sequential. Richard introduced a different element when he talked about the animals coming to see what was the matter with Owl. ‘The animals came to see what was the matter so the animals came and um the owl was being a bit of a bully cos he was scaring them off so when he scared them off he told the other animals we mu... must cut the woodpecker’s tree down.’ This was a different slant from the original story where the animals decided that they must try and move Owl’s tree and certainly showed an extra aspect of Owl’s personality. Whether this was deliberate or whether Richard just became confused by events was difficult to ascertain. The story continued: ‘but when the animals had um a meeting to say we must cut the owl’s tree down because if I couldn’t get to sleep themselves so they they pushed all they could when the owl wasn’t there.’ Empathy with the animals’ situation is evident. Richard also showed some empathy with the beavers and their job of gnawing through the tree, ‘the beaver was cutting it all thing down but couldn’t stand it.’

Megan expanded slightly on the storyline by engaging Woodpecker in an argument with Owl, ‘they asked if the wood owl would move and the owl said no
and they asked the woodpecker and the woodpecker said no and they said and the owl and the woodpecker said well I was here first so'. Despite all the confusion in this extract it was clear that Megan had a vision of Woodpecker stating that he was not going to move because he was there first. In the book it was Badger who mentioned the rights of Woodpecker, so that Megan had given the story a different interpretation by twisting these elements around to create a slightly different scenario, both visually and orally. These examples were not what many would describe as true creativity in that they were not generating something truly original, although the NACCCE (1999: 30) report commented that 'there can be degrees of originality' and that originality may be in relation to previous work of an individual. Using this model as a basis these children were showing some degree of creativity in their texts.

The rhythm of language was used to effect in part of David's recall: 'He woke up with a bad mood and turned into a scared mood...and the tree was about to fall down...the tree was about to fall down'. Here was an example of repetition but not for effect. David repeated the clause to enable him to think about the next part of the story. His voice did not change in pitch and the second uttering of 'the tree was about to fall down' was swiftly followed by 'and then the Owl flew away with the Woodpecker.' In contrast the 'bad mood' changing to a 'scared mood', emphasised by a rise in intonation on the word 'scared' signified that David was aware of the effect of his chosen words and rhythm in the story.

Once more, the story that Sadie recounted was undoubtedly the most creative in the class. She was confident and her fluent retelling contained its main elements, but in her own way. She took the story language and re-formed
it into her own structure, embellished with vernacular phrases verifying her ability to use different voices for different purposes and possibly a growing awareness that oral language was different from book language in its flexibility. ‘The Owl screeched so loud all the animals gathered to see what happened... and then... when the when all the animals arrived they were like what’s all this nonsense what’s all this noise what’s happening...’ (Interrogative voice used) What followed was a conversation between Owl and the animals, which Sadie had fabricated from details given in the book. It showed that she was aware of different characters in the story and had connected with the problem presented to them.

Humour was injected into the story when the fox suggested pushing the tree down, but without success. ‘One night when they tried to push it down it wouldn’t budge it wouldn’t even move a single bit and then they all said well that’s a good idea isn’t it to the fox’. Having heard this, one could not help but feel sorry for Fox who had had his reputation as a ‘wise fox’ destroyed, or at least besmirched. It was easy to imagine him sneaking away with his tail between his legs. The characters in the story were real; they had human characteristics; we were able to empathise with them and they spoke in a natural way. By including these elements into her story Sadie had added an extra dimension. She had allowed her imagination to elaborate the situation.

Her use of voice was an important feature of her retelling as it varied in tone and pace and was interjected with the occasional sound effect, ‘then the owl said what’s all this nonsense non arghhh then he noticed that his tree was falling down.’ Sadie displayed no reticence in telling this story, in contrast to her
recount of *What made Tiddalik Laugh*? This could have been due to her greater engagement with it or because she had become more accustomed to the tape recorder, as had all the others. Sadie was able to add her own personal touch as well. As Beetlestone (1998:20) commented, 'retelling of stories gives children the chance to express their ideas in their own way.'

Simon’s story also contained elements of creativity.

Well one day there was a woodpecker and he lived in this tree next to this owl and the owl was in his tree and owl worked all night and slept all day and the woodpecker um worked all day and .. um and slept all night so when the woodpecker was working the owl was awake trying to get to sleep and one day he lost him um temper and um he said be quiet I need to go to sleep and then owl and then woodpecker said no I was here first it's my tree so I can hit it all I want and then so he tapped and tapped and tapped until owl said stop that racket and the woodpecker went inside his tree and went to sleep and then all the big animals came and talked to owl and bear said I know why don't we knock down woodpecker's tree and owl said no I like woodpecker though I don't like his noise and then they talked to woodpecker and they said I know what we could do we could knock down owl's tree because you were here first and so they said Ok...so they knocked down owl's tree and then the storm came and then the tree got knocked over and then they had...the um owl had to go to the other side of the forest and find another tree and they were best friends as owl realised what woodpecker had to do.

The story begins with direct reference to the written text and book language is obvious. In accordance with many of his classmates Simon had taken the 'owl worked all night and slept all day' element to start the tale. The story started to become Simon's own creation when the conversation between Owl and Woodpecker progressed; 'then woodpecker said no I was here first it's my tree so I can hit it all I want and then so he tapped and tapped and tapped until owl said stop that racket and the woodpecker went inside his tree and went to sleep.' In this extract Simon was using information from the story but adding
to it his own interpretation of Woodpecker's character. It was Badger, later in the
storybook, who said that Woodpecker was in the forest first but Simon has taken
that information and used it in his own way. Owl said 'stop that racket' but a
colloquial imperative like that was not used in the book version. This could have
been Simon's reconstruction of 'stop that noise' and the word 'racket' probably
related to his own experiences. The conversation that followed between the
animals and Owl was a complete fabrication 'all the big animals came and talked
to Owl and Bear said I know why don't we knock down woodpecker's tree and
owl said no I like woodpecker though I don't like his noise.' What was obvious
from this was Simon's empathy with Woodpecker. Simon had already shown it
by having Woodpecker say that he was in the forest first and now Woodpecker
was given a further vote of confidence from Owl, who was supposed to be his
enemy. Children, in general, are very eager for justice and fair play and some
display a strong moral sense so that this could have been Simon's way of saying
where his sympathies lay. The justification for knocking down the tree was also
given some justification and his version of a good reason, 'we could knock down
Owl's tree because you were here first and so they said Ok ... so they knocked
down Owl's tree.' One wondered if Simon had encountered some recent conflict
in the playground where the idea of who was there first had some significance.
Winstone and Tandy (2001: 63) asserted that it was through 'stories that children
apprehend and think through ideas and issues of human significance.' To Simon
the idea of what was fair appeared to have influenced his retelling and enabled
him to add a creative element to his story.
10.5.3 Conclusions of analysis of picture book version of *The Owl and the Woodpecker*

In these retellings children showed that they were aware of story conventions in terms of openings, closures and sequences of events. Sound appeared to be an important feature in retellings with repeated phrases from the story and sound effects used to enliven retellings, as well as character voices. Forrester, (2000: 38) regarded sound as extremely important, challenging the idea of image based entirely on visual perception. He postulated that 'vision is an object world, sound is an event world' and, further, that sounds were more emotive, arguing that infants feel and hear things before they see them. Whether one agrees with this or not sound effects given by children in retellings echoed not only the oral tale but also enhanced their stories, bringing them to life for teller and listener. This repetition of language enabled children to understand the grammar and conventions of storybook language and evidenced how they were beginning to show awareness was apparent in some stories.

Children made emotional connections with this story in a way that was more pronounced than in *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* This may have been due to the less complicated storyline or because they felt some sympathy for Owl, who could not sleep, or Woodpecker, who was just trying to do his work.

Movement seemed to have some effect on children’s memories, enabling them to recount details of this story by incorporating gestures. As Hughes and Ellis (1998: 33) attested, ‘gestures, interruptions, intonation, the toe of voice and accent are all used to help convey the meaning.’ Saleema’s story, reproduced
above, was a prime example of this. Although some variations were observed, in
general children seemed to adhere quite closely to the original oral story, with a
few examples of created language use.

11. Conclusions

Pinker (1998: 90) commented that 'when you put down a book you forget
almost everything about the wording' and you are left instead with the
'mentalese'. Mentalese, or the paraphrasing of what we have heard, was evident
throughout all the stories these children told although, as in the study that Fox
(1993) undertook with young children, there was also evidence of book language.
The structure of narrative was apparent and it appeared that children were
listening, talking and then reforming stories in their minds before retelling.
Language they used varied from simple to more complex and contained
elements of originality of use, such as David's 'bad mood scared mood' or
Sadie's vernacular, demonstrated by, 'and the animals were like well we were
trying to make him laugh' and her direct use of everyday, common phrases.
Garbarino and Stott (1992: 68) believed that 'it is not until roughly age six or
seven that children can begin to pay attention to language itself' and that
'children can understand more language than they themselves are able to
produce.' Evidence for this was seen throughout these stories. Some children
were highly competent and confident at expressing what they wanted to say
while others, such as Tracey, were more hesitant and less adventuruous in their
choice of words and expressions.
Both stories had conflicts to resolve and they demonstrated animals with human characteristics working together to do so. They enabled children to explore some of the moral dilemmas of life. Several children showed empathy with the characters and their difficult situations.

The story of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* generated more fluent and cohesive retellings than *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* This was unexpected as *Tiddalik* was a story which these children had read, enjoyed and even constructed a wall display about during the previous year. Clark (1994) postulated that the 'story read and reread seems to stimulate extended dialogue' so the expectation was that these retellings would be fuller and more creative. From this evidence the opposite was true. Grugeon and Gardner (2000: 45) were of the view ‘that as children grow older and more experienced […] they will inevitably become more confident and competent storytellers.’ However, such competency could not have been a developmental increment in ability as recording of the two stories were only a week apart. Familiarity with the procedures of the tape-recording may also have played a part in developing fluency of retellings.

In search for possible reasons, the subject matter of the two stories and their format were examined. *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* was more complex in terms of its informational elements relating to the myth upon which it was based. The author's starting note and the nature of the ending made it a more difficult story in some ways. Some of its vocabulary was more difficult to access, for example 'billabong, wombat, platypus' were words these children would not be
expected to have in their vocabulary and had perhaps forgotten since their previous experience of the book the year before. It was also based in a real place, Australia, which the children had only heard about and was far distant from their own experiences. The idea of a land without water was also a difficult concept for these children so that on reflection, this was a story that may well have contained many challenging elements.

On the other hand, the story of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was less complicated. The storyline was clear and the theme of conflict and resolution obvious. The children were able to relate to the feelings of frustration Owl felt when he was tired and unable to sleep, some reacted to the mention of bullying and the ending was the usual ‘happy ever after’. Individuals were able to ‘place the story and all it consists of on his/her personal map of experience’ (Harrison and Ashworth, 1991: 20). Many of the boys were already aware of what beavers were, belonging to the pre-Scout movement called Beavers, so that this element of vocabulary in the story presented less difficulty to them in comprehension. The major event in the story, the storm, was an experience all children had shared and, as it was based in a forest, most or all would have been able to use their own experience to place themselves in the setting. Whitehead (1997: 110) contended that ‘young readers usually create connections between the books and their own lives and experiences.’ It is my opinion that the connections children made between their lives and the problems Owl and Woodpecker encountered helped them to remember and recount those experiences more fully.
Children's responses to these stories were part of a learning process for them in terms of understanding structures of narrative and language used in both oral and read texts. Consciously or subconsciously they were developing knowledge about story grammars and functions. Beame (1998: 82) talked about the 'significant moment' when any child 'makes the connection between what is spoken and heard and what can be read off a page'. These children had already made that connection and their recalls showed that literacy for them had taken a further step in enabling them to use storybook language, with authority in some cases, and also to develop their own understanding of the rhymes and rhythms of language. Understanding differences and similarities between oral and written texts was important for distinguishing how stories were formed and how reading differed from telling. Wilkinson (1998) attested that storytelling was important in 'children's learning about written language' and these children's retellings demonstrated that they were very aware of written conventions of language, including openings, closures, use of past tense and sequencing of events.

