

# Power maneuvers or connection maneuvers? Ventriloquizing in family interaction<sup>1</sup>

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Family interaction has long been the object of study by scholars in a wide range of fields, but their ranks have been joined by linguists and linguistic anthropologists relatively recently. Especially prominent have been researchers concerned with understanding children's acquisition of language, such as Shoshana Blum-Kulka (1997) and Elinor Ochs and her colleagues and students (Ochs, Pontecorvo, and Fasulo 1996; Ochs and Taylor 1992a, 1992b, 1995; Ochs et al. 1992). These studies have examined conversational interaction recorded around the dinner table—a logical choice because family members typically gather and talk over dinner and because the bounded nature of the activity, as well as the physical orientation around a table, facilitate recording.

My own recent research interest in family interaction (Tannen 2001, 2003) has developed out of my ongoing interest in the language of conversational interaction in general and of interpersonal relationships in particular (Tannen 1984, 1986, 1990). It draws on and contributes to two theoretical frameworks I have been developing: first, the ambiguity and polysemy of power and solidarity (Tannen 1994), and second, the linguistic framing of verbal interaction. I have been developing these frameworks both as a continuation of my overriding goal of understanding what drives interactional discourse and as a corrective to the widespread tendency to focus on power in discourse. I have argued that in studying interaction, we need to understand power (or hierarchy, or control) not as distinguished from solidarity (or connection, or intimacy) but as inseparable from and intertwined with it. Because relationships among family members are intensely hierarchical and intensely connected, family interaction is an ideal site for exploring the ambiguity and polysemy of power and solidarity. In keeping with my ongoing interest in framing in discourse, I have been examining the interplay of hierarchy and connection through a type of interactional framing—a phenomenon I call ventriloquizing.

To gain access to talk that goes on in the private world of families, my colleague Shari Kendall and I designed a project in which we enlisted four families who agreed to tape-record their own interactions, at home and at work, for a week. Drawing on a subset of the tape recordings of home interaction, I have been

examining conversational interchanges in which one family member (usually the mother) communicates to a second (either the father or a child) by speaking through, for, or to a third (typically a small child or a pet). The canonical form of what I call ventriloquizing is an interchange in which, for example, a mother holding an infant might say to her husband in a high-pitched, baby-talk register, “Daddy, my diaper is dirty!” She is speaking *as* the child to encourage the father to change the baby’s diaper. I also examine related strategies by which, for example, a mother may communicate to her husband by speaking *through* the child—still using a high-pitched baby-talk register but framing the utterance as addressed *to* rather than *as* the child. Thus, the hypothetical mother could have reminded her husband to change the baby’s diaper by saying to the infant, “You have a dirty diaper, don’t you? Yes, you do!”

I begin this chapter by briefly recapping my theoretical framework of power and solidarity. Readers who have encountered this discussion elsewhere are encouraged to skip to the succeeding section, in which I explore the intertwined nature of power and solidarity in the context of the crucial family role of mother. I then turn to the conversational strategy, ventriloquizing. After identifying this strategy as a type of constructed dialogue that creatively manipulates the framing of utterances, I examine four examples that emerged in the tape recordings of interaction made by two of the four families in our project. In each case, I demonstrate that the conversational strategies are simultaneously power maneuvers and connection maneuvers. The first example I discuss is an instance of canonical ventriloquizing, the second and third are ventriloquizing-like interactions, and the fourth is a complex blending of both. My analysis and discussion add, I hope, to our understanding of the discourse analysis of interaction in general as well as the specific understanding of family interaction.

### **The Ambiguity and Polysemy of Power and Solidarity**

Researchers routinely interpret interaction, in the family and elsewhere, as a struggle for power. For example, in a book titled *Power in Family Discourse*, Watts (1991: 145) defines power as “the ability of an individual to achieve her/his desired goals.” Similarly, in a book about family conversation Varenne (1992: 76) explains, “The power we are interested in here is the power of the catalyst who, with a minimal amount of its own energy, gets other entities to spend large amounts of their own.”<sup>2</sup> Millar, Rogers, and Bavelas (1984) write of “control maneuvers” and note that in family therapy, “Conflict takes place within the power dimension of relationships.” My claim is that family interaction (including conflict) also takes place within the intimacy dimension, and we also can speak of—indeed, need to speak of—“connection maneuvers.”

