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A comparison of mothers' and fathers' verbal discipline styles

Hazel B. Marquez
San Jose State University

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A COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' VERBAL DISCIPLINE STYLES

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Hazel B. Marquez

December 2001

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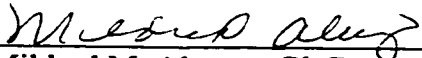
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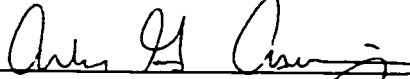
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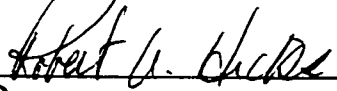
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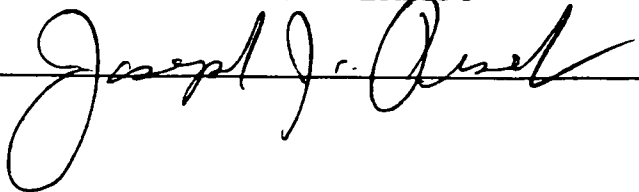


Arlene Asuncion, Ph.D.



Robert A. Hicks, Ph.D.

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY



ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' VERBAL DISCIPLINE STYLES

by Hazel B. Marquez

This study examined differences between mothers' and fathers' verbal discipline styles (e.g., power assertion, love withdrawal, and induction) and verbal control language (e.g., statements and questions) as they discussed with their child events depicting conflict. Data from a larger study on children's social and emotional development using a wordless picture book was used. Analyses were conducted to examine parent language during four conflict scenes shown in the picture book as a function of parent gender, sibling presence in the family, and child age. Hypotheses predicted differences between parents' verbal production of discipline styles and control language. Results revealed that parent gender, sibling presence in the family, and child age do not influence the production of verbal discipline styles and verbal control language, but that specific conflict situations influence parents' discipline styles and control language. Implications for future research on parent-child relations are discussed.

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A COMPARISON OF MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' VERBAL DISCIPLINE STYLES

Hazel B. Marquez

San José State University

Running head: A COMPARISON OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

Abstract

This study examined differences between mothers' and fathers' verbal discipline styles (e.g., power assertion, love withdrawal, and induction) and verbal control language (e.g., statements and questions) as they discussed with their child events depicting conflict. Data from a larger study on children's social and emotional development using a wordless picture book was used. Analyses were conducted to examine parent language during four conflict scenes shown in the picture book as a function of parent gender, sibling presence in the family, and child age. Hypotheses predicted differences between parents' verbal production of discipline styles and control language. Results revealed that parent gender, sibling presence in the family, and child age do not influence the production of verbal discipline styles and verbal control language, but that specific conflict situations influence parents' discipline styles and control language. Implications for future research on parent-child relations are discussed.

A Comparison of Mothers' and Fathers' Verbal Discipline Styles

When children misbehave their parents are often criticized for unskillful parenting. Typically, children are socialized at an early age to behave in a way that is appropriate as judged by their parents. Opportunities to learn about problem solving, including interpersonal and communication skills, will help children in future social interactions. Thus, all members of society are believed to have a vested interest in disciplining children (Prusank, 1995). Producing healthy and happily adjusted adolescents and adults are some of the goals caregivers try to accomplish. To meet this goal, parents have to convey to their children their principles, expectations, and regulations (Haber, 2000). However, it is not so simple to socialize children, as evidenced by the frustration of parents of disobedient children. Parents, for example, face complex issues in deciding how to intervene to help settle disputes, while considering the implications of their actions or non-actions (Perlman & Ross, 1997). Various perspectives on how parents should discipline children also make the parental task of discipline more difficult (i.e., understanding when discipline speech should occur or knowing what conditions foster healthy and non-healthy discipline). Common ideas found in the discipline literature include the views that: parents should teach children values; children need some form of discipline; and rules need to be reinforced by caregivers. Meanwhile, the definition of discipline has also expanded (e.g., discipline can be a form of self-regulation, corporal punishment, and learning through parent-child communication). The wide range of views on how to discipline children are of concern

to parents, caregivers, child care experts, clinicians, and policy makers (Socolar et al., 1997).

A variety of related terms such as parenting styles, family relations, socialization, parental psychological and behavioral control, parental investment, parental attitudes, parental permissiveness, corporal punishment, child-rearing practices, and child-rearing styles have been used in discipline research (Socha & Stamp, 1995; Dekovic & Janssens, 1992; Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). Some educators prefer terms such as self-regulation instead of self-discipline or self-control, because the term “regulation” does not suggest shaming and threats of punishment (Eisler, 2000). As defined by Eisler (2000), self-regulation entails goal-setting, empathy, and understanding that actions have consequences. Other discipline terms include punishment, such as corporal punishment (e.g., spanking) and isolation (e.g., time-out). Placing the various discipline terms and concepts along a continuum, one end would include discipline with corporal punishment while the opposite end would include discipline with self-regulation.

According to Curwin and Mendler (1990), discipline does not exist in isolation. In order to examine discipline more precisely, it has been important to look at who imposes discipline and the type of disciplinary action taken. Parents’ relationships with their children influence how they discipline, which is why attachment, attention, and communication are important factors in the socialization process (Curwin & Mendler, 1990). One approach parent-child relationships and parental discipline have been examined is with parenting styles. Many definitions of parenting style have been offered. Prusank (1995) compares the definitions of three highly influential views of discipline

style. According to Prusank (1995), parenting style was more clearly described by Baumrind's definitions compared to Aronfreed's or Hoffman and Saltzstein's definitions. Aronfreed conceptualized two broad categories of disciplinary techniques (i.e., parenting styles) - induction and sensitization, while Hoffman and Saltzstein identified three types of disciplinary styles - power assertion, love withdrawal, and induction. Rather than label parents' disciplinary styles into separate categories, Baumrind was able to define patterns of parenting styles in light of how parents implemented parental control and provided responsiveness in discipline situations. Baumrind's definition was described as "the more integrative approach to researching parenting behaviors," because it examined "how responsive parents are to their children and suggest that the issue of clarity in communication is an important aspect in differentiating parenting styles" (Prusank, 1995). The four parenting styles are identified as authoritative (e.g., providing reasons for requests), authoritarian (e.g., commands without providing reasons), permissive (e.g., avoids providing reasons) and unengaged (e.g., undemanding or uninvolved parenting) (Haber, 2000). Parents are believed to fit into one of the four categories when describing their general parenting style.

In contrast to the four parenting style categories described by Baumrind, most studies compare two opposite or different styles of parenting. An example of two separate definitions of discipline comes from one study contrasting proactive discipline (i.e., parental actions that encourage good behavior) and reactive discipline (i.e., parental actions that are in response to misbehavior) (Socolar et al., 1997). Another example of the conception of discipline in a dichotomous way can be found from research on

parental control. In one study, adolescents were asked to rate their parents' discipline styles, and researchers examined parental psychological control (patterns of family interaction that impedes a child's individuation process) as compared to parental behavioral control (family interaction that is disengaged and provides insufficient parental regulation of a child's behavior) (Barber et al., 1994). Thus, it is not unusual to find in the research literature that parents have been categorized into opposite ends of a singular concept of parenting and control styles.

