CHAPTER SIX

The Sex–Class Linked Framing
of Talk at Work

*The preceding chapters are sequenced in reverse chronological
order: Chapter one was originally published in 1990, and
chapter five in 1981. This chapter, however, is the most recent
of all. I originally presented it at the Third Berkeley Women
and Language Conference in April 1994, and it was published
in proceedings of that conference. In it, I return to the early
work of Erving Goffman to suggest a new theoretical frame-
work for conceptualizing the relationship between language
and gender. In this framework, ways of speaking are seen as
sex–class linked—that is, linked with the class of women or
the class of men rather than necessarily with individual mem-
bers of that class. As Goffman put it in another, related essay,
the relationship between language and gender is a matter of
"display" rather than "identity."*

*At the time I prepared this paper, I was in the final stages
of writing* Talking From 9 to 5, *which is based on a three-
year study of how women and men talk in the workplace. The
chapter is drawn from that research and includes material that*

also appears in that book. I present and analyze two examples of conversations recorded at work (one between two men, the other among three women) to illustrate, first, how speakers' relative status affects the interactions—both the linguistic strategies they use and how their linguistic strategies are interpreted. Second, I use the same examples to explain the sense in which I regard their linguistic strategies as sex-class linked. In the process, I argue that the concept of framing provides a fruitful theoretical perspective for viewing language and gender. I also show that sex-class linked linguistic strategies are ways of simultaneously balancing the dimensions of status and connection, thus elaborating on the theoretical framework of power and solidarity that I introduced in chapter one.

FOR THE LAST few years I have been concerned with talk in the workplace. When people talk to each other at work, the hierarchical relations among them are more likely to be in focus: one who talks to a boss or to a subordinate is likely to be relatively aware of these alignments. The effect of hierarchical relations on communication in this setting has been a focus of my research. I have also been interested in how gender patterns interact with the influence of hierarchical relations, but I have tried to look at gender patterns obliquely, out of the corner of the eye, rather than head-on. The reason I believe this is the most productive way to look at gender is captured by what Goffman (1977) expressed in the terminology I have borrowed for the title of this paper: ways of talking that pattern by gender are not *sex-linked* but *sex-class linked,* in the sense of being linked to the *class* of women or men rather than necessarily to individual members of these classes.[1] This insight grows out of Goffman's framing approach to interaction, an approach for which I will argue here.

In this chapter, I analyze two examples of office interaction to show how speakers' relative status affects the ways inherently ambiguous and polysemous linguistic strategies are used and inter-

preted, and to show how the particular strategies used by the speakers are sex-class linked. In the process, I attempt to bring together two theoretical frameworks and make the following points about them: 1) understanding language and gender is best approached through the concept of framing; and 2) framing is a way of simultaneously balancing the dimensions of status and connection.

I also offer a corrective to two misconceptions that have surfaced in the gender and language literature: The first is that status and connection are mutually exclusive poles. Rather, both are at play at every moment of interaction; they dovetail and intertwine. The second misconception is that a "cultural difference" approach to gender and language and a "dominance" approach are mutually exclusive and somehow opposed to each other. Rather, dominance relations and cultural influences of all types (gender-related influences as well as many others, such as geographic region, ethnicity, class, age, and sexual orientation) are at play at every moment of interaction; they, too, dovetail and intertwine.

SEX-CLASS LINKED VS. SEX-LINKED

In an essay entitled "The Arrangement Between the Sexes," Goffman (1977) points out that we tend to say "sex-linked" when what we mean is "sex-class-linked":

> In referring to an attribute of gender, it is easy to speak of matters that are "sex-linked" (or "sex-correlated") in order to avoid the more cumbersome locution, "sex-class-linked." And, of course, it is very natural to speak of "the sexes," "cross-sex," "the other sex," and so forth. And so I shall. But this is a dangerous economy, especially so since such glossing fits perfectly with our cultural stereotypes. (305)

In other words, certain behaviors in certain cultures are more likely to be associated with members of the class of females or males, but people come to regard such behaviors as associated not with the

class of females or males but rather with each individual who is a member of that class. In Gregory Bateson's (1972, 1979) terms, it is an error of logical types. For example, Bateson (1979:46) observes "that there is a deep gulf between statements about an identified individual and statements about a class. Such statements are of *different logical type,* and prediction from one to the other is always unsure."[2] This, I believe, is what is intended by sex-linked as distinguished from sex-class linked. It is, in Goffman's elegant phrasing, a "dangerous economy" because the behavior comes to be thought of as an individual phenomenon, as if it were linked to a chromosome, rather than a social phenomenon.

Capturing this crucial distinction in another set of terms, Goffman ([1976]1979) explains that ways of talking and behaving that are associated with gender are a matter not of identity but of *display*. In other words, the behavior is not a reflection of the individual's nature (identity) but rather of some performance that the individual is accomplishing (display):

> Instead of having to play out an act, the animal, in effect, provides a readily readable expression of his situation, specifically his intent, this taking the form of a "ritualization" of some portion of the act itself, and this indication (whether promise or threat) presumably allows for the negotiation of an efficient response from, and to, witnesses of the display. (1)

Interaction, then, is a *ceremony* made up of *rituals,* which Goffman defines as "perfunctory, conventionalized acts through which one individual portrays his regard for another to that other."

