

RUNNING HEAD: Ingratiation and Self-Promotion

Children's differentiation between ingratiation and self-promotion

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Author Note

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Abstract

Previous research has demonstrated that 10-year-olds can provide interpersonal explanations for certain self-presentational tactics, but detailed information about the development of their understanding of these tactics is lacking. This research investigated children's understanding of the processes involved in ingratiation (used to indicate likeability) and self-promotion (used to indicate competence). In the first study, with a sample of 60 children aged 6-11 years, children saw ingratiation as leading to more positive social evaluation than self-promotion, which was seen as having a more concrete, instrumental function. Additionally, children's differentiation between ingratiation and self-promotion was correlated with their level of peer preference, as determined through sociometric nominations, particularly for the boys. In a second study, with a sample of 63 children aged 6-11 years, it was found that audience type (peer vs. adult) was related to children's understanding of the self-presentational tactics: children offered more social evaluation justifications for a self-promotion tactic when the audience was a peer rather than an adult. Results are discussed with reference to emerging insights into the links between peer relations and social cognition.

Keywords: ingratiation, self-promotion, self-presentation, social cognition, peer relations

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Self-presentational tactics are used to control the impressions that an audience will form of the actor (Goffman, 1959). Ingratiation and self-promotion are two self-presentational tactics that are used to indicate likeability and competence, respectively (Aloise-Young, 1993; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990). More specifically, ingratiation is employed when the actor wishes to get others to like him or her, while self-promotion involves convincing the audience that one's accomplishments are more positive than the audience originally believed (Lee, Quigley, Nesler, Corbett, and Tedeschi, 1999; Schlenker, 1980). The present research was designed to examine if children are able to differentiate between the two self-presentational tactics of ingratiation and self-promotion, and how this understanding is related to social contextual factors.

One study by Bennett and Yeeles (1990) indicates that children's insights into self-promotion and ingratiation do increase with age in the primary school years. In their study, children were told a story where a protagonist wanted to become part of a team that would be selected by another character and used either an ingratiating or a self-promoting statement. Following the story children were asked why the protagonist said what he/she did. Bennett and Yeeles coded responses into four categories: interpersonal (responses that refer to the protagonist's intentions to manipulate the audience's mental state), psychological (responses that refer to a goal or purpose of the protagonist's statement without reference to manipulating the audience's mental state), descriptive (responses that simply characterise the protagonist's statement as a description of reality), and 'don't know' responses.

Children's understanding of ingratiation and self-promotion as having an interpersonal (self-presentational) motivation was found to emerge at around 10 years of age. Specifically, the 10-year-olds often referred to the appropriate self-presentational motive

(e.g., So Andrew'll think, 'Oh, he's a nice person. I'll make him be in my team. '), while the 8-year-olds offered more "psychological" (e.g., 'Cos he likes Andrew) and "descriptive" (e.g., Probably 'cos Andrew was good at sports) explanations. This is consistent with previous work suggesting that children in middle childhood begin focussing on the interpersonal motives for behaviour (Selman, 1980). However, although this study demonstrates that children develop an awareness of the self-presentational motivation for ingratiation and self-promotion, their ability to differentiate between these two tactics has not been assessed.

Bennett and Yeeles (1990) documented that 10-year-olds understand the general motivation for using ingratiation and self-promotion, but it is important to discover if and when children understand the specific process involved in each tactic. Aloise-Young (1993) showed that children could modify their self-presentational behaviour depending on what they believe the goals of their audience are. Such research may suggest that children understand that the two strategies will affect audiences' evaluation of the actor differently. However, since Aloise-Young did not ask children explicitly about the strategies used it is not known if children differentiated between ingratiation and self-promotion. Additionally, Bennett and Yeeles (1990) noted that 8- to 11-year-olds offered more descriptive and 'don't know' justifications for ingratiating statements than for self-promoting statements. This indicates that children may have more difficulty understanding the function of ingratiating strategies in comparison to their understanding of self-promotion strategies.

The present research was designed both to assess children's differentiation between ingratiation and self-promotion, and to determine how this differentiation is related to social contextual variables. In line with the methods developed and used successfully in extensive research on children's reasoning about the social motives underlying display rules (e.g., Banerjee & Yuill, 1999; Jones, Abbey, & Cumberland, 1998; McDowell & Parke, 2000;

Underwood, Coie, & Herbsman, 1992) and other self-presentational behaviour (e.g., Banerjee, 2000, 2002; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990; Juvonen & Murdock, 2005; Watling & Banerjee, in press), children were presented with hypothetical vignettes followed by questions relating to children's reasoning about the motives behind, and consequences of, the protagonists' social behaviour. Specifically, to measure children's differentiation between ingratiation and self-promotion, we used an adaptation of Bennett & Yeeles's (1990) stories about protagonists who wanted another 'audience' character to select them for some team/activity. We used a similar coding scheme to Bennett and Yeeles, adapted by Banerjee (2000), which coded for both *social evaluation* (reference to motivation to manipulate what the audience thinks of the character; e.g., "So he would think that he was nice") and *social outcome* (reference to motivation to get some concrete, instrumental reward from the audience; e.g., "So he might pick him for the team") justifications. Indeed, we expected that as children aged they would offer more social evaluation and social outcome justifications (similar to the findings of Bennett & Yeeles, 1990), but that more social evaluation justifications would be offered for ingratiation statements and that more social outcome justifications would be offered for self-promotion statements.