Elsewhere (Tannen 1994) I explore and argue for what I call the ambiguity and polysemy of power and solidarity—or, in different terms, of status or hierarchy and of connection or intimacy. Here I briefly recap this analysis.

In conventional wisdom, as well as in research tracing back to Brown and Gilman’s (1960) classic study of power and solidarity, Americans have had a tendency to conceptualize the relationship between hierarchy (or power) and connection (or solidarity) as unidimensional and mutually exclusive (see Figure 3.1).

Family relationships are at the heart of this conception. For example, Americans frequently use the terms “sisters” and “brothers” to indicate “close and equal.” If a woman says of her friend, “We are like sisters,” the implication is, “We are as close as siblings, and there are no status games, no one-upping between us.” In contrast, hierarchical relationships are assumed to preclude closeness. Thus, in military and workplace contexts, most Americans regard as self-evident that friendships across levels of rank are problematic and discouraged if not explicitly prohibited.

I suggest that in reality the relationship between power (or hierarchy) and solidarity (or connection) is not a single dimension but a multidimensional grid (see Figure 3.2).

This grid represents the dimensions of hierarchy and connection as two intersecting axes. One axis (which I represent as the vertical one) stretches between hierarchy and equality; the other (which I represent as the horizontal axis) stretches between closeness and distance. The same linguistic strategy can operate on either axis to create power, connection, or both. For example, in conversation, if one person begins speaking while another is speaking, this overlap can be an interruption (an attempt to display or create power or status over the other speaker) or a cooperative expression of enthusiastic listenership (an attempt to display or create solidarity or connection). It also can be both, as when speakers share a conversational style by which an aggressive struggle for the floor is part of friendly competition in a political argument among friends.

In the context of family interaction, imagine an interchange in which one person announces, “I’m going to take a walk,” and a second replies, “Wait, I’ll go with you. I just have to make a phone call first.” This response could be intended (or experienced) as a power maneuver: The second person is limiting the freedom of the first to take a walk at will. But it could also be intended (or experienced) as a connection maneuver—a bid to do something together, to express and reinforce the closeness of the relationship. In fact, it is an inextricable combination of both. Living with someone in a close relationship requires accommodations that limit freedom. Thus, solidarity entails power.

power	solidarity
asymmetry	symmetry
hierarchy	equality
distance	closeness

Figure 3.1. Unidimensional model

### Mother: A Paradigm Case of the Ambiguity and Polysemy of Power and Connection

If the family is a key locus for understanding the complex and inextricable relationship between power (negotiations along the hierarchy-equality axis) and connection (negotiations along the closeness-distance axis), nowhere does this relationship become clearer than in the role of a key family member, mother. It surfaces both in the language spoken to mothers and in the language spoken by mothers. For example, Hildred Geertz (1989 [1961]: 20), writing about *The Javanese Family*, notes that in Javanese there are “two major levels of language, respect and familiarity.” (I would point out that, in light of the grid presented in Figure 3.2, these are two different dimensions: Respect is situated on the hierarchy-equality axis, whereas familiarity is a function of the closeness-distance axis.) Geertz observes that children use the familiar register when they speak with their parents and siblings until about age ten or twelve; they gradually shift to the respect register in adulthood. Geertz adds, however, “Most people continue to speak to the mother in the same way as they did as children; a few shift to respect in adulthood” (Geertz 1989 [1961]: 22). This observation leaves open the question of whether mothers are addressed in the familiar rather than the respect register because they receive less respect than fathers or because their children feel closer to them. I suspect it is both at once, and trying to pick them apart would be futile.