This leads us to framing, an aspect of which is *alignment.* Goffman goes on to explain that "emotionally motivated behaviors become formalized—in the sense of becoming simplified, exaggerated, and stereotyped," and consequently, more efficient. Crucially, he continues, such displays "provide evidence of the actor's *alignment* in a gathering, the position he seems prepared to take up in what is about to happen in the social situation." Goffman elaborates:

> Displays don't communicate in the narrow sense of the term; they don't enunciate something through a language of symbols openly established and used solely for that purpose. They provide evidence of the actor's alignment in the situation. And displays are important insofar as alignments are. (1)

This is a radically different view of language than is common not only in language and gender research but in the field of linguistics in general, where language is seen as a code. As Becker (1995) argues, the code metaphor gives us a concept of language as inert, much like the *conduit* metaphor for language that Reddy (1979) has described. In contrast, Becker suggests we think of language as languaging—a way of *doing* something. Framing, then, is one thing we are doing with language—displaying our alignments.

Our tendency to locate gender differences in the individual rather than in the relation among individuals in a group also reflects American ideology. In this spirit, Maccoby (1990) points out that when she and Jacklin published their classic survey, *The Psychology of Sex Differences* (1974), they concluded that research had uncovered no significant sex differences. Looking back in 1990, however, Maccoby notes that this finding, besides reflecting the ideological climate of the times, emerged because the studies they had surveyed were looking for differences in individual abilities. When subsequent research (their own and others') examined the behavior of boys and girls in interaction, highly significant patterns of difference became evident.

Even power itself tends to be conceptualized by Americans as inherent in an individual, in contrast to the way it is conceptualized by members of cultures who tend to regard it as a social phenomenon. Wetzel (1988) points out that the Japanese see power as a matter of connection—the individual's place in a hierarchical network.

The most fruitful approaches to examining gender and language, then, do not try to link behavior directly to individuals of one sex or the other but rather begin by asking how interaction is

framed—in Goffman's terms, what *alignments* speakers are taking up. Davies and Harré (1990), in a similar spirit, ask how speakers are *positioning* themselves with respect to the situation—and then ask where women and men tend to fall in this pattern.

In one exemplary study, Smith (1993) compares the sermons of ten men and four women in a preaching lab at a Baptist seminary. She began by determining the various *footings* the preachers took in relation to the texts they were interpreting. In other words, she asked how they positioned themselves in relation to the material they were preaching about and the task they were performing. One footing she identified was a style in which speakers foregrounded their authority by putting themselves "on record" as interpreters of the text and by calling attention to the fact that they were in the position of authority, interpreting the text for the audience. To emphasize that the gender pattern is a tendency, not an absolute divide, Smith illustrates this "on-record" style with a sermon performed by a woman, Meg; however, she notes that Meg was the only woman who adopted this style, along with four men. For example, Meg posed a question and then said, "I've done a lot of thinking about that and I came up with several possible reasons." At another point Meg said, "I'd like to insert something here." In contrast, another woman spoke as if she were telling a story to a group of children. She began, "A little boy grew up in a Samaritan village. He had a happy childhood and sometimes his parents would take him to the neighboring villages, to market, or occasionally they might even go to Galilee to the sea for a vacation." A third woman, rather than stepping outside the text to comment on it in her own voice, retold the story in a literary register. For example, she said, "The clarity of the directions that God gave him were as a stab in his heart." The fourth woman downplayed her authority by maintaining a "low-profile" stance.

By asking first what alignments the preachers took up to their audiences and the material about which they preached, and only then asking which alignments were adopted, respectively, by the women and men in her study and what linguistic strategies were associated with those alignments, Smith arrived at a much fuller understanding of gender patterns than she would have had she asked only what linguistic features appeared in the sermons preached by the women and men in her study.

In another exemplary study, Kuhn (1992) examines the classroom discourse of professors at American and German universities. She noticed that the American women professors she taped were more assertive in giving their students direct orders at the beginning of the term. This initially surprised her, but then she concluded that it was because they spoke of "the requirements" of the course as if these were handed down directly from the institution, and then told the students how they could fulfill the requirements. For example, one woman professor said, "We are going to talk about the requirements." Kuhn constrasts this with the men professors in her study, who also handed out lists of requirements in the form of syllabi but made it explicit that the syllabi represented decisions they personally had made. For example, one man said, "I have two midterms and a final. And I added this first midterm rather early to get you going on reading, uh, discussions, so that you will not fall behind." In Smith's terms, he put himself "on record" as the authority who authored the requirements. Thus the apparently unexpected verbal behavior of the women, who spoke more assertively than the men, was explained by the alignments they were taking up to the course requirements and the students they were addressing.

The approach I am describing as related to framing is also found in Ochs' "Indexing Gender" (1992). Ochs argues that individuals assume stances that become associated in a given cultural context with being male or female.[3]

Finally, I borrow Bateson's (1979) concept of "the corner of the eye" to capture the idea that some phenomena are understood best when they are not looked at directly; rather, they come into view when some other aspect of the world is the object of direct focus.[4] This is the sense in which I suggest that the relation between gender and language may be best understood when the focus of attention is on framing.

