

## **“I’m Mommy and you’re Natalie”: Role-reversal and embedded frames in mother-child discourse**

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates framing in discourse while considering spontaneous role-play between a young child (age 2 years 11 months) and her mother, wherein the participants reverse roles from real life and reenact shared prior experiences. Data consist of two tape-recorded naturally occurring pretend-play episodes and the real-life interactions on which they are based, all of which took place at home. Analysis of the role-play episodes illustrates how framing occurs from moment to moment in interaction in this context, showing that the participants use both play and non-play utterances collaboratively to evoke, maintain, and embed multiple play frames with increasingly specific, and at times blended, metamessages. By linking the role-play interactions back to their real-life counterparts, I explore the relationship between framing and “prior text.” This analysis adds to our understanding of framing by showing how frames are layered in discourse. Additionally, it links frames theory to the notion of intertextuality by illustrating how prior text can be used as a resource for framing. (Discourse analysis, framing, intertextuality, role-play, mother-child discourse)\*

### INTRODUCTION

Garvey (1976:570) defines role-play as “a state of engagement in which the successive, non-literal behaviors of one partner are contingent on the non-literal behaviors of the other partner.” Thus play, including role-play, depends crucially on frames, or “definitions of a situation” that are “built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (Goffman 1974:10–11). Behaviors and utterances in play must be framed and mutually understood as “non-literal.” Children’s role-play, a type of play in which “the child simulates the identity or characteristics of another person” (Fein 1981:1101), provides a “state of engagement” wherein framing is crucial to the joint understanding of utterances as “pretend.” Nonetheless, framing has not been thoroughly explored in this context, nor

has this context been used as a site to explore how framing works from moment to moment in interaction.

In this article, I analyze tape-recorded, naturally occurring talk at home between a mother and her nearly three-year-old daughter. I explore how the participants build and maintain play frames in this context, with the larger purpose of examining how framing occurs in interaction. Janet, the mother in this study, carried a digital tape recorder with her for seven days, taping nearly nonstop during the day, as part of her participation in a larger project.<sup>1</sup> While listening to the tapes, I was amazed to hear the mother and daughter re-create earlier real-life interactions in role-play. The unique design of the larger study had captured both naturally occurring role-play episodes and the original interactions on which the play was based. The episodes for this analysis, thus, were drawn from the context of a full week of interaction: They are not “staged” interactions occurring in a laboratory-type setting, nor are they isolated preschool classroom interactions. This makes these data unusual, and it allows for analysis beyond considering role-play as an isolated event or as a realization of a child’s broader social understanding. Instead, the role-plays analyzed here are dramatic narrative reenactments of prior shared experience in the family setting. In this way, real-life interactions provide “prior text” (Becker 1995) for the play episodes.

In contrast to past studies that consider play as occurring in a single frame wherein the metamessage is “this is play,” here I reconceptualize role-play as an activity that is characterized by multiple embedded play frames. I show that the participants co-construct and layer these frames through (i) utterances indicating play direction in the “literal” or “real life” frame, and (ii) metamessages sent through play utterances indicating the footings of the participants. Utterances situated in the literal frame that indicate play direction invoke the pretend frames by (i) assigning roles and (ii) announcing parts of the play script. “In-role utterances” – that is, utterances spoken within one of the pretend frames – send metamessages that maintain these frames. These (i) use in-character terms of address, (ii) signal a course of action for the characters, (iii) repeat shared prior text, and (iv) enact the recognizable speech styles of a nurturing mother, a disciplinary mother, a child in need of nurturance, or a child in need of discipline.

These strategies work together to build and embed the multiple play frames that characterize the mother-daughter role-play. In analyzing them, I offer a refined notion of the metamessage “this is play” (Bateson 1972), highlighting the complex nature of this message and the frames associated with it. Furthermore, I illustrate how a theory of frames embedding in a speech activity such as role-play might be conceptualized, how framing plays out in interaction, and how framing relates to intertextuality or “prior text.”

I first review the theoretical foundations of frames theory and the notion of “prior text” and review past work on children’s role-play that has utilized these concepts. Second, I introduce the data on which this analysis is based. Third, I

analyze the utterances appearing in the literal or pretend frames mentioned previously, arguing that they draw on prior text and work together to establish and layer different levels of play frames. Finally, I summarize the linguistic strategies the participants use to build their play, and discuss the implications of these data for frames theory.

#### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

##### *Framing and prior text*

Framing has been crucial to linguistic anthropology and discourse analysis since Bateson introduced the concept. "Play" was central to his understanding of framing. Bateson 1972 formulated his concepts of FRAMES and METAMESSAGES while observing monkeys at play at the zoo. He remarked that a bite during play would not mean what a bite would mean outside of play. He realized that the monkeys' behavior established a play frame by somehow sending the metamessage "this is play." He thus showed that "no message can be interpreted except by reference to a superordinate message about how the communication is intended" (Tannen 1984:23).

Goffman 1974 uses Bateson's basic notion of frame in his exploration of how people make sense of everyday activity. For Goffman, a frame is a definition of a social situation. He argues that the identification of frames is necessary in order to understand everyday activities. Goffman also suggests that "there is to be found a stream of signs which is itself excluded from the content of the activity but which serves as a means of regulating it, bounding, articulating, and qualifying its various components and phases" (210). This "stream of signs" corresponds to Bateson's notion of metamessage.

Metamessages are sent through what Gumperz 1982, 1992 calls CONTEXTUALIZATION CUES. In Gumperz's theory of conversational inference, contextualization cues are the linguistic and paralinguistic means by which people signal what it is they think they are doing, or, in my terms, what frame they are operating in. Gumperz emphasizes that "the signaling of speech activities is not a matter of unilateral action but rather of speaker-listener coordination involving rhythmic interchange of both verbal and nonverbal signs," such as prosody and gesture (1982:167).

Contextualization cues indicate both frames and the participants' FOOTINGS within these frames. Goffman (1981:128) defines footings as "the alignments we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance." "Footings" thus refers to "the way in which framing is accomplished in verbal interaction" (Hoyle 1993:115). Goffman proposes that, in most interactions, participants do not simply change footings but actually embed one footing within another, or "lamine" experience. He suggests that "within one alignment, another can be fully enclosed. In truth, in

talk it seems routine that, while firmly standing on two feet, we jump up and down on another" (1981:155).

Tannen & Wallat 1993 differentiate between FRAME and SCHEMA, and explore how these affect each other in interaction. They define "frame" or "interactive frame" as "a definition of what is going on in interaction" (59). "Schemas" are "participants' expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world" (60). They note that schemas fill in "unstated information which is known from prior experience in the world" (60). Tannen & Wallat show that, in a pediatric examination involving a child, her mother, and a pediatrician, the mother's and pediatrician's differing "knowledge schemas" lead the pediatrician constantly to switch between a number of interactive frames, such as the examination frame involving the child and the consultation frame with the mother.

Tannen & Wallat's discussion of knowledge reminds us of Becker's argument that successful communication requires "successfully evoking prior texts (or scripts)" (1995:302). For Becker, all interactions are composed of prior text: In speaking, we constantly "reshape" old bits of language into new contexts (1995:185). This is reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1986) notion of "speech genres," which captures the idea that when we select words, we usually take them from other utterances. Both "prior text" and "speech genres" suggest that meaning-making in any given interaction necessarily relies on access to previous texts, whether to a prior interaction or to general cultural knowledge gained from a multitude of interactions. Thus, all interaction is intertextual. In Tannen's words, "Both the meanings of individual words . . . and the combinations into which we put them are given to us by previous speakers, traces of whose voices and contexts cling inevitably to them" (1989:100). Prior text, with its central role in meaning-making, can be used as a resource for creating frames in interaction.

*Metacommunication, frames, and the role of prior text in role-play*

Research on children's role-play has only minimally drawn upon frames theory. Prior text similarly has been only minimally discussed in the role-play literature. I now review how past work on children's play has addressed framing and prior text, and discuss what research on children's play has revealed about framing in discourse. Most past research on children's role-play comes from developmental psychology, where metacommunication has primarily been considered as a literal-frame phenomenon (Sawyer 1997). That is, only utterances in a narrator's or director's voice, such as "Let's pretend I'm the mommy," have been identified as metacommunicative or doing work to create a play frame. Recently, however, researchers have considered metacommunication as occurring in both literal and pretend frames of interaction.

Sawyer suggests that excluding pretend frame utterances as metacommunicative excludes "the implicit metacommunication that Bateson argued was so important" (1997:35). Sawyer notes, "In preschool play, children often enact a play role using a distinctive speech style. These play voices have an implicit meta-

pragmatic<sup>2</sup> function” (43). For example, when a boy is enacting a toy dinosaur, he uses a deep, gruff voice. This sends the metmessage or the metapragmatic message that he is speaking as the dinosaur and not as himself. Sawyer notes that, in the preschool classroom he observed, most metapragmatic proposals were in in-character speech; the children were simultaneously directors of the play and actors. He remarks, “The dialogic combination of the actor’s voice with the director’s voice accounts for much of the improvisational nature of play, because it allows children to negotiate the play drama while at the same time enacting it” (34).

Cook-Gumperz 1992 argues that in the 3-and-a-half-year-old girls’ “mummies and babies” play she considers, role-enactment is essential to the framing of the event. The girls use prosodic and intonational cues in conjunction with certain lexical characteristics to mark whether they are speaking “in character” or as “themselves.” She remarks, “Their performance must contain special markers to signal shifts in what Goffman calls ‘footing,’ that is contextual changes throughout the interaction” (179). The girls’ different “voices” thus indicate whether their utterances belong to the play frame or outside the play frame, where their utterances are off the record. In addition, their role-enacting voices serve to maintain the play frame.

Hoyle 1993 analyzes spontaneous and elicited sportscasting play of three eight- and nine-year-old boys. The boys play a competitive game such as basketball while simultaneously announcing what is going on. They adopt a footing in which the speaker is a sportscaster, and the addressee a television or radio audience. For example, they refer to each other and themselves in third person, they speak to an imaginary audience, and they refer to each other using the names of professional sports stars such as “Larry Bird.” This role-enactment establishes the boys’ imaginary footings toward each other, themselves, and their “audience.”

Hoyle – unlike Cook-Gumperz 1992 and Sawyer 1997, who conceive of play as being composed of a single play frame – suggests that, by situating a literal frame within the play frame or by embedding a literal footing within an imaginary footing, children can laminate experience in play. This literal-in-imaginary embedding is evidenced in her data by breaks in the play frame, or when the boys cease to speak as sportscasters and talk as themselves and then reassume play. In this way, “embedding” refers to a sequential embedding. The boys also embed imaginary frames within other imaginary frames in data from elicited sportscasting play. For example, within the imaginary frame of “sportscaster play,” the boys open a “player interview” frame. Here the boy who was the sportscaster becomes an interviewer, and the boy who was the player becomes the interviewee, thus embedding one pretend frame within another. This finding illustrates, in analysis of actual interaction, Goffman’s point that frames can be laminated or layered. Further, Hoyle’s analysis suggests that frames are layered in play through speech occurring within the play frame.

The major way the literature on children’s role-play makes reference to intertextuality is by suggesting that children enact roles and plots that reflect their

“understanding of the social world” (Snow et al. 1986:462). Thus, the “scripts” or “narrative plots” of play are assumed to be motivated by children’s prior experiences in general, rather than by specific interactions. Cook-Gumperz 1992 and Corsaro 1983, for example, maintain that role-enactment in play reflects children’s understanding of social roles. Corsaro suggests that preschool children may try to incorporate individual experience into play scripts, but that in the preschool setting this type of script expansion is unsuccessful because of “the children’s failure to contextualize their insertions” (1983:13).