In addition to asking children to justify why the protagonist said what he/she did, we asked children to rate the likelihood of the protagonist being selected for the team/activity and to rate how nice the audience would think the protagonist was. These ratings have been used effectively in past research to assess children's reasoning about self-presentational behaviour (e.g., Banerjee, 2000; Yoshida, Kojo, & Kaku, 1992). In the present context, we used the ratings principally as a method of assessing children's understanding of the different interpersonal consequences of ingratiation and self-promotion. Specifically, a protagonist who uses an ingratiating tactic should be rated as appearing nicer than one who uses a self-promotion tactic. On the other hand, use of a self-promotion tactic may lead to a higher

perceived likelihood of being picked for a team, than when an ingratiating tactic is used. Research on self-presentation in adults, interestingly, suggests that the first of these two predictions is likely to be stronger: Godfrey, Jones, and Lord (1986) found that while ingratiation leads to increased likeability, self-promotion leads to reduced likeability with no gain in perceived competence.

The present research also explored the role of social contextual factors in children's performance on the self-presentation task. Banerjee (2000) and Banerjee & Yuill (1999b) have argued that although children may have the cognitive ability to understand self-presentation by around 6 years of age, the motivation for using self-presentation becomes salient in middle childhood due to the increasing emphasis on peer evaluation as a determinant of peer group acceptance (see Parker & Gottman, 1989). Our first study includes use of sociometric nominations to identify each child's level of social preference within their class. If it is true that children's self-presentational understanding develops in the context of peer interactions, then individual differences in peer preference should be associated with variability in performance on the self-presentation task. Such findings would be consistent with emerging evidence that the perceived social consequences of different emotional displays varies according to sociometric status (Underwood, 1997), and that the understanding of emotional display rules is associated with higher levels of peer acceptance and social competence as reported by both peers and teachers (Jones et al., 1998; McDowell & Parke, 2000).

Furthermore, our second study manipulated the type of audience (e.g., peer or adult) presented in each self-presentation vignette. Previous research has shown that school-aged children will change how they present themselves depending on information given to them about their audience (see Aloise-Young, 1992; Banerjee, 2002; Watling and Banerjee, in press). We propose that concerns about social evaluation should be more readily accessible

when the interaction involves peer audiences. Watling and Banerjee (in press) have already demonstrated that children's understanding of the self-presentational implications of modesty is heightened with a peer rather than adult audience, and Zeman and Garber (1996) have similarly shown that children report being more likely to control their emotional expressions when in the presence of a peer than with either of their parents. In line with this work, we suggest that the motivation to use ingratiation and self-promotion strategies for shaping social evaluation should be especially salient with a peer audience.

Study 1

As mentioned above, this first experiment focused on assessing children's understanding of the differing functions of ingratiation and self-promotion tactics. It is expected that children will understand that the two tactics will be used to achieve different outcomes, with ingratiation tactics being used to achieve a more positive character judgement, and self-promotion tactics more directly serving a concrete, instrumental function. It is further expected that children's understanding of these tactics will be associated with the extent to which they are preferred by their classmates. Certainly, Merrell (1999) has indicated that there is a reciprocal relationship between children's social skills and their peer relationships: children require social skills to develop and maintain peer relationships, while they require peer relationships to have the social interactions that will allow them to develop and refine their social skills. It is expected that socially preferred children, who would likely experience a greater number of positive peer social interactions and consequently have a greater number of opportunities to be exposed to and learn about self-presentational tactics, would have a more differentiated understanding of ingratiation and self-promotional strategies than the less socially preferred children, who would have fewer such opportunities. Such a finding would add to evidence that positive peer relations do predict better performance on other self-presentation (Banerjee, 2002), display rule (Jones et

al., 1998; McDowell & Parke, 2000), and advanced social understanding (Banerjee & Watling, 2005) tasks.

Method

Participants. Sixty, primarily white British children participated in this study: 20 6- to 7-year-olds ($M = 6.72$ years old, range 6.29 - 7.18 years), 20 8- to 9-year-olds ($M = 8.64$ years old, range 8.22 - 9.15 years), and 20 10- to 11-year-olds ($M = 10.73$ years old, range 10.35 - 11.17 years). There were 10 females in each group. All participants were from an urban primary school in a mainly working-class neighbourhood.

A total of 99 children (40% female), including the main sample described above, provided sociometric nominations. This number represents all those available in the participating classes at the times of testing (with no more than 5% absent in any one class).

Measures. Children completed a self-presentation task and also made sociometric nominations.¹ The self-presentation task was presented to the children in the form of a multimedia presentation on a laptop computer, which included the simultaneous presentation of the story illustrations and the verbal components of the task (instructions, and narrations of the stories). For the sociometric nominations the children were shown a complete class list from which they could make their nominations.

For the self-presentation task, following a similar format to Bennett and Yeeles (1990), children heard four stories (see examples in Appendix 1), accompanied by cartoon-style drawings of the interactions. Each story involved a protagonist approaching another character who was known to be looking for a new team member. The protagonist uttered either an ingratiating statement (e.g. “You know John, I bet you are a very fast runner. You look like you have very strong legs and can probably run faster than anyone in this school”) or a self-promotion statement (e.g. “You know John, I am a very fast runner. I have very strong legs and could run faster than anyone in this school”). After each story, children were

reminded of what the protagonist had responded (e.g., Now remember, *X* said, "...") and were then asked to state: 1) why the protagonist had stated what he/she did (justification); 2) if the protagonist would get picked as the new group member (inclusion judgement; rated on a four-point scale: definitely will not, probably will not, probably will, and definitely will, scored 0-3); and 3) if the other character would think the protagonist was nice (character judgement; rated on a four-point scale: not at all nice, a little bit nice, quite nice, and very nice, scored 0-3).² Four sets of these stories were created in order to control for story content. Each set had two stories with the protagonist speaking an ingratiating statement and two with self-promoting statements. Children always heard stories with protagonists that matched their own gender.