STATUS AND CONNECTION

The second aspect of the theoretical framework I am proposing is the notion that status and connection are intertwined and both ambiguous and polysemous rather than mutually exclusive or opposed to each other. I develop this idea at length in chapter one. The discussion in this section is a condensed version.[5]

In research as well as in conventional wisdom, Americans have a tendency to conceptualize the relationship between status and connection as unidimensional and mutually exclusive. This can be illustrated in the form of a continuum with two opposite poles, shown in Figure 6.1.

The assumption that closeness entails equality can be seen in Americans' metaphorical use of the terms "sisters" and "brothers" to indicate a relationship that is close and equal. Thus, saying "We are like sisters" is intended to mean, "There are no status games between us." In contrast, hierarchical relationships are assumed to preclude closeness. Thus in my own interviews and observations in work settings, I was frequently told that being friends with subordinates or superiors is either impossible or problematic.

My claim is that we are dealing with not a single dimension but a multidimensional grid (Figure 6.2). This multidimensional grid illustrates that hierarchy/equality is one axis, and closeness/distance another.[6] Americans seem to conceptualize relationships along an axis that runs from the upper right to the lower left: from hierarchical and distant to equal and close. We put business relations in the upper right quadrant and family and close friendship in the lower left (Figure 6.3).

power	solidarity
asymmetry	symmetry
hierarchy	equality
distance	closeness

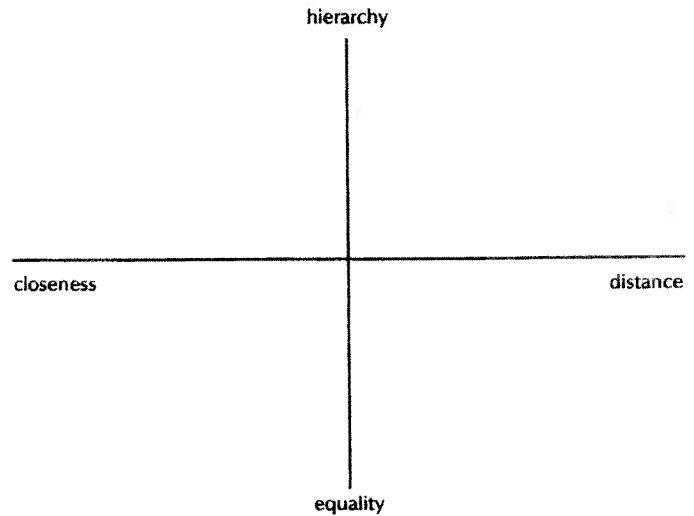Figure 6.1. *Unidimensional model*
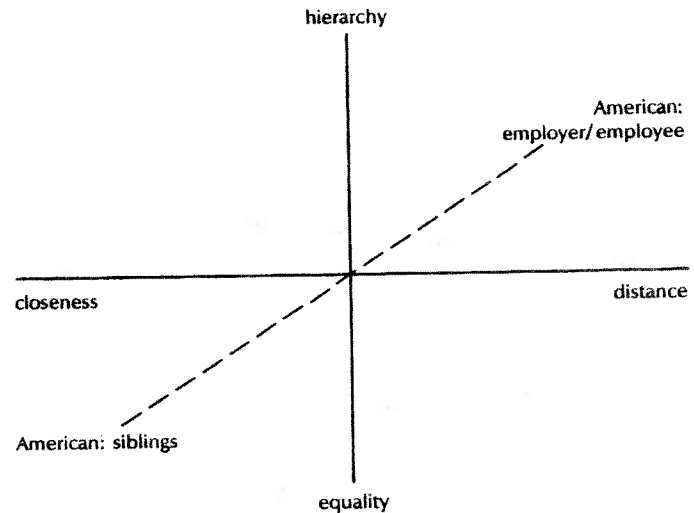
Figure 6.2. *Multidimensional model*

Figure 6.3. *American view of relationships*

In contrast, the Japanese, like members of many other cultures such as the Chinese and Javanese, tend to conceptualize relationships along an axis that runs from the upper left to the lower right: from hierarchical and close to equal and distant. The archetype of a close, hierarchical relationship for members of these cultures is the mother–child constellation (Figure 6.4).[7]

To further complicate matters, or perhaps reflecting the complex relations represented by these grids, linguistic strategies are both ambiguous and polysemous in exhibiting status and connection in interaction. In other words, a given utterance may be intended or interpreted in terms of either connection or status (hence ambiguity), or may reflect elements of both at the same time (hence polysemy).
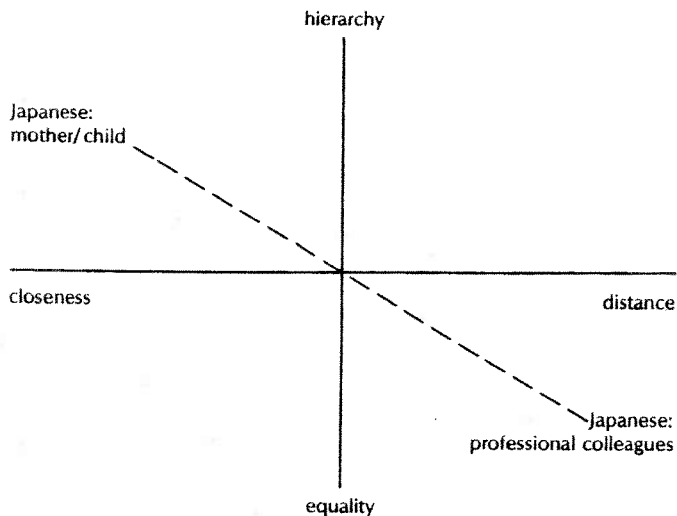

Figure 6.4. *Japanese view of relationships*

WORKPLACE EXAMPLES: BALANCING STATUS AND CONNECTION

In this section I present two examples of workplace interaction, one among men and the other among women, to illustrate how the speakers balance both status and connection, and to suggest that their ways of speaking are sex-class linked, and best understood through a theory of framing.

