Reconfiguring School at the Dinner Table: Affective and Reflective Practices in French Family Dinners

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Abstract

Family dinners, rooted in commensality, are key cultural rituals that support children's socialization, identity formation, and emotional connection. These shared moments reveal how language, meaning-making, and affect are socially-constructed – especially when children talk about school, spontaneously or in response to parental prompts. This study analyzed five filmed dinners in French middle-class families with two parents and two to three children aged 3-10. Focusing on school-related discourse, it explores how the children's experiences are decontextualized, reconfigured, and emotionally processed at the dinner table.

Using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, we examined how school talk was initiated along with participant engagement. Findings show that parents often prompt school talk through questions about learning, while children share experiences that express both cognitive insights and emotional resonances. Family interactions and adult scaffolding support reflection and reconfigure school experiences into cognitive learning or into personally meaningful narratives, reinforcing children's integration into school life – illustrating the dinner table's role as a site of educational and affective transformation.

Keywords: *Family dinners; discourse about school; family socialization; multimodal family interactions.*

1. Introduction

Shared family meals hold a central place in many cultures, serving not only as moments of nourishment but also as rituals that reinforce family bonds and cultural continuity (Ochs & Shohet, 2006). In many cultures, shared meals are more than routine – they are ritualized prac-

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tices that play a formative role in shaping children's social identities and embedding them within cultural traditions (Aronsson & Gottzén, 2011; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Caronia *et al*., 2021; Kremer-Sadlik *et al*., 2015; Morgenstern *et al*., 2021; Kremer-Sadlik & Morgenstern, 2022; Ochs *et al*., 1989; Vassallo, 2016). Among French middle-class households, the dinner table emerges as more than just a place for eating – it becomes a dynamic site for interaction, reflection, and learning thanks to situated language socialization practices. These everyday encounters offer valuable insights into how children engage with language and acquire the tools necessary to make sense of their world and construct valuable meaning. In line with Caronia *et al*. (2021), who show how moral values are implicitly constructed during everyday mealtime interactions, we consider family dinners as spaces where not only social bonds, but also cultural meanings and expectations are negotiated and reinforced.

Dinner conversations are coordinated with eating and other dining practices. This creates specific affordances that play on the types of semiotic resources used to interact. In order to refer to the multimodal conversational practices that take place, our team uses the term *languaging* (Linell, 2009; Morgenstern & Boutet, 2024) which is process oriented, embodied and situated. It includes the production of speech, gestures, facial expressions, gaze and communicative actions in context. Dinner *languaging* oscillates between a focus on immediate experiences – such as the food being eaten – which we call *proximal languaging*, and discussions that extend beyond the present moment, which we call *distal languaging* (Dancygier, 2019; Morgenstern *et al*., 2021). These can include recounting the day's events, negotiating future plans, or reflecting on broader experiences, including school life. Within this shifting discursive space, school becomes a recurring and rich topic, often prompted by parental curiosity about the events that they have not witnessed and sustained through children's narratives of their day.

This study examines how family dinners function as a site of socialization for school experiences, particularly with regard to children's evolving identities as learners and members of their social community. Drawing on filmed interactions from five French families with children aged 3 to 10, we analyze how school-related *languaging* at the dinner table enables children to revisit, reshape, and reconfigure their school experiences. Our focus lies in understanding how such discourse fosters the internalization of cultural values, social norms, affective stances, and educational practices, contributing to children's broader affective, cognitive and social development. We begin by presenting the literature and our theoretical approach, we then focus on a quantitative overview of the specific features of discourse about school and then highlight embodied practices in two detailed qualitative analyses.

2. Theoretical approach

2.1. *Multimodal situated interactions in family dinners*

To truly capture the complexity of language in use, it is essential to adopt frameworks that recognize the interplay between language, bodily action, and contextual affordances (Gibson, 1977). This perspective situates language interaction within the flow of everyday life, where actions, artifacts, and spatial arrangements co-construct meaning (Goodwin, 2000, 2018). In contrast to the dominant focus on dyadic exchanges in previous research on adult-child communication in the field of first language acquisition and child language development, our study falls within a large body of research which examines multiparty interactions as they unfold in natural settings (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Ochs *et al.*, 1989, 1992; Shaw, 2019). This approach is especially pertinent when investigating how meaning emerges collectively, through multimodal and embodied practices (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018; Morgenstern & Boutet, 2024).

The family dinner is a particularly rich site for such analysis. These gatherings offer a unique opportunity to observe how interactive practices – including speech, gesture, facial expressions, gaze, actions and the use of physical artifacts – are passed down and collaboratively enacted. In middle-class French households, the dinner table presents a semi-structured environment where participants engage in coordinated actions and dialogue. The spatial organization of the setting, combined with the affordances (Gibson, 1977) of food-related objects, facilitates a complex choreography of interaction in which semiotic resources are deeply intertwined (Goodwin, 2018).

Linguistic constructions are not limited to verbal forms; rather, they encompass coordinated cross-modal elements that work in concert to achieve coherent and meaningful communication (Morgenstern, 2014, 2022). The inherently multimodal nature of language has led our team to examine how various semiotic resources are simultaneously mobilized and integrated in everyday interactions (Kendon, 1988; Goodwin, 2000; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992), and how this *languaging* process unfolds in time during dinners, shaped by each family member's age and social status.

2.2. *Family dinner as a key site of language socialization*

In-depth analyses of dinner conversations, grounded in language socialization theory, have proven to be valuable resources for investigating everyday social practices (Duranti *et al.*, 2012; Ochs, 1988; Ochs *et al.*, 1996; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Meal practices across diverse cultures were extensively explored in a large-scale comparative project led by Elinor Ochs (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013), which provides a foundational framework for the present study. Existing research highlights the promise of family

dinner studies to explore how children acquire and develop interactive, multimodal language practices (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Caronia *et al.*, 2021; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013; Morgenstern *et al.*, 2015).

At the heart of examining the relationship between language and everyday life lies the linguistic anthropological perspective, which conceptualizes language as a form of social action and speaking as a means of structuring interpersonal relationships (Duranti, 2011). This approach underscores the centrality of interaction in the organization of daily life, based on the premise that language is a fundamental tool for cultivating socio-cultural competence throughout the lifespan (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Language socialization research focuses on how and why young children are introduced to activities through language, and how they acquire the communicative competencies necessary to perform and inhabit culturally meaningful identities.

In this study focused on discourse about school, family dinner interactions are examined as culturally embedded interactive practices, with particular attention to how novice and experienced participants coordinate semiotic resources within their environment to co-construct knowledge and develop skills. The family meal is thus approached as a key site of socialization, where children are gradually introduced to cultural values, norms, and expectations, becoming competent members of their communities (Aronsson & Gottzén, 2011). It is also a special locus of moral socialization where children learn not to handle things carelessly, and to respect others (Caronia *et al.*, 2021). Several studies have identified the patterned routines and interactional practices at the dinner table that facilitate this process of socialization into commensality (Aronsson, 2006; Vassallo 2016). The *DinLang project* builds on this work by focusing on situated language use, its transmission, and its multimodal embodiment within the context of contemporary French family life (Morgenstern *et al.*, 2021). The paper explores discourse surrounding school as it emerges in family conversations, considering how such *languaging* reflects broader social roles, concerns, and routines, and how participants actively abstract and reconfigure school-related experiences within the context of family interaction.