In terms of language analysis one could see how repeated language was more easily identified than created language. Children sometimes used phrases which may not have adhered to the actual words from original texts, oral or read, but conveyed the same meaning by simple substitutions with similar meanings, such as use of 'pond' in the Tiddalik story. Antaki (1994: 120) asserted that accounts are 'shot through with references and allusions'. Language 'created' during these retellings was subject to many different influences: aural, visual, kinaesthetic, prior experiences, personal experiences and possibly other undefined and indefinable elements.
Chapter Six

Analysis of interview data

1. Approaches to analysis

Wilson (2006) described a storyteller in school as 'a facilitator attempting to unlock a child's creativity.' My hypothesis at the commencement of this study was that storytelling would elicit more vivid visualisations in the minds of my young subjects. One major purpose of this study related to their visualisations when listening to stories, both oral and read. I wished to investigate the impact of images which the stories contained on the minds of these young children. Gathering such information required a different method from collecting their story retellings. For this reason, after each story retelling, children were interviewed. Interviews were semi-structured around a few main questions, such as 'Did you see anything while you were listening to the story?' and 'What was your favourite picture?' (Appendix Two). Other questions, particularly in interviews following storytelling, were determined by their initial responses when it became clear that further deliberation would be required for more complete answers. For example, when asking for a description of the man in The Owl and the Woodpecker I sometimes had to ask a few questions to ensure a complete portrayal. Some questions relating to characters and settings were common in all interviews. Analysing these responses gave more insight into how children perceived the stories.
I considered different approaches that might serve as appropriate theoretical underpinning for this venture, such as text and discourse analysis. Discourse analysis used as a means of studying interactions in such dialogic communication, has many different facets. One such facet is conversation analysis, where the purpose behind every interchange is examined and suppositions made as to reactions of and interactions with subjects (Brown, 1996; Silverman, 1998; Norrick, 2000). Discourse analysis supposes that in each interchange there may be more than the literal meaning of words. Antaki (1994) explains how, sociologically, relationships between the subjects have to be taken into account. It seemed to offer a method, particularly with respect to the challenging task of interview transcript, that would allow me to ascertain the impact of stories on the imagination of children, as evidenced by their visualisations.

The work of Gee (1999) and others (Antaki, 2005, Slembruck, 2005) was used as a basis for further analysis and ways to provide a model for enquiry. Gee’s (1999: 53-54) ‘tools of inquiry’, related to ‘material, social, cultural and historical contexts’, were used as starting points and kept in mind both while analysing transcriptions and speaker and listener roles in interaction. Interview conversations depended on interaction. This was a two-way dialogue where I closely examined my exchanges with children in the hope of discovering as much as possible about their thought processes in relation to the imagery which they formed while listening to stories. What had to be remembered throughout was their young age, for although Bukatko and Daehler (1995) maintained that most four or five year olds speak like adults, they were not referring to language used to explain complex ideas and thoughts. In a similar manner, while Bernstein
(1973: 178) showed that five year olds could use an elaborated code of speech, young children are often unable to express clearly what they are thinking or feeling in terms of language. Deductions had to be made using more than just transcripts of language. Intonation, gesture and eye contact made by children had to be taken into consideration. Scollen and Scollen (1984: 187) found that children, in common with adults, used intonation and pausing as markers of discourse structure. Hesitations could not be regarded only as indicators of lack of confidence but also as deliberate markers in the discourse. This may have been true when examining the recalls of children, as in Chapter Five, but most hesitations during interviews were not deliberate, as will be seen in this chapter. Frowe (1999) pointed out that even non-verbal communication, such as grunts and gestures were part of the 'linguistic domain' when comprehended as meaningful. Some children in the interviews reported here used gesture in attempting to describe the inner landscapes of their imaginations in explaining what they were trying to communicate, rather than tone of voice.

I brought my conscious and subconscious knowledge as an experienced teacher of young children, as well as researcher, to the processes of analysing how children learned and reacted. This had advantages and disadvantages. My experience as a teacher and knowledge of the schools and teaching staff with whom I worked enabled me to be relaxed with children and to develop relationships quickly. However, at times I felt as though I had a dual personality, at once curious about what they had gained from the stories in terms of imagination, but also their knowledge of the wider curriculum such as geography and literacy.
At this point I selected six children, from the core of sixteen, with whom I had conducted a total of sixty-four interviews, on whom to base further study, in search of maximum depth of insight into the nature of their interactions and responses to my questions about visualisations. Given the general character of the population of children with whom I had worked, I attempted to impart balance to this part of the study by including an equal number of boys and girls, two children with languages in addition to English, one child on the special needs register and one child who stated that he did not have any visualisations. I was particularly curious as to how he reacted to stories, if not in mental images.

However, investigation and analysis using this method proved to be unsuccessful. After several months, and many thousands of words, I realised that I had not answered my research questions effectively. Although the pathway of discourse analysis had provided insight into relationships between myself and my participants, it did not fully detail elements of visualisation that were required by my aims. I had investigated relationships and interactions with my young subjects without relating this analysis to my original research questions. While the pathway I had selected enabled me to gain further insight into aspects of the research data I had not uncovered before, the realisation that I had, in effect, wasted valuable time in relation to my study meant that I had to alter my research design and formulate a more efficient approach. Kosslyn (2004), who worked mainly with brain-damaged individuals, stated that ‘there is no viable theory of mental imagery’ so it was difficult to find an educational theory to aid this process of analysing young children’s visualisations. Referring back to the original design structure provided the base on which to start afresh. I constructed a structure for
analysis on a similar framework to that which had already proven to be effective, as detailed previously in Chapter Five.

The model for analysis detailed in Chapter Five was adapted, as shown in Diagram 6.1:

![Diagram 6.1: Structure for analysis of visualisations]

Although it could be argued that all visualisations relating to oral stories were creative, as no actual visual material accompanied the story, different influences were established. As will be seen from analysis in this chapter these visualisations may be subdivided. Some were related directly to story, while others were created. Some visualisations were difficult to categorise in nature and are classified under 'Ambiguous influences' in the tables below. Although I have included these in the following tables, to give an overview of response, I have not incorporated them, except as part of the general discussion, in the following analysis. The focus of this chapter is to ascertain the extent to which
children's visualisations were based on imagination related to the texts they experienced, oral or read. To deliberate at length on those visualisations categorised under 'ambiguous' would be speculative and dilute the main thrust of this study. In agreement with the rest of this study, analysis is presented chronologically with interviews following storytelling preceding those conducted after story-reading.

2. Interviews following Storytellings

To give an overview of the general points raised by children at interview I constructed a table to show how many different factors were mentioned following both storytelling and story-reading. These factors could have been related to events or people. Things alluded to in interview were classed in three categories: those related directly to the story they heard; those produced as creative responses; and those which could be related to other influences, such as prior experience or knowledge. This final category was explained above. At times it was difficult to distinguish between categories but Tables 6.1 and 6.2 give a general idea of the influences perceived in interviews. Where a child has related three different items related to one character or event it is recorded as three, not one. For example, Don's 'funny mouth blue eyes and no nose' counted as three creative visualisations although it is all part of one description relating to Tiddalik.

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Table 6.1 Numbers of visualisations relating to *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* by storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Story related</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Ambiguous influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadie</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meera</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleema</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rima</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As may be seen from Table 6.1 the incidence of visualisation relating to the *Tiddalik* storytelling were almost equal in total to those defined as creative, (55 and 54 respectively). Another thirty-one images were regarded as difficult to categorise as they may have related to the story or prior knowledge of some sort. To avoid bias I decided to place these in the third column and they are discussed in the following analysis where appropriate. Further definition of what constitutes a story-based or creative visualisation follows later in this chapter. This chart was intended as a starting point for comparison only, as each child gave different
lengths of response to questions. After retelling their versions of stories some children may well have been tired, or unsure how to react to questions, explaining some non-responses. Alternatively some children were adamant that they did not ‘see’ anything, such as David, Tracey and Rima. This was worthy of further exploration and responses are analysed in the sections below.

Table 6.2 Numbers of visualisations relating to The Owl and the Woodpecker by storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Story related</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Ambiguous influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleema</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rima</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to Table 6.1, Table 6.2 relating to The Owl and the Woodpecker shows a greater number of creative and fewer story-related visualisations (76 and 29, respectively, with 17 ‘ambiguous’) at interviews.
However, again due to the different lengths of response, this may be viewed in different ways and explanation for these results could relate to several factors. Children had not heard this story before so that they may have listened more actively and responded in a more creative way. The storytelling experience was more kinaesthetic enabling them to become more involved in a story related more to their own experiences, capable of evoking more emotional reaction. This less complicated nature may have enabled children to think less about understanding it and more about creating their own images. A further explanation could have been that children were more confident about responding to questions, having experienced the same interview technique the previous week.

In common with the structure of the rest of this study, I first examined interviews conducted after oral storytellings and subsequent recalls by children, then those conducted at the end of picture book readings. The bulk of analysis related to creative visualisations, as defining the impact of story on the imagination, was a focus of my study. It has already been contended that the nature of creativity is difficult to define and a report by Scottish HMIE (2006) found that teachers could not agree as to what constituted it, attempts to define it resulting in thinking of creativity as originality, 'fresh or different perceptions' (p. 5) among pupils. In this chapter creative visualisations refer to images that could not have arisen from any source other than children’s imagination, though whether imaginative response is influenced by external factors is impossible to define. As one cannot look inside another’s mind, verbalisation of these images is only the basis upon which such deliberations can be made.
Story-based visualisations, while important in enabling children to recount and explain stories, were not generally as imaginative in nature. Children were relating what they had perceived from the text rather than what was their own creation. Although Doonan, (1993) and Arzipe and Styles (2003) would argue that such perceptions are of equal importance, for the purposes of answering my research questions, concentration necessarily focused on created visualisations.

2.1 *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?*

2.1.1 Visualisations related directly to oral story

Story based visualisations were those which referred directly to incidents related during storytellings. Many children related that they had seen Tiddalik drinking the water. This was scored as a story-based visualisation. Other examples were 'kangaroos jumping' and 'snakes doing a funny dance'. Both these examples are from Annabel's interview and they are typical of the sort of comments children made when asked to describe what they had imagined.

When questioned about whether they had seen any images or pictures in their heads while listening to stories some children answered in the negative. Tracey, who had difficulty retelling *Tiddalik*, a story that all the children had studied during the previous academic year so that some prior knowledge was expected, also insisted she had no visualisations at first and then said she saw Tiddalik drinking all the water and ants and snakes. Stone (1984) attested that imagery does not necessarily have to be visual so Tracey may have experienced some undefined imagery of a different nature. Perhaps the story had not
become part of her long-term memory explaining why she had difficulties recounting details.

Memory played a part in responses. Both Don and Rima alluded to memory, claiming 'I thought and thought' and 'It was in my head.' Rima also said that she remembered the book. This was in common with others who also said that they remembered seeing the book. Martin said, 'I've seen the story' and Annabel said she could describe Tiddalik, because, 'Well, I have seen it in the book.' This indicated visualisation but it related to something other than the oral story or a creative process. Despite these assertions some children had little to say about their visualisations. Children who were adamant that they did not have visualisations stated that they remembered the words of the story but could not describe anyone or anything in the story. David ensured that I was aware that he did not have his own vision of Tiddalik by qualifying his description: 'Well I think he was a little bit brownish with dots on him 'cos I seen a painting of him.'

Others related parts of the story that they had 'seen'. Sadie mentioned the animals ‘telling jokes’ and Tiddalik ‘opening one eye’. Several of her visualisations were story related in this way with little creativity in terms of originality, merely a regurgitation of events rather than fuller descriptions:

S: at the power bit just saw them standing on the ground and telling jokes and Tiddalik opening one eye and went back to sleep again

This lack of creativity was surprising as Sadie was one of the most loquacious children in the study, as may be ascertained from transcripts of her recalls and interviews. She was mature in her use of language and questioning approach, demonstrating that she was thinking on more than a superficial level. This could
have been partly an age-related matter, as she was one of the oldest in the study, or home related, or an indicator of intelligence. Sadie had stated that she was able to visualise quite clearly and saw ‘pictures’ while listening to stories, so that her responses were disappointing.

Some visualisations related to sounds. Robertson (2002: 62) asserted that ‘words can trigger images’ and this was apparent in some responses where children included sounds. Claire said that Tiddalik gave a ‘little giggle’ and Saleema actually made sounds when she recounted her visualisations. Birch (2000) regarded imagination as multisensory, so that inclusion of sounds would have been expected. Saleema was another child who became quite animated when discussing the story, displaying good use of character voices, demonstrating the influence of sounds. She had learnt about using different forms of speech in playful situations (Meek, 1991), developing her communication skills in this respect:

S. When I was telling the story I I saw the picture in my mind when Tiddalik laughed and when Tiddalik drank all the water and I and I and I...

