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"You should have done it earlier": The Morality of Time Management in Parent-child Homework Interactions

Vittoria Colla*

Abstract

In recent years, research on family life has stressed that time management strategies constitute a survival skill for fast-paced, modern families. Despite its crucial importance, however, time management is still little explored as an interactive accomplishment of family members and a socializing experience. Adopting a Conversation Analysis informed approach, this article analyzes video-recorded parent-child interactions about time management during homework. The analysis illustrates that parents put homework first in the temporal sequence of children's routines, constituting it as an activity that should be carried out early *in the afternoon,* before *any other enterprise, and* with no interruption. *In the conclusion, we argue that parent-child conversations about time management and priorities constitute a locus where moral stances and cultural beliefs are displayed. By taking part in such ordinary interactions, children are socialized not only to the importance of homework as emerging from its temporal collocation, but also to the cultural value of time and morally appropriate ways of using it.*

Keywords*: time organization; family conversation; schoolwork; socialization; Conversation Analysis.*

1. Introduction

As reported by much research on family life, lack of time and hurriedness constitute a major concern for middle-class modern families (see among others, Provonost, 1989; Fox & Nickols, 1983; Daly, 1996; Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). "Time famine" is particularly attributed to dual-earner families, where parents experience a conflict between work time and "family time" (Kremer-Sadlik & Paugh, 2007; Forsberg, 2009a, 2009b). In addition, increasing research emphasizes the time pressures deriving from children's busy schedules filled with homework and extra-curricular activities (see among others, Elkind, 1981; Lareau, 2003; Kremer-Sadlik *et al.*, 2010; Kremer-Sadlik & Gutiérrez, 2013). For these "hurried parents and

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children" (Elkind, 1981; Daly, 1996), allocation of time is central to organizing family life (Presser, 1989). However, only very little research has focused on time management as a joint, interactive accomplishment of family members as well as one of the crucial cultural, and even moral, dimensions children are socialized to (but see Wingard, 2007).

Adopting a phenomenologically oriented approach to socialization (Caronia, 2012; Pontecorvo *et al.*, 2001; Caronia *et al.*, forthcoming) and a socio-cultural perspective, which considers learning and development as embedded in social contexts and practices (Vygotskij, 1962[1934]; Pontecorvo, 1993; Pontecorvo *et al.*, 1991, 1995), in this article we conceive of everyday family activities as socializing experiences (i.e. occurrences of "informal education", Tramma, 2009). In particular, we illustrate how children are socialized to morally appropriate time organization in and through parent-child interactions occurring during an ordinary, although extremely pedagogically dense, activity: parent-assisted homework. Given that time management and planning are key in the accomplishment of homework (see among others, Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001; Walker *et al.*, 2004; Corno & Xu, 2004), parent-child interactions during homework constitute a "perspicuous case" (Garfinkel & Wieder, 1992) for observing how children are socialized into a cultural, and deeply moral, "temporal conscience" (Elias, 1992).

The article is structured as follows. In the introductory sections, we report extant studies on time management in family life as well as research focusing on ordinary family interactions as socializing experiences, with a particular focus on parent-assisted homework. After describing the data and analytic procedures of our study, we present a series of excerpts of video-recorded, naturally occurring parent-child interactions during homework. The excerpts are analyzed adopting a Conversation Analysis informed approach (see among others, Sacks *et al.*, 1974; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), which has proved to be well-suited for analyzing how participants jointly accomplish time management in and through the unfolding of interaction (see Wingard, 2007). The analysis illustrates that parents put homework first in the temporal sequence of children's routines, constituting it as an activity that should be carried out *early* in the afternoon, *before* any other enterprise, and *with no interruption*. In the conclusion, we argue that parent-child conversations about time management constitute a *locus* where moral stances and beliefs are displayed: in organizing children's activities in a temporal order, parents create and convey a culture-specific, morally-appropriate hierarchy of daily accomplishments (Daly, 1996; Caronia, 2002). By prioritizing homework in the temporal ordering of children's activities, parents attribute a crucial importance to this activity, as well as to learning and schooling in general. At the very same time, through interactions about time management, parents convey cultural beliefs concerning the value of time and the moral implications of its use. It is precisely by taking part in such ordinary conversations that children are socialized not only to the importance of homework as emerging from its temporal collocation but also to the cultural, and deeply moral, value of time.

