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The flag, the coat of arms and me: The interactional architecture of Caribbean children's classroom stories

by

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1. Introduction

Storytelling in the classroom is a phenomenon that has has been the focus of numerous studies within a variety of disciplines, both stressing the cognitive aspects (such as educational psychology, see e.g. Applebee's phenomenal study of children's understanding of coherence (1978); and psychotherapy, see e.g. Brandell 1984 for some of its applications) and the social aspects (such as discourse analysis, see e.g. Gee 1991 ; conversation analysis, see e.g. Seedhouse & Yazigi 2005 ; or ethnographic analysis, see e.g. Erickson & Christman 1996). Within the scope of this article, I am specifically interested in the interactional aspects of storytelling in the classroom, a topic that has only been cursorily addressed in the existing literature. Most interactional/conversational work on storytelling (started by Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008) has focused on so-called 'small narratives', the type of stories that naturally occur during conversation. And while very interesting, their work has not addressed the type of narratives that are elicited by the teacher and that are also known as 'performance' (see Hymes 1975 and Bauman & Briggs 1990 for a detailed description of elicited stories as performance)

A particular case of storytelling is known as 'sharing time', the moment where one child comes up front, or stands up in a circle, and gives an account of a personal event, shares its emotions concerning a peculiar topic or simply responds to a teacher's questions regarding its personal life. This classroom moment, similar with other cases of storytelling, has also been given multidisciplinary attention. It is also often referred to as "news", "news time, and "morning news" in the work of educational sociologists such as Baker & Perrott (1988) and educational linguists such as Christie (1987, 1990) whose work on the moment of 'morning news' as genre calls for an analysis of 'sharing time' as a particular classroom activity that has its own characteristics, often quite different from other classroom tasks and activities. Most previous studies on 'sharing time' (where the name for the activity is 'show and tell') have dealt with stories of personal, mundane experience: cases in point are Sarah Michael's treatise of Leona, an African-American child telling a personal story whose structure is not recognized by a European American teacher (1983); and David Poveda's ethnopoetic analysis of a story told by Quico, a gypsy child in a Spanish classroom (2002).

The latter study underscores that sharing time, in spite of Michaels' findings, can also be a locus for gaining attention and appreciation, otherwise gone unnoticed. Poveda's teacher notices the different patterns and appreciates the child's shown verbal artistry. This study elaborates on 'sharing time' as an elicited classroom activity, but deals with data that do not (or only partly at best) reflect children's personal experience. These particular data bring to the fore instances of sharing time which consist of narratives in which children are required to realize a specific narrative genre (as opposed to the freer expressions in earlier studies, whether or not they were appreciated on their own terms). Rather than focusing on the intertextual gap that exists between particular stories and the canonical narrative that is expected (see Van der Aa 2011 for an analysis), I would like to focus here on the mechanisms of participation and collaboration as these stories are interactively managed by the teacher, the children and the ethnographer within the classroom as an institutional setting.

In this article I look at a special case of heritage storytelling during Independence Month in Barbados, the easternmost island in the Caribbean. The personal story content of 'sharing time' as studied in previous work (see above) is absent during this month: the focus is on stories related to the event of Independence Day, the day Barbados became independent of the British in the 1960s. Part of the format of regular Barbadian sharing time is continued: stories have titles, they are elicited and take place in front of the class with the teacher sitting at his desk. Other elements are not typical of sharing time in Barbados: a rigorous inscription of the child's body through remarks on posturing, an orientation to particular expected story elements, and a stronger focus on standard English usage (as opposed to Barbadian Creole English). Fenigsen reminds us that "Barbadian ways of speaking draw their stylistic richness from intertwined and differentially valued resources of Creole (Bajan) and Barbadian English" (Fenigsen 2003:457). In this article I take a look at the specific realization of these resources which result in hybrid ways of meaning-making, differently valued in each case. This is only part of the truth; other linguistic resources such as Jamaican Creole are also seen as not appropriate for this classroom activity.

I consider the Independence Day stories analyzed here as interactionally organized because they are a response to the teacher's elicitation; they are steered towards satisfying several interactional and structural goals; and they are closed by the teacher's intervention. I show the stories to be an interactionally organized, emergent mobilization of narrative resources in a specific institutional setting by making use of a particular entrée into physical space, Goffman's idea of pre-situational space (1981); and by reconsidering Goodwin's work on story structure and the organization of participation (1984). At the same

time, the asymmetrical distribution of power allows the teacher to dictate body posture and language usage. These issues will have to be taken on board in the analysis.

2. Data collection

The stories analyzed here were collected in a primary school classroom at St. Anthony on the South Coast of Barbados, during Independence Month 2005 and 2007. For matters of coherence, I have only used the tellings of 2007, which consist of approximately twenty-five stories told over eight days (four days during two weeks, as Wednesday afternoons are off). The moment of sharing time in this school took place as the first activity of the afternoon and took about twenty minutes. Each day two-three children were called upfront to tell a story. They were recorded as part of a larger project on nationhood in Barbados. Although the initial project by no means intended to treat the classroom as a locus for the reproduction of nationhood (Van der Aa 2006), it proved to be such an interesting field site that it deserved a study of its own.