For the sociometric task, each child in the participant's class (including the participant) was asked to nominate three children who they would most like to play with in their class and three children who they would least like to play with in their class, using a complete class list.

Scoring. The 'inclusion judgement' and the 'character judgement' scores were summed across the two ingratiation stories and the two self-promotion stories (range of 0 to 6 for each). Higher scores indicated a greater likelihood of being picked or being judged as nice. The justifications were coded into one of five categories, following the coding scheme of Banerjee (2000, pp. 503-504),

Social evaluation: Reference to others' evaluations, or reference to showing-off or boasting (e. g. "Because then they'll think he's really good").

Social outcome: Reference to overt social consequences (e. g. "Then they'll let him play in their team"). For justifications placed in this category, further probes (e. g. "Why?", "How?") did not elicit references to social evaluation.

Others' feelings: Reference to others' feelings (e. g. "So that they won't feel bad that

they're not as good").

Truth: Reference to the "true" state of affairs (e. g. "Because he is really good at it").

Residual: Any other response, including "Don't know", nonsense justifications and, very occasionally, sensible justifications that did not fall into the above categories (e.g. "Then they won't cheat and copy his maths work").

An independent rater, blind to the age and sociometric status of the participants, coded one-third of the justifications from each age group, and inter-rater agreement was 91.7% ($\kappa = .89$). The number of justifications offered for each category was counted across all four stories (possible range of 0 to 4 for each category). Furthermore, the number of social evaluation and social outcome justifications that were offered to explain the protagonist's response were calculated separately for the ingratiation and self-promotion stories (possible range of 0 to 2 for each).

Additionally, as it was expected that the two tactics used would give rise to different types of justifications, two difference scores were computed—a social evaluation difference score, and a social outcome difference score, as outlined below:

Social evaluation difference: an ingratiation tactic should result in more social evaluation justifications than a self-promotion tactic, so the number of 'social evaluation justifications' for self-promotion stories was subtracted from the number of 'social evaluation justifications' for ingratiation stories (range -2 to $+2$, with high scores indicating this awareness).

Social outcome difference: a self-promotion tactic should result in more social outcome justifications than an ingratiation tactic, so the number of 'social outcome justifications' for ingratiation stories was subtracted from the number of 'social outcome justifications' for self-promotion stories (range -2 to $+2$, with high scores indicating this awareness).

For the sociometric task, following Coie and Dodge (1988), the nominations received by each participant were used to assess his or her level of peer preference. First, each child's number of 'most like' nominations received and number of 'least like' nominations received were standardised within classes. Then, a social preference score was calculated for each child by subtracting the standardised 'least like' score from the standardised 'most like' score.³

Design and Procedure. A female experimenter saw each child individually in a quiet room. The child was seated in front of the laptop computer. The order of the two tasks, as well as the version of the self-presentation task, were block randomised according to age group and gender. Additionally, the order of story presentation was randomised for each participant. The experimenter recorded the child's responses to the questions of the self-presentation task, and recorded the child's sociometric nominations.

Results

Inclusion judgement. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on these scores, with age group (6- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 9-year-olds, and 10- to 11-year-olds) and gender (male or female) as the between subjects variables, and the self-presentational tactic (ingratiation or self-promotion) as the within subjects variable. It was found that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2,54) = 3.48, p < .05$, where Helmert contrasts indicated that the youngest children offered higher inclusion judgements than the older two groups of children, ($p < .05; M(SDs) = 4.80(1.16)$ and $4.19(.92)$, respectively). Furthermore, gender had no significant effect on children's inclusion judgements, $F(1, 54) = 2.66, p > .10$. Tactic type had no differential effect on children's inclusion judgements, $F < 1$ (see Figure 1).

Character judgement. A parallel ANOVA on these scores showed that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2, 54) = 4.23, p = .01$. Planned Helmert contrasts showed that the youngest children offered higher character judgements than the older two groups of

children ($p = .012$; $M (SDs) = 4.90 (1.35)$ and $4.11 (1.05)$, respectively). The main effect of gender approached significance, $F (1, 54) = 3.25, p < .10$, with girls generally scoring slightly lower than boys ($M (SDs) = 4.12 (1.14)$ and $4.63 (1.24)$, respectively). Importantly, it was found that there was a main effect of tactic, $F (1, 54) = 9.53, p < .005$. Children gave higher character judgment ratings in the ingratiation stories than in the self-promotion stories, as shown in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Justification of protagonist's statement. Table 1 provides summary information about the numbers of children in each age group offering one or more of each type of justification.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Our key focus was on social evaluation and social outcome justifications. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the mean number of social evaluation justifications offered, with age group (6- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 9-year-olds, and 10- to 11-year-olds), and gender (male or female) as the between subjects variables, and the self-presentational tactic (ingratiation or self-promotion), and audience type (peer or adult) as the within subjects variable. It was found that there was a main effect of age group, $F (2, 54) = 7.18, p = .001$; planned Helmert contrasts showed that the youngest group offered fewer social evaluation justifications than the older groups of children ($p < .005$; $M (SDs) = .33 (.41)$ and $.76 (.52)$, respectively). There was no significant gender effect ($F < 1$), and there was no significant tactic effect ($F (1, 54) = 1.17, p > .10$).

