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# On the Use of *Will* and *Gonna*: Toward a Description of Activity-Types for Child Language\*

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## INTRODUCTION

The following report represents an attempt to articulate the activities in which the terms *will*<sup>1</sup> and *gonna* are embedded, in order to understand their use in the speech of a pair of three-year-old girls. These common terms of future reference have been selected as a topic of inquiry for two reasons. First, in the psycholinguistic literature these terms have been almost neglected (except Cromer, 1971; Fletcher, 1979; and Shepherd, 1980). Although the ontogenetic relation between the acquisition of aspect and tense marking has been a topic of recent controversy (Antinucci & Miller, 1976; Bloom, Lifter, & Hafitz, 1980; Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973), these studies have been undertaken with surprising disregard for future reference. We suggest that this omission is not happenstance; but rather in the absence of an account of activity-types, like the one we begin to formulate below, a coherent explanation for the distribution of these terms is impossible. For example, whereas Cromer (1971) views the development of *will* and *gonna* as an index of the child's ability to "decenter" in time, Fletcher (1979) and Shepherd (1980) focus on the modal function of these terms. We will attempt to demonstrate that only through an account of the activity-types in which these terms occur can this duality be overcome and the temporal and modal functions of these terms be unified.

Thus, the second and even more important reason for studying the early use of these terms is to argue for the centrality of a construct like "Activity-types"<sup>2</sup> for

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout this text, *Will* refers to both "will" and its contracted form "'ll". No distributional differences were found to exist between these two forms.

<sup>2</sup>One of the reviewers of this paper was kind enough to point out that the term "activity-type" had previously been used by Stephen Levinson in a fascinating paper that we had not yet been aware of, "Activity-Types and Language" (Levinson, 1979). Our use of the term was not historically derived from his, although there are some similarities in the way we both employ the term activity-types, that is to refer to socially constituted practices. However, as we see it, there are some very

understanding the distribution of grammatical forms like *will* and *gonna*. Thus, our claim is that children construe future events in different ways depending on their present activities. The problem that we are addressing in our research is that of finding the "right level" at which these activities should be described, to account for the use of these particular forms.

The most well-developed attempt to give an account of certain features of language at "the point of intersection of a theory of language and a theory of action" (Searle, 1969) has been the theory of speech acts worked out by Searle (1969). While we share Searle's basic theoretical commitment to studying language in terms of action, as a matter of empirical fact, the distribution of *will* and *gonna* in our corpus is sensitive to more than the different illocutionary acts which may be committed through their use. Speech acts turn out to be only one of the factors which consistently co-occur in those contexts in which *will* and *gonna* are used. Moreover, speech acts do not always distinguish the situations in which one term rather than the other is used. Instead, a broader description of action, and one which is based on other distinctions, is relevant for understanding the distribution of these terms. Some of these other distinctions include things like: the speaker's stance toward her interlocutor (cooperative or not); temporal and aspectual features of the event; presence of absence of explicit consensus markers; whether or not the event referred to is in the context; whether or not the expressed intention is fulfilled; whether the speaker is narrating a sequence of future events; whether the child is enacting events in role play, and so on.

The unit of action that we will posit to capture these different dimensions and their interrelatedness will be referred to as *activity-types*. These activity-types are broader than particular speech acts. Moreover, whereas speech acts are characterized in terms of the necessary and sufficient conditions for their successful performance, these activity-types are based on a looser coalescence of properties, none of which is necessary by itself for the specification of the activity-type. Instead, these activity-types are based on the particular patterns produced by frequently co-occurring properties (such as the ones mentioned above) which cluster together and suggest a common interpretation for the actions and linguistic forms that make them up.

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important differences between Levinson's use of the term and ours. The examples Levinson works with are far more institutionally defined activities: such as a legal interrogation, or a game of cricket. Probably as a consequence of this, he does not emphasize the constitutive role of language in the construction of such activities, an issue which is of prime importance to us. In fact, one of the reasons why we have concentrated on such microactivities is that unlike Levinson who is trying to find the constraints that activity-types impose on language use (what actually does or does not count as a move in a particular language game), we have tried to discover those activity-types that actually constitute the semantic basis of the child's language. To state it more specifically, our claim is not that the activity-types we have identified (*undertaking* and *planning*) are prelinguistically specifiable entities and as such impose constraints on how the children use modals, but rather that the function of certain modals is to actually enable those activities to take place.

That another level of activity description which is more general than speech acts needs to be posited for the analysis of socially meaningful behavior has been recognized by Taylor (1971). Taylor extends the notion of "constitutive rules," postulated by Searle to account for the rule governed structure of illocutionary acts (Searle, 1969), to that of "constitutive practices" to capture the fact that even in behavioral domains with less clearly defined rules, different modes of social conduct exhibit regularities that mark distinctions between socially recognized ways of doing things (Taylor, 1971). The regularities that make up these broader modes of social conduct constitute the conditions of possibility for the commission of certain speech acts, like promises and offers, and for the use of particular forms, like *will* and *gonna*. This paper can be seen as an attempt to describe in one empirical domain what these broader constitutive practices (or activity-types) may actually consist of. Our overall claim is that activity-types such as *undertaking* and *planning* are constituted by certain regularities (to be described below), one of which is the presence of *will* or *gonna*, respectively.

Furthermore, we contend that these particular activity-types in which the terms *will* and *gonna* are embedded play a constitutive role in the establishment of their temporal referent. This theoretical perspective stands in obvious contrast to various essentialist theories which view language as a sign system representing concepts which are constituted independent of the signs that represent them. Instead, from our perspective, language and other social practices play a constitutive role in creating the very social reality of which they speak (Bruner, 1982; Foucault, 1972, 1978; Taylor, 1971). In fact, our data suggest that what it means for the child to refer to the future is determined by the different constitutive practices in which future reference is made. Thus, it is not that the child has a cognitive representation of a temporal series which is then mapped onto her language; rather reference to a future event must emerge as part of the type of activity she is presently engaged in.

The relevance of these notions should become apparent in the presentation of our data where we attempt to question the virtual self-evidence of the notion of future reference by asking: Against the background of what sort of activities is future reference made possible? We will attempt to show that it is because the notion of futurity exhibited by these two terms has two very different fields of constitution that *will* and *gonna* mean different things.

Among linguists, there has been a tradition of polemical controversy regarding the existence of a future tense independent of modality (Boyd & Thorne, 1969; Hadley, 1873; Joos, 1964; Palmer, 1979; Wekker, 1976). In many languages, the formal means to express future reference either derives from or continues to have a modal function. Moreover, it has been argued that since the future is indeterminate it must be conceived of as being predicted, willed, or wished, and thus on conceptual grounds future reference is inherently modal, especially since events described under the scope of most modals typically fructify subsequent to the time of the utterance. While such considerations have led a linguist like Wekker to try to find pockets of the system where the future tense

function is categorically different from the modal function (Wekker, 1976), many other linguists have analyzed future reference in terms of modality (Boyd & Boyd, 1980; Boyd & Thorne, 1969; Jespersen, 1931; Joos, 1964; Palmer, 1979). Typically, the analysis of modality has been carried out in terms of functions like speech acts.

However, even among linguists who claim that no sharp distinction between the tense and modal function (or speech act function) of English modal auxiliaries can be made, their argumentation is problematic. For example, although Boyd and Thorne (1969) state that the "only function of the modal verb *will*" is to make a prediction, they also refer to *will* as a future tense marker. Palmer's analysis (1979) of *will* and *gonna* reveals this same ambiguity between tense and modality even more starkly. According to Palmer, *will* is a polysemous modal auxiliary which functions epistemically to make a prediction, deontically to lay an obligation on the part of the speaker, or dynamically to talk about the subject's volition (see also Boyd & Boyd, 1980), and *gonna* is a nonmodal catenative typically used to refer to an immediate and certain future event. However, when contrasting *will* and *gonna*, Palmer's argument becomes fuzzy. On the one hand, he emphasizes the formal class of modal auxiliaries to which *will* belongs as contrasted with the allegedly nonmodal status of *gonna*, implying that *gonna* is the nonmodal substitute for modal *will*. Yet Palmer still insists that there are cases of nonmodal *will*, such as "I will be 50 tomorrow," which is a plain statement about the future and not even an epistemic prediction. However, this then contradicts his claim that *will* and *gonna* differ in terms of the presence or absence of modality.

In contrast to Palmer's claims about the nonmodal status of *gonna* (which might be attributable to his British English), it has been argued that at least in American English *gonna* functions modally as well as temporally (Binnick, 1971, 1972; Lakoff, 1972; Shepherd, 1980); and thus like *will* and *shall*, *gonna* delicately hovers over the boundary between futurity and modality.

Concerning child language, although Cromer treats *will* as a term of future reference (1971), according to Shepherd, *will* and *gonna* are both plurifunctional terms: Both terms have a modal function (indicating source of control) and a temporal function (indicating proximal vs. distal future reference) (1980). Instead, Fletcher finds that when *will* and *gonna* are used to make temporal reference, at about 2 years 6 months, the support of a temporal adverbial seems to be "felt as necessary" by the child (1979). This suggests that the modal meaning has an initial preeminence for the young child such that in order to secure future reference, an additional lexical item is required. We will adopt a position closer to both Shepherd's and Fletcher's and deny the autonomy of future reference from modality. Our data suggest that futurity is for the most part an inherently modal notion—especially for children who are not yet able to reason hypothetically (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958).