2.3. *Reconfiguring school experiences*

Parental involvement in language development is crucial for preparing children for academic expectations (Pomerantz *et al.*, 2007; Tamis-Lemonda & Rodriguez, 2017). Through everyday spontaneous exchanges, parents facilitate the acquisition of dialogic skills necessary for school.

The process of language socialization associated with school is manifest in family interactions, where educational and language practices directly influence children's academic competencies. Lahire (2019) emphasizes the role of language in family socialization. Everyday interactions, such as reading, recounting personal experiences, or language games,

when aligned with school expectations, encourage the acquisition of communication skills valued in school (Thin, 1998). These exchanges transform family moments into opportunities for latent learning, fostering the development of knowledge useful in the school context. Caronia *et al.* (2021) emphasize the role of the implicit in the construction of morality and moral values, particularly because the dinner interaction follows a rhythm and structure grounded in pre-established, socially shared rules. Middle and upper-class families tend to support autonomy and critical thinking in their children (Le Pape & Van Zanten, 2009). Parents exercise indirect control through discussions, educational games, or helping with homework – practices that resonate with school expectations, particularly in reasoning and argumentation (Bautier & Rayou, 2009; Caronia *et al.*, 2023). Caronia *et al.* (2023: 171) show that during homework sessions, or school-related activities at home, the parents of their corpus tend to align with the school culture. Their utterances often resemble what has been described in the second language acquisition research as *teacher talk* characterized by the use of specific vocabulary, specific question-formats, and evaluative stance similar to that of classroom teachers.

In those families, parents, through their knowledge of the educational system, strengthen the permeability between the school and family contexts. They reinvest school knowledge into daily activities, such as reading or cultural outings, thus promoting continuity between the two spheres (Van Zanten, 2018). Parents therefore play a role in their children's academic success by mobilizing educational resources in everyday life (Nguyen *et al.*, in press).

In certain contexts, such as those observed in the families in this study, the process of abstracting and generalizing school experiences frequently operates in family interactions. Parent-child interactions contribute to the development of academic skills and are often structured according to logics similar to those of the school.

This is why, in this study, we ask how discourse about school in which experiences are (co)-narrated and critically discussed, is reconfigured in the back-and-forth movement between the proximal (dinner) and the distal (school). By reconfiguration, we refer to two processes: a cognitive one, in which experiences are transformed into more abstract or conceptualized forms that foster intellectual learning, and an affective-personal one, in which school-related talk is reworked in terms of children's socialization and emotionally charged encounters. We examine how everyday experiences are reshaped to align with school expectations through family interactions, while also providing a close analysis of parents' caring involvement in their children's emotionally charged social experiences at school. Our goal is to show that family dinner is a mundane and recurrent interactional context during which children's school experiences are revisited, and reconfigured into cognitive learning or personal educational narrative.

3. Method

The families included in the study comprised two adults and two to three children aged 3-10 years old. Filming took place in their homes during two separate dinner occasions, using three cameras – one of which was a 360° camera positioned at the center of the table – along with a Zoom audio recorder. The families were recorded naturally as their dinner conversations and interactions unfolded. The camera setup was designed to capture the entire scene, ensuring that all participants, along with their speech, gestures, actions, and gaze, were documented as comprehensively as possible within the dynamic environment. The aim was to compile a multimodal archive that reflects the coordination of language and behavior during French family dinners. Table 1 indicates the composition of the families, the length of the dinner and the length of verbal *languaging* (including overlapping interactions) within the dinner.

Code name of the family	Members of the family	Length of the dinner	Length of verbal production
FRA1	two parents (M and F) two children: 8 year old boy (Ca); 5 year old girl (Cb)	45 min	29 min 45
FRA2	two parents (M and F) two children: 7 year old girl (Ca); 3 year old boy (Cb)	34 min	25 min 04
FRA4	two parents (M and F) two children: 7 year old boy (Ca); 4 year old girl (Cb)	37 min	33 min 44
FRA6	two parents (M and F) three children: twin 6 year old boys (Ca, Cb); 3 year old boy (Cc)	33 min	25 min 09
FRA7	two parents (M and F) three children: 7 year old girl (Ca); 5 year old girl (Cb); 2 year old girl (Cc)	50 min	42 min 25

Table 1: Characteristics of the five families analyzed in this study

The project was funded by the French National Agency for Research (ANR-20-CE27-0010-01). All participating families provided informed consent for the use of video recordings and screen captures in publications without anonymizing faces or the home environment. We ensure that none of the videos we use contain sensitive or potentially compromising information. Given the centrality of multimodal analysis in our theoretical framework, it is essential to preserve high-quality visual data, particularly facial expressions and eye gaze. The research design, including the pro-

tocols for data collection and analysis, received approval from the Ethics Committee of Sorbonne Nouvelle University[1]. We conceptualize family meals as a key setting for social interaction and relationship-building.

Advancements in video-recording technologies have greatly enhanced the ability to analyze human actions and interactions in fine detail (Mondada, 2019), creating new opportunities for examining language use within diverse environments. However, the presence of the observer can sometimes disrupt natural behavior, as highlighted by Labov's (1972) 'the observer's paradox'. Researchers must therefore carefully consider both the advantages and potential biases introduced by their presence in the research process (Caronia, 2015). To minimize our impact during the family dinners, we set up the cameras on tripods and retreated to a separate room.

The families involved in our study are not merely subjects for analysis, but individuals with whom we share emotional connections, experiences, and a mutual understanding. Our analysis does not only focus on the immediate, lived experience of the family meal, but also on how this experience is mediated and preserved through the video recordings and subsequent transcriptions. Although we did not specifically explore how the positioning of cameras and microphones or the technical choices we made might influence participants' behavior in this particular paper, we always remain mindful of the potential effects these factors have when coding the data.

A mixed-methods analysis approach, both qualitative and quantitative, was used (Duchastel & Laberge, 2014). The videos of each dinner were first viewed and debriefed: the main excerpts and associated themes were transcribed and coded in ELAN[2]. In this paper, we use a bimodal transcription system in which we try to render both the audio-vocal and the visual-gestural *languaging*. The sequences were segmented into multimodal turns which are referred to in the analyses. When multiple turns by different participants overlapped, we assigned them the same number and distinguished them using letters (a, b, c, d).