A parallel ANOVA on the mean number of social outcome justifications offered showed that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2, 54) = 3.46, p < .05$; planned Helmert contrasts indicated that the youngest group of children tended to offer fewer social outcome justifications than the older two groups of children ($p < .10$; $M(SDs) = .45 (.60)$ and $.78 (.62)$, respectively). There were no significant gender effects ($F < 1$). Consistent with expectations there was a significant main effect of tactic ($F(1, 54) = 6.48, p < .01$), whereby when a self-promotional tactic was uttered more social outcome justifications were offered than when an ingratiation tactic was uttered. This pattern is shown in Figure 2.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Sociometric ratings. Preliminary scatter plots revealed differing patterns for boys and girls. Therefore the results for boys and girls will be discussed separately.

Inclusion judgment scores were negatively correlated with social preference among the girls, significantly for the ingratiation ($r(28) = -.46, p = .005$) statements and approaching significance for the self-promotion ($r(28) = -.26, p < .10$) statements. Therefore, it appears that the more preferred girls were less likely to believe that either tactic would result in the protagonist being picked. However, the girls' preference scores were not significantly associated with the character judgement scores. Additionally, how preferred males were by their peers had no significant relationship with either the inclusion or character judgements.

As one of the main goals of this study was to examine how children differentiated between the motives underlying ingratiation and self-promotion, it was important to see how individual differences in social preference scores for boys and girls were related to their differentiation between the two tactics. Among boys, social preference was associated with:

- 1) a tendency to offer more social outcome justifications when the protagonist uttered a self-

promoting statement rather than an ingratiation statement (social outcome difference score), $r(28) = .48, p < .005$; and 2) a tendency to offer more social evaluation justifications when the protagonist uttered an ingratiating statement rather than a self-promoting statement (social evaluation difference score), $r(28) = .43, p = .01$. No such associations were evident for the girls.

Discussion

This study was designed to examine children's ability to understand ingratiation and self-promotion. Children were less positive with age regarding the social consequences of the protagonists' statements, but their understanding of the self-presentational processes involved appeared to increase with age. Consistent with other studies on self-presentational understanding (Banerjee, 2000; Banerjee & Yuill, 1999b; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990), the older children offered more social evaluation and social outcome justifications than the younger children⁴, indicating that as children increase in age they are better able to identify the interpersonal motives underlying self-presentational behaviour.

Besides replicating this general age effect, this study was designed principally to examine if children understood the differing self-presentational functions of ingratiation and self-promotion. Findings indicate that children saw ingratiation as resulting in higher character judgements than self-promotion, and offered more social outcome justifications when the protagonist was self-promoting rather than ingratiating. However, the children did not distinguish between the two tactics in terms of the perceived likelihood of being included in the team. Thus, although children understand that ingratiation will increase an audience's character judgement of the protagonist, they see ingratiation and self-promotion as equally likely to lead to the desired concrete outcome (e.g., getting picked for a team). This finding is consistent with adult literature, where Godfrey et al. (1986) found that self-promoters were perceived as less nice, but not as more competent.

Consistent with the findings of Bennett and Yeeles (1990) there was no significant difference between when children understood the self-presentational purpose of ingratiation and when they understood the self-presentational purpose of self-promotion (i.e., there were no significant interactions between age group and tactic). It is possible that children come to understand these two tactics at the same point in time, as they may develop the motivation to use both these tactics at the same time to gain acceptance into a peer group (i.e., fulfil their need for social approval and to be included; see Jellison and Gentry, 1978).

A second main area under investigation in this study was the possible relationship between peer preference scores and children's understanding of ingratiation and self-promotion. It was found that the more preferred girls were more pessimistic in their inclusion judgements following both ingratiation and self-promotion tactics. One possible explanation for this finding is that these girls may have believed that both tactics were too simple and overt to work. Indeed, girls tend to be more private and subtle in their interactions, including using indirect methods to express when they disagree with others (Hartup, 1989; for further discussion on girls' interaction styles see Lever, 1978; Thorne, 1986).

In fact, the central prediction that socially preferred pupils would have a better understanding of the distinction between the two tactics was supported only among the boys. As expected, the more preferred boys in this study tended to understand the differing processes of ingratiation and self-promotion; specifically, they offered more social evaluation justifications when the protagonist used ingratiation rather than self-promotion, and offered more social outcome justifications when the protagonist used self-promotion rather than ingratiation. However, no such pattern was evident among the girls. These different relationships for the girls and the boys are similar to previous findings (e.g., Banerjee, 2000) that boys tend to appreciate certain self-presentational processes earlier than girls; indeed, boys may come to understand the overt tactics of ingratiation and self-promotion as useful

social skills to use in their larger, less intimate groups where the other boys (i.e., their audience) may not know them well, in contrast to the smaller, private groups of girls who tend to have more intimate friendships.

To summarise, this study indicates that children have an understanding of the differing processes involved in ingratiation and self-promotion tactics, and provides preliminary evidence that individual differences in boys' peer relations are related to their understanding of the self-presentation tactics. Study 2 focuses more directly on the peer context by assessing the influence that the type of audience (peer vs. adult) may have on children's judgements and justifications for self-presentational tactic usage.