Although our research has been inspired by linguists who have used speech acts as a way to analyze the modality inherent in future reference, it seems to us

that for child language acquisition, speech acts are not the right level of description of action that is needed to understand the distribution of *will* and *gonna*. Nor has the quest to interpret utterances in terms of their speech act potential been easy. In fact, researchers have had tremendous difficulties in applying Searle's categories to actual speech samples. Thus, we begin with the circular premise that an analysis of certain linguistic terms (the modals) can help us to discover the more molar action units that they help to constitute, and these larger functional units in turn will help us to understand certain within-class grammatical contrasts in the domain of linguistic modality. Such a characterization of activity-types will provide us with a way to describe the unity underlying the modal and temporal functions of *will* and *gonna*.

### SUBJECTS AND PROCEDURES

The subjects for this particular study are two female three-year-olds: E is 3 years, 3 months to 3 years, 5 months and A is 3 years, 2 months to 3 years, 4 months during the period of data collection. The children were observed playing together in three different quasi-naturalistic tasks (a) rubber Euclidean blocks (E and A were told to make something together); (b) doll-play/miniature tea-party set (E and A were told to have a tea party for their dolls); (c) tea-party set (E and A were told to have a tea party for themselves). Each condition lasted about half an hour and was presented two times over a period of 2 months. Sessions were videotaped in the children's homes. This yields six videotapes for this dyad.

Tapes were transcribed according to the format suggested by Ochs (1979). The transcriptions represent the speaker's utterances in terms of: (a) their temporal relationship to the other speaker's utterances, (b) their temporal co-occurrences with various features of the activity-context.

Copious contextual descriptions were provided in order to transcend an objectivist account of context for a more interpretive description. For example, this consists in the move from: "E is holding a doll, talking," to "E is playing mother talking to her baby, which is the doll." Only once such interpretive accounts were given could the differential distribution of *will* and *gonna* be accounted for (see Gee & Savasir, 1981).

The data were submitted to an extensive distributional analysis. For purposes of this paper in which *will* and *gonna* are the target of inquiry, co-occurrences between these terms and various other linguistic and actional features were tabulated. Patterns in these co-occurrences were established in order to determine an emergent activity-type. The results sections give a more thorough explication of the method with the findings. The results will be presented in three different sections.

All three results sections have been scored for reliability. The agreement between the two authors' coding, when coding independently, was 88% (for the features listed in Tables 2-5). A sample of the data was also coded by an

independent observer (again for the aforementioned features) who was not associated with the research project, nor the major interpretive hypotheses. The agreement between her coding and the first author's was 76%.

## RESULTS I

To inaugurate our discussion, the grammatical category of person is an obvious locus for distributional differences between *will* and *gonna* as it has been argued that the different personal pronouns do not have homogeneously defined relationships to the verb (Benveniste, 1971). First person represents the speaker's "subjective point of view," whereas third person represents a nonperson role and thus exhibits much less subjectivity. Since modality also expresses the speaker's attitude toward what she is asserting (Lyons, 1977), it was hypothesized that these arguably modal terms would be sensitive to grammatical person. In addition, the two traditional terms of future reference, *shall* and *will*, have been known to vary as to whether they express epistemic or deontic modality due to their co-occurrence with the different grammatical persons (Boyd & Boyd, 1980).

The following distributional facts about *will* and *gonna* confirm this expectation. The speech sample contains a total of 112 cases of *will* (60 by A; 52 by E) and a total of 214 cases of *gonna* (131 by A; 83 by E). Of the *will* utterances 79% are first person singular, while only 50% of the *gonna* utterances are. Third person makes up 12% of the total distribution of *will* and 23% of that of *gonna*. Chi-square analysis reveals that the difference in the distribution of person with respect to *will* and *gonna* is significant ( $\chi^2 = 24.8$  signif.,  $p < 0.01$ ). Table 1 shows the percentage of occurrence of the different grammatical persons with both *will* and *gonna*.

If *will* and *gonna* were simply both terms of future reference, their differential distribution with regard to person would be anomalous. Were we to attempt to interpret these findings at this point, the preponderance of *will* with first person seems to indicate that *will* must express the speaker's volition. However, the term "volition" is not specific enough, and, as we will demonstrate below, *will* has more to do with the speaker's willingness than her volition. The more even

TABLE 1  
The Distribution of the Three Grammatical Persons with *Will* and *Gonna*

	1st person sing.	1st person plur.	2nd person sing./plur.	3rd person sing./plur.
<i>Will</i>	.79 (89/112)	.04 (5/112)	.04 (5/112)	.12 (13/112)
<i>Gonna</i>	.50 (109/214)	.13 (27/214)	.13 (28/214)	.23 (50/214)

distribution of *gonna* is more difficult to interpret on the basis of grammatical person alone. Therefore, we shall have to postpone characterizing *gonna* until we review other kinds of distributional evidence. In fact, once we provide our own analysis of *will* and *gonna* in terms of the activity-types they are embedded in, the reasons for the skewed distribution of grammatical person will become clearer.

Consider the following examples:

1. J (the investigator) enters the room and says to A and E:  
 J: "We're gonna play with Elizabeth's blocks/OK?"  
 E: "Yeah, I'll show you were it is"  
 as E immediately walks off.
  2. E and A are playing with blocks; the blocks topple over and then E and A recommence:  
 E: "This time let's build—build a castle together again/OK?"  
 A: "OK/I'll make it—I'll make it with you,"  
 as A begins to build with E.
  3. A's mother (K) grabs A's sweater from a chair.  
 K: "Here's your sweater to go to Gia's/Let's hang it on the door,"  
 as A's mom shakes it out and begins to walk toward the door.  
 A: "I will hang it right here,"  
 as A takes it from her mom and then puts it on the door.
  4. J enters A's house with the camera equipment, and A (who has played dolls with E, for J a few times before) smiles at J and quickly says:  
 A: "I'll get some dolls out of my box,"  
 and then walks off.  
 J: "We're not gonna play with dolls this time"
  5. As E brings a chair over to the block table, J suggests:  
 J: "I think you'd like to stand up."  
 E: "OK/I'll stand up/Standing up/Standing up,"  
 as E is already standing up.
  6. E walks into the room and announces this out of the blue:  
 E: "I'm gonna use this chair,"  
 as E looks at no one.
  7. E wants to put a flag on the castle just built by E and A.  
 A: "Put it here,"  
 as A points to the tallest block on the castle.  
 E: "No, there's—there's no hole/Hafta make a hole/How we gonna make a hole?/Oh/I know the way,"  
 as E looks at the flag in her hand and at the castle.
  8. E and A simultaneously play with separate piles of blocks.  
 A: "I'm making a house,"  
 as A builds.  
 E: "I'm making a trap,"  
 as E builds.
- .....

- E: "I'm not *gonna* make a trap/I'm *gonna* make someping else/like a city/I'm *gonna* make a city,"  
 as E first dismantles part of her building and then begins to build again.
9. E demonstrates for A how to build windows with the blocks; A is disinterested.  
 A: "I know/I'm not—I'm *gonna* make—" A is interrupted  
 as A continues to build on her own.  
 E: "See!/That's how you make windows,"  
 as E points to her windows and looks back and forth between them and A.
10. J dumps blocks out on the table.  
 J: "Here are the blocks/But you hafta make something together."  
 A: "But we're *gonna* make a house so—so it's our house,"  
 as A and E have each already begun building separately; only A is making a house.
11. A and E are playing with the tea set and some rice. E cooks some rice in a pan and then pours it onto several dishes. As E pours, A asks:  
 A: "Are you *gonna* do that once more time?"  
 A: "Are you *gonna* do that once more time?"  
 A: "Are you *gonna* do that once more time sister?"  
 as A covers and uncovers her pan, not looking at E.
12. E hands J the baby doll so J can untie her bonnet. After a while of J's unsuccessful attempt to get the knot out, E asks:  
 E: "What's *gonna* happen to the baby doll?"

First, it should be clear from these examples that the distinction between *will* and *gonna* cannot be captured in terms of future reference *per se*; *both* terms can function to make reference to a future event. Moreover, in several of the *will* utterances, the speaker makes the statement *at the same time* as she is performing the action described by the utterances (#2 and #5). Such examples mitigate against the description of *will* as a purely future tense marker. In fact, this is our first piece of evidence that suggests that the meaning of these terms is not that of straightforward temporal representation but reflects the different social practices that these utterances are part of.

Notice the examples with *will*. In each case, beyond the communicative value inherent in any dialogue, with *will* *another sort of interpersonal cooperation is sustained*. That is, *will* is used as part of a mode of regulating interpersonal conduct such that a cooperative activity is constituted. Thus, #1 is like an offer; #2, #3, and #5 consist in an explicit acceptance of the interlocutor's suggestion; in some sense they each have the superficial form of an offer, but in these cases they function dialogically as a compliance to a suggestion. Example #4 is like an offer, but what is especially notable is the fact that it is based on a background of shared experiences. That is, after a few visits from J, the investigator, A expects that when J arrives, it is time to get the dolls out again. Thus, A's utterance presupposes this shared past.

