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Children's socialization to multi-party interactive practices.
Who talks to whom about what in family dinners

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Abstract

Multiparty conversations are crucial situations to study how Western children can participate in collaborative discussions and broaden their experience of various conversational genres. Family dinners are particularly relevant to analyze how children and adults occupy various participatory roles and how parents implicitly transmit complex conversational competence. We present a study of eight dinner conversations in four middle-class Parisian families. We coded four dinners with three categories of features in order to study who participates as speaker, over-hearer and addressee to each utterance; who children and adults refer to; if the discourse objects were dinner or displaced activities. Our results are discussed and illustrated with qualitative analyses of chosen extracts.

Keywords

language socialization; language development; multi-party interactions; French family dinners; participatory roles; home language practices; personal reference; discourse object.

Most studies on language development focus on Western dyadic conversations in which the child is interacting with an expert other and scaffolding language development in “joint attentional processes” (Tomasello, 1988). But Goffman’s critique of the speaker-hearer dyadic model (1974) and cross-cultural studies of children growing up in various communities suggest that young children worldwide also learn language in multiparty interaction in very different conditions (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984).

Multiparty conversations are important situations to study how Western children can both listen to adult talk between their parents, participate in collaborative discussions and broaden their experience of various conversational genres. The situation is therefore particularly relevant to analyze how children and adults occupy different participatory roles, and talk about present and displaced discourse objects.

In the first part of the chapter, we introduce the situated approach to language adopted in this chapter and its application to children’s linguistic and interactive development. We present family dinners as a relevant cultural habitat to study multiparty conversation and its affordances.

Our approach is illustrated in the second part of the chapter which consists in a study of eight dinner conversations in four middle-class Parisian families, video-recorded in their homes. Commensality is a defining trait of most family dinners in the corpus and creates a favorable context for multiparty interaction. This type of research can underline how parents implicitly transmit complex conversational competence through multiparty discourse practices (Blum-Kulka & Snow, 2002). We focus on 1) who participates in the interactions as speaker, over-hearer and addressee for each utterance, on 2) who children and adults refer to and 3) what the discourse objects are: whether discourse is focused on the dinner itself or is displaced.

State of the art

A situated approach to language development

A growing body of research adopts a hybrid experiential, dynamic, polysemiotic, constructional and situated approach to language use informed by developmental studies, conversation analysis, interactive sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, construction grammar, gesture studies and embodied cognition (Morgenstern, 2014; Beaupoil-Hourdel & Debras, 2017; Debras, 2017; Goodwin, 2018; Mondada, 2019). In this approach, language is not conceptualized as an autonomous and rule-governed system but as inseparable from its actual contexts of use, its material and social ecologies, and dependent on the affordances of the situation and interlocutors. The theoretical roots of this research are grounded in a language socialization perspective inspired by linguistic anthropologists (Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012), considering language as a set of symbolic resources that constitute and organize the social world, and through which individuals make sense of their everyday lives. This perspective is associated with an emphasis on the multimodal nature of language (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992) in which authors investigate how various semiotic systems such as speech, gesture, posture, action, facial expressions and eye gaze are simultaneously deployed, transmitted and used. This approach thus encompasses spoken language, sign, gesture, action and how they work together (see also Kendon, 1988; Cienki, 2012; Müller, 2009). We are interested in how humans ontogenetically develop the capacity for communication that they exhibit as adults and use it as they are conducting situated activities.

Gestures, verbal productions, signs, gaze, facial expressions, and postures, are all part of our socially learned, inter-subjective communicative system. Human beings, with all their

representational skills, combine modalities in order to share meaning, to refer to present and absent entities and events, to express their intentions, their desires and their inner feelings. Sensory experiences and situated activities are important for all children's language development as "Meaning comes about through praxis – in the everyday interactions between the child and significant others" (Budwig, 2003, p. 108). Vygotsky's theory of learning as socially co-constructed between collaborating partners within a cultural context (1934, 1978) gives a fundamental role to interaction in the cognitive and language development of children. Originally developed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976), scaffolding is a metaphor referring to adults' role in language development, based on the Vygotskian premise of learning as a socially constructed process. Children's understanding of novel entities is often mediated by their interlocutors' affective display, especially through facial expressions (Ekman, 1984). This type of "social referencing" and the "affective frames" is fundamental to children's cognitive and linguistic development (Klennert et al., 1983; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989).

Children's entry into language is therefore guided by the input and is also very much triggered by their own eagerness to imitate their conversational partners (Gopnik, Meltzoff & Kuhl, 1999). If children take up and imitate the forms produced by their parents, parents also seize and take up the sounds and movements produced by their children, in order to endow them with as much meaning as possible, and shape them into a form that could be compatible with the adult communicative system.

Joint parent-child actions and interactions provide the scaffold for children's growing ability to grasp both what is happening around them, and what is being said in the situation. They learn to understand language and action together, each offering support for the other. Zlatev (1997) suggests that sensorimotor schemas provide the "grounding" of language in experience and will then lead to children's access to the symbolic function. In order for them to actually learn linguistic constructions, be they sound patterns, gestures, words or

multimodal constructions, as well as language practices and genres, children must repeat and manipulate the forms produced or recast by adults and play with them repeatedly in a variety of situations. They activate them in a productive manner in situated interactions.

During their first years of life, children experience language: “they learn how to use language as a tool to elicit attention, to establish relationships and identities, to perform social actions, and to express certain stances. All this is part of being a speaker of a language” (Ochs, 1990, p. 358). This experiencing of language is lived, embodied, within the mundane activities of children’s everyday lives. But through this process, children also progressively *language* their experiences. They learn to *filter* experience and shape it, refer to it, index it into language forms. The multiple, diverse, multimodal enactments of language performed by adults and children are themselves “modes of experiencing the world” (Ochs, 2012, p. 149) through sound, texture, visual and embodied forms.

Thousands of multidisciplinary studies of first language acquisition do not reduce our capacity to be amazed by infants’ interactive skills and the speed with which children become multimodal speakers attuned to others. The analysis of their first steps into language can only increase our appreciation of the importance of their interactions with adults and older siblings in the development of their multimodal and cooperative language skills.

Children first *language* about objects and events that they perceive or fully participate in. They can also progressively *language* about objects and events that are not perceived and experienced in the here and now but that they have perceived, manipulated, ingested, liked, disliked, been part of, throughout their past experience. They have memorized scenarios with their strings of events and the temporal unfolding of language organized in linguistic scripts, and performed interactively in moment-to-moment perceiving, feeling, thinking, being with others in daily situations. Children thus progressively use actions, vocalizations, words, gestures, syntax, multimodal constructions and discourse to co-construct with their

interlocutors their reference to objects and events that are part of their daily lives. The subtle architecture of sensory perceptions, mental states and processes can be progressively expressed through fine linguistic constructions. However, even if it can index experience, language does not render its multilayered complexity. Language is but an incomplete representation of the worlds and individual practices, objects or events in which it is embedded and that it attempts to capture (Boas, 1965, p. 189) through condensations of meanings. If language shapes experience, as proposed by Boas (1911), Sapir (1921, 1927), Whorf (1956), Gumperz and Levinson, 1991) or Lucy (1997), language can also create worlds of its own, out of our remembrance of things past, our projects or dreams of things to become and the figments of our imagination. Those worlds are inhabited and shared with others thanks to the linguistic forms we perform with all the semiotic resources at our disposal.