Our quantitative analyses aimed to determine whether school is a recurring theme in all the dinners. We thus calculated the rate of time devoted to the topic of school within the compiled number of verbal productions of all family members (see Section 4 for results). Then, three types of discourse were identified and coded in ELAN (labelled as 'school-discourse' tier). School can be approached from the perspective of learning (lessons, homework, grades). It can also appear as a place of socialization (relationships, recess, outings). Finally, it can serve as a spatiotemporal reference point to structure the narrative. We also coded who initiated the sequence

1 Participants were thoroughly informed about the research process and gave their consent for the data to be accessed by the research team, with the possibility of sharing it with the broader scientific community.

2 ELAN [Computer software]. (2002–present). *Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Language Archive, Nijmegen*. Retrieved from https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan

and what type of speech act was used. Figure 1 illustrates our use of the ELAN software.

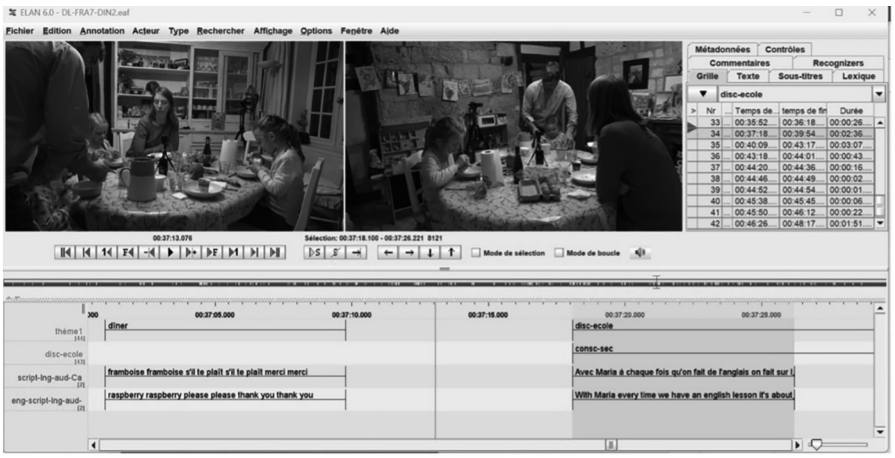


Figure 1: Excerpt from ELAN file (FRA7)

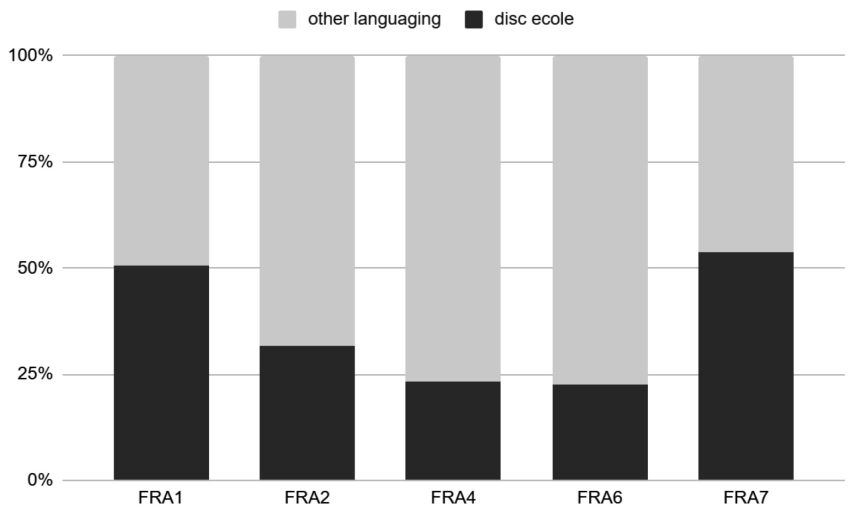
At the same time, qualitative analyses were conducted based on excerpts deemed significant in relation to the theme being addressed – for instance, school, which was identified as conducive to children's speech and interaction (Morgenstern *et al.*, 2021). For this paper we selected two particularly relevant extracts to conduct detailed qualitative analyses (see Section 5 for results).

Our research method thus consists in constantly circulating between qualitative and quantitative analyses.

4. Quantitative overview of discourse about school

Our quantitative analyses aimed to determine whether school is a recurring theme in all the dinners. As we expected, family dinners are a supportive space for children and parents to discuss school, although to varying extents as shown in Graph 1.[3]

3 See Table 1 for the total amount of spoken production by the family members in each dinner.

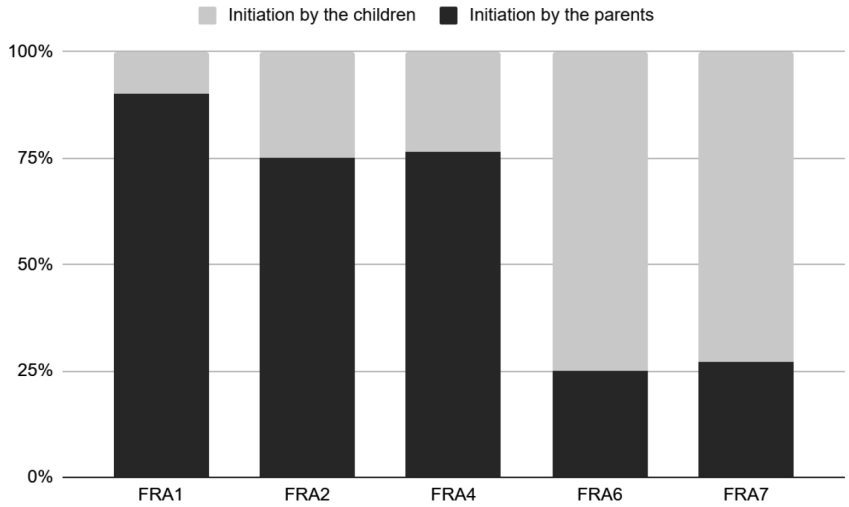


Graph 1: Percentage of the time spent languaging about school during the five family dinners.

In Families 1 and 7, *languaging* about school reaches up to 50% of the time during which the members of the families are interacting, whereas in Families 4 and 6, only slightly over 20% of the conversations are about school. The profile of Family 2 is somewhere in the middle. Despite that diversity, school is one of the most important topics in our families' dinner conversations. Across families, other recurrent dinner topics include plans for vacations or weekends, leisure activities, family coordination to manage the household schedule according to each member's activities, accounts of the parents' workday, likes and dislikes.

Depending on the family, the types of school-related discourse are not distributed in the same way: some spend more time talking about their social life at school, while others spend more time discussing learning, and still others address both aspects in a balanced manner. Across all families, school is less frequently used as a spatiotemporal reference point and only by the adults.

Discourse about school was divided into 65 overall sequences (which were sometimes interrupted by proximal discourse about the dinner including food eating and serving and comportment, resulting in 108 sequence fragments about school) across our 5 families. We coded who initiated the topic during their interactions over those 65 sequences and what speech act was used. Graph 2 indicates that both adults and children initiate the topic.