Moreover, while it is equally likely for the *gonna* utterances to introduce a

new topic into the discourse as to sustain the old topic, *will* is rarely used to introduce new referents into the discourse. The tendency of *will* to sustain the discourse around previously established topics further corroborates *will*'s role in constituting joint activities. (See Results III for a brief description of a different use of *will*).

Unfortunately, no one word lends itself to describe what the activities have in common. Traditional speech act categories such as offers and promises don't fit. Offers per se is too narrow a category since the beneficiary of an offer is typically only the addressee. In many of the examples with *will*, both the speaker and addressee are beneficiaries. Even in the few examples where the speaker is the manifest beneficiary, there is still the sense of the speaker's action being determined by a felt sense of jointness or cooperativeness. This in part is sustained through the use of the *will* form. Also, the category of promises is too strong as the "essential condition of a promise is that it is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act" (Searle, 1969). In that such an obligation would seem to require an explicit way of creating it (such as the performative formula, "I promise"), this condition renders the notion of a promise too restrictive for our data.

Yet the *will* examples do have the flavor of promises and offers in that some kind of joint endeavor seems to be involved. We shall use the term *undertaking* to refer to this phenomenon when the speaker in some way commits herself to sustaining a cooperative activity with her interlocutor, with respect to her ongoing or subsequent actions. *Undertaking* refers to a practice in which the speaker's action is in some ways carried out in terms of the interlocutor as well as the speaker. The term *undertaking* covers both the means used to construct such a joint endeavor and the ensuing cooperative activity. Moreover, it is our contention that the use of *will* is one of the factors which enables the speaker to engage in and constitute a cooperative activity. Hence, a primary function of *will* is to indicate the speaker's "willingness" (J. Boyd, personal communication, 1982).

Thus, what these *will* utterances share is that they are all instances of what we will call the activity-type of *undertaking*. In order to specify what this activity-type consists in, we will offer a short list of some of the properties which typically co-occur with *will* such that their co-occurrence suggests a common interpretation. That is, these properties have been empirically discovered to cluster together such that we can interpret them as forming a practice which seems to have its own coherence and cuts across the different play contexts. Although *undertaking* is broader than traditional speech act categories, it is not so broad so as to be equivalent to the different task themselves, such as block-play or doll-play. Instead, as we will demonstrate below, the practice of *undertaking* functions to structure particular facets of these tasks. Thus, although each of the contextual situations with *will* differs from each other in innumerable ways, what they typically have in common are the coalescence of certain proper-

ties which define them as instances of *undertaking*. Some of the properties consist in the following:<sup>3</sup> (a) offers; (b) requests; (c) compliances with requests; (d) speaker presupposes a recently constructed common reference frame based on shared experiences; (e) explicit consensus marker "OK"; (f) paired utterances (e.g., "You do *X* and I'll do *X* or *Y*"); (g) beneficiary of the action is the interlocutor; (h) beneficiary of the action is the speaker and the interlocutor; (i) discourse about already established topics; (j) projects that utterance is embedded in tend to be joint activities. (See below for Table 2).

Our claim is that *will* plus any number of these other discursive properties "recur together over and over in action after action" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) so that they form a coherent unity. (For a similar suggestion about the development of metaphoric representation, see Lakoff and Johnson's interesting discussion on the establishment of "experiential gestalts," 1980). These meaningful co-occurrences become the experiential basis for the development of a unified practice which consists in this particular sort of joint activity of *undertaking*.

With regard to the activities in which *gonna* is embedded, this extra level of interpersonal cooperation is absent. There is no sense of negotiation. The speaker does not explicitly set up that she does her action for the other, or in terms of their cooperative endeavor. This is not meant to imply that the *gonna* utterances function in a vacuum. On the contrary, it will be noted in the examples that a dialogic format of statement and response-to-statement is often maintained. However, what the *gonna* utterances lack is the additional suggestion that the speaker's actions are being done in terms of a negotiated frame of reference. Moreover, even if the speaker asks a question with *gonna*, the question is typically about some aspect of the addressee's activities which is not immediately coordinated with those of the speaker.

Thus, in #6, E makes an announcement to no one really, with no prior discussion of the topic. In #7, the speaker is not looking at her partner but at a toy flag in her hand. Example #7 consists in a rhetorical question quickly answered by the speaker. In #8, after a long sequence in which E and A each declare what they are making over and over again, as they each play separately with a pile of blocks, E changes her mind with *gonna*. E is working on a personally determined goal; hence it is up to her what she builds. Thus, she uses *gonna* to refer to her own goal. As no negotiation is needed, no negotiative form such as *will* is used. In #9, A is block-building on her own, not complying with E's attempt to be instructive.

Example #10 is interesting in that a first person plural subject is used. At first

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<sup>3</sup>Due to the limitations of space the methodological steps that were laboriously followed to extract the following properties (and all of the activity-type properties in the text) and apply them in scoring the utterances cannot be described here. For those who are interested in adopting a similar approach to text analysis, you are encouraged to contact the first author at the Psychology Dept., University of California, Berkeley, or to read her unpublished dissertation.

blush, this form would seem to be the paragon of a cooperative form and thus should not co-occur with *gonna*. However, note that although A uses the *we* form, E in fact has already begun making something else and is not even attending to the conversation between A and J; nor does A attempt to build something together with E. In other words, when used with *gonna*, the first person plural is not a joint *we* of inclusive agency.

Examples #11 and #12 are typical of all of the *gonna* questions in which the speaker inquires of the addressee about actions which are not determined by an ongoing negotiated joint activity. In this corpus, the 12 cases of *gonna* questions stand in marked contrast to the single case of a *will* question which goes as follows:

13. A: "Hi baby!//And *will* you carry me?" //adult register//  
as A holds girl doll up to baby doll in E's hand; A moves the girl doll back and forth as A talks for girl doll.

This example shows how once again, even in the context of questions, *will* functions as part of a practice of interpersonal negotiation (in this case a request). Although only a single case, the difference between this example and #11 and #12 above (and all the rest of the *gonna* questions) is illuminating.

At this point we shall present a table which empirically summarizes what we have said so far about the activity-frame of *undertaking* and its relation to *will* and *gonna*. The table consists of both (a) properties whose very definition includes a kind of negotiatory stance (e.g., offers and requests); hence these properties invariably co-occur with *will* and not *gonna*; (b) properties which do not themselves define negotiation but which are amenable to differential manipulation by either negotiatory or non-negotiatory activities; hence these properties have a more contingent relationship to *undertaking* and thus display a more interesting statistical pattern.

Table 2 accords with our description of the interpersonal nature of *will* as opposed to *gonna*. The fact that *gonna* occurs in joint projects (see 11 b) just means that the children may both be engaged in the same activity when *gonna* is used. It does not imply that any negotiatory process has obtained. In fact, what is notable is the striking absence of negotiation with *gonna*; that is, even if the activity is a joint one, it is not negotiated. The distribution of *will* is more restricted such that it cannot be used for the speaker's personal projects.

However, it would be much too hasty to assume that the definitive distinction between *will* and *gonna* has been exhumed so that it can be represented by the presence or absence of a single interpersonal dimension. What about the putative tense function of *will* and *gonna*? How does this interact with the interpersonal dimension?

The overriding majority of cases with *gonna* make reference to an event which will occur at a future point which is *temporally more distant* from the

TABLE 2<sup>a</sup>  
The Distribution of the Initial Set of Properties with *Will* and *Gonna*

			<i>Will</i>	<i>Gonna</i>
Affirmative Speech Acts	1. Offers	<i>N</i> = 34	1.00	.00
	2. Requests	<i>N</i> = 22	.95	.05
	3. Compliances with requests	<i>N</i> = 27	.92	.08
	4. Expression of noninterpersonal intention	<i>N</i> = 98	.14	.86
Dialogic Features	5. "OK" marker	<i>N</i> = 29	.82	.18
	6. Paired utterances	<i>N</i> = 10	1.00	.00
	7. Presupposition of common experience	<i>N</i> = 24	.82	.18
	8. Statement and response-to-statement format: No negotiation	<i>N</i> = 65	.08	.92
Beneficiary <sup>b</sup>	9a. Addressee	Total	.16	.04
	9b. Speaker & addressee	<i>N</i> = 44	.75	.04
Topic	10a. Old topic	Total	.33	.34
	10b. New topic	<i>N</i> = 171	.04	.29
Whose Project Is It?	11a. Project very much speaker's own		.02	.35
	11b. Project very much a joint one		.29	.20
	11c. Project very much addressee's	Total	.00	.07
	11d. Can't tell; belongs to a 3rd party; irrelevant	<i>N</i> = 326	.03	.03
Questions	12a. Questions having nothing to do with speaker	<i>N</i> = 12	.00	1.00
	12b. Questions involving speaker's volition	<i>N</i> = 1	1.00	.00
	12c. Rhetorical questions	<i>N</i> = 3	.00	1.00

<sup>a</sup>Every utterance was scored for the presence of each of these properties. If one property was implied by another, this was not tabulated separately. For example, if an utterance was scored as an *Offer*, the beneficiary was not counted separately in the beneficiary-as-addressee tabulation, since this category was considered to be implied by the category of *Offer*. Only when the beneficiary was both the speaker and the hearer for an *Offer*, was it tabulated separately. All instances of seeming implicature were treated similarly.