In order to capture language development with a true usage-based perspective (Tomasello, 2003), a focus on children's engagement in spontaneous interactional activities through situated practices is required. This approach emphasizing speakers' body in action through the detailed analysis of the organization of human action and interaction has become possible with the use of video-recording (Mondada, 2019) which has considerably transformed the vision of language in interaction in multiple ecologies and deployed in time (the moment-to-moment unfurling of a conversation) and over time (multiple recordings over several years of the same children in their family environment). Sacks encouraged the use of video-recordings as early as the 1960s (see Sacks, 1984, 1992) to be able to capture everyday practices, and to play and replay the situated video extracts researchers analyze as well as share them with other scientists. The presence of the observer could be a source of interference as explained by Labov (1972) in his "paradox of the observer". Researchers must then acknowledge, assess and integrate those interferences in their framework (Caronia, 2015). As we capture scenes of their everyday life, the repetition of their own rituals and

routines helps counterbalance our intrusion. When we collect longitudinal data and film children every month from very early on, the familiar repetition of our presence in their home enables us to build a strong relationship which we can integrate in our analyses (Morgenstern, 2009). The families we film are not only the target of our analyses, they are people with whom we interact, share emotions and feelings. The sessions we record only represent a small portion of their life, but we can analyze those snippets of their daily activities and exchanges over and over, with a variety of perspectives thanks to the traces we have in our video-recordings and the aligned transcriptions we produce with specialized software.

Child language research is one of the first fields in which spontaneous conversation data was systematically collected, initially through diary studies (Ingram, 1989; Morgenstern, 2009), and later by audio and video recordings shared worldwide thanks to the CHILDES project (MacWhinney, 2000). Corpora from various languages therefore form the backbone for a large number of issues in the field. As we use video in order to analyze actions, gestures, facial expressions as well as speech, the data cannot be made anonymous. All video-recordings should only be used and analyzed with the families' informed consent after we explain the general framework of our research and our scientific objectives. We have been following General Data Protection Regulations (renewed in 2016, and enforced in May 2018). As the author of our data, we have full responsibility for the protection of our participants' intimacy and must erase all sections that could create any prejudice to the families. They also have the right to have a copy of the videos, view them and ask for any extract to be retrieved at all times. By respecting the families we record and their intimacy, and sharing the results of our studies with them as explicitly as possible, they can fully inhabit their crucial role as collaborators in our research and thus have a sense of their own importance in the advancement of our knowledge on language development and interactive practices.

This data-centered method has allowed many researchers to confirm that in the course of their development, children make their way through successive transitory multimodal systems with their own internal coherence (Cohen, 1924). This phenomenon can be observed at all levels of linguistic analysis. Children's productions are like evanescent sketches of adult language and can only be transcribed and analyzed in their interactional context by taking into account shared knowledge, actions, manual gestures, facial expressions, body posture, head movements, all types of vocal productions, along with the recognizable words used by children (Morgenstern & Parisse, 2007; Parisse & Morgenstern, 2010). Research in language acquisition has therefore developed the tools, methods, and theoretical approaches to analyze children's multimodal productions in context. The detailed follow-ups of children's language anchored in their daily lives are a source of links between motor and psychological development, cognition, affectivity, and language.

Children can internalize the language to which they are exposed; and they can extract form-function pairings, use them with sensitivity to the pragmatic and dialogic context (Halliday, 1967). Their mastery of language is marked by how freely they combine constructions and produce utterances that are accepted and understood by their interlocutors in context through negotiation of meaning as part of the social practice of conversation (Gumperz & Levinson, 1996).

Children's daily engagement in conversations occurs in a variety of contexts and with a wider and wider range of interlocutors as they grow older. Family dinners are one of the cultural habitats in which children are socialized to interactive practices and the subtleties of cooperative *linguaging* both about the here and now - the food being eaten, a sibling's behavior-, and about displaced and fictive events - sharing daily experiences, remembering past vacations, arguing over the best recipe to bake an apple pie, telling stories or making projects.

Family dinner as multi-party discourse

In their work, Blum-Kulka and Snow (2002) show how important the contribution of multiparty discourse is to language acquisition and strongly advise researchers not to concentrate all their studies on dyadic communication. Since dinnertime is often the only moment when families stay together and interact for a certain amount of time, evening meals are an excellent locus to study the impact of multiparty interaction on children's language development. Many researchers see meals as an interesting cultural practice to study language development (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Berko-Gleason, 1975). Studies of dinner conversations date back to the 1960s (Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 2009), focusing on eating rituals and interactional frameworks (Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo, 1996; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Aronsson & Gottzén, 2011). These studies show that language in interaction is a socializing tool that enables parents to transmit values and beliefs (Aronsson, 2012; Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012; Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo, 1996).

It is particularly interesting to study how the two joint activities of eating a meal and interacting are organized and to analyze how those simultaneous activities structure children's language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). When parents use language with and in presence of children, they are providing cues about what the members of their culture are doing. Children acquire the tacit knowledge and competence to deal with and understand the social organization of activities and events within the framework of their culture.

We consider family dinners as a *communicative habitat* in which children develop language socialization favoring more complex multiparty interactions. Most of the time, all participants have access to all the interactions going on, which is what Kendon calls an "F Formation" (F standing for facing) (Kendon, 1990).

As linguistic anthropology has shown (Duranti, Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012), situated language practices during meals fully contribute to the development of children's taste, knowledge and know-how connected to food and eating. Speech during meals about food and eating is endowed with a reflexive dimension whereby participants (parents and children) express their preferences, likes and dislikes, transmit or remind each other of meal regulations, as well as monitor behaviors and misbehaviors. Family dinners are thus an influential context for children to experience enriching social practices transmitted through eating and talking (Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo, 1996).

The French family dinner in particular facilitates the transmission of food heritage involving specific dishes (Fischler & Masson, 2008) as well as culinary and interactional skills. Eating is an activity constitutive of the family. Participants can be observed as members of a specific group, a specific culture and a specific community. During dinners, adults transmit norms, values and assessments of food. This line of research has offered comparative studies of meal practices across cultures. Several recent studies investigate ways in which participants express feelings, attitudes, and evaluations within mealtime events (Aronsson & Gottzén, 2011). Expressions of food preferences and other evaluations are deeply embedded within the activities related to the unfolding of the meal (Mondada, 2009). Family dinner conversations constitute a promising arena for work in the socialization of taste and social order, and for the study of the language of affective and moral stances related to food and health. Dinners are collective practices structured in time, in space and in the social world (Ochs & Shoet, 2006). French dinners bring together parents and children in a specific time framework (dinner time), in a specialized space (around the dinner table) and involve repetitive, structured actions organized in courses – first course, main course, cheese, fruit or dessert (Mondada, 2009). All the members participate synchronously since, in principle, everyone must have finished one course before the whole family can start the next one. In

video-recordings of French family dinners, we can observe and analyze children's appropriation through repetition and imitation in order to better understand how they learn the art of coordinating eating and talking during meals, which is constitutive of their French identity.

But dinners are also wonderful stages to narrate the events of the day for other family members or to collectively remember past events, make plans, discuss and argue. They offer fruitful opportunities for children to switch from speech about the here and now to displaced speech that can be co-constructed collaboratively.

Thus, dinners are scenes of diversity, and perspective taking, offering rich opportunities for children to engage conversationally with others. They give children excellent but challenging occasions to learn varied language practices and genres concerning dinner and other activities.

Following the footsteps of the CELF project which took place in Los Angeles and for which comparisons had been made with Italian and Swedish family dinners (Ochs *et al.*, 1996), Morgenstern has collaborated with Kremer-Sadlik and they have collected data in 16 family dinners in Paris. They conducted analyses centered on Food and Language (Kremer-Sadlik *et al.*, 2015; Morgenstern *et al.*, 2015; Morgenstern, 2016). The results indicate that French dinners give children excellent but challenging occasions to learn varied specialized practices concerning food and language. Similar to Italian families, French families spend more time preparing and eating dinner, and are more likely to express positive assessments and feelings about the food they are eating than American families. French families eat a larger variety of fruit and vegetables and are socialized to more specialized practices. As explained by Mondada (2009), the consumption of food, the expression of participants' preferences and tastes during dinners, cannot be reduced to mere physiological processes. They are social practices that have to be analyzed in relation to the social actions performed

during meals and to the detailed organization of dinner interaction. The French meals are collective and over two times longer than the American meals, which gives more space to practice multiparty conversations, share narratives about school and work and engage in argumentative discussions. They are thus an excellent cultural habitat to study how children learn to participate in interactions as speakers, interlocutors or overhearers, how they refer to self and other as well as to present and displaced discourse objects. We will illustrate those issues by reporting the results of our quantitative and qualitative analyses in four Parisian families.