Some researchers have avoided classifying parents into a single parenting style, instead they describe the various discipline techniques or disciplinary actions used by parents, and examine the purpose or function of the discipline. Such approaches emphasize the view that discipline functions to put structure around relationships (i.e., clarifies expectations for both children and adults) and helps parents teach children how to get along effectively with others (Curwin & Mendler, 1990). Moreover, researchers stress that it is important to note that discipline is not an automatically learned skill (Curwin & Mendler, 1990). Parents exhibit an array of behaviors in reaction to various situations and that is the reason an examination of discipline techniques are more useful in describing parental disciplinary actions than classifying parents into specific parenting styles or groups. Larzelere and Merenda (1994) defined a discipline technique as a specific tactic used in response to an incident of child misbehavior. A more general definition of discipline is offered by Howard (1996) who refers to the term discipline as a system of teaching, learning, and nurturing used in child-rearing. She states that promoting the parent-child relationship, reinforcing positive behavior, and decreasing

undesired behavior are all needed to discipline and improve child behavior (Howard, 1996). In fact, she suggests that missing one of these factors may result in the useless attempt to discipline or may even produce detrimental family outcomes. With the many possible conflict situations in which discipline may occur, parents naturally have to resort to using different types of discipline styles, or discipline strategies. In everyday naturalistic settings, the same individual parent is unlikely to react to all discipline events with the same approach or remedy.

Parents need to notice that the concept of discipline changes throughout their children's life. Young children are being socialized to understand self-control, empathy, and social norms, as well as other prosocial behaviors. During the preschool years, parents may find it a struggle for their children to go to school, share their toys, or listen to rules. These are just some of the discipline issues parents and children normally confront. By the time children are adolescents they are gaining independence from authority figures, and the type of control parents use also changes. Parents may be more or less controlling of their adolescents' lives, mostly depending on the quality of the parent-child relationship and how independence is defined in one's family. Researchers also support the idea that children experience a general age-related shift in their concept of responsibility, changing from an objective to a more subjective (intentional) notion of responsibility (Berzonsky, 2000). Adjusting parenting styles to children's developmental changes is very important, because it builds upon the quality of the parent-child relationship. During a child's first years, for example, there is a focus on routine caretaking activities, however during the second and third years parents often use

physical manipulation (e.g., carrying the child away) or sometimes spanking as discipline (Santrock, 1993). Children older than three years are mostly exposed to reasoning, moral exhortation, and giving or withholding privileges, but surprisingly by the time children are in elementary school their parents show them less physical affection as a way to handle misbehavior (Santrock, 1993). Phelan and Booth (1990) propose the idea that discipline in a family should function as a type of dictatorship (for families with children younger than 12 years of age) and gradually change into a democracy (for families with children in their teens). Whether one agrees with the views of Phelan and Booth or not, it is safe to say that one's family dynamics are constantly changing and so must the roles of the individuals in the family system. There are also demographic and family composition factors, such as family size, socio-economic status, and children's gender that may influence parental roles and discipline techniques (DeSalvo & Zurcher, 1984). These factors, along with children's developmental changes, make family discipline more complex.

In addition to changes in discipline style because of developmental and other factors, the connection between parental discipline and child outcomes has interested child-rearing experts and researchers. Parents who are able to appropriately communicate their expectations and family rules, and be equally responsible to their children, have children who are assumed to be more socially adjusted than other individuals. In contrast, parents hoping to control their child may hold unhealthy beliefs, such as the "little adult assumption" where young children's early verbal development falsely encourages parents to use words and reasoning to persuade and argue with their

children (Phelan & Booth, 1990). Verbal discipline that is not controlled or monitored can escalate to yelling and hitting - one of the major causes of child physical abuse (Phelan & Booth, 1990). Permanent, yet subtle, psychological changes in children linked to the forms of discipline they have experienced may also exist. It has been found that high school boys and girls from controlling backgrounds tend to have externalized beliefs about their environment, believing that powerful others and chance determine life events (DeMan, Leduc, & Labreche, 1992). Power-assertive parental practices, in addition, have been associated with an externalizing morality, such that children have been found to comply with normative standards because they fear detection and punishment (Hoffman, 1994, as cited by Berzonsky, 2000). Parental discipline and control are important issues, as research on child outcomes provide support that children are not only affected physically, but also psychologically and emotionally.

Effective parenting involves a set of tools to help discipline children. Utilizing a combination of parenting styles and beliefs, along with good communication skills, parents can effectively socialize their children through discipline, meanwhile understanding how to focus their children's actions and attention. Discipline is believed to be closely related to what and how parents and children communicate with each other on a daily basis (Socha & Stamp, 1995). When used responsibly, researchers agree that discipline does not necessarily have a negative connotation (Socha & Stamp, 1995). The quality of one's discipline style is an important factor because of how it influences children's overall socialization. In a study that examined parent effectiveness training, a list of the typical ways parents responded to children's misbehavior (e.g., ordering,

warning, lecturing, analyzing, and interrogating behaviors) and the effect of parent response style on children's behavior were examined (Gordon, 1970). A general conclusion of the author was that these parental reactions could possibly result in negative and hurt feelings among children if parents lack empathy, as evidenced by excessive lecturing or unreasonable ordering from parents (Gordon, 1970). Several articles on effective discipline emphasize the importance of the amount and quality of positive contact between parents and children (called time-in) (Blum, Williams, Friman, & Christophersen, 1995). The opportunities children have to learn from important socialization agents, such as parents, siblings and peers, greatly influences socio-cognitive development. Without the necessary skills that originate from parental discipline, children may be deficient in their ability to interact appropriately with parents (authority figures), siblings, friends, and ordinary people.

Mother and Father Communication Styles

Parental speech with their children in experimentally observed activities (e.g., building blocks and puzzles, free play, directed play, and storytelling) has revealed significant differences between mothers' and fathers' speech during a storytelling task (Bredart-Comperol, Rondal, & Peree, 1981). Mothers in that study were found to produce more words compared to fathers, which was not a function of their children's gender. Storytelling may also be an activity mothers are more likely to engage in with their young children compared to fathers. Additionally, perhaps the storybook content that parents present to their children is more familiar to mothers compared to fathers, therefore mothers often produce more speech in telling these stories. Specific types of

language production, as opposed to general speech production, may provide clearer information about parent discipline styles.

Little is known about how mothers and fathers differ in disciplinary strategies (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, as cited by Hart & Robinson, 1994). One form of language that may be relevant to discipline involves the use of verbal controls. Schaffer and Crook (1979) devised a coding system using the grammatical structure of parents' utterances to define three categories of verbal control language. The three categories are: commands (e.g., utterances that open with a verb such as "stop talking now"); questions (e.g., "could you please stop talking?"); and statements (e.g., "the boy should stop talking"). Examining the use of verbal controls may help distinguish mother and father patterns of discipline speech.