The first example is from a conversation taped by Lena Gavruseva (1995).[8] The conversation took place in the office of a local newspaper between John, the editor-in-chief, and Dan, a recently hired writer. Dan was walking past John's office, spied him sitting at his desk with his door open, and stepped into the office to engage in friendly chat, which he initiated by asking, "What are you scowling at, John?" In response, John launched a discourse about problems involving someone's computer (making it into an amusing anecdote about how the computer exploded), in the course of which he referred to Dan's computer in the following way:

John: You just have that little shitburner
of an XT.

Soon after, John asked Dan, "How is your computer?" and the following conversation ensued:[9]

Dan: It sucks. I mean
John: Why?
Dan: I- 'Cause it doesn't
John: Why, it's slow?
Dan: No, it's not that.
It's just like there are all sorts of keys
that don't work and stuff.
John: What do you mean keys that don't work.
Dan: Like the caps lock doesn't work.

John: It can- You want it to?

Dan: No, it doesn't.

John: You want it to?

Dan: Okay.

John: All right. What else would you like?

Dan: um I don't know. It was just sort of-

John: No no no, come on.

Dan: Like I can't turn it off because

John: You would like-
you'd like to be able to turn it off?
Why? 'Cause it bothers you?

Dan: and it's it's frozen up on me
like three times.

John: Yeah?

Dan: Yeah.

John: Like is there a pattern?

Dan: No, I mean maybe there is
I haven't noticed it.
I- I don't know.
It hasn't done it for about a week or so,
so don't worry.
I'm just griping.
I'm just griping.
I've never-
I've got no particular complaints
because it- all I need to-
I'm not I'm not one of these,
I'm not a computer junkie
so I don't really care.

John: So if you want your caps lock key to work
there's no problem.
I can come in and do that.

Dan: No, I don't really need a caps lock.

John: It'll take me 25 seconds.

Dan: I'd like to s-
Okay I challenge you to do it.
I think it's broken.
I challenge you, John Ryan.

John: Yes, the John Ryan challenge?
(2 second pause)
You are a fool if you think
you can challenge *me*, Mr. Computer!

In this interaction, connection-focused banter turned into a status-sensitive (and stressful) interchange because of hierarchical relations. During playback, Dan told Gavruseva that he intended his remark, "It sucks," in the spirit of what Jefferson (1988) calls "troubles talk"—a ritual exchange of woes in the service of solidarity. In choosing the vulgar verb "sucks," he took his cue from John's use of the term "shitburner." Because he intended his remark in this spirit, he averred, he was taken aback when John treated his remark as a literal complaint about his computer and offered to remedy the situation.

Because of the paralinguistic and prosodic quality of John's offers—fast-paced and overbearing, from Dan's point of view—Dan became increasingly uncomfortable, a discomfort that peaked when John proclaimed that he could fix the problem in 25 seconds. It is also possible (though this is purely speculative) that John was putting Dan back in his place because he perceived Dan's use of profanity as cheeky, or that he felt obligated, as the boss, to do something about a problem brought to his attention, regardless of the spirit in which it was mentioned. In any case, Dan told Gavruseva that he felt John was "showing him up" and putting him "on the spot." Gavruseva observes that John was framing Dan as a supplicant.

At this point, Dan restored balance by playfully challenging his boss, and the boss agreed to the shift in alignment by playing along. In the excerpt that follows, I suggest that Dan's reframing signalled to the boss that he had stepped over a line, and that John tacitly

agreed to redress the imbalance of power by bonding with Dan as two men who can talk indelicately about bodily functions, and can align themselves in opposition to women.

Knowing that John had been suffering from an intestinal ailment, Dan shifted the topic to John's health. John's surprise at the topic (and frame) shift is evidenced in his initial response, "What's that?":

Dan: How are you feeling today, John?

John: What's that?

Dan: How are you feeling? Are you still—

John: um Actually my guts started grinding
and I thought, "Hey, it's back,"
but I had like a heavy night last night.
I mean I went to bed at six,
and only came out to
like piss and drink water,
and eat a can of tuna fish.
I mean it was bad.
I get a gastro-intestinal thing
at both ends.
It was it was spewing.
It was violent.

Dan: (laughing) Not simultaneously.
Please tell me no.

John: No no no but it was intense.
And it made me so glad
that there was no girlfriend around,
nobody could take care of me.
There's only one fucking thing I hate
it's being sick
and somebody wants to take care of me . . .