Data and Method

This study is based on sequential, multimodal analyses of video-recorded family dinner interactions on four upper-middle class families living in Paris. The data was collected as part of an international project coordinated by Elinor Ochs (CELF – UCLA; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2013). Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik have demonstrated how cultural differences between families were at the source of important variations in eating and speaking behaviors during meals. Our study comparing French and American families showed that French families spend more time preparing dinner, eating, interacting during meals and make more comments and assessments on a much larger range of food items than American ones (Kremer-Sadlik *et al.*, 2015). Families that participated in the study were selected on the following criteria: both parents worked, they had at least two children one of which was between 7 and 11 years old. The other children were between 3 and 16 years old, which enabled us to study a large variety of interactions between parents, between children and between parents and children.

The methodology was based on the linguistic anthropological CELF project. The families were selected through our social-professional networks and were filmed by two observers between 2011 and 2012 during two meals on weekdays. The families were familiar with most of the observers who very well integrated in their family life. The two dinners were recorded at an interval of two weeks, from the beginning of the preparation of the meal until the children's bed time. In each family, individual filmed interviews about eating and dinner practices were also conducted when that was possible. The questions were prepared in advance and asked in the same order but with some leeway to prioritize rich interaction between the interviewer and the participants. The parents expressed themselves quite freely and went into the details of their specific practices. We also filmed a tour of the kitchen with one of the parents' comments.

The beginning of the recordings involved some participation on the part of the observers. One of the observers filmed the preparation of the meal in the kitchen, and took advantage of that time to interact with the parents as they were cooking, asking questions about the family's habits, the choices of shopping places, the sharing of tasks among the family members, the food they ate most frequently and each member's tastes. The second observer filmed the activities of the rest of the family wherever they would take place (living-room, bedroom). During the meal, the observers left the camera rolling securely set on a tripod so that the dinner was filmed in the living room or kitchen, and went in another room. The families had been explained the aim of the overall project (a comparison between French and American practices) and were extremely enthusiastic about participating. They all accepted to sign the consent forms and allowed us to transcribe and analyze the recordings, show them at conferences and cite their interactions in academic papers. We were welcomed in every family and the general attitude of all family members was extremely positive.

The dinners used for this study took place with all the family members present. We used the recordings of the 8 dinners, from the first signal to start dinner until dinner was cleared up. They were transcribed and aligned with the videos thanks to the software CLAN (MacWhinney, 2000).

For this study on interlocution and discourse objects which involved detailed coding and quantitative as well as qualitative analyses, we focused on four families with two children each and on the dinnertime itself. All semiotic resources used to communicate as well as participants' actions were taken into account in order to interpret the data. Table 1 presents the corpus that amounts to close to five and a half hours.

Table 1: List and duration of video-recorded dinners in the 8 French families

	Children's age	Duration of dinner 1	Duration of dinner 2
Family 4	Gabriel (4), Lucien (9)	41'	37'
Family 5	Judith (7), Elisabeth (10)	29'	30'
Family 6	Mélanie (3), Solal (8)	49'	58'
Family 8	Julien (7), Fanny (10)	38'	31'

The average length of a French dinner in our data was around 40 minutes with a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of close to one hour. This is longer than the American dinners in the CELF project, which were two to three times shorter even when they involved all family members (Kremer-Sadlik et al., 2015). The structure of the French dinners, which includes several courses, is a relevant factor to explain this difference in duration. In our data, all dinners consisted of 3 to 5 courses (first course, main course, salad, cheese, dessert). The synchronization of the eating behaviors, usually orchestrated by the parents and internalized by the children, is a very specific characteristic of the dinners in our data. The second factor is that dinnertime is used not just for eating but also for family interactions. In the same time and space, the children learn to coordinate two important

activities that are specific to their culture: eating and talking. Because the meals are longer, and because they are treated as family time, there is more interaction in the French data about food itself and about each member's life experience. These features make French family dinners a specifically relevant cultural habitat to study transmission of multiparty language practices.

The quantitative analyses were conducted on one dinner per family (approximately 3 hours of video). The qualitative analyses were conducted on the eight dinners. We first ran specific analyses of the multi-layered overlapping conversations and the adults' role in their children's interactive skills as involved co-constructors. The use of four types of software, CLAN (to focus on verbal productions), ELAN (to focus on gesture), PRAAT (to make detailed prosodic analyses), and a synthesis on EXCEL tables to code the transcriptions and videos enabled us to make both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the involvement of each participant and of the personal references used in context. We coded the four dinners on Excel tables with three categories of features in order to study:

- 1) Who participates as speaker, over-hearer and addressee to each conversational turn and whether each turn is in fact dyadic, multiparty or even sometimes monological. For each utterance, using the discursive and situational context, we coded who was the speaker, who was (or were) the addressee(s), who were the involved participants. Our interpretation to code "involved participants" was based on all possible expressions of their involvement (gaze, gesture, facial expression, action, later verbal intervention).

- 2) Who children and adults refer to. For each expression referring to self or other used by the participants, we coded who was the speaker and who they were referring to.

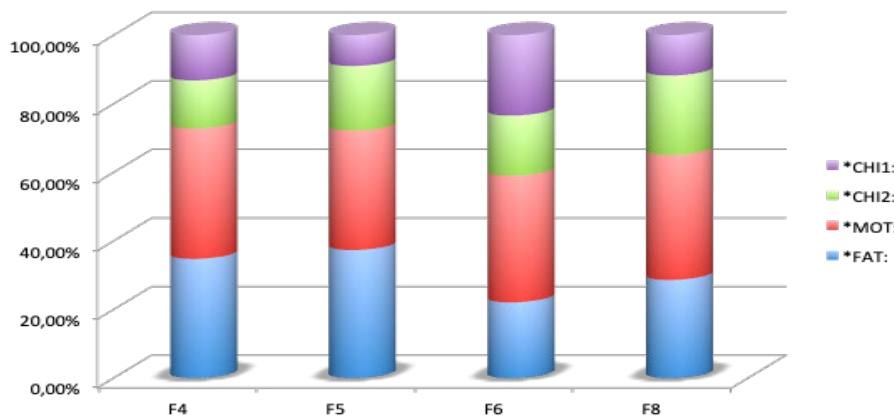
- 3) What were the discourse objects and if they referred to dinner activities or other activities and events.

The coding was conducted collectively on the first dinner, then separately with an even distribution of the dinners among the authors. All dinners were double-coded and all differences were resolved collectively.

Participant involvement in multiparty interactions

Speakers

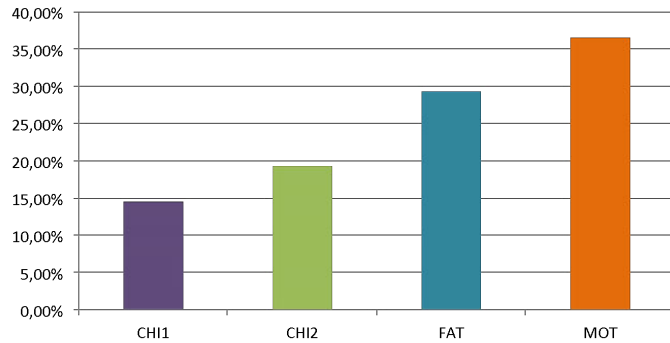
The structure and orchestration of polyadic interactions had caught our attention during our qualitative overview of the data and we started by analyzing our results on participant involvement in our family dinners. Graph 1 illustrates the distribution of utterances among the participants in the four families. Child 1 is the youngest and child 2 is the eldest.



Graph 1: who speaks during family dinners - distribution per family

The profile of the four families is quite similar and not very surprising. A compiled version over the four families (graph 2) shows that the youngest child speaks less than the eldest child, who speaks less than the father, who speaks less than the mother. The role of the

participants (whether they are father, mother or children) and the place they have within the family structure (firstborn child or second) has an impact on the distribution of utterances during the dinner.