What happened was this: children were called up-front by the teacher and were asked to stand in front of the other children. The teacher sat at his desk next to them, and I was positioned at the left hand of the teacher on a chair. Of the twenty-five stories analyzed, all of them refer to the flag and the coat of arms, which are the national symbols and so emblematic of statehood and important during a celebration such as Independence. Next to these two, often recurring elements are natural resources (sun, sea, crops), historical elements (colonialism and slavery, independence from England) and contemporary Barbados (freedom, and in two instances the current situation of Barbadian schools). Each story was individually tape-recorded by me during the sharing time sessions, and complemented by taking field notes. Due to school and Ministry of Education regulations, it was not possible at the time to video-tape the tellings. Teachers' compliance with this regulation was absolutely crucial in order to avoid severe problems.

I was present in the school for the whole month, and children were more and more familiar with my presence as time proceeded. So much so that after a while I was invited to extra-school activities such as cricket on Wednesday and picnics on Sunday. This involvement allowed me to see the children in other settings than the classroom and in turns this allows me to explain the story examples below in their cultural as well as their institutional context. I was an observer (and a recorder for that matter) of sharing time, and

other classroom activities, but I was also a participant and sometimes even a facilitator. I will show my own ethnographic involvement through children's and teacher's orientations toward me as well as through bringing in relevant contextual information we need to fully grasp and understand the scope of the tellings. The underlying study is ethnographic, and sees the interactional management of the stories as crucial in order to gain an emic perspective: what do the children and the teacher themselves find relevant to give their attention to. This complements some of my earlier work on

(i) *the intertextual gap* between these stories and the canonical narrative that is around during this month through the analysis of one exemplary story for its poetic properties (Van der Aa 2011)

(ii) *the meta-pragmatic perspective* that is offered by the teachers during narrative workshops I organized (Van der Aa & Blommaert 2011)

The tape-recorded and field-annotated collection of sharing time stories was further complemented with the collection of policy documents, teacher and parent interviews and more field notes with regards to Independence Day celebrations and the workings of St. Anthony Primary. For this article, I explicitly draw on transcriptions of the recordings, field notes made during these recordings, and a limited number of other field notes.

3. Unwrapping the Stories: A heuristic for narrative participation

For the purpose of this article I have chosen not to discuss full stories one by one, but rather to organize the discussion thematically, illustrating key points with story excerpts (for the analysis of a full story, see Van der Aa 2011). I start with the framing of the event by discussing the pre-situational space, in other words the classroom as a concrete site before action takes off, then I move on to discuss participation arrangements by focusing on the elicitation of the stories followed by an in-depth analysis of how the teacher steers the stories during the telling including the prompting of required/desired narrative elements and his orientation to issues of language use and body posture. I end by discussing the different types of story closings. In the conclusion I argue that the narrative architecture of the stories consists of an interactionally constructed frame in which narrative elements are prompted, elaborated upon and evaluated, and which is recursively mapped onto a local sociolinguistic order to which the teacher orients during the situationally produced story frame: a rigorous bodily hexis and a demand to speak standard English. Through complex positioning work and

a multi-dimensional participation structure (children have tellers' roles, are sometimes overhearers and sometimes addressees) the story is steered towards a satisfying end.

In the first examples we take a look at the pre-situational given of the classroom drawing on work by Goffman (1981). In the first pages of 'Forms of Talk' Goffman insists that every interaction needs to be seen in light of the full physical arena involved (Goffman 1981:3) In our case, this refers not only to the physical set-up of objects in the classroom but also to the pre-given relations of teacher and children, the authority and power involved. In other words: what sociolinguistic order is brought to bear on the sociolinguistic situation? (Blommaert et. al. 2004:19). I come back to the latter (and second part of Goffman's concern) when talking about the teacher inscribing the children's bodies in the participation frame (the frame in which the whole telling takes place as a classroom activity) through a profound attention to body posturing; and his attention to the situationally produced sociolinguistic order: during the telling the only accepted language resource is standard English. The purpose of this article is not to discuss all the consequences that follow from pre-situational givens, but rather to investigate (i) how articular classroom resources are appropriated and situationally oriented to, and (ii) how pre-existing sociolinguistic order is interactionally negotiated (and sometimes partially enforced). To analyze these frames, we need to turn to a heuristic reconsideration of Goodwin's work on participation structure.

Goodwin's work on story structure and participation frameworks (1984) gives us an entry into analyzing emergent structure in storytelling by pointing out that one should pay attention to:

(1) how the participants organize themselves in relation to each other through the telling
(2) ways in which the distinguishable subcomponents of the story are analyzed
(3) how participants display with their bodies and talk an orientation to alternative possibilities
(4) how participants, through attention to story structure and their place within it, also manage to pay attention to other activities they are involved in

(slightly adapted from Goodwin 1984:225).

