Past Habituality in English Discourse;
used to and *would**

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This paper presents an empirically grounded discourse analysis of the English past habitual expressions, *used to* and *would*, in oral narrative and conversation. A text – based examination of these two competing forms in various contexts shows that *used to* has an episode–initiating function by way of framing a past habitual episode and *would* is subsequently used for elaboration within the frame. The discourse–organizational functions of *used to* and *would* are found to derive from the different semantic properties of each form; first of all, *used to* marks independently a now–defunct past habitual event, while the past habitual reading of *would* depends totally on discourse contexts or frames. Secondly, in denoting past habitual situations, *used to* tends to characterize the occasion as a whole, whereas the subsequent instances of *would* refer to separate and specific fractions of the occasion.

1. Introduction

This paper explicates the discourse functions of two forms in spoken American English that are used to describe past habitual situations, namely, *used to* and *would*. It addresses one of the questions that has long puzzled ESL students and teachers : "what is the difference between *used to* and *would*?" In this regard, the purpose of the study is to examine the differences between these two competing forms in terms of the contexts where each form is used recurrently, and in terms of how they frame or specify discourse differently when they co–occur. Special attention is given to how the speaker chooses one form over the other in organizing discourse

in a way that meets his communicative golas both in narrative and conversation.

The theoretical and methodological framework for this study is Contextual Analysis (Celce–Murcia 1980, 1990). The major concern of this approach is to provide an empirical, data–based explanation about English grammar in such a way that the findings can contribute both to theory and to practice in language teaching. Pedagogically relevant questions about *used to* and *would* will be discussed on the basis of a data–based analysis with the assumptions that (i) English grammar rules (i.e., grammar choice the speaker/writer makes) should not be based on intuitive, theoretical hypotheses but on fact (Celce–Murcia 1980), and that (ii) grammar decisions should be made not at the sentence level but at the discourse level, with a consideration of the interactional context as well as of the linguistic context.

The data examined in this study include oral narratives and conver-sations. The narrative data come from *Working* (Terkel 1974), which contains transcribed spoken narratives produced by people of all different occupation talking about what they do for a living and how they feel about it. For this study, I randomly selected 16 narratives. The conversational data include Group Therapy Session 3&4 (hereafter GTS) and Auto Discusion (hereafter AD), which were professionally transcribed by researchers in the field of Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). The GTS data are conversations among teenagers who are participating in a loosely structured therapy session, and the AD data are backyard picnic conversations about cars and car racers. Also included in the data are some natural conversations transcribed by students in Sociology 244A and 244B, classes taught at UCLA by Professor E. Schegloff ("Halloween Dinner," "Fergus," and "Schiffman phone conver-sation fragment 2")[1]. The sample size for the narrative and conversational data is shown below:

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[1] For verification of the judgments I made on my data, I consulted with many native speakers. I showed them unmarked portions of my data without letting them know my target forms, and asked them to mark episode boundaries and if possible to explain how they made such a decision. For some data such as the Auto Discussion Conversation, the students and Professor Schegloff at UCLA had

Table 1. Discourse Type and Sample Size

Discourse type	Data source	Size
Narrative	Working	46,940 words
Conversation	Group Therapy Session 3 & 4	72,590 words
	Auto Discussion	
	Sociology 244A & 244B	
Total		119,530 words

In the following discussion, I will first present a brief frequency analysis of *used to* and *would* to examine the distributional tendency of these forms in discourse, which will be related to a detailed qualitative analysis in the following sections. I will then posit a hypothesis about the discourse–pragmatic functions of each form on the basis of preliminary text examination. The hypothesis will be validated by further examining the functions of each form within the various discourse contexts in which they occur. The validation of the hypothesis will provide a basis on which I will discuss the semantic features of each form which impinge upon and condition their discourse–pragmatic behaviors. The recurrent discourse–pragmatic functions and distributions of the competing forms will be shown to be related to the semantic properties of each form and to some degree to differences in genre.

2. Frequency and Distribution

A total of 338 tokens of *used to* and *would* were identified in the data examined[2]. Table 2 shows the distribution of the two competing forms in the narrative and conversational data:

already marked episode boundaries in order to see how the different but related episodes were organized in story–telling sequences. In these cases, the established boundaries were the ones used for this study. The original marking of episode boundaries and the verification of my own judgments regarding episode boundaries were done independently of any conscious influence on native speakers cause by the target forms in the data.

[2] In counting the tokens of *used to* and *would*, I excluded the repeated use of the same token occurring in self–repair. For example, in a sentence such as "He'*d* rule–he'*d* // rule" (from GTS 4: 23), I counted *would* once rather than twice. I also did not count the instances of *would* conveying the subject's insistency. An example of *would* with the insistency reading is provided below:

Table 2. Frequency of *used to* and *would* in Narrative and Conversation

	Used to	Would	Total
Narrative	73(28.9%)	180(71.1%)	253(100%)
Conversation	41(54.7%)	34(45.3%)	75(100%)
Total	114	224	338

In terms of distribution, we can note that in narratives *would* is used more frequently than *used to*, while in conversations *used to* is used slightly more than *would*. As I will show later, these distributional tendencies reflect the discourse–organizational functions of both forms interacting within these two very different genres. In narratives, for instance, *used to*, which marks a past habitual meaning on its own, often occurs in a topic statement at an episode boundary. On the other hand, *would* whose past habitual use is mainly determined by discourse context, is used to elaborate, often successively, on specific points deriving from the topical frame provided by *used to* in narratives. The relatively higher number of tokens of *would* as opposed to *used to* in narratives, then, is significantly attributable to the genre characteristics of monologues, where a *used to*–utterance serves as a frame to be elaborated successively by a series of *would*–utterances. On the other hand, in conversations, where discourse builds upon the · turn–by–turn exchange of talk, mutual orientation, and negotiation between the interlocutors, there would be fewer cases where a certain topic utterance is successively elaborated throughout an extended turn, and hence a lesser likelihood for *would* to occur in elaborating utterances. This sketchy explanation of the frequencies and distributions of these forms will be argued in greater detail in the following sections, where I examine the functional differences of these two forms in oral narratives and conversations.

