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Abstract

The paper explores children's peer co-construction and negotiation of classroom norms, focusing on rule formulations as a resource to assume an authoritative position in the group hierarchy. Drawing from a larger ethnographic research documented with video recordings in two primary schools in northern Italy, this study adopts a CA-informed approach to analyze children's situated deployment of rules (here, rules regarding academic tasks) after peers' behavior that is deemed inappropriate. As the analysis illustrates, children formulate ethical and procedural rules with the deontic modality (*must*, i.e. the Italian *dovere*) in order to a) sanction peers' previous conduct and/or b) account for a previous action that has been problematized. In the discussion it is argued that such practices are relevant to children's socialization to expected ways of behaving in the classroom and to the local negotiation of authoritative positions and valued identities within the peer group.

Keywords

Peer socialization, rule formulations, authority, deontics, classroom interaction, Conversation Analysis

1. Introduction

A significant part of children's everyday life at school revolves around normativity and the diverse array of expectations regarding appropriate ways of talking and behaving during classroom activities. Although common-sense understanding might place norms within the exclusive domain of the teacher, recent research has highlighted children's active role in shaping and negotiating the social and moral order of the classroom (Danby & Baker 1998, Sterponi 2007). Even though adults do play a major role in establishing norms and frames of reference for acceptable behavior in the classroom (Nucci 2006; Powell, Danby & Farrell 2006), children appropriate such value-laden messages and creatively transform them according to their local motives and purposes in the peer group (see the concept of *interpretive reproduction*, Corsaro 1992).

Based on two primary schools in Italy, this study analyzes the sequential organization of children's deployment of rules within the peer group. Working individually or in small groups, children formulate ethical and procedural rules regarding the appropriate performance of academic tasks (e.g., sticking a photocopy onto the notebook). These rule formulations occur in response to perceived transgressions of the classroom order. Among the different linguistic resources that might be used to formulate rules, the analysis considers the modal verb "must" (i.e. the Italian *dovere*) and examines therefore what we here call *deontic rule formulations* (DRF). The focus on this specific format is due to the preponderance of "must" in teachers' and children's rule statements.

The first goal of the study is to provide insights on the role of deontic rule formulations in children's peer socialization to the normative and moral expectations of the institutional context. Although several studies have analyzed children's orientations toward classroom normativity, they have mainly focused on the transgressive nature of their local peer cultures, highlighting children's more or less explicit resistance to adult's constraints (Corsaro 1990, Corsaro & Schwarz 1991, Kyratzis 2004, Sterponi 2007). On the contrary, accounts of children's 'adjustments' to institutional norms beyond mere transgression are still scarce. The interactional practices through which children manage to competently navigate the moral and normative landscape of the classroom and their contingent use of rules remain relatively uncharted territory (but see Cobb-Moore, Danby & Farrell 2009, Martin & Evaldsson 2012).

The second goal of this study is to highlight how children make use of classroom norms to address their local concerns in the peer group. As studies within developmental psychology have shown (see section 2.1.), children's formulations of classroom norms are part of their broader practices of morality making: by referring to a rule in response to peers' untoward conduct, children display a certain understanding of norms and sanction their classmates' behavior. The present analysis shows that children accomplish several other actions by stating a rule. For instance, children's deontic rule formulations are relevant for the negotiation of authority and social hierarchy in the peer group. By stating a rule of appropriate behavior, children lay an authoritative claim which might be acknowledged or resisted by the other classmates. In this regard, the analysis integrates previous studies on children's authoritative stances by considering (second language) classroom interaction (see section 2.3.).

The article addresses the following research questions: (1) when and how do children mobilize institutional rules in the peer group, and how are they responded to? (2) in what ways are deontic rule formulations relevant for children's socialization into a specific array of

social expectations? (3) what is the role of these rule statements in children's local negotiations of authority and social hierarchy in the peer group?

2. Theoretical perspective and background research

The present analysis is informed by a language socialization perspective (Ochs & Schieffelin 2017) and focuses on the process through which children acquire the social and moral competences necessary to appropriately act in a specific community of practice. Central to this process of socialization is children's *participation* in socially situated activities (Goodwin & Goodwin 2004). By interacting on a daily basis within ever-changing participation frameworks, children are introduced to a world already endowed with meaning, and at the same time contribute to shaping and re-producing it.

In the classroom, children are introduced to the set of social expectations that inform and regulate everyday activities. These social expectations also regard explicit norms of appropriate behavior (Cobb-Moore, Danby & Farrell 2009), which can range from an official language policy (e.g. a monolingual norm) to norms regulating classroom participation and multiparty talk (e.g. you must raise your hand to speak). Although studies in language socialization have mainly focused on the 'official' business of teacher-led socialization (see Howard & Burdelski 2020 for an overview), an increased attention is being devoted to analyzing the role that children might assume in the apprenticeship period of peers (Goodwin & Kyratzis 2007). In this regard, scholars have shown that children are active agents of their own socialization, highlighting the tension between adults' worldviews and their creative appropriation by children (Sterponi 2007, Burdelski 2013).

2.1. Children's understanding of norms and everyday making of morality

Socialization processes also involve the management of morality, as children are apprenticed into a specific moral order and held accountable for breaches in the social expectations of the group. Children's socialization to the set of culturally and contextually shaped norms of a community mainly takes place through social interaction. Children acquire a sense of morality by attending to and participating in verbally mediated routines (Bergmann 1998, Sterponi 2014). As regards the relevance of specific social actions, *accounts* have been shown to play a

central role in the local management of morality (Sterponi 2003). When a social action is problematized in some way by the other interlocutor, an individual might give an account for it, trying thereby to recast its meaning into something that could be more easily ‘accepted’ (Scott & Lyman 1968, Buttny 1993, Antaki 1994; see also Goffman 1971). For example, the infringement of a shared norm can be justified with a subsequent account that explains the reasons behind the breach.

Children’s understanding of social norms has been also extensively studied within developmental psychology, at times from a similar perspective. Several studies have connected deontic reasoning to specific linguistic forms such as modal verbs (as an example, see the appraisal of the Italian *dovere* in Bascelli & Barbieri 2002), highlighting how an understanding of the deontic meaning of these verbs already arises in the early years. However, these studies were based on hypothetical situations that prompted children’s judgments in laboratory settings. Another stream of research advocates the deployment of “naturalistic methods in addition to experimental methods” (Dahl et al. 2018, 48) and underlines the centrality of social interaction to children’s moral development (among others, Killen & Dahl 2016, Turiel & Dahl 2019). Within this framework, naturalistic observations in different contexts have shown that children react differently in relation to different types of transgressions. In this regard, rule statements are mainly deployed in response to transgression of so-called *conventional* rules (Turiel 2008). Nevertheless, a finer grained analysis can illustrate how a specific interactional ‘move’ accomplishes multiple social actions. As will be shown in the analysis, with rule statements children are not only responding to a transgression but making use of an institutional norm to achieve specific purposes within the peer group.