With his query about John's health, Dan redirected the conversation away from one that framed Dan as subordinate (both because he needed to report his problems to John and because John declared

---

himself able to fix in 25 seconds a problem that Dan was unable to fix) in favor of a conversation that framed John as potentially one-down (a sufferer of embarrassing physical ailments). John went along with the reframing by recounting the symptoms of his intestinal distress. By talking explicitly about body functions gone awry, he seems to be positioning Dan as an equal: they are now two men who can talk openly about topics they might not discuss if women were present.

John then goes further toward aligning himself with Dan, man to man, by referring to how annoying women can be. Moreover, the very act of choosing the topic and having John accede to it reframes Dan as higher in status than he was in the preceding interchange. At the same time, however, as Gavruseva pointed out to me, John is still positioning himself as someone who does not need help. In this example, then, Dan and John reflect and negotiate their relative status while engaging in office small talk.

Contrast this with the following segment that was taped by Janice Hornyak (in preparation) in connection with her study of discourse in an all-woman office. Tina had been telling a story when June, the mail clerk, entered the office to deliver mail. Tina stopped her narrative and invited June into the room, and into the interaction, by commenting on her clothing. The other women joined in:

June: Hi:.

Tina: Hey! Ah, we gotta see this getup.
Come on in.

Heather: C'mere June!

Tina: She she she's uh...that's cute.

Heather: Lo:ve that beau:tiful blou:se!

Janice: Hey, high fashion today.

Tina: Cool.

June: Hi...I had the blouse /?/
and didn't know what to wear it with.
And I just took the tag off

    and /?/ said /?/
       I'm gonna wear it with a vest.
  Tina: And that hair too.
  Janice: Oh that's neat.
Heather: Is that your Mom's?
[Tina laughs]
  June: No I got this from uh /?/
  Tina: What is it?
  June: /It's from/ Stylo.
  Tina: I've heard of it.
  June: The one in Trader Plaza
      that has all that wild stuff.
Heather: What'd you do to your hair?
  June: Added /?/.
     Judith said you just are bored,
     you have to do something.
[All laugh]

At first glance, this, too, is an instance of office small talk, or what I have called "rapport talk" (Tannen 1990), to refer to conversational discourse in which the phatic function seems to override the informational. Nonetheless, relative status is a pervasive influence on this interaction as well. The complimenting ritual is initiated by Tina, who is the manager of the office as well as the daughter of the company's owner. She is the highest status person in the interaction. June, the mail clerk (and also the intruder into the office) who is the object of the complimenting, is the lowest status person present. Complimenting June on her clothing was a resource by which Tina could include June in the conversation, even though she did not want to include her in the narrative event June interrupted, as Tina might have done if someone of equal status and/or a friend had entered unexpectedly. In other words, complimenting June on her clothing was a conventionalized ritual that Tina could use as a resource to include her and attend to her as a person, even as she

declined to include her in the story-telling event. It is difficult to imagine their alignment reversed: June was not likely to enter with the mail and call out to Tina regarding her clothing. As with John in the computer-fixing segment, the highest status person controlled the framing of the interaction.

The other two speakers' participation can be arrayed along the status dimension as well. Heather is next in status under Tina, and she follows Tina's lead with alacrity. Hers is the most extreme expressive intonation, in contrast to the subdued intonational contours used by June and by Janice, who is a temporary office worker (and the researcher). Thus Janice and June, who have the lowest status, are also the lowest-key in their paralinguistic contours.[10] Keeping a low profile paralinguistically is surely an element of demeanor that both creates and reflects their lower status in this encounter. Furthermore, Janice's two contributions are immediate ratifications of a superior's comments:

      Heather: Lo:ve that beau:tiful blou:se!
→   Janice: Hey, high fashion today.
      Tina: And that hair too.
→   Janice: Oh that's neat.

Thus, at the same time that Janice is aligned with Heather and Tina as complimenters of June's clothing, she is also positioning herself as subordinate to them insofar as her contributions are subdued echoes and ratifications of theirs rather than initiations of utterances that reframe the interaction.

In summary, these two examples illustrate parallel ways of balancing status and connection in interaction. The ways that the speakers created connection also reflected and created their relative status. Or, reversed, the ways that they negotiated their relative status also reflected and created connections among them. We are not dealing with an either/or choice: is status or connection at play? Instead, every moment of the interactions exhibited complex interrelations among the two dimensions.

SEX-CLASS LINKED PATTERNS AT WORK

Moving to the second main point of this chapter, the linguistic patterns exhibited in these examples not only negotiate both status and connection but also are sex-class linked. It is not coincidental and haphazard that the first conversation—with its use of vulgarity, play challenge, alternate displays of helping, expertise, and needing no help, and bonding against women—took place among men, with no women present, and that the second conversation—with its lengthy complimenting, focus on clothing and shopping, balancing of display and gaze, and expressive intonation—took place among women, with no men present. Re-imagining these two conversations taking place among speakers of the other gender yields the stuff of comic theater. Patterns associated with gender are pervasive in the interactions and reflected on a range of levels, including vocabulary, topic, intonational contours, and the whole array of alignments that can be considered in the domain of framing.