<sup>b</sup>Instances of speaker-as-beneficiary were not tabulated for this analysis for three reasons: (a) there were no lexicalized first person indirect objects; (b) given this absence, there seemed to be no empirically rigorous ways of distinguishing speaker as beneficiary from cases where there was no beneficiary at all; (c) our impression was that this distinction is unimportant for the distribution of the terms *Will* and *Gonna*.

moment of utterance than the event given under the scope of *will*. Typically, in using *will*, the speaker engages in the event immediately after the utterance (#1 and #4), or at times the event is even contemporaneous with the moment of speech (#3 and #5). Exceptions occur in those few cases where offers are made which do not get implemented immediately. Contrariwise, with *gonna*, the execution of the event usually occurs after a longer temporal span from the moment of utterance (#8 and #10).

Other temporal or aspectual properties of events seem important for the dis-

tribution of *gonna*. Notice that in examples #8 and #10, *gonna* is used for events of the sort that are considered “telic” (Comrie, 1976; Taylor, 1964), where the processual component of the activity can be separated from its completed end state. That is, *making a city* is not equivalent to *having made a city*. Thus, *gonna* is used for protracted telic events. Example #7 makes reference to an event that has not even yet been initiated but is only in its envisagement phase. Thus, *gonna* is used to refer to future events whose ontological status is only imaginary. This point is clearly exhibited in the following dialogue that occurs as the investigator is setting up the camera equipment.

14. A’s mom (K) reminds A about their upcoming vacation.  
 K: “Tell Elizabeth about your vacation.”  
 A: “I’m *gonna* go to the snow/I’m *gonna* go on skates/I’m *gonna* go on skates.”  
 E: “Well I hafta be a little bit older to skate.”  
 A: “Well I’m *gonna* skate when I’m a big sister.”  
 E: “I know.”  
 A: “Well I’m *gonna* skate when I’m a big sister/And I’m *gonna* skate all by myself when I’m a sister.”  
 E: “Me too!”  
 A: “When I’m a big sister, I’m *gonna* go to ski and to skate.”

This example continues in the same vein for 10 more lines with eight more instances of *gonna*. Overt reference to time is related to *gonna* in another way.

15. A: “I’m making a building and a city,” as A builds with her blocks.  
 E: “Oh!/That’s someping!” as E collects more blocks from the floor.  
 E: “I’m *gonna* make a building in just a minute,” as E walks to table with blocks.  
 E: “Now I’m *gonna* make a building,” and then E starts to build by adding blocks to her previous building she had called a “city but stops rather soon.”

Note that in example #15, the temporal phrases “in just a minute” and “now” co-occur with *gonna*. It is striking that throughout A and E’s corpus, temporal phrases occur *only* with *gonna* and never with *will*.

One temptation might be to explain these disparate temporal phenomena as resulting from the fact that *gonna* marks distal temporal reference while *will* marks immediate temporal reference. Although this generalization does in fact capture the majority of the utterances, there are enough exceptions to question it as stated and attempt another level of explanation. Moreover, this account does not explain why temporal phrases like “in just a minute” do not occur with *will*. Consider the following example:

16. E: “Let’s make a big castle,” as E and A each rebuild separately.  
 A: “ ‘K’ ”.  
 E: “I’m *gonna* make a flat place,” as E has already started building this flat place, which is the foundation for her castle.

This exemplifies one of the exceptional occurrences of *gonna* used concurrently with the activity it refers to. However, in context, the example suggests that E is beginning on another telic activity wherein the "making of a flat place" is an event which is *serially ordered* with respect to the more distal goal of making a castle. In fact, what we find is that *gonna* is consistently used to refer to events which are part of a sequential configuration. Thus, although *gonna* usually makes reference to distal future events, this is a consequence of the fact that it is used *to plan ordered sequences of events*. Thus, *gonna* can be used for temporally proximal events only if they fall under the same description. We call this description "now-for-then" temporal reference in that it is a kind of split temporal reference in protracted projects, such that the child's utterance refers to an event which gets carried out immediately for the sake of a more long-range goal. Such a finding accounts for the future-narrative flavor of *gonna* utterances.

Thus, it is our contention that *gonna* is part of a larger activity-type which functions to project events in accordance with some kind of sequential ordering structure. The term *planning* (which will be further analyzed) will be used as the technical name for this practice (similar to *undertaking*) in which E and A project events in accordance with a plan which requires the *imposition of an order on a set of events*. Moreover, this ordering has a varied form; events are not necessarily presented within a chronological framework of pure succession. Rather, the entirety of the activity is usually represented in terms of the end toward which the activity is progressing. That is, the telos of the activity is usually stated in advance and provides the direction that guides the subsequent activities leading up to it. Given the importance of this attempt at ordering events, it seems that in comparison with *undertaking*, *planning* is a more *cognitive* activity whose function is to *represent* the speaker's plans.

Another striking fact about the use of *gonna* which suggests that *planning* is a more cognitive sort of activity-type is the rift it allows between the utterance and its conditions of satisfaction. (See Table 3).

Whereas 86% of all *will* utterances are carried out (in the session), only 38% of the *gonna* utterances are. However, although so few of the *gonna* utterances are actually carried out, this does not mean that the expressed intention is neces-

TABLE 3  
Fulfillment of Expressed Intention

	Expressed Intention Fulfilled in Session	Expressed Intention Not Fulfilled in Session	Not Clear Whether Expressed Intention Is Fulfilled in Session
<i>Will</i>	.86 (89/104)	.05 (6/104)	.09 (9/104)
<i>Gonna</i>	.38 (74/193)	.17 (32/193)	.45 (87/193)

sarily just dropped or not fulfilled; only 17% belong to this category. Rather, for the preponderance of the *gonna* utterances (45%), it is not clear whether or not the activity described by the utterance is carried out. Obvious examples are those such as #14 which project beyond the context of the play session. In these cases, it cannot always be determined whether or not they are ever fulfilled. Certainly such examples were not intended to be carried out in the play session. However, there are many more examples even within the play session when it is still not clear whether the projected activity has been carried out, since the determination of what would count as carrying it out would be very arbitrary. Example #10 is exemplary in this regard. Although A says to J, "But we're *gonna* make a house so—so it's our house," can she (or both of them as the utterance states) be said to have made a house if she only builds it halfway? In fact, many of the *gonna* utterances are used to project telic activities which do not get completed. In these cases, the issue of whether or not the conditions of satisfaction of the utterance obtain is extremely equivocal, and sometimes even seems irrelevant.

In fact, it is our contention that this difficulty in discerning whether or not certain *gonna* utterances really get carried out is not just a methodological problem whose solution lies in adopting more rigorous criteria for what counts as the satisfaction of the utterance. Instead, it seems to us that often, when using *gonna*, E and A seem to be more involved in the *organization of the activity rather than its implementation*. That is, it seems that the point of many of the *gonna* utterances is not so much to get things done, but rather *to organize experiences by projecting them as plans*.

In accordance with this interpretation, example #14 is quite suggestive, not only because of the 15 instances of *gonna* that it contains, but because of the type of discourse that it embodies: what we will call a *future narrative*. That is, a few different thematically related predicates (e.g., *go on skates, go ice-skating, go to ski and to skate*) are projected of the same subject (who, in this case is the speaker) for a future point in time. At the time of telling, the events are purely imaginary and hypothetical. In fact, in the entire example, five temporal-conditionals (e.g., *when I'm a big sister*) are used. We will suggest that such a discourse form is in some sense the *inverse of narratives about the past*—with one important difference. Since the events have not yet obtained, the speaker is not representing events truth-conditionally, but rather is representing only her plans. Thus she uses the *gonna* form, the form which allows a wedge to be driven between the expression of intentions (or projection of plans) and a commitment to carrying them out. A in fact was not able to go to the snow over Christmas as planned, but we want to suggest that this does *not* falsify her utterances. Instead, it forces us to consider future narratives as a particular type of genre or discourse form which is more committed to the *saying* rather than the *doing*.

Two other features of the use of *gonna* corroborate this interpretation. Utterances with *gonna* often get repeated. In fact, 21% of all of the *gonna* utterances are followed by an almost exact duplication of the utterance. This occurs

only .02% of the time with *will*. Second, *gonna* utterances are characterized by what we call *chaining*. This refers to the third successive occurrence of one of the target words (*will* or *gonna*), no matter whether or not the propositional content of the utterance changes. Thus, both example #11, which maintains the same propositional content through the third turn (and is thus also an example of repetition), and example #14, where the content of the successive utterances changes, exemplify this property of chaining. In our corpus, 30% of all *gonna* utterances are characterized by this property of chaining, whereas only .02% of the *will* utterances are.

In light of everything that has been said about *gonna* utterances so far, we interpret the selective occurrence of these two properties of repetition and chaining as further indicating that it is the organization or linguistic representation of the activity which is most important when *gonna* is used. Moreover, the features of repetition and chaining suggest that this organization or patterning has an almost ritualistic character.