Other researchers have examined forms of communication that are related to the notion of control. For example, DeSalvo and Zurcher's research (1984) on defensive and supportive communication (described below) in a discipline situation involving 3- to 5-year-olds found that 44.7% of the children had mothers who held the role of main disciplinarian, 34% had both parents as disciplinarians, and 21.3% had fathers in the role of main disciplinarian. Interestingly, DeSalvo and Zurcher (1984) found that while relatively more mothers than fathers appeared to hold the role of main disciplinarian with preschool-aged children, mothers and fathers did not differ in the type of communication (defensive and supportive) used in discipline. Defensive and supportive communication did, however, produce different types of parent-child interactions. Defensive communication was defined as verbal and nonverbal behaviors that were "threatening or

punishing to others,” which produced defensive behaviors in return, whereas supportive communication was defined as “genuine information seeking and information giving, spontaneous problem solving, and empathic understanding,” which produced clear communications and productive interactions (Alexander, 1973; DeSalvo & Zurcher, 1984). In another study, mothers’ over-reactive discipline (e.g., yelling, physical aggression, frequent commands, name-calling, criticism, and unreasonable threats and expectations) and children’s externalizing behaviors were found to be significantly and comparably stable over a 2 ½ year period (O’Leary, Slep, & Reid, 1999). The children were between the ages of 18 and 36 months. The relationship between parental discipline and young children’s social and cognitive behaviors has been shown to influence communication in the family.

The literature shows that different conflict situations also produce different reactions from mothers and fathers. The type of situation, or misdeed, affects the discipline technique a parent will use. One study found that mothers chose power assertion techniques (i.e., threats of punishment) for dealing with most of 4- to 8-year-olds’ wrongdoings (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1980, as cited by Damon, 1983). For improper behavior that caused psychological harm to others (i.e., humiliation, annoyance, or teasing), mothers chose reasoning and discussion (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1980, as cited by Damon, 1983). Mothers were also found to be less powerful (i.e., less power oriented) in using disciplinary strategies compared to fathers (Hart, DeWolf, & Burts, 1993, as cited by Hart & Robinson, 1994). The researchers explained that mothers appeared to have more flexible belief systems about the causes of their children’s misconduct, and mothers

were more likely to consider and perform discipline strategies using induction (discipline that directs children to attend to norms and focus on their victim's perspective) than fathers (Hart & Robinson, 1994). Meanwhile, fathers were considered inflexible in their discipline style. Hart and Robinson (1994) found that fathers reported using more power assertive discipline strategies with their preschool-aged children compared to mothers.

Siblings

Children are not only influenced by their parents, but by their siblings who likewise contribute to their socialization. Within the family system, children are frequently faced with social conflict (Spitz, 1957, as cited by Dunn & Munn, 1987). Therefore, family members should be taken into account when examining conflict and social interactions. Researchers have stated that whether intentionally or unwittingly, additional family members often become involved in what begins as dyadic conflict between parent and child; they may form alliances with one side and influence the outcome of the conflict (Vuchinich, Emery, & Cassidy, 1988). Siblings may also be present to take a parental role and influence the modeling behavior of other siblings. Relationships with siblings may provide a context in which children can practice the skills and interaction styles that are promoted by parents or others (McCoy, Brody, & Stoneman, 1994, as cited by Parke & Buriel, 1998). Older siblings often socialize younger siblings in their roles as tutors, managers, or supervisors of younger siblings' behaviors during social interactions (Edwards & Whiting, 1993). Siblings have been found to act as gatekeepers who extend or limit opportunities to interact with other children outside of the family (Weisner, 1997, as cited by Parke & Buriel, 1998).

Parents' verbal discipline styles and control language may differ as a function of whether their children have siblings.

Although parents may use certain disciplinary techniques, based on their experiences as an authority figure in the home and based on the past misbehaviors of their children, it is a difficult task for parents to be consciously aware of their differential treatment of siblings. Research on parental negativity and control by Deater-Deckard (1996) found that parental negative affect was child specific and related to parental perceptions of children's externalizing behavior. However, parental control was unrelated to perceptions of siblings' behaviors - parental control style was the same between siblings (Deater-Deckard, 1996). The dimension of parental control was more general and stylistic compared to parental negativity, which was more specific to the behaviors of a particular child. It seems that with the accumulation of experiences in dealing with conflict and disciplinary situations, parents become more skilled at selecting arguments and effectively reasoning with their children. In comparing mother-child and sibling interactions, in families with more than one child, researchers have found that mothers were more likely than siblings to talk about the consequences of their children's behavior and refer less to their own feelings as a way to handle conflicts (Dunn & Munn, 1987). However, children referred to social rules more often in their disputes with siblings compared to disputes with their mothers (Dunn & Munn, 1987). Issues discussed between parents and children are very different from those between siblings and peers. Similarly, solutions to conflicts between members of a family may differ from solutions arrived at with conflict between friends. Social problem-solving research has

shown that important factors (e.g., the degree of liking, tolerance for disagreement and motivation for maintaining the relationship) were found to account for the greater tendency toward cooperative solutions and lesser tendency toward physically aggressive solutions with friends compared to acquaintances (Caplan, Bennetto, & Weissberg, 1991). It seems likely, therefore, that the number of children and the nature of family and sibling relationships in the home provides family members greater opportunities and motivation to resolve disputes, and this influences parental discipline style.

Child Age

Another key variable to examine is child age and how it may affect parental discipline. Age has been considered in terms of ways it might affect a child's response to reasoning, power assertion, and general parental intervention (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Since parents are believed to have more control over their own behavior, it may be more important to examine parental behavior than young children's behavior. Parents, in a longitudinal study, mostly used power assertion and induction methods with children between the ages of 1 ½ and 3 ½ years, and children rated as temperamentally anxious at the start of this study had parents who predominantly used induction five years later (Kochanska, 1991, as cited by Larzelere & Merenda, 1994). Age and children's temperament, or personality factors, both influenced the type of discipline parents likely employed. Literature on socialization practices presents evidence that parents use more reasoning and withholding of privileges, but use less isolation methods, as children become older (McNally, Eisenberg & Harris, 1991). Families may discuss different matters (e.g., using simple commands or complex explanations) about discipline at

different age levels, as they participate in a dynamic parent-child relationship. As a child matures, they are better able to recognize, respond, and interpret parental behavior (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Parents, likewise, become more attuned to their children's behaviors as time goes on. Most especially, parents are influenced by their child's age and whether their child is being instructed once or being retold rules repeatedly (Socolar et al., 1997). Parental discipline styles change, not by reinforced parenting patterns, but rather by children's developmental needs.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' verbal discipline styles and verbal control language. The role of three independent variables (i.e., parent gender, siblings, and child age) on parental verbal discipline styles and control language were examined. Parent-child storytelling interactions as they discussed selected conflict scenes depicted in a picture book were used to obtain parent language, which was later analyzed for verbal forms of discipline and control language. Three hypotheses were tested in this study. First, mothers and fathers were predicted to differ in their production of discipline and control styles, as suggested by Hart and Robinson (1994). Mothers were predicted to produce more induction in their discipline and control styles compared to fathers, while fathers were predicted to produce more power assertion in their discipline and control styles compared to mothers. Second, as suggested by Dunn and Munn's research (1987) on the importance of siblings, parents were predicted to differ in their production of discipline and control styles as a function of the presence of siblings in the family. Furthermore, it may be that having children with younger or older siblings

in the family affects parenting styles. Children with older siblings in the home, as suggested by Edwards and Whiting (1993) have older siblings who function as tutors and siblings. Thus, children with younger siblings, children with older siblings, and children without siblings in the home were predicted to have parents who differed in their discipline speech and control language. The research literature supports the potential role of siblings in parenting; however, specific hypotheses suggested by the literature about the direction of the effects are less clear. Third, parents were predicted to differ in their production of discipline and control styles as a function of their child's age. Younger children were predicted to have parents who produced more discipline and control styles compared to parents of older children, as suggested by Grusec and Goodnow (1994); parents of younger children may be more actively trying to provide their children with their socialization views than parents of older children, because older children can make better inferences on their own about their parents expectations than younger children. Finally, different conflict situations may affect parental discipline, as suggested by the views of Grusec and Kuczynski (1980, as cited by Damon, 1983). Thus, the effect of context on parent verbal discipline and control language was examined using the four conflict scenes parents were presented to discuss with their children. Specific hypotheses were not generated for this portion of the study, but rather the role of conflict scene on parent language was explored. The extent to which parents recognized, discussed and identified the subject of discipline and utilized control language may help explain parental socialization goals and behaviors.