Graph 2: Initiation of discourse about school across the five families

Interestingly, two distinct patterns emerge across the five families: in families 1, 2, and 4, it is primarily the parents who initiate discourse about school, whereas in Families 6 and 7, it is the children who bring up these topics more frequently. Overall, our findings show that the parents in our families initiate school-related sequences more often, accounting for 57.5% of the instances. However, the variation in family profiles highlights that there are meaningful differences in how school-related interactions are conducted within each family. Our analyses also show that across families, parents initiate a majority of the sequences related to learning in school, whereas initiation of sequences about social relationships is evenly distributed between parents and children. When the parents initiate the topic, it is almost systematically through a question addressed at one of their children (90%). When the children initiate the topic, it is mostly to retell and comment upon an event that happened during their school day (70%).

School emerges as a consistent subject across all households. Importantly, the diversity in how families discuss school – whether focusing on learning, social experiences, or both – demonstrates the multifaceted role that school plays in family discourse.

The initiation patterns further reveal important dynamics: parents are more often the instigators of school-related talk, particularly when the focus is on learning, and they predominantly do so through questioning. In contrast, children tend to initiate school discourse when sharing personal experiences, especially those tied to social events. These patterns indicate that dinner conversations about school are not merely

spontaneous but are shaped by family roles, expectations, and relational habits. Taken together, the findings point to mealtime interaction as a communicative space where the educational and social dimensions of school life are jointly co-constructed and negotiated between parents and children. These aspects will be explored in greater depth through our qualitative analyses.

5. Qualitative analyses

We present the analyses of two excerpts focused on the scaffolding role of the parents to highlight the socializing quality of family dinner conversation about school and how the interactions facilitate children's ability to narrate, embody, reconfigure, and reflect upon their school experiences. The first sequence is focused on what the elder child has learnt in school (*i.e.* perspective-of-learning-type of discourse about school) and is directly initiated by the mother. The second sequence is focused on relationships and socialization in school (*i.e.* socialization-type of discourse about school); the initiation involves both parents and children.

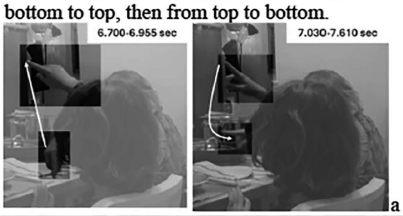
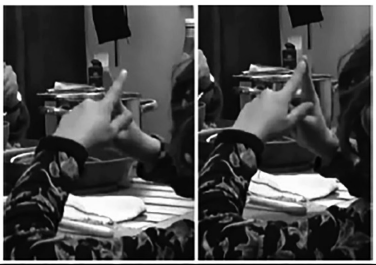
5.1. *Multimodal reconfiguration into a learning event*

In Family 1, the elder child (Ca) follows Chinese lessons at school. The mother (M) asks him (Ca) whether he can write in Chinese. He replies he can write the character for "man" and uses his fingers to show what the ideogram looks like. The conversation then shifts from describing the shape of the ideogram, to discussing what it indexically refers to in real life, and finally to tracing its form.

Extract 1. FRA1 Ideogramme[4]

The interaction between the mother and her son at the dinner table illustrates a rich instance of family-based language socialization, where everyday conversation becomes a platform for cognitive development, reflective thinking, and multimodal meaning-making.

4 M refers to mother, F to father, Ca to the older child and Cb to the younger child. Translation of the French is provided between brackets. The video extracts can be viewed by following the this link: https://sharedocs.huma-num.fr/wl/?id=u4tqYWpuP-pDXjVPyRVy0BfsFAe8VR3xY.

		Vocal productions	*Visual productions*
1	M	T'as appris à écrire des trucs en chinois ? (You've learned to write things in chinese?)	Gaze at Ca
2	Ca	euh… ouais. 'hum…. Yeah)	Puts down his fork to the right of his plate.
3	Ca	Homme c'est comme ça. (You do Man like that)	With his right index finger, draws a diagonal line from bottom to top, then from top to bottom.  a
4a	M	Ok	Gazes at Ca
4b	F		Gazes at Ca
5	Ca	Homme, c'est trop facile. (Man is really easy)	
6	M	C'est comme des jambes. (They are like legs)	Looks at Ca and, with his right index finger, draws a diagonal line from top to bottom toward the right, then from top to bottom toward the left, within a gestural space smaller than Ca's.  b
7a	M	Non ? (No?)	Gazes at Ca
7b	F		Gazes at Ca
8	Ca	Euh oui, ben tu vois, tu sais faire ça ? (Hu, yes, well, you see, can you do that?)	Crosses his two index fingers, then presses them together at the last phalanx.  c
9	F	Non ! (No!)	Gazes at Ca and smiles
		(…)	
10	M	C'est comme si tu dessinais ça.	Gazes at Ca

		(It's as if you were drawing that)	Places the last phalanx of both index fingers against each other and performs a wrist flexion and an abduction of the arms.  d
11a	Ca	J'ai dessiné ça. (I drew this)	Gazes at his own fingers. Places the last phalanx of both index fingers against each other.  e
11b	M		Gazes at Ca's fingers
12	Ca	Et y a un côté le plus grand que l'autre. (One side is bigger than the other).	The extended index fingers are placed against each other at the last phalanx in the starting position, then Ca slides the tip of his right index finger under the second phalanx of his left index finger.  f
13a	M	Ouais (Yeah)	Gazes at Ca and gives him a wink.
13b	Ca	Ça fait un T mais comme ça. (It forms a T like this)	After retracting his hands, Ca reproduces the previous gesture and positions it higher in the gestural space.  g
14a	M	Ah, je vois (Oh, I see)	Gazes at Ca
14b	F		Gazes at Ca
15	F	Ok un T de travière, de travers (OK, a crooked T)	Gazes at the content of his Fork.

Figure 2: Extract 1. FRA1 Ideogramme

From the outset, the mother plays an active scaffolding role by initiating the topic of conversation in terms that connect school experience with learning outcomes: 'You've learned to write some things in Chinese?' (turn 1). Her use of pedagogical verbs such as *learn* and *write* explicitly frames the school activity within an epistemic context, subtly inviting her child to adopt a metacognitive stance – to not only recount what happened, but to

reflect on what was learned. This linguistic framing indicates to Ca that school knowledge resonates with the family context and vice versa.

Ca responds by introducing a piece of this knowledge: the ideogram for 'man'. His utterance – 'Homme c'est comme ça' – combines verbal reference (homme) with a deictic pronoun ('ça') and a pointing gesture, which attempts to ground meaning in shared perceptual space (turn 3). However, his use of a single finger to sketch the ideogram lacks iconic clarity, limiting the gesture's semiotic potential and interpretability. Here, the child is in a phase of emergent conceptualization, and the gesture serves as an exploratory act, rather than a stable sign.