Continued
(GTS 4: 26)
  1 Ken: Ohh! Oh and my God the=the girl // the rest of the night
→ 2   wouldn't talk to me. Just // y'know, she w-
  3 Roger: So?
→ 4 Roger: She wouldn't talk to you?
→ 5 Ken: She wouldn't talk to me. You know i(hh)t was like⋯

Also, as the reading of past habituality and insistency are found to be often overlapped, I excluded cases where the insistency reading is salient.

3. Discourse-Pragmatic Functions of *used to* and *would*

3.1. Frame-Elaboration Hypothesis

The analysis presented here to account for the differences in the discourse-pragmatic functions of *used to* and *would* partly rests on my earlier text-based studies (Suh 1989, 1992), where I proposed the "Frame-Elaboration Hypothesis". When these two forms occur sequentially in discourse, *used to* tends to mark an episode[3] boundary by proffering a topic or resuming a topic[4]. Most often, *used to* sets up a rhetorical frame for a past habitual episode by expressing the rhetorical equivalent of a topic sentence. Once *used to* establishes a past habitual episode, *would('d)* or sometimes the past tense tends to mark the details that follow, expanding on or elaborating the topic. In other words, *used to* sets up a frame, and the following tokens of *would* are used for elaboration. This hypothesis is summarized in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Frame-Elaboration Hypothesis

Hypothesis: When *used to* and *would* occur sequentially to organize discourse describing past habitual events :

Used to–   Marks an episode boundary/Sets up a rhetorical frame for a past habitual episode.

Would–   Marks the details/Elaborates the topic.
(The simple past tense is also an alternative.)

3.1.1. *used to* and *would* in Narrative

As I noted earlier, the discourse-pragmatic functions of *used to* and *would* proposed in the hypothesis are salient in the narrative data taken from *Working*. This would be attributable to the monologic characteristics of narratives, for in the case of an extended monologue, the speaker usually has the burden of doing two tasks, i.e., bringing up the topic and

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[3] An episode is defined as a chunk of discourse, all of which is related to the same story-line, event, or topic.
[4] Topic is loosely defined as "what is being talked about."

elaborating on the topic. At the same time, the speaker can more or less control or plan his rhetorical organization from beginning to end.

The hypothesized discourse functions of *used to* and *would* are well illustrated in example (1) from *Working*. In this narrative segment, the speaker, a Mexican-American farm worker, reflects on some of his school experiences:

> (1) (Farm worker in *Working*: 32)
> 1   ···I'*d* go barefoot to school.
> → 2   The bad thing was they *used to* laugh at us, the Anglo kids.
> → 3   They *would* laugh because we'*d* bring tortillas and frijoles to
> → 4   lunch. They *would* have their nice little compact lunch
> → 5   boxes with cold milk in their thermos and they'*d* laugh at us
> 6   because all we had was dried tortillas.
> → 7   Not only *would* they laugh at us, but the kids *would* pick fights.
> → 8   My older brother *used to* do most of the fighting for us and
> → 9   he'*d* come home with black eyes all the time.

Up to line 1, the speaker has been talking about the poverty of the Mexican-Americans. In line 2, he shifts the focus of talk by using a cleft utterance (*"The bad thing was···"*), thus putting the current talk in a contrastive context in relation to the prior talk. In this new episode, the speaker starts to relate how they were treated by the Anglos. Here the speaker uses *used to* in line 2 to initiate a new episode, and by means of several tokens of *would* , the speaker lists specific details that describe how he was treated by the Anglo kids.

What is also noticeable is that the same subject "they" is retained throughout the same episode from line 2 to line 7. In line 8, the speaker shifts the topic to the behavior of his brother. Here the prior mention of "picking fights" evokes a related topic, i.e., how his brother dealt with the situation, which is introduced by the use of *used to* in line 8. Within the past habitual frame established by *used to* in line 8, *would* in line 9 elaborates on the event while retaining the same subject "he." We can notice here that the shift of the subject coincides with the occurrence of *used to* in lines 2 and 8, which in turn coincides with the episode boundaries.

The pattern in which *used to* is followed by several tokens of *would* is also observed in examples (2) and (3) below:

   (2) (Policeman in *Working*: 185)

     1   ···If I were President. I'd legalize it. As long as she's operating,

     2   I don't have to worry about someone being raped or a child

     3   being molested. They render a service as long as they're clean

     4   and don't hurt people.

→   5   I *used to* call the girls at two in the morning and say,

     6   "I need four or five for the night."

→   7   And they'*d* say, "Okay Vince, we'll be here. Come back

     8   in about two hours."

→   9   They'*d* all lined up and I'*d* lock'em up. I'*d* grab one of

→   10   the broads off the streets and I'*d* say, "Charlene,

    11   you'd better hustle because I'm coming back later and

    12   if I catch youse around–boom–

    13   you're gonna get nailed. The beef is on."