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 48$; 24 mothers, 24 fathers) were selected from archival data of families who took part in a larger study on children's social and emotional development (Alvarez, 1992; Alvarez, 1996). Since there was a small, limited number of fathers from the larger sample, all the fathers with complete data were included. Only one father from the larger sample was excluded because of missing data.

Overall, a highly educated sample of parents was in this study: 75% of the mothers and 71% of the fathers completed at least 4 years of college. Sixty-seven percent of the households had at least 2 or more children, and 96 % were dual-parent families. The majority of the parents were Caucasians (35%) and Japanese Americans (31%), the rest of the sample included Mexican Americans (15%) and others (19%). The 45 preschoolers and 3 kindergartners in this study were between the ages of 3 and 5 years.

Materials

As part of the larger study, parents and children were asked to create a story from a 29-page wordless picture book that portrayed a family - mother, father, brother, and sister - going on a picnic (Greif, Alvarez, & Tone, 1984). The picture book was provided as the basis for obtaining parental speech styles and labeling of emotion words in previous studies. An artist was hired to illustrate the story, using photographs of facial expressions depicted in Ekman and Freisen's research (1975). The first section of the picture book depicted the family preparing for the picnic and the family driving in a car to their picnic destination. The middle section of the picture book illustrated the family

eating together and the two children playing with outdoor toys. In the last section of the picture book the children were shown returning to their parents, who were at the picnic site.

A total of four conflict scenes (i.e., Car, Sandwich, Kite, and Broken Kite scenes) from the picture book were selected for examination for the present study, because common conflict themes were depicted between child story characters, and because the characters showed clear expressions of being upset or angry in the selected scenes. Parental speech about discipline and control in these conflict situations was examined. First, the Car scene depicted the children sitting in the back seat of the car. Three pages of illustrations showed the altercation that led the sister to push the brother into his seat. Second, the Sandwich scene depicted the children eating at the picnic. Three pages of illustrations depicted the brother, after he found ants on his sandwich, throwing a sandwich at his sister, and the following pages showed the sister crying and the parents, with angry expressions on their faces, next to the children. The third scene, the Kite scene depicted the boy and girl pulling opposite ends of a kite. This scene contained two pages: one with the children struggling for the kite, and the second with the boy running away with the kite, while the girl in the background is holding a ball and running after the boy. The fourth scene, the Broken Kite scene showed the sister raising her arms up to help her brother down a tree, where the kite is seen hanging from a branch. On the second page of this scene, the brother (with a frown on his face) is looking at the torn kite while the sister is standing in the background with an expressionless look on her face.

Procedure

As part of the larger study, parent-child dyads were asked to spend approximately 10 minutes making up a story together using the picture book. The task was intended to obtain naturally occurring parent-child conversation. After completing the storytelling task, parents were given a self-report questionnaire. Only selected parts of the questionnaire that requested specific demographic information were used in the present study (e.g., the number, age and gender of the children in the home).

Coding

Data from the larger study were audiotaped and transcribed. Parent speech was divided into separate utterances based on speech intonations. The focus of this study was on the communication of discipline and use of control language as parents discussed the four conflict scenes with their child. Each utterance was coded for discipline style and control language. Four categories of discipline styles were coded: (1) power assertion, (2) love withdrawal, (3) induction, and (4) permissiveness (Henderson & Bergan, 1976, as cited by Papps, Walker, Trimboli, & Trimboli, 1995). Papps and her colleagues (1995) used these four categories of discipline styles to examine the extent to which a method was used by parents from different cultures. The broad categories include behaviors parents exhibited, and were not used in categorizing parenting styles; moreover, parents were believed to use a combination of disciplinary styles (Papps et al., 1995). Subcategories of parental verbal discipline styles include: physical punishment or aggression, verbal threats, withdrawal of privileges, forced compliance, isolation,

shaming, disappointment, self harm, conformity, harming others, and no reaction. A more detailed description appears below (Papps et al., 1995):

Power assertion involves the use or threatened use of force to discourage unwanted behavior. It includes the use of physical punishment, verbal abuse, and deprivation of privileges. Love withdrawal refers to the control of unwanted behavior by making the love and approval of the parent conditional on the child's good behavior. This technique includes not only threatened emotional reaction but also physical and emotional isolation of the child. Induction refers to the use of reasoning in persuading the child to behave one way rather than another. Reasoning proceeds not through threats as in power assertion but through consideration of the consequences for self and others. Whereas the parent seeks to control the behavior of the child through power assertion, love withdrawal, and induction, the parent has other goals when permissive. No attempt is made to control the child but rather the child is encouraged to behave in any way he or she desires in order to directly experience the consequences. Permissiveness typically involves interaction between the parent and child through discussion and commentary but without the explicit attempt to persuade the child that occurs in induction (p.53).

Appendix B provides a list of the discipline styles, subcategories, and examples of the verbal statements produced by parents as they discussed the conflict scenes from the story and how they were coded. For example, in this study, parental permissiveness consisted of content containing simply a non-discipline utterance, or description, of the story-characters' permissive behavior. In contrast, parents who produced power assertion, love withdrawal, or induction verbal discipline styles were believed to have a particular socialization goal for their child.

The co-occurrence of three types of control language (i.e., statements, questions, or commands) within the context of parents' discipline styles was investigated. Identification of control language was based on grammatical structures parents often use to verbally present control and direct children's attention and actions. For example,

parents may use different types of control language to discuss how the story characters behaved. Parents have a choice to present their message using commands (“the mom said, ‘behave’”), questions (“the girl should behave in the back seat, right?”), or statements (“the girl needs to behave in the back seat because they might get into an accident”). For each discipline style utterance that was coded, the form of control language expressed was identified. When examined with parents’ verbal discipline styles, control language may help explain how parents conveyed their message about discipline to their child.

Using 20% of the sample, two trained coders established 92% agreement for coding parent verbal behavior into the identified discipline styles (e.g., discipline style agreements/overall discipline style agreements and disagreements). One of the coders had no previous background with the original study. Verbal control types were merely identified on the basis of their grammatical structure (e.g., question form, etc.) and agreement was not calculated.