Graph 2: who speaks during dinners over the four families

The parents (especially the mother) speak more during our family dinners but their verbal productions also serve the purpose of monitoring language and food practices. In the case of GAB, in family 4, he is the younger brother (4 years old) and does try to participate in the conversation by narrating his day in school just like his brother. However, he speaks with his mouth full. Dinnertime is an ideal place to teach children how to manage the two activities that they are expected to fulfill during the dinner: eating and conversing. By telling him that they do not understand him, his parents indicate that his lack of coordination, and his impatience, results in communicative failure.

(1) Family 4 – Gabriel (4;0)

FAT: Et après vous avez été répartis dans les classes? (and after that, you were distributed between the various classes?)

GAB: moi j'ai, moi j'ai XXX (I have, I have XXX).

Speaks with his mouth full

MOT: Attends, on comprend rien. (Wait we don't understand anything).

FAT: On comprend rien à ce que tu dis ouais. (We don't understand anything you're saying).

There are variations in children's coordination of eating and interaction practices according to the development of their cognitive and motor skills. Social interactions during family dinners can be mined for culturally rooted ways in which expert and novice participants coordinate modes of communication, actions, bodies, objects, in the environment to enhance their knowledge and skills. Parents thus scaffold their children's management of the two activities and set up the stage for their discourse to be performed in better conditions.

The distribution of speech among participants is not always easy to operate during meals as two activities, multiparty conversation and eating (each person has their own food to eat) have to be coordinated. Parents might therefore have to regulate the family interactions in order to avoid overlaps between individual contributors. In Example 2, the mother takes up the role of orchestra conductor of family interactions, embodying that role with her arms and hands to indicate each participant's turn (Mondada, 2007).

(2) - Family 8 – JUL, 7; FAN, 10

MOT¹: Hé, si vous parlez en même temps...

(Hey, if you are all speaking at the same time...)

the two arms are raised, spread apart.

JUL: *Mais j(e) parlais et elle m'a coupé.*

¹ The data was transcribed using three letters to designate the children, MOT for mother and FAN for father. In the CHAT format used for the transcriptions, the names of the participants are preceded by an asterisk. The secondary lines give indications on the situation or on the gestures and actions are preceded by the symbol % and by a code that specifies the type of indication given (example %gest= gestures).

(But I was talking, and she interrupted me)

MOT: Oui c'est vrai, alors vas-y.

(Yes that's true, so go ahead).

she points at JUL with her two index fingers lined and parallel

MOT: Pendant qu'elle finit tu parles et après elle parle.

(While she finishes you talk, and then she talks)

She keeps her two fingers pointed at JUL, then moving them in a circular motion to point at FAN as she says « she finishes.

MOT: oui.

OK

FAT: oui.

Yes.

To manage speech turns during multiparty interactions is a complex process. It is even more complex during meals, as participants have to coordinate two activities that involve the hands and the mouth: eating and speaking. In Extract 3 (Family 8, Dinner 1) the elder child, FAN, is taking time to finish her first course as she is absorbed in the performance of her narrative and is busy interacting with the rest of the family. This prevents the family from continuing their meal as a structuring rule of the meal is to wait for everyone to finish one dish before going on to the next one. The mother therefore intervenes several times in order to orchestrate the two activities.

(3) - Family 8, dinner 1

MOT: bon tu t(e) dépêches on t'attend là. (so, will you hurry up now, we're waiting for you).

FAN: <tu m'as> [/] tu vas m'acheter des bensimon grises trente quatre. (did you, are you going to buy me grey bensimon sneakers size thirty four ?)

MOT: tu [/] tu arrêtes de parler et tu ... (will you, will you stop speaking and you...)

(...) FAN having not eaten at all, her mother speaks up again

*MOT: allez mange la salade dépêche toi. (come on, eat your salad, hurry up.)

FAN's delay becomes so important that the father intervenes as well (Extract 4) in order for the meal to take place more synchronously as FAN is telling the story of a movie (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) and her mother, caught up in the story has forgotten that she had taken on the role of orchestra conductor.

(4) - Family 8, dinner 1

FAT: allez termine. (come on finish your plate)

FAT points at FAN's plate

FAN: ben Willy_Wonka c'est celui qui a la grande chocolate factory. (well Willy Wonka is the guy who owns the big chocolate factory).

FAN represents the size of the factory with a representational gesture

FAT: d'accord. (OK)

MOT: c'est l(e) méchant (.) ou gentil ? (is he the nice or the bad guy ?)

FAN: j(e) sais pas. (I don't know).

MOT: ni l'un ni l'autre. (neither)

FAN: il est en même temps pas très sympa. (Well, he's not very nice).

FAT: allez . (come on)

FAN: en même temps. (you see)

JUL: xxx² . (xxx)

MOT: allez arrête de parler et mange. (stop talking and eat now)

MOT: tu nous diras après. (you'll tell us later)

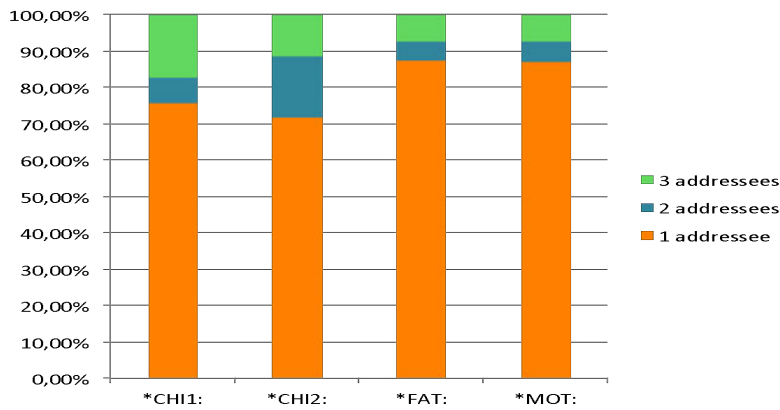
The two parents therefore cooperate to articulate the two activities as harmoniously as possible, making sure that the eating is done while children are also allowed to express themselves.

The children are guided by the parents as they learn to coordinate eating and talking. Thanks to the parents' explicit transmission of commensal practices, the children are socialized into becoming autonomous dinner participants, which involves both enjoying the food and participating in the ongoing conversation. Developing the relevant cognitive and motor skills takes time and it is therefore not surprising that older siblings take on more space than the younger ones in the general economy of family interactions.

Addressees and involved participants

We now turn to whom the speakers are addressing. We were surprised to find that a majority of turns are explicitly addressed to only one interlocutor as illustrated in graph 3.

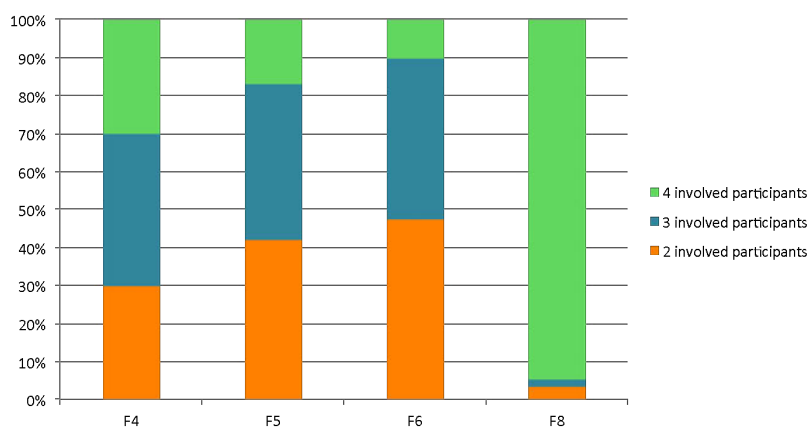
² XXX indicates that the transcriber was not able to understand what the participant said.



Graph 3. Distribution of explicit addressee(s) per turn in the four families.

However, the younger the child is, the more he or she addresses the three other members of the family. The elder child speaks about 15% of the time to both his parents and 10% of the time to his parents and his sibling.

We also thought it would be interesting to code who is actively engaged in the conversation since being the explicit addressee is not the only way to be involved in multiparty interaction. We coded involved hearers using all possible cues to assess their level of interest: gaze, facial expressions, gestures, actions and following turns in the conversation.



Graph 4: Distribution of participants involved in the conversation per family.