2.2. *An ethnomethodological outlook on rules and classroom social order*

As several scholars in the ethnomethodological tradition have underscored, teachers and students display sensitivity to the classroom normative order during their everyday activities (Margutti & Piirainen-Marsch 2011). Previous research has mainly focused on the teacher’s role in constructing and maintaining discipline in the classroom [e.g., by reproaching inappropriate conduct (Margutti 2011) or by intervening in peers’ conflict to restore order (Danby & Baker 1998)]. Parallel to this venue, other researchers have highlighted children’s agency in reproducing and challenging teacher’s authority and normative constraints within the peer group, in this way co-constructing a local social order that might be more or less alternative to the ‘institutional’ one (Danby 2002, Corsaro 1985). The complex

interrelationship between adults' and children's social order have been accounted for by stating that processes in the peer group occur both *alongside* and *within* the adult lifeworld (i.e. they are at the same time alternative to and dependent on it, Cobb-Moore, Danby & Farrell 2009).

Hence, the actions related to 'doing discipline' in the classroom are shared by teachers and students, and can be accomplished through various practices. Among these practices, explicit reference to (institutional) rules of appropriate behavior has been documented in teachers' talk (Margutti 2011) as well as in children's peer interactions (Cobb-Moore, Danby & Farrell 2009). From this kind of practice, the contingent character of rules clearly emerges. Rules are cultural resources publicly available to participants (Wootton 1986), which might be used to make sense of the surrounding social world (Heritage 1978) and to accomplish diverse local purposes in interaction. This perspective, radically grounded in practical action, rests on participants' displayed orientations to rules, which need to be made relevant and 'applied' to a specific situation (Dupret 2011). Therefore, although rules are generally sensitive to abstraction and might be seen as 'structural' features of the context (i.e. as propositions that retrospectively and prospectively indicate what constitutes acceptable conduct, Danby & Baker 1998, Martin & Evaldsson 2012), the focus here will be on their situated deployment in interaction. In other words, norms do not determine participants' conduct, but are rather constructed, negotiated, resisted or ratified by participants in and through a variety of verbal, embodied and material means.

2.2.1. Explicit formulations of rules and their sequential positions

Although the explicit formulation of rules has already been documented in classroom interaction, norms are usually tacit and the practice of stating them seems rather seldom (Mehan 1979, Wootton 1986). When they are indeed deployed, rule formulations usually occur in the grammatical form of a declarative and show "characteristic semantic markers like the words and phrases *must*, *got to*, *have to*, and *not allowed*" (Jordan, Cowan and Roberts, 1995: 340). One of the verbal resources that participants might use to state a rule is the modal verb "must". This format, which is here called a *deontic rule formulation*, is a subset of the broader category of "deontic declaratives" (Goodwin & Cekaite 2018, 50). Deontic rule formulations can be accomplished with different grammatical persona. For example, they can be formulated with a 2nd person – singular or plural, focusing on the transgressor(s) ("you must do x") – or a 1st person plural that includes the speaker in the 'domain' of the rule ("we

must do x”). Notably, the use of different personal pronouns is crucial to the co-construction of local *participation frameworks* (Goffman 1981), which account for the disparate ways of participating that individuals might adopt during co-operative action (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004). This is especially relevant in multiparty interactions, which often involve a local negotiation of the roles of ratified and non-ratified participant (Clark 1996, De Leon 2012). Apart from their segmental features, the social force of deontic rule formulations might rely on prosody (i.e. on speech volume and intonational contours) and embodiment (e.g. on gestures, facial expressions, body positions) (Goodwin & Cekaite 2014, Zinken et al. 2021).

The explicit formulation of rules can be deployed in a variety of ways and be diversely localized within an interactional sequence. In most cases, rule statements fall within the broad category of directives (i.e. turns that attempt to get someone to do something, Goodwin 1990) and occur after so-called *untoward events* (Wootton 1986), usually relative to another party’s inappropriate behavior. Notably, it is exactly the subsequent reference to a rule that constructs the previous event as inappropriate and in need of “remedial work” (Goffman 1971, Sanders & Pomerantz 2018). Once the rule is publicly formulated, the sequence can basically proceed in two ways. The preferred response (Schegloff 2007) is a display of compliance by the recipient, which might merely consist in the ceasing of the problematic behavior or in some minimal evidence of acceptance of the previous turn (Cekaite 2020); in this case, the sequence can terminate. Conversely, even though the formulation of a rule indexes non-negotiability (Goodwin & Cekaite 2018), explicit or silent non-compliance might happen and lead to an expansion of the sequence (e.g., a re-statement of the rule). Clearly, such formulations are meaningful not only in relation to the immediate prior or subsequent turns, but also in light of the broader activity (or *communicative project*, Goodwin & Cekaite 2014) in which they are embedded (Moore 2017).

2.3. *Enacting authority in the peer group*

As mentioned above, classroom institutional rules are among the resources that children employ to jointly construct their social organization on an everyday basis. This process of ongoing negotiation and maintenance of the social and moral order is not neutral in terms of power, as peer hierarchies and alliances are continuously at stake: it has been pointed out how adult restrictions “provide a frame within which children’s peer relations are played out and managed” (Martin & Evaldsson 2012, 53; Corsaro & Schwarz 1991). Within the peer group, children can be varyingly (mis)aligned to the institutional social order. Previous literature has

mainly considered the ‘alternative’ character of classroom peer cultures. The focus has been on children’s strategies to *defy* institutional rules and find gaps in adult “ideologies, institutions and structures” (Mayall 1994, 5; Corsaro 1990, Corsaro & Schwarz 1991). These subversive practices have been described as a way to establish friendship relationships and a collective sense of the group (Corsaro 1985).