Another property of the *gonna* utterances which supports the interpretation that their function is cognitive or representational concerns the decontextualized nature of their referents. Of all of the references to entities outside of the immediate context, 72% occur with *gonna* (total  $N = 25$ ). Furthermore, references to nonactual, imaginary objects occur with *gonna* 100% of the time (total  $N = 18$ ). In other words, whenever the reference requires a mental representation, *gonna* is used. This is in sharp contrast with the finding that in those cases where the speaker points out the referent in the context, these deictic gestures co-occur with the *will* utterances 89% of the time (total  $N = 19$ ).

To summarize what has been said so far, the properties which co-occur with *gonna* which we interpret as part of the activity-type of *planning* are the following:

1. Reference to a more temporally distant event;
2. Reference to an end-state of a telic activity;
3. Not clear whether expressed intention of utterance is fulfilled or not;
4. Reference to an event which is not intended to be carried out in the play session (e.g., going skiing);
5. Repetition;
6. Chaining;
7. Reference to an entity outside of the immediate spatial context;
8. Reference to a nonactual, imaginary entity;
9. Reports (see below); plus absence of negotiatory properties (#1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, & 9 in Table 2).

It is our contention that a common interpretation can be given to all of these properties. That is, these properties are not contingently related to each other, but rather are different manifestations of a coherent activity-type. We call this ac-

TABLE 4  
The Distribution of a Second Set of Properties with *Will* and *Gonna*

			<i>Will</i>	<i>Gonna</i>
Temporal Reference	1a. Immediate event	Total	.22	.05
	1b. Concurrent event	<i>N</i> = 258	.13	.03
	1c. Distant event		.04	.52
Aspect	2a. Telic activity	Total	.03	.32
	2b. Atelic activity	<i>N</i> = 307	.12	.28
	2c. Nondurative activity		.21	.04
Intentional Fulfillment	3a. Expressed intention fulfilled		.30	.24
	3b. Expressed intention not fulfilled	Total	.02	.11
	3c. Not clear whether expressed intention fulfilled	<i>N</i> = 297	.03	.30
	4. Utterance not intended to describe an event to be carried out in context	<i>N</i> = 34	.00	1.00
Temporal Features	5. Time adverbs	<i>N</i> = 32	.00	1.00
	6. Repetition	<i>N</i> = 48	.06	.94
	7. Chaining	<i>N</i> = 68	.04	.96
	8. Points out referent in context	<i>N</i> = 19	.89	.11
Spatial Features	9. Refers to entity not spatially present	<i>N</i> = 25	.28	.72
	10. Refers to a nonactual imaginary entity	<i>N</i> = 18	.00	1.00
Reports	11. Reports	<i>N</i> = 17	.00	1.00

activity-type *planning* in order to emphasize its cognitive or representational character and to suggest that, as in a regular plan, the ordering of events is a basic characteristic. Thus, each of the abovementioned properties describes different aspects of this cognitive activity. Table 4 gives the breakdown of each of these properties with both *will* and *gonna*.

Although each of these properties has a different probability of occurrence, what is important is *not* the absolute frequency of any of these properties but rather their distributional tendencies: When they occur they typically co-occur with *gonna* and each other, and not with *will* nor the properties associated with *will*. In short, the coalescence of these properties, plus *gonna*, constitutes the activity-type of *planning*. Thus the meaning of *gonna* can be equated with the future dimension implicit in the activity of *planning*. Furthermore, our claim is that if *will* were substituted for *gonna*, other properties would also tend to change as well, and thus the meaning of the utterances would correspondingly change so that the speaker's future activity would in some way be explicitly including her interlocutor.

Moreover, it is our contention that the absence of these temporal-organizational properties with *will* is not adventitious. Rather, it is part of the meaning of the activity-type of *undertaking* that the speaker generally follows through with her negotiated intention and that this occurs soon after the utterance. In contrast

to *planning*, *undertaking* is usually a very contextualized activity type in which the speaker negotiates events in the here and now.

Another aspect of these activity-types must be mentioned in order to understand the distribution of *will* and *gonna* in the doll-play tasks presented below. Different speaker stances are associated with *both* activity-types. The above mentioned properties suggest that the more cognitive activity-type of *planning* implies that the speaker adopts a less involved, more distanced, stance toward events than in *undertaking*. Instead of being caught up in the present experience and carrying out the expressed intentions, in using *gonna*, E and A seem to be representing events from an external or more detached vantage point. That is, in order to plan, the subject necessarily extricates herself from her involvement with the event and thereby objectifies it. (The implication that such cognitive activities have for the agent's taking a more distanced stance toward that activity has been described by phenomenologists; cf. Heidegger, 1962, pp. 86–107).

That this more distanced stance occurs with *gonna* in *planning* sorts of activities is clearly exemplified in third person reports (See Table 4, #11). A and E when reporting the *will* utterances of another speaker *always* switch to *gonna*. That is, when a third party says "I will do X", if E or A then repeat this, it takes the form of "She's gonna do X." For example:

17. E: "Julie, you go to sleep!"  
 J: "I'll go to sleep in a minute."  
 E: "Julia's gonna go to sleep in a minute," as E turns to A and relays this although A is in the room and hears it as well.

*Gonna* is the form that is consistently preferred in all 17 cases of reports in E and A's corpus. This reporting function of *gonna*, which represents a third party's intention, buttresses the characterization of *gonna* as a form of speech which dissociates the involvement of the speaker.

This interpretation of *gonna* is consonant with Lyons' delineation of the "historical" as opposed to the "experiential" mode of event description, which Lyons invokes to explain the use of perfective aspect (Lyons, 1977). Although Lyons uses the term historical to refer to narration of past events, these events are distinguished as being "presented dispassionately with a minimum of subjective involvement." Inverting the historical mode to cover future as well as past events, the same characterization seems to hold true for the way in which future events are described under *gonna*.

Lyons' description of the experiential mode is slightly less helpful for understanding the use of *will*. Whereas he ascribes "personal involvement and a subjective conception of time" to events presented in the experiential mode (he relates this to imperfective aspect), E and A's use of *will* does more than that as it creates an interpersonal commitment. Hence we will alter Lyons' characterization to read "interpersonal involvement." Thus, our claim is that there is a

different speaker stance which goes along with each of the activity-types: We will call them "distancing" (for *planning*) and "interpersonal involvement" (for *undertaking*). The importance of this relatively more phenomenological characterization of the activity-types will become apparent in the next section.

Two further studies have corroborated these results. The first consists in a further analysis by the first author of two other female dyads, (four children between the ages of 3 years, 6 months and 4 years, 2 months). The entire set of results (plus those in Results II and III) were basically replicated. (See the first author's unpublished dissertation for an extensive report of these findings (Julie Gee, 1983), "Tout se tient: Towards an analysis of activity-types to explicate the interrelation between modality and future reference in child discourse," Fall, 1983).

The second consists in a study by McFarland (1983). Using some of the features developed in this paper, McFarland analyzed the distribution of *will* and *gonna* in a different sample. Her sample consisted of the speech of two siblings: one male (4 years, 9 months–5 years, 0 months) and one female (2 years, 10 months–3 years, 1 month), and their mother. McFarland's results support some of our findings such as the fact that (a) *will* and *gonna* were never "mixed together, even in extensive verbal conversations"; (b) while *will* typically occurred with the first person, *gonna* showed a much more even distribution with respect to grammatical person; (c) "expressed intentional fulfillment occurred for the *will* statements 76%, and for the *gonna* statements only 18% of the time."

What is surprising about McFarland's study was the finding that the pattern of distribution of these features does not show a significant difference in the mother's child-directed speech, and in the children's speech. The interpretation of these features from the adult data will have to be explored in greater detail in a later paper.

## RESULTS II

At this point we shall shift our focus slightly and suggest how this generic distinction between *undertaking* and *planning*, embodied in part in *will* and *gonna*, is realized in diverse contexts to structure particular aspects of these contexts. More particularly, we shall attempt to show how the differential distribution of *will* and *gonna* both determine and are determined by certain differences in each of the three task contexts mentioned above: block-play, doll-play, and tea-party play.

One way in which *will* and *gonna* are used differentially to constitute different activities is observed in the block-play session. Although the block-play tasks were initially conceived of as tasks to pull for joint activity, in fact, in one of these sessions, both of the children continually constructed different edifices by themselves, though simultaneously. However, the outcome of this parallel play is interesting in that the two terms end up in almost complementary distribution

and get used to structure the activity into different phases. Due to its interpersonal nature, *will* is used to get things underway (#1 and #5), to start again (#2), to deal with other interpersonal interactions that interrupt the block-play (#3). Thus more instances of *will* are located at the beginning and at the juncture of the activity, and in response to interruptions by others. *Gonna* is used to plan and project more long-range activities and thus functions to maintain the cohesion in the ongoing constructive play of each participant (#8).

However, a further insight is afforded by the examples with *gonna* in the block-play tasks. All those verbs describing activities *thematically* related to block-play (e.g., building a castle, making a house, making a hole to put the flag in, etc.) are described with *gonna* (except in those cases where one child offers to do something with the other child; hence the *will* co-occurring with “make it” in #2). We will refer to the verbs which describe these thematic activities as “emplotting” verbs. The term “emplotment” is borrowed from White’s analysis of different forms of historical explanation (White, 1973). According to White, “emplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind.” We use this term to suggest that in using *gonna* with thematic verbs, E and A are developing the story line by ordering events in accordance with the particular theme or motif they have adopted for their activities.