As illustrated in graph 4, there are at least 3 involved participants per conversation in a majority of turns. The profile of family 8 is quite different as the whole family is engaged in the conversation throughout most turns in the dinner. One of the factors could be that both the siblings are over 7 years old and quite close in age. But the parents are also eager to maintain the general flow of the conversation on shared topics and to invite and acknowledge the two children's contributions, or as we have seen, to contain the older sister's verbal flow by asking her to concentrate on finishing her plate. This quantitative analysis of participants' role in the interactions shows that the adults and the children in our data are very much engaged in the interactions taking place during family dinners. This emphasizes that family dinners are a crucial moment for children to be socialized to multi-party interactive practices as they fully benefit from them not only as speakers, but also as interlocutors and overhearers as example 5 illustrates.

(5) Family 4 – Dinner 1

Mother has announced to father that they are invited to visit friends the next evening and see their baby.

MOT: on verra Aurèle et le petit Emile . (we'll see Aurèle and little Emile).

FAT: le bébé là . (you mean the baby).

MOT: +< mais le bébé là il a grandi i(l) marche et tout Emile . (but the baby is now more grown up you know, he walks and everything Emile).

She takes the jar of pickles.

MOT: ben ça fait un moment oui lui qu' on l' a pas vu . (we haven't seen him in quite a while).

LUC: c'est qui déjà Emile ? (who's Emile ?)

MOT: ben c'est le petit de Geoffroy et Suzanna . (well it's Geoffroy and Suzanna's little boy).

FAT: <tu l' as> [/] j(e) sais même pas si tu l' as vu non j(e) crois pas qu(e) tu l' as vu . (you have, I don't even know if you've seen him, no I don't think you've ever seen him).

MOT: si mais tout bébé . (yes when he was a tiny baby).

FAT: +< si ? (really ?)

LUC: ah ouais . tout tout petit . (oh yeah. Teeny tiny)

LUC represents the size with a gesture performed in front of him with his two palms facing each other, leaving a small space between them. He speaks with a high pitch voice.

FAT: to MOT +< on est allé chez eux ? (we went to their place ?)

MOT: ben +... (well...)

LUC: à l' anniversaire d' Aurèle . (for Aurèle's birthday)

MOT: +< oui non . (yes no)

GAB: +< y+a minuscule <il est> [/] <il est> [/] <il est> [/] il est +...(there is tiny, he is, he is, he is , he is)

He performs a gesture directed towards his brother with his two hands in front of him side by side, the two indexes are pressed unto his thumbs

GAB: et <en+plus il est> [/] <en+plus il est> [/] plus il est +... (and he is, and he is, and he is)

MOT: +< ah ben oui mais à l'anniversaire de Geoffroy là tu sais . (well yes, for Geoffroy's birthday you know)/

She puts a piece of pickle rolled in ham on GAB's plate.

GAB: en plus il est riquiqui . (and he is tiny)

He holds up his right hand in the same position, index pressed on thumb towards his mother and father.

GAB: plus il est riquiqui regardez . (and he is tiny, look).

FAT and LUC look at GAB

GAB: comme ça riquiqui . *He holds up the gesture.* (tiny like that)

LUC : qui ça ? (who ?)

GAB : Emile. (Emile)

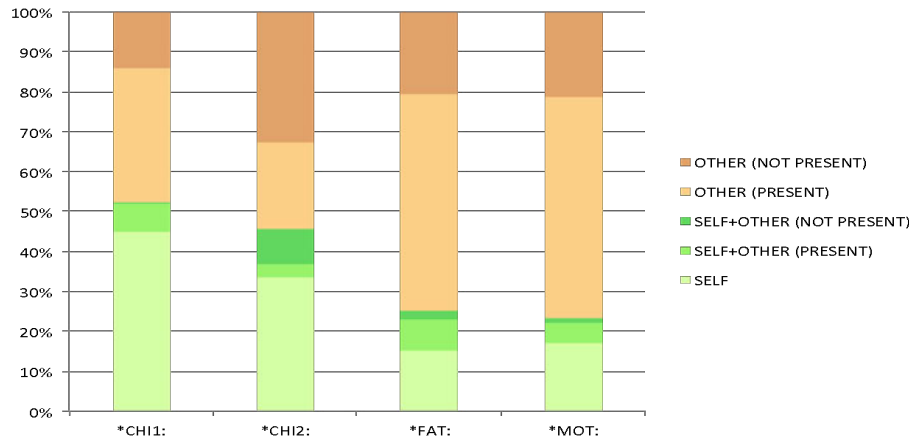
The mother's announcement that they are invited by friends was directed at the father who was her only explicit addressee. She was turned towards him and did not gaze at her sons. Comments follow between the two parents on the baby who has grown quite a bit. LUC, the older sibling, who was at first an overhearer, intervenes, asking who Emile is, which indicates his interest in the topic. The mother then includes him in the conversation by gazing at him and referring to him with a second person pronoun, thus directly addressing him and saying he has already seen the baby when he was tiny. LUC aligns with his mother and either seems to remember or is just eager to repeat and enact the smallness of the baby with a combination of semiotic resources, by changing his prosody (high pitch voice) and indicating his small size with a representational gesture. This enactment of the baby's size seems to attract GAB's attention as well. He gazes fixedly at his brother's hands. He then repeats the semantic information he is particularly interested in - the baby's size - with a different gesture as he is searching for another adjective. His word search associated to a gesture is successful and he finds a playful synonym used a lot in child directed speech indicating a tiny size: "riquiqui". His first multimodal production is directed at his brother on his left, but he then repeats it louder and gleefully in the space in front of him so that the whole family can see it as well. His performance is successful enough for his brother to address him a question

“who?”. GAB’s answer elaborating on the small size of the baby as well as the orientation of his head and body towards LUC, his gaze set on his older brother’s hands are semiotic means that indicate that GAB was following, if not the whole conversation, at least the end of it. He was not just focused on taking up playful representational gestures and adjectives as it is fully relevant. He answers with the baby’s name, Emile. GAB has also shifted from the status of overhearer to the status of active participant, engaged in the conversation with a multimodal production he is proud to direct at the whole family. The family then continues the conversation with all four members fully included. The parents now indicate that both sons are also addressed as interlocutors sharing their planning to visit their friends. From a dyadic interaction between adults, the conversation has become multi-party and includes the two children. This type of move from dyadic to triadic to multi-party conversation, and from overhearer to speaker and interlocutor, is extremely frequent in our data. It is an example of how children are socialized to participation in interactive communication through family dinners.

The topic of family dinner conversations

Reference to self and others

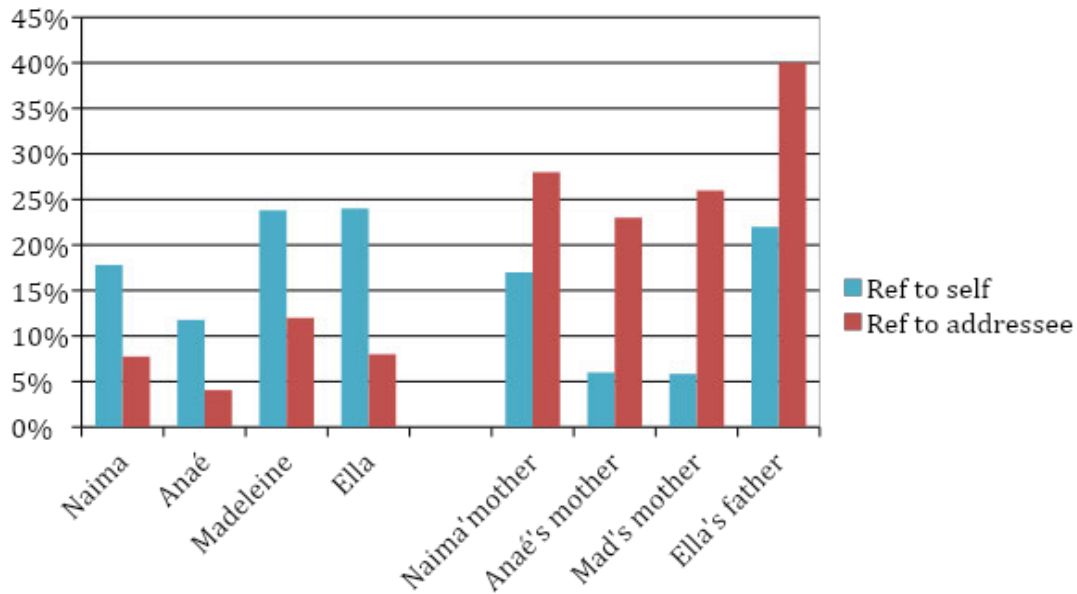
Our next issue was to find out whom each speaker talked about during our family dinners. We coded who talks about whom in our data, and more specifically, if they talk about themselves, about others around the table or others who are not sharing dinner with them. Graph 5 illustrates the average distribution among participants of the four families.