Conversely, a parallel research venue has highlighted children’s orientations to norms beyond mere transgression. Rules of expected behavior might be also enforced, reproduced, and discussed within the peer group, for example to sanction breaches in the classroom social order (Cobb-Moore, Danby and Farrell 2009; see also Martin & Evaldsson 2012, LeMaster 2010, Niemi 2016). Such displayed alignments to the institution (which might be only apparent, or bound to the teacher’s physical presence, Danby & Baker 1998; Cekaite 2020) do not necessarily imply a shared institutional mandate: children might reproduce adult rules in order to accomplish diverse social purposes within the peer group, purposes that are often relative to children’s central concerns for *power* and *inclusion* (Kyratzis 2004; see also Corsaro 1992). This creative appropriation has consequences for the negotiation of local hierarchies among classmates, as rules might be mobilized to achieve valued positions and identities (Maynard 1985). More broadly, such practices can be brought back to children’s general ability to draw from authoritative discourse(s) to attain a powerful position in the peer group (Goodwin 1990).

Specifically, children might formulate institutional rules to invoke higher order entities, using them as “discursive weapons” with their peers (Jordan et al. 1995, 340). This kind of practice can be brought back to the concept of “macro-acting”, meant as the ability to invoke various figures as co-authoring one’s actions (see Cooren 2010 and the concept of *ventriloquism*). In the classroom, institutional norms – which are usually formulated and enforced by teachers – are among the authoritative sources that children might ‘presentify’ to enact authority in the peer group.

Since these interactional moves attempt to control peers’ behavior, they might be considered as indexing *deontic* authority, i.e. the perceived right to establish what to do next and to determine future courses of action (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2014). In particular, the analysis will consider deontic *stances* (as opposed to statuses), as the focus will be on children’s local claims of the right to decide about the ongoing activity. Clearly, being in a position of (deontic) authority in the peer group does not exclusively concern a child’s displays of power. A projected position of control needs to be ratified by other group members, and it can be

challenged and resisted in interaction through a variety of verbal and embodied means of expression (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2014). Notably, local claims of authority might also concern the epistemic order of interaction, as children might use their knowledge to construct local asymmetries with their peers (Heritage & Raymond 2005, Melander 2012).

Children's negotiations over authority have been mainly considered in instances of pretend play (Griswold 2007, Cobb-Moore 2012), or in relation to specific rules of a game (Evaldsson 2004, Goodwin 1995). By focusing on the spontaneous use of social rules to achieve a position of deontic authority in the peer group, the present study integrates previous work on authoritative stances among children, and at the same time it broadens the field of analysis by considering peer interactions during academic work in the classroom.

3. Setting and methodology

The data were collected during nine months of video-ethnographic fieldwork in two primary schools in Northern Italy. The schools are placed in a low socioeconomic area and are attended by a large number of children with a migratory background. Several Italian L2 classes were organized in order to deal with children who still had a limited competence in Italian. The analysis takes into consideration peer interactions among children aged 8 to 10, in the ordinary as well as the L2 classroom.¹ The Italian L2 class is attended by a small group of children who have been attending the Italian school for less than a year. These children are from China, Pakistan, Morocco, and the Philippines. The activities in the classrooms were quite multifarious, ranging from whole-class discussions to small-group tasks, and also involved 'transition' moments between different tasks; peer negotiations of the social order mainly emerged in these two latter activities, during which the teacher's hold on classroom interaction and discipline was usually looser. Moreover, children's seating arrangement and physical proximity during these activities possibly favored their peer interactions (e.g., during group work children were usually seating close to each other and facing one another). Apart from these broad considerations, there were no recurrent patterns regarding what happened before the untoward action that led to a deontic rule formulation.

¹ The ordinary and the L2 classroom are different context, with distinct pedagogical aims and interactional structures (Seedhouse 2004). However, the phenomena presented in this article were present in both contexts. Furthermore, in the extracts analyzed children did not display a particular orientation to the specificity of the two contexts. The choice of including extracts from both contexts appears therefore consistent with the ethnomethodological mandate regarding the analyst's *emic* perspective.

3.1. Analytical methods

A prolonged ethnographic fieldwork is combined with a microanalytic approach to everyday interactions (Goodwin & Cekaite 2018) that allowed to study social actions in their sequentiality and to account for the various semiotic resources that participants deploy within shifting participation frameworks (Goodwin 2000). The ethnographic perspective was chosen to better grasp participants' *emic* perspective and gather contextual elements participants are likely to orient to when they interact (Maynard 2006). More specifically, the use of ethnographic knowledge was relevant in order to examine the wider structures and ideologies available to children, who agentively draw on them in their peer group interactions. This combined approach has been widely used in the study of children's peer interactions and has proven fruitful in the analysis of the ecology of situated social action (Moore & Burdelski 2020). After an initial period of observation, approximately 30 hours of naturally-occurring interactions in the classroom were video-recorded, transcribed,² and analyzed with a CA-informed approach (Cekaite 2013). The analysis proceeded inductively, as videos and transcripts were repeatedly viewed to identify relevant phenomena. All occurrences of deontic rule formulations were first selected and then analyzed in terms of their grammatical features, their sequential position, and the social action that children thereby accomplished. The resulting analytical hypotheses were discussed and validated in several data sessions with both the local research group and international colleagues. The four excerpts presented in this article are representative of the ways deontic rule formulations were used in the larger corpus (see Table 2). As regards the discursive indexing of authority, the notion of deontic stance was used in all excerpts to account for children's claims regarding necessary courses of action. When relevant to children's local negotiation of an authoritative position, the epistemic order of interaction was also taken into account.

3.2. Italian deontics and the focus on *dovere*

In Italian the deontic modality can be expressed with different linguistic formats: the modal verbs *dovere* (e.g. *devi*, "you must", or the negative form *non devi*, "you must not") and *potere* (e.g. *non puoi*, "you cannot", to indicate prohibition), impersonal constructions (e.g. *non si corre*, "no running"), and periphrases such as *è obbligatorio*, "it's mandatory" (Barbieri & Bascelli 2002). In the classroom observed, both children and teachers formulated

² Data were transcribed according to an adapted version of Jefferson's conventions (Jefferson 2004); transcript symbols are in the appendix.

rules during ordinary activities. They used the modal verbs “must (not)” and “cannot”, and the impersonal form. A further linguistic form, though only in the written ‘mode’, was the first person plural as a kind of collective commitment (see Figure 1 below).

Apart from this partition, in the analysis we distinguish between *procedural* and *ethical* rules. The former are relative to rather contingent matters (e.g. how to properly stick a photocopy), whereas the latter refer to broader values and classroom ideologies that partly transcend their contingent use (e.g. you must not argue).