To determine the relative use of a specific discipline style, in comparison to the other styles, the frequency of producing each verbal discipline style was converted into proportions for each scene (i.e., specific discipline style production/overall discipline style production). Each discipline utterance within a scene was identified and a value that reflected how often one form of discipline occurred relative to the other discipline styles was calculated (i.e., highest value = 1.00, lowest value = 0.00). Thus, the lower the value, the less likely a parent responded with a specific discipline style when discussing the conflict scenes. The subcategories of verbal discipline styles (e.g., verbal threat,

forced compliance, etc.) were collapsed to form a total value for verbal production of the major discipline categories (i.e., power assertion, love withdrawal, induction, and permissiveness). To analyze verbal control language, proportions were also used (i.e., specific type of verbal control/overall discipline style production).

First, analyses were conducted using parents' overall proportion rates of discipline and control language across all conflict scenes. Second, to explore differences between scenes, analyses were conducted using parents' proportion rates of discipline and control language within each conflict scene (i.e., Car, Sandwich, Kite, and Broken Kite scenes). Different types of conflict situations were believed to produce different types of discipline and control language among parents.

Results

Storytelling resulted in the production of an average of 224 utterances for the parents, who generally told the story, whereas children produced an average of 94 utterances - evidence that some children produced none, or only a few, utterances throughout the storytelling task. The average storytelling time was 9 minutes (range = 5 - 18 minutes).

Preliminary analyses of the verbal discipline styles variables (power assertion, love withdrawal, induction, and permissiveness) showed that parents rarely or never produced permissive discipline; therefore, permissive discipline was removed from further analyses. Additional dependent variables included parents' production of control language. Parents rarely used commands in their verbal control language compared to statements or questions; therefore, commands were excluded from further analyses.

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of parent verbal discipline styles and verbal control language production. The alpha level for all analyses was set at .05.

Pearson product-moment correlations examined intercorrelations between verbal discipline styles. Statistically significant correlations were found for the production of power assertion and induction ($r = -.43, p < .01$). Similarly, the production of love withdrawal and induction were negatively correlated ($r = -.36, p < .05$). Interestingly, there was not a significant relationship between power assertion and love withdrawal, indicating that each of these categories were unique.

Verbal Discipline Styles

First, parents' production of discipline utterances were analyzed in a 2 X 3 mixed factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA), with parent gender as the between-subjects variable and discipline type (power assertion, love withdrawal, induction) as the within-subjects variable. An interaction was not found between parent gender and the type of discipline styles parents used. Findings revealed no main effect for parent gender, $F(1,46) = 1.18, n.s.$ However, a main effect for type of discipline was uncovered, $F(2, 92) = 7.26, p < .01$. Significant differences in parents' overall production of power assertion ($M = .40$) and love withdrawal ($M = .17$) were found, $t(47) = 4.34, p < .001$, and significant differences in parents' overall production of love withdrawal ($M = .17$) and induction ($M = .33$) were found, $t(47) = -2.69, p < .01$.

Second, to test for the role of siblings on the discipline styles parents produced, two separate tests were conducted with different sibling groups (i.e., sibling

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Parent Verbal Discipline Styles and Verbal Control Language

Variable	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Discipline Style		
Power assertion	.40	.27
Love withdrawal	.17	.21
Induction	.33	.29
Control Language		
Statement - Power assertion	.36	.04
Statement - Love withdrawal	.16	.03
Statement - Induction	.25	.04
Question - Power assertion	.30	.05
Question - Love withdrawal	.12	.03
Question - Induction	.36	.05

Note. Numbers represent proportions.

presence vs. sibling absence, and three sibling types in the home). In the sample, 10 children had no siblings, 13 children had only older siblings, and 21 children had only younger siblings. None of the children had both younger and older siblings. Four children had missing siblings' age data and were excluded from this part of the analyses.

Parents were randomly selected to analyze for differences between families with "only" children for the "siblings absent" group ($n = 10$) and families with "siblings present" ($n = 10$). A 2 X 3 mixed factorial ANOVA on parents' production of discipline utterances was conducted, with sibling absence or presence as the between-subjects variable and discipline type as the within-subjects variable. An interaction was not found, $F(2,36) = 1.94$, n.s., nor was a main effect for sibling absence or presence in the home, $F(1,18) = 3.11$, n.s. A main effect for discipline type was uncovered, $F(2,36) = 4.08$, $p < .05$. Identical results were found for the simple comparisons for the main effect of discipline type for sibling presence or absence, sibling types, and child age (using t-tests) to those reported with parent gender as the between-subjects variable in the mixed factorial ANOVA.

Parents of children with "no siblings" ($n = 10$), parents of children with "only older siblings" ($n = 13$), and parents of children with "only younger siblings" ($n = 12$) were used to test for differences between three types of siblings in the home. A 3 X 3 mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted on parents' production of discipline utterances, with sibling type (none, only older siblings, only younger siblings) as the between-subjects variable and discipline type as the within-subjects variable. Again, no interaction was uncovered, $F(4, 64) = 1.13$, n.s., nor was a main effect for sibling type uncovered,

$F(2,32) = .66$, n.s. A main effect for discipline type was uncovered, $F(2,64) = 6.70$, $p < .05$.

Finally, to test for differences between child age and parents' discipline language, a median split was employed to obtain two children's age groups— "younger children" 47 months in age and younger ($n = 24$) and "older children" 48 months in age and older ($n = 24$). A 2 X 3 mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted on parents' production of discipline utterances, with child age (younger vs. older) as the between-subjects variable and discipline type as the within-subjects variable. Findings uncovered no significant interaction between child age and type of discipline style, $F(2,92) = .24$, n.s., and no main effect for child age, $F(1,46) = 1.18$, n.s. A main effect for discipline type was uncovered, $F(2,92) = 7.25$, $p = .001$.

Verbal Control Language

Parents' production of verbal control language was also analyzed. Recall that the co-occurrence of verbal control language with discipline style was of interest. Thus, the following types of control language were analyzed: statements and power assertion (SPA), statements and love withdrawal (SLW), statements and induction (SIN), questions and power assertion (QPA), questions and love withdrawal (QLW) and questions and induction (QIN). Refer to Table 1 for the means and standard deviations of parents' overall verbal control language production.

To test for differences between mothers' and fathers' production of verbal control language, a 2 X 6 mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted, with parent gender as the between-subjects variable and control language type (SPA, SLW, SIN, QPA, QLW, QIN)

as the within-subjects variable. No interaction was uncovered between parent gender and type of control language, $F(5,230) = .56$, *n.s.*, and no main effect for parent gender was uncovered, $F(1,46) = 2.36$, *n.s.* However, a main effect for verbal control language was uncovered, $F(5,230) = 5.07$, $p < .001$. Significant differences between parents' overall production of SPA ($M = .36$) and SLW ($M = .16$) were found, $t(47) = 4.16$, $p < .001$, such that parents were more likely to discuss statements with power assertion compared to love withdrawal. Significant differences between parents' overall production of QPA ($M = .30$) and QLW ($M = .12$) were found, $t(47) = 2.88$, $p < .01$, showing that parents were also more likely to produce questions with power assertion than with love withdrawal. SLW ($M = .16$) and QPA ($M = .30$) were significantly different, $t(47) = -2.42$, $p < .05$, and the inverse of those two items, SPA ($M = .36$) and QLW ($M = .12$), were found to be significantly different, $t(47) = 4.51$, $p < .001$. Questions and statements with power assertion were more likely to be produced by parents compared to either questions or statements with love withdrawal. Also, significant differences were found between verbal control language with love withdrawal and induction as follows: SLW ($M = .16$) and QIN ($M = .36$) [$t(47) = -3.12$, $p < .01$]; SIN ($M = .25$) and QLW ($M = .12$) [$t(47) = 2.41$, $p < .05$]; and QLW ($M = .12$) and QIN ($M = .36$) [$t(47) = -3.48$, $p < .001$]. Parents' overall production of questions and statements with induction were more likely to be produced than statements or questions with love withdrawal.