Graph 5: Who speaks about whom across the data

Mothers and fathers have a similar profile: they speak more about others than about themselves. As far as children are concerned, it is quite obvious that the younger children speak more about themselves than the elder children. And that the elders are the participants who speak the most about others outside the dinner framework.

Our results are very comparable to observations in Morgenstern (2012) and Caët (2013)'s findings in four mother-child dyads. In adult-child dyadic interactions, young children (from one to three) mostly talk about themselves, whereas the parents talk primarily about the children as illustrated in graph 6 (taken from Caët 2013).



Graph 6: Reference to self and addressee in four longitudinal follow-ups

The following extract illustrates how younger children proudly refer to their own actions. One of the youngest children in our data, child 2 in family 4, Gabriel, who is 4 years old, often tries to attract his family's attention on himself even when the conversation flow is focused on other topics. During our first recording, the father called to say that he would be a bit late and the mother wanted to wait for him before starting dinner. While the father was on his way back home from work, the mother prepared an avocado for her younger son and cut it up into cubes in his bowl. After he had prepared the dressing for himself and poured it on the avocado under the supervision of his mother, the child spontaneously sat down at the table while his father entered the room. The mother went towards the father to welcome him in the hallway, they then came back together towards the dining-room to sit down to eat. As she called everyone to the table, the mother noticed that her younger son was already seated and that he had begun to eat his first course without waiting for the others as shown in extract 6.

Extract 6 - Family 4, Dinner 1

MOT: à table. (let's eat)

She gets near the table and sees that GAB has started to eat ?

MOT: ah ben ça y est GAB il a direct attaqué lui. (oh well there we are, GAB has started to eat straight away).

(...) LUC, and MOT sit down. FAT enters the room.

GAB: moi j'ai direct attaqué (Me, I ate straight away)

To his father

MOT: on a direct attaqué . (we ate straight away)

FAT: +< direct attaqué . (straight away)

FAT: <t(u) as direct attaqué> (you ate straight away) *he laughs* bon ben super . (well that's great).

Father sits down

MOT: *she looks at FAT.* i(l) dit que c'était noté sur euh. (he says the grade is out of...)

She looks at LUC combien cinquante c'est ça ? (how much 50, is that right?) *She hands LUC a bowl.*

GAB: *he shouts* moi <j' ai dé(jà)> [/] j' ai déjà ter(miné) [/] terminé . (me, I've already finished it all)

FAT: cinquante . (fifty)

Father looks at LUC with a puzzled expression.

MOT: ben oui mais nous on n' a même pas commencé nous . (well, yes, but we haven't even started, you see).

MOT looks at GAB and produces a Palm Up Open Hands with her two hands and arms.

FAT: et t(u) as tout réussi ? (and did you answer every question right?)

LUC: non . (no)

FAT: non ? (no?) qu' est-ce que tu savais pas ? (what couldn't you do?)

GAB: s' il te plaît j(e) peux avoir des cornichons avec du jambon ? (please, can I have pickles and ham?)

FAT: mais attends un instant . (well, wait a little)

MOT: ouais attends une seconde regarde . (yah, wait a little)/

She emphasizes her verbal production with a palm down gesture towards GAB

reinforcing the concept of “waiting”. MOT drinks water then gets up.

MOT: nous on n' a même pas mangé l' avocat . (we haven't even eaten our avocado)

FAT: j(e) vais préparer ça après . Tu patientes. (I'll prepare it for you in a minute.

Just be patient).

At the beginning of the extract, MOT makes a playful comment about the fact that GAB has started to eat, without scolding her son. However her interjection and the comment indicate that there is a discrepancy between her expectations and the situation she has discovered. The mother and older son finally sit to eat, and the father joins them. Mother and father discuss a test that LUC (elder son) had that day in school. When the father sits down, GAB (younger son) interrupts the conversation and addresses him by taking up his mother's words and putting them in the first person “moi j'ai direct attaqué” (I started to eat straight away). Despite the interruption, their son's lack of attunement to their interest in Lucien's test, and the asynchrony of his eating the first course before everyone else, his mother and father adopt a positive attitude towards this utterance and the boy's behavior. They seem to encourage him to eat the avocado. The mother takes up the words again and says “on a direct attaqué” (we started straight away) and the father even repeats the expression with a positive assessment “t(u) as direct attaqué <laughter> c'est très bien” (you started straight away <laughter> that's great).

Thus encouraged, the young boy finishes his bowl of avocado very quickly. He holds it up towards his mother and shouts: “moi j’ai dé(jà) / j’ai déjà ter(mine)/terminé” (I have al(ready)/ I have already fin/finished). GAB seems to look for more positive reinforcement on the part of his parents as he underlines how his behavior is in line with one of the important rules of family meals which will be expressed during the next stage of the dinner, the main course, by the mother: everyone must finish their plate. His self-focused attitude and verbal productions in the first person are in line with what we found about younger children’s constant self-referencing. This is probably supported by parents’ pleasure in their children’s feats. Parents’ continuous praise recontextualizes children’s very mundane activities, such as eating a whole share of avocado, into an accomplishment (Ochs, 1993: 345). Children take up the verbal scripts themselves and their own descriptions of their actions are permeated with markers of self-praise, such as in GAB’s case, emphatic prosody, reinforced first person markers (in French “moi je” rather than the simple subject pronoun “je”/I).

But the mother’s positioning towards her son now changes. She answers with a tone of reproach: “ben oui, mais nous on n’a même pas commencé, nous” (well yes, but we haven’t even started). As she says that, she designates her plate and looks at the child in the eyes in order to show that the other participants’ bowls are almost full. The child does not answer and turns his gaze away.

Two important rules are in conflict in this extract: rule 1) finishing one’s plate is a main goal; rule 2) being commensal involves synchrony between the participants. The parents encourage the child who demonstrates his enthusiasm to eat the avocado and therefore is in the progress of finishing his dish. This quantitative aspect constitutes one of the prescriptions for a “good meal”. However, his mother’s slight reproach transmits the idea that individual goals (eating well, finishing one’s plate) expressed verbally with self-centered grammatical markers “moi, je” (stressed I) must not be accomplished without taking the collective goal of

the meal into account and joining a collective inclusive “nous” (we). To have “a good meal” also includes waiting for the others, eating at the same pace, experiencing commensality in the relevant tempo.

To our knowledge, there are no longitudinal studies following the children as they become older in their use of reference to self, versus reference to others. In our family dinners, the older the children are, the more they seem to refer to the other members of the families but also to absent others with displaced reference. Talk about absent others is often initiated by the conversation led by parents who ask their children a lot of questions about their school day as in extract 7.

(7) Family 6.

FAT: alors tu t' es fait punir ce matin parce-qu' on est arrivé en retard ou pas ? (so did they punish you in school because we were late ?)

SOL: non . (no)

FAT: non. (no)

MOT: elle était pas là la directrice ? (the director was not there ?)

SOL: non . (no)

FAT: +< non mais c'était pas xx .(no it wasn't)

MOT: oui non mais elle aurait pu être dans les couloirs .(yes, well, she could have been in the corridor)

SOL: ouais si elle était dans les couloirs j(e) me ferais punir . (yes if she had been in the corridor, I would have been punished).