What was significant about this was reference to Saleema’s own telling of the story. From this statement I assumed that visualisations helped her to remember and retell. Storytellers often use visualisations to aid memory. Maguire (1998: 47), himself a storyteller, advised others to visualise past just seeing an image to actually ‘hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling something.’ Saleema had obviously enjoyed her role as storyteller and this ‘performance’ mode continued in the interview where, later, she used onomatopoeic words and
gestures, to explain her images, pointing towards a full involvement in spoken text and visualisation beyond a simple image, as Maguire advocated:

S. I saw in my mind to a picture and I saw...

T. What did you see?

S. When Tiddalik he was going like this SLURP (bobbing up and down)

Saleema interspersed her descriptions with gestures to emphasise the points she was making. She frequently referred to parts of the story, ‘I seen that in my mind’ and identified eight different story-related visualisations.

While Peter’s excited account communicated meaning through a list of events when he said ‘I saw like it when I heard it’, I wondered if he was referring to an image brought about by listening to the words or whether he also heard sounds in his head when remembering the story. Robertson (2002) stated that imagery consisted of all the senses so that mention of sound is not unusual in this context. As this statement follows on from the tickling incident in the oral story (see Chapter Five, Section 6.1.2) it may be worth suggesting that the sound he heard was Tiddalik laughing. The oral story contained chuckles and giggles so he could have been making a memory connection. In this case visual images would have been enhanced by aural memories. For Peter, on the Special Needs register and requiring help with his literacy work, the fact that he was able to indicate his enthusiasm and to remember the story was an indication that the oral story had produced a positive response in him. Further aspects of Peter’s visualisations are investigated in the next section as he had the highest score for creativity following What Made Tiddalik Laugh? storytelling.
2.1.2 Visualisations related to creativity

Children also brought to the story their own knowledge from different sources, lending ambiguity to some responses. This made it difficult to decide whether what they said was truly creative or not. Although this story was set in Australia some children included other countries. Don talked about Spain so I wondered if he had been on holiday to Spain and equated heat and thirst with his own experiences. This was difficult to define. Other examples were also ambiguous in nature. Megan introduced a number of African animals to her visualisations. The following extract, taken from her interview, illustrated this point:

M: Well the wise owl was brown and he had brown eyes and he had a little bit of black and he had greyish blackish eyes and he was he was brown and black and he was um....and one the animals was giraffe with a long long back and one was a parrot and one was a snake and one was a hippopotamus and I think there was I think I saw two giraffes

Megan was not the only child to allude to a number of animals more suited to the African continent rather than Australia, where the story was set. Saleema saw giraffes and elephants, Peter mentioned giraffes and a monkey and Martin also included a giraffe while Claire introduced a tiger into the scene. Whether these images were truly creative in this context or not was impossible to decipher, explaining why I referred to them as ‘ambiguous influences.’ Sartre (1983) would have undoubtedly regarded them as precise, rather than creative images, as explained in Chapter Three. Children were recalling them from their own experiences, related to television, books or other sources, based on memory.
Claire's description of her imagery was different and delivered with gusto:

C Well at the end bit where he had all the water and he had all the water in his mouth well I was thinking like all of them were drowning like ooooooooooooo

T. So you could see all the animals being what?

C. Being like drinking the water and just like the snakes are just floating and the kangaroos were just splashing

In this extract we are able to see a mixture of story related and creative imagery. Claire referred to Tiddalik having all the water and drinking the water, two images directly related to the oral text. She elaborated on these images by adding creative elements of her own; 'drowning like oooooo', 'the snakes are just floating and the kangaroos were just splashing'. Although snakes and kangaroos formed a part of the oral tale, she had created a different vision by her verbs, 'floating' and 'splashing.' In a similar manner Sadie recounted events but used different vocabulary to make her descriptions more vivid:

S I could see just little fishes going down and I still say this little and I saw a wavy stream water and when he got to there very hot looking sand and another dying tree with the stream filled with just little fishes flapping up and down

Although on first reading this may seem disjointed, given lack of punctuation, Sadie is referring to series of images related to a sequence in the story. The 'little fishes going down' is a direct reference to the oral story where 'all the fishes in the pool were jumping on top of one another trying to keep wet'. Sadie's image is slightly different in that she says the fish were going down, presumably under the water. The end of her utterance returns to the fish and gives a broader interpretation of what could be the same event, but could equally
refer to a separate one in the story. Sadie talks about the 'wavy stream water' and the 'stream filled with just little fishes flapping up and down', her own, innovative way of using language. Dryden, Forbes, Mukherji and Joshi (2005) stated that it was clear that language facilitates cognitive development and here we had an example of how a child used it in explaining her internal, visual perceptions of a part of a story.

In asking children to describe Tiddalik I was interested to see if they remembered the picture book cover image of him, yellowish with brown stripes, from their previous experience. Most responded with a stereotypical, 'green' which I took as an 'ambiguous influence' rather than a creative response as it could have referred to personal knowledge and experience. I also asked if they could give me some idea of their images of the land. Peter's account was detailed and totally unique, as illustrated in the following extracts:

P. There was a daffodil and there was a...and I saw a...I saw the houses where they lived a...

T. Houses like this? Houses we live in or different sorts of houses?

P. Different sorts of houses like this this one got small and got about

By this stage Peter was using his finger to draw a shape in the air and then on the table in front of him. I passed paper and pencil to him. Despite his obvious enthusiasm Peter resorted to gestures and finally scribbled a drawing of a house where people lived. Garbarino and Stott (1992: 161) stated that 'eliciting stories from children is often combined with other activities, particularly with drawing' so that Peter's reaction was not uncommon. His fertile imagination, as
demonstrated by his excitement, went in want of sufficient verbal communication skills to offer explanation in any detail. Peter was competent enough in some ways but found it difficult to explain his more complex thoughts without some visual representation. This was not unusual and recent research, such as that reported in the joint UKLA and QCA (2004) publication, *More than Words*, has investigated how children frequently use multimodal ways of communication. While I attempted to elicit further information by more questions Peter was engrossed in his drawing:

P: And there's a door there [...] it is different cos its got holes there [...] That's the bit on another roof

At this point Peter was using drawing to illustrate his reference and I thought how useful it would have been if I had collected drawings from all the children in the study. However, as my main focus was upon language and visualisations, this could have complicated matters and many young children do not have the physical ability to produce a drawing that would express clearly what they see in the mind's eye. Peter continued, 'I saw the ground as well...all the way down I could see a shadow I could see the little frog as well.' Why exactly he said he could see the ground 'all the way down' is a mystery. Perhaps he was viewing the scene in his imagination from a high point or perhaps he imagined himself as taller than the giant frog, which would be a reasonable assumption, especially as he mentioned the 'little frog'. Further deliberation may have enabled me to understand more clearly what Peter was attempting to describe and the act of explaining may have clarified his thoughts and visualisations for him. As Nicholson (1999: 28) asserted, 'talk enables children to
experiment with ideas'. The act of translating their thoughts and visualisations into speech was in itself a cognitive act encouraging them to think about and express personal perceptions.

Involvement with the oral text was obvious from the responses of a few children. At the end of her interview Sadie asked, 'Why would there be an owl in Africa I have no idea why there’d be an owl there.' Although this followed from her description of the animals she had 'seen' in the story it was unexpected and illustrative of a creative, or at least thoughtful response to the story. In the same manner Saleema demonstrated her personal involvement:

S I liked best the parts when the ants tickled Tiddalik and the water came out and I liked the part best when everybody...when everybody...when...when... when they had water in when they were thirsty they could go over there and drink some water and then when they want water they can drink it like Tiddalik.

Saleema had thought about the implications of the story for all the animals. Her empathy with these creatures and their thirst was clear. This would indicate that Saleema was looking at more than the literal level of the story and was able to think more deeply about its characters. It also demonstrated my difficulties when analysing interview responses. Although this response is not strictly imaginative the inclusion of 'they can drink it like Tiddalik' displays a more superficial one. As a second language learner, with relatives in Bangladesh, Saleema's family experiences may have led her to think more deeply about the necessity of water to all life forms.
Although Richard displayed little creativity in his responses, he did describe the water as 'swishing out' of Tiddalik's mouth and stated that it had 'fishes' in it. This may have been an echo of the storybook remembered from the previous year but the language used was not used in either oral or text based stories, it was Richard's own creation. Meera also mentioned 'a big huge fish' that came out of Tiddalik's mouth and insisted that 'I saw that all myself.' This emphatic response and the inclusion of 'all', emphasised that if Meera was influenced by her prior knowledge it was a subconscious influence of which she was unaware.

When I questioned Simon about his visualisations he produced a mixture of both story-based and creative. The colours he used to describe the animals are not exactly what one would have expected and added an element of authenticity to this imagery. For example, his parrots were black and yellow and the ants were black and white. Description of the land was also unique; 'it was crinkly and hard', unusual language to describe land. Where did the word 'crinkly' come from in connection with land? I wondered whether it was based on his science work on materials where vocabulary of this sort would be used but had no indication that this was the case. Nevertheless it was evocative language that created a mental picture for me, as well as Simon. He was making connections of some sort but not really revealing how he had created this image. He continued this imagery later in the interview when asked about the land after Tiddalik had stopped laughing.

T And after Tiddalik had stopped laughing was the land the same then?
S No it was all blue and little cuts and water in the cuts
The 'little cuts' were a reference to cracks in the earth as it dried up but was an unusual way of describing them. It resulted in an innovative and personal description of Simon's visualisation where he extended his linguistic repertoire by 'sharing ideas and thoughts' (Nicholson, 1999: 29) though, as Parke (2002) commented, this type of one-to-one discourse is not the norm in schools. Teachers are generally too busy to be able to spend dedicated time with individuals, so I was in a privileged position in witnessing this cognitive process. I was also very conscious of the children's age and the limits of their concentration in such a context. I was asking them to reflect and explain in more depth than they would normally be required to do during a busy school day, encouraging their 'perception and evaluation' (Norrick, 2000: 4) of stories heard and retold.

2.2 The Owl and the Woodpecker

2.2.1 Visualisations related directly to oral story

In a similar fashion as in responses to What Made Tiddalik Laugh? a few children said they had no visualisations. Neither David nor Trevor was able to give any descriptions at all. When asked if he could describe Woodpecker David responded 'Well I have seen one but it was dead.' Curious as to how he had remembered the story I asked him and was told, 'I just listened to it.' Once again one saw auditory memory predominating. David was unable to comment on whether the actions and gestures incorporated in this story had helped his recall.
Trevor was similarly reticent and gave no response to questions about imagery perceived.

When asked to describe the forest answers were sometimes predictable and influenced by children's own experiences. Leaves, green and brown and branches were all words they used, variations on this theme, which will be discussed in the following section. Sadie's description illustrates how children were given points for both story-based and ambiguous influences. Sadie had related the forest to her own knowledge as well as giving a description of a place with trees as in the story.

S Well you know in the park all that wood on the floor I imagined that and all the trees everywhere and branches sticking out.

The school was close to a park and Sadie was using this experience of trees and woodland to draw her own imaginary forest. The tone was conversational as she addressed and asked me to share in her knowledge, 'well you know in the park'. This personal experience was the basis on which Sadie 'grew' her own forest in her imagination related to the story base. Saying 'I imagined that' was indicative of a child with firm understanding of the working of her own mind. She was a visualiser, able to articulate her images to a significant extent, displaying a maturity and facility for language beyond most of her classmates.

Some features were easily identified as springing directly from the oral story. Annabel told of the birds 'flying off into the air' and a few children
mentioned the saw that the man was carrying. Once again there were variations and additions to this, to be examined later in this chapter. Woodpecker was described as ‘pecking’ by Martin, a word that would have been related to his knowledge about birds and a reflection from his retelling of this story. This gained a mark under ‘ambiguous influences’, but it could also be interpreted as an indication of a story-based visualisation. Saleema appeared to be rather confused at times:

S  I think he had wings and a body and he had um a green body and he had wings that um he had um he had umm he had um what do you call it again um his wings um and eyes and he didn’t have claws and a mouth.

Saleema appeared reluctant to share her description of the woodpecker. She seemed very uncertain about what words to use and her hesitation was marked by several ‘ums’. Despite Scollen and Scollen’s (1984: 187) assertion that ‘pausing’ was used to mark out ‘hierarchical structure of the text’, in this case I was clear that hesitations arose from doubts about what to say. Saleema had already stated that she had not seen a woodpecker implying that she had neither experience nor knowledge upon which to base her picture. She realised that the character was a bird, hence the inclusion of wings but seemed to be struggling to summon up other features of the species. In referring to the lack of a mouth, I wondered whether she was trying to remember that birds have beaks. This would have been significant as the woodpecker tapped with his beak at various events in the story.