2. Time management in family life

In the last decades, research on family life has been reporting that time shortage is a major concern for post-industrial, middle-class families (see among others, Provonost, 1989; Fox & Nickols, 1983; Daly, 1996; Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). References to families' "time famine" (Daly, 1996) and "time crunch" (Fox & Nickols, 1983; Beaujot & Andersen, 2007) as well as phrases like "to carve out time" (Kremer-Sadlik, 2013: 218) clearly convey that time has become the most precious commodity for contemporary families (Rubin, 1994). This is especially true for dual-earner families: when both parents work outside the home, finding time to fulfill the roles of workers, parents and partners can be extremely challenging (Gigli, 2007, 2016; Milani, 2018; Kremer-Sadlik & Paugh, 2007; Forsberg, 2009a, 2009b). Families' perception of time scarcity also depends on children's busy schedules. According to much literature, recent years have been characterized by a growing institutionalization of children's time, with kids' free time being gradually 'colonized' by an increasing amount of homework and extracurricular activities (see among others, Elkind, 1981; Lareau, 2003; Kremer-Sadlik *et al.*, 2010; Kremer-Sadlik & Gutiérrez, 2013; Wheeler & Green, 2019)[1]. For contemporary parents and children always short on time, time management strategies have become "a necessary survival skill" (Daly, 1996: 210).

Importantly, organization of time in families is not only a matter of logistics: it is a deeply moral issue. Time allocation is informed by cultural and moral ideologies, and family members evaluate themselves and one another on the way they manage time. For example, in Western middle-class families, finding what is commonly called 'time for family' is considered "the right thing to do" (Kremer-Sadlik, 2013: 218; see also Kremer-Sadlik & Paugh, 2007; Kremer-Sadlik *et al.*, 2008). In this perspective, being a 'good parent' is strongly connected to the ability to carve out time to be with children, to participate in their (extra)curricular activities, and to come together as a family at specific moments such as dinnertime (see Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013; Daly, 1996). Yet, at the same time, Western post-modern culture also highly values speed, efficiency and productivity, which are in stark contrast with "nonprofit, inefficient use of time for caregiving and nurturance" (Daly, 1996: 39). As a consequence, parents (and children, even though to a lesser extent) constantly strive to find a balance between two mutually exclusive, and equally culturally valued, alternatives: unproductive time for care and family *vs* profitable time for work.

1 This has originated a public debate on the effects of children's busyness: if much literature documents its benefits for children's academic achievement and sense of self-efficacy (see among others, Mahoney *et al.*, 2005), other researchers stress the importance of unstructured, free time for children's development (see among others, Elkind, 1981; Maggioni & Baraldi, 1997).

Given the "escalation of pace in our culture" (Daly, 1996: 38) as well as the moral implications of time allocation (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013), time management and planning are crucial in the organization of family life (Presser, 1989). In Daly's words (1996), "negotiations within families about control over time […] and norms about 'appropriate' time use lie at the heart of the politics of time in families" (p. 204). However, and surprisingly, only very little research has focused on how time management is accomplished in the day-to-day experiences of families. With the only exception of Wingard's article (2007) analyzing parent-child talk about time and planning, time management as an interactive accomplishment of family members as well as a socializing experience is still largely unexplored.

In the next section, we report some of the studies that laid the foundations for conceiving of ordinary family interactions as pedagogically dense, socializing experiences.