When Goodwin elaborated Goffman's earlier work on participation, analyzing storytelling in natural conversation (see Goodwin 1984) was one of the detailed empirical foci which allowed him to create a more refined model of analysis, one that later developed into an integrated approach for analyzing interaction as embodied, and situated in social and material environments (see e.g. Goodwin 2000). In his work on storytelling, he also formulated a

desire that the particular analytical stance offered there be made relevant to storytelling that is not naturally occurring in conversation, or that is not directly labeled by the participants as a story. Goodwin defines emic analysis "in terms of how phenomena are utilized within specific systems of action, not with reference to labels recognized by informants" (1984:243). When considering the classroom stories under scope, explicitly labeled by all the participants as stories, we need not so much prove that what they are doing is actually a story (e.g. structurally) or labeled as such; but rather try to investigate the ways in which participants have positioned themselves towards the different elements of the telling. In other words: how is the elicitation of the story organized, how do participants maintain, negotiate and break the sociolinguistic order (and especially bodily hexis and language usage), and how are the stories closed (how is the story frame carried over into other forms of conversation). Let us now turn to some examples.

4. Story Openings

In this section I show five examples of story openings, in other words: the ways in which the stories are set up. I will focus on two important issues here: the organization of the different roles participants take on (teacher, tutor, children and ethnographer) and the inscription of children's bodies into the telling (bodily hexis). The first two examples show the announcement of the teacher, the setting up of the stage (e.g. the invitation of a teller), and the addressing of recipients (the class and me). Examples 3-5 show the rigorous bodily posturing that is required of the children and which forms an integral part of the opening sequence of the stories: examples 3-4 discuss the initiation of the required bodily hexis, example 5 its maintenance during the telling.

4.1. Participant Roles

Example 1:

11 **Teacher:**(to the class) Class, this afternoon, (1.0)

12 (in a hush voice, to tutor) bring these to Farley (3.0)

13 ***Tutor*** *(*leaves the class*)*

14 **Teacher:** (to class) Class, this afternoon we will be

15 starting off sharing our experiences of what Independence
16 is all about. First Marsha, and then Reynold.(0.5)
17 **Marsha**: (walks up, points at Reynold) Sir, Reynold make fun
18 of me,
19 → **Teacher**: (to Jef) aaah that boy (.)
20 *(*goes to Reynold, and takes him by the arm*) you hush boy,*
21 you ain hear me? You is bare misery(.) QUIET. (0.5)
22 **Jef**: Is he alright?
23 **Teacher**: sure, ain't nothing (.) Him vex me you know (kisses
24 teeth) (1.5)
(Marsha's story)

In example 1, the teacher was setting the stage for the children to tell a story about Independence Day in Barbados. In lines 14-16 he explained to the class and to me what the goal of the classroom activity entails: it is to 'share' experience of what independence is about. The word 'share' is important here because it indexes the official denomination of this activity as 'sharing time'. As explained earlier, this type of storytelling is quite different from the more free expressions usually encouraged during sharing time, but is framed as an expression of 'our' experience as to invoke the shared history and national identity associated with the event. After the teacher's announcement of the activity, two names of performing children were declared. The teacher also set the order for the performance: 'first Marsha, then Reynold'. Marsha took this announcement as a request to walk up front, indicating that she understood that these kind of performances usually involve standing up front facing the class, with the teacher seated on her left behind her (at his desk) and the tutor standing at the back of the class against the wall. In this case, I was sitting next to the teacher, behind the children, and the recording device was located at the outer right corner of the teachers' desk.

Upon coming forward, Marsha was made fun of by Reynold, scheduled for this day as the second performer; and Marsha alerted the teacher to this. He first turned to me to vent some discomfort with Reynold's behavior in line 19, and then reprimanded him for being naughty to Marsha in lines 20-21 In the first instance, I was treated as a recipient for a negative comment on Reynold, after which he explicitly took him by the arm and firmly instructed him to be quiet. In line 22, I reacted to this by asking if the boy is alright, not being familiar with

the sort of intensive physical teacher-pupil contact. Because the teacher had treated me earlier on as the addressed recipient, I felt it part of my role to make sure the student in question was doing fine. In line 23, the teacher reassured me that Reynold was fine and explained why he got so upset with him, using a habitual present tense, indicating that Reynold is often bothering classroom organization in whatever way. In other words: the teacher felt the need to account for his action of reprimanding Reynold. The teacher then added a kiss-teeth sound, which here functioned as a moral disapproval of Reynold's behavior towards me. It is always an "inherently evaluative and inexplicit oral gesture with a sound-symbolic component, and a remarkably stable set of functions across the Diaspora" (see Figueroa & Patrick frth.:1). In another article, Esther Figueroa makes use of politeness theory to explain how 'kiss-teeth' is involved in the negotiation of moral standing between individuals in public contexts (Figueroa 2005:73).

In the second example, you see the teacher setting up the stage for the storytelling in a slightly different way. My own role as the addressed recipient is even underscored firmer here than in example 1, where I am a recipient of the teacher's comment towards a student. Here the set-up is complete and the teacher makes it very clear that I am ratified as the main recipient of the stories. Rather than eliminating my own presence, I understand it to be crucial for the way in which the studied interactional processes unfold.