Although the lexical distinction between respect and familiar registers is not found in the English language, there are phenomena in English that parallel those

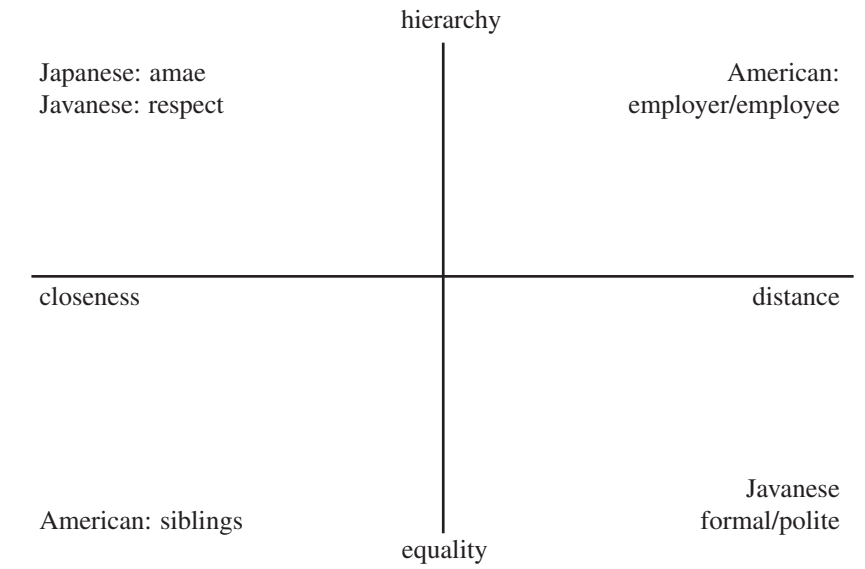


Figure 3.2. Multidimensional model

described by Geertz. Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg (1984) looked at the forms of "control acts" in family discourse to gauge power in that context. They found that "effective power and esteem were related to age" (134). Again, however, "the mothers in our sample were an important exception to the pattern. . . ." (135). The authors note that mothers in their caregiving role "received nondeferent orders, suggesting that they expected compliance and believed their desires to be justification enough." As with the Javanese example, one could ask whether children use more bald imperatives when they speak to their mothers because they have less respect for them or because they feel closer to them, or both. In other words, children's use of nondeferent orders to their mothers, like Javanese children's use of the familiar register with their mothers, is both ambiguous and polysemous with regard to power and solidarity.

### **Power Lines—or Connection Lines—in Telling Your Day**

Blum-Kulka (1997) and Ochs and Taylor (1992a, 1992b, 1995) identify a ritual that typifies dinner conversation in many American families—a ritual that Blum-Kulka dubs "Telling Your Day." When the family includes a mother and father (as the families recorded in these studies did), mothers typically encourage children to tell their fathers about events experienced during the day.

Ochs and Taylor (1992b: 310) give the examples of a mother who urges, "Tell Dad what you thought about gymnastics and what you did," and another who prompts, "Chuck, did you tell Daddy what happened at karate when you came in your new uniform? What did Daisy do for you?" The authors note that in a majority of the instances recorded in their study, fathers responded to the resultant stories by passing judgment, assessing the rightness of their children's actions and feelings, and thereby setting up a constellation the researchers call "father knows best." The family power structure, Ochs and Taylor observe, is established in these storytelling dynamics. Just as Mother typically prompted a child to tell Daddy what happened, older siblings were much more likely to urge younger ones to tell about something that happened than the other way around. Children were most often "problematizees"—the ones whose behavior was judged by others. Rarely were they "problematizers"—the ones who questioned others' behavior as problematic. This pattern puts children firmly at the bottom of the hierarchy. Fathers were the most frequent problematizers and rarely were problematizees. In keeping with the findings of Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, and Rosenberg (1984), mothers found themselves in the position of problematizees (the ones whose behavior was held up for judgment) as often as they were problematizers (the ones who were judging others).

In this revealing study, Ochs and Taylor identify a crucial dynamic in middle-class American families by which the family exhibits a power structure with the father at the top. They further show that mothers play a crucial role in setting up this dynamic: "Father as problematizer," they argue, is "facilitated. . . by the