We can note that the *used to*–utterance in line 5 initiates an episode, which is followed by descriptions of what happened next, where several instances of *would* are used. That is, *used to* occurs when the speaker marks a disjunction with the preceding talk and begins to talk about a past episode, and subsequently *would* is used several times when the speaker provides specific descripitions of conversations and actions that occurred in the episode.

In example (3) below, we find again that the speaker uses *used to* to initiate a past habitual episode in line 5, where he recollects his maritime experiences. The event coded with *usted to* is presented as a characteristic behavior of the speaker himself, *vis–a–vis* the whole period of time, i.e., each trip at sea. The subsequent events coded with *would* refer more or less to the sepatate occasions which can be included in the whole picture given in the *used to*–utterance:

   (3) (Cabdriver in *Working*: 267)

     1   The big topic at sea is still exploits with women.

     2   Because there's always loneliness.

     3   A traveling salesman, he has a means of picking up a phone.

     4   But a seaman is one month, two, three months

     5   before he'll get a letter from his wife.

→   6   I *used to* phone my wife three, four times every trip.

      7   In Calcutta I waited five hours to get a phone call through.

→   8   If I didn't get it through one night, I'*d* call again and wait

      9   three, four hours the next morning. The feeling you get,

     10   just hearing her voice⋯

→   11   I'*d* stand on the phone and just actually choke up.

→   12   My wife *would* be crying on the other end and

→   13   I'*d* say, "Woman, listen, I'm spending

     14   too much money on this phone call. Stop crying."

The preceding examples strikingly support the Frame–Elaboration Hypothesis in terms of how speakers use and deploy *used to* and *would* in organizing discourse. The pervasive occurrence of *used to* at an episode boundary, where some past habitual event is "globally" put forward, suggests that *used to* encodes past habituality in the verb itself without any ambiguity, which marks off the projected episode in disjunction with the prior talk. The *used to*–utterance thus provides a global frame at the level of topic shift or topic proffering, within which various specific past habitual events relevant to the preceding global one are marked by a succession of occurrences of *would*.

Such a disjunction–marking function of *used to* is also observed in the context where a *used to*–utterance initiates an episode which constitutes some parenthetical background telling in relation to the on–going main line of an episode. For instance:

  (4) (Script supervisor/producer in *Working*: 107)

     1   The night before, there was a rehearsal. Afterwards

     2   the account man suggested we go back to the hotel,

     3   have a nightcap, and go to bed early.

     4   It was a 9:00 A. M. meeting. We were sitting at the bar and

     5   he said, "Of course, you'll be staying in my room."

     6   I said, "What? I have a room." He said, "I just assumed.

     7   You're here and I'm here and we're both grown up."

     8   I said, "You assumed? You never even asked me

     9   whether I wanted to." My feelings obviously meant nothing

    10   to him. Apparently it was what you did if you're out of town

    11   and the woman is anything but a harelip and you're ready

    12   to go. His assumption was incredible.

→ 13   We *used to* joke about him in the office.

→ 14   We'*d* call him Mr. Straight, because he was Mr. Straight.

   15   Very short hair, never grew sideburns, never wore wide ties,

→ 16   never, never swore, never *would* pick up an innuendo,

   17   super–super–conservative.

   18   No one would know, you see?

→ 19   Mr. Straight is a man who'*d* never invite me to have a drink

→ 20   after work. He *would* never, invite me to lunch alone.

→ 21   *Would* never, nerver make an overture to me.

   22   It was simply the fact that we were out of town and

   23   who would know? That poor son of a bitch had no notion

   24   what he was doing to my ego.

   25   I didn't want to destroy his. We had to work all together

   26   the next day and continue to work together.

In this segment, the speaker shares an episode where an accountant and co–worker once askerd her to stay in his room during a business trip. Here, the accountant's behavior is contrasted with his apparent personality while in the office. Notice that the *used to*–utterance in line 13, as a topic statement, initiates the past habitual episode. This *used to*–utterance is then elaborated further with utterances containing *would* and utterances containing the preterit in the subsequent context up to line 21. After the past habitual episode, the speaker resumes the main line of the story and continues to talk about how she felt about the incident. We can note, in this respect, that the *used to*–utterance initiates a parenthetical interjection whose import is essential to the point of the main story. That is, the outrageous behavior of the accountant is further brought into relief by way of being contrasted with how he was perceived by the co–workers in the office.

While example (4) shows a case where the point of a story is highlighted through a contrastive link with a past habitual event, example (5) illustrates a case where a *used to*–utterance initiates a past episode that provides a contrastive link with a present state of affairs. What is noteworthy in this example is that the contrastive link is provided by the sense in which the past habitual event no longer holds at present, which is attributable to the remoteness meaning of *used to*:

(5) (Cabdriver in *Working*: 270)

  1   Business isn't nearly as good as it was four years ago.
→ 2   We *used to* get a lot of expense account fares.
  3   We don't get nearly as much now.
→ 4   They'*d* ask for receipts. They'*d* tip about the average.
  5   I think a lot of them would tip better, yet they fear if they're
  6   too generous the company will react. I'd say a fare
  7   that runs eighty cents, a twenty–cent trip is sufficient.
  8   For long trips, we don't expect as great a percentage.

In line 2, *used to* initiates a past habitual episode, from which we can infer that past event does not hold any more. While we have some sense of the "remoteness" of a particular event being signalled by *used to*, as seen in previous examples, that signal of "remoteness" is made explicit in this example. The talk initiated with the *used to*–utterance in line 2 provides support for the prior utterance in line 1, where the speaker globally contrasts the present time with the past time, i.e., four years ago. Throughout the segment of talk, the speaker contrasts the past with the present, thus explicitly marking that the past habitual event no longer holds at present. Again, we can observe that *used to* is followed by *would* in line 4.