Study 2

Previous research has indicated that children make differing judgements about self-presentational tactics depending on the nature of the audience. Banerjee (2002) found that children would modify their self-presentation depending on whether the audience is a peer or an adult. In particular, 10-year-olds, but not younger children, judged that a new child should emphasise academic competence and diligence to an adult audience and athletic competence and interests to a peer audience. Moreover, there is already good evidence that self-presentational processes involved in modesty are better understood by children when responding to stories about interactions with peer rather than adult audiences. Watling and Banerjee (in press) explored 8- to 11-year-olds' understanding of modesty with peer and adult audiences. Children heard short stories where a child protagonist responds either modestly or immodestly to praise that was given by an adult or peer. It was found that children judged modesty as more appropriate for peer audiences than for adult audiences. It is important to stress, however, that this study concerned children's responses to praise after succeeding at a task. We still know little about how children reason about the proactive (rather than reactive) engagement of ingratiation and self-promotion tactics to achieve

specific social goals. Aloise-Young (1993) demonstrated that school-aged children could use self-promotion to make desired impressions on a new audience, but the extent to which children appreciate the self-presentational processes involved in such interactions with peer versus adult audiences remains unclear.

In the present study, we expect that children will be more focused on the self-presentational desire to control social evaluation when responding to stories with a peer rather than an adult audience. As noted earlier, there is strong evidence that when children enter middle childhood, an increasing emphasis is placed on acceptance by their peer groups (Parker and Gottman, 1989). Therefore, children may be more aware of the consequences of one's behaviour for the way one is evaluated when the audience is a peer than when the audience is an adult. To summarise, children should be more aware of the protagonist's motivations to influence the peer audience's social evaluation of him/her.

Finally, we expect to replicate the findings from Study 1 regarding children's understanding of the two tactics. Specifically, children are expected to offer more social evaluation justifications and more social outcome justifications as they get older. In addition, they should see ingratiation as more likely to lead to a positive character judgement than self-promotion, and should offer more social outcome justifications for the self-promoting protagonist than for the ingratiating protagonist.

Method

Participants. Sixty-three, primarily white British children from a rural primary school in a mainly working-class neighbourhood were divided into three age groups: the youngest age group included 25 children ($M = 7.31$ years, range 6.57 – 7.84 years, 17 females), the second age group included 21 children ($M = 9.46$, range 8.88 – 9.99 years, 10 females), and the oldest age group included 17 children ($M = 11.03$, range 10.52 – 11.83, 9 females).

*Measures.*⁵ The self-presentation task was presented to the children in the form of a multimedia presentation on a laptop computer, which included the simultaneous presentation of the story illustrations and the verbal components of the task (instructions, and narrations of the stories). As in Study 1, this study followed a similar format to Bennett and Yeeles (1990), whereby the children heard eight stories (see sample story in Appendix 2), accompanied by cartoon-style drawings of the interactions. Each story involved a protagonist approaching another character, either a peer or an adult (audience manipulation), who was known to be looking for a new team member. The protagonist uttered either an ingratiating statement (e.g., ‘You know John/Mr. Young, I bet you are a very fast runner. You look like you have very strong legs and can probably run faster than anyone in this school.’) or a self-promotion statement (e.g., ‘You know John/Mr. Young, I am a very fast runner. I have very strong legs and could run faster than anyone in this school.’). After each story, children were reminded of what the protagonist had responded and were then asked to state: 1) why the protagonist had stated what he/she did (justification); 2) if the protagonist would get picked as the new group member (inclusion judgement; rated on a four-point scale: definitely will not, probably will not, probably will, and definitely will, scored 0-3); and 3) if the other character would think the protagonist was nice (character judgement; rated on a four-point scale: definitely will not, probably will not, probably will, and definitely will, scored 0-3). Four sets of stories were created in order to control for story content. Each set had four stories with the protagonist speaking an ingratiating statement and four with self-promoting statements; additionally, half of each of these ingratiation and self-promotion stories had a peer audience and half had an adult audience. The participating children always heard stories with characters matching their own gender.

Scoring. For both the ‘inclusion judgement’ and the ‘character judgement’, children received a score out of 6 on each of the following pairs of stories: ingratiation/peer,

ingratiation/adult, self-promotion/peer, self-promotion/adult. Higher scores indicated a greater chance of the protagonist being picked or being judged as very nice. Children's justifications were coded following the coding scheme used by Banerjee (2000), whereby each justification was coded into one of five categories: social evaluation, social outcome, others' feelings, truth, and residual. An independent rater, blind to the age and sociometric status of the participants, coded one-third of the justifications from each age group, and inter-rater agreement was 94.9% ($\kappa = .92$). The number of justifications offered for each category was counted for the stories (possible range of 0 to 8 for each category). Furthermore, as this study was particularly concerned with children's understanding of ingratiation (designed to elicit a positive social evaluation) and self-promotion (designed to promote a positive social outcome), as well as the influence of audience on children's justifications, children received a score out of 2 on each of the following pairs of stories: ingratiation/peer, ingratiation/adult, self-promotion/peer, self-promotion/adult.

Design and Procedure. A female experimenter saw each child individually in a quiet room. The child was seated in front of the laptop computer. The version of the self-presentation task was block randomised according to age group and gender. Additionally, the order of story presentation was randomised for each participant. The experimenter recorded the child's responses to all questions.