In this particular block-play session, the theme is determined by the things the children are trying to build. In each of the play sessions a theme is adopted (e.g., having a tea party, taking the dolls to a party, making a castle); the unmarked way to refer to the events which comprise this thematic activity is through the use of *gonna*. Moreover, this activity of emplotment is one subvariety of *planning*. They only differ in that straightforward *planning* is based more or less on means–ends relationships, so that the events progress toward achieving an end; whereas when emplotting events, what guarantees their ordering is their thematic coherency. Separate events form a thematic configuration. This point becomes clearer in the doll-play tasks where the activity-contexts are more thematically based.

Consequently, the two doll-play sessions, in which the children are minimally instructed to have a tea party with the dolls, provide richer contexts to demonstrate the emplotting function of *gonna*. The children emplot events with respect to the motifs embodied in having a tea party with the dolls. Notice how *gonna* is continually used.

18. E: “She’s *gonna* have a bath,”  
       as E undresses her doll.  
 A: “Hers not *gonna* have a bath,”  
       as A holds her doll up and looks at it.  
 E: “Well, where’s the bath?”  
       E glances at A as E continues to undress her doll.

- A: "I'll show you/It's right here,"  
 as A gets up holding her doll and walks about 10 feet to the xylophone.
- E: "Oh!/That's the bath!"  
 as E follows A holding her own doll.
- A: "Well the baby's bath is—/Sh!/Sh!/The baby's *gonna* go to sleep in the bath,"  
 as A puts her baby down on the xylophone.
19. E: "Now the babies are *gonna* drink theirs all up,"  
 as E lifts up her two baby dolls and looks toward the juice in the pitcher. E then puts down the dolls, but does not give them a drink—and proceeds to do something else.
20. A: "She's *gonna* get dressed and she's *gonna* get a drink,"  
 as A dresses her doll, but does not give her a drink.

All three examples confirm our initial description in which *gonna* is used for the activity of describing thematic events. And predictably, in example #18, *will* is used by A to volunteer assistance to E in finding the bath, though without a verb of employment.

However, another observation, namely the presence of third person in all three examples with *gonna*, is a clue which suggests that we must differentiate two different ways in which E and A talk about thematic events. One consists in this use of *gonna* with third person. However, surely E and A talk not only *about* their dolls (third person), but *for* and *to* their dolls as well (first and second person). What happens in the first and second person cases? Observe the following examples:

21. A: "I'll come baby back/Baby's *gonna* come back,"  
 as A walks over to the ambulance holding the girl doll, making the girl doll move back and forth in the air as if she is walking/then A looks inside the ambulance at the baby on the bed, holding girl doll up to the window of the ambulance.
22. A: "I'll go on top," //adult register//  
 as A holds girl doll to top of ambulance that E pushes around with baby inside. A seems to talk for the girl doll.
23. A: "Hi baby!/And *will* you carry me?" //adult register//  
 as A holds girl doll up to baby doll in E's hand. A moves girl doll back and forth as A talks for girl doll.
24. E: "OK/I'll come/I'll stay home," //adult register//  
 as E dresses the baby doll—seems to be speaking for her to A, since A wants E and the baby doll to stay with her and not to go to the party.
25. E: "Don't worry baby/I'll get you out" //adult register//  
 as E holds teddy bear up to back door of ambulance with baby inside. Seems to talk for teddy.

These examples demonstrate the frequent co-occurrence between first and second person with *will* (as opposed to third person with *gonna*) in these thematic

contexts. Although this thematic use of *will* initially seems to falsify our contention about the unique function of *gonna* for emplotting thematic events, we interpret these data as evidence for the claim that *doll-play is not a homogeneous context*; there are at least two distinct modes of expressing the themes that make up doll-play—each of which seems to have its own organization:

(1). Children can talk about the dolls in a way that is similar to that of a character of a story. That is, they represent the dolls' activities from an external point of view. This has the effect of making the speaker independent of the dolls such that the dolls become like characters of a narrative.

(2). The children can talk for the dolls or to the dolls in such a way that the children are actually acting out what it is they are describing. It is as though the children are inside the event enacting it, not outside narrating it. This has the effect of treating the dolls like role-partners.

This distinction is analogous to the one made between the two literary genres, narration and drama. Typically, the narrative consists in two components: the story line itself plus the narrator, who renders it in a particular way (Barthes, 1977; Scholes & Kellogg, 1966). Drama, on the other hand, "is a story without a storyteller; in it characters act out directly what Aristotle called an 'imitation' of such actions as we find in life" (Scholes & Kellogg, 1966).

Similarly, for E and A's role-play with their dolls, we must differentiate the two subgenres described above. We will continue to refer to the former activity in which the speaker acts as a narrator as "emplotment" whereas the latter activity in which the speaker acts out the role-play directly, will be called "enactment." Thus, emplotment and enactment are two different activity-types in the larger context of doll-play.

More specifically, in E and A's corpus, the practice of enactment is exhibited when the child speaks (a) for the doll (first person) to another doll, (b) for herself (in role) to another doll, or (c) for the doll (first person) to the other child in role. In these enactment contexts, the child creates a *close interpersonal space* within which she may interact with her dolls as role partners. As was the case with the more generic activity of *undertaking*, in enactment *will* is used to address the dolls; this creates an interpersonal situation which functions to transform the dolls into communicative partners. Thus, in fact, enactment is just a particular type of *undertaking*; in this case, the child sets up her subsequent activities as a joint project with the dolls.

In contrast, when emplotting events in doll-play, insofar as the speaker describes the dolls' activities from a third person point of view, no interpersonal interactive space is set up with the dolls. Rather, the children distance themselves from their dolls so that they narrate the dolls' activities as though they were characters independent of the children. Thus, *gonna* is used since as we have noted above in our discussion on *planning*, it functions to diminish the interpersonal involvement of the speaker, and thus allows the speaker to talk about the activities of a third party without interacting with her. Moreover, even though E

and A might be addressing each other when talking in the third person about their dolls, for enactment to occur, the children must act for the dolls; talking about them (in the third person) will not suffice. Any reference to a third party in the doll-play tasks requires the more distanced stance of emplotment and hence *gonna* is used.

Thus, our claim is that, in doll-play contexts, the distribution of *will* and *gonna* is dependent on the children being in one role-play mode rather than another. Consequently, the question arises as to how to identify these different role-play modes noncircularly. For the most part, these two modes of doll-play can be empirically distinguished on the basis of grammatical person. This stands to reason as one of the defining characteristics of enactment and emplotment is the presence or absence of an interpersonal dimension. Insofar as first and second person are typically used as modes of address, codifying the speaker–hearer relationship and thus creating an interpersonal space (Benveniste, 1971), they would seem to indicate enactment. Third person utterances which represent the subject (doll) as an independent character, and not the speaker’s dialogic partner nor one of the speaker’s first person personas, indicates emplotment.

However, the following examples show that while the occurrence of first and second person is necessary for determining enactment, it is not by itself sufficient since *gonna* does occur in certain seemingly interpersonal role-play contexts in the first person. The following examples suggest that a more refined specification of emplotment and enactment is needed:

26. E: “After we go to the party/I’m *gonna* wear a dress/and somebody’s *gonna* babysitter/and I’m *gonna* bring her home,” //adult register//as E tries to get panties on her girl doll. E seems to be talking for her girl doll to A’s baby doll.
27. A: “Mommy/I’m *gonna* come too,” //girlish register and very whiney// as A tries to hold girl doll to top of ambulance. A has been trying to do this persistently, but E keeps pushing ambulance away with the baby doll inside, preventing A from playing with E and the baby doll.
28. A: “I’m *gonna* sit here,” //girlish register and very insistent// as A finally is able to put toy dog into driver’s seat of ambulance; A glances up timorously at E as though she expects E to prohibit the dog’s placement in the ambulance; E then does prohibit this.
29. A: “I’m not *gonna* come back to the party/I’m *gonna* go in my sleep// They’re mean at me/I’m *gonna* go away/They’re mean at me/I’m not *gonna* come,” //girlish register and very angry// as A grabs her two Fisher–Price dolls from the doll house and stands up and then walks away with her dolls. E has been demanding that A and her dolls go to the party with E. A has been resisting this all session. They’ve been bickering a lot about this; a very tense situation.
30. E: “If you ( ) let met have your grandma/Um/I’m not *gonna* let you have one of my people,” //E shouts this at A// E and A are still bickering, as they stand up and provoke each other with sharp, angry gestures.

Note the occurrence of first and second person with *gonna* in these very thematic and interpersonal contexts. To be consistent, must we consider these examples instances of enactment and conclude that the presence of *gonna* rather than *will* is anomalous?

Instead, these examples suggest that *enactment is a very restricted activity-type*, and thus we must further specify the quality of the interpersonal relation that must obtain between communicative partners for enactment to be even possible. Enactment consists in (a) *the constitution of an interpersonal space between communicative role-partners*, but it likewise (b) *excludes any form of distancing between communicative partners*; the speaker must be involved in what she is doing with her partner. Once the latter condition is not met, the presence of the former condition is not enough to ensure enactment. Remembering that enactment is an instance of *undertaking*, it is as though once the speaker loses her sense of joint involvement with her role-partner, the conditions for *undertaking* are no longer met and thus *will* is an inappropriate form.