Sensing the ambiguity, the mother intervenes to guide interpretation by offering an iconic gesture (legs walking) along with a verbal analogy: 'it's like legs' (turn 6). This is a key scaffolding move: she is not only helping her child articulate the concept more clearly, but also modeling how metaphor and analogy can be used as tools for abstract thinking. By replacing the vague generic pronoun 'ça' with the noun 'jambes', she recontextualizes the ideogram within a concrete bodily schema – walking legs – which helps bridge the gap between unfamiliar script and embodied knowledge. This aligns with the iconic gesture category, where the gesture maps the shape or movement of a concept onto bodily space.

Ca adjusts his own gestural strategy in response, refining his ideogram representation by now using two fingers – a more complex gesture – thus improving the gesture's iconicity and communicative precision (turn 8). His mother aligns with this updated gesture by mirroring it in her own way, placing the last phalanges of her index fingers together (turn 10). Though her language momentarily returns to the informal register with 'ça', this gestural mirroring acts as a powerful interactive move, demonstrating alignment and attunement to her child's evolving understanding.

The child's subsequent correction – verbal and gestural – marks a moment of conceptual stabilization (turns 11 to 13). This moment is crucial: he now moves from representing the ideogram to connecting it to a known graphemic form, the letter T. This gesture can be interpreted as a metaphoric gesture where the child maps the abstract form of the Chinese character onto a familiar Western letterform. His embodied calligraphy – sketching the letter T in the air – demonstrates the child's ability to integrate school knowledge into a new conceptual framework, moving across linguistic and cultural systems. This transition is enabled by the scaffolded interaction and the iterative cycles of clarification, modeling, and validation provided by his parents.

The mother ratifies her child's production, reinforcing the legitimacy of his interpretation (turn 14), and the father contributes by reformulating it into shared family discourse: 'a crooked T' (turn 15). These parental moves serve as both epistemic validations and cultural anchoring strategies, embedding the new knowledge within the family's collective understanding. The father's reformulation also functions as a recasting strategy, reshaping the child's idea in familiar terms, thereby deepening its intelligibility and memorability.

Throughout the interaction, the parents socialize their child not only into what he has learned, but also into how to talk about learning. They model reflective discourse practices, guide multimodal clarification, and reinforce the legitimacy of school content within a family setting. By doing so, they help Ca transition from tacit knowledge (the ideogram) to explicit conceptualization and communication.

Two key aspects of conceptual development are evidenced in this exchange:

1. Semantic linking – establishing a connection between the ideogram and its meaning ('man').

2. Multimodal transformation – reinterpreting the ideogram through a different system (the letter T), enabled by embodied gesturing and verbal analogy.

Ultimately, this episode highlights how family mealtime discourse functions as a site for multimodal *inter-languaging* (Morgenstern, 2024), where gestures, verbal scaffolding, and collaborative interaction converge to support children's reflective thinking and knowledge construction. The parents' roles are not simply reactive but proactively structuring, modeling ways of engaging with knowledge that promote autonomy and cross-modal reasoning. The dinner table thus becomes a space not only for nourishment, but for the cultivation of epistemic and semiotic awareness.

5.2. *Reconfiguration of social relations*

Extract 2 focuses on the reconfiguration of social relations as they unfold during dinner, highlighting how talk about school is not simply reproduced but actively reshaped and negotiated within the interactional dynamics of the dinner table.

In family 4, the younger child (Cb) and the mother (M) tell the father (F) about what happened on their way home from school. The mother explains that it was raining and that she was hurrying the children along. Cb then talks about how two children from school, Raphaël and Louise, wanted to walk home together. The mother explains that they are in love. Later in the conversation, the older brother (Ca) says that his little sister Cb is in love with Raphaël. The parents then ask Cb about her relationships with friends at school, and Cb tells a story about an incident in the playground in which she was excluded from a group by another child. The parents and Ca try to make sense of her narrative and its events while also attempting to comfort Cb. As the excerpt is particularly long, we have decided to break it down into sections (Extract 2.1 focuses on turns 1 to 21 and turns 35 to 49).

Extract 2.1: FRA4 – Social relations[5]

5 The video extracts can be viewed by following this link: https://sharedocs.huma-num.fr/wl/?id=gm1w9FofznWQ092tHsV5uxta7m20Rdne.

Excerpt 2 captures the emergence of a shared narrative space around the youngest child Cb's social experience at school. The sequence is shaped by a series of reconfigurations – of peer relationships, emotional affiliations, and relational stances within the family – carried out through speech, gesture, gaze, and touch. What unfolds within the family interaction is not a linear account of events by the little girl who has experienced them, but a co-constructed refiguration of social experience, anchored in the family's affective resonance and sustained attention.

		Vocal productions	*Visual productions*
1	M	Et là on est passé à travers les gouttes. (And then we managed to dodge the rain)	Gazes at Ca while eating a yogurt
2	M	Je suis allée les chercher. (I went to get them)	Gazes at F
3	F	Ouais j'ai vu (Yeah, I saw)	Gazes at M
4	M	J'ai dit à Cb, j'ai vu l'orage arriver 'allez viens on court on court !' (I told Cb, I saw the storm coming, 'Come on, let's run, let's run!')	Gazes at Ca, then F, then Cb Points to the ceiling and mimics the action of running.
4	F	J'ai surveillé le ciel (I kept an eye on the sky)	Gazes at Ca
5	M	Hein Cb on a couru ? (Right, Cb, we ran, didn't we ?)	Gazes at Cb
6	Cb		Nods while gazing into space
7	M	On a couru pour aller chercher Ca (We ran to go get Ca)	Points to Ca Gazes at F
8	Ea	Ah pourquoi c'est bleu (Oh why is it blue?)	Points to an object and gazes at F
9	F	Je sais pas ((whispers)) (I don't know)	Looks at Ca
10	M	On a couru pour aller chercher Ca et euh quand on est revenu, pareil, je les ai fait courir, courez ! courez ! parce que là et alors tu vois à dix minutes près, on se prenait (.) la saucée. (We ran to get Ca and then when se came back, same thing, I made them run-run, run!- because, you see, if we'd been ten minutes later, we'd have gotten caught in the downpour.)	Eats her yogurt
11	M	On a eu de la chance (we were lucky)	Gazes at Cb and touches Cb's hair
12	M	Hein les chouchous ? (right, sweeties?)	Gazes at Cb
13	Cb	Et là on a vu, on a vu Raphaël (and then we saw, we saw Raphaël)	Gazes alternately at F and M
14	M	Oui (yes.)	Nods and looks at Cb
15	Cb	On va passer et va voir Louise (we are going to go and see Louise)	
16	M	Oui tout à fait (yes, exactly)	