While I propose that *used to* expresses past habituality with remoteness, I am not claiming that *would* cannot indicate an event which does not hold any more. Actually, it often does. However, the resson why *would* can do so, or can express past habituality in the first place, is this ; it is preceded by a *used to*–utterance or by some other utterance that provides a temporal setting within which a past habitual message can be inferred. That is, remoteness is viewed as a part of the meaning of *used to*, along with the component of past habituality, both of which are salient to the point of having a pragmatic correlate of initiating a past habitual episode at some point of disjunction with the prior talk. These characteristics of *used to* stand in sharp contrast with those of *would*, in that *would* cannot be used as a past habitual marker episode–initially. While there are cases where *would* is used as a past habitual marker without any *used to*–utterance in the preceding context, we still find that there are some context–setters such as a preposed adverbial clause (cf. Ford and Thompson 1986, Haiman 1978). For instance:

(6) (Policeman in *Working*: 184)

1   If there was a crime pattern working,

→ 2   we'*d* go out and find who, what, when, and cleaned it up.

→ 3   We *would* roam the street as citizens, rather than marked as

→ 4   policeman. We'*d* wear neat and presentable suits.

5   You can hear a lot more when you're sitting in a group of hippies

→ 6   or you're sitting in a restaurant. That's how I *used to* operate.

→ 7   I'*d* pick up information. Nobody knew I was a policeman.

In this example, several instances of *would* are used to indicate past habitual events, even without a *used to* in the preceding context. In line 1, however, we find a preposed conditional clause functioning to provide a frame in which the following occurrences of *would* can express past habit.[5] In this respect, we can also note that *used to* appears in a reversed pseudo–cleft (*"That's how I used to operate"*) in line 6, where the speaker provides a summary of the prior talk in a gist–marking manner. The salient past habitual meaning of *used to* seems to allow *used to* to clearly signal, in such an episode–terminal position, that an episode is over, often in a reversed pseudo–cleft which frequently serves to wrap up a story (cf. Kim 1992).

That *would* never occurs as a past habitual marker episode–initially without some discourse frame strongly suggests that past habituality is not part of the inherent meaning of *would*, but is rather a discourse message that derives solely from the discourse context. In other words, the grammar of the English language happens to not semantically oppose *used to* and *would* on an equal footing. *Used to* independently marks past habituality with remoteness. *Would* does not have this ability, for it is "unmarked," and its past habitual reading depends totally upon discourse contexts or frames.

3.1.2. *used to* and *would* in Conversation

3.1.2.1. Conversational Stories

Informal conversation, unlike narrative, is built up by interlocutors through continuous negotiation in generating topics and through the

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[5] If *used to*, instead of *would*, were used here, it would suggest DISJUNCTION with the IF–clause (Kirsner, personal communication).

monitoring of co–participants' reactions. In this respect, it is often the case
that one speaker cannot hold the floor in a long, extended turn as in the
case of narrative. Namely, the persistence of a topic is not as strong in
informal conversation as it is in narrative.

Due to these characteristics of conversation, the Frame–Elaboration
Hypothesis is not as strikingly supported as it is in narrative because each
topical unit in a conversation is found to be rather short. However, we still
find that a *used to*–utterance often initiates an episode. This point is
illustrated in the following example, where *used to* is employed twice to
introduce an episode:

(7) (AD: 16–7)
          1   Pam: you all will have tuh∥carry on without us fer a minute.
          2   Gary: Went home after work from then on I guess
          3   Mike: Mmhhhmmmhhmmm
          4   Curt: he : : h heh heh heh–eh heh
          5   Mike: hheh hh
→   6   Curt: Keegan *usetuh* race uhr uh–er ih was um, (0.4) *usetuh*
          7   ru∥n um,
          8   Pam: siddown'n just look before you sit c'mmere en sit down.
          9   (1.0)
         10   Curt: oh : : shit.
         11   (0.4)
         12   Curt: Uhm
         13   (0.4)
         14   Curt: Fisher's car
         15   Mike: Three en∥na∥quarter?
         16   Curt: Thr∥ee enna quarter.
         17   Phyllis: Need some more i∥ce.
         18   Mike: Yah,
         19   (1.0)
         20   Curt: (when I) wz foolin around
→   21   Gary: I *usetuh* go over there with my cousin
         22   (when he had a car)
         23   (1.2)
         24   Gary: His name wz uh,∥Tucker.

This segment of talk is from Auto Discussion Conversation, which is a backyard picnic conversation where several participants talk about cars and car racers. Further back in the talk which precedes this segment, the interlocutors have discussed a fight between two car racers, Keegan and DeWald. This story is followed by turn–by–turn assessments and other related "second" stories. In the context that immediately precedes example (7), Gary, one of the interlocutors, tells a story about twins, which is triggered by talk about a place associated with "Keegan". This story, which is a digression in the story–telling sequence, has not been collaboratively responded to by the interlocutors, and fails to generate turn–by–turn assessment talk, even though it is finally responded to by Mike's laughter in lines 3 and 5, and is joined by Curt's laugh tokens in line 4. In the absence of some collaborative assessment of Gary's story, Curt initiates a new episode about Keegan in line 6 regarding the car which he used to race. And it is here that *used to* occurs at a place which coincides with an episode boundary. Curt's story is again followed by Gary's next story in line 21, where Gary produces a *used to*–utterance to initiate another story. Here we can notice that in both cases the *used to*–utterances serve to mark an episode boundary.