In short, the prime determinants of *will* in doll-play are twofold. Besides expressing a consensual basis for action, it is as though there is a phenomenological requirement that the speaker feel immediately engaged or involved in her current activity. As soon as either of these two conditions are not met, enactment becomes employment and thus *will* is no longer an appropriate form.

Examples #26–#30 indicate three different ways in which this phenomenological requirement of involvement is undermined so that the speaker ends up taking a more distanced stance toward what she is describing. Thus, the doll-play, albeit interpersonal, becomes the more distanced practice of employment. The three factors are the following: (a) the presence of *overt temporal expressions* (#26); (b) the speaker's *loss of control* in the situation such that she cannot expect events to go on as she would like (#27 and #28); and (c) *negative contexts* where a clear adversative situation suffuses the interpersonal interaction (#29 and #30).

These three situations throw the speaker out of a mode of involvement into a more distanced stance for the following reasons:

1. The presence of temporal phrases suggests that the point of the utterance is to establish a temporal relation between two events, rather than to maintain the present event in which the speaker is involved. In effect, to be able to establish such a temporal relation, the speaker must put a sufficient distance between herself and the present event to enable her to explicitly coordinate it with another event. Since the imposition of temporal relations (and hence distancing) has been identified as one of the constitutive features of *planning*, temporal phrases select for *gonna* and not *will*, even in an interpersonal dialogue.

2. Certain situations diminish E and A's sense of control over their actions. This seems to occur when a continual discrepancy arises between their expectations about the outcome of a situation and what in fact actually happens. This lack of control seems to prompt them to abandon an easier mode of involvement

for a more distanced stance, which receives linguistic expression in the choice of the modal auxiliary *gonna* (even when fully agentive semantic cases are used). That language is sensitive to the phenomenon of efficacy or control is, of course, well known. Comrie posits a "continuum of control" as the basis for the case relations (Comrie, 1981). What is new is the suggestion that, at least for E and A, the choice between *will* and *gonna* is a linguistic reflection, in part, of the feeling of control (or loss of control).

The empirical basis for the claim that E and A use *gonna* rather than *will* in situations of diminished control consists of the occurrence of *gonna* with the following properties, each of which suggests, in a different way, that the speaker does not have full control.

1. Subject's demotion ("Us gonna get a tea party"); impersonal subject ("No one's gonna hurt you") N = 8
2. Activity considered to be difficult; hence outcome more indeterminate N = 46
3. First person utterance describes action which has failed in the past N = 16
4. Third person subject of utterance which is not represented as being contingent on, or a consequence of, the speaker's actions N = 50
5. Projected activity requires another person for implementation N = 50

Except in one instance for property #2, in all of the utterances which are scored for these properties, *gonna* and not *will* is used. Thus *gonna* seems to mark absence of complete control.

3. It has often been noted that the pragmatics of negation are more complex than that of affirmation. According to Givon, "negative speech acts are presuppositionally more marked than their corresponding affirmatives" (Givon, 1979). At a deeper ontological level, it has been claimed that any negative statement "implies some positive condition" (Burke, 1945). Therefore, as temporal expressions, negation requires that the speaker make a comparison, this time between a present positive condition and the negative state of affairs she expresses. The following properties demonstrate the relation between *gonna* and negation:

1. Negative speech acts
  - 1a. Prohibitions, warnings, threats N = 27
  - 1b. Speaker refuses addressee's suggestion N = 20
  - 1c. Speaker controverts addressee's suggestion N = 22
2. Negative surface markers N = 57

Except for three cases where a negative surface marker is conflated with *will* ("won't"), *gonna* is used across the board in all of these negative contexts. In fact, the three cases of "won't" have a dubious negative value. All three are used by the speaker to *assent* to the addressee's request (e.g., A: "Don't eat up

all the cookies!’/ E: ‘I won’t’), and thus are not used in negative speech acts. In all other cases, these negative contexts pull for *gonna* as they seem to require the cognitive skills involved in *planning*: distancing in order to make the requisite comparison that a negative statement implies.

To summarize, in the two doll-play contexts, there are two activity-types for talking about thematically related events. Enactment consists in directly acting out what the utterances represent (and therefore is more ‘‘presentational’’ in nature). Moreover, it is basically interpersonal; the children talk to/for their dolls. Emplotment is narrative in nature and occurs when the children project a sequence of events in the third person about their dolls. The only exception to this generalization is that first person interpersonal dialogue occurs as emplotment when the speaker distances herself from her interlocutor due to one of the three mitigating conditions described above. Therefore, enactment seems to be a much more restricted practice and *will* the more marked role-play form. In fact, Table 5 reveals the more prolific use of *gonna* as opposed to *will* in these thematic role-play activities. Moreover, we contend that the deployment of *will* in enactment and *gonna* in emplotment is one of the constitutive elements making up these diverse activity-types. That is, the use of *will* is part of what gives enactment its consensual meaning, while the deployment of *gonna* imparts to emplotment its tendency to order more distal events from a less involved standpoint.

Although space forbids a detailed exposition of the two tea-party sessions, a few comments about the thematic role-play activities within them will be proffered in order to corroborate the above-mentioned findings about how *will* and *gonna* are used differentially to structure different modes of role-play. In the tea-party sessions, the children are instructed to have a tea party for themselves; there are no dolls. However, even in the absence of dolls, surprisingly, two modes of role-play ensue which are analogous to the two modes of role-play adopted with the dolls. Observe the following example:

31. A: ‘‘I want some juice please,’’ //adult register//  
       as A holds her cup to E who has pitcher and is playing mother.  
    E: ‘‘OK/I’ll give you some juice,’’ //adult register//  
       as E holds pitcher out towards A.

In this example, E and A are in role (indicated by the register shift and the prior appellation of ‘‘mother’’ to E by A), and they are engaged in a cooperative interaction about the thematics of the tea party. We consider this sort of closely interpersonal role-play to be an instance of enactment, as E and A act out directly what it is they want. And, predictably, *will* is used as it is part of the negotiatory process.

Moreover, the same three mitigations on interpersonal enactment found in doll-play also exist here. A single example of a negative context will suffice to make the point.

32. A: "Mother/you should not do that/I'm not *gonna* be your friend when you go to the movies,"  
 as A scolds E, after E has taken a disproportionately large share of the cookies.

However, since there are no dolls to serve as referents for third person narration, we predicted that the activity-type of emplotment would be minimal in the tea-party tasks, occurring only when there were mitigations which distance the face-to-face interpersonal role-play. However, we were wrong. E and A still project short narrative sequences, this time about themselves as main characters. That is, similar to the third person narration about the dolls in the doll-play sessions, in these tea-party sessions the children narrate short sequences in the first person about themselves. In such sequences, E and A do not immediately act out the events they are talking about, nor do they engage in interpersonal negotiation. Instead, these sequences are characterized by the imposition of a thematic order on a series of events through the use of thematically related verbs, temporal phrases, and other properties characteristic of emplotment. Notice the following example:

33. E: "I need a spoon,"  
 as E gets up and walks away.  
 A: "I'm *gonna* cut them in half."  
 A: "I'm *gonna* squish it,"  
 as A talks to no one, but looks around at the cooking utensils; 10 seconds later,  
 A uses her fork to cut her food, then the pan lid to squish her food.

Thus we are claiming that in the tea-party sessions, where reference to a third person basically does not occur, two different modes of role-playing still obtain. Since they both occur in the first person, they are slightly harder to distinguish. However, the distinction is maintained in terms of the presence or absence of an interlocutor. Whereas enactment still refers to interpersonally negotiated role-play which is acted out as it is spoken, in emplotment the speaker describes thematic events which she will do only subsequently (if at all), and she speaks to no one. Also, as the examples suggest, *will* and *gonna* are part of what structures the two different role-play contexts such that *will* imparts a negotiatory flavor in enactment while *gonna* dissevers the interpersonal commitment and diminishes the sense of immediacy.

It should be noted that in #33 we deliberately chose an example whose role-play status is equivocal given the absence of register shifts or role appellations. In all such sequences when children are not acting out the events directly but narrating them, traditional role-play indicators occur only fleetingly. However, this example still counts as an instance of emplotment since the activity concerns the thematics of the tea party, preparing the food for the party.

The findings on enactment and emplotment for both the two doll-play and two

TABLE 5  
The Distribution of *Will* and *Gonna* in Thematic Role-Play Contexts

	Interactive Role-Play		Noninteractive Role-Play	
	<i>Talking To, First Person (Enactment)</i>	<i>Talking To, Third Person (Emplotment)</i>	<i>Talking About, First Person (Emplotment)</i>	<i>Talking About, Third Person (Emplotment)</i>
<i>Will</i>	48	0	0	0
<i>Gonna</i>	2	5	25	26
	Mitigations			
	(Emplotment)			
<i>Gonna</i> Negation	30			
<i>Gonna</i> Temporal Phrases	8			
<i>Gonna</i> Loss of Control	8			

Note: Frequencies are given instead of percentages.

tea-party sessions are summarized in Table 5. The headings of the columns have the following meanings:

*Talking To in the First Person*: refers to cooperative interactive role-play when the child speaks for/to the doll in role, or for herself in role to her interlocutor (e.g., #22 and #31).