3. Ordinary parent-child interactions and socialization

After Ochs and Schieffelin's groundbreaking studies on language socialization (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009; Duranti *et al.*, 2012)[2], a great amount of research has been devoted to illustrating how children are socialized to culture-specific ways of thinking and acting in and through everyday interactions with caregivers, particularly parents. Indeed, in parent-child interactions, cultural beliefs, expectations and norms are not only present in the form of implicit underlying premises, but they are also frequently brought to the surface of interaction, especially through parental corrections and "practices of control" (Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018). By resorting to different discursive formats, such as requests for an account (Sterponi, 2003, 2009), test questions (see Caronia *et al.*, forthcoming; for the first definition of "test question", see Mehan, 1979a, 1979b) and directives (see among others, Craven & Potter, 2010; Kent, 2012; Goodwin & Cekaite, 2012), parents signal their children's misbehaviors, making salient different dimensions of guilt and responsibility (Sterponi, 2014). In so doing, parents socialize their children to culturally and morally appropriate stances and conducts.

Research on family interaction has illustrated how socialization occurs in and through interactions during various family activities, such as dinner (see among others, Ochs *et al.*, 1996; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Ochs & Shohet, 2006; Pontecorvo & Arcidiacono, 2007; Caronia *et al.*, forthcom-

2 According to the language socialization paradigm, children's socialization is, at the same time, socialization *to* language and *through* language. In other words, by participating in ordinary interactions and practices with adults/experts, children are socialized to using language as well as to the cultural patterns implied by language-in-interaction (see Duranti *et al.*, 2012).

ing), sports activities (Gottzén & Kremer-Sadlik, 2012; Kremer-Sadlik & Kim, 2007), reading or watching tv (Caronia, 2002, 2012), and cleaning (Fasulo *et al.*, 2007). Each of these mundane activities provides parents and children with specific occasions to display, and socialize each other to, taken-for-granted assumptions and norms. In this article, we focus on an ordinary activity constituting a significant component of family routine: parent-assisted homework.

3.1. *Parent-assisted homework as a socializing experience*

Like other family activities entailing interactions between parents and children, homework constitutes a "cultural site" (Ochs & Shohet, 2006), that is an opportunity for (re)affirming and conveying "implicit and explicit messages about right and wrong, better and worse, rules, norms, obligations, duties, etiquette, moral reasoning, virtue, character, and other dimensions on how to lead a moral life" (Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2007: 5). According to Pontecorvo *et al.* (2013), parental help with homework is characterized by a "hybridization" of different learning practices, both formal and informal. Through such practices, children are apprenticed to cultural norms, values, and beliefs enacted within the family, and gradually become legitimate and competent participants in the activities of their community (see Lave & Wenger, 1991). For example, in and through parental practices of involvement in homework, children and parents locally negotiate notions of autonomy, self-reliance and responsibility concerning school and learning activities (Forsberg, 2007; Wingard & Forsberg, 2009), and socialize each other to culturally relevant ideologies about childhood and 'good parenting' (Kremer-Sadlik & Gutiérrez, 2013; Kremer-Sadlik & Fatigante, 2015).

Interestingly, much research has stressed that parental assistance with homework fosters children's time management and planning abilities. According to Walker *et al.* (2004), time regulation is one of the most important parent involvement activities: by "specify[ing] regular times for homework" and "establish[ing] structures for time use", parents significantly contribute to students' motivation and performance (p. 2, see also Hoover-Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). Conceiving of homework as a form of preparation for the job, Corno and Xu (2004) have emphasized that parental control over homework time helps children get good work routines and gain experience with keeping a personal calendar. In her analysis of parents' inquiries about homework, Wingard (2006a, 2006b) has illustrated how parents accomplish the prioritization of homework in the unfolding of interactions with children. By asking about homework and making plans for its completion, parents help children manage homework time, and socialize them to planning and sticking to schedules.

The importance of time management in modern family life combined with the socializing function of parent-child (homework) talk made relevant to analyze how parents socialize children to time as a morally loaded

resource that both *endows* activities with value according to their location in the timeline, and *is endowed* with value through the prioritization of certain activities over others.