MOT: donc elle y était pas ? (so she wasn't ?)

SOL: non . (no)

MOT: et <la maî(tresse)> [///] xx ta classe était déjà montée ? (and the teacher... your classmates were already upstairs ?)

SOL: ben oui hein . (well yes)

MOT: oui ? (they were ?)

SOL: +< y avait personne dans la cour . (there was noone in the courtyard).

MOT: et la maîtresse t' a dit quelque chose ? (and did the teacher say something ?)

FAT: i(ls) sont rentrés tôt aujourd'hui alors . (they went in early today then).

Mother laughs

SOL: +< non elle m' a rien dit .(no, she didn't say anything).

MOT: elle t' a rien dit ? oh ça va . (she didn't ? Good then)

The father initiates the topic of Solal being late in school. The father accompanied Solal in the morning and they were late. Solal was extremely nervous when his father dropped him off as the director punishes students for being late. The father thus takes up the sequence of events until their separation but only his son has the information about what happened next. Separation between children and parents during the school day is thus an excellent prompt for self-narratives and the parents are extremely eager to get all the details. Within the narrative co-constructed by the parents' questions and Solal's answers, the adults and the child refer to absent characters (the director, the schoolmates and the teacher). The focus thus shifts from Solal and his punishment to the agents of the potential punishing process. The narrative gives all the participants an opportunity to distance themselves from the here and now. As he introduces absent entities and past events, Solal is detached from the immediately perceptible situation. His socio-cognitive development enables him to view his interlocutor as a person who has not experienced those events but with whom he can share and discuss them as he has

become a competent enough speaker to use language as a medium to reconstruct experiences without his parents having been immersed witnesses. This process or distancing can be called *displacement* (Smith 1980, Veneziano 2001) or *disconnection* (Parisse, de Pontonx & Morgenstern 2018). In this extract, the participants introduce absent referents with third person pronouns, they use language to share states of mind, they express comments or stances about the events (“good then”), and they make hypotheses (« (if she had been in the corridor, I would have been punished »). Use of narratives during family dinners is thus an excellent means for children to develop the symbolic character of language in all its cognitive complexity, it’s separateness from concrete entities and events in the world. Children thus learn through their daily experience and activities that linguistic forms can be used to refer to meanings that are only experienced through language and have no perceivable referents in the here and now (as when they express their own hypotheses or when they narrate events to interlocutors who have not experienced them).

Extract 8 takes place a few minutes after extract 7. Solal is narrating a scientific experiment conducted in class. His younger sister, Melisande, who is 3 years old, is sensitive to the general topic, narratives about their school-day, and tries to make her own contribution to the family conversation by telling what happened in her own class. She first expresses herself with a multimodal construction, a hand wave and « au-revoir » (bye bye). Her own contributions are much more enacted than her older brother’s, through gestures and prosody and she embodies the nursery song the teacher has taught them. She is trying her best to catch her parents’ attention, but they are focused on her older brother and then interrupted by a phone call.

(8) Family 6

SOL: on a fait une expérience sur la vapeur d'eau .

(we conducted an experiment with water vapor)

SOL speaks with his mouth full.

SOL: on a mis d(e) l' eau, le prof il a allumé deux allumettes .

(we put some water, the teacher lit it up two matches).

MEL's gaze is unfocused. Both parents are focused on him.

SOL: il avait d(e) l' eau dans une bouteille . (he had water in the bottle).

SOL: il nous a mis deux allumettes dans chaque bouteille .

(He put two matches in each bottle).

SOL: xx devait refermer la bouteille . (had to close the bottle)

MEL suddenly waves her hand and launches in her own narrative.

MEL: au-revoir . (good-bye)

Mother quickly smiles at her and then turns back to her brother.

MEL: ma maîtresse elle a dit, oh la maîtresse elle a dit au-revoir la cantine
bonjour la pluie. (my teacher said, so the teacher said good-bye cafeteria, good-
morning rain).

SOL: +< xx devait refermer la bouteille et après XX. (had to close the bottle
and then XX)

MEL: +< au-revoir maman hé . c'est bien ? (good-bye Mummy hey. Is it
good ?).

SOL: xx devait appuyer sur la bouteille et quand tu lâchais i(l) devait y avoir
un nuage .. (had to press on the bottle and when you release it, there was supposed
to be a cloud).

MEL: +< j' avais pris de l' eau . (I had taken water).

*MEL dips her finger in her glass and « draws » on the table. She is immersed in
self-talk and focused on what her fingers are drawing with the water on the table.*

- MEL: ensuite on va +//. (then, we'll +)
- FAT: +< et y a eu un nuage ou pas ? (was there a cloud ?)
- SOL: hum dans l(e) nôtre non . (well, not in ours).
- MEL: +< xx . (xx)
- SOL: on n'a pas réussi . (we did not succeed).
- MOT: et vous étiez +//? (and you were +)

The phone rings

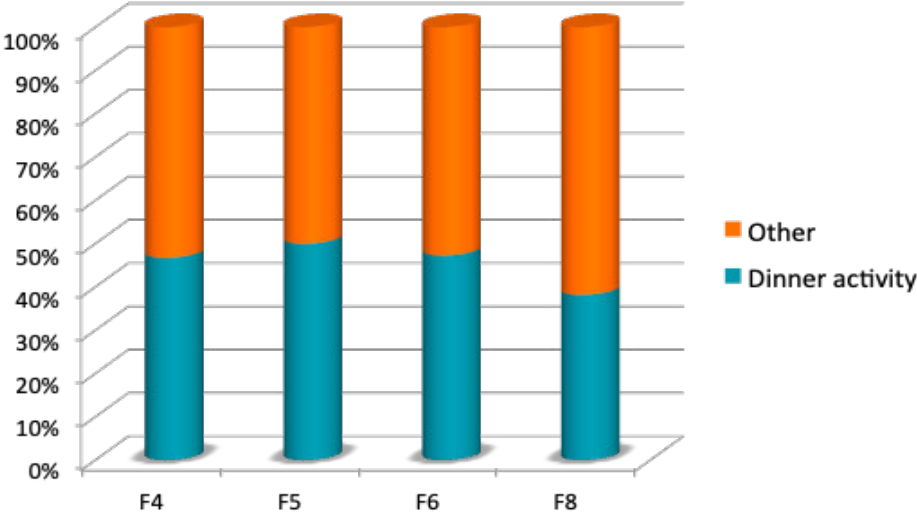
At 3 years old, MEL has the skill to associate to the general topic (narration of their school day) and to intervene in the conversation. She tries to bring her own experience into the shared conversational stage. She can distance herself from the immediate situation through language. Her narrative refers to past events, and even though she still uses the first person to refer to herself and her behavior in her class, she introduces an absent character in the third person, her teacher. However, she does not try to find a more suitable moment to tell her story and does not manage to hold her parents' attention as they are both focused on her brother's narrative. Her interactive behavior is not yet attuned to her conversational environment. After two attempts to attract the others' attention, she only succeeds in getting a fleeting gaze and smile from her mother. Her brother is concentrated on telling his own narrative and both parents' posture, gaze and verbal cues indicate that they are focused on him. However, MEL then seems perfectly content to enjoy her own company as she launches in self-talk, gazes at her own hand and traces circles on the table.

This sequence of narratives illustrates the difference between the older brother and younger sister who both refer to themselves and to absent referents. MEL's contribution seems to be an attempt to get some attention, whereas Solal's contribution is more complex

and enables him to fully share the impact of past events and the specific features of absent characters with his parents.