active role of mothers who sometimes (perhaps inadvertently) set fathers up as potential problematizers—by introducing the stories and reports of children and mothers in the first place and orienting them towards fathers as primary recipients” (329). For me the word “inadvertently” is crucial. I believe that the father-knows-best dynamic results from gender differences in assumptions about the place of talk in a relationship and that it reflects the inextricable relationship between power and connection. In my view the mother who asks her children what they did that day is trying to create closeness and involvement by exchanging details of daily life—a verbal ritual frequently observed to characterize women’s friendships, as I explain elsewhere (Tannen 1990). It is a connection maneuver. And when the mother encourages her children to tell their day to their father, she is trying to involve the father with the children in much the way she herself created involvement. However, the father who does not ask, “How was your day?” is not evincing lack of interest in being close to his children. Rather, he does not assume that closeness is created by the verbal ritual of telling the details of one’s day.<sup>4</sup> So fathers, looking elsewhere for reasons their wives are urging their children to report their activities, may well conclude that they are being asked to evaluate and judge the children’s behavior. Thus, it is not the mothers’ initiation of the “Telling Your Day” routine in itself that sets fathers up as family judge. Instead, the “father knows best” dynamic is created by the interaction of divergent gender-related patterns.

### **Ventriloquizing: Reframing through Constructed Dialogue**

The ambiguity and polysemy of power and solidarity provides the theoretical background against which I have been examining ventriloquizing in the tape recordings of family interaction. A few words are in order about the phenomenon I am calling ventriloquizing. Schiffrin (1993) identifies a discourse strategy she calls “speaking for another.” For example, in a conversation among a married couple and their neighbor who is visiting in their home, the wife supports the neighbor’s refusal to accept the husband’s offer of candy by saying, “She’s on a diet.” The wife thus speaks for the neighbor, addressing her husband on the neighbor’s behalf. My notion of ventriloquizing is a related phenomenon by which a person speaks not only *for* another but *as* another. This would have been the case if the wife had said “I’m on a diet,” where “I” represented not herself but the neighbor. One could imagine the wife doing so in a teasing or genuinely mocking way, perhaps imitating her neighbor’s habitual way of declining offers of sweets.

I am interested in ventriloquizing as an instance of two phenomena I have been examining for many years: constructed dialogue and framing. Constructed dialogue is my term for animating speech in another’s voice (Tannen 1989). Ventriloquizing is a special case of constructed dialogue in that a ventriloquizing speaker animates another’s voice *in the presence of that other*. It also is a kind of frameshifting in that a speaker “frames” an utterance as coming from another.

To illustrate what I mean by ventriloquizing and to demonstrate the significance of this strategy in family interaction, I move now to examples taken from the tapes and transcripts of two of the four families who recorded their talk for a week. In discussing these examples, I explore ventriloquizing as a framing device that simultaneously serves the needs for power and solidarity—that is, for connection and for control.

### Ventriloquizing and Related Strategies in Family Interaction

*Example (1)—Ventriloquizing the dogs.* The first example, identified by research team member Cynthia Gordon, comes from a family composed of a mother, Clara; a father, Neil; a child of nearly four, Jared; and two small dogs, pugs named Rover and Rickie. (All names, in this and other examples, are pseudonyms.) At the time of this exchange, Clara has been home with Jared and is frustrated because he has refused to pick up his toys—a point of frequent contention in this family. She indirectly chastises Jared for his failure by animating the dogs, using the first-person plural in a high-pitched, baby-talk register. (Instances of ventriloquizing on which my analysis focuses are highlighted in boldface.)

- (1) Clara: [to dog] What (do) you have.  
 [high pitched] Come again?  
 Rover and Rickie! You guys, say,  
 [extra high pitch] **“We’re naughty,  
 but we’re not as naughty as Jared,  
 he’s naughtiest.  
 We—we just know it!”**  
 Okay, careful there Jared.

By using the high-pitched, baby-talk register and speaking in the first-person plural (“we”), Clara frames her utterance as the dogs’ discourse. In other words, she speaks as the dogs. In animating the dogs, she does not specify an addressee, but Jared clearly is the intended recipient of the communication. When she addresses Jared directly (“Okay, careful there Jared”), she speaks at a far less marked pitch level—more as one would address an adult rather than a child.

In one sense, Clara’s conversational move is a control maneuver: She is chastising her son and trying to get him to pick up his toys. Yet by ventriloquizing the dogs, she turns her chastisement into a connection maneuver as well. Ventriloquizing introduces a note of humor because the dogs obviously can neither speak nor understand the words she is putting in their mouths. Furthermore, ventriloquizing is a form of teasing, an affectionate speech move. Moreover, the indirectness, teasing, and humor deflect the confrontation and modulate the criticism—and that in itself is a connection maneuver.