In the next section, we describe the research design and analytical procedures of this study aiming at analyzing in detail how parents and children accomplish and negotiate time management in the unfolding of interactions during homework.

4. Data corpus and analytical procedures

The data used in this study are drawn from a corpus of about 2440 minutes of video-recorded homework sessions where children happen to be supported by their parents. The nineteen families involved in this ethnography-informed study live in two regions in the north of Italy (Emilia-Romagna and Veneto) and are composed of two working parents and at least one child attending primary school[3]. Participants were recruited by the author and her colleagues through their personal and work connections, and were first contacted by phone or e-mail to explore their willingness to participate in the study. To minimize the potential impact of researchers and video-recording tools, the video-tape recording was administered by the parents. Participants' consent was obtained according to Italian law n. 196/2003 and EU Regulation n. 2016/679 (GDPR 2016/679), which regulates the handling of personal and sensitive data. For the sake of anonymity, all names have been fictionalized.

The excerpts presented here have been transcribed using Conversation Analysis conventions (Jefferson, 2004; for transcription conventions see the Appendix). In line with the multimodal approach to social interaction (Goodwin, 2000), transcripts have been enriched with notations for gaze, gestures, body movements and orientations when ostensibly relevant for participants as a means to unfold the interaction. Transcripts are presented in two lines: the original Italian transcript is followed by an almost literal translation in American English.

5. Time management in parent-child interactions during homework

After repeated observation of the data, we singled out 13 sequences where talk about time, schedules and temporal organization occur. In all these sequences, parents problematize children's management of homework time. Using a radically *post hoc* categorization, we regrouped the

3 Among the nineteen families involved, sixteen are from Italy, one from North Africa and two from Eastern Europe. In all the families, parents and children master the Italian language and use only this language when accomplishing homework.

sequences into three clusters according to the assumptions evoked by parents. Specifically, parents constructed homework as an activity that should be done 1) *early* in the afternoon, 2) *before* anything else, and 3) *with no interruption*. In the following sections, we analyze one example for each of the above-mentioned clusters.

5.1. *Doing homework early*

In the following excerpt, the mother criticizes her child for doing homework in the evening and formulates the child's obligation to do homework early.

Ex. 1 – F5H4 (10.12 – 10.30)
M = Mother
T = Tania (nine years old, fifth grade)

It is evening[4] and M is quizzing T on the history lesson due the next day. After giving a wrong answer to one of M's questions, T takes the history book and starts looking for evidence supporting her answer. At this point, M problematizes the time when they are doing homework.

1	T	c'era scritto °chi regna(va)° it was written °who reign(ed)° *((staring at a page of the history book))*
2	**M**	**però tania >posso dirti una cosa,<** **but tania >can I tell you something,<**
3	**M**	**a me non mi piace che andiamo a fare i compiti a quest'ora eh.** **I don't like that we get to do homework at this hour eh.**
4	**M**	**(.) tu dovevi farli prima=** **(.) you should have done it earlier=**
5	T	=però (.) c'era scritto chi [°regna:va°] =but (.) it was written who [°rei:gned°] *((staring at a page of the history book))*
6	M	[>sì sì però<] hai capito [>yes yes but<] do you understand
7	M	cos'ho detto? what I said?
8	T	sì:: ye::s

4 The word "evening" is used by the participants in another video recording to refer to the time when this interaction occurred. It is not possible to establish the exact time when the interaction was recorded. However, the fact that the lights are on in the room demonstrates that it was at least 7 pm when the interaction occurred (the video was recorded in September, when the sun goes down at about 7 pm in the region).