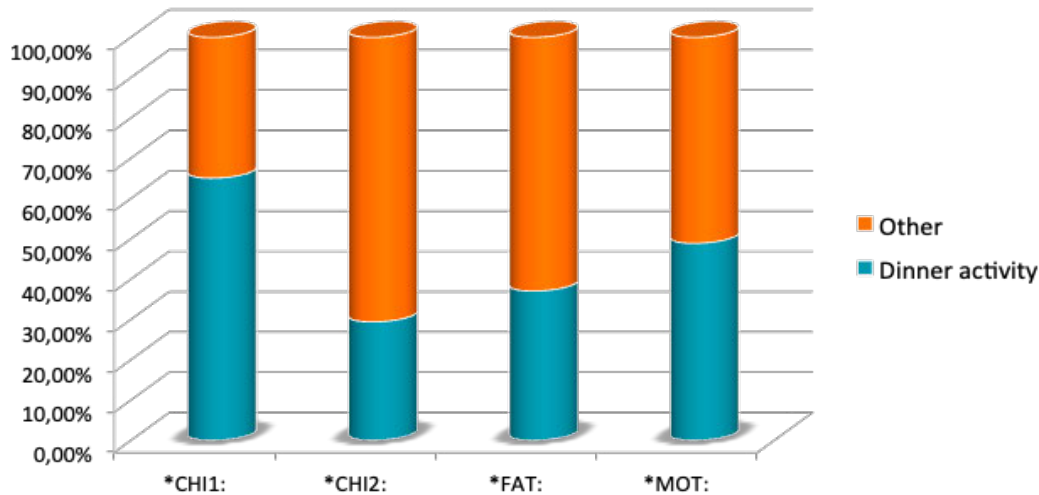
Reference to dinner versus other activities

As we were interested in each member of the family’s engagement in displaced language, we coded whether the topic of the conversation was centered on dinner activities (the food itself and its taste, flavor, preparation, or the serving and eating practices related to the food etc...) or on other topics.



Graph 7: reference to dinner versus other topics in the four families

In Graph 7, we observe a similar distribution of dinner related talk and other conversations, and a similar pattern among the four families. If we look more closely in our four families to the distribution for each participant, the younger child and the mother have the most dinner related talk, as illustrated in graph 8.



Graph 8: reference to dinner versus other activities for each participant.

The older child is the one who speaks the most about other topics than the dinner. It is particularly the case in Family 8, who was the family with the most multiparty conversation (all participants involved in a large majority of interactions) and who had more non dinner related conversations than the three others (graph 7). Family 8 constantly switches from dinner related talk to other-related talk with a lot of ease as illustrated in extract 9.

In the following extract, the family is having strawberries for desert. They start talking about the strawberries they had bought during their summer holiday in Spain. They then engage in a displaced conversation about the past events, activities and locations they visited. The conversation flows between the four participants but it does not prevent the father from commenting on his son's bad table manners.

(9) Family 8

They are eating strawberries.

FAT: tu les as trouvées où celles-là ? (Where did you find those?)

MOT: euh au marché, mais en-haut . (well at the market but in the top part).

FAT: en-haut ? (the top part?)

MOT: (en)fin en-haut au coin d(e) la rue d(e) l' arbalète .(well the top part at the corner of arbalète street).

FAT: +< ah oui ; d'accord . (oh yes, OK).

MOT: elles viennent d' Espagne . (they're from Spain).

FAN makes a pointing gesture in front of her.

FAN: +< on avait acheté des fraises d' Espagne au petit casino de gazes at her father comment ça s' appelait ? (we had bought strawberries from Spain in the little supermarket, what what is called ?).

FAT: +< ouais le petit village là . (yeah, the little village).

FAN: Fourques . (Fourques)

FAN: Fourques Forques . (Fourques Forques)

FAT: +< ah oui non . (oh yes no).

Boy almost drops his food on his shirt.

FAT: ouh la ! Julien ça a failli tomber .

(Oh my ! Julien, you almost dropped it).

FAN: comment i(l) s'appelait déjà ? (what was it called ?)

FAN: euh Mont Mont j(e) sais plus très bien . (um Mount, Mount, I don't really remember).

MOT: +< <j(e) sais> [l] j(e) sais plus . (I don't, I don't remember).

FAT: approche, tu approches ta chaise xx . (bring, bring your chair closer)

FAT produces a gesture to express the action of moving his chair closer to the table.

MOT: +< Montauriol . (Montauriol)

FAN: +< Montauriol non, non, non . (Montauriol no, no, no)

MOT: +< mais c'était pas là qu' y avait... (but wasn't it were there was...)

FAN: Villemolaque . (Villemolaque)

She points at a location in the space between her mother and herself.

FAT: ah oui Villemolaque bravo, quelle mémoire . (yes, Villemolaque, good job, what good memory)

MOT: +< 0 [=! mimique] oh ben dis-donc .(well done.)

MOT makes a surprised facial expression.

GIR raises her arm in a victory gesture.

MOT: bravo . (bravo)

FAN: y avait Trouillas . (there was Trouillas)

MOT: <c'était drôle les noms de village> *she laughs.*

(the names of the villages were quite funny)

Father laughs

JUL: y avait Fourques et Forques . (there was Fourques and Forques)

MOT: non c'était le même . (no those were the same village)

Mother shakes her finger in a negation gesture.

FAN: +< non Forques c'est en [/] en espagnol . (No Forques is the name in Spanish)

MOT: en occitan . (in Occitan)

Even if the father tells his son that he is not eating properly, his two remarks do not put a check to the boy's participation in the conversation about the past holidays. Two layers of interactions – one related to the here and now of the dinner, one related to displaced topics - are constantly intertwined during family dinners. In this extract, one layer is devoted to shared memories and the other to transmitting good manners. Interestingly enough, the

transition between the present time and space and the past time and space is frequently performed through gestures. Participants' gestures are particularly expressive semiotic resources to ease those shifts between frames: past frame/present frame; story-telling/dinner activities. The strawberries they are having for dessert are associated by Fanny to the strawberries they had bought during their holiday in Catalonia. This association is expressed in the pointing gesture she performs in the *gestural space* right in front of her. She is pointing at an absent topic in an absent location, linking them through her gesture to the present space and to their dinner. The whole family then collectively starts evoking the names of various villages they visited. A second pointing gesture is produced by Fanny when she remembers the name of the village where they bought the strawberries. Her gesture could be interpreted as a blend between a deictic gesture (indicating a location in absentia), a beat for emphasis and a pragmatic gesture towards her mother we could gloss as "See, I've got it!". Another instance of a frame-shifting gesture is used when the father needs to monitor his son's behavior. He uses gestures to show him that he almost dropped his food or to express that he should sit straighter and bring his chair closer to the table. Not only do the gestures enact shifts in frames, but in conjunction with facial expressions, they also indicate speakers' affective stance. Fanny for instance expresses her sense of victory at finding the name of the town Villemoque with a "glee gesture", raising her right arm. Both her parents gaze at her when she remembers the name and make surprised and admiring facial expressions which perfectly match their prosody when they say "oh ben dis donc" (well done) and "bravo". When the father comments on JUL's table manners, he is also expressing his disapproval through his facial expression and his prosody in complement to the dynamic gesture produced to make him move his chair closer to the table so that the food does not drop on the floor. The role of gestures in this extract is thus fully consistent with Goodwin's research on how

participants of a family dinner maintain and shift frames as well as express stance multimodally (Goodwin, 1996).

Thanks to repeated experience during family meals, to parents' scaffolding practices and to the variety of semiotic resources they learn to skillfully deploy when needed to switch frames from the here and now to displaced events, or to express affective stance, children become competent dinner conversationalists. They can fully benefit from the specific affordances of the very special cultural habitat, the dinner, by progressively learning to coordinate eating, listening and speaking and share the food and talk specific to their own culture.

Conclusion

Our results enabled us to quantitatively measure and qualitatively analyze how multiparty the interactions were throughout four families' dinners and to correlate those analyses to the children's age and to parents' scaffolding or reinforcement strategies. The analyses of personal reference also show a high correlation with age: the younger the children are, the more they refer to themselves. This is reinforced by the adults who use the dinner table to elicit self-talk from their children. When the children are older, they will refer to the other dinner participants including their siblings, or to absent persons, more frequently and conversations will in parallel become more multiparty. Adults in our data seem to adjust to children's cognitive and linguistic development. They change strategies as children grow older and promote broader language socialization skills by exchanges on more diversified topics involving more participants and more displaced events and activities as the child grows older. This framing of family interactions therefore involves interesting discursive and

referential regulations that are only possible in multiparty environments and have important effects on children's social and communicative development.

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