In sum, a few researchers of role-play have recognized in-role speech as having a metacommunicative function. Sawyer 1997, Cook-Gumperz 1992, and Hoyle 1993 all suggest that role-enactment plays an integral role in play maintenance and direction, while Cook-Gumperz and Hoyle draw on the concepts of footing, framing, and metacommunication for analysis of transcripts. But scripts and role-enactment are generally assumed to be cultural rather than individual; play episodes are not linked to specific prior interactions or utterances. Thus, the role of both framing and specific prior texts in the creation of role-play interactions remains largely unexplored.

#### THE STUDY

I analyze here two episodes of pretend play between a 33-year-old middle-class White mother, Janet, and her daughter, Natalie, aged 2 years 11 months. These are drawn from a larger study in which the mother carried a digital tape recorder with her for a week, recording all of her interactions. Although child language was not the focus of this study, many adult–child interactions were captured on tape. In the two pretend play episodes, both happening around lunchtime at home, Natalie initiates play episodes wherein Janet pretends to be Natalie and Natalie enacts the role of “Mommy.” These two role-reversal episodes have different plots and different “feels.” One is characterized by disciplinary action. In this pretend play episode, the “child” (played by mother) makes noise, while the “mother” (played by child) is on the telephone and is subsequently reprimanded. The other is nurturing in nature: The “mother” comforts the “daughter,” who is upset because her friend has moved away.<sup>3</sup>

The design of the larger study allowed me to mine previous interactions for the source of the language that the participants use in play, and thereby to identify correspondences between the child’s enactment of the mother role and her mother’s actual mothering behavior, and the mother’s enactment of the child role and the child’s real-life behavior. That is, I was able to identify the “prior text” of the play. Comparing the play episodes with the mother and daughter’s real-life interactions reveals that the enactment of “characters” in play is based on specific real-life models. In addition, the “plots” of the play episodes are based on shared prior experiences. Thus, by making references to prior text, Janet and Natalie frame their current play as a reenactment.

GENERAL COMPARISONS BETWEEN ORIGINAL AND PLAY INTERACTIONS

Comparing excerpts from the disciplinary role-play and the real-life disciplinary episode shows that Janet and Natalie’s play reenacts, by reversal of roles, a shared prior experience. The real-life disciplinary episode occurred two days before the pretend play episode. In the real-life episode, Janet is talking on the phone to her mother, who is very sick, and Natalie repeatedly whines and yells about wanting cheese and crackers. Janet threatens punishment (“time-out”), and Natalie starts crying, saying she needs to “cuddle (her)self.” Excerpts from the real-life disciplinary episode appear in ex. (1). In line 23, Janet is asking her mother when she is going back to the hospital (see Appendix 1 for transcription conventions):

(1) Real-life disciplinary episode.

<p>17 Natalie (Child)          18 &lt;yelling&gt; [Ba ba ba bee]→          19 cheese and crackers for lunch.)          20          21 No time-out.          22          23 &lt;whiney&gt; I want cheese and crackers.)]          24 &lt;whines, louder&gt;          25 &lt;whines, louder&gt;          26          27          28          29          30 (Ba bee!)          31 &lt;cries&gt;          32 &lt;cries&gt;          33 &lt;cries&gt;          (...) ((lines 34–52 elided))          53 &lt;cries, whines&gt;          54          55          56 No!          57          58 &lt;yelling&gt; No I don’t want to go by          myself.)          59          60          61 &lt;cries, whines&gt;          62 &lt;cries, whines&gt;          63 &lt;sad&gt; Let me cuddle myself.)          64 &lt;cries&gt;          65 &lt;cries&gt;</p>	<p>Janet (Mother)          [(So you’re heading – )] ((into phone))          If you scream while I’m on the phone, ((to          Natalie))          you will have time-out.          Then let’s not scream while I’m on the          phone.          [All right so you’re going back when?]          ((into phone))          [Oh yeah.]          [And so-]          Natalie! ((to Natalie))          Natalie,          I can’t hear when you’re crying.          Oh boy. ((into phone))          [Sorry.] ((into phone))          [Uh huh,]          [want me to come with you.]          ((lines 34–52 elided))          Natalie I mean it! ((to Natalie))          Stop it.          Then you may go sit and collect yourself.          Okay, ((into phone))          um so what now?          [Right. Right, right.] ((into phone))          [I see.] ((into phone))</p>
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Two days later, again at home and at lunchtime, Natalie and her mother enact play that echoes the basic plot of the real-life episode. First, while Janet is trying to eat,



Natalie tries to engage her in play, saying *I want to pretend I'm Mommy and you're Natalie*. After several minutes during which Natalie pretends to get Janet ready for school, Natalie introduces the specific plot, in which she is going to pretend to be making a phone call by saying *I'm gonna call somebody first, then you can go to school*. She also instructs Janet, *Be noisy while I'm on the phone*. Then the disciplinary plot unfolds, as shown in (2): While Natalie pretends to be on the phone, Janet yells and screams. Natalie subsequently threatens punishment (time-out) and actually initiates time-out. Janet pretends to cry and says she needs *a hug* and *a cuddle*.

## (2) Pretend play disciplinary episode.

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
112	I'm on the phone right now!	
113	Shhh!	
114		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ No!
115	⟨ <i>laughing</i> ⟩ Shhh!	
116	[⟨ <i>laughs</i> ⟩]	[⟨ <i>screeches, high-pitched</i> ⟩]
117	If you scream,	
118	you will have to have a time-out.	
119		⟨ <i>cries, high-pitched</i> ⟩
120		⟨ <i>cries, high-pitched</i> ⟩
121		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ Are you done now?⟩
122	Nope.	
123	Shhh! .	
124	I'm talking on the phone.	
(...)	((lines 124–148 elided))	((lines 124–148 elided))
149	[⟨ <i>laughs</i> ⟩]	[⟨ <i>high-pitched, loud</i> ⟩ Waaaaaaaaaaaaaa!⟩]
150	You have to stay for time-out→	
151	till you co:me back.	
152		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ No time out,
153		no time out!⟩
(...)	((lines 153–158 elided))	((lines 153–158 elided))
159	Come with me.	
160		⟨ <i>high-pitched, sad</i> ⟩ I need a hug.⟩
161	Come with me!	
162	Right now!	
163		⟨ <i>high-pitched, sad</i> ⟩ I need a cuddle.⟩
164	We're- we're coming together.	
165		⟨ <i>high-pitched, sad</i> ⟩ But –⟩
166		⟨ <i>cries</i> ⟩

It is clear from (1) and (2) that the “real-life” disciplinary episode serves as a model for the pretend play reenactment, as they have similar “plots” and share some details of language. First, the mother talks on the phone and the daughter misbehaves; then the mother threatens punishment; and finally, the daughter expresses the need for comfort.

Like this disciplinary role-play, the nurturing role-play is based on a prior interaction. In this play, the mother comforts her child, who is upset. In the real-life episode, Natalie's friend Annie has moved away, and Janet comforts her, as illustrated in (3). Janet and Natalie are at home, in the kitchen just after lunch-



time. In line 14, Janet asks Natalie if she is angry because Natalie had asked if it was okay to hit and throw her “blankie” (blanket).

(3) Real-life comforting episode.

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
14		Are you feeling angry about something?
15	I'm feeling sad about something.	
16		You're feeling sad?
17		What- what's making you sad,
18		Hon.
19	<sad>That Annie went awa:y.)	
20		That's making you sad?
21	Yes.	
22		Yeah.
23	Yes.	
24		Well that is sad Honey when somebody moves.
25		I bet you'll miss playing with her huh?
26	<sad>I miss playing with her.)	

Approximately 30 minutes later, the basic plot of the real-life episode shown in (3) is reflected in play. Following the interaction in (3), Natalie initiated play in which she and Janet pretended to be fairies greeting each other. Their play was interrupted by a telephone call. After she finishes talking on the phone, Janet says, *Okay, time to go upstairs* [for naptime], and then *Come on little fairy. Blue Fairy, will you help me pick a book*. Natalie then tells Janet, *Um, you're Natalie and I'm the Blue Fairy Godmother*, and introduces the comforting play, saying *Natalie let's talk about Annie moving away*. Janet, playing the role of Natalie, pretends her friend has moved away and she is upset, and Natalie comforts her. In this case, the pretend play episode is less “true” to the original than was the disciplinary play to its real-life counterpart. In fact, the comforting play is much more developed than the real-life version. Nonetheless, the similarities are clear, as seen in (4). In each case, the child, real or pretend, expresses sadness because her friend has moved away, and the mother, real or pretend, comforts her.

(4) Pretend play comforting episode.

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
43		<high-pitched> what happened to Annie?>
44	She moved away Sweetheart.	
45		<high-pitched> Why:??>
46	She's not here anymore.	
47		<high-pitched> Will she come back→
48		to the Burke School?
49	She won't come back to the Burke School,	
50	because she moved awa:y.	
51		<high-pitched> Wh- Is she gonna go→
52		to a different school:1?>
53	She moved to another school.	
54		<high-pitched, sad> O:h.
55		But I used to play with her.)
56	Did you guys play babies,	
57	and- and you can't play babies anymore?	

- 58 *(high-pitched)* Yeah,  
 59 who- who will be there to play babies→  
 60 with me.)  
 61 Sarah will be here to play babies with you.  
 62 *(high-pitched)* Sarah will play babies?)  
 63 Sarah will play babies with you.  
 64 *(high-pitched)* Oh that makes me happy.)

Both pairs, (1–2) and (3–4) suggest that both pretend play episodes are based on previous interactions that provide “scripts” for the role-play. The role-play thus can be conceived of as a “performed narrative” wherein each participant takes the role of the other, and they together reenact episodes and “prior text” from their shared past. Bergman & Lefcourt (1994:145) describe toddler’s role-play as “the capacity to reenact one’s own lived experience or one’s own experience of another.” In the following analysis, I suggest that the participants, in uttering lines that draw on prior text, embed multiple non-literal frames to co-construct this type of play. (For the entirety of the transcripts, disciplinary and comforting, real and pretend, see Appendix 2.)

#### ANALYSIS

What can a microanalysis of these mother-child play interactions tell us about framing in discourse, the relationship between framing and prior text, and how meaning is created in interaction? In order to explore answers to this question, I first conceptualize the play interactions as composed of layers of frames. Then I examine how the participants initiate play, the linguistic strategies they use in the role-play, and the relation between their speaking styles in the role-play and the real-life episodes.

#### *Frames embedding*

I suggest that the participants “lamine” experience by enacting play characterized by multiple layers of frames, or frames overlaid onto one another during a single moment in time. I propose that there are at least three non-literal, or pretend, frame embeddings in these data. The broadest non-literal frame is the play frame, embedded in “real life.” In the play frame, the alignment between the participants is non-literal or pretend, and the metamessage is Bateson’s “this is play.” The second frame is the frame of role-reversal within the play frame, wherein the footing between the participants is not just pretend but also specifically reversed from “real” or “ordinary” situations. The metamessage of this frame is “I’m playing you.” The third embedded frame is characterized by one of two family-specific SCRIPTS or PLOTS, which I have identified as “nurturing” and “disciplinary.” The metamessage in this “plot” or “script” frame is that the participants are enacting their roles in a specific type of interaction – for example “I am playing you, Mom, when you are playing the role of disciplinarian.” The three levels of non-literal frames are shown in Figure 1. Each frame is identified by its

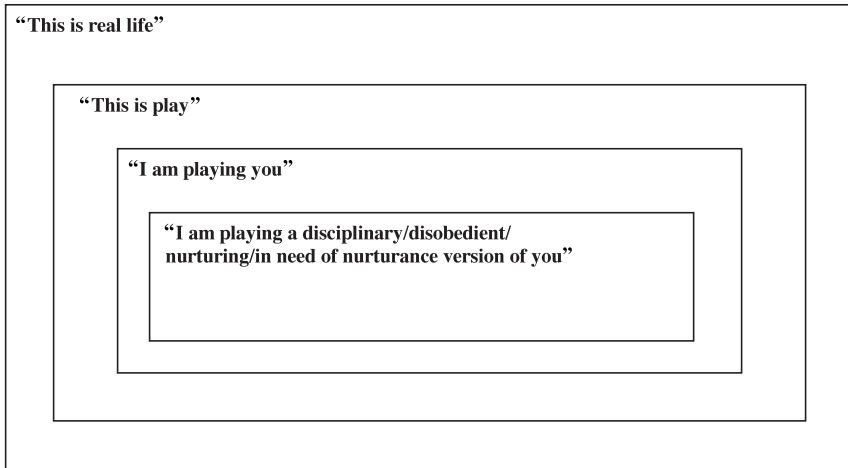


FIGURE 1: Three levels of non-literal frames.

metamessage, appearing in bold in the upper left-hand corner of the box representing its frame.

I suggest that these frames are embedded through metamessages sent by Janet's and Natalie's utterances, situated both inside and outside the play frames themselves. It is important to remark that the frames identified in Figure 1 are not as definite as they might appear, however, because frames sometimes "leak" accidentally or are intentionally blended together. In part, this is because the pretend play episodes are interwoven with the ongoing action of the day. Janet, for example, tries to use the play frame to get Natalie to do things such as pick out books for naptime, which blends the play and literal frames.

In their examination of how a pediatrician juggles the frames of a videotaped pediatric exam/interview, Tannen & Wallat 1993 found that frames occasionally accidentally "leaked" into each other. For example, the doctor, in what Tannen & Wallat call "the social encounter frame," uses a teasing register and says to the child while examining her stomach *No peanut butter and jelly in there?* in order to entertain the child. Using this same register and still examining the child's stomach, she asks, *Is your spleen palpable over there?* and the child laughs again. The words *spleen* and *palpable* belong to another frame, the "examination frame," in which the pediatrician verbalizes the findings of her examination for the benefit of medical students who will later view the video. In this way, these words have leaked from one frame into another.

Similarly, in these data, frames do not remain entirely distinct from one another. Whereas in Tannen & Wallat's data frames are blurred by the accidental leakage between them, in these data frames are intentionally blended together as

a result of Janet's attempts to accomplish things in the real world, or of Natalie's adding aspects of fantasy to their play. In addition, sometimes the play breaks momentarily to deal with the ongoing actions of the day; for example, in the middle of the pretend-play comforting episode, both participants break the play frame in order to address the fact that Natalie's favorite nightgown is in the wash. In (5), Natalie and Janet are engaged in play, with Natalie (playing the character "Fairy Godmother") explaining that Sarah will play baby dolls with Janet (who is pretending to be Natalie). In lines 65–66, Janet blends the play frame with the literal frame by attempting to get Natalie to select a nightgown to wear for nap-time, while enacting the role of Natalie. In line 69, Natalie breaks the play frame to ask about her favorite nightgown, *the kitty one*.

## (5) Breaking the play frame.

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
63	Sarah will play babies with you.	
64		< <i>high-pitched</i> > Oh that makes me happy.
65		Would you like to pick a nightgown,
66		Fairy Godmother.)
67	Wh- What happened to the –	
68		That one got all wet.
69	What happened to the kitty one.	
70		How about one of these.
71	No.:	
72		We have to wash it.
(...)	((lines 73–80 (discussing nightgowns) elided))	((lines 73–80 (discussing nightgowns) elided))
81	Um,	
82	say where's Annie,	
83	and I will say she moved away,	
84	[okay?]	[< <i>laughing</i> > Oh boy.]
85		All right,
86		one more time.
87		< <i>high-pitched</i> > Fairy Godmother.)
88		
89	What. ((play continues))	

Following Hoyle, this literal frame wherein Natalie and Janet temporarily put their play on hold to discuss nightgowns can be considered as embedded in the pretend frame, although it is not blended.

One of the most striking examples of a blended frame occurs in the comforting pretend-play episode, in which Natalie does not explicitly play the role of "Mommy," but instead the role of "Fairy Godmother," as seen in (5). This is an example of a blended frame, and perhaps the result of a leaky frame. Because this play is modeled in terms of plot and character-enactment on a preceding episode wherein Janet comforted Natalie about her friend Annie's moving away, I argue that this is an example of role-reversal, and that a fantasy frame blends into the play, transforming "Mommy" into another maternal figure, the "Fairy Godmother" (also called "Blue Fairy"). The blending of the role-reversal frame and the fantasy "Fairy Godmother" frame could be conceptualized visually as another frame

laid exactly on top of the frame in which the metamessage is “I’m playing you.” The metamessage of that box would be “I’m playing Fairy Godmother,” and it is blended with, rather than embedded in, the “I’m playing you” frame.

In the analysis that follows, I show that the participants’ back-and-forth exchange of utterances creates and embeds these multiply embedded play frames. I explore the participants’ collaborative construction of their play, examining the linguistic strategies the participants use to invoke, maintain and embed the non-literal frames that characterize their play.

*Establishing and maintaining the play frame*

In this section, I show that literal-frame utterances that (i) assign roles and (ii) announce parts of the play script also define the play frames. Pretend-frame utterances that enact roles also send metamessages maintaining the embedded play frames. These utterances (i) use in-character terms of address, (ii) signal a course of action for the characters, (iii) repeat shared prior text, and (iv) enact a recognizable speech style or register. These utterances all serve to direct and maintain play, and they work in concert to maintain not just one play frame but several pretend frames embedded in one another.

*Literal-frame utterances: Assigning roles.* The first literal-frame strategy that directs play is the explicit, out-of-frame assignment of roles and the subsequent acceptance of these roles. There is only one example of this in the data. It comes from the role-reversal disciplinary play. In (6), Natalie uses an utterance in the literal frame that explicitly refers to the play frame. This utterance cues the pretend-play frame and the reversed-roles frame by assigning pretend-play roles. Janet accepts Natalie’s role assignment, also in the literal frame. Each participant is speaking as herself and not as a character in the play frame. Natalie’s role-assigning and Janet’s role-accepting utterances are in bold type.

(6) Assigning roles (from role-reversal disciplinary episode).

Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
22 (Mommy) no!	
23 <b>I want to pretend I’m- I’m Mommy→</b>	
24 <b>and you’re Natalie.</b>	
25	<b>Okay.</b>
26 Natalie,	
27 you’re going to school.	
28	<i>(high-pitched)</i> I am?)

The boldface utterances in (6) lie outside the play frame. Natalie introduces or cues both the role-reversal frame and the pretend-play frame simultaneously through her literal-frame utterance *I want to pretend I’m Mommy and you’re Natalie*.

Janet accepts these frames in the literal frame by uttering *Okay*. She then steps into play, using a high-pitched voice that she and Natalie elsewhere in the tapes refer to as “the little voice,” which signals that Janet is pretending to be Natalie.

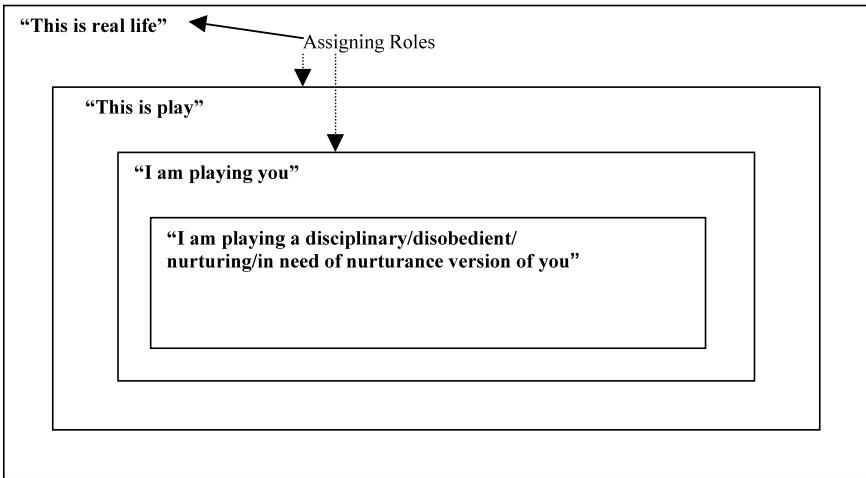


FIGURE 2: Embedded frames in a role assignment.

Janet also responds to the name “Natalie” in line 28 to indicate that she is assuming that role (*I am?*). *I am* is mostly inside the play frame, but it may be partly blended with real life, as Janet is using the “Natalie” role to verify the development of the play plot.

In this example, Natalie’s and Janet’s utterances, though situated in the literal frame, serve to cue the introduction of a pretend-play frame wherein they reverse roles a conversational moment later. Thus, although the utterances *I want to pretend I’m Mommy and you’re Natalie* and *Okay* send the metmessage “this is real life,” they serve to set up the pretend-play episode that both participants move into. This is illustrated in Figure 2, where the type of the utterance (“assigning roles”) appears in the frame in which it was uttered. An unbroken line points to the metmessage the utterance sends, while a broken line indicates which frames it invokes. Figure 2 shows that the utterance in the literal frame assigning roles (*I want to pretend I’m Mommy and you’re Natalie*) works to indicate that, while it itself is in the literal frame, it should be followed by the opening of a non-literal frame, in which the participants reverse roles.

*Literal-frame utterances: Announcing the script.* In addition to assigning roles in the literal or real-world frame, Natalie also introduces scripts or parts of scripts that trigger the embedding of play frames. For example, in (7), Natalie explicitly announces part of the comforting script in the literal frame when she says that she is going to say that Annie is moving away. Janet accepts this script in the literal frame before enacting the role of “Natalie.”

(7) Announcing a script (from the role-reversal comforting episode).

35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44	Natalie (Child) <whiney> <b>I- I'm gonna say</b> → <b>she's moving away.</b>  <b>I'm gonna say Annie is moving away.</b>  What.  She moved away Sweetheart.	Janet (Mother)  What?  <b>Okay,</b> let's go upstairs. <high-pitched> Fairy Godmother,  <high-pitched> what happened to Annie?
--	---	--

In this excerpt, Natalie directs the script from outside the play frame, in her own voice. Janet acknowledges and accepts the play direction outside of the play frame by saying *Okay* in her ordinary voice. In line 41, she assumes the high-pitched “little voice” that sends the metamessage that she is assuming the role of Natalie and is thus entering the play frame. She also begins to enact the nurturing script suggested by addressing Natalie as “Fairy Godmother” and asking what happened to Annie. This allows Natalie to enact what she directed from outside the play frame: She says that Annie moved away.

This example and others like it show that explicit out-of-frame references to the script – utterances that indicate what a participant should say next – serve to direct action within the play frame, even though they send the metamessage that they themselves are situated in the literal frame. Similar examples of literal-frame play direction appear in the pretend disciplinary episode, where Natalie and Janet also use out-of-frame utterances to direct and accept script direction.

These utterances evoke the play frame of either discipline or nurturing embedded in the role-reversal frame. The utterances send the metamessage that they are outside of the play frame, but they serve to cue the disciplinary and nurturing pretend frames through reference to their scripts, and the larger play frames through entailment. This is shown in Figure 3 (as in Fig. 2, a solid-line arrow points to metamessages sent by a type of utterance, while a dotted-line arrow points to frames triggered by a type of utterance). Figure 3 illustrates that literal-frame utterances directing the script cue play frames, even though the metamessage of the utterances themselves situates them in the literal frame.

In this section, I have identified two types of literal utterances that direct play: those that assign roles, and those that announce parts of the play script. Assigning or accepting roles through utterances in the literal frame sends the metamessage that the utterances, and the participants, are situated in the literal frame, while at the same time triggering pretend play wherein the participants’ roles are reversed. Announcing the script in the literal frame triggers the opening of the most embedded frame, wherein the metamessage is “I’m playing you as a disciplinarian” or “I’m playing you as a child seeking comfort.” I now turn to metacommunication that occurs in the pretend frames through role-enacting utterances.



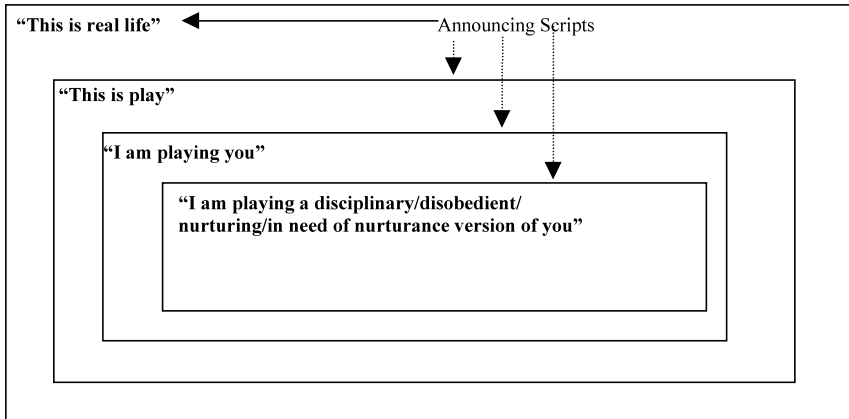


FIGURE 3: Embedded frames in script announcement.

*Pretend-frame utterances.* In this section I explore Janet and Natalie’s use of role-enactment to metacommunicate levels of play frames. These role-enacting utterances (i) use in-character terms of address, (ii) signal a course of action for the characters, (iii) repeat shared prior text, and (iv) use a recognizable speech style or register.

*Pretend-frame utterances: In-character terms of address.* In both nurturing and disciplinary role-play, addressing the other person by her in-character name or identifying the self with the in-character name serves to assign or reaffirm roles and play frames. These utterances also serve to play a character in the play frame. For example, in the comforting pretend play, Natalie assigns roles to her mother and to herself inside the play frame by identifying her mother as “Natalie” and herself as “the Blue Fairy Godmother.” In lines 9–10 in (8), Natalie assigns roles from inside the play and the role-reversal frames. In line 11, Janet accepts this assignment inside the play frame:

(8) In-character address (from role-reversal comforting episode).

Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
8 Um,	
9 <b>you’re Natalie→</b>	
10 <b>and I’m the Blue Fairy Godmother.</b>	
11	<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> <b>Blue Fairy,</b>
12 What.	
13	<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Will you help me→
14	pick a book please.)

In uttering *I'm the Blue Fairy Godmother* Natalie is assuming that role. Janet implicitly accepts her role by enacting it – she addresses Natalie as *Blue Fairy* and uses “the little voice.” Natalie acknowledges that she is also in-frame, responding to the name “Blue Fairy.” Contrast how Natalie assigned pretend play roles outside the play frame in the disciplinary episode of play (*I want to pretend I'm Mommy and you're Natalie*) with the utterance here (*You're Natalie and I'm the Blue Fairy Godmother*), which both assigns roles and enacts her role in play.

Once a role-reversal has been established through assigning roles, the participants continually address each other using the role-play names. In ordinary situations, Janet calls Natalie “Natalie” or uses a term of endearment such as “Sweetheart” or “Honey,” while Natalie calls Janet “Mommy.” In role-play, these names are reversed: Janet calls Natalie “Mommy” or “Blue Fairy Godmother,” while Natalie calls Janet “Natalie” or “Sweetheart.” In (9), Natalie calls Janet “Sweetheart,” while Janet calls Natalie “Fairy Godmother,” as shown in bold.

(9) Using role-play names (from role-reversal comforting episode).

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
87		<i>(high-pitched)</i> <b>Fairy Godmother,</b>
88	What.	
89		<i>(high-pitched)</i> where's Annie?
90	She moved away <b>Sweetheart.</b>	
91		<i>(high-pitched, laughing)</i> She did?

In this pretend-play excerpt, Janet and Natalie change their normal address terms. Natalie addresses Janet as “Sweetheart” only in this play frame and not elsewhere in the tapes of Janet and Natalie’s interactions. Janet’s laughter in line 91, which seems to be a reaction to Natalie addressing her as “Sweetheart,” marks its unusualness.

Although in the real world frame Natalie addresses Janet as “Mommy” and in the pretend frame Janet addresses Natalie as “Fairy Godmother,” I maintain that this is an example of role-reversal. “Fairy Godmother” is a maternal figure, and Janet and Natalie are exchanging roles and reenacting previous shared experience. As I suggested earlier, the address term “Fairy Godmother,” introduced at first by Natalie, seems to be an example of aspects of fantasy pretend frames blending into reality pretend frames. Although Natalie calls her character “Fairy Godmother,” her role is enacted as though she is playing “Mommy”; for example, she uses terms of address while playing the “Fairy Godmother” toward “Natalie” that Janet uses toward Natalie in literal frames of interaction.

In sum, once the play has become established, the participants use terms of address that are different from the terms of address they use in the literal frame. The use of these terms sends the metamessage “I am playing you” to the other participant, in addition to the metamessage “this is play,” as illustrated in Figure 4.

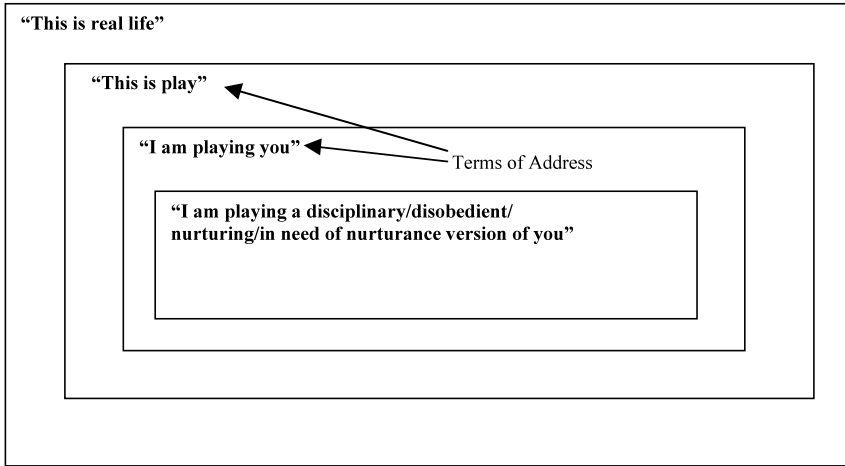


FIGURE 4: How terms of address serve to maintain role-reversal.

*Pretend-frame utterances: In-character utterances signaling a course of action.* Another aspect of role-enactment sends metameessages about the nature of the frame of interaction: in-character utterances signaling movement in the script, or a certain course of action. Natalie and Janet frequently use role-enactment to send metameessages about the scripts to be enacted.

In the disciplinary role-play episode, Natalie’s in-role utterances cue Janet to enact a plot wherein the mother is on the telephone. In (10), Natalie and Janet use utterances situated in the pretend frames to begin a telephoning script. The excerpt begins with Natalie pretending to put sunscreen on Janet’s face. This is within the role-reversal play frame. Then Natalie introduces the “telephoning” script while in-role. Corsaro 1983 recognizes “telephoning” as a cultural script for children’s play. It is also a personal experience script for Janet and Natalie, as Janet talked on the phone during lunchtime nearly every day that was taped. Natalie’s introduction and Janet’s subsequent acceptance of the script are shown in bold. Both are accomplished while the participants are in-role.

(10) Signaling a course of action (from role-reversal disciplinary episode).

Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
79 Get your face all ready.	
80	<i>&lt;laughs&gt;</i>
81 Okay,	
82	<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Okay.)
83 <b>I’m gonna call somebody first,</b>	
84 <b>then you can go to school.</b>	
85	<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> <b>Who are you calling→</b>
86	<b>Mommy?&gt;</b>

In (10), Natalie’s boldface utterance introduces a pretend-play script based on her prior experiences, while Janet’s boldface utterance accepts the script. Both utterances are situated in a pretend frame.

Once the script has been introduced and accepted, Natalie steps outside the play frames and instructs to Janet to make noise, thereby introducing a disciplinary telephoning script. When Janet makes noise, Natalie re-enters the role of “Mommy” and shushes Janet and threatens time-out. Janet reacts to Natalie’s in-role utterances by continuing to make noise. Natalie’s and Janet’s in-role utterances enacting the script are shown in bold in (11).

(11) Enacting a script (from role-reversal disciplinary episode).

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
87	Be noisy while I’m on the phone.	
88		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ What’s that?⟩
89	Be noisy while I’m on the phone,	
90	[Natalie,]	[⟨ <i>laughing</i> ⟩ Be noisy?⟩]
91	on the –	
92	While I’m on the [phone.]	[Okay.]
93		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ <b>Mommy!</b> ⟩
94	<b>Shhh!</b>	
95		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ <b>Mommy!</b> ⟩
96	<b>Shhh!</b>	
97		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ <b>MOMMY!</b> ⟩
98	⟨ <i>laughs</i> ⟩	
(...)	((lines 99–128 elided))	((lines 99–128 elided))
129	<b>If you scream, you will have to h- →</b>	
130	<b>come with me and have a time-out.</b>	
131		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ <b>No time-out Mommy.</b> ⟩

In the disciplinary script, the child must be disobedient so that the mother can punish her. Thus, when Natalie shushes Janet in this excerpt, Janet responds by loudly calling out *Mommy*. She thus interprets Natalie’s utterances non-literally and uses them as a cue to advance the play script. When Natalie threatens time-out, saying *If you scream you will have to h- come with me and have a time-out*, Janet responds naughtily by rejecting time-out. Natalie’s threat of time-out serves to cue Janet to misbehave or continue misbehaving, and Janet’s subsequent misbehavior works to cue Natalie that she can move to the disciplinary or punishment phase of the script. Each of these utterances also enacts the roles within the disciplinary frame, thereby sending the metmessages “I am you when you are a disciplinarian” and “I am you when you are in need of discipline,” and maintaining the disciplinary frame.

Exx. (10) and (11) show Natalie initiating a script or a course of action within that script. However, there are a number of places in the play episodes where Janet tries to introduce scripts while in-role in order to accomplish tasks in the real world, interweaving the role play with the ongoing action of the day. Like Natalie, Janet introduces scripts through utterances inside the play frame. However, whereas in these episodes Janet accepts Natalie’s script direction, Janet’s directions are rejected by Natalie and are not incorporated into play. In (12), Janet

tries to get Natalie to pick books for naptime in lines 13–14. In line 16, Natalie offers an alternate script:

(12) Introducing an alternate script (from role-reversal comforting episode).

	Natalie (Child)	Janet (Mother)
11		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ Blue Fairy,⟩
12	What.	
13		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ <b>Will you help me→</b>
14		<b>pick a book please.⟩</b>
15	N- But –	
16	<b>Natalie let’s talk about Annie moving away.</b>	
17		⟨ <i>high-pitched</i> ⟩ Okay.
18		It makes me sad.
19		Come on Blue Fairy.⟩

Here, Janet uses “the little voice” and addresses Natalie using her role-play name, “Blue Fairy” in line 11. Then, in lines 13 and 14, Janet, still enacting the role of Natalie, suggests that the Blue Fairy help her pick out a book. Natalie rejects this “picking books” script, which is an activity that needs to be accomplished in the literal frame to move toward naptime, while enacting the “Blue Fairy” role. She thus successfully maintains play while simultaneously delaying naptime.

In this section, I have shown that introducing and moving play scripts forward through role-enactment sends metamesages about the type of frame embedded in the larger play frame. Pretend-frame utterances signaling movement in the script serve not only to trigger a script based on Natalie and Janet’s shared prior experiences, but also to signal the footings of the characters involved, sending the metamesage, for example, “I am you, Mommy, when you are playing the role of disciplinarian.” This not only creates a course of play; it also is play itself. I also have shown that Janet uses the pretend frames to introduce scripts related to real life (e.g., moving toward naptime), which blends the play frames with the literal frames. Natalie, in turn, uses the pretend frames to resist Janet’s proposals.

Figure 5 shows how in-role utterances that signal the script and move it forward serve to cue and maintain frames. This figure shows that utterances spoken in-role that serve to introduce or advance scripts work on two different levels. Those that signal scripts send the metamesage “I’m playing you,” because they are role-enactments. At the same time, they cue the opening of a frame wherein the metamesage “I am playing a disciplinarian (etc.) version of you” gets sent. Utterances that advance the script once it has been opened are situated in the smallest frame. The metamesage of these utterances is “I am playing a disciplinarian (etc.) version of you.” In addition, they signal the larger pretend frames by entailment.

*Pretend-frame utterances: In-character dialogue repeating shared “prior text.”* Janet and Natalie also send metamesages that indicate their footings or the frames in which they are operating by repeating utterances from the “original” interaction in their play. The dialogue Janet and Natalie enact in the disciplinary role-play repeats utterances that were spoken in the previous real-life

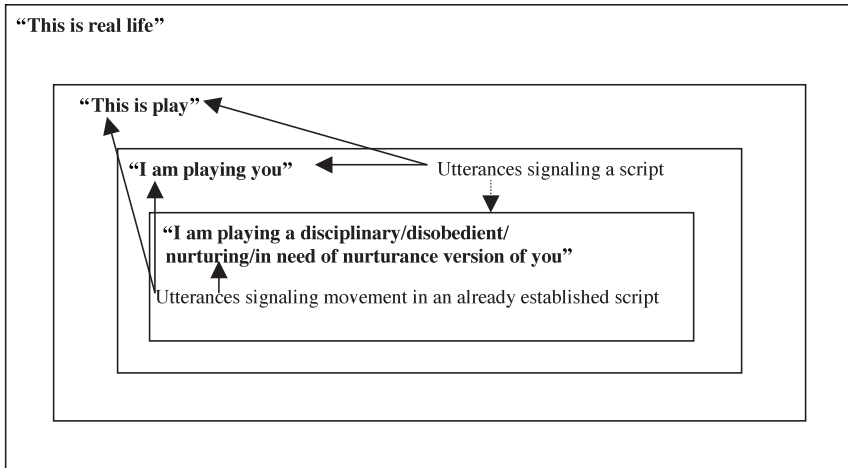


FIGURE 5: In-role script-related utterances embedding frames.

interaction, and this sends metamessages that help them frame their play. I have already suggested that each episode of role-play is based at least partly on specific prior real-world interactions. However, the pretend disciplinary play in particular has links to the real-life disciplinary episode. Here I consider in some detail utterances that are exactly or nearly repeated from the original episode in the play episode, forming a striking type of reference to prior text.

Table 1 shows that several utterances appearing in the real-life disciplinary episode reappear in the role-play episode, uttered by the participant who is assuming the role of the “original” speaker. Significantly, these utterances are essential to the disciplinary “plot” – the repeated utterances are those that threaten punishment, reject punishment, and express the need for comfort after being reprimanded.

Table 1 shows that each participant in the role-play disciplinary episode repeats or reproduces at least one utterance spoken by the other participant in the “original” interaction. In all cases, the “original” and “role-play” versions of the utterances in Table 1 are similar in both content and form. Note that 48 hours intervened between the “real-life” and pretend-play episodes, so it is not surprising that these repetitions are not “perfect.” They are, however, very similar in terms of both syntax and lexical choice.<sup>4</sup>

If we consider Natalie’s and Janet’s play as a narrative reenactment of prior experience, then their “lines” spoken in-role can be considered as a kind of “constructed dialogue” (Tannen 1989). Tannen notes that when we use words uttered by previous speakers, “traces of (their) voices and contexts cling inevitably to them” (1989:100). In the type of repetition or constructed dialogue surfacing in

TABLE 1. *Utterances in the “real-life” and “role reversal” disciplinary episodes.*

Original			Role-Play		
19	Janet:	If you scream while I'm on the phone,	108	Natalie:	If you scream,
20		you will have time-out.	109		you will have to have a time-out.
			((...))		
			129	Natalie:	If you scream,
			130		you will have to h- come with me → and have a time-out.
21	Natalie:	No time-out.	131	Janet:	No time-out, Mommy.
			((...))		
			143	Janet:	No time-out,
			144		no time out!
73	Natalie:	I need (to) cuddle myself.	154	Janet:	I need a cuddle.
((...))					
75	Natalie:	I need (to) cuddle myself.			
((...))					
77	Natalie:	I need (to) cuddle myself.			

the role-play, the traces of Natalie and Janet's voices from the former context are quite strong, as they recently shared the prior interaction and are collaboratively reenacting it.

Although much past work on children's play suggests that children's play episodes echo their real-life experiences (e.g., Corsaro 1983, Cook-Gumperz 1992), it is unspecified what exactly these experiences are. In contrast, these data reveal that real-life utterances can be repeated in play nearly verbatim, and that Janet's and Natalie's play is based not so much on cultural models of “mommy and baby play” as their own specific shared experiences. Thus, this use of prior text ties the pretend-play “Natalie” to the real-world Natalie, and the pretend-play “Mommy” to the real-world Mommy. The utterances analyzed in this section send the meta-message “I'm who you, Mommy/Natalie, were 48 hours ago in our previous interaction.”

In the context of these data, repeating a prior utterance works to establish the role-reversal frame and the larger play frame. It also maintains the embedded disciplinary frame through reference to the prior text of a real life disciplinary frame. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

It is important to note, following Becker 1995, that all the utterances make some reference to prior text. For those I have focused on here, the reference is markedly strong because of the notable similarity between each “original” and its “copy.” As an example of “constructed dialogue,” these utterances link Janet's and Natalie's pretend-play roles to the roles in real life on which they are based, framing their play as a reenactment of a specific shared past experience.



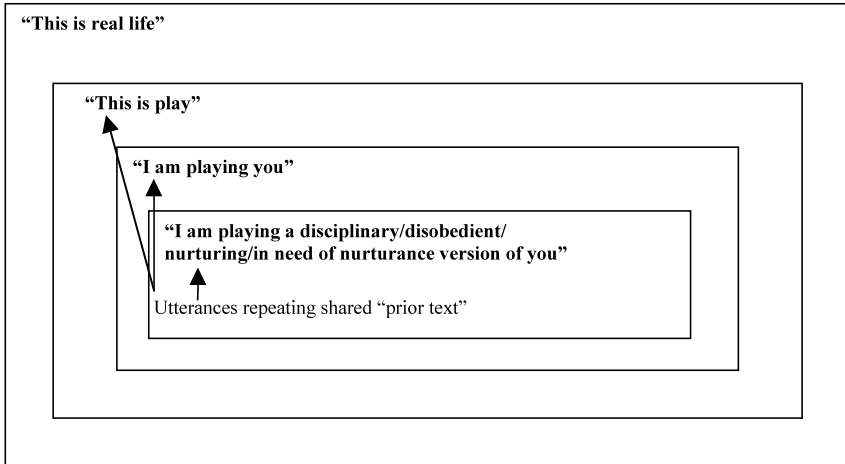


FIGURE 6: Repetition of prior text embedding frames.

*Pretend-play utterances: In-character speech style or register.* Janet and Natalie enact different versions of the “Natalie” and “Mommy” roles in the pretend play of discipline and the pretend play of nurturing. In each case, the participant uses a speech style that further delineates the nature of the role that she is playing; this sends, in addition to the metamessage “I am playing you,” a metamessage saying, for example, “I am playing a disciplinary version of you.” When Natalie is enacting the role of Janet in the disciplinary play, she (i) issues simple imperatives, and (ii) does not use affectionate terms to address Janet. These features of Natalie’s speech frame her as playing a disciplinary version of “Mommy.” For example, in (13) Natalie uses simple imperatives to tell Janet to come with her for time-out:

(13) (From role-reversal disciplinary episode.)

149    Natalie: Come!  
 150            Come with me.  
 ((...))  
 152    Natalie: Come with me!  
 153            Right now!

Natalie’s use of these imperatives echoes Janet’s real-life parenting behavior, as in the real-life disciplinary episode in (14):

(14) (From real-life disciplinary episode.)

11        Janet: Eat your grilled cheese.  
 ((...))  
 55        Janet: Stop it!

Natalie's use of simple imperatives directed to Janet frames her as playing a disciplinary version of Janet as "mother," because it echoes Janet's real-life mothering behavior in frames of discipline.

In the disciplinary play, Natalie does not refer to Janet by affectionate terms, but only as "Natalie." These behaviors also echo Janet's real-life parenting behavior, further framing Natalie as playing a disciplinary version of "Mommy."

When Natalie enacts the role of Janet in the nurturing play, her language is markedly different. She (i) uses the affectionate term "Sweetheart" to address Janet, and (ii) focuses the content of her talk on the feelings and wishes of her "daughter," using a soothing voice. These behaviors frame Natalie as playing a nurturing version of the "Mommy" role. In line 90 of the comforting play, for example, where Natalie gently explains that Annie moved away, she calls Janet "Sweetheart":

- (15) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)  
 90 Natalie: She moved away **Sweetheart**.

Natalie's addressing her mother as "Sweetheart" indexes not only a role-reversal, but also that she is trying to be a particularly comforting version of "Mommy." In real life, during the week of taping, Natalie never calls Janet "Sweetheart" with the exception of this instance, whereas Janet frequently calls Natalie "Sweetheart." For example, in (16), from real-life, Janet calls Natalie "Sweetheart" while thanking her for offering to share her snack:

- (16) Janet: Oh that's nice of you,  
 thank you **Sweetheart**.

Natalie's "Sweetheart" in play may be seen as an echo of the way Janet normally addresses Natalie when she is not upset with her, framing her as a nurturing version of "Mommy."

In addition, the content of Natalie's talk focuses on the feelings of Janet, her pretend child. For example, playing the role of "Mommy," Natalie addresses the concern of her "child" (that she will have to play alone) by providing her reassurance that her friend Sarah will play baby dolls with her:

- (17) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)  
 61 Natalie: Sarah will be here to play babies with you.

Later in the interaction, she asks how this makes "Natalie" feel:

- (18) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)  
 109 Natalie: Does that make you happy?

In (18), Natalie is specifically addressing the emotions of her "child." Again, she uses a comforting tone of voice. Her behavior echoes Janet's real mothering

behavior in the real-life comforting episode, where Janet soothingly asks Natalie if she is angry about something:

(19) (From real-life comforting episode.)

- 14 Janet: Are you feeling angry about something?  
 15 Natalie: I'm feeling sad about something  
 16 Janet: You're feeling sad?  
 17 What- what's making you sad,  
 18 Hon.

In echoing Janet's real-life comforting mothering behavior, Natalie frames herself as a caring, comforting version of "Mommy," sending the metamessage "I am you, Mommy, when you are comforting."

Janet, like Natalie, uses different speech styles in the disciplinary and nurturing episodes, although in both episodes she uses "the little voice," the high-pitched voice that indexes that Janet is playing Natalie. When Janet is playing Natalie during the disciplinary episode, she screams, often uses a loud voice, repeats the same thing over and over again, and issues simple need statements.

Recall that during the real-world disciplinary episode, Natalie screamed while Janet was on the phone. Janet's screaming in the pretend play echoes that screaming and frames her as a child who is misbehaving by having a tantrum. Janet's use of a loud voice accomplishes this footing also, for example, when in lines 149 and 150 she objects to time-out by yelling:

(20) (From role-reversal disciplinary episode.)

- 149 Janet: *<high-pitched, loud>* I don't want to now!  
 150 *<high-pitched, loud>* Waaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Using loudness in these types of utterances characterize Janet's speech here as what might be called "the tantrum register."

Janet also repeats the same thing over and over within a short period in the disciplinary episode – for example, in lines 121, 127, 129, and 131 in (21), where Janet, as "Natalie," asks "Mommy" if she is finished talking on the telephone:

(21) (From role-reversal disciplinary episode.)

- 121 Janet: *<high-pitched>* Are you done now?  
 (...) *<high-pitched>* Are you done Mommy?  
 127 (...) *<high-pitched>* Are you done?  
 129 (...) *<high-pitched>* Are you done now Mommy?  
 131

This repetition of utterances frames Janet as enacting the role of a child who is misbehaving and disturbing her mother. In the real-life disciplinary episode, while Janet is on the phone, Natalie whines, over and over, about wanting cheese and crackers for lunch:

(22) (From real-life disciplinary episode.)

- 4     Natalie: Can I have some cheese and crackers→  
 5             with lunch,  
 (...) )  
 7             I want some cheese and crackers for lunch.  
 8             Cheese and crackers for lunch.  
 (...) )  
 13            ⟨*whiney, louder*⟩ Cheese and crackers→  
 14            with lunch!)  
 (...) )  
 17            ⟨*yelling*⟩ Ba ba ba bee→  
 18            cheese and crackers for lunch.)  
 (...) )  
 23            ⟨*whiney*⟩ I want cheese and crackers.)

Similarly, Janet, playing the role of “Natalie,” asks repeatedly if Natalie is finished talking on the phone. Janet’s self-repetition may also be a type of repetition or echo of Natalie’s behavior in the shared prior experience, invoking the innermost play frame.

Finally, Janet issues simple need statements while playing Natalie in the disciplinary frame:

(23) (From role-reversal disciplinary episode.)

- 110    Janet: ⟨*high-pitched*⟩ I **need** you!  
 (...) )  
 160    Janet: ⟨*high-pitched, sad*⟩ I **need** a hug.)  
 (...) )  
 163    Janet: ⟨*high-pitched, sad*⟩ I **need** a cuddle.)

Making and repeating need statements is characteristic of Natalie’s everyday speech:

- (24) Natalie: I **need** my juicy,  
               I **need** my juicy,  
               I **need** my juicy.  
 Janet:     [Okay Baby!]  
 Natalie:  [I **need** my juicy.]  
               I **need** my juicy!

Janet’s speech style as “Natalie” during the nurturing episode gives her a specific footing. Here, Janet asks many questions, uses a sad tone of voice that is not loud, and cries. First, Janet asks many questions when speaking as Natalie in the nurturing pretend play. For example, in lines 43, 45, and 47–48, Janet asks questions about “her” friend Annie:

(25) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)

- 43     Janet: ⟨*high-pitched*⟩ what happened to Annie?  
 (...) )  
 45             ⟨*high-pitched*⟩ Why:?)  
 (...) )  
 47             ⟨*high-pitched*⟩ Will she come back→  
 48             to the Burke School?)

These questions frame Janet as a child in need of both answers and nurturance. Asking questions, especially “why” questions, is typical of Natalie’s speech. For example, in (26), Natalie and Janet are making a cake, and Natalie wants to taste the cake mix:

- (26) Natalie: I want to taste the mix.  
**Will I like mix?**  
 Janet: You can’t taste it Honey,  
 because it’s got RAW EGG in it.  
 Natalie: **Why it has raw egg in it.**  
 Janet: Well that’s- that’s some of the ingredients,  
 and that’s not- that’s not very safe to eat.  
 When it’s raw.  
 Natalie: **Why it’s not that safe to eat when it’s ra:w.**  
 Janet: Because it could give you a ba:d tummy ache.  
 Natalie: **Why it could give you a bad tummy ache.**  
 Janet: Well because raw eggs –  
 Eggs need to be COOKED.

Janet’s pretend play behavior thus can be seen to echo Natalie’s real-world behavior.

Janet also pretends to cry while enacting the role of “sad Natalie,” when Natalie (as “Mommy”) tells Janet (as “Natalie”) that her friend Annie moved to another school:

- (27) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)  
 101 Natalie: She moved to another school.  
 102 Janet: <cries>

Further, Janet’s utterances in this frame are not loud, and some are markedly sad. For example, earlier in the same episode, when Natalie tells Janet that Annie moved to another school, Janet responds:

- (28) (From role-reversal comforting episode.)  
 53 Natalie: She moved to another school.  
 54 Janet: <high-pitched, sad> O:h.  
 55 But I used to play with her.)

This sad tone of voice is part of a speech style that Natalie used in the real-life comforting episode to express that she was sad. Using it frames Janet as a version of Natalie who needs nurturance, because it echoes Natalie’s real-world behavior.

I have shown that many aspects of Natalie and Janet’s role-play behavior echo or repeat the other’s real-world speech behavior. Using a particular speech style thus makes links to specific prior texts, or shared past interactions, that affect how play is framed. I suggest that enacting a role in a specific speech style drawing on prior text sends the metamessage, for example, “I am playing a nurturing version of you, Mom,” in addition to the broader metamessages “I am you” and “this is play.” This is illustrated in Figure 7. Utterances enacting a character as using a specific speech style situate the character in the smallest

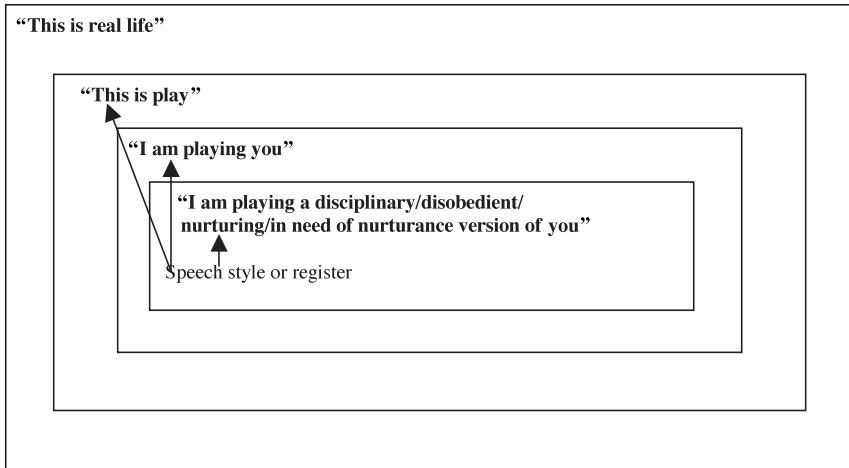


FIGURE 7: Speech style embedding frames.

play frame as well as within the broader play frames. The language that the participants use to enact their roles is essential to defining the nature of the most embedded play frame in which they operate, where their utterances are both role-enacting and frame-maintaining.

#### *Analysis: Summary*

I have demonstrated that Janet and Natalie build their play sequences through utterances both outside and inside the non-literal or play frames. This adds to the relatively small body of research on role-play that suggests that both non-play and play utterances are metacommunicative, or that they contribute to how play is framed. I illustrated how these utterances indicate play direction and establish and maintain the participants' pretend footings. I showed that the utterances situated in the real-life or literal frame that invoke the pretend frames (i) assign roles and (ii) announce parts of the play script. For example, when Natalie says, *I want to pretend I'm Mommy and you're Natalie*, the metamessage of her utterance is that she is speaking in the literal frame. At the same time, this utterance triggers the role-reversal that follows in the interaction. Past research on role-play primarily considers these types of utterances as directing or maintaining play.

In contrast, this analysis demonstrated that utterances spoken within one of the pretend frames, or role-enacting utterances, also send metamessages that maintain and direct play, building on the work of Sawyer 1997, Cook-Gumperz 1992, and Hoyle 1993, all of whom analyze role-enactment as play-maintaining or directing. The role-enacting utterances I identified as play-maintaining or directing

(i) use in-character terms of address, (ii) signal a course of action for the characters, (iii) repeat shared prior text, and (iv) enact a recognizable speech style or register. I have shown how these different utterances work to create, embed, and maintain play frames through the metamesages each utterance sends. I have also illustrated how frames are blended in play – for example where Janet blends the literal frame with the play frame in order to try to accomplish real-world tasks, and where a “fantasy frame” blends into the role-reversal frame, transforming “Mommy” into “Fairy Godmother.”

This analysis, in considering framing in role-play, has made use of “prior text” in a new way. Whereas past studies on role-play acknowledge that real-life models serve as children’s inspiration for their pretend play roles (e.g., Corsaro 1983; Snow et al. 1986), this analysis links mother-child role-play back to the specific “original” interactions on which it is based. Drawing on an unusual data set that captured a full week of interaction, I was able to identify the sources of the language the participants use in play, and to show that the participants use prior text as an inspiration for play plots as well as for guidance on how to speak in role on the level of speech acts, lexical choice, and syntax. Furthermore, I suggested that participants’ use of prior text sends metamesages that relate to how their play is framed, for example, as reenactment of a past disciplinary interaction.

The cooperative role-play analyzed here is unusual in that it is drawn from talk at home rather than in a nursery school or laboratory setting. Because of this, we get a glimpse of Natalie’s and Janet’s private lives. Besides showing a mother and child at play in a natural setting, these role-play episodes begin to hint at the complexity of frames a mother manages simultaneously on a day-to-day basis. When Natalie introduces the disciplinary role-play, Janet is trying to eat her lunch, and Janet has to engage Natalie verbally and eat simultaneously. While engaged in play, Janet is not only playing – she is also working, performing the multiple tasks a mother must perform. Janet socializes with Natalie, keeping her entertained; she cooperatively allows Natalie to explore the identity of “Mommy” in play; and additionally she accomplishes tasks in the real world, such as getting Natalie upstairs for naptime. For Natalie, the role-play represents the “work” of being a child: she is finding ways to attract and keep her mother’s attention and attempting to influence real-world activities such as naptime. In this way, role-play is not just “play,” but a complex balancing and blending of play and literal frames for both mother and child.

Finally, this analysis has shown that role-play is a layered activity composed moment-to-moment in interaction. It has illustrated that literal-frame utterances and aspects of role-enactment serve to invoke and also embed play frames, building upon Hoyle’s (1993) findings that children can “laminare” experience through embedding frames in their play. This analysis thus has implications for frames theory that are discussed in the next section.



At the outset, I suggested that there are at least three non-literal, or pretend, frame-embeddings in these data. The broadest non-literal frame is the play frame, embedded in “real life,” where the alignment between the participants is non-literal and the metamessage is “this is play.” The second play frame is the frame of role-reversal, where the metamessage is “I’m playing you.” The third embedded frame is characterized by enacting one of two family-specific “scripts” based on shared prior experiences, which I have identified as “comforting” and “disciplinary.” The metamessage in this “plot” or “script” frame is that the participants’ roles in the frames are specified in some way, sending, for example, the metamessage “I am playing you, Mommy, when you are playing the role of disciplinarian in real life.”

Undoubtedly, there are also other frame embeddings in these data that I did not address specifically in this analysis. For example, in the disciplinary play frame, Janet enacts not just the role of a child needing discipline; at the end, she enacts the role of a child needing comfort. In this way, a smaller frame is embedded in the frame I identified as the smallest play frame in this analysis. Although I did not address the entirety of possible frame embeddings in Natalie’s and Janet’s play, the conceptualization of embedded play frames I have presented here readily deals with such smaller frame embeddings.

I suggested that such play embedding, or pretend-play frame within pretend-play frame, not only appears in but actually characterizes the spontaneous mother-child role-play data for this analysis. I showed that these frames, though blended at times with frames from real life or fantasy, are readily identifiable and are invoked, maintained, and embedded through metamessages sent by the participants’ play utterances and the relationship of those utterances to prior text. In doing so, I have refined the notion of the metamessage “this is play” by showing that play is composed of layers of frames identified by increasingly specific metamessages. I have also suggested how a theory of frames embedding in a speech event such as role-play might be conceptualized.

In addition, I identified ways in which prior text can be used by interactants in framing their current interactions, which was possible because both the play episodes and the “original” episodes were captured on tape. In order to understand fully the nature of Natalie’s and Janet’s play – that is, to understand it as a narrative reenactment of specific shared prior experience – access to the prior text is necessary, both for the analyst and for the participants themselves. This analysis suggests that participants draw on prior text in a number of ways for framing current play interactions: through reenactment of plots, reversal of typical address terms and ways of speaking, and even through repeating real-life utterances. These echoes of prior text frame current interaction and help the participants (and the analyst) to interpret utterances.

Because all discourse is layered and makes reference to prior text in some way, there is reason to believe that the findings in this analysis apply beyond mother-child role-play. Although role-play provides a particularly striking example of how interactants can layer frames and draw on prior text to build their speech activity, other types of interactions are also characterized by multiple frames, both real and imaginary, that may be layered.

In conclusion, conceptualizing frames as embedded through metamesages in the role-play context has highlighted how two participants create joint understanding in the imaginary speech activity in which they are engaged. I have shown that mother-child role-play is not simply defined by the metamesage “this is play.” Instead, conceiving of role-play as made up of multiple frames, each embedded in the other and characterized by an increasingly specific metamesage, gives a more refined analysis of this type of interaction. Considering frames as potentially “blended,” and as dependent on reference to prior text, further illustrates the complexity of framing. Examining other types of interaction as potentially made up of multi-layered frames inextricably linked to prior text would be fruitful, and it would provide insight into the frames that comprise interaction, as well as how participants create mutual understanding in discourse.

APPENDIX 1

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

These transcription conventions were developed by Shari Kendall and Deborah Tannen for use in the research study “Balancing work and family: Creating parental identities through talk,” at Georgetown University.

((words))	Double parentheses enclose transcriber’s comments
(words)	Single parentheses enclose uncertain transcription
new line	Each new line represents an intonation unit
→	An arrow indicates that the intonation unit continues to the next line
–	A dash indicates a truncated intonation unit
-	A hyphen indicates a truncated word
?	A question mark indicates a relatively strong rising intonation
.	A period indicates a falling, final intonation
,	A comma indicates a continuing intonation
..	Dots indicate silence
:	A colon indicates an elongated vowel
CAPS	Capitals indicate emphatic stress
{laughs}	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises
{manner}words}	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of the manner in which an utterance is spoken, e.g. <i>high-pitched, laughing, incredulous</i>
words [words]	Square brackets enclose simultaneous talk.
[words]	

## TRANSCRIPTS

*Real-Life Disciplinary Episode*

<b>Natalie (Child)</b>	<b>Janet (Mother)</b>
1 Love you, ((into phone))	
2 bye bye. ((passes phone to Janet))	
3	Okay.
4 Can I have some cheese and crackers→	
5 with [lunch,]	[Hello?] ((into phone))
6	
7 I want some cheese and crackers for lunch.	
8 Cheese and crackers for lunch.	
9	What?
10 [(??)]	[You] have your grilled cheese,
11	eat your grilled cheese.
12 No!	
13 <whiney, louder> Cheese and crackers→	
14 with lunch!	
15	Natalie Jane, .
16	So, anyway, ((into phone))
17 <yelling> [Ba ba ba bee]→	[So you're heading-]
18 cheese and crackers for lunch.)	
19	If you scream while I'm on the phone, ((to Natalie))
20	you will have time-out.
21 No time-out.	
22	Then let's not scream while I'm on the phone.
23 <whiney> I want cheese and crackers.>]	[Alright so you're going back when?] ((into phone))
24 <whines, louder>]	[Oh yeah.]
25 <whines, louder>]	[And so-]
26	Natalie! ((to Natalie))
27	Natalie,
28	I can't hear when you're crying.
29	Oh boy. ((into phone))
30 (Ba bee!)	
31 <cries>]	[Sorry.] ((into phone))
32 <cries>]	[Uh huh,]
33 <cries>]	[want me to come with you.]
34 <cries>]	[Uh huh,]
35 <cries>]	[alright so- so-]
36 <cries>]	
37 <cries>]	[Hello?] ((still into phone))
38 <cries>]	[So they were just waiting to see if eating→]
39 <cries>]	[something would help,]
40 <cries>]	[or just time?]
41 <cries>]	
42 <cries>]	[Oh I see.] ((into phone))
43 <cries>]	[Oh okay.]
44 <cries, makes noise>]	[Right.]

45	< coughs >	
46		<laughing, incredulous> Coffee and → ((into phone))
47		doughnuts!)
48	[[<cries>]	[Okay.]
49	[[<cries>]	[What are you talking about.]
50	[[<cries>]	[Oh boy.]
51	[[<cries>]	[All right so . now what happened →]
52	[[<cries>]	[with the other thing.]
53	<cries, whines>	
54		Natalie I mean it! ((to Natalie))
55		Stop it!
56	No!	
57		Then you may go sit and collect yourself.
58	< yelling > No I don't want to go by myself.)	
59		Okay, ((into phone))
60		um so what now?
61	<cries, whines>	
62	[[<cries, whines>]	[Right. Right, right.] ((into phone))
63	<sad> Let me cuddle myself.)	
64	[[<cries>]	[I see.] ((into phone))
65	<cries>	
66		All right, ((into phone))
67		All right.
68		Well,
69		off you go.
70		Alright,
71		good luck.
72		Bye. ((hangs up phone))
73	I need (to) cuddle myself.	
74		Excuse me? ((to Natalie))
75	I need (to) cuddle myself.	
76		You what?
77	I need (to) cuddle myself.	
78		You need to cuddle yourself.
79	Yeah.	
80		You need to CALM yourself.
81	[[<whines>]	[It is not okay to scream →]
82	[[<whines>]	[when Mommy's on the phone.]
83		I can't hear what' going on,
84		and I need to talk to Grammy.
85	< whiney > I (don't want - )	
86		What.
87	< whiney > I want to cry.)	
88		You want to cry?
89	Yes.	
90		Well you may cry.
91		((Janet dials another number on the phone))

*Role-Reversal Disciplinary Episode*

<p><b>Natalie (Child)</b></p> <p>1 We're gonna need some sunscreen for . →</p> <p>2 the pretend school.</p> <p>3 Okay?</p> <p>4</p>	<p><b>Janet (Mother)</b></p> <p>Oh don't open that.</p>
---	---

- 5 Just for a second.  
 6 *<laughing>* No:.)  
 7 [No.] You can pretend [to put] it on.  
 8 No just for a second.  
 9 No,  
 10 I don't want you opening that.  
 11 No.  
 12 (Let me.)  
 13 [*screeches in objection*]  
 14 [Sweetheart.]  
 15 Sunscreen isn't a toy.  
 16 You'd –  
 17 Now you can pretend to just go like this→  
 18 [No.] and put it on [me.]  
 19 No.  
 20 *<whiney>* No no [no.]  
 21 It's a- *<whiney>* eh eh.)  
 22 I- I want [to open it.]  
 23 [(Just) pretend.]  
 24 (Mommy) no! .  
 25 I want to pretend I'm- I'm Mommy→  
 26 and you're Natalie.  
 27 Okay.  
 28 Natalie,  
 29 you're going to school.  
 30 *<high-pitched>* I am?)  
 31 Yeah.  
 32 *<high-pitched>* What time will you→  
 33 pick me up Mommy?)  
 34 I'm gonna pick you up at one-o'clock.  
 35 Because I'm gonna have a MEETING.  
 36 *<high-pitched>* Oh:.)  
 37 Y[ou're – ]  
 38 You are gonna stay for lunch.  
 39 [What] will I do?)  
 40 *<high-pitched>* At school?)  
 41 At school,  
 42 yeah.  
 43 *<high-pitched>* What will they feed me?)  
 44 They will feed you *<listing intonation>*  
 45 some bread and some milks and some . →  
 46 strawberries and some chicky . →  
 47 and some corn,)  
 48 *<high-pitched>* Mmm.  
 49 That sounds good Mommy.)  
 50 Would- would you like it at school?  
 51 I'll get your jacket.  
 52 [I-] *<high-pitched>* I like strawberries Mom-  
 53 my.)  
 54 Do you like your teeth brushed?  
 55 *<high-pitched>* Mhm.)  
 56 Do you want your teeth brushed NO:W?  
 57 *<high-pitched>* Right now I'm still eat-  
 58 ing→  
 59 Mommy.)  
 I'll get your toothbrush.  
*<laughing slightly>* Oh boy.) ((to self))  
 .....  
 Say "ah!"  
*<high-pitched>* Mommy I'm still eating.)

60	Say "ah!"	
61		Ah!
62	No,	
63	[no . ] open wide.	[Honey,
64		can we play something else.
65		I can't pretend to brush my teeth→
66		when I'm eating.
67	Yes,	
68	we can play something else if you want.	
69		⟨high-pitched⟩ Mommy?)
70	What.	
71		⟨high-pitched⟩ Do I need sunscreen→
72		on my face?)
73	(Yeah.)	
74	You need sunscreen on your face.	
75	Like I do. . .	
76	What.	
77		⟨high-pitched⟩ Aren't you gonna→
78		rub it in my face?) . . .
79	Get your face all ready.	
80		⟨laughs⟩
81	Okay,	
82		⟨high-pitched⟩ Okay.)
83	I'm gonna call somebody first,	
84	then you can go to school.	
85		⟨high-pitched⟩ Who are you calling→
86		Mommy?)
87	Be noisy while I'm on the phone.	
88		⟨high-pitched⟩ What's that?)
89	Be noisy while I'm on the phone,	
90	[Natalie,]	[⟨laughing⟩ Be noisy?)]
91	on the –	
92	While I'm on the [phone.]	[Okay.]
93		⟨high-pitched⟩ Mommy!)
94	Shhh!	
95		⟨high-pitched⟩ Mommy!)
96	Shhh!	
97		⟨high-pitched⟩ MOMMY!)
98	⟨laughs⟩	
99	⟨laughing⟩ Shhh! Shhh! Shhh! Shhh!)	
100	[⟨laughs⟩]	[⟨high-pitched⟩ No Mommy!)]
101	[⟨laughs⟩]	[⟨high-pitched⟩ I need you!)]
102	⟨laughs⟩	
103	I'm on the phone right now!	
104	Shhh!	
105		⟨high-pitched⟩ No!)
106	⟨laughing⟩ Shhh!)	
107	[⟨laughs⟩]	[⟨screeches, high-pitched⟩]
108	If you scream,	
109	you will have to have a time-out.	
110		⟨cries, high-pitched⟩
111		⟨cries, high-pitched⟩
112		⟨high-pitched⟩ Are you done now?)
113	Nope.	
114	Shhh! .	
115	I'm talking on the phone.	
116	(Let's-) Wait till I get off the phone.	

- 117 Then you can talk.  
 118 *<high-pitched>* Are you done now Mommy?)  
 119 No.  
 120 *<high-pitched>* Are you done?)  
 121 No.  
 122 *<high-pitched>* Are you done now Mommy?)  
 123 No.  
 124 *<high-pitched>* Be done!)  
 125 No!  
 126 *<yelling>* I'm not done yet!)  
 127 Shhh!  
 128 *<laughs>*  
 129 If you scream you will have to h- →  
 130 come with me and have a time-out.  
 131 *<high-pitched>* No time-out Mommy.)  
 132 Scream!  
 133 *<screams, high-pitched>*  
 134 Okay.  
 135 Time-out.  
 136 *<high-pitched>* No::!))  
 137 *<laughs>*  
 138 You have to.  
 139 *<high-pitched, loud>* I don't want to now!)  
 140 [*<laughs>*]  
 141 [*<high-pitched, loud>* Waaaaaaaaaaaaa!)]  
 142 You have to stay for time-out→  
 143 till you co:me back.  
 144 *<high-pitched>* No time out,  
 145 no time out!)  
 146 You have to come.  
 147 *<high-pitched>* Mommy→  
 148 I'm eating my lunch!)  
 149 *<laughs>*  
 150 Come!  
 151 Come with me.  
 152 *<high-pitched, sad>* I need a hug.)  
 153 Come with me!  
 154 Right now!  
 155 *<high-pitched, sad>* I need a cuddle.)  
 156 We're- we're coming together.  
 157 *<high-pitched, sad>* But - )  
 158 *<cries>*  
 159 *<laughs>*  
 160 No,  
 161 I'm on the phone.  
 162 *<yelling>* Be quiet!)  
 163 *<high-pitched, sad>* Okay.  
 164 Then can I talk?)  
 165 Yes.  
 166 Then you can talk.  
 167 .....  
 168 *<high-pitched>* Can I- (? ? the phone)→  
 169 Mommy.)  
 170 You can- you can sit (here.)  
 171 till I get off the phone.  
 172 ..  
 173 Okay.  
 174 I'm talking to Daddy right now.

174 Be quiet while I'm on the phone.  
 175 *<high-pitched, sad>* Yes Mommy.) .  
 176 No! .  
 177 (Get- We're having a good time.)  
 178 I'm Natalie now.  
 179 You're Mommy.  
 180 I'm Mommy?  
 181 Okay.  
 182 You're gonna get on the phone.  
 ((they reverse roles and continue play))

*Real-Life Comforting Episode*

<b>Natalie (Child)</b>	<b>Janet (Mother)</b>
1 Mommy,	
2	Yes,
3 Is it nice to bang on blankies?	To BANG on blankies,
4	what do you mean.
5	
6 Is it okay to b- to bang on blankies.	I guess so.
7	
8 It's- (that's) nice.	
9 . .	
10 Is it okay to THROW blankies?	Well it's okay to THROW blankies,
11	as long as . no one gets hurt,
12	a:nd . you pick it up when you're finished.
13	Are you feeling angry about something?
14	
15 I'm feeling sad about something.	You're feeling sad?
16	What- what's making you sad,
17	Hon.
18	
19 <i>&lt;sad&gt;</i> That Annie went awa:y.)	That's making you sad?
20	
21 Yes.	Yeah.
22	
23 Yes.	Well that is sad Honey when somebody moves.
24	I bet you'll miss playing with her huh?
25	
26 <i>&lt;sad&gt;</i> I miss playing with her.)	
27 I'm gonna be the (ba:ll) blue fairy.	You're gonna [be what.]
28 [ ? ? ]	
29 I'm (????)	<i>&lt;laughing&gt;</i> What are you gonna be?
30	
31 I'm gonna be blankie,	
32 I'm gonna be blankie.	I thought you said you were gonna be a fairy.
33	
34 I'm gonna be a fairy,	What kind of fairy.
35	
36 A blankie fairy.	<i>&lt;laughing&gt;</i> Oh the Blankie Fairy.)
37	
38 The Blankie Fairy.	<i>&lt;laughs.&gt;</i>
39	Well that's nice.
40	
41	. .
42 Can I be Blankie Fairy?	



43		Sure you can.
44	Hi!	
45		Hi Blankie Fairy.
46		Will you make my dreams come true?
47		What do you do Blankie Fairy?
48	I play with my wand.	
49		You play with your wand?
50	Yeah.	
51		O:h.
52	How are you doing.	
53		Well I'm doing all right,
54		Blanket Fairy.
55	What are you doing Blanket Fairy.	
56	What are you doing Natalie.	
57		<i>&lt;laughs&gt;</i>
58	Natalie.	
59	Natalie?	
60		Am I supposed to be Natalie?
61	Yeah.	
62		Oh.
63		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Yes?)
64	I'm the Blue Fairy.	
65	Who are you.	
66		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> I'm Natalie.)
67	I'm the Blue Fairy.	
68		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Hi Blue Fairy.)
69	((They continue greeting each other over and over, until Janet gets a phone call))	

*Role-Reversal Comforting Episode*

	<b>Natalie (Child)</b>	<b>Janet (Mother)</b>
1		Thanks a lot, ((into phone))
2		bye bye. ((hangs up phone))
3		Okay, ((to Natalie))
4		time to go upstairs.
5		Come on little fairy.
6		Blue Fairy,
7	[What.]	[will you] help me pick a book.
8	Um,	
9	you're Natalie→	
10	and I'm the Blue Fairy Godmother.	
11		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Blue Fairy,)
12	What.	
13		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> will you help me→
14		pick a book please.)
15	N- But –	
16	Natalie let's talk about Annie moving away.	
17		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> Okay.
18		It makes me sad.
19		Come on Blue Fairy.)
20	(Where) Annie lives.	
21		<i>&lt;high-pitched&gt;</i> (Oh),
22		she moved to a town called . Boston.)
23	Um,	
24	Na . ta . lie,	

- 25 *<high-pitched>* Yes,)
- 26 Tell the Fairy Godmother where Annie  
moved.
- 27 *<high-pitched>* Well she moved away.)
- 28 Um,  
29 tell me,  
30 tell me.
- 31 I'm telling you!  
32 All right upstairs!
- 33 Um.
- 34 [*<whiney>*Tell me] again,)
- 35 *<whiney>* I- I'm gonna say→  
36 she's moving away.)
- 37 What?
- 38 I'm gonna say Annie is moving away.
- 39 Okay,  
40 let's go upstairs.  
41 *<high-pitched>* Fairy Godmother,)
- 42 What.
- 43 *<high-pitched>* what happened to Annie?)
- 44 She moved away Sweetheart.
- 45 *<high-pitched>* Why:?)
- 46 She's not here anymore.
- 47 *<high-pitched>* Will she come back→  
48 to the Burke School?
- 49 She won't come back to the Burke School,  
50 Because she moved awa:y.
- 51 *<high-pitched>* Wh- Is she gonna go→  
52 to a different school:!)?
- 53 She moved to another school.
- 54 *<high-pitched, sad>* O:h.  
55 But I used to play with her.)
- 56 Did you guys play babies,  
57 and- and you can't play babies anymore?
- 58 *<high-pitched>* Yeah,  
59 who- who will be there to play babies→  
60 with me.)
- 61 Sarah will be here to play babies with you.
- 62 *<high-pitched>* Sarah will play babies?)
- 63 Sarah will play babies with you.
- 64 *<high-pitched>* Oh that makes me happy.  
65 Would you like to pick a nightgown,  
66 Fairy Godmother.)
- 67 Wh- What happened to the –
- 68 That one got all wet.
- 69 What happened to the kitty one.
- 70 How about one of these.
- 71 No:.
- 72 We have to wash it.  
73 We have to wash it.  
74 [(I ? ?)]  
75 How . about . Arie:l?)
- 76 How about Ariel.
- 77 Oh.  
78 Okay sure.  
79 Here you go.
- 80 *<sing-song>* Ariel.)

- 81 Um,  
 82 say where's Annie,  
 83 and I will say she moved away,  
 84 [okay?] [*(laughing)* Oh boy.}]  
 85 All right,  
 86 one more time.  
 87 *(high-pitched)* Fairy Godmother,)  
 88 What. *(high-pitched)* where's Annie?)  
 89 She moved away Sweetheart.  
 90 *(high-pitched, laughing)* She did?)  
 91 Yeah.  
 92 *(high-pitched)* Why:.)  
 93 She moved to another town because . . .  
 94 she- .  
 95 [wouldn't] come ba:ck. [*(high-pitched)* Yeah.])  
 96 *(high-pitched)* But- but she's supposed→  
 97 to go to the Burke School.)  
 98 No Sweetheart,  
 99 she's supposed to go somewhere else.  
 100 *(high-pitched)* Where.)  
 101 She went to another school.  
 102 *(cries)*  
 103 [Sarah will have→] [Do you have to make a tinkles?]  
 104 to play babies with you.  
 105 *(high-pitched)* Sarah will play babies→  
 106 with me?)  
 107 Yeah.  
 108 *(high-pitched)* Well that's good.)  
 109 Does that make you happy?  
 110 *(high-pitched)* That makes me happy,  
 111 but I'll still miss my friend Annie.  
 112 Is it okay to miss someone.)  
 113 Yeah.  
 114 *(high-pitched)* Is it okay to feel sa:d.)  
 115 Yeah.  
 116 *(high-pitched)* Okay.)  
 117 Okay?  
 118 *(high-pitched)* Okay Fairy Godmother.  
 119 Fairy Godmother,  
 120 would pick some books for us to read?)  
 121 Um,  
 122 Fairy Godmother,  
 123 Where's Annie?  
 124 *(high-pitched)* She moved away Sweet-  
 heart.)  
 125 *(little laugh)*  
 126 Will she come back?  
 127 *(high-pitched)* No Sweetheart.)  
 128 Okay let's go pick some books.  
 129 Um,  
 130 Fairy Godmother,  
 131 where's Annie.  
 132 *(high-pitched)* I told you Sweetheart,  
 133 she moved away.)  
 134 Why:.)  
 135 Okay I'm gonna go make tinkles,



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