Several mixed factorial ANOVAs were conducted on parents' production of verbal control language using the additional independent variables in this study (i.e., sibling presence or absence, sibling types, and child age) to test for interactions and main

effects. Similar to the findings for discipline styles language, no statistically significant interactions were uncovered with type of verbal control language and the following variables: sibling presence or absence, $F(5,90) = .88$, n.s.; sibling types, $F(10,160) = .92$, n.s.; and child age, $F(5,230) = .17$, n.s. Also, no main effects for sibling presence or absence [$F(1,18) = 3.29$, n.s.], sibling types [$F(2,32) = 1.33$, n.s.], and child age [$F(1,46) = 2.43$, n.s.] with verbal control language were uncovered. However, main effects for parents' production of type of verbal control language were uncovered for sibling presence or absence [$F(5,90) = 2.73$, $p < .05$], sibling types [$F(5,160) = 5.31$, $p < .001$], and child age [$F(5,230) = 5.03$, $p < .001$]. Simple comparisons for the main effect of type of verbal control language for sibling presence or absence, sibling types, and child age (using t-tests) were identical to those reported with parent gender as the between-subjects variable in the mixed factorial ANOVA.

Planned Post-Hoc Analyses

Conflict Scenes and Discipline Styles. Additional analyses were conducted to examine parents' verbal discipline styles within the four conflict scenes. It was reasoned that the scenes depicted different types of conflict scenarios, and parents would most likely use different types of discipline methods within each scene. Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of parents' verbal discipline styles within the four conflict scenes. Several one-way within-subjects ANOVAs on parents' production of discipline utterances uncovered statistically significant differences for type of verbal discipline styles (i.e., the within-subjects variable) for the Car scene [$F(2,94) = 24.88$, $p < .001$], the Sandwich scene [$F(2, 94) = 5.16$, $p < .05$], the Kite scene [$F(2,94) = 33.51$,

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Parent Verbal Discipline Styles**Within Conflict Scenes**

Conflict Scene	Discipline Style	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Car	Power assertion	.47	.05
	Love withdrawal	.22	.04
	Induction	.08	.02
Sandwich	Power assertion	.35	.05
	Love withdrawal	.14	.04
	Induction	.24	.04
Kite	Power assertion	.05	.03
	Love withdrawal	.01	.01
	Induction	.46	.07
Broken Kite	Power assertion	.00	.00
	Love withdrawal	.01	.01
	Induction	.41	.07

Note. Numbers represent proportions.

$p < .001$], and the Broken Kite scene [$F(2,94) = 31.50, p < .001$].

For the Car scene, significant differences were found between power assertion ($M = .47$) and love withdrawal ($M = .22$) [$t(47) = 3.62, p < .001$], power assertion ($M = .47$) and induction ($M = .08$) [$t(47) = 7.84, p < .001$], and love withdrawal ($M = .22$) and induction ($M = .08$) [$t(47) = 3.00, p < .01$]. Parents were more likely to produce power assertion in the Car scene compared to love withdrawal or induction.

For the Sandwich scene, significant differences were found between power assertion ($M = .35$) and love withdrawal ($M = .14$) [$t(47) = 3.13, p < .01$] such that parents were more likely to produce power assertion than love withdrawal. There were no significant differences between parents' production of power assertion and induction, or between their production of love withdrawal and induction in the Sandwich scene.

For the Kite scene, significant differences were found between power assertion ($M = .05$) and induction ($M = .46$) [$t(47) = -5.41, p < .001$], and love withdrawal ($M = .01$) and induction ($M = .46$) [$t(47) = -6.57, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce induction compared to power assertion or love withdrawal in the Kite scene. No significant differences were found between power assertion and love withdrawal.

For the Broken Kite scene, significant differences were found between power assertion ($M = .00$) and induction ($M = .41$) [$t(47) = -5.73, p < .001$], and love withdrawal ($M = .01$) and induction ($M = .41$) [$t(47) = -5.55, p < .001$], showing that parents were more likely to produce induction compared to power assertion or love withdrawal in the Broken Kite scene. Similar to the Kite scene, no significant differences were found between power assertion and love withdrawal.

Conflict Scenes and Control Language. Parents' use of control language was analyzed within the four conflict scenes. Several one-way within-subjects ANOVAs were conducted on parents' production of control language and uncovered statistically significant differences for type of control language (i.e., the within-subjects variable) for the Car scene [$F(5,185) = 7.65, p < .001$], the Sandwich scene [$F(5,175) = 3.29, p < .05$], the Kite scene [$F(5, 120) = 14.36, p < .001$], and the Broken Kite scene [$F(5, 95) = 12.58, p < .001$]. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of parents' verbal control language within the four conflict scenes.

For the Car scene, significant differences were found between SPA ($M = .30$) and SLW ($M = .18$) [$t(37) = 2.51, p < .05$], SPA ($M = .30$) and SIN ($M = .06$) [$t(37) = 5.22, p < .001$], SPA ($M = .30$) and QLW ($M = .10$) [$t(37) = 3.49, p < .001$], and SPA ($M = .30$) and QIN ($M = .04$) [$t(37) = 5.90, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce SPA than statements or questions with love withdrawal and induction. Significant differences were also found between SIN ($M = .06$) and QPA ($M = .25$) [$t(37) = -3.32, p < .01$], QPA ($M = .25$) and QLW ($M = .10$) [$t(37) = 2.11, p < .05$], and QPA ($M = .25$) and QIN ($M = .04$) [$t(37) = 3.69, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce QPA than QLW, QIN, or SIN. Statistically significant differences were also found between SLW ($M = .18$) and SIN ($M = .06$) [$t(37) = 3.02, p < .01$] and between SLW ($M = .18$) and QIN ($M = .04$) [$t(37) = 3.61, p < .001$], showing that parents were more likely to produce SLW than SIN or QIN.

For the Sandwich scene, statistically significant differences were found between SPA ($M = .29$) and SLW ($M = .11$) [$t(35) = 3.21, p < .01$], SPA ($M = .29$) and QLW

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Parent Verbal Control Language**Within Conflict Scenes**

<u>Conflict Scene</u>	<u>Control Language</u>					
	SPA	SLW	SIN	QPA	QLW	QIN
Car	.30 (.04)	.18 (.03)	.06 (.02)	.25 (.05)	.10 (.03)	.04 (.01)
Sandwich	.29 (.05)	.11 (.03)	.17 (.04)	.17 (.05)	.09 (.04)	.07 (.02)
Kite	.04 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.31 (.08)	.04 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.52 (.09)
Broken Kite	.00 (.00)	.02 (.02)	.41 (.10)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.51 (.11)

Note. Numbers represent proportions. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

SPA = Statement – Power assertion, SLW = Statement – Love withdrawal,

SIN = Statement – Induction, QPA = Question – Power assertion,

QLW = Question – Love withdrawal, QIN = Question – Induction.