In the turn at line 1, T is backing up her previous (wrong) answer by attributing it to the book ("*it was written* who reigned") and looking for evidence in the book. At this point, M draws the child's attention by producing an articulated preface (line 2). Firstly, M issues a strong adversative ("però" in Italian), which introduces a contrast with the interlocutor (Mascherpa, 2016). Secondly, M calls the child by her first name ("Tania"). Since T is M's only potential interlocutor (not only has mutual engagement been established in the previous turns, but T is also the only person in the room), the use of the child's name is marked and does more than just addressing: it emphasizes the child's personal responsibility (Galeano & Fasulo, 2009). Finally, M projects an incoming statement through a "pre-sequence" ("can I tell you something?") that frames what she is about to say as important and "delicate" (see Schegloff, 1980; Silverman, 1998).

After such a preface, M issues a subjective negative evaluation of the time of the ongoing homework activity ("I don't like that we get to do homework at this hour eh", line 3). In this way, M treats doing homework "at that time", i.e. in the evening, as inappropriate. Note that the use of the inchoative periphrasis ("we get to do", "andiamo a fare" in Italian) presents the homework activity as *beginning* at that moment, thus emphasizing the inappropriateness of its timing. After a very brief pause, M adds that T should have done her homework "earlier" (line 4). While the subjective negative evaluation ("I don't like…", line 3) was hearable as M's personal opinion, the deontic verb in the past tense ("you *should have done*", line 4) strongly conveys a breached moral obligation. In addition, the subject shift (from "we" in line 3 to "you" in line 4) and the marked use of the subject pronoun "tu" emphasize the child's sole responsibility for the moral breach, i.e. failing to do homework earlier.

In the following turn, T continues pursuing her interactional trajectory: she backs up her previous answer with information from the history book ("but it was written who reigned", line 5). In so doing, T is in fact ignoring M's reproach. But M does not let go: she treats the child's contribution as irrelevant (see the quick acknowledgement "yes yes but", line 6), and then asks T to verbally acknowledge the reproach by requesting a display of understanding ("do you understand what I said?", lines 6 and 7). By explicitly requesting a feedback from T (which the child produces in the turn at line 8), M conveys the importance of her reproach: the moral obligation to do homework before the evening ("earlier") must be clearly understood by the child and cannot be ignored.

Through the negative evaluation (line 3), the statement of the breached norm (line 4), as well as the preface (line 2) and the final request for a display of understanding (lines 6 and 7), M problematizes the temporal collocation of the homework activity in T's afternoon schedule. In particular, by allocating the study activity to an "earlier" time slot (line 4), M prioritizes homework in T's routine and conveys "doing homework earlier" (i.e. before the evening) as a golden rule for the management of homework time.

5.2. *Doing homework before anything else*

The next example further illustrates how the mother problematizes the time when the child is doing homework. In this case, the mother makes relevant the cultural belief that homework must be done *before* anything else, especially entertaining activities.

Ex. 2 – F5H4 (12.20 – 12.55)
M = Mother
T = Tania (nine years old, fifth grade)

This excerpt is the unfolding of Ex. 1. After her bad performance in the quiz activity, T complains about the exaggerate amount of homework and questions the teacher's right to assign four pages to study. We join the interaction when M rejects the child's complaints about the teacher and shifts the blame onto the child.

1	M	te ne può dare anche dieci* ^perché è l'insegnante. (.) lei può she can even give you ten* ^because she's the teacher. (.) she can
2	T	^*((moves the book to her side and starts reading))*
3	**M**	**è che tu, quando vieni a casa,** **the thing is that you, when you come home,**
4	**M**	**non ti metti a guardare i video ma ti metti a studiare** **don't get to watch videos but get to study**
5	**M**	**(.) e i video li guardi quando ti vuoi rilassare** **(.) and the videos you watch them when you want to relax**

***** The number (ten, dieci) is referred to the homework pages.

Quizzed by M on the history lesson due the next day, T has failed to answer many questions: after her poor performance, T blames it on the teacher for the exaggerate amount of pages assigned for homework (not transcribed). In response to T's complaints, M advocates for the teacher (line 1): by issuing a conforming extreme example ("she can even give you ten (pages)"), an account ("because she's the teacher"), and a deontic claim ("she can"), M presents the teacher as the undisputable authority over homework. After T has visibly abandoned her complaint trajectory (she moves the history book to her side and starts reading, line 2), M holds the child accountable for her bad time management (lines 3-5).