Example 2:

01 **Teacher:** Allright (0.5) let's see. did everyone do their
02 math assignment? Mrs. Small will pick up the names from A
03 to L and then the names from M to Z.(1.0) See hold on, (2.0)
04 (puts on his glasses, looks at his paper) yeah, (1.0)
05 (to me, smiling) meanwhile we do sharing time <u>right</u>? (.)
06 **Jef:** [(nods)
07 **Teacher:** [(pats Jef on the shoulder) haha, alright then
08 (1.5)
09 (to the class) ALLRIGHT CHILDREN,(.) we are going to tell

10 some more stories to Jef (pats Jef again),(0.5) and to each

11 other, about the independence of (0.5)

12 **Class:** BARBADOS (in choir)

13 **Teacher:** ==yes, our beloved country Barbados (0.5)

14 Sandra, come up.

(Sandra's story)

Here the teacher explicitly invoked my presence as an important (if not the most important) spectator of the celebration of Independence in the Barbadian classroom. He did so by first patting me on the shoulder and then by announcing to the children that they are going to tell 'some more stories' to me. At the same time, he also involved the other children as the audience by referring to 'each other'. This was the second day of storytelling, and it was clear from the onset that, once familiar with the format, I was brought in as the most prominent member of the audience. Having that said, children rarely oriented towards me in the way that the teacher does here. He then invited Sandra to take front stage.

Here we can see the frame of the narrative activity being set up in the space of the classroom: the teacher makes use of a pre-situational given (the classroom with the desks set up so that the children are facing the teacher) to produce a classroom activity in which several items (a dictionary, a map, a flag on the wall) become immediate items of relevance in the storytelling (see Collins & Slembrouck 2005 for a discussion). The spatial dimension of the tellings is crucial to understand how the participants make sense of the temporary audience (the teacher, their peers and an exceptional visitor, me), of the subject material and of the historicity of the post-colonial classroom with all its objects.

In the next few examples, I discuss more of what the teachers' role entails: examples 3-5 illustrate the way he expects the children to posture their body in a particular way, something that could be associated both with the requirements of classroom storytelling as well as with the sort of 'official-ness' related to activities that are important in the context of the nation-state.

4.2. Bodily hexis

Example 3:

01 **Teacher**: Okay, Reynold, come here boy (smiling) (1.0)

02 *(*positions him in front of the class*)* Okay (0.5) like you

03 is in the military now,(.) stand up,(.) shoulders

04 straight,(.) up up up,

05 **Reynold**: (smiling, imitates military tone) ==Yes sir (0.5)

(Reynold's story)

In this example a first element of the required bodily posturing, an integral part of the opening sequence of the stories, becomes visible: the position should be in the front of the class. The bodily posturing associated with the storytelling is part of a sociolinguistic order that needs to be invoked or indexed here during the opening sequence: after announcing a student and inviting him or her upfront, body posturing becomes a crucial element in the set-up of the telling. It is part of the same order of standard English, an order that invokes 'official-ness' and statehood. Besides that, it is also a characteristic of other classroom situations, such as reciting a poem, or delivering some other sort of address. In line 3, 'like you is in the military now' evokes a metaphor of rigorous soldier-like posturing and at the same time connects this posture with the official-ness of statehood. The teacher then further demonstrated what the positions entails: shoulders should be straight and pointing upwards. Reynold took this rigorous instruction as an invitation to explore the military metaphor further by prosodically imitating the military tone of an army officer and lexically by using a very common phrase for a soldier to answer to an officer ('yes sir').

Example 4:

13 **Teacher**: ==yes, our beloved country Barbados (0.5)

14 Sandra, come up.

15 **Sandra** (steps forward)

16 **Teacher**: ==Come, stand up (demonstrates how to

17 put shoulders back*)*

18 ***Sandra*** *(*positions herself*)*

19 **Teacher**: Good (1.0) Now, Sandra,(.) what can you tell us

20 about Independence month? (0.5)

(Sandra's story)

In example 4, the teacher oriented to Sandra's bodily hexis in a much softer way, perhaps because she is a girl and not such a 'bad boy' like Reynold, who needs in the teachers' mind a more severe treatment. When Sandra had stepped forward (in line 15), the teacher positioned her 'correctly' by telling her to 'stand up' and by modeling how to put one's shoulders back. After Sandra had done this, and only then, the teacher approved it ('good' in line 19), then paused for a second and finally elicited the story.

The next example shows that the required bodily hexis is not only important when setting up the story, but that it needs to be maintained continuously until the end.

Example 5:

07 **Trenton:** Using the dictionary?
08 **Teacher:** Yah, if you want to (1.0) Stand up man (*imitates someone with hanging shoulders*)(1.5)
09 **Trenton:** (*postures his body, straightens his shoulders*)
10 **Teacher:** (*nodds*) (3.0)
11 **Trenton:** according to the dictionary,
(Trenton's story)

In line 8, a second important element comes up: the bodily posturing needs to be maintained throughout the storytelling. After Trenton had already started (at least in line 7 he asked a clarifying question after the original elicitation by the teacher), the teacher was not yet satisfied with Trenton's posture and makes this clear by telling (or slightly shouting) him to stand up, and imitated Trenton's posture by exaggerating the way he was pointing his shoulders a little downward. Trenton adapted himself based on this remark, the teacher approved of it by a nod (line 10), and after a short pause of a few seconds, Trenton, began his story.