17	F	Qui ça ? (who?)	Gazes at Cb
18	M	Raphaël	Gazes at Cb
19	Ca	Son amoureux (her lover)	Gazes at M, smiling
20	M	Ouais (yeah)	Lifts her eyebrows
21	M	En fait Raphaël, c'est l'amoureux de Louise, il est amoureux de Louise (actually, Raphaël is Louise's sweetheart, he's in love with Louise)	Gazes at F and lifts her eyebrows
			[…][6]
35	M	C'est son amoureux ? (is he her sweetheart?)	Gazes at Cb
36	Cb		Nods
37	M	Ah oui? (oh really?)	
38	Ca	Et toi t'es amoureux de lui (and you are in love with him)	Smiles, points to Cb looks at Cb, then M then back at Cb  h
39a	Cb		Gazes at Ca
39b	F		Gazes at Cb
40	M	Ah bon ? (oh really?)	Gazes at Cb
41	Ca	Ouais, si (yeah.)	Gazes at M and nods
42	M	Ah bon ? (really?)	Gazes at Ca then Cb
43	Ca	Ouais (yeah)	Gazes at M and raises his eyebrows  i
44	M	Tu l'aimes bien Raphaël ? (Do you like Raphaël ?)	Gazes at Cb
45	Cb		Nods Looks at M and then at Ca
46	M	C'est votre copain avec Louise ? (are you and Louise friends with him?)	Gazes at Cb
47	Cb	Oui (yeah)	Looks at her yogurt
48	M	C'est votre ami ? (is he your friend?)	
49	Cb	Presque (almost)	Looks at her yogurt

Figure 3: Extract 2.1: FRA4 – Social relations

6 We cut out the transcription between turns 22 and 34 due to word limitations.

The initiation of the topic is more complex than in extract 1 as both children join in a conversation between their two parents. Discourse about school is initiated by M who explains to F how she picked up the children just before the storm (turns 1-10). Cb then initiates the focus on Raphaël whom they met as they were running home (turn 13). A teasing frame is then introduced by the older sibling (Ca) and the mother (M): Raphaël is Louise's sweetheart (turn 19) / and Cb is in love with Raphaël (turn 38). The utterances, accompanied by pointing and gaze toward Cb (image h), operate as a first form of reconfiguration – transforming prior references to Raphaël into an emotionally marked category. Cb, while eating, nods quietly. Her minimal response signals alignment. The parents then initiate a series of clarification sequences – 'Do you like Raphaël?' (turn 44) / 'Is he your friend?' (turn 48) – inviting Cb to position herself within a complex set of peer relationships. Cb's effort to specify 'with him and with Louise' shows both the social tension she is experiencing and her willingness to account for it. The parents' interventions here do not impose a framing but rather accompany the emergence of her perspective. They seem to be seeking to understand, with a series of a questions and terms, the degree of relationship with a schoolmate (*amoureux, copain, ami),* rather than interpret. The next section then shifts to Cb's playmates.

Extract 2.2: FRA4 – Social relations

The narrative then develops into a more affective tone when Cb verbalizes a tension between her friendship with Louise and Raphaël and the fact that she cannot play with them at recess (turns 51-59). She explains that she was excluded from her group of friends, which made her sad (turns 61-63). As soon as Cb mentions her feeling, the parents both affectively align with their child and the mother gently tucks a lock of hair behind Cb's ear. The father echoes the concern: 'Oh, that made you sad?' (turn 65). The dinner setting becomes a place where Cb's sadness is welcome, acknowledged and shared, not only through words but through synchronized gestures of care. Touch, gaze and speech are coordinated in a way that makes Cb's emotional state collectively perceptible and receivable (from turn 56 until the end of the section).

		Vocal productions	*Visual productions*
50	M	Ah presque ? (oh almost ?)	
51a	Cb	Parce que Emma elle veut pas et il est pas dans mon groupe (Because Emma doesn't want to, and he's not in my group)	Gazes at M  j
51b	M		Gazes at Cb
52a	M		Gazes at F and produces a mouth shrug  k
52b	F		Gazes at Cb
53	Cb	On joue pas avec lui à la cour parce que Emma elle veut pas (We don't play with him at recess because Emma doesn't want to)	Looks at her yogurt
54	F	Mais Emma elle est dans ton groupe ? (but is Emma in your group?)	Frowns
55	Cb	Oui (yes)	Stares into space
56	M	Mais Emma elle veut pas que tu joues avec lui ou Emma elle veut pas jouer avec lui ? (Emma doesn't want *you* to play with him or she doesn't want to *play* with him?)	Looks at Cb and suspends her action of drinking water from her glass.  l
57a	Cb	Elle veut pas jouer avec lui et avec Louise (She doesn't want to play with him and with Louise)	Looks at F, then at her yogurt and then gazes into space while orienting her head towards M.  m
57b	F		Gazes at Cb
57c	Ca		Gazes at Cb
57d	M		Gazes at Cb

58	M	Et toi t'as envie de jouer avec lui, avec lui et avec Louise ? (And you, do you want to play with him, with him and with Louise?)	Makes a funny face because saying "avec lui et avec Louise" is tricky
59	Cb	Oui (yes)	
60	F	Et xxx (and)	
61	Cb	Et même dans la cour ils m'ont dit que je suis pas dans, dans, le groupe et j'suis plus dans leur groupe (And even at recess they told me I'm not in, in the group anymore, I'm not in their group.)	Gazes at M and turns towards her.  n
62	M	Oh	Gazes at Cb
63	Cb	Et j'suis triste (and I'm sad)	Looks at her yogurt
64a	M	Oh	Tucks a lock of hair behind Cb's ear and looks at her  o
64b	Ca		Looks at Cb
65	F	Oh et ça t'a rendu triste ? (oh, and that made you sad?)	
66	F	Mais le groupe de qui ? J'ai pas compris. (but whose group? I didn't get it.)	Gazes at Cb
67	M	T'es dans le groupe de qui ma chérie ? (whose group are you in, sweetie?)	Tucks a lock of hair behind Cb's ear Gazes at Cb  p
68	Cb	Emma (Emma)	Looks at M
69a	M	De Emma ? (Emma's)	Looks at Cb
69b	F	De Emma ? (Emma's)	Looks at Cb

70	Cb	Hum	
71	F	Bah comme ça tu peux aller jouer avec euh avec euh (Well, then you can go play with, um, with...)	Looks at Cb
72a	F	Raphaël et Louise (Raphaël and Louise)	Looks at Cb
72b	M	Raphaël et Louise, hein ? (Raphaël and Louise, right ?)	Looks at Cb and strokes Cb's hair
73	Cb	Oui (yes)	
74	M	Et ça t'a rendu triste ? (and that made you sad?)	Gazes at Cb
75	Cb	Oui (yes)	Eats a spoonful of yogurt
76	M	Oh	Strokes Cb's hair 
77	M	Alors t'es allée voir qui ? t'es allée voir Isée ? (So who did you go to? Did you go to Isée?)	Strokes Cb's hair
78	M	Qu'est-ce que t'as fait ? (What did you do?)	Strokes Cb's hair
79	Cb	Isée l'est venue quand j'étais triste (Isée came when I was sad)	Manipulates her yogurt pot Looks at her yogurt
80a	M	Oh c'est gentil ça (oh that's nice)	Strokes Cb's hair
80b	F	Oh elle est gentille, Isée (oh, she's kind, Isée)	Gazes at Cb

Figure 4: Extract 2.2: FRA4 – Social relations

From turn 61 onward, the interaction becomes increasingly physical: M continues to stroke Cb's hair at regular intervals (turns 76, 77, 78), Cb, in return, strokes her mother's arm twice (turns 110 and 120). The bodily configuration of care shifts: the child, formerly the recipient of affection, begins to re-enact and reciprocate it.