The storm was the climax of the story but a feature of few responses. Sadie talked about rain. Richard recounted this event in more detail, as follows:
well the sky was very very rainy and there was so much rain and then the big CRASH (slaps hands for effect) and then I saw after that when the big wave, the big wind was gathering together ready to blow the tree over, the tree blew over.

Despite the length of this section of narrative Richard had really only identified two events relating to the story; the lightning strike and the tree falling over. I surmised that 'the big wave' was referring to the wind as he adjusted his vocabulary immediately afterwards. The influence of the kinaesthetic nature of the storytelling was evident in use of sounds, slapping, to strengthen the impression of the crash. The storm also featured in Simon's responses to questions.

S. I saw thunder striking trees and them falling down and bear running away and that was it

He obviously meant the lightning striking trees but one wondered if the use of 'thunder' was an error in vocabulary or because the body percussion we had used during storytelling had created an auditory impact. The bear running away was an innovation to be reflected upon in the following section. The bear was another story-based feature that several children alluded to during interviews. Peter described him as 'quite frightening and he was big and black', another feature that could be memory based or creative and Richard once again used gestures to indicate the size of Bear by holding his hands above his head to represent a pouncing stance, 'and he had all brown and some patches in his ears and had three things like that on his feet.' This is a mix of story-based inference, creative, and other influences as the description of Bear seemed to relate to previous knowledge of some sort. Richard may have spent time watching wild-life programmes on television so that he would have been aware that bears can

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have patchy fur. The 'three things like that on his feet' were, I assumed, his pads. In this way one was aware of the complexity of influences sometimes apparent in children's responses.

2.2.2 Visualisations related to creativity

The Owl and the Woodpecker was one of Brian Wildsmith's less familiar tales. These children were hearing it for the first time and their teachers had not seen it. One child thought it familiar but realised that he was thinking of another story about an owl. Taking this unfamiliarity into consideration one could have assumed that children would be less forthcoming about their visualisations. Kosslyn (2005) insisted that images are built up over time so that following this argument, response to questioning would have been sparse. In fact, the evidence presented here in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 contradicts this. Table 6.2 shows more incidences of creativity appearing in interviews following the second storytelling of a story completely unfamiliar to respondents. One could take this as evidence of the power of oral story in creating vivid images for children, supporting my hypothesis, although other factors could have accounted for this surge of creative activity. Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 18) asserted that interview situations relied very much on the 'interaction between interview participants' so the more confident attitude of children may have been because they were more aware of the expectations of interviewers, having experienced the same situation the previous week. Whatever the reasons visualisations were more creative following this second oral tale.
One feature that was common to most visualisations, with the exceptions of David, Trevor and Tracey, was the figure of the man. A description of the character of the man was a question central to all interviews. I knew that each child would be likely to have a completely different image of him as no description was given in the story and, as expected, responses varied, some more detailed than others. Peter described the man as 'strange'. In the oral story the man was introduced as 'a stranger' so that 'strange' could have stemmed from his auditory memory. Probing revealed the following:

T Why was he strange?
P Black trousers a stripy top black hair um...he was carrying an electric saw

T Why was he strange looking?
P Cos he looked a bit funny

T In what way?
P Well like on his face...

T Um

P Quite a lot of teeth missing

Peter was struggling to remember detail. The figure, even after my continued probing, remained somewhat nebulous. Only afterward did I reflect upon why Peter had decided to include an electric saw, with which he may have seen men working either in everyday life or on television. Saleema was equally vague at times: 'he had a head two eyes one nose'; she had to be encouraged to give a fuller picture of her visualisation:
S  He had um dark um light brown hair and he was very very short he was wearing a tee-shirt and had some trousers and he had

Once more her depiction of the character was very basic, lacking detail apart from hair colour, about which she seemed unsure. It could have been that her visualisation was unformed for, just as we listen and hear the gist of a story, it may be that our visualisations, or imagined people and places, are equally vague. When we remember dreams they normally tend to be blurred. While listening to the story Saleema may have had quite vivid pictures in her mind but by the time she came to speak to me those pictures may have faded, distorted by time and by her retelling of the story herself. Imaginative response may, therefore, not have been static but changing and dynamic in nature. As the tale was thought about and reshaped, both mentally and verbally, so visualisations could have changed. Meera, another bilingual child included in the study, was more assertive in her response.

M  Um he looked like he was black hair and he had a red hat on... and his eyes was green and he had a tee-shirt on which was blue and his trousers was blue as well

T  What was he wearing on his feet?

M  Um he was wearing shoes and he was the colour was brown

This interchange, designed to find out about this character, shows that Meera remembered that, in her previous interview, I had asked for extra details. I was unsure whether the final reference to colour was the man's skin or his shoes. Meera's father was Pakistani so she may have based her image on that familiar figure or may simply have been colour-coding clothing as she had done previously.
Was he carrying anything?

He had a big bag with rough thing a sword and...and that's it.

I thought that it was worthy of note that Meera referred to the cutting implement as a sword, just as Saleema had in her response and wondered whether they had been discussing the story in class. However, checking through her oral story revealed that Meera had used 'sword' when talking about the chopping of the tree which revealed how children substituted words to make sense in communication. Baker (2003) referred to the extra dimension a second language afforded those who were fortunate enough to be bilingual. It was interesting but hardly surprising to note that both of these bilingual girls, in making substitutions in the school context, did so in English, rather than adding a word from their other language. When children are learning to read they often produce substitutions of this kind, for example substituting 'home' for 'house' and here was similar substitution in oral texts.

All descriptions varied in a range of detail. James had a man with a 'brown hat and brown suit and pink sleeves.' He used gestures to indicate the colour of the man's shirt by pointing to his own jumper and stated that the man was wearing black shoes 'like mine.' Claire also used gestures when attempting to explain what the man's hat looked like. 'It was one that like um with long bits.' She was waving her hands about and I interpreted this to mean a brim all the way around. I think the 'long bits' were strings dangling down, like Australian bush hats but this was not entirely clear and may just have been a false assumption. Children's 'cognitive powers of information processing' (Antaki,
1994: 95) were revealed in descriptions that provided an ideal opportunity for children to use their imaginations to create a unique personality:

S He had a red hat and like a yellow and green t-shirt on and his trousers were yellow and his boots were black I mean brown

Sadie’s vivid picture was quite startling. The colours were not what one would have expected and the slight confusion over the colour of the boots added authenticity to the description. Megan’s description also read like a colour catalogue:

M He looked like he had yellow socks like an orange saw he had a blue tee shirt black trousers black sunglasses a yellow hat and

When asked if he was carrying anything she stated ‘some tools.’ Some children visualised the saw the man was carrying and gave further details. Saleema placed the ‘sword’ in a cover ‘like orange and it was sharp because there was a zigzag down it.’ This description scored two points for creativity for both the cover and the zigzag although, on reflection, the zigzag could just have been referring to a serrated edge and based on previous knowledge. When speaking to Sadie I asked if the man was carrying anything more than a saw and introduced an alternative:

T No bag or anything?
S Yes like a first aid bag with like if like a tree falling on them

This was a very logical response. If the man was carrying a saw he was in danger of hurting himself there a first aid bag would be a sensible and useful thing to have with him but the bag was perhaps not a part of Sadie’s original
visualised world as I had introduced the idea. She may have been, as Cook-Gumperz and Green (1994) attested, constructing her own reality, in other words making sense of her visualised world and making it explicit for her listener or, as an accomplished 'pupil' (Dowling, 1995) she may have included this element that she felt was expected. My question had, after all, been leading to an affirmative response.

The other question which produced high creativity scores was related to animals that children had visualised when listening to the story. In the oral version of The Owl and the Woodpecker Bear was the only other animal mentioned by name. Children, when questioned about animals, produced a range of different ones, sometimes so unexpected that I queried if these were true visualisations or just fabrications or lists. For example in Rima's account:

R. Yes but ... they tigers monkeys live in the trees and uh...uh the elephants and the hippopotamus

Martin had a similar list, as well as the bear consisting of 'a giraffe, frog and a hippopotamus a elephant.' I thought these were unusual animals but Martin assured me that 'I seen them in my head.' Meera included a 'big big squirrel with his babies' and 'little owls and then I saw the reindeer drinking water.' I regarded inclusion of these different animals as creative elements, although some prior knowledge of wildlife would have been required. Sadie finished her retelling with a question, almost instigating the discussion that followed.

S Where was he living before he moved into the forest
This indicated that Sadie had not just been thinking about the story and her version of it but had been involved with the characters and plot. The story had given no inkling as to the previous abode of Owl so that the question she posed was very reasonable. Whitehead (1990: 137) asserted that 'young children become thinking, communicating people because they are involved in the discourse of social life from birth' and Sadie's comments clearly demonstrated her ability to think beyond the obvious. She had become involved with characters presented in the story world and empathised with their predicaments. Even though her score for visualisations was less than many others her involvement with the story could not be denied.

A similar involvement was demonstrated during Simon's interview when he talked about the 'bear running away.' When asked where the bear was going Simon responded 'going back to his cave' and then said 'there was a little bear in there.' I pondered why Simon included this information, two possibilities came to mind, both based on children's literature. Picture book texts were used extensively in the school and reading was given strong focus from the early years onwards. Mallett (2002: 207) offered an overview of why this is important and many others have debated the merits of such texts. Two of the Big Books used in the school may have formed, consciously or unconsciously, an image in Simon's memory, which he then transferred to his own mental picture. In the end papers of *We're going on a Bear Hunt* (Rosen and Oxenbury, 1993) there is an illustration of a bear walking back to his cave. The story of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* contained a bear so that Simon may have made connections with his previous experience of *Bear Hunt* to include a similar image in his visualisation here. In comparable fashion, Waddell's story, *Can't you Sleep Little
Bear? (1994) had a big bear living in a cave with a little bear who was afraid of the dark. As a former teacher in the school I know that both these books were included in the infant scheme of work for English so that Simon would have been familiar with them. Whether this was the basis on which he built his image is a matter for speculation and begs the question why others did not include such imagery. For whatever reason, this was included it was evidence of a vivid imagination.

Doonan (1993) held the view that even when listening to picture book stories children's perceptions varied according to their own personal experiences and that they formed variable, unique 'composite pictures' based on these different experiences. The second part of this chapter will examine this concept and judge whether what children had to say following their retellings of read versions of these stories were as thoughtful and imaginative as those that have just been examined.

3. Interviews following story-readings

As with interviews following storytelling, once children had finished retelling their versions of the picture book tale I asked them various questions based on describing characters, favourite scenes and pictures and whether they had a preference for the told version or the picture book version of the story (Appendix Three). These events took place five months after oral storytelling to ensure that they had experienced a number of different books in the interim and that their memories of oral stories would possibly have faded from their long-term memories. The purpose was to gain fresh responses divorced, as far as possible, from the influences of the oral tales. In common with the analysis
following storytellings I colour-coded transcripts of interviews for evidence of visualisations related directly to the illustrations; those which were creative and those which were different in nature and impossible to place with confidence, although shades of influences could be discerned.

Table 6.3 Visualisations relating to *What made Tiddalik Laugh?*, storybook version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Book related</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Ambiguous influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadie</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meera</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleema</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rima</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses directly linked to the storybook were overwhelming in comparison to other elements: seventy-four references to the book, fifteen creative and ten which were ambiguous in influence. Under 'ambiguous influences' several factors were connected to oral versions of the story heard
previously. Echoes were present in children’s comments, such as Sadie’s reply to a question about the size of Tiddalik: ‘he was small like the other little froggies in the palm of your hand and fit right there.’ Peter also talked about Tiddalik starting ‘to get little’ and thought he was small to begin with despite the opening paragraph of the text which says he was a giant frog. Creative elements identified in interviews were minimal as children related directly to their visual experiences of the storybook.

Table 6.4 Visualisations relating to *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, storybook version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Book related</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Ambiguous influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadie</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meera</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleema</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rima</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With one hundred and twenty-nine responses directly linked to the
storybook in comparison to nineteen creative visualisations and nine others it
became clear that the illustrations in picture books texts had a very strong
influence on the imagery perceived by these children when listening to stories.
Their responses to questions for both texts were firmly anchored in the visual
impact of the picture books themselves as will be further examined in the rest of
this chapter.