*Talking To in the Third Person*: refers to cooperative interactive role-play when the child speaks about the doll in the third person (e.g., #18).

*Talking About in the First Person*: refers to noninteractive role-play in which the child projects a thematically related narrative sequence about herself (e.g., #33).

*Talking About in the Third Person*: refers to noninteractive role-play in which the child speaks about the doll to no one (e.g., #19).

This exhausts all of the cases of thematic role-play utterances with *will* and *gonna* in E and A's corpus.

Table 5 presents the distribution of *will* and *gonna* with respect to person in thematic role-play activities. Of all 50 cases of Talking To in the First Person, 48 occur with *will*. The two instances which occur with *gonna* remain anomalous to us. Notice that the five cases in the second column are marked by *gonna*. This shows that even in interactive role-play contexts, as soon as another character is talked about (the doll in third person), emplotment as a mode of role-play takes over.

### RESULTS III

The claims we have made account for 94% of the *will* and *gonna* utterances in E and A's corpus. However, there are 20 *will* utterances which seem to constitute a homogeneous semantic class but have a different primary function than solely the

negotiatory one posited so far. That is, they all refer to the direct consequences of the speaker's actions. Notice the following examples:

34. A: "I'm mixing it up *so* I'll do it again,"  
as A messes up her blocks and starts to build again. A was and continues to build on her own—doesn't look at E when she talks; not clear whether utterance is directed at E.
35. A: "I put these in a cup/because I need to stir them in a cup/*so* they *will* be cooked,"  
as A grabs spoon and then her cup. After the utterance, A spoons food from pan into her cup and then stirs—utterance directed at no one. E is doing something different.
36. A: "I need some of that,"  
as A watches E pour more rice into her pan.  
E: "I know that *so* I'll leave some for you/here,"  
as E looks at rice in her pan—then gives rice sack to A.
37. E: "Let's make some noises/*and then* he'll wake up/*and then* I'll tell him/we made a magic castle for him/*and then* he'll come and see it,"  
as E and A each build different edifices at the same time.
38. E: "Where's the tootsie pop-pie?"  
A: "I'll show you/I'll point to it *and* you *will* see/OK/I'll point/I'll point,"  
while A gets up and points to stuffed animal on her bed—continues to point as she walks over nearer to the bed.

In #34, A's "doing it again" (rebuilding) is presented as enabled by her mixing up the blocks. In #36, E's leaving some rice for A is presented as being motivated by E's knowledge of A's explicitly stated need. When second or third person is used in the second clause (#35, #37, and #38), the activity predicated of this nonspeaker referent is presented as a direct consequence of the speaker's action. This is true even when the referent is another person (#37); it is as if his agency is circumvented and what is important is that the speaker(s) do something to effect an action on his part. Similarly, with the second person referent in #38, the addressee's "seeing it" is presented as a direct consequence of the speaker's pointing to it and showing it.

On the basis of the 20 such examples in E and A's corpus, we would like to suggest that this consequence use of *will* is tantamount to a nascent epistemic (predictive) use of *will*. What these examples suggest is that epistemic *will* develops out of the activity-type of *undertaking*. In fact, we might choose to view the *undertaking* use of *will* as a form of deontic modality in that it involves the construction of an interpersonal commitment, which seems to function as an obligation, to carry out the projected activity. The predictive use of *will* thus seems to emerge from its deontic use.

This hypothesis is supported by inspecting the sorts of contexts that such predictive uses are found in: (a) predictive *will* is always used in contexts of some kind of *joint activity*, and (b) it is used to express an event which is related to the speaker's activities, in terms of being *represented as a consequence of that*

activity. We want to suggest that in its earliest manifestations, predictive *will* is constrained by these two conditions; that is, the predictions involved must be made conditional upon the willingness of the participants, and must issue forth from their own actions. Thus, although predictive in nature, this use of *will* remains tethered to its more primary deontic usage.

It will be noted that such an interpretation differs from Palmer's (1979), presented in the introduction, in which he merely lists several different uses of *will* (e.g., epistemic, deontic, subject-oriented), without attempting to integrate them nor explain why the same term should be used for divergent purposes. As psychologists, this solution leaves something wanting for us.

Moreover, beyond their developmental relationship, both the *undertaking* use of *will* and its nascent predictive use seem to share another relationship which we might just mention. Without raising all the philosophical ghosts that get ritually resurrected through this concept, we might notice that both uses of *will* are embedded in a particular type of *causal matrix*. They both involve a very *local* sort of causality within which events can be seen as reactions to one another. This point becomes clearer when contrasting *will* with *gonna*. Whereas *gonna* utterances tend to be used to project more distant ends toward which the activity is headed, *will* is employed in utterances which function as causes for subsequent actions, or their immediate effects. For example, when in #1, E says that she will show J where the blocks are, this offer functions as the cause of her subsequent departure from the room. Whereas in the examples of consequence *will* (epistemic *will*), the *will* clause expresses the effects of the speaker's actions. Thus, in both cases, the *will* expresses a reactive relationship between two events; in contrast, *gonna* expresses a telic relationship.

At this point, all we can do is to suggest that one of the functions of *will* and *gonna* is to impart different causal relations to the two practices of *undertaking* and *planning*: a local sort of push-pull causality for *undertaking*, and a more teleological causality for *planning*. Obviously, more interpretive work needs to be done to substantiate this suggestion.

## DISCUSSION

To conclude, three points will be made. First, an approach based on activity-types begins to provide a way to overcome the duality of the modal and temporal functions of *will* and *gonna* by suggesting that both functions derive from a coherent, unified activity-type. More specifically, the typical modal function associated with *will* in *undertaking* concerns the speaker's expression of her willingness to undertake a commitment to carry out a cooperative activity. Given this, *will* achieves future reference in virtue of the willingness it expresses (one cannot be willing that something has happened). Moreover, the restrictedness of *will* to expressing concurrent and immediately subsequent actions is also explained by this activity-type, which limits the children's interests to the immediate contingencies of setting up a joint task.

Conversely, in the use of *gonna*, since the central concern is in imposing an order on events, no such restriction of immediacy obtains. *Planning* as an activity seems to call for more distal temporal reference. Moreover, our interpretation of *gonna* shows why many linguists do not accord it a modal status. That is, modality expresses the speaker's attitude toward what s/he is asserting (Lyons, 1977); yet, in using *gonna*, E and A seem to project future events independent of any attitude of commitment or intention to bring about these events. (Witness the high percentage of unfulfilled intentions in the *gonna* utterances). Thus, *gonna* might seem to be paradigmatically amodal, expressing only future tense.

However, we contend that it is just this very absence of commitment on the speaker's part which modalizes *gonna* utterances. That is, interpreting *gonna* as a future tense marker would not explain how, in using *gonna*, the speaker is not only not committed to carrying out the action she projects, but the nonoccurrence of the projected events does not even seem to falsify the *gonna* utterances. Therefore, we argue that *gonna* does have a modal function such that, in using *gonna*, the speaker adopts the particular cognitive attitude of distanciation in which the seeming expression of intention is dis severed from its conditions of satisfaction. (See Gee, 1985, for a description of dynamic modality of which *gonna* seems to be an instance).

Second, in the absence of more studies employing the same sort of extensive distributional analyses, we cannot really tell whether our findings on *will* and *gonna* can be generalized to other children. However, the studies by McFarland (1983) and Gee (1983) mentioned previously suggest that they can. Thus, we predict that with other children, our general claim about activity-types will be corroborated. That is, we expect that the two activity-types of *undertaking* and *planning* will be among the normative social practices that are being acquired as part of the process of language development by all children in our particular socio-historical epoch.

Moreover, given the McFarland (1983) and Gee (1983) studies, we have reason for optimism regarding the generalizability of our findings about the specific forms *will* and *gonna*. Although not analyzed in the same way, in the few examples offered by Shepherd (1980), *will* is used more interpersonally as part of a form of address, while *gonna* is used in more solitary contexts or to negate the suggestion of an interlocutor. The question that remains unanswered is whether this distinction is applicable to adult usage as well. Although at this point no definitive answer can be offered, there are suggestive indications that this might be the case (Boyd, personal communication, 1982; McFarland, 1983; Slobin, personal communication, 1983; Dowty, as quoted in Yavas, 1980).

The third point concerns the implications of our work for research in early social development. The sort of socially meaningful practices we have described (*undertaking* and *planning*) in order to explain the distribution of *will* and *gonna* adds a new dimension to the spate of recent work in social cognition, whose target of inquiry is the *form* of the child's reasoning about diverse social issues. While important advances have been made in the field (Kohlberg, 1969; Turiel,

1978), there remains a lacuna in terms of describing the practical basis of this later reflective consciousness. It would seem that developmental theory would require that the child's social reasoning cannot be studied independent of the different ways in which the child constitutes those social practices out of which the reasoning emerges. However, as we have shown above, an analysis of conventional social practices requires, in part, an analysis of that facet of the child's language (viz., modals) where different modes of commitment and obligation get worked out. Therefore, we would like to conclude this paper with a plea for a joint research program based on activity-types for developmental psycholinguistics and research on early social development.

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