Importantly, both parents suggest a possible future (turns71-72) as they assume Cb can go play with Raphaël and Louise. By suggesting this possibility, they offer a reconfiguration of agency: they show their daughter that although she may have initially been positioned as excluded and passive, she may also reposition herself as someone with options and relationships beyond Emma's refusal and exclusion. The affective stance shifts from one of empathy to one of encouragement, without denying the emotional weight of the experience. In Extract 3, the narrative continues to expand.

Extract 2.3: FRA4 – Social relations

Cb maintains the thread of her narrative and repeats 'and then, and then' (turn 81) while looking intently at M (image r) and is now able to talk about a less dramatic and charged event. Her older brother, Ca, demonstrates his engagement by joining in – 'And then what happened?!' (turns 82 and 84) – adding a new coloration to the storytelling and building suspense. The figure of Auguste appears: 'He's the meanest!' (turn 86) followed by M's reframing: 'But he's mean not for real, right?' (turn 87). The narrative shifts from emotional pain to fictional play, and Auguste is reconfigured not as a mean schoolboy but as a game partner. Here again, the boundaries between event and interpretation are blurred. Cb's account is not linear; it alternates between remembered sequences and associative logics.

		Vocal productions	*Visual productions*
81	Cb	Et après, et après, et après, (And then, and then, and then...)	Intently looks at M  r
82	Ca	Et après ! (and then!)	Looks down at his hands
83	Cb	Et après (and then)	
84	Ca	Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ?! (what happened ?!)	Looks down at his hands
85	Cb	Et après (and then)	Intently looks at M
86a	Cb	Auguste est venu c'est le plus méchant parce qu'on joue au méchant ! (Auguste came, he's the meanest because we play the mean guy!)	Intensively looks at M
86b	M		Gazes at Cb
86c	Ca		Gazes at Cb
86d	F		Gazes at Cb
87	M	Ah bon alors il est méchant pour de faux (Oh, so he's mean not for real.)	Gazes at Cb
88	Cb	Oui (yes)	Stares into space but turns her shoulders towards M  s
89	M	Ah	Gazes at Cb
90	F	Oui parce que je croyais qu'Auguste c'était ton copain (Yeah because I thought Auguste was your friend.)	Gazes at Cb
91	Cb	Non c'est plus mon copain (no, he's not my friend anymore)	Gazes at F
92	F	C'est plus ton copain ? (he's not your friend anymore?)	Gazes at Cb and raises his eyebrows
93	Cb	Oui (yes)	Eats her yogurt
94	M	Pourquoi ? (why?)	Looks at Cb
95	Cb	Parce que c'était avant (because that was before)	Eats her yogurt

96a	F	J'ai du mal à suivre (I'm having trouble keeping up)	Gazes at Cb
96b	Ca		Gazes at F
97	M	Ah	
98	F	Avant c'était ton copain et maintenant c'est plus ton copain ? (Before he was you friend and now he's not?)	Gazes at Cb
99	Cb	Oui (yes)	
100	Ca	J'ai du mal à suivre (I'm having trouble keeping up)	Looks down at his fingers
101	F	((Laughs))	
102	M	Et du coup t'as joué avec qui, avec Isée ? hein ? (So who did you play with, with Isée? Right?)	Looks at Cb
103	M	C'est bon là y a plus de yaourt ma chérie, tu manges tes pépites (Okay, there's no more yogurt, sweetie, eat your toppings)	Puts the empty yaourt pot away from Cb
104	M	T'as joué avec Isée du coup ? (so you played with Isée then?)	Looks at Cb
105	F	Cb, maman t'a posé une question. (Cb, mommy asked you a question)	Looks at Cb
106	Cb	Oui (yes)	
107	M	D'accord (okay)	Looks at Cb
108	M	Et t'es t'es t'es pas restée longtemps triste ? (and you, you, you weren't sad for too long, were you?)	Tucks a lock of hair behind Cb's ear and looks at Cb  t
109	Cb	Bah si ! longtemps (well yes! A long time)	
110	M	Longtemps ? (A long time?)	Strokes Cb's hair

Figure 5: Extract 2.3: FRA4 – Social relations

A key moment of temporal reconfiguration occurs when the father remarks: 'I thought Auguste was your friend" (turn 90) using the imperfect tense to indicate a prior mental model (Parisse *et al.*, 2018). Cb answers that Auguste is no longer her friend, but he indeed used to be (turns 91-95). The interaction thus becomes a locus where past affiliations are updated, and affective ties are re-assessed. The child's sadness remains anchored in the spatial-temporal frame of the schoolyard, but the adults' understanding is gradually reshaped by what they hear and see. In Extract 2.4, Cb returns to the context of the schoolyard.

Extract 2.4: FRA4 – Social relations

Cb now explains how recess ends: when the teacher claps her hands, the children gather, hold hands in pairs, and go back to class. This shift toward procedural explanation marks a moment of stabilization, supported by

both institutional routine and narrative coherence. The figure of Auguste – introduced earlier – may have served as a pivot in this transition – from a space of emotional vulnerability to one of shared play and regulated practice. The sadness has not been denied, but it has been resituated. Cb, who had earlier described herself as sad and excluded, now appears as a competent narrator of school routines, capable of both recounting and demonstrating procedures (image x). The sequence ends with a softly articulated 'et voilà' (turn 131) – a closure that is both narrative and affective. With the sustained support of her parents, Cb has moved from the territory of sadness to a space where the story can be completed, gestures can be demonstrated, and the body can re-engage in ritualized, meaningful activity.