3.1 What made Tiddalik Laugh?

3.1.1 Visualisations directly related to storybook

Responses to What made Tiddalik Laugh? were more uniform than those
to The Owl and the Woodpecker. Most children gave an accurate picture of
Tiddalik, describing him as yellow and brown, some saying that he had stripes
and others spots. Children tend to be more observant than adults when
examining pictures in books and make new meanings from illustrations while
adults tend to read text and observe pictures as almost superfluous. Unsworth
(2001: 172) regarded interpretation of picture books as involving interaction
between reader and image and of benefit to young readers as 'awareness of this
aspect of visual meaning-making provokes further fascination in young readers' 
interrogation of literary texts.' Although children were not given an opportunity to
examine the books in detail they all had opportunity to see the pictures both
during and after reading, as noted in Chapter Four, Section 5.1.

Several children also stated preference for the picture where Tiddalik
laughed and all the water came out, the highlight of the book, featured on the
front cover and the illustration most familiar to them during story reading. It was a humorous image likely to provoke positive response in young minds. Tracey, who had difficulty remembering oral stories, had greater recall of elements in picture books. Tiddalik was ‘yellow and he had brown like stripes and he is very big and he has little spots on his face.’ She was also able to describe the picture of the ‘funny faces’ where the snake was ‘doing the funny one.’ She needed the visual impact of the book to help her and had identified factors in illustrations which made an impression on her memory. This was an example of visual memory rather than visual imagery, as defined by Huston (1991) and explored in Chapter Three. In fact, taking Huston’s argument that visual memory is the recall of imagery already experienced, most of the visualisations recounted by children after story-readings could be regarded as visual memory rather than visual imagery. On the other hand, Doonan, (1993) whose thoughts on how images are perceived, stored and used to form composite pictures formed a central role in thinking about this difficult topic, would have argued that each child perceived illustrations differently. Evidence for this argument may be found in David’s description of one illustration depicting Tiddalik laughing:

*D Cos all the fish and eels were coming out of his mouth I wonder how it would be like to live inside his stomach*

David’s account indicated that he was referring to the part when Tiddalik laughed and the fish and water snakes are evident in the picture. (Event 13, Table 5.5) The word ‘eels’ did not occur in the story but came from David’s knowledge base so this response was a mixture of story-based, creative and prior knowledge. The question he posed at this point indicated his involvement with the story, he was thinking about the text and placing himself within its
boundaries, moved from the fantasy of story to a real and interesting dilemma, posed in his reflection. He had entered ‘into the story world’ (Holdaway, 1979: 149).

David was one of the children who was adamant that he did not have visualisations in relation to oral stories so that I was particularly interested to discover the effect of visual text on his responses. He had a low score on visualisations following storytelling but managed to respond with descriptions of images from the storybook depicting characters and scenes.

T Ok can you describe to me, what did Tiddalik look like?
D Um sort of brown yellow
T What was your favourite picture in the story?
D The picture of him like um with his eyes popping out and his mouth open with the water about to come out

David’s description was accurate and he had used some phrases from the story, as well as the illustration. The book said ‘Tiddalik’s eyes popped out of his head’ and the pictures showed him smiling with a mouth full of water so that it appeared David used both aural and visual cues to provide this answer.

Unsworth (2001: 174) described images in picture books as ‘a significant narrative resource’ and advocated talking about text in relation to the pictures to expand ‘interpretive reading practices.’ Megan’s responses were very visual but she hesitated when asked to talk about her favourite part of the story.

M When when they were trying to when they were telling when they were dancing.
Megan had identified three different images from the story and was unsure which she preferred. Eventually she stated that it was when they were dancing and added (Event 9, Table 5.5) ‘because it looked funny.’ Humour depicted in illustrations appealed to many children.

Rima, whose scores were low after storytelling interviews, was able to use her knowledge of the picture book to express herself and gain higher scores after story-reading, displaying the value of illustrations for some children. Her favourite picture was ‘when his tongue gets bigger.’ At first I thought this was her way of depicting the spray of water from Tiddalik’s mouth after he laughed but the illustration of Tiddalik drinking (Event 3) shows a long curved tongue. This was evidence of storybook influence as defined by Graham (1995) and discussed in Chapter Three. Don’s description of ‘all the fish were flying out’ also substantiates Graham’s theory as the illustration helped him to form an imaginary world where fish were doing extraordinary things. It also helped him in remembering the story:

D. Well then you get to see the pictures in it’s good because then... ah because then you can remem...try and remember it easier.

When questioned about preferences for modes of story, responses proved illuminating. Simon preferred story-reading to storytelling although his creative responses exceeded story-based responses. I assumed this preference was associated with his perception of himself as a storyteller as demonstrated in the following interchange.

T And what happens whenever you just listen to stories?
S I don't like it because if I'm telling someone the story and I get stuck on a word then I can't look at the picture to help me.

From Simon's response at this point I was able to deduce that he equated books with reading. He liked books with pictures to help him with it, as was obvious from his comments about problems, such as 'when I get stuck I can look at the pictures.' He felt insecure if he had to tell a story without a book - 'if I'm telling someone the story and I get stuck on a word then I can't look at the picture to help me.' It seemed that his lack of confidence in his own ability to retell stories was at the basis of his choice; he had not developed the concept of himself as a 'confident narrator' (Hughes and Ellis, 1998: 30).

Most children preferred the picture book, although a few could not make up their minds, including Sadie and Martin who liked both. Martin said, 'read and told with pictures or you can picture the pictures in your head.' This last comment was a direct reference to visualisation but related to storytelling. Martin had shown both auditory and visual influences when recounting his images from the book. He thought that 'platypus looked had a very strange face on him,' and that 'platypus was trying to get some sleep around here.' The first was a visual recall and the second, although story-based, an auditory recall as it reflected words from the text, an auditory image (Stone: 1984).

As may be detected from these extracts children were using their own 'mentalese' (Pinker, 1998: 90), the language of the mind, to help them to explain their perceptions of stories. Asking them to recall images which were nebulous
and fluid was a difficult task for some but beneficial, aiding their cognition in translating thoughts and images into words (De La Garanderie, 2001).

3.1.2 Visualisations related to creativity

Creative elements in interviews following story-readings were infrequent. Richard equated Tiddalik as being 'a bit like a toad a big toad.' I took this as evidence of prior knowledge of animals as Richard must have had some realisation of what a toad looked like. Tiddalik was portrayed as 'like greys greyish greenish and um some black on.' Although some toads may be coloured in this way I took this as evidence of more creative thought, especially as Richard had hesitated before responding. Despite Scollen and Scollen's (1984: 187) assertion that 'pausing' was used to mark out 'hierarchical structure of the text', in studying Athabaskan children's storytelling techniques in this case it was clear that hesitations arose from doubts about what to say in response to questioning. Claire's depiction of Tiddalik was also punctuated by hesitations as she attempted to explain her visualisations:

C  Tiddalik looked like um he was yellowy green and he had um dark green or something on his legs...and um on his arms I think and he was greeny yellow greeny yellow

Animals in this story had human characteristics so the use of 'arms' was not unusual especially as some of the illustrations showed Tiddalik sitting up and using his forelegs as arms (Event 2, Table 5.5). As illustrations in the book were clearly yellow and brown the inclusion of green was an element Claire had introduced into her personal imagery. The other aspect that was unusual in her responses was the 'antelope' which she had used in her recall when referring to
the platypus, so that it was assumed that this was further reference to the same animal. As she could not remember this unusual name Claire had substituted a creature that she had perceived as similar.

At first Sadie was very reluctant to say anything, having previously mentioned being embarrassed when talking, presumably because her voice was being recorded. Norick (2000: 17), who experienced problems audio-taping people, given interference, such as deliberate rudeness, swearing, whispering or refusal to speak said that 'the so-called observer's paradox states that it is impossible to observe how people behave when they are not being observed.' He regarded it as just another constraint when observing and I was forced to do the same. Started with her interview, rather than the recall, Sadie soon gained her confidence and sense of humour. Although an articulate child she displayed few stances of creativity, with only one easily defined element in her description of Tiddalik.

S Had like yellow skin and brown um like little diamonds on diamonds

This was a unique use of language. Some of the markings in the pictures did look diamond shaped so this may have been due to prior knowledge of the text as Sadie reminded me later in the interview.

S I've already seen the book I've already seen

This was significant as she said that during the storytelling she had thought of the pictures and when experiencing story-reading she could 'look at those pictures and see if they're funny or not.' Sadie stated that she liked both
versions of the story and in her interview she actually made reference to the oral
version of the story when recounting what had happened to the frog at the end.

S  no he was small like the other little froggies in the palm of your hand
and fit right there hello I'm a little frog

Sadie's reply was accurate in terms of the picture book story version but
an echo of the oral story had crept in too, 'in the palm of your hand and fit right
there'. Whether this remained from the story told five months previously as a
kinaesthetic rather than an auditory memory is impossible to say. Sadie
gestured as she said the words so that it seemed probable that she was
influenced by the visual element connected to the movement. Nicholson (1999)
stated that some aspects of talk are physical, not just in terms of tone, pitch and
intonation of voice but also through gestures and eye contact. Sadie was aware
of this and may have been in performance mode. The tone of her voice was
playful as she used a higher pitched tone when saying 'hello I'm a little frog.'

The visualisations that Simon experienced were related to both picture
book and with additional creative elements; Tiddalik was, 'brown and big and
ugly', both 'brown' and 'ugly' being Simon's interpretations, as the predominant
colour of the frog was yellow, although his markings were brown and he was not
depicted as particularly ugly. Simon introduced a different character into his
account.

S  My favourite part was when the wombat came out and said what's all
this noise and laughing and water came out of his mouth as well
This section was different from the book in two ways. Children were encouraged to change and make up versions of the story if they forgot something and in the book the creature was a platypus, not a wombat. Simon had also referred to a wombat, after a hesitation, 'and there was a...there a wombat,' in his retelling. During the interview he said that the wombat had laughed until 'water came out of his mouth as well.' This was entirely original with no basis in either story or illustration. Why Simon felt that the wombat had water in his mouth remains a mystery, part of his individual interpretation of the story. Norrick (2000: 198) discussed the problem he encountered when studying narrative in everyday conversation and described it as 'what tellers remember versus what they reconstruct.' Norrick was investigating stories of real events where reconstruction could have interfered with the facts. This type of reconstruction was not regarded as a problem for my study, on the contrary, it was a point of interest and speculation. Martin said that platypus 'had a very strange face on him' which could have been interpreted as referring to the illustration, as platypus is an odd looking creature. As Martin seemed to be referring only to a facial expression it indicated that his visualisation was unique. He liked the picture of platypus emerging from his hole as 'his feet was just waddling along.' The terminology used was reflective of a personal and creative image caused by visual and mental images blending to form something different. The theory of a composite picture posed by Doonan (1993) seemed a viable idea to link with this section of analysis as each child perceived the illustrations in different ways depending on their own experiences.
3.2 The Owl and the Woodpecker

3.2.1 Visualisations directly related to storybook

David scored the highest number of points for visualisations related to illustrations in the book. After storytelling David had been adamant that he saw nothing and was able to remember the story from just listening. David’s story had been told out of sequence with references to visual cues in the book, while maintaining its gist. His response to the question about animals in his favourite picture was complex:

D There was mice pig a bear squirrels deer...and fox looking forward to the plan oh and they tried to knock down the tree they um tried to push it down that was the crafty fox’s idea

I wished to find out why he was particularly drawn to this illustration and what impact it had had on his memory (Event 10, Table 5.6). His list of animals was accurate and use of the words 'crafty fox' echoed words in the text. He had also introduced some elements of his own as to what he thought was happening. The animals were described as ‘looking forward to the plan’, yet the word ‘plan’ was not in the text, so this was, presumably, his way of analysing what the animals were having a meeting about. He also corrected himself, changing 'knock down the tree' to the more accurate 'tried to push it down', appearing to realise that knocking down was subtly different from pushing down. I thought that this change was not so much a desire to adhere to the words of the text but more likely an awareness of differences in the visual impact of the image created by either word. To knock something would have indicated striking it in some way while pushing gave more of an impression of moving and linked better with the illustration which he remembered. Smith and Call (1999: 39) asserted that
'pictures are easier to recall than words' but in this case we have evidence of both pictures and words working together. David recalled visual information from the book and linked it with words in the text. His visualisations after storytelling were non-existent so the fact he was able to remember so much about the storybook illustrations demonstrated that he needed, as Graham (1995) attested, pictures to enable him to see this other world. David's favourite part of the story was when the animals were pushing the tree because he thought the bear 'would be very good at it.' He then moved to how amusing the beavers were when chewing: 'the beavers they were funny chewing through it'. This had to be a reflection of the illustration in the book as the text itself offered no hint of amusement. One could only assume that the picture of the beavers chewing with their long teeth looked amusing to this young child.