It is well to recall at this point that ways of conventionalizing the balance of hierarchy and connection are culturally relative. I have no intention to imply that the conversations presented in these examples would be typical in other cultures. Cultural relativity is particularly apt in connection with the element of spectatorship versus display that emerged in the second example. Margaret Mead (1977) notes that there are cultures in which higher social status is associated with display and lower status with spectatorship, as in the British assumption that adults speak whereas children should be seen and not heard. In other cultures these alignments may be reversed, as when American children are called upon to display their talents before onlooking adults ("Show Aunt Ann and Uncle Harry how you can say your ABC's"). This dynamic is evidenced in the preceding example of women's conversation, in which the higher status women take the role of spectators to the lower status woman's display of her clothing.

This constellation, indeed, is reminiscent of an example discussed by Goffman (1981:124–125) to illustrate his notion of align-

ment or *footing:* President Nixon reframed journalist Helen Thomas as "domestic" and "sexual" rather than "professional" by interrupting a White House press conference to remark on her wearing pants, asking her to "turn around" so that he could appraise how well they suited her, and inquiring as to whether her husband approved of that mode of dress. Here, too, the discourse is sex-class linked: it seems far less likely that the display of June's clothing, in the all-women context, had sexual overtones, whereas this was clearly the case at the press conference, when Thomas was asked to "pirouette" (in Goffman's apt phrasing) for a male president in front of an audience of male reporters and cameramen (who, according to the news clipping, roared with laughter at the President's wit). Moreover, it seems unlikely that President Nixon would have interrupted a press conference to ask a male correspondent to turn around to model his clothes.

FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR SEX-CLASS LINKAGE

Dramatic evidence that gendered patterns of behavior are a matter of display, not identity, can be seen in the autobiographical writing of a woman with autism, Donna Williams. In *Somebody Somewhere* (1994), Williams explains that, despite her inability to understand what people were doing and saying, she was able to function in the world by imitating what she had heard others saying and doing. She regarded her convincing performances not as expressions of her own self but as the creations of two imaginary personas that she called her "characters," one named Willie and the other, Carol. There is no indication that Williams thought of these as male and female principles, but her account of how they spoke and behaved through her mouth and body read like caricatures of male and female style.

Willie went for interviews; Carol held down jobs. "Willie was the scholar. Carol was a repertoire of stored-up 'social' skits" (19–20). Willie was a speed reader who accumulated facts to impress people; Carol smiled, cocked her head, and filled the air with social

chatter. Willie was strong, feared nothing, and was always in control. He appeared indifferent, responsible, and detached. Carol was "all that people wanted her to be: a smiling, social imp. . . . With language echoed from storybook records, TV commercials, and stored conversations, Carol could buy my way through life . . ." (9–10). Carol had a "cheery" facade (10). Willie seized upon key words and elaborated them (40). "As Carol," Williams explains, "I never had to understand anything that happened. I just had to look good" (89). When she determines to confront the world as herself, not her characters, Williams panics: "Carol could have looked at him and laughed. Willie could have imparted his latest store of interesting information" (13). "Willie wasn't there to help me understand, depersonalize, and deny. Carol wasn't there to make me laugh and pretend nothing mattered" (69).

Carol, above all, smiled:

Smiling works wonders though—smile and people think you can do almost anything you know. (42)

Mockingly I put on a disturbing minute-long medley of action replays of Carol smiles, poses, and witty lines. (47)

Carol is always ready to entertain, with "quick jokes, clever lines and a smile—always the smile." (55) Looking back on her earlier life, Williams focuses on the role of Carol's smiling in allowing others to exploit and abuse her:

I burned with the injustice of having been taught to put a smile on the face of hatred. I raged silently with the memory of how others justified what they'd done as long as I did as I was told and smiled, always smiled. (56)

People could do the most atrocious things as long as they smiled peacefully at me. A smile always called for a smile and unintentionally I not only let them get away with murdering Carol again and again but my innocent smile seemed to tell them it was okay. (111)

Goffman's (1976) comments on smiling in *Gender Advertisements* provide an explanation for Williams' behavior in the role of Carol. He includes smiling (like the head-cocking that Williams also enacts as Carol) as a form of "ritualization of subordination" linked with the female sex class:

Smiles, it can be argued, often function as ritualistic mollifiers, signaling that nothing agonistic is intended or invited, that the meaning of the other's act has been understood and found acceptable, that, indeed, the other is approved and appreciated. Those who warily keep an eye on the movements of a potential aggressor may find themselves automatically smiling should their gaze be "caught" by its object, who in turn may find little cause to smile back. In addition, a responding smile (even more so an appreciative laugh) following very rapidly on the heels of a speaker's sally can imply that the respondent belongs, by knowledgeability, at least, to the speaker's circle. All of these smiles, then, seem more the offering of an inferior than superior. In any case, it appears that in cross-sexed encounters in American society, women smile more, and more expansively, than men. . . . (48)

Williams' ability to speak either as Willie or as Carol supports Goffman's claim that gender is not a matter of identity—inherent modes of behavior that are "given off" willy-nilly—but of display, chosen from a range of possible behaviors and linking speakers to others of a sex class. That Williams was apparently unaware that in Willie and Carol she was performing stereotypically male and female roles is evidence of the wider phenomenon that people are, more often than not, unaware that their ways of speaking are sex-class linked. On the other hand, the fact that she thought of the range of behaviors associated with Willie as representing a character whose name was a male version of her own surname, may be taken as evidence that on some level she sensed the sex-class linked nature of these behaviors.