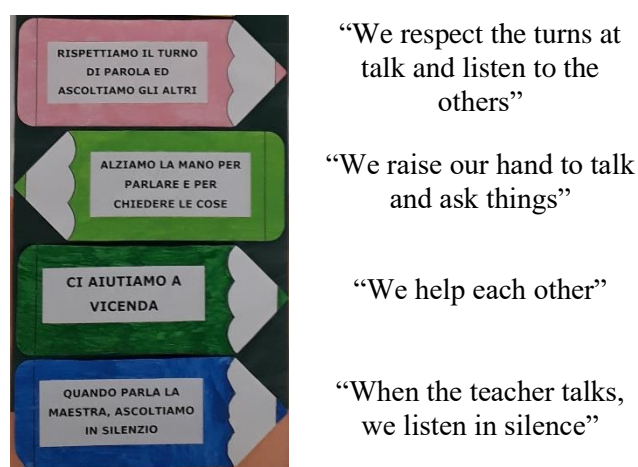


Fig. 1. A poster with rules on the wall

In the corpus, teachers mostly stated rules with the deontic modal “must” (see Table 1). Moreover, children’s requests for permission were at times reformulated by teachers in deontic terms (e.g., “can I do x?” – “you must.”). Among the rules that children invoked in the analysis, teachers were recorded saying “well done, you must help him!” (to praise a child that was helping a classmate) and “you must work” (to reproach a child who was not doing an exercise).

Children mobilized such institutional rules within their peer group, formulating them with various verbal resources. We were able to label the matrix of these rules as ‘institutional’ based on our ethnographic knowledge: just norms that were ‘in force’ at the moment of the recording and that teachers officially endorsed were considered. Notably, children were often formulating rules with the very same words used by the teachers. This might be seen as a further proof of the institutional origin of these resources.

Also in peer talk, the modal verb “must” was preponderant (see Table 1). Furthermore, the formulations with *dovere* engendered prolonged negotiations of the social and moral order. The uses of “cannot” and of the impersonal form were not followed by this kind of uptake (as an example, when children formulated a rule with an impersonal declarative, they obtained no ostensible response from their classmates). Given the centrality of *dovere* in peer life-worlds, we selected four perspicuous sequences in order to highlight the multiple social actions that children thereby accomplish.

	must (not)	can (not)	impersonal	total of RFs
teacher’s talk	13	4	5	23
children’s peer talk	14	6	5	25

Tab. 1. Occurrences of rule formulations (RFs) with different linguistic formats (corpus: ca. 30h)

	Total	Responses to DRF		
		Compliance	Resistance	Unclear
DRF used as ‘reproach’	9	0	9	0
DRF used as ‘account’	5	2	2	1
Total of DRF in peer talk	14			

Tab. 2. Different uses of deontic rule formulations (DRFs) in children’s peer talk and subsequent responses (corpus: ca. 30h).

4. Analysis

The analysis shows that with *deontic rule formulations* children mainly accomplished two social actions, which are differently placed within the sequence.

First, children state rules during (or immediately after) a peer’s behavior, constructing it thereby as inappropriate (section 4.1.). In this case, children seem to use such rules to urge the stopping of the behavior and project a desirable/necessary conduct instead. The social action accomplished is thus similar to a *reproach* (i.e., an action that portrays a specific conduct as an infringement of social expectations and makes relevant its cessation while holding the recipient as morally at fault; Margutti 2011, Klattenberg 2021).

Second, children mobilize this formulation to underpin a previous reproach that has been resisted (section 4.2.). When the explicit sanctioning of a problematic behavior does not obtain compliance, children make use of an institutional rule to account for the prior sanctioning and thus re-state the need for compliance. Such rule statements work sequentially as *accounts*, that is they are attempts to modify (“e.g. change, explain, justify, clarify, interpret, rationalize, (re)characterize, etc.”, Robinson 2016, 15) interlocutors’ assessment or understanding of the other’s previous conduct (see section 2.1.).

These two social actions are presented both in dyadic and in multiparty peer interactions (see section 4.3. and 4.4.). As regards the content of rule, children invoked procedural rules to reproach their classmates and ethical rules to account for their prior sanctioning. The analysis also considers children’s responses, highlighting how deontic rule formulations were often resisted by the other classmates.

4.1. Deontic rule formulations to sanction previous conduct

Children used deontic rule formulations as “priming moves” (Sterponi 2003), which retroactively constructed the previous conduct as problematic (see also *retro-sequences*, Schegloff 2007). In doing so, they also prospectively indicated what constituted desirable, deontically relevant conduct instead. In Excerpt 1, a child formulates a rule immediately after a classmate’s inappropriate conduct.

In this ordinary classroom, when children finish an exercise they are expected to bring the book to the teacher, who rapidly checks the work done. After the teacher’s positive evaluation, children are expected to put the book back on a specific shelf at the back of the classroom. In this excerpt, Carlo³ is putting his book back on the shelf, as Janet approaches and stands next to him.

Excerpt 1

- ((Carlo is putting his book back on the shelf, Janet goes to him with her book))
- 1 Janet: ((puts her book back on the shelf, looks at Carlo))
- 2 Janet: devi portarlo al maestro
 you must bring it to the teacher
- 3 Carlo: >l’ho già fatto vedere<

³ All names in the article are pseudonyms.

→ 4 Janet: >i've already shown it<
 >dobbiam farglielo rivedere<
 >we must show it again<
 5 ((turns around and goes back to her desk))
 6 Carlo: no gliel'ho già fatto vedere janet!
 no i've already shown it to him janet!

While putting her book back on the shelf, Janet looks at Carlo (line 1) and explicitly formulates a rule regarding a specific expectation that needs to be met (*you must bring it to the teacher*, line 2). With her turn, Janet is sanctioning the breach in the classroom social order as well as projecting a necessary action, underscored by the deontic “must”. Janet’s turn is also indexical of an authoritative stance. By “presentifying” the institution through the reproduction of the rule, she tries to assume a position of deontic authority in relation to her classmate: she claims a right to decide what needs to be done in the specific situation and to correct the other child’s behavior. Moreover, Janet makes relevant a further asymmetry in terms of epistemics between peers, in that she treats Carlo as unknowing of the rule (Melander 2012).