When relating his description of Owl and talking about features of the text, such as the meeting with the animals, David showed empathy with characters. He was concerned with the character of Owl and the problem that he presented to others. The word 'bully' was mentioned and I wondered if David had experienced a problem or situation where a number of people had gathered to sort it out. Cook-Gumperz and Green (1984) suggested that young children learned the frames of story from their experiences of books and David had learnt a model of storytelling that was very book based. The description of Owl was complex, beginning with 'big big wingspan'. Not only was this visual, as it not only related to the picture of the owl chasing small animals but also used technical vocabulary. The word 'wingspan' indicated that David knew something about birds or had heard or seen the word in his own reading or watching television. He was bringing his personal knowledge and experience to the story
and making connections (Gee, 1999). The remainder of the description was related to Owl’s personality. This, coupled with David’s discussion of animal interpersonal relations, led me to believe that his main source of interest in the story was character driven and that he had some empathy with the animals and Owl. Unsurprisingly, David preferred picture books to oral stories as ‘the pictures in the book are better than my than pictures in my head.’ David’s avowed reasons for preferring picture books were because he could not imagine settings and stories so vividly himself, demonstrating the value of illustrations in children’s picture books and a further evidence for Graham’s (1995) assertion that illustrations added to rather than detracted from narratives. Wildsmith’s illustrations were very striking so that it would have been unusual for them not to have some impact.

Others, who had no visualisations following storytelling, or minimal recollection, were able to recount much more after story-reading. Trevor, for example, described Owl as having ‘big eyes and he was very big’. He was able to say that it was beavers who chopped down the tree, mentioned the storm as well and used an unusual phrase when recounting what had happened to the tree. He said, ‘the tree clunked down in the wood.’ The word ‘clunked’ was different to both oral and read text but an onomatopoeic word possibly reflecting Trevor’s auditory visualisations of this story. Even though in this section of analysis I was looking for evidence of visualisation rather than language use this was significant as Trevor, a reticent child, was unforthcoming with both recalls and answers to questions. The storybook had given him a more substantial anchor for his responses than oral tales. Without the physical presence of a
book to support him he had lacked confidence to present his own ideas of the story.

Choice of favourite pictures or parts varied from child to child, indicating the autonomy of choice children had after viewing illustrations in the book. Annabel and Simon liked the storm because of the dramatic effects caused by the crashing to the ground, while Tracey, Rima and Claire all opted for the final scene when all is resolved and Owl and Woodpecker become friends. This proved a satisfactory closure for them as, in many folktales where problems are resolved, everyone lives 'happily ever after.'

Colours in this book were highly unusual with trees and leaves in almost fluorescent shades, as well as a mixture of browns, blacks, greens and reds as one would have expected in what David termed a 'normal forest.' Annabel related her visualisations directly to her memory of the book when she said:

A Well the trees were really good cos they were different colours striped stripes

She did not elaborate further but the impact of the illustrations had certainly made an impression on her memory and visualisations. Children are often more aware of features of illustrations than adults and this was proven while sifting through comments made by these youngsters. Meera and Saleema both referred to the unusual colours in the trees.

M They were nice colours they were they wasn't all brown they was all different colours
This was an accurate description as Wildsmith used a variety of different colours and shades of colours, swirls and other effects to create an almost surreal forest.

Oh the tree well I liked the colours in the tree but when you were telling the story in my mind my pictures was showing that the tree was like that and it went and looked like that and it was all different colours coming down brown yellow whatever colours but not black as that was a dark colour.

This interchange was evidence of Saleema’s changing mental imaging. Colours in the book had clearly made significant impression on her, evidenced by her constant repetition of how much she liked them. Her image of the tree had been ‘like that’ after storytelling but, having seen the illustrations ‘it went and looked like that’. In Unsworth’s (2001: 168) terms, ‘images construct representational meanings’ while ‘also simultaneously constructing interactive meanings’. Saleema’s interaction with the texts had moved in relation to her interpersonal relationship with them. Just as her personal knowledge of story structures and traditional openings and closures featured, both in her oral retelling and in imaginative reconstructions of the story, so her personal imagery was affected by her experience of the pictures presented to her. In this way it became clear that her visualisations were constantly being adjusted to deal with new information.

When asked about animals they had seen a range of responses forced me to check illustrations very carefully. Claire reported seeing a ‘massive hedgehog and there were these bushes they were looking into.’ At first I thought the bushes were an example of creative visualisation but on close examination of
Event 4 it became obvious that she was making a direct reference to the picture. At the forefront of this picture was a hedgehog, in this perspective looking larger than Bear, who is in the background. All the animals were running towards a green patch, which may have looked like a hedge in her eyes and certainly represented undergrowth of some sort. Children were much more alert to different animals in the book than I had been. James included a 'wild pig... a fox a badger a hedgehog... a rat a mouse', all of whom appeared in the text, and Richard was able to remember seeing a badger, beaver and squirrels. I thought the inclusion of squirrels was creative but the picture illustrating Event 5, indeed, included two fat squirrels. Megan's response included the beavers who were eating the tree, causing it to fall down during the storm. Sadie mentioned butterflies, another feature I had failed to observe closely (Event 2). Doonan (1993: 9) considered how there was an interaction between the physical aspects of books, where words tell while pictures show and readers who exemplify these ideas to form a composite text. Sadie's observations suggested that she was very conscious of the detail of illustrations and how these provide an atmosphere, or setting, for the story text to expand. I could not be absolutely certain what these children were actually 'seeing' except through their verbalisations so these could have been evidence of Huston's (1991) theory of visual memories as opposed to visual imagery. Although challenging to define I interpreted these as story-based visualisations.

3.2.2 Visualisations related to creativity

At one point in the story (Event 8, Table 5.5) Owl is seen in profile with one wing above his head so that it he appears to have a horn, 'like a unicorn.'
Simon and Claire both identified this feature in their interview, as did Annabel, creating new images by their comparisons with a unicorn.

A his wing was up and it looked like a unicorn's horn he's turning into a unicorn

Annabel's excited account revealed how an illustration became something out of the ordinary in her perception of what was happening. She had used this strange image of Owl to extend her imagination and create a new scenario. Saleema created a similar development of a situation when discussing how the tree had collapsed. She used gestures and sounds: 'Well the beavers went (noise)' and compared this version to the story I had told.

Yeah but the story that you told us without the book said that the woodpecker pulled it down with his big long beak and sharp beak so they cut people's finger off

This was definite poetic licence on Saleema's behalf. She was very confident and really seemed to be enjoying her time at the centre of attention. Her conversation was lively and remarkably self-assured. I had the feeling that this part was added to stir a reaction from me. The woodpecker had a sharp beak but cutting people's fingers off was not part of the story. Other traditional stories have quite gruesome aspects. For example, in Hansel and Gretel the witch poked a long bony finger into a cage. It was possible that this type of incident had featured in stories Saleema had heard or read in school. I was unaware if her home culture had similar stories containing such violence. Cook-Gumperz and Green (1984) stressed that the frames young children bring to the task of storytelling are important, their previous experiences of oral and written
texts becoming part of their interpretation. It would appear that Saleema was bringing her own understanding of story to this version of the narrative and creating something quite different. She was very aware of different versions and alluded to her visualisations when explaining these differences.

Saleema was able to compare and contrast her visualisations with those in the book in contextualising the narrative. Pinker (1998: 298) stated that ‘images must give way to ideas’ and it would appear from her deliberations that Saleema was using her images to help her form ideas and concepts about the narrative and visualisations related to it. Her changing mental imaging was evident from her discourse.

Many children gave descriptions of Owl which coincided with the book saying he was ‘bad-tempered.’ Giving their visualisation of Owl proved more difficult as some said he was ‘different’ while others mentioned different colours. Sadie found it difficult to verbalise her thoughts and said, ‘it’s quite hard its like beige with um spots on very brown spots on.’ In fact most pictures of Owl show not only the beige and brown but a range of other colours as well. Sadie also described Woodpecker as having ‘red hair’, an explanation with firm roots in the illustration where Woodpecker does look as if he has either red hair or a red cap on. This is especially obvious in Event 1, as seen in Chapter Five, Section 8.2.2. Simon also used the word ‘hair’ when referring to Woodpecker and strangely used ‘black fur’ when offering his portrayal of Owl. Whether this was a slip of the tongue or a deliberate creation was difficult to ascertain.
Meera’s image of Owl was quite different to that in the book: ‘The owls grey and he had a yellow beak’. This image is not coincident with the illustration in the text where Owl is multicoloured and has a black beak. The explanation for Meera’s description had to lie within the cultural and historical contexts within which Meera was operating. Her memories of pictures of owls she had seen elsewhere came to the fore and imposed themselves on her conscious vision. Whether children were drawing on previous knowledge, consciously or subconsciously was a factor I had to bear in mind while analysing what they had said. Asked for a description of Woodpecker Peter replied: ‘He was red blue yellow and he was green and he was red’. This was a very confused description in which Peter might have been thinking of Owl as multicoloured or it could have represented his impression based on knowledge of different species of birds, or stand as a completely imaginary creation. Although the woodpecker’s head had a red top his predominant colours were black and white, with shades of blue. Peter’s description sounds more like a parrot and he may well have been thinking of pictures he had seen of exotic birds in books. While to an adult a woodpecker may not seem strange, even if never encountered, to a child with limited experience it would be just as rare as an albatross.

Echoes from other stories appeared occasionally and were counted as ‘other influences’. For example, Claire mentioned a ‘wombat’, reflective of the Tiddalik tale; Richard thought the told version was better as the tree was ‘swaying back and fore’ and Sadie said ‘they swooped up in the rain.’ Children were influenced by their perceptions of story as well.
One question asked at the end of interviews was which version of the story they had preferred and why. From the original one hundred and forty-nine children identified at the beginning of this study most stated a preference for books stating that they liked seeing illustrations or it helped them to remember easier. A total of eighty-six preferred picture books with twenty-nine stating no preference and only nineteen professing a preference for oral stories. Fifteen children were absent at this point of data collection. These preferences were reflected in those expressed by children in the core study with ten stating a preference for picture books, four with no preference and two preferring oral stories.

David thought ‘the pictures in the book are better than my than pictures in my head.’ Although Richard stated a preference for the picture book version of *What made Tiddalik Laugh?* he thought the oral story of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* was better ‘because I already knew the story’ and ‘today it wasn’t that exciting at all.’ Sadie’s commented on the book version as the ‘real’ story. When questioned about this she tried to explain why the story was more ‘real’, perhaps meaning vivid, when given in picture book format. Sadie mentioned the colours in the book twice as if, somehow, illustrations had a life of their own in adding to the story. Nornick (2000: 69) suggested that repetition was used ‘for organizing the conversational narrative.’ In many ways this is what Sadie was doing. She said that colours could not be imagined so it may have been that those of the illustrations enabled her to see the story more clearly, making the visual version more alive. This aspect of what constitutes a real story in the minds of children was further investigated, with a colleague, as a consequence of these comments, but did not form part of this study. (Harrett & Benjamin, 2005)
4. Conclusions

The oral, aural, visual and kinaesthetic experiences of children in this study served different purposes and they were able to articulate feeling and experiences to different story modalities in a variety of ways. As Holdaway (1979: 150) claimed language starts from experience and the 'listener himself creates the meanings.' Although children in this study were relatively young they used language to create meanings from both the texts given to them and the texts they had themselves created.

The impact of the visual was expressed by a number of children and this was hardly surprising when one considers the nature of our society today where we are bombarded on all sides by pictorial elements which hugely influence how we perceive the world. In particular young children are exposed to, entertained and educated by all manner of texts. Marsh and Millard (2000: 57) emphasised that narrative is still important to our culture from whatever source, 'from bedtime stories to classic novels, from comics to television soaps', so it was unsurprising that children preferred visual texts over oral.

However, children perceive stories visually, orally, aurally and emotionally and asking them to give verbal explanations of visualisations was an exceptionally difficult task for my young subjects. Most managed to explain, sometimes in detail, what they had visualised when listening to both oral and read stories. As with recalls examined in Chapter Five, the second story, The Owl and the Woodpecker, had a greater influence on both visualisations related to storytelling and story-reading. Why this should be still remains a matter for
speculation. I can only assume, as suggested in Chapter Five, that children made more connections between the characters in this story and their own lives and experiences.