Speakers' relative lack of awareness of the sex-class linked

nature of their verbal and other behavior makes our task as researchers all the more challenging. Even more troubling, speakers who are aware that their behavior is sex-class linked may not want to admit it. Johnstone (1995) discovered this when she interviewed four prominent and successful Texas women who do a great deal of public speaking: a union leader; a former congresswoman; a journalist–writer–musician; and an attorney. As part of her research, Johnstone asked each of these women where they thought their speaking styles came from. She notes that all four denied that their gender affected their ways of speaking, although they all readily acknowledged the influence of being Texan. The lawyer was typical in saying that her success as a litigator was unrelated to being female but simply reflected her being "herself":

> [P]eople have told me that they think that I'm successful in the courtroom because I can identify with the jury, that the juries like me. And I haven't ever figured out why, except that . . . I try to smile, and I try to just be myself. And I don't put on any airs.

Much could be said about this woman's ability to "identify" with the jury, her likability, her not putting on any airs, and the relation of all these patterns of behavior and the language attitudes they reflect, to female-sex-class linked behavior. But what leapt out at me was her saying she tries to smile. Her certainty that this has nothing to do with her gender but just reflects her being "herself" should not impede our ability to understand the extent to which her way of being herself is sex-class linked. Donna Williams' performance as Carol and Goffman's previously cited observation are just two of many types of evidence available that in our culture, smiling is a sex-class linked behavior; in other words, women tend to smile more than men.

Emphatically, this does not mean that every individual woman necessarily smiles often nor that every individual man does not; that

this is not the case is precisely what is meant by observing that smiling is sex-class linked rather than sex-linked. However, it is clearly the case that women are expected to smile more often than men are. Furthermore, women are seen as severe and lacking in humor if they rarely smile, whereas men who do not smile often are far less likely to meet with negative reactions.

Johnstone's study provides evidence that individuals may not be aware that their styles are sex-class linked, and may even take offense at the suggestion that they are.[11] Others, however, may be aware of such linkage but nonetheless be reluctant to admit it. In *Women Lawyers,* for example, Mona Harrington describes a group of women who left large law firms to start their own. The women told Harrington that they believe they practice law differently than they were able to when working for large traditional firms. They told her that they represent clients not by being as aggressive and confrontational as possible but by listening, observing, and better "reading" opponents. One pointed out that in taking depositions, she gets better results by adopting a "quiet, sympathetic approach," charming witnesses into forgetting that the attorney deposing them is their adversary, than by grilling witnesses and attacking them. Yet when interviewed by the press, these same women do not mention their different styles, not even to explain how well they work. Instead, they stress that they are "tough" litigators and seasoned veterans of traditionally contentious legal settings. The reason, they explained, was that if they told the truth about their styles, they would be dismissed as soft and weak. Their conclusion is that you can't talk about it; you have to just *be* it, and get a reputation based on results.

It is nothing new for linguists to recognize that speakers often cannot or will not accurately describe how they speak or why, and that researchers must draw conclusions from observation, not self-report, although interviews with speakers may well provide further material for observation.

REPRISE

I have attempted to show that understanding the relationship between language and gender is best approached through the concept of framing, by which gendered patterns of behavior are seen as sex-class linked rather than sex-linked, as a matter of display rather than of identity. With reference to analysis of two examples of workplace discourse, I have shown that framing allows us to see how speakers simultaneously balance the dimensions of status and connection. Thus status and connection are not mutually exclusive poles; rather, both are in play at every moment of interaction. Finally, by showing the interrelation between status (that is, dominance) and connection, and the role of culture in negotiating both, I have argued against the misconception that a "cultural" approach to gender and language and a "dominance" approach are mutually exclusive and opposed to each other. Culture, moreover, provides unique ways of negotiating relationships along both the status dimension of hierarchy/equality and the connection dimension of distance/closeness—in sex-class linked ways.

NOTES

This chapter originally appeared in: Communication in, through, and across cultures: Proceedings of the Third Berkeley Women and Language Conference, ed. by Mary Bucholtz, Anita Liang, and Laurel Sutton. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, Linguistics Department, University of California, Berkeley, 1995.

1. Note that this use of the term "class" has no relation to social or economic class. Rather, as discussed below, it derives from Russell's theory of logical types.

2. The connection between Bateson's and Goffman's perspectives is close in many ways; indeed, Goffman (1974) notes that it was Bateson who proposed the term "framing" "in roughly the sense in which I want to employ it." (7)

3. Interestingly, this leaves open the question of whether men and women who speak in ways associated with the other gender may not be indexing the other gender. It seems clear that this is so when gay men not only use intonational and syntactic patterns associated with women in our culture, but also refer to

each other as "she" or "Miss . . ." But is this the case when heterosexuals or gay men and lesbians who are not "out" speak in ways associated with the other gender?

4. The corner of the eye concept is further explored by Mary Catherine Bateson in *Peripheral Visions* (1994).

5. My essay, "The relativity of linguistic strategies: Rethinking Power and Solidarity in Gender and Dominance," is also the basis for the chapter entitled "Talking Up Close: Status and Connection," in *Talking From 9 to 5* (1994).