The same pattern is observed in example (8). This example is from the GTS data, which consist of therapy session conversations where teenage participants produce a series of stories related to the general concern or topic under consideration:

(8) (GTS 4: 15)

1	Ken:	Uh Pat McGee. I don't know if you know him,
2		he–he lives in // Palisades
3	Jim:	I know him real well as a matter of fa (*hh*) (he's) one of my best
4		friends.
→ 5	Ken:	He–he *used to* go to the same military school I did.
6		// An'he–
7	Jim:	No, no (*hh*)!
8	Ken:	He was in the dorm with me, and I was over him,
9		and he–he had a room. // An'he–
10	Jim:	No! hhh // hehheh

	11	Ken:	–he despised me. He-you ask him about me sometime,
	12		he really hated me. He must've thought I was
	13		the lowest // thing (that ever lived)
	14	Roger:	Now you got something in common. // (Because)
	15		he likes him and he hated him.
	16	Jim:	No! hahhaha! eaghh! // hhehh
	17	Ken:	No, I liked Pat. I thought he was a // great guy
	18		because–like–I–
	19	Roger:	Now you champion his cause and you attack.
→	20	Ken:	He *used to* draw the advertisements for the yearbook
	21		and I was *on the yearbook staff*.

In the course of talking about "McGee", Ken initiates an episode in line 5 with a *used to*–utterance. Another episode about the character is initiated in line 20, again with a *used to*–utterance.

While the pattern in which *used to* is followed by several tokens of *would* is relatively less frequent in conversations than in spoken narratives due to the genre differences, it is still sometimes observed in conversational stories. For instance, in example (9), a *used to*-utterance initiates an episode in line 8 and several instances of *would* are subsequently used for elaboration:

(9) (Fergus: 8)

	1	N:	Yes, they have flowers.
	2	M:	Well, they're probably simultaneous.
	3	L:	They're selling these candies now that explode
	4		when you chew on them
	5	M:	Right, wow.
	6	M:	The Rhode Island something or other just refused
	7		to ban them.
→	8	T:	We *used to* have these things when I was a kid (.2) up in
	9		(.) northern California.
→	10		These flowers after the flowers *would* wilt
→	11		this little ( ) pea–like structure *would* come ( ) and
→	12		it *would* form kind of a coil, and the seed *would* grow inside it.
→	13		It *wouldn't* really coil, it *would* curl a bit, a little bit, enough

→   14   to put tension in it. And suddenly it *would* pop open and
     15   shoot the seed. You catch them
     16   M :   Yes, probably the same thing.

Up to line 2, the interlocutors have been talking about a particular type
of flower that pops out its seeds upon applying some pressure. In line 3
through 7, the topic triggers talk about certain candies that explode when
one chews on them. In line 8, speaker T resumes talk about the flowere by
evoking an episode relevant to the resumed topic. Here we find that *used to*
is deployed to initiate an episode. It is noteworthy that, as in narratives, the
global statement that the speaker related this particular flower with a
similar one from her childhood is marked by *used to*, and specific
descriptions of how the flower came to explode are encoded with *would*.

Example(10) illustrates another conversational story, where *used to* is
followed by several tokens of *would* that are used for elaboration :

     (10) (GTS 3 : 74)
          1   Ken :   Now—now the man two doors down, his name is
          2   Mister Henry, he's Joelle's father.
          3   He—without a doubt he is the most hilarious man
          4   I've ever met in my whole life. He's a real good Joe.
          5   I mean—one of these guys who's never—(/) Y'know,
          6   he's always helping kids out, anything he c'n do,
          7   like if my car breaks down he'll say
          8   "W'l use mine, go ahead it's ok." This kinda stuff?
          9   Oh it is—and—
→   10   We *useta* go play baseball in the street, all these kids
→   11   ya know, kids from five years on up'd play.
→   12   We *useta* get—My brother'd come out, and
         13   all a'his twenny one year old friends,
→   14   Mister Henry'd come out.
→   15   When Mister Henry'd come out,
→   16   the whole—all the parents'd come out
→   17   ya know, all the fathers? We'd play a—playin baseball.

In this segment, Ken is talking about the type of person Mr. Henry seems
to be. In the course of telling how nice he is, Ken brings up an episode

about a baseball game in which everybody in the neighborhood, including Mr. Henry, participated, and then goes on to talk about how Mr. Henry behaved differently from the other adults. We find that Ken uses a *used to*–utterance as he begins to tell this episode in line 10. In the following description about those who played ball, *would* is successively used for describing each person who came out to play.[6] We also observe that the events marked with *would* belong to the one global event marked with *used to* as if the sum of the separate occasions makes one whole occasion under which they can be subsumed.

The discoures function of *used to* as an episode initiator is strikingly observed in example (11) with regard to the choice of reference terms[7]:

(11) (GTS 4: 17)

	1	Jim:	Like yesterday it was dead at State Beach,
	2		we were d–all down to State Beach, I didn't go
	3		to school the other day, neither did he.
	4		We were all down at State Beach so he puts on his
	5		little–it was dead down there, so he n–he was gonna live it
	6		up so he put on this little leopard bathing suit he bought
	7		for a buck you know this little teeny leopard
	8		bathing suit. He's walkin up an' down the beach
	9		with heh one of those things on,
	10	( ):	((sigh))
	11	Jim:	That guy's just radical.
	12	Ken:	Well–
	13	Jim:	That guy will do anything for a laugh.
→	14	Ken:	That guy *used to* g–// Pat McGee *used to* think
	15		that it was the funniest thing in the world to get up

[6] We can note that in line 12 the speaker shifts from "We *useta* get" to "My brother'd come". The self–repair seems to be motivated to further elaborate on the previous utterance in line 11 about people "from five years on up" who would play in the game. Thus the speaker provides further elaboration with *would* beginning from the speaker's brother, rather than skipping the elaboration and directly going on to some other global level description that would have been provided with the abandoned *used to*–utterance.