Incidences of creative visualisations, as explained above, were more prevalent following storytellings than story-readings. If one also takes into consideration the language development of children in this study one would have expected greater incidences of creativity following storybook readings. Children were five months older when the second set of interviews was conducted and ability to articulate thoughts and ideas should have grown proportionally. Benelli, Belacchi, Gini and Lucangeli (2006) found that children’s ability to define words increased with age so that one should have expected greater linguistic explanatory skills following what was effectively half a school year. With some children it was observable. Tracey and Trevor were more communicative but creative elements related to storybooks overall were disappointingly small.

One explanation could be to do with the role of the school curriculum. The tension between curriculum expectations and creativity has been well documented (Dowling, 1995; Gardner, 1993; Robinson, 2001; Grainger, Gououch and Lambirth, 2005) and children learn to conform. ‘Children are expected to learn and behave in certain ways’ in school (Dryden, Forbes, Mukherji and Pound, 2005: 132). The National Literacy Strategy is prescriptive in its format and if books are seen as its vehicle in the form of exercises related to word, sentence and text level children will be less likely to generate their own concepts and ideas around these narratives. With oral stories there was more flexibility, both in retelling and in constructing mental imagery; with picture books perhaps
children were more constrained and although each individual saw different aspects within illustrations there may still have been an element of 'getting it right'.

Winstone and Tandy (2001: 37) postulated the need for teachers to use storytelling and drama to enable children to 'explore issues of human significance'. They stated that 'the demands of a nationally prescribed curriculum put considerable pressure on teachers to 'fit everything in' (p.54). Dryden, Forbes, Mukherji and Pound (2005) also highlighted these tensions in the curriculum in discussing educational transitions when children move from relatively play-based and child-initiated learning to more formal education. They stressed that 'teachers may have little time [...] as their time is occupied by providing literacy and numeracy and other more formal experiences' (p. 126). Recent official intentions to develop creativity in the curriculum include the QCA's 'Creativity in Action' project to encourage teachers to incorporate creativity objectives into planning. It would seem that the role of imagination in developing thinking is at last being acknowledged. The constraints of an overcharged curriculum are perhaps loosening with teachers being encouraged to 'make the most of unexpected events'. (QCA: 2006) After years of clock watching and teaching to the test many practitioners will perhaps find this a challenging task.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion and recommendations

1. Introduction

The settings for this investigation were two multiethnic and socio-economically mixed inner city primary schools. Many children experienced English as a second language but although this was an element of consideration in the research design results displayed no significant patterns relating to any particular group of children. I began this study with two main aims: to investigate language used by children in their retellings and their imaginative responses to different modes of storying. The work of Fox (1993) in showing how children's storytelling language was reflective of stories they had heard was central to the first aim. As an experienced teacher I had witnessed this in primary classrooms and wished to investigate it further. Although this gave some theoretical structure methodology, as explained in Chapter Four, was mainly based in grounded theory. Analysis in Chapter Five gave examples of the responses of children to different modes of stories and strands of language in terms of visual and aural influences, as well as creative use of language by my young subjects. It was based on a conceptual structure similar to that of Applebee (1978) but adapted and influenced by Walsh (2003). Elements from Applebee (1978) provided a model for analysing structure of stories by identifying beginnings, endings and events. Walsh (2003) used a tick list to record whether children in her study referred to words or pictures when talking about texts and my findings were similarly recorded on a grid sheet.
My second aim, related to the nature of visualisation and imaginative responses to stories, had to begin from the fact that young children experience much literacy teaching in school mainly through the medium of picture books. As a passionate advocate of oral storytelling I was convinced of its many benefits in both engaging children in active listening processes and stimulating imaginative responses. This study aimed to examine whether and in what ways oral stories could produce more vivid and creative visualisations in young children. In Chapter Six I recounted interviews following storytellings and story-readings where children had explained their visualisations following both. One of the problems experienced was establishing a method and structure for defining creative responses. Identifying imagination and creative aspects and subsequently building a model on which to base these findings was challenging. Imagination, in the education field, is often regarded as measurable only in terms of output such as writing. From the evidence collected for this study it may be seen that children who were not traditionally academic, such as Peter, were enthusiastic storytellers, aware of features of narrative and language that they would have been unable to present in written format. The literature revealed that methods for analysis of visualisations were almost exclusively based on cognitive neuropsychology, a scientific discipline, unsuited to the purpose of my study. Scientific research in these fields using fMRI scanners, speculated that 'our innermost thoughts and visions might not be secret for long' (Fox, 2006) but education does not rely on such instruments for defining imaginative response. Without a model on which to base analysis it was necessary to adapt the one used to examine language in Chapter Five. Consequently, the theoretical framework developed for analysis was similar to that used when analysing recalls of stories, identifying features of a story-based or creative response. Using this
structure I recorded evidence of visualisation, story-based or creative, in my young subjects. I defined their responses into categories of those that were clearly linked to the texts, oral or written, and those which were based on imagination. In some cases this was problematic. Children's comments could have been construed as creative, as they did not adhere to texts, but other influences could have affected response. These cases I categorised as, broadly speaking, 'ambiguous influences' and analysis of comments were incorporated into the other two other categories, where appropriate. These indefinable cases could have been related to various sources such as: children's previous experience of texts heard or read to them during this investigation; influences from other texts seen or heard or personal knowledge, conscious or subconscious.

2. Language

Following Fox (1993), who established that even very young children were aware of storybook language and used that language in their everyday personal storytelling, my investigation would seem to reveal that a number of factor are at play when children recount oral and read tales. Aural influences permeated them, as detailed in Chapter Five, while visual influences were also discernable, both following storytelling and story-readings. On recounting stories children were generally able to present their recalls in a structured and accessible manner having understood the 'gist' of stories and recounting them in their own ways, adhering to both events and language. Some children were adept storytellers using tone, gesture, and rhythm to make their stories come to life. They were revealing the creativity of retelling and managing what Rosen
(1988: 171) termed ‘the delicate tension between reproduction and invention.’ Others were less adventurous, preferring to remember what they could of stories they had heard. In all cases ‘mentalese, the language of thought’ (Pinker, 1994) was apparent, children describing and imagining, paraphrasing and thinking about what they had heard. Children remembered more of story structure, as evidenced by openings and closures, than its finer details. Language used reflected a range of influences, including aural and visual, experienced during both storytellings and story-readings concurring with Fox's (1993) findings on the impact of storybook language and Clark's (1994) assertion that both reading and telling stories enabled children to become more conscious of the structure of narrative and different features of language.

The second story, Wildsmith’s *The Owl and the Woodpecker* had more effect on children’s stories in terms of fluency in retelling and creativity in visualisations. I postulated that this was due to a subject matter more attuned to children’s own experiences than that in Troughton’s *What Made Tiddalik Laugh?* The conflict between Owl and Woodpecker in this story could be equated with everyday conflicts in the playground. Tiddalik, on the other hand, presented a problem to other animals by his greed in drinking all the water. Gee (1999: 113) suggested that ‘narrative is the way we make deep sense of problems that bother us.’ This story would not have represented a problem children could empathise with to a great extent. Although they would understand to some degree about greed, extreme lack of water, such as in a major drought, would not have been something they were likely to have experienced.

Grainger, Goouch and Lambirth (2005: 128) stressed the importance of the tunes of stories, ‘the rhythms and cadences’ and how children were able to
find their own voices through 'a playful approach' where they could 'make their own choices and discover the pleasure of making language do what they want.' Although recounting stories they had heard, rather than inventing their own may have restrained children in this study, there were still examples of creative use of language, as established in Chapters Five and Six. Children gained confidence by knowing that they were able to manipulate storylines and words to suit their purposes. Evidence for this lies in the words, voices, expressions and gestures of these children as they retold their tales and talked about their thoughts, impressions and visualisations.

3. Visualisations

I began this study with the hypothesis that oral stories would produce more vivid visualisations in children's minds. From the evidence presented here that hypothesis appears to have been verified. Children's creative visualisations, as defined in Chapter Six, were more prevalent in interviews following storytelling than story-reading. Markers of creativity in responses indicated more generation of original visualisations following storytelling, as a modality. Both stories told to children came from oral tradition and had repetitive patterns in language and discernible structures so that differences in style might be thought unlikely to have contributed to these discrepancies. Children were engaged not onlyaurally but also kinaesthetically as they repeated words and actions in repetitive refrains, giving them anchors for their memories. Stone (1984) suggested that images do not have to be purely visual and children used gestures when attempting to explain their visualisations, pointing to garments they were wearing or using gestures to try and explain other items.
Some creative responses received after storytelling may have been due to the nature of the questioning which involved them. Discussions following storytelling tended to be more open and guided by children's responses while questions following story-reading, while no less open in nature, were marginally more structured. According to Lee and Fielding (2004: 536) 'it is acceptable to adjust the interview guide to the specifics of the respondent's knowledge, comprehension, experience and interests.' By adjusting questioning to fit situations I hoped to glean more about what was happening in the minds of these young children. To have adhered rigidly to a completely structured interview technique could possibly have intimidated them, so that it was deemed both appropriate and more productive, in terms of responses, to permit them, at times, to lead discussions, as Doddington (1998: 49) put it, in a context 'congenial to open-ended discussion'. In this way sometimes more illuminating comments came to light, such as how differences between modes of story delivery were perceived (Harrett and Benjamin, 2005). A more structured schedule of questions may have led to more formulaic responses, easier to categorise but less revealing in nature.

The theories posited by Doonan (1993) and Huston (1991) referred to in Chapters Three and Six, were examined in relation to these visualisations. Although Huston warned that visual imagery and visual memory were different, Doonan asserted that images, such as those in picture book illustrations, were perceived by different people in different ways according to the connections they had made with the image. Children responded favourably to illustrations in picture books, many preferring those images given to them to their own
visualisations. Picture book illustrations also helped some less confident children to both retell stories and explain what they had perceived, and created meanings from, when viewing illustrations. Descriptions varied from child to child and even similar incidents were recounted in different ways, giving credence to Doonan’s (1993) theory of composite pictures. What always had to be remembered was that these children may not have had the linguistic skills required to explain as fully as they would have wished what they could ‘see’ in their imaginations, visually, aurally, kinaesthetically and emotionally.

4. Implications for future research

As with any piece of research, ‘inevitably the interpretations of the researcher form part of the method of producing the knowledge’ (Griffiths, 1998: 37). From my journey into discourse analysis I am aware that the same information may be viewed from different angles and turned into different sets of data, open to different interpretations. As Gorard and Taylor (2004: 3) reminded us, ‘our choice of method is determined by the needs of the investigation.’ As a researcher I became more aware of the importance of interactions between researcher and participants. A degree of trust and mutual respect was essential, not just between myself and fellow professionals in the schools involved but, most importantly with children in the study. Time spent interpreting data from Gee’s (1999) perspective was insightful in many ways enabling me to look afresh and from a distance at these relationships. My years as a teacher had made me very aware of the needs of, and ways of working with, young children giving an empathy with them that enabled me to approach data collection with a degree of assurance. I entered classrooms confident that I had the experience to manage
class sessions and elicit responses. Although arguments put forward inevitably disclose my personal interpretations, the evidence of the voices of, albeit a small number of children in this study gave credence to my conclusions.

Several issues arose in the course of this study, which could give rise to future research in this area. Visualisation in young children after experiencing story is under-researched. This study concentrated on two aspects of storying: oral storytelling and stories read from a highly illustrated picture book. Children experience story in many more ways today and the influence of television, computers and other multimodal texts needs to be established. These forms are, I believe, underused in schools today though else where they have an impact on how children visualise and interpret texts.

In interviewing children the concept of what makes a ‘real’ story became an avenue explored in a small way and, as a subsidiary development of the main study, what constitutes it in the eyes of infant children, aged between five and seven years led to further supplementary research. Harrett & Benjamin (2005) gave an overview of children’s literacy practices and deliberated on their comments as they wrestled with the concept of a real story. Many children equate ‘real’ with written texts (Hughes, 1986, Beame, 1998, Grainger, Gooch & Lambirth, 2005) so that broadening their outlook, or at least understanding why they have this belief, could be explored further. As a print orientated society it may just be that we have what Birch (2000: 14) describes as a ‘reverence for the printed word.’

My research concentrated on gathering recalls of stories as opposed to personal stories. The first phase of this study conducted in Albert Square
indicated a paucity of dialogue linked to personal stories and this is another avenue to be explored in more depth (Harrett, 2002). Maguire (1998) asserted that we all need to have our voices heard and to tell our personal stories to help us to come to terms with our world. This lack of time for personal stories was, I felt, linked to a curriculum so overloaded with targets and objectives that education had become a process through which children were passed instead of being fed and nurtured. Recent initiatives, such as *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2004) and change in approach and professional policy agendas to incorporate more creative approaches, indicate that government now recognises the need to develop less conditioned pedagogical approaches. According to Egan (1998) we all learn through narrative so the place of story should be central to learning and may be used as the basis for cross-curricular work.