Results

Inclusion judgement. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on these scores, with age group (6- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 9-year-olds, and 10- to 11-year-olds), and gender (male or female) as the between subjects variables, and the self-presentational tactic (ingratiation or self-promotion), and audience type (peer or adult) as the within subjects variables. It was found that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2, 57) = 8.22, p < .001$, where Helmert contrasts indicated that the youngest offered higher inclusion judgements than

the older two groups of children ($p < .001$; $M (SDs) = 4.86 (.91)$ and $3.99 (.87)$, respectively). There were no significant effects of gender, audience, or tactic (all $F_s < 1$).

Character judgement. The same ANOVA on these scores showed that there was a main effect of age group, $F (2, 57) = 3.06, p < .05$. Planned Helmert contrasts showed that the youngest group of children offered higher character judgements than the two older groups of children ($p < .05$; $M (SDs) = 4.90 (.92)$ and $4.41 (.98)$, respectively). There was no main effect of gender, $F < 1$. Similar to Study 1, there was a main effect of tactic, $F (1, 57) = 3.12, p < .05$, where children offered a higher character judgement in the ingratiation stories than in the self-promotion stories ($M (SDs) = 4.71 (1.11)$ and $4.47 (1.09)$, respectively).

Several audience effects were also observed. Children offered higher character judgements for the peer audience than for the adult audience stories, $F (1, 57) = 5.01, p < .05$ ($M (SDs) = 4.70 (1.00)$ and $4.48 (1.10)$, respectively), but a significant interaction between audience type and gender, $F (1, 57) = 3.55, p < .05$, showed that this was true for the boys ($t (26) = 2.88, p < .01$; $M (SDs) = 4.86 (.99)$ and $4.47 (1.08)$), but not for the girls ($t < 1$; $M (SDs) = 4.53 (1.00)$ and $4.50 (1.13)$). In addition, there was a significant interaction between audience type and age group, $F (1, 57) = 4.03, p = .01$, indicating that the higher scores for peers only appeared among the 8- to 9-year-olds ($t (20) = 3.17, p < .005$; $M (SDs) = 4.82 (.99)$ and $4.23 (1.17)$).

Justification of protagonist's statement. Table 2 provides summary information about the numbers of children in each age group offering one or more of each type of justification.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Our key focus was on social evaluation and social outcome justifications. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the mean number of social evaluation justifications

offered, with age group (6- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 9-year-olds, and 10- to 11-year-olds), and gender (male or female) as the between subjects variables, and the self-presentational tactic (ingratiation or self-promotion), and audience type (peer or adult) as the within subjects variables. It was found that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2, 57) = 4.21, p = .01$; planned Helmert contrasts showed that the younger children (6 to 7 years) offered fewer social evaluation justifications than the two older age groups ($p < .05$), and that the 8- to 9-year-old children offered fewer social evaluation justifications than the 10- to 11-year-olds ($p = .05$; $M(SDs) = .13 (.19), .23 (.41)$ and $.46 (.43)$, respectively). There was no main effect of gender, $F < 1$.

Importantly, there was a main effect of tactic, $F(1, 57) = 5.38, p = .01$, and a main effect of audience, $F(1, 57) = 4.42, p < .05$. Children offered more social evaluation justifications when an ingratiation was uttered than when a self-promotion was uttered ($M(SDs) = .35 (.53)$ and $.18 (.39)$, respectively), and they offered more social evaluation justifications when the audience was a peer than when the audience was an adult ($M(SDs) = .31 (.45)$ and $.22 (.34)$, respectively). These main effects are qualified by a significant interaction between tactic and audience, $F(1, 57) = 4.70, p < .05$. Children offered more social evaluation justifications for self-promotional statements when the audience was a peer than when the audience was an adult ($t(62) = 3.07, p < .005$; see Figure 3). There were no difference between the number of social evaluation justifications offered for ingratiation to peer and adult audiences ($t < 1$).

[Insert Figure 3 here]

Social outcome justifications. A parallel ANOVA on the mean number of social outcome justifications offered showed that there was a main effect of age group, $F(2, 57) =$

17.80, $p < .001$; planned Helmert contrasts showed that the youngest group offered fewer social outcome justifications than the two older groups combined ($p < .001$; $M (SDs) = .36 (.55)$ and $1.31 (.60)$, respectively), whereas there was no significant difference between the two older age groups ($p > .10$) in the number of social outcome justifications offered. There was no main effect of gender, $F < 1$.

Consistent with findings in Study 1, there was a main effect of tactic, $F (1, 57) = 8.48$, $p = .005$, where children offered more social outcome justifications for the self-promotion stories than for the ingratiation stories ($M (SDs) = 1.13 (.86)$ and $.86 (.80)$, respectively). In addition to the main effect of tactic, there was a significant interaction between the type of audience and the child's gender, $F (1, 57) = 3.85$, $p < .05$. Indeed, boys offered more social outcome justifications when the audience was an adult than when the audience was a peer ($t (26) = 1.99$, $p = .05$, see Figure 4). There were no such differences between the number of social outcome justifications the girls offered for adult and peer audiences ($t < 1$).