[7] This example is discussed in Kim (1991) in the context where he shows different interactional/discourse–organizational uses of names and general nouns in English story–telling sequences.

	16		at four inna morning, and yell, come into my room
	17		and yell ((loud whisper)) "Ken! Ken! You're late
→	18		you're late you're late!." I'd jump up outta bed
	19		you know thinkin my alarm // clock didn't go off,
	20		run out and wake everybody up an'
	21		we had another half hour to sleep, you know?
	22	Jim :	ahhhh ((sniff))

In the context where this segment of talk is produced, the interlocutors are talking about a referent "McGee," who was introduced earlier in the preceding talk. From lines 1 to 9, Jim is relating one episode as a way of describing McGee's unique character. This episode is followed by Jim's self-assessment in lines 11 and 13, where he provides the gist of the episode regarding the person of "McGee." Following Jim's episode and self-assessment, Ken, in line 14, initiates another episode regarding the same referent "McGee," and we find that he uses *used to* in the course of bringing up the episode. We can note here that Ken initially uses a general noun "that guy" with *used to*, as a trailing effect from the preceding talk, but self-interrupts the utterance to shift to the name "Pat McGee." With reference to Kim's observaion (1991) that names tend to occur where a new episode is initiated while general nouns, e.g., "that guy," are predominantly used in turn-by-turn assessment talk following as episode, we find that Ken's self-interruption in line 14 correlates with a transition from the turn-by-turn assessment to a new episode. In this regard, we find a strong sense in which the context where *used to* occurs is indeed a place where a new episode begins. Also in line 18, we find an instance of *would* which is used for elaboration.

3.1.2.2. *used to*-utterance as Parenthetical Interjection

As I noted above, *used to* occurs more frequently than *would* in spontaneous conversation, which I attributed to the salient past habitual meaning of *used to*. In this respect, *used to*-utterances, due to the unambiguous and distinctive past habitual meaning marked by *used to*, often serve as a one-shot comment which is produced as a parenthetical interjection. In contrast with *used to*, *would* cannot be used singly in such a context; when used without sufficient prior context that yields the past habitual message, *would* sounds ambiguous to the point of being

ungrammatical. This would be so because the meaning of *would* is not one of past habituality *per se*. Example (12) shows an instance where *used to* appears in a one–shot comment, which is found in line 4:

> (12) (GTS 3: 79)
>   1   Louise: I had–I just called up an'I said "Mom, I need
>   2   s'm(hh) ore money." Cause my parents let me go up
>   3   there alone with <u>Jo</u>.
> →   4   Who uhm is–c'they *useta* forbid me to see her
>   5   every other <u>week</u>
>   6   Ken: Mh hm,
>   7   Louise: Cause she was a bad influence.
>   8   But they let me go up there, an' one night,
>   9   down in Hot Creek the guy I was goin with,
>   10   we fell <u>asleep</u> down there no one woke us an'
>   11   we woke up the next morning at six o'clock in the
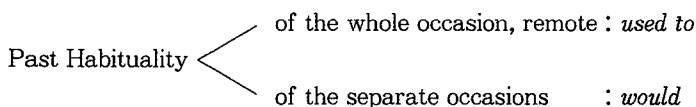>   12   morning come staggering into camp, half dead.

We can note that in line 4 *used to* does not initiate an episode in the sense that it is disjunctively used when the speaker begins to produce an extended story. However, we still find that Louise's *used to*–utterance in line 4 and her .subsequent utterance in line 7 constitute a background portion of her story that is inserted in the middle of the main line of the story. This observation suggests a link between *used to*–utterances which initiate an episode and those which serve as a parenthetical insert, because the former often evokes a background scene highlighting the point of the story. In either context, *would* cannot replace *used to*, which points to a semantic–functional difference between the two forms.

4. Semantic Accounts of *used to* and *would*

In the preceding section, I have examined how *used to* and past habitual *would* are used in discourse organization and interactional management, which are mainly explained in terms of the Frame–Elaboration Hypothesis; *used to* tends to be used for framing a past habitual episode, and *would* is used for elaboration within the frame. I have also discussed cases where *used to* is inserted in the middle of a story line as a parenthetical interjection.

This section is devoted to identifying the semantic features which can help to explain and support these discourse–pragmatic behaviors of the two forms. Considering that past habitual meaning is inherent to *used to*, while it is contextually determeined in the case of *would*[8], the two forms cannot constitute a grammatical system where one signal is directly opposed to the other. In this regard, the current analysis does not attempt to identify semantic opposition between *used to* and *would*. Instead, it mainly focuses on identifying semantic features which can help make a choice between *used to* and past habitual *would*. Differences in semantic features between the two forms are captured in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Semantic properties of *used to* and *would*

Past Habituality
- of the whole occasion, remote : *used to*
- of the separate occasions　　 : *would*

The above diagram shows that *used to* and *would* share the notion of "past habituality". However, past habituality, which is seemingly common to both forms, is an inherent meaning of *used to*, while in the case of *would*, it is a message inferred from the interaction between *would* and the discourse context. It this regard, it is evident that *used to* marks past