*Examples (2) and (3)—Ventriloquizing-like constructed dialogue.* Examples (2) and (3), identified by research team member Alexandra Johnston, are not canonical cases of ventriloquizing, but illustrate a related strategy insofar as they involve a mother speaking to her husband through her daughter. These examples come from a family in which we call the mother Kathy, the father Sam, and their two-year-old daughter Sophie.

The context for the interchange in example (2) is a disagreement between the parents that was not clear from the audiotapes. What is clear is that Sam has been displeased with Kathy and that he has just entered the room drinking a Coke. In this family, as Johnston observed, there is an ongoing conflict between Kathy and Sam concerning Coca-Cola: Sam likes to drink it, but Kathy disapproves because she regards it as unhealthful and because she believes that the father's Coke-drinking habit strains the family's budget. (If he buys several Cokes a day from the machine at his workplace, the monthly cost becomes significant.) When Sam appears, Coke in hand, Kathy addresses her response not to Sam but to their daughter:

(2) Did Daddy get a Coke 'cause Mommy's being mean?

Like the highlighted lines in example (1), this line is spoken in a high-pitched, baby-talk register. Thus, the paralinguistic and prosodic features of the utterance frame it as ventriloquizing-like. Furthermore, the conversational move is much like ventriloquizing in that Kathy is communicating to a second party, Sam, through a third party, Sophie, even though she is speaking *to* Sophie, not *as* her.

The utterance in example (2) is a power maneuver insofar as Kathy is positioning herself as the family member in charge of nutrition—a position Johnston (2001) observed her to take habitually—and passing judgment on Sam's choice of drink. But it is also a connection maneuver, as Kathy admits in a subordinate clause that she has been “mean” to Sam. The lexical choice “mean” belongs to the baby-talk register as much as the high pitch and sing-song prosody. By speaking as a child, Kathy criticizes Sam but also indirectly apologizes for a prior offense, introducing a note of irony as well by characterizing herself, an adult, as “mean”—a characteristic more often associated with children. By addressing herself to Sophie, indirectly characterizing herself as a child, and indirectly apologizing, Kathy frames her criticism in a less confrontational way and introduces a note of nonseriousness that mitigates the criticism and the confrontation. Thus, Kathy's criticism is both a power maneuver and a connection maneuver.

Indeed, an apology is by nature simultaneously a power maneuver and a connection maneuver, in that it operates on both the hierarchy/equality dimension and the closeness/distance dimension. By seeking forgiveness for and admitting fault in a prior move, an apology pursues reconciliation and rapprochement. In this sense, it operates on the connection dimension. But admitting fault and seek-

ing forgiveness also position the apologizer as one-down. In this sense, it operates on the hierarchy dimension, negotiating power relations.

Example (3) comes from the same family. Here again, the mother expresses criticism of her husband by addressing their preverbal child. Another ongoing point of conflict between this couple is the father's tendency to wake up late. His job allows him flexible work hours, so he can arrive when he wishes. But if he arrives at work late, he leaves their daughter at her daycare center late (about which the daycare center staff complain), and he returns home in the evening late as well. On this morning, however, the father is not heading for work; he is about to go on a ski trip with a group of friends. In his excitement (or perhaps his anxiety) about the impending trip, he wakes up inordinately early and awakens his wife and daughter earlier than they normally arise.

Kathy uses this unusual circumstance as an occasion to register not only her annoyance at being awakened earlier than necessary but also her dissatisfaction with Sam's habitual sleep schedule. She registers her complaint to Sam by addressing herself to Sophie in baby-talk register:

(3) Tell Daddy to wake up this early on other days.