The preferred response to Janet’s formulation would be Carlo’s compliance, which would ratify Janet’s authoritative claim and close the sequence. However, Carlo seems to resist Janet’s claim and displays his competence (i.e. his being “a good student”, Cekaite 2012), by constructing Janet’s directive as unnecessary (Robinson 2016): he knows the rule and has already done what was required (*i’ve already shown it*, line 3) His claim of independent knowledge is emphasized by the use of a different verb (bring > show; lines 2, 3). Notably, the validity of the rule *per se* is not questioned and both children appear aligned to classroom institutional constraints. In line 4, Janet further tries to direct Carlo’s behavior: she recycles her classmate’s turn to create another rule, contingent to this specific sequence (*we must show it again*, line 4). This use of the deontic is quite different from the previous one, as it does not refer to an actual institutional norm. Janet creates the ‘rule’ on the spot for her contingent purposes (Cobb-Moore, Danby and Farrell 2009), and seems to deploy it to win the local argument by accounting for her previous contribution. Janet formulates the rule with a shift in the personal pronoun (“we”, see also Figure 1). Even though this choice prevents an “overt display of asymmetry” (Poole 1992, 607), the turn is again indexical of a deontic claim regarding the appropriate course of action. Janet completes her attempt to establish what needs to be done and thus ‘have the last word’ with an embodied action: she turns her back to Carlo and goes away, clearly indicating that the sequence is closed and marking his classmate’s (possible) reply as not worthy of attention.

This first extract was an example of children's mobilization of an institutional rule to reproach a classmate. In response to an action that is deemed inappropriate, children can formulate a rule to sanction the transgressor, thereby indexing an authoritative stance in the peer group. In this case, the recipient refused to comply with the directive and resisted the classmate's authoritative claim. This kind of response was recurrent throughout the corpus. When children used a deontic rule formulation *to reproach a classmate*, the 'transgressor' never complied with the directive (see Table 2).

4.2. Deontic rule formulations to account for previous sanctioning

Children also mobilized institutional rules to account for a previous reproach. In Excerpt 2, a child sanctions an untoward behavior, but the 'transgressor' openly resists the sanctioning. In response to that resistance, the 'reprimanding' child formulates an institutional rule.

The sequence was recorded in the ordinary classroom during group work. Four children sit around a table, working together on a shared project. A boy, Ahsan, violates a rule regarding the completion of the task and is sanctioned by his 'teammate' Melek. At the beginning of the sequence, the teacher is standing a couple of meters away from the children.

Excerpt 2

- 1 Dario: questo dove va?
where does this go?
- 2 Dario: ((shows a marker by lifting his arm))
- 3 Teacher: questo nella plastica,
this in the plastic,
- 4 Ahsan: questo nella: nella (pupù)
this in the: in the (poo-poo)
- 5 Ahsan: ((looks at Melek))
- 6 Melek: ma la smetti?!
will you stop?!
- 7 (0.2)
- 8 Ahsan: oh ma cos' ti ho detto?
oh but what have i said to you?
- 9 Melek: ((shakes her ^head))
- 10 Melek: ^devi ^lavorare.
^you must ^work.
- 11 Melek: ^((points to Ahsan's notebook))
- 12 Ahsan: ((looks down on his notebook))

Dario, a child from another group, walks to the teacher and asks her in which bin he should put the marker he holds in his hand (lines 1, 2). The teacher answers (*this in the plastic*, line 3) and Ahsan recycles her contribution, substituting the last element of the turn with a scatological reference (*this in the poo-poo*, line 4). The turn is not audible for the teacher and his subsequent gaze (line 5) seems to locate Melek as recipient, who is faced with a choice: (a) she could align with the ‘institutional’ order and sanction the taboo language and the fact that Ahsan is not working; (b) she could ignore his contribution; (c) she could take sides with him (e.g., by laughing). In line 6, Melek reproaches her classmate with a rhetorical question (*will you stop?!), which works sequentially and prosodically as a directive to stop the inappropriate behavior and to avoid its recurrence. Ahsan resists Melek’s deontic claim to decide what should be done and therefore her attempt to control his behavior. With his turn (oh but what have i said to you?, line 8), Ahsan defends the appropriateness of his previous turn in terms of content (what have I said?) and addressee, questioning her involvement in the matter (to you?).*

At this point, Melek disambiguates her prior contribution, while avoiding joining the dispute that Ahsan was setting out (i.e., a dispute about what can(not) be said in the classroom). She makes relevant another deontic rule (*you must work*, line 10), relative to morally appropriate conduct during group work and oriented to the broader academic task they have been assigned. The rule formulation seems here to account for the reproach by linking it to a shared norm, and to re-actualize thereby the pressure for compliance on the recipient. In the face of resistance, children’s invoking of an institutional rule can be seen again as a strategy to assume an authoritative position and claim the right to decide about the ongoing activity. Notably, the urgency of the directive and its conflictual nature are strengthened by the use of non-verbal resources: a shake of the head that prefaces the oppositional move (line 9) and a hand gesture toward Ahsan’s notebook to locate the ‘correct’ focus of his attention (line 11). In this sequence, the nearby presence of the teacher could also be relevant. Apart from their relevance within the peer group, Melek’s moves could also be a way to showcase her alignment to institutional normativity in front of the institutional authority.

As shown in the extract, deontic rule formulations are mobilized by children to justify previous sanctioning, which is thereby legitimized, and to re-state the need for compliance. At the end of the sequence, Ahsan complies with the directive, thereby aligning with his

classmate's deontic claim (line 12). Melek's right to decide about necessary courses of action has been interactionally established. Arguably, the fact of drawing on institutional discourses played a role in constructing her as the authoritative 'voice' of the group. In the corpus, children used a deontic rule formulation to account for a prior move in five occasions. In two cases children complied with these rule formulations, whereas in other two cases they resisted them (see Table 2).

4.3. Deontic rule formulations in multiparty interactions

In four occasions in the corpus, children mobilized institutional rules in multiparty interactions. In two cases, two children constructed a 'formation' of two-against-one to sanction a transgressor. In two other cases, a single child formulated a rule to sanction two or more classmates who were involved in an untoward activity. Excerpt 3 shows an example of the former case: two children deploy deontic rule formulations to sanction another classmate's behavior. The interaction takes place in the second language classroom and involves a girl, Ying, and two boys, James and Manuel. The children are working in a small group and have received a photocopy from the teacher, which they are supposed to stick onto their notebooks. James violates a rule regarding the appropriate way of performing this action and is sanctioned by Ying and Manuel.