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[8] Besides expressing past habituality, *would* is also used to express the speaker's insistency (often overlapping with the past habitual reading), and future in the past, which are mainly determined through the help of contextual cues. The following sentences (Diver 1964: 345) illustrate this point. Each sentence appears ambiguous if stripped of the contextual cue given in each parenthesis:
  (a) He would go to the seashore (the next day). ("Future–in–the past" reading)
  (b) He would go to the seashore (whenever I went to the mountain). ("Past habitual" reading)
  (c) He would go to the seashore (but his parents wouldn't permit it). ("Insistency" read...ig)
We also note that *would* can convey hypotheticality with appropriate contextual help:
  (d) He would go to the seashore (if we told him that the ship arrived).
The context–dependency of *would* is also apparent in the domain of polite requests:
  (e) Would you open the door?

habituality on its own. As I observed in the preceding sections, *used to* clearly and disjunctively establishes the time reference for past habitual situations at the beginning of an episode. Once the frame is established by *used to*, which yields the past habitual interpretation, *would* is then used for expressing past habitual events without ambiguity. We have observed that due to this difference between *used to* and *would*, the substitution of *would* for *used to* turns out to be ungrammatical in most cases.

Given these observations, we can note that *used to* is distinguished from *would* as illustrated in Figure 2, where *used to* signals the "past habitual" events with "remoteness" which are matched to the "whole" period of time, while *would* expresses the past habitual events which are matched to the "sparate" occasions. The "remoteness" feature (Diver 1963) plays a significant role in making the distinction between *used to* and *would*. The following example strikingly shows that *used to*, not *would*, expresses the meaning of remoteness on its own:

> (13) (Cabdriver in *Working*: 270)
→ 1   Drivers are more transient now than they *used to* be.
>   2   I'd say there's well over fifty percent turnover every year.

In (13), if *used to* were replaced by *would*, it would not yield the intended meaning ; the utterance would not convey the now-defunct past habitual event necessary to provide the speaker with a basis on which he could compare the present situation with the past situation which does not hold any more.

The following is is another case where the speaker chooses *used to* to convey his commitment that the event coded with *used to* no longer obtains at present:

> (14) (GTS 4: 44)
>   1   Ken: Al likes to uh t'–to ride sailboats or–or something // ( )
>   2   Roger: Not any more hah hehhh ah hah heh
>   3   Ken: Why? What happened?
>   4   Roger: She is gone hehhh
>   5   Al: Mh hm,
→ 6   Ken: She is sold. She's gonna be sold.
>   7   Oh. Well he *used to*. // Or–he–he still does in–in the back of
>   8   (Al:)   his mind probly.

9	Roger:	Now he // likes to drive // fast Austin Healey's now.
10	Ken:	Or–
11	Ken:	Or he–he // he
12	Al:	Not any more.
13	Roger:	What happened?
14	Al :	It blew up.
15	Roger :	Didju really?

In line 1, Ken says that Al likes to ride sailboats. This utterance, however, is downgraded by Roger in line 2, who says that Al does not do that anymore. In response to Ken's subsequent query in line 3, Roger provides an account (*"She [the boat] is gone"*), which is elaborated by Al, who says that the boat is going to be sold. Through the *used to*–utterance in line 6, Ken backs off while highlighting the fact that Al liked to sail boats at least in the past. This *used to*–utterance thus serves as a marker which provides a clear sense of remoteness. What is interesting, in this respect, is that Ken tags another utterance to the *used to*–utterance in such a way that he offers an alternative through the use of "or." In the sequence, Ken brings up this utterance in order to establish a ground on which his earlier claim in line 1 can be treated as still relevant, i.e, the claim that Al likes to ride sailboats at present. Thus, the utterance preceded by "or," which refers to what Al does in the back of his mind at present clearly suggests that *used to* marks a now–defunct event by way of showing that the alternative to the *used to*–utterance is something that goes on "at present." We find again in this context that *would* is not viable as a marker of past habituality due to a lack of salient remoteness as part of its meaning.

There are also recurrent cases where a now–defunct past event expressed by *used to* is often accompanied by utterances which explicitly state that the current situation is different from the past habitual situation coded with *used to*[9]. These cases serve as additional evidence that remoteness is a part of the meaning of *used to*:

(15) (Car hiker in *Working*: 302)

→   1   I *used to* chew twenty–five sticks of gum a day.

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[9] Notic that, in examples (15) and (16), each *used to* · utterance is accompanied by an adverbial "now," which clearly marks the present, thus showing a contrast with the past.

→ 2   Now I smoke cigars.

(16) (Neighborhood merchant in *Working*: 547)
→ 1   They *used to* hang around more.
2   But now I don't allow anyubody to drink soda or eat food in the
3   store.

Due to its remoteness meaning, *used to* is often found at a place where it initiates a past habitual episode or marks a background in story–telling(or marks a parenthetical interjection). That is, the now–defunct past habitual events are presented to provide a contrastive link with the prior talk in such a way that they highlight the point of a story or support the speaker's points as was discussed in examples (4) and (5), among others.