This utterance is a power maneuver insofar as Kathy is positioning herself as a critic and judge of her husband's behavior—hence one-up on the hierarchy dimension. But on that same dimension, speaking in a baby-talk register positions Kathy as one-down. Yet it operates on the connection dimension as well: Because a parent obligatorily feels connected to a child, by positioning herself as a child through the way she speaks Kathy obligates Sam to feel connected to her instead of angry at her. It is a connection maneuver in another way, too: By referencing this morning as one of many, Kathy reinforces the family's alignment as a single unit. Furthermore, like all indirect criticism, it deflects the confrontation.<sup>5</sup> And as in the previous examples, confrontation is deflected because the baby-talk register introduces a note of nonseriousness. Just as it is amusing to pretend dogs are speaking, it is amusing to tell a preverbal two-year-old to tell her father a line of dialogue she is not yet able to produce. (This child doesn't even say "Daddy"; instead, she calls her father "Da da.") In all these ways, Kathy's ventriloquizing negotiates hierarchy and connection in her family.

*Examples (4) and (5)—Ventriloquizing and related strategies as complex framing.* Examples (4) and (5) also were identified by Alexandra Johnston. Example (4) illustrates how Kathy uses a combination of ventriloquizing-like utterances and canonical ventriloquizing to join an interaction between Sam and Sophie and thereby blend power and connection in complex and intriguing ways. Prior to this interaction, Kathy had been home with Sophie when she heard the arrival of Sam's car and began to prepare Sophie to welcome her father home ("Daddy's home"). Sam, however, was tired and hungry and sat down to eat

something. When Sophie tried to climb into his lap, he snapped at her. Sophie began to cry, and she continued to cry despite Sam's attempts to soften his voice and mollify her ("Wanna come up?").

Example (4) is Kathy's response to this interchange between Sam and Sophie. Kathy explains to Sam why Sophie is crying, indirectly chastising him for causing this reaction. At the same time, she explains Sophie's own feelings to her and suggests how she might, when she learns to talk, use words rather than tears to express those feelings and get her way:

- (4) Kathy: She got her feelings hurt.  
 . . .  
 I think she just wanted  
 some Daddy's attention.  
 You were missing Daddy today, weren't you?  
 You were missing Daddy, weren't you?  
 Can you say,  
**"I was just missing you Daddy,  
 that was all?"**  
 Sophie: [*cries*] Nnno.  
 Kathy: And I don't really feel too good.  
 Sophie: [*cries*] No.  
 Kathy: No, she doesn't feel too good either.

Kathy's repeated explanations of why Sophie is crying move progressively closer to Sophie's point of view. In the first line ("She got her feelings hurt"), Kathy speaks about Sophie to Sam; in this utterance, mother and daughter are linguistically distinct. Kathy next addresses Sophie directly ("You were missing Daddy, weren't you?"), bringing herself into alignment with the child. She then models for Sophie what the child might say to articulate her own feelings ("Can you say, 'I was just missing you, Daddy, that was all?'"). Here Kathy animates Sophie's feelings but linguistically marks the fact that she is doing so by beginning, "Can you say?" This introducer separates her point of view from her child's.

Kathy's next line ("And I don't really feel too good") continues to merge Kathy with Sophie linguistically; Kathy is speaking but says "I"—meaning Sophie. This move may be interpreted either as still modified by "Can you say?" or as a new, canonical ventriloquized utterance, in which Kathy is not just suggesting to Sophie what she might say but is actually speaking as Sophie. In any case, Kathy is expressing Sophie's point of view by using the first-person pronoun. Finally, Kathy mitigates her alignment with Sophie and reorients to Sam by addressing him and referring to Sophie rather than animating her ("No, she doesn't feel too good either"). Thus, Kathy moves progressively closer to Sophie,

discursively, by gradually shifting from referring to Sophie in the third person to ventriloquizing her—that is, merging her persona with Sophie’s by animating Sophie’s voice. Moreover, by communicating to both Sophie and Sam in the same utterances, Kathy is connecting the three of them as a family.

Kathy’s explanation of why Sophie is crying (“She got her feelings hurt”) is an indirect criticism of Sam because it entails the assumption that a father should not hurt his daughter’s feelings. After a short spate of intervening talk, Kathy makes this injunction more explicit. (Note that the utterances transcribed in example (5) as “ROW ROW” are not the word “row” as in the children’s song “Row, row, row your boat” but a verbalization meant to reproduce the sound of a dog growling, pronounced to rhyme with “how” and “growl.”)