Excerpt 3

- ((James glues his photocopy around the borders, Ying is observing him))
- 1 James: ^ ((glues his photocopy in the middle))
- 2 Ying: ^no: james non devi incollare dentro:
^no: **james you mustn't glue in the middle:**
- 3 Ying: basta fuori!
around the borders is enough!
- 4 James: ^ ((keeps on gluing in the middle))
- 5 Ying: ^james non ser- (0.3) non devi incollar dentro
james there's no nee- (0.3) you mustn't glue in the middle
- 6 Manuel: de^ve fare solo così
he^must do just like that
- 7 ^ ((pats Ying on the arm))
- 8 Manuel: ^così [: (.) poi basta!
^like [tha:t (.) that's enough! FIG.2
- 9 Manuel: ^ ((mimes how to glue the photocopy))
- 10 Ying: [è vero!
[it's true!
- 11 Ying,

Manuel: ((look at James)) FIG. 3

12 Ying: se no, (.) finisce subito la colla eh,
otherwise, (.) you run out of glue eh,

13 James: ^na,
^na,

14 James: ^((starts showing his glue))

15 Ying: sì.
yes.

16 James: ah:a
ah:a

17 (1.0)

18 Ying: guarda adesso hai pochissimo colla vero?
look now you almost run out of glue right?

19 James: ((shrugs))

20 James: è così: ^ () guarda,
it's like tha:t ^ () look,

21 James: ^ ((takes out the glue and shows it to Ying))

22 Ying: ma prima lunghissima
but earlier very long

23 (4.0)

24 Ying: ^guarda mia colla quanto è lu-
^look my glue how is lo-

25 Ying: ^ ((starts showing her glue))

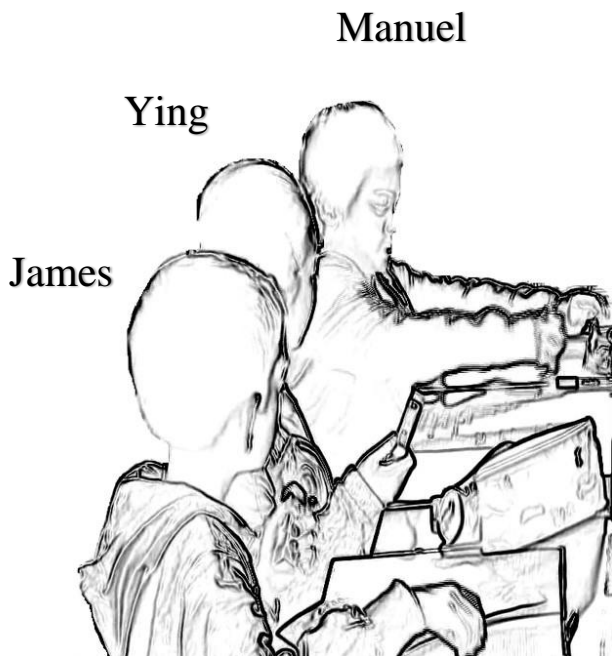


Fig. 2. Manuel shows how to glue



Fig. 3. Ying and Manuel's gaze toward James

The children have received the photocopy and James is gluing it. Sitting next to him, Ying is closely monitoring his behavior with her gaze. As soon as James starts gluing the photocopy

in the middle, she intervenes to stop his action (lines 2, 3) and reproaches him by articulating a rule children have been socialized to by the teachers: the photocopy must be glued only around the borders. Ying uses this declarative to sanction previous conduct (*no james you mustn't glue in the middle*, line 2), and to indicate the right way to accomplish the action (*around the borders is enough*, line 3). James ostensibly ignores Ying and keeps gluing his photocopy (line 4). At this point, Ying tries again to obtain compliance by restating the institutional rule (line 5).

In line 6, Ramil joins the exchange and aligns with Ying by adding an embodied exemplification of the 'correct' way of performing the action (line 9, Figure 2). Ramil integrates his embodied action with another deontic rule formulation (*he must do just like that*, line 6), accomplished through a recycling of verbal resources from the previous turns ("must"). Manuel's recycling is also transformative, since he changes the deontic modal (from negative to positive) and the personal pronoun (you must not > he must, lines 2 and 6). The third person reference, together with Manuel's embodied action (he pats Ying's on the arm, constructing her as the ratified addressee; line 7), momentarily excludes James from the ratified participants: he is the child the others are talking *about*. Nevertheless, James is arguably an "intended" recipient of Manuel's contribution (De Leon 2012): the correct way to glue is also displayed for James, who is still within the perceptual space of the ongoing interaction. After this brief exchange with James as a "bystander" (Clark 1996), the participation framework shifts again, since Ying and Manuel re-includes James among the ratified participants through their joint gaze (line 11, Figure 3). Considering the whole sequence (lines 2 to 11), the reproach after the untoward action is distributed between the two children, who assume an authoritative position in relation to their classmate both in terms of deontics (i.e. what needs to be done) and epistemics (since James is constructed as unknowing of the rule).

Although the children's sustained gaze makes relevant some kind of uptake by James (Stivers & Rossano 2010), he does not ostensibly reply. Ying also gives an account for the rule, explaining the rationale behind it (*otherwise you run out of glue*, line 12). This turn indexes an even stronger authoritative stance, since Ying gives an account even if it was not solicited (Morek 2015). At this point, James starts to explicitly resist his classmates' contributions and projected stances (see lines 13 to 21). He uses both verbal and non-verbal resources to question the rule and display his competence by showing that he still has an acceptable amount of glue. These moves seem to undermine Ying's and Manuel's authoritative claims

based on the institutional rule. Indeed, Ying shows her glue to provide a further material proof of the validity of her stance (*look my glue how is lo-*, lines 24 and 25).

As illustrated in the analysis of Ex. 3, children can deploy rule statements to index and negotiate authoritative stances within shifting participation frameworks. Specifically, two children co-constructed a participation framework that momentarily excluded and re-included the transgressor from the ratified participants. These local shifts were also accomplished through the creative recycling of deontic rule formulations. Notably, children's deontic claims were resisted by the recipient, who mobilized material evidence to counter them.

4.4. Successive deontic rule formulations to obtain compliance

In the classroom, institutional rules can show a contradictory character in which compliance with one rule implies the breach of another rule, and *vice versa*. In the case discussed here, a shared norm states that children should help their peers when in need (see Figure 1), whereas another underscores the necessity of developing competences that allow children to solve tasks autonomously. Confronted with these contrasting mandates, children face a dilemma relative to the dichotomy between autonomy and interdependence: when a child displays difficulties in solving an exercise, what are the others supposed to do?