5. Elicitation

An important element of the stories is how they are elicited. As we saw above, these stories are different from naturally occurring stories, as the participants themselves know and understand that they are going to explicitly 'perform' a story. And this happens particularly in the next examples, when the teacher specifically elicits a particular story from the children that he has set-up in front of the classroom. In this way, it is the teacher that 'shapes' what is coming next as 'stories', and creates expectations from the other participants. I expect to hear stories about the Independence of Barbados, but in my role as a researcher I orient towards story structure. The children, as key recipients of the teacher's announcement 'to tell stories' get ready to possibly be called up-front. What happens mostly is that the teacher asks a question, addressing a different aspect each time. It can be aimed at describing an activity ('What do you do during this month'), a feeling ('How does Independence make you feel') or an explanation ("What does Independence mean'). Even though potentially these questions offer different, quite distinct opportunities to tell a story, students reply in remarkably similar ways. Here are a few examples of different types of elicitation.

Example 6

14 **Teacher**: (to class) Class, this afternoon we will be
15 starting off sharing our experiences of what Independence
16 is all about. First Marsha, and then Reynold.(0.5)
17 →(to Marsha) so Marsh? what do you do during this month?
18 (1.0)
19 → **Marsha**: Independence Month is there for me. (.)
20 Independence means to be free from England, free from war
21 and strife, free to do our own thing. (0.5) Because of
22 slavery and col-colinial- colonial (1.0)
(Marsha's story)

In this example, the teacher first addressed Marsha in line 17, followed by the question 'what do you do during this month'. The question was aimed at eliciting an activity, perhaps creating space for an answer related to celebrating, playing carnival, picknicking etc. Marsha responded in quite a different way however. She did not take the question as a real interest of

the teacher in what she would be doing, but rather as a rhetorical question that functions as a directive for her to bring up the bits and pieces of information concerning the historical meaning of Barbadian Independence. Examples of references to history are 'free from England' in line 20, and 'slavery' and 'colonial' in line 22. These references are part of explaining what Independence means. That is exactly how Marsha perceived the teacher's question, rather than an explanation of activities.

Example 7

06 → **Teacher**: Okay, good (.) Let me hear how you feel about
07 Independence? (1.0)
08 **Tutor** (walks back in)
09 → **Reynold**: Independence (0.5) we learn in school about
10 Independent? (0.5) Independence and I like it. (laughing)
11 (1.0)
12 **Class**: [(laughing)
13 **Teacher**: (to me) [this boy bad (0.5).
14 → (to Reynold) and what do you like?
15 → **Reynold**: I like be free from the Englishman, and do what
16 we want.
(Reynold's story)

In example 7, the teacher First asked Reynold how he 'feels' about independence. As opposed to Marsha in the previous example, Reynold did not take the question as a rhetorical one, but rather as an opportunity to make a joke. He claimed in line 10 to 'like' independence which is in line 12 taken up by the class as funny; they laugh. In line 13, the teacher explained to me that Reynold had done bad by taking the question as an invitation for a joke (and thus evaluates and categorizes him as 'bad') In line 14, the teacher then builds on Reynold's own terms ('I like it'), by asking him what he 'likes' about Independence. Reynold understands this as an invitation, or a prompt so you will, of the required narrative elements. In line 15, Reynold does exactly this by pointing to his desire to 'be free from the Englishman'.

In the next example, the teacher slightly reformulates the question ‘What Independence means’ to ‘What can you tell about Independence Month’. The addition of ‘month’ makes the child wonder what information is exactly expected from her.

Example 8

18 **Sandra** (positions herself)
19 → **Teacher:** Good (1.0) Now, Sandra,(.) what can you tell us
20 about Independence month? (0.5)
21 → **Sandra:** about the month? (.) or the [country?
22 **Teacher:** [what
23 Independence means to you (makes a rolling movement with
24 his hand). (1.5)
25 **Sandra:** Independence means freedom (.) Freedom from
26 downpression by the mother country
(*Sandra’s story*)

In this example, Sandra took the teacher’s elicitation question in yet a different way. She was not sure what sort of information is expected from her, or at least: how she was supposed to start telling a story of this nature. In other words: the teacher’s elicitation was not immediately encouraging Sandra to tell a story but was a trouble source. Then in line 21, Sandra initiated a repair sequence, which the teacher honored in lines 22-23: he repaired the original elicitation question. He did this however not by answering Sandra’s question, but by treating it as an action; he addressed what kind of response the question invited. A lot of other students have started their story by a line identifiable (with some variation) as ‘what Independence means to me’. It seems that when the teacher reformulated the question as “what Independence means to you”, that his question was no longer problematic for Sandra.

Overall, it seems that no matter how the teacher formulated the initial question (or elicitation), most children saw it as a prompt to produce a certain number of narrative elements. Only

rarely do students orient to particular wording, as in Sandra's case, and when that is so, the teacher reformulated the question to something more familiar.

6. Narrative elements

This section deals with the prompting of narrative elements that are required of the children when telling the stories. Certain elements are recurring and are prompted by the teacher: the dictionary, the flag, the coat of arms among others. Below I give some examples (9-11) of the teacher's prompting of these elements.