Grainger, Gouch and Lambirth (2005: 137) conducted research into influences of different creative modes of teaching related to writing, including poetry, drama and storytelling. Their results showed that through retelling tales ‘children widen the number of tunes and structures in their repertoires,’ which impacted on the quality and form of their writing. Teachers in the *We’re Writers* project, which they investigated, became involved in a number of different creative teaching methods including storytelling. It should be worthwhile assessing further the impact of storytelling and story-reading on children’s written work to ascertain if discussion added to their knowledge and enabled them to ‘orally redraft’ (Jones 1988) before writing. Freeing children from the constraints of planning on paper by using a type of oral rehearsal instead may have enabled them to become more in tune with stories and story language and structures required for writing.
5. Reflections

On analysing interviews and the meaning of these interactions I came to realise more and more clearly how my tone, attitudes and substantive questions resulted in different response. As an experienced teacher I was used to encouraging talk and debate in the classroom. I often used Aidan Chambers' (1993) *Tell me* framework for this purpose and found that giving children the lead produced more thoughtful responses after group story reading. Having classroom time to talk to children on a one to one basis is not usual (Parke, 2002) so that interviewing them in this manner was strange for both them and myself. Although I had undertaken previous classroom research I was more used to classroom teacher roles. This duality of roles as researcher and teacher was obvious in virtually all of the interviews where I shifted position from empathic listener to knowledge seeker, from facilitator to interrogator. This duality and my experience in working with children of this age group was, I believe, beneficial in eliciting responses from children and interpreting those responses in a reliable way.

The second reflection refers to my own visualisations. As I listened to each child I made mental images based on their descriptions, so that my vision changed with every conversation, making impressions on my original images so that I could not remember them clearly. This led me to think that the same must be true for all adults and children. If we are not presented with an iconic image, such as the illustration in a picture book, then surely our images of person or place must shift with every retelling of a story? With every fresh retelling we are
given a different perspective and a different focus, layering one tale on another and so adding or detracting from the original but more probably changing it.

As children listened to an oral story version of the texts used in this study they created meaning in terms of their own experience and knowledge, recreated during retelling. Further discussions, reading and retellings encouraged them to reconstruct meaning and added layers of understanding. Unsworth (2001: 174) maintained that analysis of images enhances interpretation of texts and ‘hold the potential to expand young readers’ interpretative reading practices.’ That first image, aural or iconic, would perhaps be most vivid, as it would be the basis for a child’s retelling. Some children said that they preferred told stories, as the pictures were not static, as in a book. Nicholson (2003) asserted that a ‘good book is visual and makes the film in the head’. As a writer of novels Nicholson (ibid) felt that he wanted the reader to cast characters themselves. Listening to stories and making their own characters in their minds actively engaged these children in imaginative activity. As Moyles (1995: 148) said ‘when children listen to a story with eyes open wide, they experience the fact that language has the power to make the impossible happen.’ I wondered if this could have been an explanation for the more engaged responses after The Owl and the Woodpecker. As this was an unfamiliar story children had to work harder to understand and form ideas and images based on the story. They experienced ‘novelty value’ as this story was not part of their repertoire. They may also have had to listen more actively to engage with movements and repetitive refrains. They had heard What made Tiddalik Laugh? the previous year and may still have had residual images in either conscious or subconscious form, of that story but the same was not true for The Owl and the Woodpecker. This may be one reason why visualisations
following storytelling of *The Owl and the Woodpecker* were noticeably more vivid and creative but is a theory to be tested by further research.

Although children in this study were relatively young they used language to create meanings from both the texts given to them and the texts they had themselves created. In listening to, retelling and then discussing their reactions to two different narrative forms they created and recreated meaning at several different levels, changing imagery as each new impression imposed and changed the previous image. Although each story would have been essentially the same, retelling and discussion reflected mental shifts they were making in adjusting some of these elements, enabling children to reconstruct and change parts of their texts. As Hughes and Ellis (1998: 28) discovered 'when children talk about and re-create stories [...] they talk about the essential elements of story'. Scollen and Scollen (1984), in their study of Athabaskan traditional storytelling, discovered that it was not the words used that were important to the reconstruction of traditional stories but ‘the abstract created out of the boy’s own sense of the story’ (p. 193). Although they were working with teenage children I would postulate that the young children in my study were completing a similar sort of cognitive activity as they listened and responded, making sense of stories in relation to their own lives.

**6. Implications for classroom practice**

The performance element in both storytelling and story-reading needs further consideration. Wilson (2006: 9) describes storytelling as ‘predominantly performative’, the voice its main dynamic. This is true for both storytelling and
story-reading. When reading aloud to young children it is not sufficient to just read the words. Interpretation needs to be reflected in the pace, pitch, tone and rhythm of voice. As young children often mimic their teacher's manner of speaking, this could have implications for classroom practice. Some children in the research showed themselves as adept performers in terms of eye contact, gesture and character voices. Given more opportunities to explore narrative in this form, children should be able to develop confidence in communication skills. Teachers also need to be aware of the performative element and its importance in making stories, both told and read, ‘come to life’ for children. Although story-reading is common in most infant classrooms the art of storytelling is not as frequently utilised (Grainger, Goouch and Lambirth, 2005) and this could be addressed by teacher training establishments and continuing professional development. Franklin (2006: 84) regarded language as the underpinning of ‘almost all learning experiences’ and, therefore, of utmost importance as the means through which children learn. Oral language is the foundation on which the whole curriculum is built. Without ability to communicate effectively children are severely restricted in understanding what is required from them and also in exchanging their knowledge and perceptions with others. Teachers need to be able to model expressive reading, employing all the nuances of voice, rhythms and elements of oral stories to ‘creatively sculpt much more than words’ (Grainger, Goouch and Lambirth, 2005: 161) and bring stories to life. This needs to be explicit, especially in Early Years classrooms where children are still developing their ideas about language and the rhythms or music of language. By using multidimensional approaches: eye contact; gestures; exaggerated facial expressions; differing character voices; pace and tone of voice and visual aids teachers will be able to engage the hearts and thoughts of those they teach.
Children in this study illustrated how these performative elements, essential to storytelling and story-reading and implicit teaching tools, became a part of their own multimodal performances as they mimicked words, gestures and voice.

In this study I have explored two methods of story experience and what results from them, as expressed by children in the study. Although use of language was paramount in the investigation young children expressed themselves in other ways and the impact of visual and kinaesthetic learning was apparent. From results offered here two factors present themselves for classroom practice: oral storytelling as a vehicle for developing imagination and the need for young children to explore picture book narratives in detail. Encouraging visualisation is important for developing imagination. Smith (1996) asserted that ‘our capacity to create vivid mental pictures and to use our imaginations to daydream, diminishes as we grow older and we are discouraged from such activities.’ The school curriculum allows little time for reflection. Other factors, which could be linked to this lack of reflection, also raise concern for current practice, such as inability to be able to express personal experiences, as established during the first phase of data collection, described in Chapter Four. This is a part of the larger issue about infrequent use of oral storytelling in classrooms. Grainger, Gooch and Lambrith (2005: 122) have also identified this need calling for ‘personal tales and anecdotes’ to be given higher status. They postulate that:

retelling such tales can help children to reflect on and interpret their lives and can create natural writing frames of lived experience which can give structure and coherence to their writing.
Oral storytelling as a teaching tool enables children to form impressions of events through visualisation. It requires participation in terms of active listening and response through which they learn how to structure and sequence narrative; develop communicative practices and react both cognitively and imaginatively.

In a similar manner, illustrations in picture books provide rich resources for language and thought development. Exploration of pictures, as stories in themselves and as ways of creating meaning, are important issues for teachers to consider. Arzipe and Styles (2003) demonstrated how children learned how to interpret stories by deep examination of illustrations in conjunction with text. Mackey (2003) also highlighted how picture books helped children to interpret stories. In this study they indicated the importance of visual imagery as a means to helping them comprehend and build on their imaginative framework.

The role of talk in classrooms, with teachers and children actively listening and responding appropriately to each other, is paramount. Powney and McPake (2004: 2) asserted that 'from their first day at primary school children are socialised into becoming pupils' so that they met the demands of the curriculum. This pressure on teachers to fulfil its requirements was discussed in Chapter Six and has, I believe, a direct impact on learning, not just about literacy, but across the curriculum. Powney and McPake found that there were few opportunities for 'real conversations' in classrooms. Without opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas, challenge their cognitive powers and extend their verbal skills, as children in this study demonstrated they could do, the curriculum is not providing what they need in terms of thinking skills. If we wish to draw on the wealth of knowledge they already possess and enable our young children to
blossom as learners we need to give them the freedom to do so. The Foundation Phase in Wales aims to encourage a more child centred approach to learning and one hopes that a high adult to child ratio, with properly trained Early Years specialists will enable this development but the messages from this study do not apply solely to Wales. Throughout the United Kingdom and other countries across the globe school-based development depends strongly on management and teachers will need support and guidance for new ways of thinking and engaging with the words and thoughts of their young pupils.

The words of the children in this study demonstrate the links between imagination and cognition. By discussing, sometimes at length, their inner worlds they explored different thoughts and visions about story and their perceptions of story. In verbalising visualisations and responding to questions about these inner landscapes children deepened their own understanding of narrative and were able to describe these changing landscapes. Examination of interviews showed that at each stage of the process, listening, discussing and retelling, children were adding layers to their knowledge and experiences. As Alexander (2005: 2) expresses 'Language not only manifests thinking but also structures it, and speech shapes the higher mental processes necessary for so much of the learning which takes place, or ought to take place, in school.'

Claxton (2002: 1) advocated that 'reverie is crucial to the creative mind' and furthermore that 'creativity is learnt.' Children need time to talk about, play with and reflect on stories they have heard and seen, freed from timetabled constraints imposed by an over-stretched curriculum. This should enable them to exchange ideas and realise, through interaction with peers and empathetic
adults, that their perspectives may differ from those of others. Exploring different versions of narrative in more depth and detail than is afforded by present curriculum constraints should have direct impact on children's reading and understanding of oral and written texts. This study emphasises the need for teachers and children to work together, through talk, to explore narrative, in its different forms, and to create meaningful discussions from this in order to extend both language and imagination.
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Appendix One

National Curriculum requirements on which observation and assessment notes for teachers were based.

Key Stage One Programme of Study for Oracy

Range:

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

1. talk for a range of purposes, including:
   - telling stories, both real and imagined
   - describing events, observations and experiences

2. listen carefully and show their understanding of what they see and hear by:
   - making relevant comments
   - listening to others’ reactions

Skills:

Pupils should be taught to:

4. use the conventions of discussion and conversation,
   *e.g. taking turns in speaking, and structuring their talk in ways that are coherent and understandable*

5. listen with growing attention and concentration, so that they:
   - respond appropriately and effectively to what they have heard
Appendix Two

Questions following storytellings:

What follows was a very loose guide only. Sometimes children were asked all questions or a question was supplemented by further probing on a particular topic. If children appeared fatigued or disinterested interviewing ceased at that point.

The first question asked was: Have you heard this story before? This was usually asked before recording of retelling commenced and noted rather than recorded on audio-tape.

1. Questions following oral storytelling of Tiddalik:

Did you see any pictures when you were listening to the story?
Can you describe Tiddalik?
What colour was he?
Did you see the land/animals/plants?
What animals did you see?

2. Questions following oral storytelling of The Owl and the Woodpecker:

Can you describe Owl/Woodpecker?
Did you see anything when you were listening to the story?
What about the man who came to the forest can you describe him?
What did the forest look like?
Did you see any animals?
Appendix Three

Questions following story-readings:

As with interviews following storytellings these questions were a guide only to stimulate talk. Children were generally asked some of these questions but not necessarily all, depending on initial responses.

1. Questions following story-reading of Tiddalik:
Can you tell me what Tiddalik looked like?
What was your favourite picture in the story?
What was your favourite part of the story? Can you describe what you saw?
Do you prefer told stories or stories with the book?

2. Questions following story-reading of The Owl and the Woodpecker:
Can you tell me what your favourite picture was?
What was your favourite part of the story?
What animals did you see?
Do you prefer the story I told you or the story with the picture book?
Appendix Four

Examples of children's drawings:
Appendix Five

Picture books

In Albert Square four different picture books were used as follows:


In Victoria Place only two of these books were read to children in the study:


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Appendix Six

Examples of children's drawings: