Epistemic responsibility predicts developing frame awareness in early childhood: A language socialization perspective

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Abstract

This article examines the emergent relationship between epistemic responsibility and frame awareness in early childhood, wherein a mother uses language socialization practices to guide her child into a new frame. The pair co-constructs the parameters of the new frame through negotiation of epistemic responsibility and remedial interchanges. The analysis demonstrates that these remedial interchanges arise from conflicting understandings of the embeddedness of frames and the epistemic dynamics that these frames entail. The child maintains epistemic primacy in her concurrent play frame, which carries over to the recording activity given that the recording activity is embedded within her larger play frame. I argue that the data predict epistemic responsibility to be acquired earlier than the ability to shift epistemic dynamics outside of role-play. This study contributes to our understanding of frame and epistemic development in early childhood.

Introduction

Goffman (1974) argues that what we should concern ourselves with is not what an individual senses is real, but rather 'what it is he can get caught up in, engrossed in, carried away by; and this can be something he can claim *is really going on* and *yet claim is not*

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real' (p. 6, emphasis my own). Thus, what we claim is 'real' or 'pretend' is nevertheless *what is going on*, and what it is that is going on can be understood as a frame. A frame will have principles of organization that allow us to identify it as a type of social organization, such as the narrative structures, body orientations, and make-up practices that distinguish theatrical plays from films.

While the idea of knowing what it is another person believes to be going on appears quite difficult to articulate as an outsider, *frame analysis* is a tool through which we can examine the set of organizational rules which define social events and, in turn, our involvement in these events (Goffman, 1974). The present study is concerned more specifically with frame *awareness*. That is, when someone does not understand what is going on, that person does not understand the organizing principles that make up the social interaction. From a developmental perspective, language socialization practices between children and their parents are one important tool to facilitate this process (Ruffman et al., 2002). Therefore, I will be taking a language socialization approach to this phenomenon by asking how the development of frame awareness is acquired. Specifically, this analysis is relevant to socialization of frames and the development of frame awareness.

The data presented here come from a larger study investigating sociostylistic creaky voice, in which nine child-parent pairs recorded themselves holding a casual conversation. The first part of the conversation modeled a sociolinguistic interview, but with the researcher replaced by a parent. In the instruction packet that I gave to parents, I asked them to have a casual conversation with their child, and gave suggested prompts such as 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' and 'What is something you're very excited about?' In the second part, each child was asked to voice two characters in a comic strip where the speech bubbles had been left blank.

Listening to these similarly framed interactions across nine speakers (ranging in age from 4 to 11), the youngest, Isabelle,[1] stood apart in her responses to some of the questions her mom asked during their recording. For example, Isabelle refuses Mom's request for elaboration of a game, because they had already 'played statues earlier' (Excerpt 7). All other participants in the study had answered questions and generally engaged in a conversation with their parent, including Isabelle's three siblings. In addition to Isabelle filling out a consent form with her mother, Mom also briefed Isabelle on the study by telling her that they were 'doing a project for someone and that she[, the researcher,] just wanted to hear her talk'. (2020, personal communication) Throughout this paper, I will be interested in knowing what Isabelle believes to be going on, using the theoretical lenses of frame analysis (Goffman, 1974) and epistemic discourse analysis.

Epistemic discourse analysis is concerned with the management of knowledge in interaction (van Dijk, 2013). This can include holding someone accountable for knowledge they should have, being protective of knowledge about oneself, or negotiating an accurate account of a past event (thus, the current knowledge about the event). While the field of epistemic discourse analysis is multidisciplinary (van Dijk, 2013), linking the various approaches shares the same challenges as with any interdisciplinary venture. As such, the current study provides a link by showing that the management of epistemic responsibility (Stivers et al., 2011) is a key indicator of an individual's awareness of a frame.

Language socialization

Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) discuss language socialization as a form of acquiring social and communicative competence. That is, caregivers play a substantial role in socializing children into determining the appropriate expectations for others' social behaviors (Ochs and Schieffelin, 1984), at least in some Western cultures. This theme will be most relevantly applied to my analysis of how Mom manages multiple frames as she orients Isabelle to the new recording frame.

   The kind of orientations that Isabelle and Mom take, both as understood by themselves and by each other, can be elucidated by way of *positioning* (Davies and Harré, 1999). That is, the storyline in which participants place themselves and others in conversation aids us in reaching an understanding of the co-constructed nature of the interaction. Positioning sheds light on how each person views and projects themselves, as well as how they are received and understood by others. In a frame, then, each person takes up a position that is both self-constructed and ratified (or rejected) by another.

Structure of a frame

Adding to the structure of a frame, Goffman (1974) invites us to consider a frame as constituted of multiple rekeyings, or *layers*. The outermost layer is the *rim*, which Goffman (1974) defines as the representation of the activity in the real world, regardless of the complexities of the inner layers. Thus, the rim comprises a broadly defined set of organizational rules that is recognized by others who are outside of the frame. This visual will become useful in the subsequent analysis, as the frame of the current data is one that is recognizable from the rim as an interview. Additionally, *limits* (Goffman, 1974) sets the parameters for possible exchanges within a frame. These limits are tacitly recognized and adhered to in an interaction. For example, the limits of a frame differ substantially between two interlocutors if one perceives teasing as combat and the other perceives it as play (Bateson, 1972). Taken together, *layers*, *rim*, and *limits* add depth to our understanding of frame analysis.

   Further, Goffman's (1959) notion of *regions* provides valuable insight as to how Isabelle comports herself during her conversation with Mom, as well as how she understands the presence of the recorder. Goffman (1959) uses the terms *front* and *back* regions to denote, respectively, the place where a performance is given for an audience, and the place where the performer expects no audience. We can contextualize the idea of regions with an example of a sales associate at an expensive dress shop, from whom customers might expect a friendly demeanor and more formal speech. By contrast, the back region of a sales associate might be drastically different – perhaps they are sullen and detached in the stock room. These back region behaviors will involve a less formal linguistic register and would likely be a detriment to sales and commission rates; thus, this kind of discourse is kept hidden from the front region. Even further, any transition between the front and back regions is also kept hidden from the audience (see *impression management* in Goffman, 1959: 116). These regions, of course, extend beyond dress shops to nearly any aspect of life. Of focus here is that of home and family life.

Epistemics

In the realm of family discourse, the idea of pretend play (more specifically, role-play) is explored with an eye to frames in Gordon's (2002) work on talk between a mother and child. Crucially, role-play is contingent on the simulation of another person's identity (Fein, 1981). In her study, Gordon describes how the interlocutors' role-playing is a blend of both literal and play frames for both mother and child. Gordon (2002) shows how both mother and child draw on prior texts and metamessage signaling to create and embed play frames. Thus, Goffman's idea of *layered frames* is demonstrated at quite a complex level, and by a young child (age 2;11) no less. Sidnell (2011) also discusses make-believe as a publicly-available system of practices, which translates well to Goffman's (1974) understanding of a frame. Further, Sidnell (2011) argues that make-believe is *morally ordered*. This has direct consequences for who can hold *epistemic primacy*, or the primary rights to create and modify organizing principles in the development of events (Raymond and Heritage, 2006; Sidnell, 2011). Additionally, other actors may propose organizing principles if they hold *shared epistemic rights*. In Sidnell's (2011) data, this is demonstrated during an exchange between two children in which one reports that the horse within their make-believe world is shot, to which the other child vehemently objects. In the sequence that follows, the two children negotiate the possibilities of their make-believe world, calling into question who has the epistemic rights to decide the rules of their game.

While the present data do not explicitly deal with a make-believe activity, I will discuss pretend epistemic dynamics in terms of *epistemic access* (Heritage, 2012a). Epistemic access refers to a person's access to a territory of information relative to their interactant, such that they are more knowledgeable (K+) or less knowledgeable (K−) than the other at any given time. This relative access, then, determines the person's *epistemic status* (Heritage, 2012a, 2013) about some information. Importantly, epistemic status is relational in nature, both to other interactants and to the time and space in which it exists. In this way, epistemic statuses are situationally negotiated by all participants in each interaction (Mondada, 2013). Thus, a person's epistemic status is the degree to which they are knowledgeable about something, given the positioning of persons relative to a domain of knowledge.

Epistemic status can also be falsely presented, as Ilie (2001) discusses in her analysis of talk show interviews. Because the recording activity in the current data loosely resembles an interview, this analysis draws on Ilie's (2001) conceptualization of *semi-institutional discourse*. Ilie (2001) outlines the social practices that govern interviews as both conventionally and spontaneously structured within a particular participant configuration, in which one participant might present as less knowledgeable than the other for the benefit of an audience. Because of this complicated mix of epistemic configurations, reconciling the different frames may be difficult for a young child. Of central importance in this analysis is determining when Isabelle adheres to the epistemic dynamics of the frame that is entailed by her positioning as the interviewee, given the general understanding of an interview frame. What I mean by the epistemic dynamics of an interview frame is those interactions which Mom presents as unknowing of aspects of Isabelle's life that she indeed does know in real life, and for which Isabelle expects her to know. As I will demonstrate, this has consequences for a functional epistemic engine (Heritage, 2012b),

in which pieces of knowledge are tossed back and forth until both interlocutors reach equilibrium. These sequences are driven by the epistemic imbalances between interlocutors, whether they are *on the record* (meant to be heard by the audience) or *off the record* (meant to be hidden from the audience) (Heritage, 2012b).

In the current data, Mom asks Isabelle questions that she already knows the answer to in real life but were instead asked for my benefit as the researcher (e.g. 'what's your name?'). Mom, who is a mutual contact of mine, knew that the purpose of the recording session was to record as much of Isabelle's speech as was comfortable for her. Isabelle responds to some of Mom's questions with confusion, thus providing evidence that Isabelle holds Mom responsible for knowledge that she should already have. Therefore, Isabelle displays adherence to *epistemic responsibility* (Stivers et al., 2011), but this is relatively static – when a change in frame entails an epistemic shift, she maintains her pre-shift understanding. In this way, Isabelle does not recognize or ratify her mom's shifted epistemic status in the new interview-styled frame. The upsetting mismatch of epistemic statuses can be understood as opposite of what a child would expect their parent to attend to regarding the child's life. That is, being a parent entails epistemic access to sets of knowledge that inform and constitute the relationship between a child and a parent (Raymond and Heritage, 2006) and thus renders the parent's epistemic status as knowledgeable about most aspects of the child's life. As such, we can understand knowledge as a 'moral domain with important implications for managing social relationships'. (Stivers et al., 2011: 19) Epistemic responsibility becomes particularly apparent when one interlocutor calls out another's failure to recognize the *common ground* (Enfield, 2006) otherwise understood as assumed epistemic access. Given the particular relationship between a child and parent, the negotiation of epistemic responsibility between a young child and her mom could very well provide insight into the emergent awareness of self and others in early childhood. In this way, I argue that the management of epistemic responsibility (Stivers et al., 2011) is a key indicator of an individual's awareness of a frame.

Summary of introduction

Thus far, I have introduced the theoretical concepts that will guide the analysis of the data below. To this end, I will apply concepts from Goffman's (1974) *frame analysis* to answer questions of Isabelle's adherence to *epistemic responsibility* (Stivers et al., 2011) when presented with differences in *epistemic status* (Heritage, 2012a) between herself and her mother. Throughout this paper, I will also show how Mom uses implicit socialization practices to guide Isabelle into this new frame and its epistemic parameters. The genre of this data is grounded in related work on make-believe (Sidnell, 2011) and role-play (Gordon, 2002), as well as interview-styled discourse (Ilie, 2001).

Methodology

The data presented in this paper were remotely collected for a larger study according to protocols approved by the Georgetown University institutional review board (study #2159), including informed written consent from participating children and adults. Child and parent pairs

recorded themselves having a conversation that was loosely structured on a set of questions I had previously provided, which were intended to elicit casual talk from the child. Although I was in close communication with those who participated in the study, I was nevertheless absent from the data collection itself due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is relevant during my discussion of *audience*. The pair whose data is used in this paper is a 4-year-old child, Isabelle, who is the youngest of four siblings. Her mother, Mom, toggles between asking Isabelle questions and playing 'dollies' with her. The total amount of time of speech recorded between these two speakers was about 9 minutes, all of which was considered for analysis in this paper.[2] The sample size of the present work is small; however, the detailed quality of the analysis and its subsequent claims merits further work to expand this line of inquiry.

Given that I am primarily interested in Isabelle's understanding of the frame and its constitutive epistemic dynamics, segments where Isabelle expresses confusion or distress (usually regarding an interactional offense[3]) were selected for this paper. As a unit of analysis, I specifically examine question and answer adjacency pairs, since this is a site for rule-governed information exchange (Schegloff, 2007; Schegloff and Sacks, 1973).

Analysis

This analysis will explore two hypotheses. The first is that Isabelle is not aware of the interview frame at all, which entails that she is not aware of the rules governing this interaction. The second hypothesis is that Isabelle is aware of only the recording frame which is part of the larger interview frame, and that the frame structures for the two participants differ. More succinctly, Isabelle and Mom are operating in different structures of embedded frames, despite overlapping recording frames. I will begin by disproving the first hypothesis through discussing how Isabelle discursively recognizes the recording frame within her play frame. Although I will show that she is aware of the recording frame, her resistance to Mom's information requests remains unclear. Therefore, I will extend the analysis to the epistemic limits of Isabelle's frame. Finally, I will account for exceptions to this pattern of blocked information requests (i.e. when Isabelle readily answers Mom's questions).

The parameters of Isabelle's frame

In this section, I will elucidate the parameters of Isabelle's recording frame. I will look at evidence for what she recognizes to be part of the frame, especially in relation to a play frame, given that she concurrently engages in play activities during the recording. I will also look at how Isabelle orients to an imagined audience via the presence of the recorder. This will also indicate how Isabelle conceives of the frame; indeed, what she believes to be *going on*.

At the beginning of their conversation, Isabelle requests orientation to the interview frame (in itself a metadiscursive social practice). The drawn-on intonation contours follow Tannen's (1984(2005)) *Conversational Style* (p. 85).

(1)

```
01   ISA:   Uh –
02          Mom,
```

```
03          what are we doing again?
04    MOM:  <softly laughing>What's your name, sweetheart?>
05    ISA:  Isabelle.
06    MOM:  What's your last name?
07    ISA:  Petrovick.
```

08   MOM: `<CDS>`Very goo:d.>

Here, Isabelle asks 'what are we doing again?', which Mom does not answer, but rather asks for information that is arguably a basic question in an interview. Of note here is that Mom is asking for information that she already has epistemic access to, which Isabelle surely recognizes. However, Isabelle does not reject this proposed parameter of the new frame and provides her name in line 5. This could largely be due to Mom's use of the term of endearment, 'sweetheart', in line 4, which does facework in mitigating her threat to Isabelle's negative face; that is, Mom's added term of endearment addresses Isabelle's desire for her autonomy to be respected and recognized (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This conversational strategy of orienting to face ('facework') thus cushions Mom's known-answer question in line 4. We can also understand this as a component of a *remedial interchange*; specifically, 'sweetheart' shows that Mom is aware of, and seeks to remedy, a possible offense to Isabelle. Additionally, Mom provides encouraging feedback to Isabelle's performance in line 8 using an intonation contour indicating child directed speech (CDS), which we can understand as the third part of an initiation–response–feedback (IRF) sequence that is typical in educational (Mehan, 1979; Schegloff, 2007; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975) as well as interview (Heritage, 1985) settings. This sequence also ameliorates Mom's epistemic status, in that she is positioning herself not as unknowing, but as a teacher of frame socialization. Because Mom indicates that her lack of knowledge must be accounted for, Isabelle's conception of the responsibility dynamics between herself and Mom is ratified. In the following excerpt, Isabelle questions the nature of the interview frame.

In this new frame, Isabelle must also manage her *regions*, which is a consequence of this interaction having a (non-participating) audience. I argue that Isabelle's whispered delivery in line 14 below ('Can I – why can't I press it.') is meant to be off-the-record, because it is addressed to Mom and the only possible listener left to exclude is the recorder. I take this to be evidence that Isabelle is aware of an audience. Whether Isabelle conceives of the recorder as purely a mechanism that hears (but does not think) or as someone on the other line (i.e. a human researcher who will listen to it later) implicates different management of her regions. That is, a mechanism that only hears would not entail region management, whereas someone on the other line would entail more region management than if it were only Isabelle speaking with her mother in private. Below, Isabelle orients to the recorder as something she wants to 'press':

(2)

```
09    ISA:  Mhm.
10          [<whispered>Mom can I->]
11    MOM:  [You don't think] it's hard at all?
```

```
12   ISA:  Nope.
13   MOM:  Okay.
14 → ISA:  <whispered>Can I- why can't I press it.>
```

Here, Isabelle orients to the recorder as an object of the *back region* through her use of whispering, which she gives Mom access to as well. Thus, Isabelle successfully understands and complies with *some* parameters of the interview frame, in that she treats her request as one that should not be performed for her audience. That is, talk about the interview itself is a back region matter, as it would break the façade of performing for an audience. Although Isabelle was unsuccessful in concealing her passage from the front to back regions, she demonstrates her ability to move between and operate within both regions. Further, this may give argument to Isabelle's treatment of this recording as a performance, in which the front and back regions are kept separate. Although this is similar to region management typical of interviews, the activity of recording is not bound to interviews alone. Rather, recording is an act of audio preservation that has longevity beyond the present moment and which may be listened to by others. Thus, we can understand Isabelle's region management as evidence for her awareness of an audience being an element of the recording frame.

In line 14, Isabelle refers to the recorder as something to 'press', which may lend to an argument that she is orienting more to the mechanical actions of this frame than the discursive ones (which she had trouble remembering, e.g. 'What do we do again?'). Further, this lends evidence to her orientation to the frame as one of play, in that the recorder is an object to be manipulated, much like a toy. Below is a further example of how Isabelle and Mom orient to the recorder, as well as Isabelle's adherence to her play frame.

(3)

```
15   ISA:  Get out of here!
16         Megan.
17 →       We are recording something.
18   MEG:  /Playing dolls./
19 → ISA:  We're playing dolls together.
20   MEG:  K.
21   ISA:  A:nd let's go play dolls now, mom.
22   MOM:  Where are we gonna play dolls?
23   ISA:  Over there!!
24   MOM:  Let's go then!
25         I'm ready.
26   ISA:  <singing>Hm hm hm hm>
27   MOM:  The point is for her to just hear YOU talk, peanut.
28   ISA:  <laughing>You> can turn that off now, Mom.
29   MOM:  <laughs> Are you done?
30   ISA:  Yes.
```

At the prompting of her sister entering the room, Isabelle presents a paralleled structure of what it is she believes to be going on (lines 17 and 19) – 'recording something' and 'playing dolls together'. Because these utterances are expressed in successive, similarly structured ways, I argue that this is evidence of Isabelle's orientation to the recording as

a play activity. This is further supported by Isabelle's prompt rejection of the recording activity in line 27 ('you can turn that off now') in favor of playing dolls. In this sequence, Mom again mitigates her frame socialization with 'peanut' in line 27, similar to 'sweetheart' in line 4. Therefore, Isabelle's rejection of the continued interview frame contributes to the argument that Isabelle orients to this activity as play (and thus, a play frame), given her focus on the recorder as an object ('that') rather than a researcher ('her'). This is also supported by Isabelle's parallel treatment of recording and playing dolls as interchangeable play activities.

Thus far, I have argued that Isabelle is aware of an audience and may be orienting to the recording activity as play. Mom, meanwhile, continues to attempt to guide Isabelle to the parameters of the interview frame while also managing the audience's view. This directly relates to Tannen and Wallat's (1993) work on a pediatrician's frame management during a child's visit to her office. During the pediatrician's examination of the child, she not only manages the two frames of the actual examination with the child and her explanation to her mother, but she also orients to a third frame of a video recorder that will later be used as educational material for future medical residents.

Within this frame socialization dynamic, we can understand Mom's engagement in play as a way to access Isabelle's recording frame. That is, Isabelle's recording frame is embedded within her larger play frame. I argue that Mom's interview-related questions and proposals are more easily accepted by Isabelle when the recording activity is structured in a way that resembles play, especially if Isabelle is given epistemic primacy. Of note in the following exchange is Mom's agreement to go along with Isabelle's proposed activity, which effectively ratifies Isabelle's position as the director of the frame and its parameters, akin to the epistemic rules of make-believe as laid out by Sidnell (2011). In Excerpt 4 below, Mom follows Isabelle's lead and asks about playing dolls:

(4)

```
31   MOM:  <laughs> Are we gonna play dollies?
32   ISA:  Yeah?
33   MOM:  Who are you gonna be?
34   ISA:  U::m
35         I've got a few dollies out there that I'm gonna play.
36         Oh I've got a doll out there that .
37         I was gonna play and you're gonna pla::y the baby.
38         That's the dau- the daughter.
39         The baby's the daughter.
40   MOM:  Yeah.
41   ISA:  Mhm.
```

Here, Isabelle has no qualms about this proposed activity, and readily engages in directing the make-believe activity in lines 34–39. This is a clear instantiation of the metamessage of role play, an embedded frame within a larger frame (Gordon, 2002), which presents as the rim as it is contextualized in the real world. Thus, this interview frame contains layers, which are differently ordered for Isabelle and Mom. Isabelle has consistently oriented to play, rather than all of the parameters of an interview. Instead, Isabelle engages in only the recording aspect of the interview frame, which does not necessitate the epistemic dynamics typical of
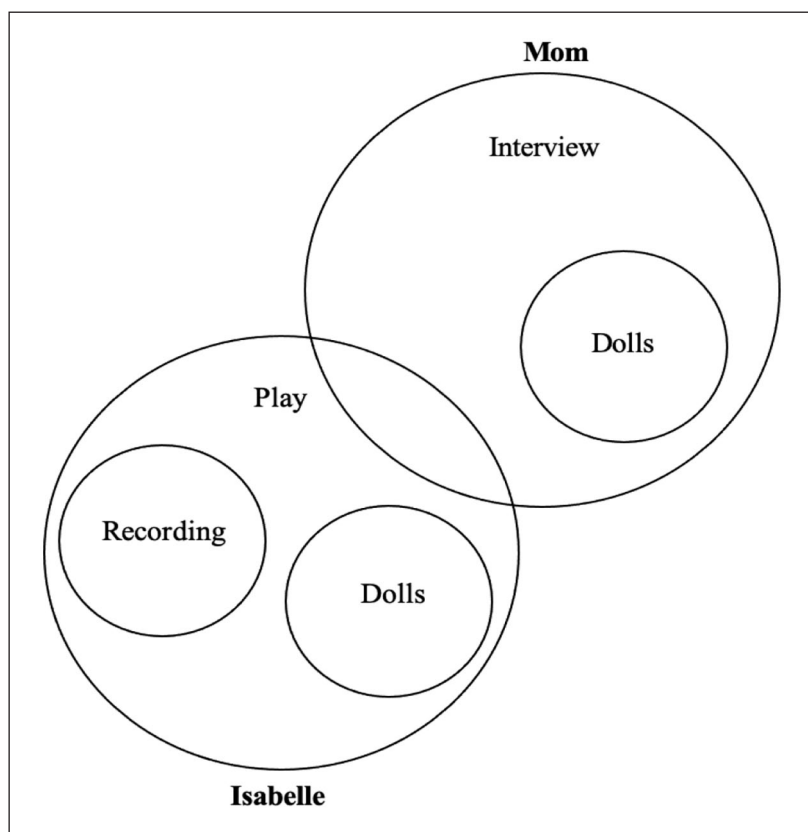
Figure 1. Isabelle's and Mom's embedded frames.

an interview. Recording appears to be a concurrent activity with playing dolls and is therefore encompassed within the larger frame (and thus, *rim*) of play (Figure 1). Mom, meanwhile, orients to the interview as the larger frame, and engages with Isabelle's doll game as a smaller activity within it. Therefore, both Isabelle and Mom are engaged in the recorded activity, but with different structures of embeddedness. For this reason, I will now refer to Isabelle's *recording* frame as distinct from Mom's *interview* frame.

As the data suggest, Isabelle adheres quite strongly to the imagined world of play. In the following excerpt, Mom asks Isabelle who she likes to play with, to which Isabelle responds with a kind of obviousness in her intonation.

(5)

```
42    MOM:  Like who?
43→a        Who's your favorite person to play with.

44→b ISA:  <high-pitched>My family!>
```

```
45   MOM:   <laughs><laughing>Who's in your family, sweet pea.>
46→b ISA:   Abby, you::.
47→b        That's who I like to play with. .
48          [<quick inhale>] Oh! And Danny and Davie. .
49   MOM:   [Bu-]
50   ISA:   And Dad.
```

This excerpt illuminates two main points. In line 47 ('That's who I like to play with'), Isabelle repeats Mom's question of who her 'favorite person to play with' is after listing her sister and Mom, and before listing her remaining family members in lines 48 and 50. This adherence to the question of play (via repetition) speaks to the strength of the play frame for Isabelle. The second aspect that I would like to point out is that Isabelle expects Mom to know who she likes to play with, as evidenced by the intonation contour in line 44. Mom again provides a remedial interchange for this breach of epistemic responsibility by responding with the address term 'sweet pea' in line 45. As I will discuss further in the next section, this indicates that Isabelle's frame has certain epistemic limits. That is, Isabelle's management of epistemic responsibility indicates her parameters of the recording frame, and therefore, her awareness of the frame itself.

To round out this section, I maintain that the evidence I have presented lend to an argument that Isabelle does not engage with the parameters that typically define such an interview frame. Instead, Isabelle looks to her mom for guidance in an activity that is embedded within her play frame. Despite Isabelle's explicit request for orientation to the interview frame in Excerpt 1 ('what are we doing again?'), Mom responds with *implicit* guidance alone ('what's your name, sweetheart?'). I argue that Isabelle is operating in a different structure of embedded frames than her mother. That is, the organizing principles of the recording activity are quite different from Mom's. I will explore these organizing principles more in the following section, in which I examine how the parameters of Isabelle's frame have epistemic limits.

The epistemic limits of the frame's parameters

In this section, I will explore what Isabelle deems an acceptable interview question. I will look at (1) how Isabelle holds Mom accountable for information she has epistemic access to, and (2) what such accountability means for her awareness (or lack thereof) of the epistemics of the interview frame. In Excerpt 6, I present an example of Isabelle's use of epistemic accountability. Mom has just asked Isabelle what she wants to be when she grows up. Mom had already asked this question a few minutes before, likely due to the cognitive load of managing different audiences and their associated frames (comparable to a minor slip-up of frame and register in the pediatrician's office of Tannen and Wallet's (1993) data). Isabelle resists the information request, causing the epistemic engine to sputter, as we see in line 51.

(6)

```
51   ISA:   <whispered> I already know I wanna be a doctor.>
52   MOM:   <whispered> Yeah.
53          You're gonna be doctor, okay.>
```

In lines 52–53, it is particularly intriguing to note that Mom joins Isabelle in the back region by her whispered acknowledgment of Isabelle's utterance in line 51. This could be an attempted compensation for Isabelle's perceived negative face threat (Brown and Levinson, 1987), as indicated by her situatedness in the back region (whispering) as well as her slight frustration of the question ('I *already* know'), which she perhaps expects Mom to know. Of course, this speaks to the morally ordered nature of Isabelle's recording frame, and thus, Mom's epistemic responsibility to know this information of her daughter.

I will now extend this line of inquiry to what this means for Isabelle's awareness of the epistemics of the interview frame. In the following excerpt, Mom asks Isabelle about her favorite play activities. 'Statue' is a game that Isabelle and her sister play, and the innerworkings of it are not readily apparent to those outside of the family. To this end, Mom asks Isabelle to explain the game, presumably for my benefit as a researcher outside of the family.

(7)

```
54    MOM:   <laughs> What's your favorite thing to play, baby.
55    ISA:   Dolls a:nd statue::: .
56    MOM:   What is—
57           what do you mean by statue.
58    ISA:   We played statue earlier!
59    MOM:   I know, but you have to tell me about it.


60    ISA:   Well, me and Megan were statue:s?


61           a:::nd I loved playing it?
```

Beyond a request for information, lines 56–57 also contain a repair which reformulates the question asked. This may be an indicator that Mom is stepping into potentially problematic waters in the common ground. Asking 'What is statue?' displays a complete lack of knowledge (K−) of the game. Instead, Mom reformulates her question to ask Isabelle about the game from Isabelle's perspective, which distances Mom from the epistemic responsibility of knowing what the game is ('what do *you mean* by statue'). Further, this demonstrates Mom's recognition that she and Isabelle have different understandings of the present frame. Nevertheless, Mom's question assumes some level of not knowing the game, which Isabelle clearly disputes in line 58 ('We played statues earlier!'). Mom's 'I know' in line 59 ratifies Isabelle's objection in line 58, therefore validating Isabelle's awareness of Mom's apparent change in knowledge of the game (K+ to K−). This epistemic symmetry (Mikesell et al., 2017) also serves a remedial function as Mom continues directing the frame using the obligatory 'have to' in line 59. This serves to remind Isabelle of the frame of the interaction. Isabelle responds with 'well' in line 60, indicating her acceptance of the proposed frame as she formulates her response (Schiffrin, 1985). Her acceptance, however, does not necessarily extend beyond giving the information requested. The rising intonation in Isabelle's description of the statues game in lines 60 and 61 indicate her continued resistance to Mom's question. Again, Isabelle's management of epistemic responsibility indicates awareness and epistemic limits of the present frame.

There are two important aspects of Mom's knowledge in this excerpt that I argue are not recognized or ratified by Isabelle. First, Mom presents herself as unknowing (K−) of aspects of Isabelle's life that Isabelle expects her to know. Second, Isabelle's expectation indicates not only Mom's *rights* to such knowledge, but her *responsibility* (Stivers et al., 2011) as well. Thus, Isabelle displays her recognition of epistemic responsibility, but not necessarily as is relevant to unexpected frame parameters which necessitates an imagined world in which epistemic responsibility has become irrelevant.

In this part of the discussion, I have shown that Isabelle does not ratify Mom's claim of lack of epistemic access within a new frame. Although Isabelle demonstrates awareness of the frame itself (e.g. by orienting toward the recorder), she does not demonstrate awareness of the epistemic shifts that are entailed by this new frame. Thus, Isabelle's confusion can be understood as a break from the epistemic obligations she expects of her mother given the social relationship between the two of them.

Evidence to the contrary? When Isabelle ratifies information requests

The issue remains of what it is about asking Isabelle to talk about 'statues', specifically, that is so problematic for the epistemic engine. To answer this, I will present an excerpt that was *not* problematic for the epistemic engine. In it, Mom asks for Isabelle's predictions of her future family life. In Excerpt 8 below, we see that hypothetical, personal questions in which Mom asks for Isabelle's stance are licit for Isabelle. I argue that this contributes to the idea that the interview frame is more akin to play for Isabelle than what is socially structured as an interview (in adult life).

(8)

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62   MOM:  Is he gonna have dark hair? like Daddy?
63         or blonde hair like you.
64   ISA:  Mm I think he's gonna have light hair
65         or black hair
66         I n-
67         light hair or dark hair.
68   MOM:  He's probably gonna have one or the other.
69   ISA:  He:: might have the second.
70         Might have light hair like me.
71   MOM:  Mm K.
72   ISA:  Wait - my hair's dark.
73         Wait no. YOUR hair's dark, MY hair's light. <laughs>
```

The difference between the success of this series of questions and the failure of Mom's earlier questions may lie in the type of information requested. That is, Isabelle holds Mom accountable for information and activities that they have previously discussed or have otherwise participated in together. In contrast, the hypothetical question Mom poses in Excerpt 8 does not refer to known information and is therefore licit for Isabelle. Further, Isabelle's hypothesizing of her future husband's hair color underlyingly has to do with preference for choosing a mate; that is, her opinion of hypothetical events is more akin to her larger play frame than would a factual information exchange.

In this subsection of the analysis, I have presented a question that Isabelle did not reject during the recording activity, which stand in contrast to several of Mom's questions that Isabelle did not comply with. The key differences between these two sets of questions are the lack of known-answers and their resemblance to Isabelle's play frame. In Excerpt 8, Mom asked for Isabelle's stance on hypothetical events. This assumes a degree of epistemic primacy on the part of Isabelle, which resembles the epistemic dynamics of Isabelle's play frame. By examining what was successful in the pair's interaction, we are better able to understand the epistemic limits of Isabelle's recording frame.

Summary of analysis

In this analysis, I have demonstrated that Isabelle is indeed aware of the recording frame. Crucially, this frame is embedded within her larger play frame. This has direct consequences for the parameters of the frame within which she operates. That is, recording is a type of play activity that does not extend to the epistemic dynamic shift that is typical of an interview. Through an analysis of the epistemic parameters of Isabelle's frame, I have shown that her adherence to epistemic responsibility correlates to her apparent rejection of Mom's information requests. The information requests that did not succeed were ones of: prior text or previously given information ('I already told you', 'I already know I wanna be a doctor') and family specific knowledge ('We played statues earlier!'). Isabelle recognizes the presence of an audience but does not conform to the epistemic dynamic of Mom's frame. Isabelle rejects Mom's purported (K−) epistemic status regarding aspects of Isabelle's life, therefore holding Mom accountable for that which she is epistemically responsible. In turn, Mom implicitly orients Isabelle to the interview frame through remedial interchanges, initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequences, and explicit instruction on some aspects of the frame.

One question that succeeded (Excerpt 8) can be understood as a request for Isabelle's stance. The only interview-like question that was *not* of this nature, yet still succeeded, was the earlier example given of Mom asking Isabelle for her name in response to Isabelle's request for orientation to the frame ('What are we doing again?' in Excerpt 1). Crucially, this is the opening of a frame, while the other successful instance was in the middle of the frame. This may be why Mom's initial interview-like request succeeded – it was a response to something that Isabelle had already requested regarding how she should orient to the frame.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Mom does not provide sufficient instruction in orienting Isabelle to her proposed frame of an interview-like conversation. Although this was largely unsuccessul, I argue that this is an instantiation of language socialization into this type of discursive interaction. This is played out as explicit metamessages about the frame ('You just talk to me'); terms of endearment operating as facework and remedial interchanges; epistemic symmetry using 'I know' (Mikesell et al., 2017); child-directed-speech (CDS) and initiation-response-feedback (IRF) three-part structures; and guiding questions (to yes/no rather than open-ended). By employing these discursive devices,

Mom weaves between frames by accounting for the epistemic needs of her audience, but not enough for Isabelle to understand the nature of the interview frame. Crucially, Mom's interview frame is the least embedded – play occurs *within* this frame's parameters. On the other end of the language socialization dynamic, Isabelle orients to the frame's audience (the recorder) largely as an object that listens (therefore you may want to whisper backstage information) but is not necessarily connected to a real person. Further, her concurrent play activity (dolls) and adherence to the story world ('That's who I like to play with') give evidence that what Isabelle largely believes to be going on is *play*. Isabelle's play frame encompasses all other frames in the interaction – recording is an activity within it. For Isabelle, the recording frame entails the same epistemic parameters as the larger play frame. This frame has epistemic limits tied to the positioning of its actors. Further, this positioning is contingent on Isabelle's play frame parameters given that she has epistemic primacy of the make-believe activity. I also discussed how Isabelle is not aware of the social organization of an interview frame as evidenced by her holding Mom accountable for that which Mom is epistemically responsible in real life. Nevertheless, the recording frame is embedded within Isabelle's play frame, given that she does orient to it sometimes (depending on the type of information requested).

To address broader implications of this work, I will now turn to a more specific discussion on what these data mean for the awareness and acquisition of the epistemic domains of frames. Although Mom provides implicit and explicit cues to the organization of the proposed frame, Isabelle largely does not ratify the epistemic dynamics of such. This is largely due to Isabelle's strong adherence to epistemic responsibility and accountability. Therefore, these data support a hypothesis that predicts epistemic responsibility to be acquired earlier than the ability to shift epistemic dynamics outside of role-play. Of course, more work on this topic would help to evaluate the merit of this analysis, as well as continue to illustrate the fascinating aspects of the emergence of frames and epistemic dynamics in childhood. For example, this epistemic dynamic would be worth pursuing with a larger set of data in which young children play the part of the interviewer themselves to see how they reconcile different epistemic statuses with their peers.

The awareness of a common ground, or even an epistemic status outside of one's own, is a cognitive property that is gradually acquired in early childhood. Crucially, Isabelle and Mom's close social tie of child and mother should speak to the complexity of any predictions made from this data. That is, Isabelle may have a higher level of awareness of epistemic responsibility given her specific expectations of her mom. As such, the present study contributes to the larger conversation on cognitive and linguistic development by providing a window into the young mind in real-time conversational data.

Moreover, this paper squarely contributes to the literature on discourse analysis and framing, and especially to work on child language discourse such as that of Gordon (2002) and Sidnell (2011). This paper sought to address Isabelle's confusion of the interview-like conversation, which was primarily elucidated through the application of frame analysis (Goffman, 1974). Specifically, the parameters and epistemic limits of Isabelle's play frame guide us to what is *going on* for Isabelle. Given this, I argue that the management of epistemic responsibility is a key indicator of a person's awareness of a frame and may be acquired earlier than the ability to temporarily shift epistemic dynamics. This paper provides a line-by-line view of the development of frame awareness, as well as

frame management and socialization. Not only does this contribute to our understanding of frames and epistemic dynamics in early childhood, but it can also be understood within the realm of child psychology. To that end, I again call for further inquiry into this rich area of mental, social, and linguistic development.

Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. All participants are referred to by pseudonyms.
2. The full transcript is available as supplementary material.
3. See Goffman's (1971) chapter on 'Remedial Interchanges' for more on this topic.

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