Example 9:

35 **Kevin**: And now we are free to do what we want to. (1.5)

36 → **Teacher**: Tell Jef some more about the flag. (1.5)

37 **Kevin**: The flag, (gasps for air and swallows) (2.5)

38 **Teacher**: ==Calm down man? (pats Kevin on the

39 shoulder*)*

40 (to me)==this boy? (kiss teeth)(1.0)

41 → **Kevin**: The flag is yellow like the sun and blue like the

42 sea and it has the trident in the middle, (.) And now we 43 have the English flag no longer. (1.5)

(Kevin's story)

In this example Kevin was helped by the teacher in line 36 in order to bring out the next narrative element. It was not so that the elements are always in a particular order, but at least a minimum of them need to be present in order to form a coherent, structured story about Barbadian Independence. In line 36, the teacher suggested that the flag would be a good next topic. Kevin repeated the topic, but gasped for air being extremely nervous. The teacher in line 38 put Kevin at ease by telling him to calm down while patting him on the shoulder. At the same time, he disapproved of this nervousness by giving me a 'kiss teeth', an oral gesture that is always evaluative, mostly in a negative way (see above, example 1). After being put at ease, Kevin continued the story in line 41.

Example 10:

38 → **Teacher:** Ok, and what is the name of our Prime minister

39 (0.5)

40 **Reynold:** Owen Arthur, sir (military tone)

41 **Class:** ==(laughing)

42 → **Reynold:** ==And now we have our own

43 Barbadian Prime Minister Owen Arthur and he is from St.

44 Lucy the most northern parish on the island (1.0) And now

45 we have our own Barbadian's government and can make our own 46 decisions (0.5)

(Reynold's story)

In line 38, the teacher asked Reynold the name of the Prime minister of Barbados. Reynold treats the question as on occasion for joking. This would have been much harder had the teacher just suggested a next element without deploying the question format. Reynold responded correctly to the question, but did so in a military tone, accompanied by the use of 'sir', something he also did in example 3, and which is typical of the way a soldier would speak to his or her superior. In line 41 the class was laughing but Reynold's narrative skills were strong enough to continue the story on his own, without the teacher intervening.

Example 11:

24 **Reynold:** They wanted to make us slaves and work on the

25 plantation. (0.5)

26 → **Teacher:** yeah man, very good, what else? (0.5)

27 **Reynold:** We could not bring our children to their schools

28 and their children were English, (.) and we the Barbadians

29 could not go to their schools.

(Reynold's story)

In example 11 we can observe how the teacher elicited more information from the child, not by asking a precise question (as in example 13) or by suggesting a next element (as in example 12) but by asking a fairly general question, preceded by an informal ('yeah man') encouragement ('very good).

Language usage during the telling

This section deals with sociolinguistic requirements, and a strict focus on the use of standard English language resources is part of what I earlier referred to as a part of the sociolinguistic order of the classroom. It is however not only a pre-textual (or pre-situational so you will) given –standard English is the language of instruction-; it is also situationally enacted during the telling. It is important that this order is maintained. It seems that in this particular case the teacher took on the role of making sure that all the required narrative elements were present, and the tutor (who was not present in all cases) that the language resources used for telling were mainly standard English. Below, I will give three examples of such orientations. Examples 12 and 103involve correcting Bajan Creole lexical or verbal items and example 14 involves correcting a Jamaican Creole lexical item. These corrections happen in the presence of a quite rigorous political focus on the use of Standard English only (the proposed normativity) within a more hybrid realization in the emerging classroom interaction (of *actual* norms). The 2000 Curriculum reform brochure of the Barbadian Ministry of education states e.g. that the main objective of language teaching should be that "students will learn the art of listening and how to speak Standard English" (p. 16).

Example 12:

21 **Kathy-Ann:** Englishman take away we sugarca:ne an (xxx)
22 → **Tutor:** === OUR (.) sugarcane and corn Kats (.).
23 **Kathy-Ann:** our sugarcane and corn (2.0), was taken away from 24 us.
(Kathy-Ann's story)

In line 21, and looking from a standard English perspective, Kathy-Ann used a plural personal pronoun as a possessive. However, personalization of possessives is described as a grammatical feature of many Atlantic Creoles (see Holm 1988) including Bajan Creole (Van Herk 2003). In line 22, the tutor corrected the Bajan lexical item 'we' into a standard English item 'our'. She did this by breaking into Kathy-Ann's turn and stressing the replaced item 'our'. Kathy-Ann accepted the correction and repeated the new lexical item in line 23 without changing the rest of her sentence structure. Corrections of this kind are frequently initiated by the tutor, later confirmed to me when asking the teacher about the tutor's role (as being mostly occupied with "grammatical matters", personal communication with the teacher).

Example 13:

15 **Reynold:** I like be free from the Englishman, and do [what
16 we want.
17 → **Tutor:** [I like
18 TO BE free from the EnglishMAN (.)
19 **Reynold:** (imitating) I like TO BE free from the [EnglishMAN
20 **Class:** [(laughing)
21 **Reynold:** ==and 22 do what we want to. (1.0)

(Reynold's story)

In this example, Reynold deployed a verbal construction that consists of a predicate 'like be free', quite common in Bajan Creole, whereas the tutor in lines 17-18 insisted on using an auxiliary with an infinitive (more typical of standard English), deploying the same lexical material. The example shows that differences in Bajan and standard English are often very subtle, and of a rather structural than lexical level. The tutor here used the same correctional tactics as in the previous example: she broke in the turn, stressed the new sentence structure (as opposed to a lexical item in the previous example), and the child repeated the proposed correction. Reynold however, while accepting the revised structure, criticized the insertion of the tutor by exactly imitating the prosody of what she said. This created laughter in line 20, after which Reynold continued his story.