[Insert Figure 4 here]

Discussion

The results of this study replicate the key findings of Study 1. First, consistent with Study 1 and other studies on self-presentational understanding (Banerjee, 2000; Banerjee & Yuill, 1999b; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990; Watling & Banerjee, in press), the older children offered more social evaluation justifications and social outcome justifications than the younger children⁶, indicating that as children increase in age they are better able to identify the interpersonal motivations behind self-presentational behaviour. Second, children demonstrated an understanding of the differing self-presentational functions of ingratiation and self-promotion. Although children saw both tactics as equally likely to lead to the

desired social outcome (e.g., getting chosen for a team), they offered more social outcome justifications when the protagonist uttered a self-promoting statement than when he/she uttered an ingratiation statement, and saw ingratiation as resulting in higher character judgements than self-promotion.

This study extended the findings of the first study by directly comparing children's responses to stories involving peer vs. adult audiences. We maintained that children would be more focused on concerns about social evaluation when the audience was a peer than when the audience was an adult. Results provide some support for this notion. Although children were equally likely to refer to social evaluation when responding to ingratiating peers and adults, they offered more social evaluation justifications when the protagonist used a self-promotion tactic to peers than to adults. This gives credence to the notion that concerns about social evaluation are more accessible to children when they are responding to self-promoting behaviour directed towards peer audiences, and supports Zeman and Garber's (1996) finding that children tend to control their emotional expressions more in the presence of a peer than an adult, due mainly to fear of negative interpersonal consequences (e.g., rejection). In contrast, self-promotions directed towards adult audiences are more likely to be perceived as having a purely instrumental function (to achieve the goal of getting picked for the team).

Several other effects of audience were also observed. In general, boys tended to offer more social outcome justifications when the audience was an adult than when the audience was a peer. This relates to the idea, presented above, that self-presentational behaviour directed towards adults may be explained in terms of instrumental goals rather than concerns about social evaluation. The fact that this pattern of reasoning was found only among the boys is consistent with suggestions that girls may be less likely to adopt an instrumental orientation in general (see Crick & Dodge, 1994). Finally, boys in general judged that peer

audiences would rate the protagonist's character more positively than adult audiences, while girls demonstrated no such difference in judgement. This finding may reflect a more optimistic attitude of the boys towards the use of these kinds of self-presentational strategies with peers, alluded to earlier. Researchers have noted that boys tend to interact in larger groups than girls (Dweck, 1982; Hartup, 1989) and these kinds of self-presentational strategies may be more effective for entry into male peer groups than into smaller, more intimate female peer networks. Speaking more broadly, the more positive ratings by the boys are consistent with evidence that boys tend to approach new children with the belief that they are a potential friend and therefore treat them as a friend, while girls will treat new children quite differently than their actual friends (Berndt, 1983). However, we still know little about interactions between audience type, gender, and age group, and these clearly deserve more attention in future work.

General discussion

This pair of studies supports previous observations that children generally begin to demonstrate an understanding of self-presentational motives during middle childhood (e.g., Banerjee, 2000; Bennett and Yeeles, 1990; Watling and Banerjee, in press; Yoshida et al., 1982). Furthermore, they provide clear evidence that children recognise that different self-presentational processes are involved in self-promotion and ingratiation tactics. Finally, this research supports the argument that the focus on social evaluation as a basis for self-presentation is related to the peer context.

To elaborate on these points, both studies demonstrated that children were capable of identifying relevant social motives for the self-presentation tactics under investigation during the primary school years. The production of appropriate interpersonal justifications for the self-presentational behaviour tended to increase with age during this time, consistent with previous evidence (e.g., Banerjee & Yuill, 1999; Banerjee, 2000; Bennett & Yeeles, 1990).

Differentiation between ingratiation and self-promotion was also evident in the children's responses: although the two tactics were seen as equally likely to result in the desired concrete outcome (e.g., being selected for a team), ingratiation was rated as more likely to lead to positive character judgements while justifications referring to concrete outcomes were used more often when explaining self-promotion tactics.

The importance of the peer context in the development of self-presentation was also highlighted in these studies. In Study 1, children's sociometric peer preference scores were positively related to aspects of their understanding of ingratiation and self-promotion. Indeed, successful peer relationships offer a safe, supportive environment from which children may explore the use of different social skills, such as self-presentation, without inflicting damage on their self-esteem if something goes wrong (Fine, 1981). Children who are more preferred by their peers are able to develop a behavioural repertoire of appropriate behaviours to use in social encounters, which will allow them to develop and maintain positive peer relations (Merrell, 1999). Furthermore, individual differences in peer relations, as determined by sociometric nominations, have been empirically linked with children's understanding of complex social situations (such as unintentional insults; Banerjee & Watling, 2005), and have been connected in particular with children's understanding of situations involving regulation of emotional expressions to others (Jones et al., 1998; McDowell & Parke, 2000). It is important to stress, however, that the link between peer preference and understanding of self-presentation depended on the gender of the child. For example, while peer preference in girls was linked with less positive beliefs about the success of self-presentation tactics in general, peer preference in boys was linked with a meaningful differentiation between the two tactics (offering more social outcome justifications for self-promotion than for ingratiation, and offering more social evaluation justifications for ingratiation than for self-promotion).

In Study 2, we found more direct evidence that self-presentation to peers is associated with a stronger focus on social evaluation, consistent with evidence of increasing concerns about peer group acceptance, gossip, and social comparison in middle childhood (Erwin, 1993; Parker & Gottman, 1989). Specifically, as well as the general tendency to explain ingratiation in terms of social evaluation concerns, children were more likely to justify self-promotion in terms of a desire to shape social evaluation when the behaviour was directed towards peers rather than adults. These findings complement existing evidence that children regulate emotional displays differently in front of peer and adult audiences (Zeman & Garber, 1996).