($\underline{M} = .09$) [$t(35) = 2.74, p < .01$], and SPA ($\underline{M} = .29$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .07$) [$t(35) = 3.56, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce SPA compared to both SLW or QLW, or QIN. Second, significant differences were found between SIN ($\underline{M} = .17$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .07$) [$t(35) = 2.09, p < .05$] such that parents were more likely to produce SIN than QIN.

For the Kite scene, statistically significant differences were found between SPA ($\underline{M} = .04$) and SIN ($\underline{M} = .31$) [$t(24) = -3.35, p < .01$], SLW ($\underline{M} = .01$) and SIN ($\underline{M} = .31$) [$t(24) = -3.95, p < .001$], SIN ($\underline{M} = .31$) and QPA ($\underline{M} = .04$) [$t(24) = -2.93, p < .01$], and SIN ($\underline{M} = .31$) and QLW ($\underline{M} = .00$) [$t(24) = -4.05, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce SIN than SPA, SLW, QPA or QLW. Significant differences were also found between SPA ($\underline{M} = .04$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .52$) [$t(24) = -4.97, p < .001$], SLW ($\underline{M} = .01$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .52$) [$t(24) = -5.43, p < .001$]; QPA ($\underline{M} = .04$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .52$) [$t(24) = -4.51, p < .001$], and QLW ($\underline{M} = .00$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .52$) [$t(24) = -5.84, p < .001$]. All together, parents were found to be more likely to produce QIN than SPA, SLW, QPA, or QLW.

For the Broken Kite scene, significant differences were found between SPA ($\underline{M} = .00$) and SIN ($\underline{M} = .41$) [$t(19) = -3.94, p = .001$], SLW ($\underline{M} = .02$) and SIN ($\underline{M} = .41$) [$t(19) = -3.54, p < .01$], SIN ($\underline{M} = .41$) and QPA ($\underline{M} = .00$) [$t(19) = 3.94, p = .001$], and SIN ($\underline{M} = .41$) and QLW ($\underline{M} = .00$) [$t(19) = 3.94, p = .001$]. Results showed that parents were more likely to produce SIN than SPA, SLW, QPA, or QLW. In addition, significant differences were also found between QPA ($\underline{M} = .00$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .51$) [$t(19) = -4.81, p < .001$], QLW ($\underline{M} = .00$) and QIN ($\underline{M} = .51$) [$t(19) = -4.81,$

$p < .001$], SPA ($M = .00$) and QIN ($M = .51$) [$t(19) = -4.81, p < .001$], and SLW ($M = .02$) and QIN ($M = .51$) [$t(19) = -4.33, p < .001$]. Parents were more likely to produce QIN than QPA, QLW, SPA, or SLW. Questions and statements about induction were the types of verbal control language parents' mainly produced for both the Kite scene and Broken Kite scene.

Discussion

Many people believe that parent-child discipline interactions provide learning opportunities for children. As a child develops and learns how to understand and get along with others in the world, discipline provides an additional opportunity to learn (Curwin & Mendler, 1990). The familiar activity of storytelling is one of many parent-child interactions where socialization goals and approaches can be observed. Under this controlled activity, the present study explored the differences between parents' communication about discipline to children as a function of parent gender, the presence of siblings in the home and child age (younger vs. older children). Several realistic conflict situations were depicted in the picture book used in the study, which gave parents the opportunity to discuss or ignore, and more importantly teach, the importance of discipline. Discipline actually means teaching (Curwin and Mendler, 1990), and this sort of teaching is essential for family functioning and child development.

Past research has examined parental discipline styles using observational techniques and self-report questionnaires. In these questionnaires, parents were sometimes presented with short vignettes of discipline situations and were asked to indicate what disciplinary actions they would take. In the present study, parents'

naturally occurring speech to their children about the conflict situations and how they handled the occurrence of story conflict depicted in the picture book was examined. Similar to the purpose of discipline language, parent verbal control language attempts to focus children's attention to the events in the picture book. In fact, verbal control language attempts to influence children's behavior. Researchers, Schaffer and Crook (1979), state that verbal control language is based on its potential function to influence behavior; specifically, verbal control language functions to initiate, modify, or terminate on-going behavior. Results showed that there were no differences between parent gender, sibling presence or absence and sibling types in a home, and child age in the production of verbal discipline styles and verbal control language. However, it is the type of conflict situation that influences parents' production of discipline styles and control language.

Parents' production of overall discipline and control language surprisingly did not reveal differences between mothers and fathers. These findings support the idea that parents, regardless of their gender, have similar socialization goals about discipline when using a storytelling task. They do not differ in their narrative discussion about discipline when interacting with their young children. Findings do not support previous research stating fathers produce more power assertion compared to mothers (Hart & Robinson, 1994). Other researchers (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1980, as cited by Damon, 1983) have also found that mothers use power assertion techniques for dealing with most of young children's misdeeds. In fact, both parents focused more on discussing power assertion across the four conflict scenes, and that with particular types of conflict (i.e., the Car

scene and the Sandwich scene) parents were more likely to discuss power assertion than in other types of conflict (i.e., the Kite scene and the Broken Kite scene). Unfortunately, the present study does not address whether parents were commenting on their disapproval or approval of power assertion. The coding of verbal statements during storytelling only allowed for the categorization of parental utterances into discipline categories, and not whether parents' were judging actions as necessarily "good" or "bad."

According to researchers (Vuchinich et al., 1988), the presence of siblings in a home makes it easier for children to form alliances, and issues about power assertion are matters which children with siblings normally confront. Findings did not support the existence of differences between parents of children with siblings and parents of children without siblings on discipline styles and control language production. There was also no support for the hypothesis that types of siblings in the home (i.e., none, only older siblings, and only younger siblings) affects parental discipline and control language production.

Studies have shown that induction is a very important tool parents use with both younger and older children of toddler and preschool ages (Larzelere et al., 1994). In another study comparing 4- to 5- and 7- to 8-year olds, parents' use of multiple disciplinary techniques did not decrease with child age (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1980). In the present study, there were no differences in child age and parents' verbal discipline and control language, which supports previous findings that parents discuss similar discipline methods and control language with both younger and older children.

Differences were found between the four conflict scenes and parents' production of control language. First, in the Car scene parents were more likely to discuss SPA, QPA, and SLW compared to other forms of control language. Parents presented power assertion issues both with statements and questions to their children, because this scene depicts the two child-characters pushing each other in the back seat. Not only did parents use statements, they were also likely to present questions because possibly parents wanted their children to engage in the storytelling process. For the same scene, parents were more likely to use statements to speak about love withdrawal than induction. Perhaps this is because parents wanted to direct their children's attention to the emotions of the story characters rather than to speak about rules and appropriate behaviors in a car.

Second, in the Sandwich scene the parents were found to more likely use SIN, showing that they wanted to discuss appropriate behaviors and general rules of politeness (i.e., "conformity") with their children. Interestingly, when parents presented issues about induction, they were more likely to use statements and not questions. SIN may also have been more likely to occur during the Sandwich scene because parents wanted to emphasize the importance of not "harming others." Power assertion statements were also highly discussed by parents in this scene, because of the nature of the characters' behaviors. Recall that in the Sandwich scene, the boy-character is shown throwing a sandwich at the girl-character.