Example 14:

24 **Sandra:** Independence means freedom (.) Freedom from

25 downpression by the mother [country

26 → **Tutor:** [ain't no rasta talk in heh

27 Sandra (.)

28 **Sandra:** huh? (.) faada country?

29 **Class:** ==(laughing)

30 → **Tutor:** ==Oppression,

31 Oppression [by the MOTHER country. (0.5)

32 **Teacher** [(nodding head) (0.5)

33 (to me) dunpression, from reggae,(.) reggae music you know

(Sandra's story)

In this example, Sandra used the lexical item 'downpression' in line 25. The word has its origins in rasta talk, a widely globalized register within Jamaican Creole. It has its origins within the Rastafarian community, a social grassroots movement in Jamaican society, known for their sporting of dreadlocks, the use of marijuana as a sacrament, reggae music and the worship of the former emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie. They also have been critical of the 'imposed artifice of standard English and its hegemonic powers' (see e.g. Barrett 1997). Therefore, Rastafarians often change English words into something that more closely resembles its meaning (Pollard 2000). The word that Sandra uses here is a case in point: 'op-pression' has been altered to 'down-pression', hereby reflecting the fact that something negative as oppression can never be 'up' but has to be 'down'. The tutor again broke in the turn, correcting the lexical item, or at least not yet. She responded first (in line 26) in a negative way but with a humorous tone, possibly imitating African-American English, another stigmatized language variety, and perceived as equally 'problematic'.

In the next turn, line 28, Sandra takes the comment of the tutor to refer to the word 'mother country', very prominent in Rastafarian cosmology, but then referring to Africa. The class found this very amusing and in the next turn, the tutor broke into the laughter and corrected the word 'downpression' into the standard English 'oppression', and adding stress to 'mother'

country, hereby showing that this was not the 'wrong' item. The teacher nodded his head agreeing with the tutor's corrections, then turned to me to explain how the word may have slipped into Sandra's linguistic repertoire: 'dunpression, from reggae, reggae music you know' (line 33). The 'grammatical' correction here is tied closely to Sandra's verbal identification with Rasta culture (through the usage of an emblematic Rasta word), and thus makes for a different case than the two previous examples. Whereas the first examples are showing that it is 'not good' to use Creole items, and thus they need to be subtly corrected; the usage of Rasta talk is worse, since there 'ain't no Rasta talk in here'.

7. Story Closings

Finally, we need to take a look at how the stories are closed by the teacher, and how the children respond to it. Both the teacher's closing-initiating actions and the children's responses to it vary. Throughout the series of stories, there seem to be two main types of closing: a rather formal closing (examples 15 and 16) and a closing with a personal coda (examples 17 and 18).

First Type: Formal Closing

Example 15:

42 **Reynold:** And now we have our own
43 Barbadian Prime Minister Owen Arthur and he is from St.
44 Lucy the most northern parish on the island (1.0) And now
45 we have our own Barbadian's government and can make our own
46 decisions. (0.5)
47 → **Teacher:** Thank you, very good (1.0)
48 **Class:** (applause)
(*Reynold's story*)

In example 17, we see a pretty straightforward closing. Reynold had basically produced sufficient narrative elements and structural elements (finishing in Lines 42 and 44 with 'and

now', 'and now') for the teacher to formally close his story by thanking him followed by an evaluation, which in his case was an appreciation ('very good'). The teacher's final turn followed Reynold's falling intonation and a short pause. The class then applauded.

Example 16:

39 **Sandra:** we used to grow crops like sugarcane for the mother
40 country but no longer. (.) now we grow our own crops, and
41 we have our own national symbols, (.) the flag and the coat
42 of arms. (0.5) the flag is bright yellow for the heat of
43 the sun and blue for the wonderful sea, (points to the flag
44 on the wall) and is an emblem of our nation.(.) It also has
45 the trident? (1.0) We now also have the coat of arms (.)
46 and our own governor general who is no longer an English
47 man. (2.0) The Prime minister [is
48 → **Teacher:** [Thank you, Sandra, we also want to hear a
49 few more today.(.) Thank you very much. (1.0) Class? (0.5)
50 **Class:** Thank you Sandra, (applause)
(Sandra's story)

In this example, Sandra was elaborating on national symbols and persons, and in line 47, she wanted to add a section about the Prime minister. At that point, the teacher broke into the turn and thanked Sandra for her story. One could argue that the teacher did this because the Prime minister is not an important narrative element. This however is not the case, as this particular element is explicitly elicited on other occasions (see e.g. ex. 13). We see that in line 47, Sandra had finished a section on the governor general, followed by a falling intonation and a pause. The teacher may have judged that this was a nice ending for the story, and that Sandra had already brought up sufficient elements for the story to be a coherent piece of work. He thanked her in line 49, and motivated his decision to end the story by indicating lack of time ('we also want to hear a few more today'). The teacher's consciousness of class time has made him use the opportunity that Sandra created in line 47 to wrap it up. The teacher then thanked Sandra and elicited the same from the class in line 50.