Excerpt 4 was recorded in the second language classroom and involves three children, Moad, Manuel, and Ying. The children are sitting around a desk and are working separately on the same grammatical exercise. Before the sequence shown here, Moad has been trying to copy from his classmates, thereby displaying problems in solving the exercise. Manuel starts helping him and is sanctioned by Ying, who uses successive rule formulations to obtain compliance.

Excerpt 4

- 1 Moad: °io ho finito:,°
°i **finishe:d**,°
2 Manuel: ^no:, (.) non è così!
^no:, (.) **it's not like that!**
3 Manuel: ^ ((moves forefinger right and left))
4 Manuel: ((stands up and starts going to Moad))
→ 5 Ying: no non devi aiutare nonononono,
no you mustn't help nonononono,
7 Manuel: ((goes to Moad))

8 Ying: ^ (*tries to pull Manuel from his sleeve*)

→ 9 Ying: ^non devi aiutarla!
^you mustn't help him!

10 Manuel: (*stands beside Moad, turns the photocopy and looks at it*)

11 Ying: come ti chiami?
what's your name?

12 (0.2)

13 Manuel: <io: mi chiamo:> manuel. tu?
<my: name i:s> manuel. you?

→ 14 Ying: manuel ^to:- via non devi aiutarla.
manuel ^to:- go you mustn't help him.

15 Ying: ^ (*tries to push Manuel's hand from the desk*)

→ 16 Ying: deve imparare far da SOLO!
he must learn to do ALONE! FIG.4

17 Moad: °ying (.) tu (.) ^via.°
°ying (.) you (.) ^go.°

18 Moad: ^ (*gesture with the hand as if to drive her away*)

19 Ying: (*stands up, closes her notebook and goes to Manuel*)

20 Ying: ^ (*pulls Manuel from his arm*)

→ 21 Ying: ^vattene via non devi aiut[arla:
^go away you mustn't help [hi:m

22 Manuel: [lasciami:
[leave me:

→ 23 Ying: non ^devi aiu°tarla°
you ^mustn't he°lp him°

24 Ying: ^ (*stands beside Manuel, looks at him*)

25 Manuel: °eh bè ma: , °
°eh well bu:t , °

26 (0.5)

27 Manuel: io po- se voglio aiutare?
i ca- if i want to help?

28 Ying: (*looks in the camera*)

→ 29 Ying: lo devi dire a francesca se vuoi aiutare
you must tell francesca if you want to help

30 Manuel: questo, (0.2) ^qui.
this, (0.2) ^here.

Manuel: ^ (*points on Moad's photocopy*)
(*13 lines*)

44 Ying: va bè tu vai ^a sedere.
alright you go ^and sit down.

45 Ying: ^ (*pushes Manuel toward his desk*)

46 Ying: aiuto ↑io a fare,
↑**i help to do,**

47 (*Manuel goes back to his desk, Ying stands beside Moad and enacts the teacher*)
FIG.5

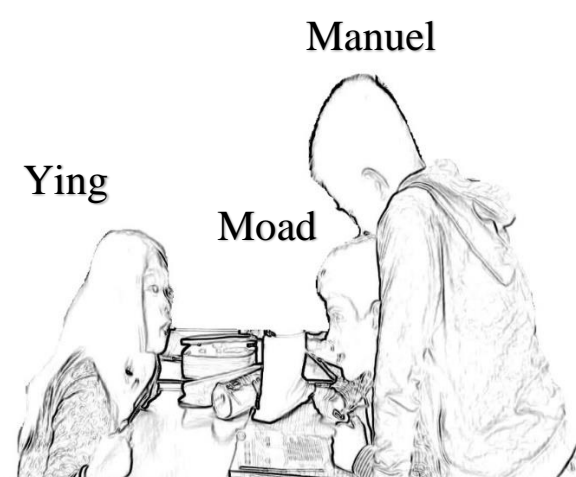


Fig. 4. Manuel's enactment of the role of the teacher and Ying's gaze, accompanying a rule formulation



Fig. 5. Ying's enactment of the role of the teacher

In line 1 Moad displays his competence by stating that he has already finished his exercise. Manuel contests this statement, both verbally (*no it's not like that*, line 2) and non-verbally by the use of his forefinger. He then stands up and starts going to Moad, thereby positioning himself as the more competent child who can help the other. Ying immediately issues a directive to stop him. Again, she uses a deontic rule formulation (*you mustn't help*, line 5), together with a repeated oppositive “no”, to sanction a behavior that she deems inappropriate. Manuel ignores Ying's deontic claim and keeps on moving. At this point, Ying tries to physically stop Manuel (line 8) and repeats the prior rule with a marked prosodical contour (*you mustn't help him*, line 9). Her attempt is however unsuccessful: Ying's mobilization of an institutional rule to underpin her deontic stance is seemingly not enough. Manuel now stands behind Moad and looks at his photocopy, bodily enacting the role of the teacher (line 10). Ying tries a different strategy to recruit her classmate. She asks Manuel for his name (line 11) and produces then an upgraded directive in an attempt to control his behavior (*manuel go you mustn't help him*, line 14). As shown in the first part of the excerpt, when they are faced with prolonged resistance and the reiteration of a problematic conduct, children might deploy successive, negative deontic rule formulations to obtain compliance.

In line 16 Ying formulates another rule, which accounts for her previous contributions by explaining the rationale behind them (*he must learn to do alone*, line 16; Figure 4). Ying's further mobilization of authoritative discourse can be seen as an additional attempt to assume

a position of deontic authority that re-actualizes the pressure for compliance on the recipient. Notably, Ying formulates the rule utilizing a positive form that outlines a necessary action for Moad, who is referred to in the third person. This third person reference confirms the ongoing participation framework with Ying and Manuel as ratified participants, and Moad as a bystander (from line 5 to 16). Nevertheless, Moad changes this configuration by directly intervening in the exchange, challenging Ying's authoritative claim (*ying you go*, line 17).