Firstly, M shifts the blame and responsibility onto the child ("the thing is that *you*", line 3; note the marked and prosodically stressed subject pronoun "tu"); then she criticizes the child's time management by describing the appropriate after-school plan she should keep to, that is studying instead of watching videos (lines 3 and 4). Through the antithetic construction "you

don't get to…, but you get to…", M creates an opposition between doing homework and watching videos, constituting these activities as mutually exclusive and conveying homework as the required, morally appropriate activity. By allocating the study activity to the immediately after-school time slot ("when you come home", line 3), M prioritizes doing homework over watching videos in T's afternoon routine. In this way, homework is constructed as an urgent accomplishment, which must be completed right after school, before any other activity. Interestingly, M conveys the importance of homework even through the syntax of her turn: she first refers to watching videos and then to studying (line 4). Since the addressee typically orients to the last thing being said (see the "contiguity principle", Sacks, 1987), by referring to homework in the final part of her turn, M gives relevance to this activity with respect to the previously uttered one (i.e. watching videos).

After a very short pause, M adds that T can watch videos when she wants to relax (line 5). Being assigned to the break time ("when you want to relax"), watching videos is constructed as an extra activity, which can only constitute a diversion from more important accomplishments, first and foremost homework. Also, note the characteristics of the invoked time slots. The after-school time slot (i.e. "when you come home", line 3) is unequivocally identifiable and constitutive of the weekdays, which contributes to further conveying homework as a priority, i.e. as an activity that must be carried out systematically and before any other accomplishment. On the contrary, the 'relax time slot' is constructed as dependent on the child's will ("when *you want* to relax", line 5) and is therefore much vaguer in terms of its temporal collocation. However, M's reproach clearly implies and conveys that the 'relax time slot' can only come after homework, since homework constitutes the first activity to be accomplished in the after-school time slot (see lines 3 and 4).

5.3. *Doing homework with no interruption*

In addition to further illustrating how parents make relevant the belief that homework must be completed *before* other activities, the next episode shows how parents orient to the idea that homework should be carried out *with no interruption*.

Ex. 3 – F15H1 v. 3 (04.50 – 05.20)
M = Mother
R = Roberta (seven years old, second grade)

M and R are standing close to the table, next to each other. On the table lie R's science notebook and an empty plate that contained R's apple snack.

The excerpt begins during the snack break: R is eating the last piece of her apple while leafing through the science notebook with M. When R gets to the homework page, M urges her to stop the break and restart the homework activity.

1 M dai. finisci:,
come on. fi:nish, *((taking the empty plate and moving away from the table))*

2 (3) *((R jumps next to the table))*

3 R dopo devo andare in bagno
then I need to go to the toilet *((following M))*

4 M sì ma roberta non è più finita
yes but roberta it's never-ending

5 M (.) e mangiare, e in bagno, e:: quando finiamo?
(.) and eating, and going to the toilet, a::nd when will we finish?

6 R non posso andare in bagno?
can't I go to the toilet?

7 M sì. ma- e:: (.) c'è un obiettivo.
yes. but- e:: (.) there's a target.

8 M finire i compiti prima di andare via.
finishing homework before leaving.

9 (3) *((R stands next to M while eating the last mouthful of her apple snack))*

10 M finché sei in bagno pensi a cosa disegnare (.) va bene?
while you are at the toilet think about what to draw (.)ok?

11 R mh *((nodding))*

In the turn at line 1, M multimodally urges R to stop the break and restart the homework: she verbally exhorts R to finish the apple snack ("come on. Finish"), and concurrently removes the plate that contained the apple, thus marking the end of the snack break. R does not align with M's directive (the child remains silent and jumps, line 2) and then voices her need to go to the toilet after finishing the snack ("then I need to go to the toilet", line 3). In so doing, the child proposes an activity (i.e. going to the toilet) to be accomplished right after the snack break, thus postponing the restart of homework.