- (5) Kathy: Why are you so edgy?  
 Sam: 'Cause I haven't eaten yet.  
 Kathy: Why didn't you get a snack  
 on the way home or something?  
 Save your family a little stress.  
 Sophie: Mm  
 Kathy: **Yeah give us a break, Daddy.  
 We just miss you.  
 We try to get your attention  
 and then you come home  
 and you go ROW ROW ROW ROW.**  
 Sophie: Row row!

Although the “we” in “We just miss you” could indicate that Kathy and Sophie both miss Sam, the continuation (“We try to get your attention. . .”) makes clear that Kathy is speaking for (and as) Sophie. Then, still speaking as Sophie, she mimics how Sam comes across from Sophie’s point of view: “You go ROW ROW ROW ROW.” In this utterance, Kathy is animating Sophie animating Sam. So the linguistic strategy by which Kathy tells Sam that he should alter his behavior (a control maneuver) also linguistically merges the three of them (a connection maneuver).

In sum, by speaking as, to, and through Sophie, Kathy creates involvement between Sophie and her father, explains Sophie’s feelings both to Sam and to Sophie herself, explains to Sam why he’s been unfair to Sophie, and aligns herself with her daughter as a team. (She could have aligned with Sam by telling their daughter to let Daddy eat, as another mother in our study did in the same situation.) Finally, by speaking for Sophie, who cannot yet speak, Kathy enters into the alignment between Sam and Sophie and thus frames the three of them as a single unit—a family.

## Conclusion

I have shown that ventriloquizing and related ventriloquizing-like strategies allow a speaker to address a second party by speaking as, to, or through a third. In this type of constructed dialogue, speakers frame and reframe their utterances as they balance the needs for connection and for control. I have suggested that the concept of “connection maneuver” is needed to compliment the more commonly observed notion of “power maneuver” by showing how ventriloquizing simultaneously serves both power and connection. Thus, the analysis advances our understanding of the interrelationship between the dynamics of power and solidarity, or control and connection. It also expands and deepens our understanding of how verbal strategies create and manipulate framing in the discourse of conversational interaction in general and of family interaction in particular.

## NOTES

1. The project I report on here was supported by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to me and Shari Kendall. The families who participated are middle-class, dual-career couples with children. I am grateful to the foundation and our project officer, Kathleen Christensen, for their support; to my co-principal investigator, Shari Kendall; and to the generous families who participated in the project. I also thank Alexandra Johnston and Cynthia Gordon, the research team members who worked with the families whose talk I have cited here and transcribed and identified the examples that I cite. The power-connection grid was first presented in Tannen (1994) and is reproduced here with permission from Oxford University Press. The theoretical background on power and solidarity as it applies to mothers is based on selections previously included in Tannen (2003). The analysis of family interaction that I present here is new.
2. Blum-Kulka's *Dinner Talk* (1997) compares American, Israeli, and American-Israeli families. She discusses parents' dual and sometimes conflicting needs to socialize their children in the sense of teaching them what they need to know and also to socialize with them in the sense of enjoying their company. This perspective indirectly addresses the interrelationship of power and connection in the family.
3. I have struggled, through many papers, with the best way to acknowledge Brown and Gilman's original conception of power solidarity without misrepresenting it, especially given my objections (Tannen 1998, 2002) to the academic convention of obligatorily posing one's work in opposition to work that came before. On one hand, Brown and Gilman acknowledge that relationships can be both equal and solidary or unequal and solidary. Yet they also claim that power governs asymmetrical relationships in which one is subordinate to another, whereas solidarity governs symmetrical relationships characterized by social equality and similarity.
4. Moreover, unlike many mothers, a father may not regard closeness as the most important barometer of his relationship with his children. See Henwood (1993) for evidence that women tend to judge the mother-daughter relationship by how close it is.
5. It should be noted that many people are more irritated by indirect criticism than by direct criticism, precisely because it seems intended to do the work of criticism without taking responsibility for it. A metaphor I have used elsewhere (Tannen 1986) is that such indirect criticism can be perceived metaphorically as being shot by a gun with a silencer: The injury is felt but the source is camouflaged.

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