Third, the Kite scene surprisingly did not have a high proportion of power assertion issues discussed by parents, instead the parents mostly used induction with statements and questions. Again, the nature of the scene probably influenced what

parents were more likely to discuss; recall that the two child-characters were shown pulling at opposite ends of a kite. The fourth scene, the Broken Kite scene, also produced similar results as the Kite scene - SIN and QIN were the most influential types of control language. Using both statements and questions to convey their message about induction, parents were possibly trying to engage their children to speak about or to notice the consequences of the story characters' actions.

Conclusion

Further studies need to define discipline and punishment clearly, not only for research purposes but also for parents. Parents also have to learn to recognize the difference between these two variables, because discipline and punishment can produce different child outcomes. For example, children are punished when their behavior is controlled through fear. When children are punished with the use of fear tactics, they are humiliated, develop a poor self-concept, and fail to develop inner controls to handle future problems (Miller, 1984). However, children are disciplined when they see the possible consequences of their actions and alternative behaviors are proposed. Through the proper use of discipline, children learn to control themselves and balance their needs with those of others, while becoming increasingly independent (Miller, 1984). Through better definitions, longitudinal studies, and the use of multiple research tools, where both parent and child behaviors are examined, researchers can help define the concept and impact of discipline on children.

One of the limitations of the current study was its reliance on a single task to obtain data about parents' discipline styles. Although the picture book presented

common conflict situations that parents could discuss with their children, parental discipline behaviors may differ from those they might discuss in a story context. The task lacked the impact of emotionally charged, real-life situations involving parental attempts to discipline, where parents have the choice to ignore or resolve children's conflicts. However, this study showed that mothers and fathers produce similar discipline styles in a non-emotionally charged environment, and supports previous research that there is a relationship between parents' use of power assertion and induction. Thus, their general perceptions of discipline and socialization goals are similar. Another limitation of the use of a story to measure discipline and control language was that the conflict scenes were part of a continuous story line. It was not possible to separate the scenes from the story and counterbalance their presentation. Using a non-emotionally charged task and not controlling for conflict scene presentation in the storytelling task, the current study found that parents have similar perceptions of discipline and that they do produce discipline speech.

Longitudinal research on parent-child relationships and child-rearing practices may find differences between mothers' and fathers' production of some discipline styles. Researchers examined changes in mothers' reported disciplinary practices over an 8 – year period, and found that some parental practices increased or decreased with their children's age but most remained stable (children were between the ages of 7 – 8 years and were followed until 15 – 26 years) (McNally et al., 1991). For example, mothers reported using less isolation and more withdrawal of privileges methods, while reasoning and praise methods remained stable (McNally et al., 1991). Parental goals are

continually changing, while some forms of parent discipline methods remain stable. Future research on discipline may possibly identify these stable and dynamic discipline methods, and focus on the discipline methods that mostly appear in specific conflict situations within families.

In conclusion, parental use of specific verbal discipline style is more apparent in specific types of conflict situations than others. Analyses revealed that parental use of verbal discipline and verbal control language is related to the conflict situation. It would have been interesting to have obtained parents' perceptions of child-rearing practices and attitudes using a questionnaire. For example, researchers (Trickett & Susman, 1988) using self-report questionnaires found that abusive parents were more likely to use material punishment (e.g., isolation, removal of privileges) compared to reasoning or verbal punishment (e.g., verbal prohibition, physical punishment, physical restraint, and threats). Non-abusive parents were more likely to first promote the use of reasoning in their perception as the most effective discipline method, second material punishment, and third verbal punishment. Their results showed that abusive parents reported a preference for using reasoning less often than the control group, and abusive parents proposed the use of verbal prohibitions and removal of privileges more often than the control group (Trickett & Susman, 1988). Thus, a very different population may produce different types of parental discipline styles.

It is important to note that the sample in the present study contained "typical", dual-parent families. In dual parent families, parents may have different roles and the role of disciplinarian may belong to one or both parents, that particular issue was not

assessed in the present study. Other factors between mothers and fathers that may be taken into account in future discipline research includes, examining parent-child communication skills, cultural backgrounds, and parental perceptions of various conflict situations. Certainly, parents' communication skills are important factors in parent-child relations. Parents' preconceived views of their children's emotions and reactions may also bias their understanding and attention to discipline. Second, cultural differences in parental discipline was not explored in this rather small sample, but in past research cultural differences have been found to influence parent-child relations and should be considered in the future (Haber, 2000). Finally, parents should not expect to resolve different types of conflict situations using the same disciplinary actions, because of the complex nature of conflict situations. Courses on improving parenting skills should address the fact that parents' views about discipline and control are very similar, and that discipline styles and control language are influenced by the conflict situation.

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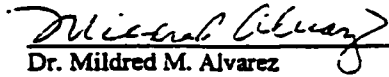
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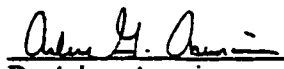
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APPROVED BY THE MASTER'S THESIS COMMITTEE



Dr. Mildred M. Alvarez



Dr. Arlene Asuncion



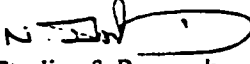
Dr. Robert A. Hicks



**San José State
UNIVERSITY**

**Office of the Academic
Vice President**
*Associate Vice President
Graduate Studies and Research*
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0025
Voice: 408-924-2480
Fax: 408-924-2477
E-mail: gstudies@whoo.sjsu.edu
<http://www.sjsu.edu>

TO: Hazel B. Marquez
2292 Lanai Ave.
San Jose, CA 95122-2424

FROM: Nabil Ibrahim, 
AVP, Graduate Studies & Research

DATE: February 21, 2000

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

**"A Comparison of Mothers' and Fathers'
Verbal Discipline Styles"**

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Nabil Ibrahim, Ph.D., immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

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Appendix B

List of Discipline Categories	
Discipline Style	Examples
VERBAL STATEMENTS MAKING REFERENCE TO:	
Power Assertion	
Physical punishment	Physical punishment to direct behavior (e.g., reference to hitting, slapping, or spanking).
Verbal threat	Verbal threat or abuse to direct behavior (e.g., reference to scolding or giving orders).
Withdrawal of privileges	Grounding or withdrawal of privileges or resources to direct behavior.
Forced compliance	Children needing to behave the way parents want them to behave, such as compliance without indication of rationale (e.g., "I think he should give her the kite").
Love Withdrawal	
Isolation	Utterance implies a child should play alone or have a time-out. The solution may require physical movement from others and from the child-character's present actions (e.g., "she needs to stay on her side of the seat").
Shaming	An apology or admission of personal wrong by the character.
Disappointment	Parent- or sibling-character's dislike of the child-character because of their misbehavior (e.g., "mother is mad at the boy" and "sister hates brother").
Induction	
Self harm	Consequences to child-character are presented (e.g., "if the brother fights all the time, no one will play with him").
Conformity	Conformity to appropriate norms. Child is given a reason to conform (e.g., "you should respect your brother because that's the right thing to do").
Harming others	Utterance implies consequences to others (e.g., "if the sister hits brother, she will hurt him").
Permissiveness	
No reaction	Simple description of characters' inaction or non-discipline behavior (e.g., "mother and father are not paying attention to the kids fighting").