M immediately problematizes the child's statement: she appeals to the child's personal responsibility by calling her by her first name ("Roberta") and then uses an Extreme Case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986)[5] that presents R's break from homework as endless ("It's never-ending", line 4). After a short pause, M lists the accomplishments preventing R from continuing the homework activity, each one introduced by the conjunction "and" ("and eating, and going to the toilet", line 5). The listing and the repetition of the conjunction (known as "polysyndeton") have the effect of slowing up the rhythm of the talk, which contributes to conveying the length of R's break. Then, M issues a rhetorical question concerning the end of the

5 With "Extreme Case formulation", Pomerantz (1986) indicates the verbal formulations that describe facts in an exaggerate ("extreme") way (e.g. 'he didn't say a word', 'no time', 'forever', 'every time', 'everyone'). Extreme Case formulations constitute an effective resource for legitimizing claims (Pomerantz, 1986).

homework activity ("when will we finish?", line 5): this question implies that homework will never be finished due to the child's "never-ending" break for snack and toilet.

After R's surprised reaction ("can't I go to the toilet?", line 6), M grants the child's request for the toilet break ("yes.", line 7), while also making explicit the "target" (line 7) to which R must orient: "finishing homework before leaving" (line 8). After three seconds of silence during which R finishes her apple snack (line 9), M urges the child to think about how to continue the homework during the toilet break ("while you are at the toilet, think about what to draw", line 10). With this final directive, M instructs R on how to take a break without interrupting the homework activity.

Throughout the excerpt, M makes relevant the belief that the homework activity cannot be interrupted in multiple ways: first, she urges R to stop the snack break and get back to homework (line 1), then she problematizes R's request for a toilet break (lines 4 and 5), and finally she orders R to think about the homework during her toilet break (line 10). The completion of homework thus emerges as an absolute priority, which even has precedence over the fulfilment of the child's basic needs such as going to the toilet.

6. Discussion

Considering family activities in a socio-cultural perspective (Vygotskij, 1962 [1934]; Pontecorvo, 1993; Pontecorvo *et. al.*, 1991, 1995), in this article we have illustrated how ordinary parent-child interactions during homework constitute occasions for formulating and socializing children into culture-specific norms and beliefs about time management. Focusing on the interactive construction of children's transgressions, our analysis has shown how parents orient to and evoke three main moral obligations concerning the management of homework time. Specifically, parents construct homework as an activity that should be done 1) *early* in the afternoon, 2) *before* any other enterprise, and 3) *with no interruption*.

In ex. 1, the mother "talks-into-being" (Heritage, 1984: 290) the moral obligation to do homework *early* by negatively evaluating her child for studying in the evening (lines 2 and 3) and by making explicit the breached time norm (line 4). In this way, the parent socializes her child to "doing homework early" (i.e. before the evening) as a taken-for-granted, fundamental rule for the management of homework time. In ex. 2, the mother orients to the belief that homework must be done *before* any other activity, especially entertaining ones such as watching videos. By allocating studying and watching videos to different time slots and prioritizing the former over the latter in the temporal organization of the child's afternoon routine (lines 3-5), the mother creates a morally relevant sequence of the child's activities where studying is in first position. Assuming that homework must be completed before engaging in other activities has consequences for the way the homework activity is managed. In ex. 3, the mother conveys that

the homework activity cannot be interrupted by problematizing the child's breaks from homework in various ways (lines 1, 4-5, 10).

In and through such ordinary talk about time management and temporal ordering of activities, children and their parents rely on and convey assumptions concerning homework and the other activities involved (e.g. watching videos and taking a (toilet) break). For example, by allocating homework to an "*earlier*" time slot (ex. 1), the mother constitutes homework as an important activity, which deserves to be put first in the sequence of the child's accomplishments. By putting homework *before* any other activity in the child's afternoon routine (ex. 2), the mother constructs homework as a compulsory and urgent activity, as opposed to watching videos that is treated as an unnecessary diversion. Finally, by problematizing homework interruptions (ex. 3), the parent conveys that (finishing) homework is a major priority, which even overrides basic needs. In sum, in all the excerpts presented, parents demonstrate to assume, and socialize their kids to, the idea that homework constitutes an absolute priority in their daily routine (see also Wingard, 2007).