6. After developing this framework, I discovered that Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) present a similar framework.

7. For Javanese, see Wolfowitz (1991); for Japanese, see Doi (1973); my source for Chinese is Ron Scollon (personal communication).

8. Gavruseva taped the conversation in connection with a seminar I taught in the fall of 1993 at Georgetown University. The initial part of the analysis presented here, which illuminates the power relations between the two speakers, is taken from Gavruseva's term paper, written for that seminar and later presented at the 1995 annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in New Orleans. Her analysis, however, did not extend to the second part of the conversation, beginning "How are you feeling today, John?" This secion of analysis is my interpretation of the conversation she taped and transcribed.

9. Dialogue is presented in lines representing breath groups rather than undifferentiated paragraphs because this more closely resembles the way spoken language is realized and perceived. Other transcription conventions include the use of punctuation to indicate intonation patterns rather than grammatical convention, and colons (::) to indicate elongation of vowel sounds. /Slashes/ indicate uncertain transcription, and three unspaced dots (...) indicate a brief pause, not an ellipsis. In excerpts from printed texts, ellipsis is represented by three spaced dots (. . .).

10. Although I am here focusing on hierarchical relations as the key variable, other influences on conversational style are, as always, operative. Janice Hornyak points out that Heather is from the South, and her style of speaking calls that to mind for everyone who hears her. On the other hand, June is African-American, and it is possible that her style would exhibit more paralinguistic variation if she were talking to peers.

11. Since researchers are people, this resistance can be found among our colleagues as well as among laypeople. (I should hasten to point out that this observation is not intended to include Barbara Johnstone, as her published research—this study as well as Johnstone [1993]—makes abundantly clear.)

REFERENCES

Bateson, Gregory. 1972. Steps to an ecology of mind. New York: Ballantine.

Bateson, Gregory. 1979. Mind and nature. New York: Ballantine.

Bateson, Mary Catherine. 1994. Peripheral visions. New York: HarperCollins.

Becker, A. L. 1995. Beyond translation: Essays toward a modern philology. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Davies, Bronwyn, and Rom Harré. 1990. Positioning: Conversation and the production of selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior 20:1.43–63.

Doi, Takeo. 1973. The anatomy of dependence. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha.

Gavruseva, Lena. 1995. Constructing interactional asymmetry in employer-employee discourse. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, New Orleans, January 5, 1995.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. Frame analysis. New York: Harper Colophon.

Goffman, Erving. 1977. The arrangement between the sexes. Theory and Society 4:3.301–331.

Goffman, Erving. [1976]1979. Gender advertisements. New York: Harper & Row.

Goffman, Erving. 1981. Footing. Forms of talk, 124–159. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Harrington, Mona. 1994. Women lawyers: Rewriting the rules. New York: Knopf.

Hornyak, Janice. In preparation. Shifting between personal and professional frames in office discourse. Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University Linguistics Department.

Jefferson, Gail. 1988. On the sequential organization of troubles-talk in ordinary conversation. Social Problems 35:4.418–441.

Johnstone, Barbara. 1993. Community and contest: Midwestern men and women creating their worlds in conversational storytelling. Gender and conversational interaction, ed. by Deborah Tannen, 62–80. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnstone, Barbara. 1995. Sociolinguistic resources, individual identities and public speech styles of Texas women. Journal of Linguistic Anthropology 5:2.1–20.

Kuhn, Elisabeth D. 1992. Playing down authority while getting things done: Women professors get help from the institution. Locating power: Proceedings of the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference, vol. 2, ed. by Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, and Birch Moonwomon, 318–325. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Women and Language Group, University of California, Berkeley.

Maccoby, Eleanor E. 1990. Gender and relationships: A developmental account. American Psychologist 45:4.513–520.

Maccoby, Eleanor E., and Carol N. Jacklin. 1974. The psychology of sex differences. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Mead, Margaret. 1977. End linkage: A tool for cross-cultural analysis. About Bateson, ed. by John Brockman, 171–231. New York: Dutton.

Mühlhäusler, Peter and Rom Harré, with Anthony Holiday and Michael Freyne. 1990. Pronouns and people: The linguistic construction of social and personal identity. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Ochs, Elinor. 1992. Indexing gender. Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon, ed. by Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, 335–358. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reddy, Michael. 1979. The conduit metaphor: A case of frame conflict in our language about language. Metaphor and thought, ed. by Andrew Ortony, 284–324. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scollon, Ron, and Suzanne Wong Scollon. 1995. Intercultural communication. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Smith, Frances Lee. 1993. The pulpit and woman's place: Gender and the framing of the 'exegetical self' in sermon performances. Framing in discourse, ed. by Deborah Tannen, 147–175. New York and Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press.

Tannen, Deborah. 1994. Talking from 9 to 5: How women's and men's conversational styles affect who gets heard, who gets credit, and what gets done at work. New York: William Morrow. Paperback: Avon.

Wetzel, Patricia J. 1988. Are "powerless" communication strategies the Japanese norm? Language in Society, 17:555–564.

Williams, Donna. 1994. Somebody somewhere: Breaking free from the world of autism. New York: Times Books.

Wolfowitz, Clare. 1991. Language style and social space: Stylistic choice in Suriname Javanese. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.