In summary, the findings from these studies demonstrate that primary school children are able to understand the differing self-presentational functions of ingratiation and self-promotion tactics during the primary school years. Furthermore, assessments of individual differences in sociometric peer preference and of children's responses to stories involving peer and adult audiences demonstrate that reasoning about self-presentational processes is linked to the social context. Further research is needed in order to advance our knowledge of how children's peer relations are causally linked to their understanding of these and other self-presentational tactics (e.g., modesty, excuses, disclaimers). In addition, research that uses multiple methodologies that rely more on behaviour and forced-choice judgements in real-life contexts, and less on open-ended verbal responses to hypothetical vignettes, will be crucial for determining the extent to which the understanding demonstrated in this study relates to children's experiences of everyday social encounters.

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Appendix 1

Sample ingratiation/self-promotion story

This is John/Jane. Everyone in the school likes John. One day, John's classmate told him that a boy on his track team was sick and would not be able to compete in the track races that night, so he would need to find another boy for his team that day. Trevor/Tracy, who was the new boy in the class, heard the classmate tell John this.

Trevor went up to John and said, "You know John, I am a very fast runner. I have very strong legs and could run faster than anyone in this school" (*self-promotion*) **OR** "You know John, I bet you are a very fast runner. You look like you have very strong legs and can probably run faster than anyone in this school" (*ingratiation*)

Appendix 2

Sample ingratiation/self-promotion story with audience manipulation

This is Andrew/Andrea (*peer*). Andrea is liked by everyone in her class. One morning Andrea was told that she needed to choose a new player for the football team by that afternoon. A new girl in the class, called Charlotte (Charlie), heard Andrea tell one of her friends this.

OR

This is Miss/Mr. Shaw (*adult*). Miss Shaw is liked by everyone in the class. One morning Miss Shaw was told that she needed to choose a new player for the football team by that afternoon. A new girl in the class, called Charlotte (Charlie), heard Miss Shaw tell a child in the class this.

Charlotte went up to Andrea (Miss Shaw) and said, “You know Andrea (Miss Shaw), I’m very good at sports. I’m very strong and I can kick a football further than anyone in the class” (*self-promotion*) **OR** Charlotte went up to Andrea (Miss Shaw) and said, “You know Andrea (Miss Shaw), I bet you’re very good at sports. You look as if you must be very strong. I’m sure you can kick a football further than anyone in the class” (*ingratiation*)

Footnotes

¹An additional measure piloting a new self-report scale was presented to the two older age groups.

²Our analyses on the ‘inclusion judgement’ and ‘character judgement’ scores showed that children responded consistently across the two ingratiation and the two self-promotion stories. Averaging across all possible pairs of stories with the same self-presentation tactic, the mean correlation between ‘inclusion judgement’ ratings on the two stories was .33, and the mean correlation between ‘character judgement’ ratings on the two stories was .38. Both these figures are larger than the .30 threshold for ‘medium’ size coefficients (Cohen, 1992).

³We also conducted analyses after standardising positive and negative nomination scores within gender as well as class, but these revealed a virtually identical pattern of results to that reported here.

⁴The developmental increase in reference to social evaluation and social outcome justifications could potentially be explained by younger children’s relatively greater linguistic difficulties with providing articulate verbal justifications. However, although it is true that residual responses tended to decrease with age, the age differences in appropriate interpersonal explanations are unlikely to be explained by linguistic difficulties. An analysis of covariance showed that the age effect on the total number of social evaluation and social outcome justifications remained highly significant even after controlling for the number of residual responses, $F(2, 60) = 7.18, p < .005$.

⁵A measure of social relations was also administered in a test of separate hypotheses not addressed here.

⁶As in Study 1, the number of residual responses tended to decrease with age, but an ANCOVA showed that the age effects on the total number of social evaluation and social outcome justifications remained significant even after controlling for the number of residual

responses, $F(2, 80) = 4.57, p < .05$.

Table 1

Numbers of children giving one or more justifications in each category (Experiment 1).

	Social evaluation	Social outcome	Others' feeling	Truth	Residual
6- to 7-year-olds (N = 20)	9 (45%)	8 (40%)	0	11 (55%)	10 (50%)
8- to 9-year-olds (N = 20)	14 (70%)	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	6 (30%)
10- to 11-year-olds (N = 20)	19 (95%)	18 (90%)	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)

Table 2

Numbers of children giving one or more justifications in each category (Experiment 2).

	Social evaluation	Social outcome	Others' feeling	Truth	Residual
6- to 7-year-olds (N = 25)	7 (28%)	8 (32%)	0	20 (80%)	16 (64%)
8- to 9-year-olds (N = 21)	9 (42.86%)	19 (90.48%)	0	7 (33.33%)	7 (33.33%)
10- to 11-year-olds (N = 17)	12 (70.59%)	17 (100%)	1 (5.88%)	5 (29.41%)	6 (35.29%)

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mean inclusion and character judgement scores for each self-presentational tactic (Experiment 1).

Figure 2. Mean number of social evaluation and social outcome justifications offered for each tactic (Experiment 1).

Figure 3. Mean number of social evaluation justifications for each tactic, by audience type (Experiment 2).

Figure 4. Mean number of social outcome justifications for each gender, by audience type (Experiment 2).