		Vocal productions	*Visual productions*
111a	Cb	Mais quand on tape des mains, maîtresse, on vient tous et on range (But when we clap hands, teacher, we all come and clean up)	Mimics the teacher clapping her hands  u Touches M's arm  v
111b	M	Ah !	
112	M	Et après ça allait mieux dans la classe ? (and then you were feeling better in the classroom?)	
113	Cb	Oui (yes)	
114	M	D'accord (okay)	Strokes Cb's hair
115	F	Quand ta maîtresse elle tape des mains vous rangez ? (when your teacher claps her hands you all clean up?)	Looks at Cb
116	Cb	Oui (yes)	
117	F	D'accord (okay)	
118	M	Et y a une musique, non ? (and there's a tune, right?)	Strokes Cb's hair
119	M	Y a pas une musique ? (isn't there a tune?)	
120	Cb		Nods and touches M's arm  w

121	F	Pourquoi quand je tape des mains dans ta chambre, tu ranges pas ? (Why is it that when I clap in your room, you don't clean up?)	
122	Cb	Et moi je donne la main à les autres (and I hold hands with others)	
123	M	Aux autres (the others)	
124	F	Aux autres (the others)	
125	Cb	Aux autres (the others)	Looks at F and then M
126	M	Ouais (yeah)	Strokes Cb's hair
127	Cb	Un par un, tu tiens la main à une (One by one, you hold hands with one)	Looks at M Moves her hands to show how to hold hands correctly  x
128	M	D'accord Hum hum (okay)	
129	Cb	Parce que faut faire deux par deux (because we have to go two by two)	
130	M	Hum hum	nods
131	Cb	Et voilà (and that's it)	Looks at M out of the corner of her eye  y
132	M	D'accord (okay)	

Figure 6: Extract 2.4: FRA4 – Social relations

Throughout the conversation, Ca pays close attention to the ongoing interaction and the parents display their sustained attention: their gaze rarely shifts away from Cb, their actions slow down or are suspended, their speech is punctuated with pauses. This management of availability allows the child's emotional experience to unfold in interaction. The dinner table, here, functions not only as a setting for a meal but as a space of reconfiguration of emotional ties, narrative authority, and social understandings.

This sequence, in which school events are recounted and analyzed across four sections, reveals more than Cb simply narrating her day; it captures a family collaboratively reconstructing meaning, roles, and emotional dynamics. The child's experience of exclusion becomes a moment of shared reflection, allowing the parents not only to understand what happened but

also to gain insight into how their daughter situates herself in relation to others and how they, as parents, might respond with empathy, support her emotionally, and help her reconfigure complex social challenges.

6. Conclusion

In the French family dinners we studied, school emerges as a recurring and meaningful theme, though its prominence and character vary from one family to another. Those interactions underscore the critical role of family dinners in the socialization of school practices. They function not merely as occasions for recounting daily events but as both educational and affective spaces where children are supported in the articulation, negotiation, and internalization of school-based knowledge and social experiences. These findings align with the broader argument of the study: that French middle-class family meals may foster reflective learning, social and cultural transmission through richly multimodal and interactive discourse permeated with affect.

Within the structured-yet-spontaneous rhythm of those French middle-class family meals, school-related discourse emerges as a privileged moment for children to revisit their day, share experiences, and co-construct meaning with their parents. Through a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses, we show that dinner conversations about school – often sparked by parents' inquisitive interest in their children's school day, but also by the children's own eagerness to share experiences from time spent apart – are far more than anecdotal retellings; they are transformative exchanges through which children are encouraged to reflect on and reconfigure their school experiences within a supportive family environment. Parents play a pivotal role in guiding this process. Through open-ended questions, metaphors, gestures, touch, and analogies, they scaffold their children's narratives, encouraging them to process, articulate, interpret, and generalize what they have experienced and learned.

Our detailed qualitative analyses further support those trends. In excerpt 1, the interaction between Ca and his mother around the ideogram for 'man' exemplifies how school knowledge is actively reconfigured at the dinner table through multimodal *inter-languaging*. The mother's use of epistemic framing, metaphor, and gesture invites her child to adopt a metacognitive stance, moving beyond recall to reflective engagement with school-acquired knowledge. Through iterative clarification and embodied modeling, the parents collaboratively recontextualize a classroom concept – transforming it from an abstract ideogram into a culturally resonant and semantically anchored representation. This exchange highlights the role of parents as co-constructors of meaning, guiding their children through processes of semantic linking, multimodal transformation, and symbolic stabilization. In doing so, they cultivate forms of reasoning and discourse that echo school-based practices, reinforcing educational continuity while

promoting the child's autonomy as a learner. This sequence thus reinforces the conclusion that the dinner table operates as a site of cognitive apprenticeship, where knowledge is not merely reproduced but reconfigured through interactional, semiotic, and affective dynamics.

The analysis of extract 2 deepens this perspective by illustrating how dinner conversations can function as emotionally charged, co-constructed spaces of meaning-making. In this sequence, the child's experience of social exclusion at school becomes the starting point for a collective reconfiguration of emotional and relational roles within the family. Through coordinated talk, gaze, touch, and gesture, the family does not merely listen to Cb's account but actively participates in reshaping it – transforming sadness into shared understanding, and exclusion into a moment of re-empowerment. The parents' responsive scaffolding and embodied care enable the child to reposition herself in relation to her peers, moving from a passive stance to one of agency. This interaction exemplifies how family dinners can host complex affective negotiations, where school experiences are not only recounted but reconfigured in ways that support emotional regulation, identity formation, and narrative competence. Such findings highlight that the dinner table is not only a site for cognitive and discursive development, but also a key arena for the emotional and social reconfiguration of school life within the family sphere.

These interactions blur the boundaries between home and school, fostering both educational and affective continuity and supporting children's identity formation as both learners and as members of a community of school peers. The interplay between proximal and distal discourse – between immediate sensory experience and decontextualized reflection – offers a fertile ground for developing the kind of cognitive, social, affective and communicative skills that are highly valued in school settings. Our analyses align with those of Caronia, Colla & Bolognesi (2023): just as parental testing at the homework table sets up a micro-school environment at home, family dinners set the scene for a reflective ritual in which school experiences are cognitively and affectively reshaped and re-experienced collectively.

These observations raise significant educational and social issues. They show that the development of school knowledge and social engagement is not limited to the classroom and the schoolyard but is equally built within the family context. The role of families – particularly in middle-to-upper-class households that are culturally close to the school institution – is central here. These families deploy everyday language practices that actively support the development of cognitive and discursive skills in alignment with school expectations. This directly challenges educational inequalities and raises the question of family-school relations, discussed in Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) in France and in Lareau (2003) in the American context. Thus, the implicit access to these resources in certain families constitutes an invisible but crucial advantage in children's educational trajectories in Western cultures.

Although our analysis is based on a limited sample of five families within our broader research project, it underscores how the family context can serve as a space for the co-construction of knowledge, where school-related learning may – or may not – be revisited, reformulated, and reintegrated into other frameworks of meaning. This perspective invites us to recognize the diversity of educational experiences outside the school environment and to consider that other forms of learning – equally significant – can emerge through narrative, affective, or cultural practices specific to each social setting. It also calls for educational policies to better support the role of families as co-educators, by making school expectations more visible, while valuing the diversity of language and cultural forms involved in learning pathways.

By analyzing the linguistic and embodied dimensions of school talk, this study contributes to a richer understanding of how knowledge and experience are negotiated and transformed in everyday family life. It underscores the importance of viewing dinner conversations not just as casual exchanges, but as structured sites of socialization, where children are actively apprenticed into culturally specific ways of thinking, *languaging*, learning and feeling. In doing so, it positions the dinner table as a crucial space for the multimodal socialization of all family members, fostering the development of reflective, cognitively engaged, and affectively attuned members of their community.

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