Along with the feature of "remoteness," the opposition of "whole" and "separate" also helps account for the discourse–pragmatic behaviors of *used to* and *would* (Joos 1964). Joos, in this respect, defines the meaning of *used to* as "characterizing the real past era as a whole by specifying event proper to the era and perhaps event peculiar to it" (1964: 29). Concerning the difference between *used to* and *would*, he maintains, "*used to* matches the events to the whole era, while *would* matches them singly to their separate occasions" (1964: 138). As discussed above[10] we observe that *used to* is often employed to mark a topic statement which covers the whole period of time in the sense that it characterizes the occasion as a whole, whereas the subsequent instances of *would* are for reference to separate and specific fractions of the occasion which can be embedded in the whole period. The following example, which was introduced in (10) in the preceding section, illustrates this point:

(17) (GTS 3: 74)
1   Ken: Now–now the man two doors down, his name is
2   Mister Henry, he's Joelle's father.
3   He–without a doubt he is the most hilarious man
4   I've ever met in my whole life. He's a real good Joe.
5   I mean–one of these guys who's never–(/) Y'know,
6   he's always helping kids out, anything he c'n do,
7   like if my car breaks down he'll say

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[10] Especially, examples (1), (3), (4), (10), and (11) illustrate the point.

	8	"W'l use mine, go ahead it's ok." This kinda stuff?
	9	Oh it is–and–
→	10	We *useta* go play baseball in the street, all these kids
→	11	ya know, kids from five years on up'*d* play.
→	12	We *useta* get–My brother'*d* come out, and
→	13	all a'his twenny one year old friends,
	14	Mister Hernry'*d* come out.
→	15	When Mister Henry'*d* come out,
→	16	the whole–all the parents'*d* come out
→	17	ya know, all the fathers? We'*d* play a–playin baseball.

In the example above, the *used to*–utterance in line 10 gives the whole picture which can characterize the given occasion as whole, and within the whole picture of "playing games," the events marked with *would* serve as separate scenes, where the speaker describes who participated in the game one by one.

5. Conclusions

The preceding discussion shows that the overall discourse–pragmatic functions of the two competing forms can be coherently explained in terms of the "Frame–Elaboration Hypothesis." *Used to* concerns a global discourse –organizational dimension where an episode boundary is marked and a background telling is provided for the main story line. It orients the interlocutor to a new episode about a past habitual event disjunctively from the prior talk, as a number of the examples discussed above illustrate. The transition to a new episode is often made coherent because the shift is motivated to collaboratively provide a second story (cf. Jefferson 1978), as in example (7), or to highlight the point of the story, often in a contrastive context, as in examples (4) and (5), among others. These observations suggest that the meaning of *used to* correlates with a highly salient interactional function of causing a shifted orientation on the part of the interlocutor. Namely, upon an occurrence of *used to*, the interlocutor is led to treat the current utterance as marking the beginning of a new episode. On the other hand, *would* is specialized to elaborate specific details of a past habitual event after the event has been established by *used to*, or some other frame–setting device like a preposed adverbial clause. Without such a

context setter in the prior context, *would* cannot denote past habituality. This observation suggests that *would* as a past habitual marker is not concerned with global aspects of discourse—organization in the same way that *used to* is. We should note in this regard that it is not always the case that *used to* precedes *would* in discourse. The point is that there is a massive tendency for the frame—initiating form to be followed by its elaborating form in cases where they co—occur. Most importantly, the findings clearly suggest that there are few cases where the REVERSE pattern is observed ; I have found no instances of past habitual *would* functioning to set up a frame for the subsequent discourse where they are then elaborated by *used to*. In this sense, *used to* is treated as having the interactional function of creating a "global" disjunction, whereas their competing forms have more "local" elaborating functions.

The observations on distinctive discourse—pragmatic behaviors of *used to* and *would* are found to be related to their semantic properties. I discussed the past habituality, which *used to* marks on its own along with its sense of remoteness, as a basic meanming of *used to*. I also noted that *would*, in contrast to *used to*, conveys past habituality only when there is a contextual basis for such an inference. When both *used to* and *would* are used for expressing past habitual events, I argue that *used to* tends to present the whole picture where events are matched to the whole occasion, whereas *would* tends to present specific enents which are matched to certain fractions of the occasion. In sum, the findings in this study suggest that the functions of these forms can be fully grasped only when we consider the discourse—pragmatic—interactional features as well as their semantic features. In particular, the consideration of interactional context sheds light on how the grammar is integrated into the communicative—interactional context.

These findings have pedagogical implications in that they have the potential to serve as "concentrated descriptions"(Sharwood Smith 1988). They suggest that a data—based analysis is a valid source of information and ideas for the language teacher and the materials developer, which sheds light on questions which have long puzzled ESL students and teachersa : "what are the differences between *used to* and *would*?" Indeed, as I demonstrated in Suh (1990), the distributional patterns of these forms captured by the Frame—Elaboration Hypothesis provide a solid basis for applying the finding to materials development. In that study (Suh, 1990), I

suggested the possibility of teaching the functions of these forms on the basis of comic strips and authentic discourse data. Such an attempt would provide an effective way of dealing with the area of Tense–Aspect–Modality, probably one of the most elusive areas in ESL, by way of grounding instruction in actual language use, because, as Celce–Murcia (1980) notes, "rules of English usage should not be based on ·intuitive, theoretical hypotheses but on fact" (1980: 48). The findings can serve as a guide for ESL learners to create coherence[11] in text by providing them with a salient rhetorical pattern, and help them understand what the "rules" of grammar are with reference to communication by showing how grammar operates in discourse and especially in interactive contexts.

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[11]The use of tense–aspect–modality is a vital part of cohesion in extended discourse (see Celce–Murcia 1990, 1991), and as Givon (1984) notes, "Tense–Aspect–Modality is one of the major devices coding the connectedness/coherence of sentences in their wider discourse context"(1984: 269).

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