At the same time, in interactions and negotiations about time organization, parents also convey cultural beliefs concerning the value of time and the moral implications of its use. For example, by attributing a socially valued activity like homework to an "earlier" time slot (ex. 1), the mother implies and conveys that early time slots are more valuable, more profitable, in one word, 'better', than late time slots. Similarly, in creating a sequence of activities where studying comes first (ex. 2), not only does the mother further convey that 'the earlier, the better', but she also conveys the generalized time norm of 'work before play', which constitutes a fundamental moral imperative of Western middle-class culture (Daly, 1996). Finally, by problematizing breaks during homework, the mother constructs time as a limited and precious resource, which should only be dedicated to important activities such as homework. Interestingly, by urging the child to continue the homework during the toilet break (line 10), the mother socializes her child to 'multitasking' (i.e. doing more things at a time) as a resource for making the most of the available time.

7. Everyday family talk and socialization to time management: Concluding remarks

As illustrated in this article, time management is not just an abstract logistic skill, but also an ordinary interactional accomplishment of family members, as well as a socializing experience. It is in and through ordinary talk that parents and children manage their time, negotiate priorities, and reach decisions about time use and planning. Crucially, the way family members talk about time and the choices they make concerning its use reveal and locally (re)affirm cultural ideologies, values and relations of power (Daly, 1996).

As our analysis has shown, conversations about time are crucially informed by, and concurrently convey, moral beliefs, values and norms con-

cerning the activities involved. As Caronia explains (2002), activities acquire specific meanings and values by virtue of their temporal collocation: the amount of time devoted to a certain activity, the time slots deemed appropriate for this activity, and its sequential order with respect to other activities show the importance and meanings attributed to such activity and to the others. For instance, parental emphasis on prioritizing homework shows and socializes children to the value that middle-class parents attach to learning and education (Lareau, 2003).

At the same time, through everyday interactions about time, planning and schedules, children (and parents) undergo a process of "temporal socialization" (Elias, 1992): they gradually acquire the concept of time, its symbols, and the moral implications of its use. Fundamental norms of the Western world such as 'work before play' and 'make the most of your time' are presupposed and conveyed in and through ordinary interactions in the family context. Family conversations about time also constitute a *locus* of socialization into the "time management model" (Daly, 1996: 209). Based on multitasking and accurate scheduling, this model assumes that it is possible to take control over time and make the most of it by strategically managing different and often competing demands. Enhancing productivity and avoiding waste of time, efficient time management is assumed to be a fundamental tool for professional and personal success in Western middle-class, fast-paced culture. And children are apprenticed to it in and through day-to-day interactions with adults.

In conclusion, by taking part in ordinary conversations about time organization, children are socialized not only to the cultural meanings attached to different activities and conveyed precisely by their temporal collocation, but also to morally appropriate ways of conceiving and managing time. Everyday family interactions about time management therefore constitute the primary forum for children's development of a cultural, and deeply moral, understanding of time (Daly, 1996; Elias, 1992).

8. Appendix – Transcription Conventions

°word°	talk that is markedly quiet or soft
[word]	overlapping talk
(.)	pause shorter than 0.2 seconds
(1.5)	pause measured in seconds and tenths of a second
=	absence of any discernable silence between two turns
>word<	rushed talk
(word)	uncertain hearing
((word))	description of nonverbal events (e.g. gestures)
wo:rd	prolongation of the sound
^	point where nonverbal event begins
word	talk uttered with emphasis
,	slightly rising intonation
?	strongly rising intonation (typical of questions)

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