Second type: Personal Coda

Example 17:

41 **Marsha:**Now we are free,(.) Free to do what we want, (1.0) And
42 play our carnival and [thing.
43 → **Teacher:** [you went
44 carnival this year?
45 **Marsha:** ==Yes, my uncle from the US came for the
46 election.
47 **Teacher:** ==he was in the election fuh di march? (.)
48 **Marsha:** yeah, him a long time fellow, (0.5)
49 **Teacher:** weh he name?
50 **Marsha:** ==Mr. Glinsford. [Albert.
51 **Teacher:** [I en know that name
52 (.) Albert (1.0) St. Michael he come from? (.)
53 **Marsha:** St. Peter.
54 **Teacher:** ==mhm (.) Alright, thanks Marsh. (0.5)
55 Class? (0.5)
56 **Class:** Thank you Marsha (*in choir*) (*applause*)
(Marsha's story)

In this example Marsha, in line 41-42 inserted an unusual narrative element into the story. She associated independence with its local celebratory aspect, the playing of carnival. The classroom teacher was on the carnival committee and breaks in the turn in line 43 to ask a question about the recently finished carnival events. The teacher expanded the sequence by moving into a side sequence before going to the final closing in line 54. This carried Marsha literally outside of the story. She responded by saying that an uncle of her came especially from the US for carnival elections. In lines 47-53 Marsha and the teacher discussed why he came, his name and where he is from. Then, in line 54, the teacher thanked Marsha and

elicited the same from the class. The formal closing at the end is still there, which has a rather routinous positive evaluation, but it is now preceded by a personal coda or annex instead of an ending within the required story. These personal codas are closer to what sharing time is traditionally about.

Example 18:

41 **Kevin**: The flag is yellow like the sun and blue like the
42 sea and it has the trident in the middle, (.) And now we
43 have the English flag no longer. (1.5)
44 → **Teacher**: you goin to cricket twenties on Independence? (.)
45 **Kevin**: (*broadly smiling*) yah man, for real. (.)
46 **Teacher**: what team you supporting? (.)
47 **Kevin**: Gall Hill
48 **Reynold**: ==BOOOOH?
49 **Class**: [==(*laughing*)
50 **Teacher**: [(*smiling, to Reynold*) hush (.)
51 (*to Kevin*): thank you very much (0.5)
52 **Class**: (*applause*)
(*Kevin's story*)

In the final example, Kevin was talking about the flag followed by a falling intonation and a pause. The teacher used this opportunity to bring in a personal coda, but not as in the previous example by picking up on something mentioned in the story, but rather by proposing a topic that Kevin really likes. Again, a full side sequence is developed here before going in to the real closing. He may do so to put the child at ease after a rather difficult telling, or just as another way to wrap up the sharing time moment. Kevin is familiar with the topic of cricket, a West-Indian ball sports game, which can be seen from his broad smile in line 45, and his exclamation (a very strong confirmation, 'yah man, for real'). We also know this because the teacher had informed me of Kevin's cricket interest just before the storytelling. The teacher

then elaborated on the cricket topic by asking Kevin what team he supports. Apparently, Reynold is not a fan of this team and booh'd Kevin. The class was laughing and the teacher appreciated the little humorous act (smiling in line 50), yet still feels the need to hush Reynold in order to set up the stage for thanking Kevin in line 51, which is the real closing. The class, and I, than responded by applauding.

8. Conclusions

The classroom as an institutional setting for telling stories related to heritage was the main locus for investigating how participants (the teacher, the tutor, the children and me) were orienting towards the structure of the stories, its narrative elements, the language in which they were told and their physical inscription (bodily posture and the use of dictionary and flag on the wall). We have clearly seen that pre-situational (or, pre-textual) givens are certainly relevant, but that instead of assuming that every physical object in the classroom is relevant, or that standard English only serves as a medium of exclusion; I have argued that some of these contextual elements are also situationally enacted, and that this enactment can be studied by paying close attention to the stories as interactive accomplishments.

The ethnographic base of the study above resonates well with the actual contextual enactments of the participants, who know that they are 'performing' a story, as it is labeled as such. The participants' knowledge about what a story is and how it needs to be performed is demonstrated here by showing the different voices of all the participants on the page. An emic perspective is further accomplished because the ethnographic implications of the fieldwork engagement of the researcher with the actual participants, generates pre-textual knowledge of a particular sociolinguistic order, which can be clearly demonstrated through the several orientations towards two crucial elements of this order: body posturing and language use. The ethnographic context is made relevant by the participants and noticed by the researcher because of an in-depth knowledge of pre-situational conditions, acquired by a long-term ethnographic commitment.

Transcription conventions

== for **latched utterances**

[for **overlap**

(.) for **pauses** less than one second

(1.5) **pauses** in seconds, up to 0.5 seconds precise

: and :: for **sound lengthening**

intonation as follows: . (fall) , (continuing) ? (rising)

emphasis/stress by ___ or CAPS (louder than the environment)

(between italic brackets) indicate laughter, stance, other actions

Note that visible signals are taken from Notebook of Author.

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