Ying ostensibly ignores Moad's contribution and further excludes him from the ratified participants. She stands up, positions herself next to Manuel, and reproduces the rule in the negative form in an attempt to stop his problematic behavior (lines 19 to 24). In line 27, Manuel suggests a different perspective on the matter by using another modal verb, "want" (*if i want to help?*). Ying promptly rejects the volitive modal verb, making it conditional to a deontically formatted action (*you must tell francesca*, line 28; Francesca is the teacher). As in Extract 1 (*we must show it again*, line 4), this rule is locally constructed to maintain control of the situation, as it does not refer to an institutionally sanctioned norm. Anyway, Manuel further ignores this directive and keeps helping Moad by suggesting him the right solution (*this here*, line 30).

Eventually, having seen that she cannot manage to get compliance by making relevant institutional rules of appropriate behavior, Ying opts for a different action: she disavows her previous contributions and starts helping Moad herself ⁴ (lines 44-47; Figure 5). This move can be interpreted in relation to the local power structures within the peer group. Ying backs down on her stance toward helping but does not allow that somebody else does it, in this way sustaining her authoritative position. She pushes Manuel away and issues an imperatively formatted directive (*you go and sit down*, line 44), appointing herself as the new teacher (*i help to do*, line 46; note the emphasis on "I"). With this move, Ying displays her epistemic primacy (i.e., her being more competent than the others) and, again, claims a position of deontic authority with her peers.

This time, neither Manuel nor Moad question Ying's claim. By receding from the previously reproduced rules, Ying managed to establish her right to control the ongoing activity. In this last part of the sequence children's concern for peer hierarchies emerges with particular evidence. Power and local structures of control seem to be, at least here, the priority. Ying

⁴ The enactment of the role of the teacher is again carried out with verbal and embodied resources. Ying stands next to Moad and leans over his photocopy. Notably, she does not simply offer the solution (as Manuel did few turns before), but asks a question and then evaluates the response, following thereby the IRE structure typical of pedagogical contexts (Mehan 1979).

tried different strategies to achieve her purpose and control her classmates' behavior. In this regard, deontic rule formulations appear to be *just one* of the variegated resources children deploy to obtain a powerful position within the peer group.

In Ex. 4, a child deployed successive deontic rule formulations to obtain compliance from a classmate. The rules were formulated in the negative form and sanctioned a prohibited behavior, which was nevertheless reiterated by the 'transgressor'. Faced with this prolonged resistance, the other child re-used the deontic rule formulation in order to obtain compliance and stop the untoward conduct.

5. Concluding discussion

The present paper investigated the sequential organization of children's deontic rule formulations, both in dyadic and in multiparty peer interactions.

As regards the first research question, the analysis showed that children make use of such declaratives in two different ways, varying in relation to both the interactional sequence and the social action that they accomplished. First, children deploy deontic rule formulations immediately after an untoward conduct, which is constructed as such with reference to a breach in the moral expectations of the group. In this case, these formulations retrospectively sanction a behavior and prospectively indicate an alternative, desirable course of action (Ex. 1, 3, 4). Second, children invoke an institutional rule when a first reproach has been questioned or resisted. In this case, these moves mainly account for the previous action by making relevant an institutional rule that explains and justifies it. By accounting for the prior reproach, these formulations underscore once more its relevance and therefore work also as directives that re-actualize the moral pressure for compliance on the recipient (Ex. 2, 4).

In the corpus, children formulate rules both in the positive and negative form. Negative formulations are usually deployed to reproach a classmate, as they sanction a behavior and demand its cessation ("must not"). Conversely, positive formulations are used both as 'reproaches' and 'accounts': they might sanction a classmate for a missing action or justify a previous move in relation to a positive rule ("must"). As illustrated in the analysis, children might also reproach a classmate with a negative formulation, and then mobilize a positive rule that outlines the normatively expected behavior (see Ex. 3 and 4).

Moreover, there might be a possible link between the content of rule and its interactional deployment. For instance, rule formulations employed as ‘reproaches’ seem to make relevant procedural rules, relative to the appropriate performance of an action and with a restricted domain of validity (e.g. you must glue the photocopy around the borders). Conversely, formulations employed as ‘accounts’ refer to ethical rules, which are relative to broader values and ideologies and can be mobilized in quite different situations (e.g. you must work). Clearly, this possible link should be further investigated, considering the small empirical basis on which it is based. Specifically, future research could focus on how certain characteristics of a resource (i.e. of a rule) constrain and influence its contingent use by participants.

Apart from these two main social actions, children deploy deontic rule formulations to negotiate the local participation framework in multiparty interactions. The analysis showed how children aptly change the personal pronoun of rule formulations, temporarily excluding a child from the ratified participants. Furthermore, these formulations can be successively recycled to obtain compliance from a classmate who reiterates the problematic conduct. Notably, the reiteration of the untoward behavior was just one of the possible responses to deontic rule formulations: recipients often displayed resistance, but at times complied with the stated rule. Specifically, children’s deontic rule formulations were always resisted when they were deployed to reproach a classmate. Conversely, rule formulations that children deployed to account for previous actions obtained at times compliance.

As regards the second research question, the analysis illustrated that deontic rule formulations are relevant for children’s socialization into the array of social expectations in the classroom. Children mainly enforced and reproduced norms they had been socialized to by teachers. In this regard, the analysis underscored the role of children in *sustaining* the institutional normative order. Children’s local deployment of classroom rules is thus relevant from an educational perspective, as these practices have a potential to socialize the peer group to expected ways of behaving in the classroom. This might be especially relevant in the L2 class, where children have little knowledge of the Italian school system (as they have been attending the Italian school for less than a year). The socializing potential of deontic rule formulations also regards the local moral order. By stating norms of appropriate behavior, children negotiated what constitutes acceptable conduct, both in positive terms (what must be done) and negative terms (what must not be done). In relation to this set of deontically-relevant actions and prohibitions, children showcased their morally appropriate conduct and held others as morally accountable for their actions. Specifically, deontic rule formulations were

deployed to blame recipients for an infringement of the local expectations. Recipients, on their part, complied at times with the directive, but they also often resisted the ascription of blame by various means. In and through these local negotiations, children were introduced to a certain moral order and displayed ingenious strategies to negotiate and shape its features. Deontic rule formulations are thus an important resource that children might mobilize in their everyday making of morality. In this respect, the analysis showed that children's rule formulations are relevant to the social organization of the peer group. The study integrates thus previous research on children's deontic reasoning by highlighting how the concrete unfolding of morality can be intertwined with issues of identity and social hierarchy.

As regards the third research question, the analysis highlighted how rule statements are relevant for children's local negotiations of authority and social hierarchy in the peer group. By enforcing social norms in the peer group, children displayed their affiliation to an institutional mandate regarding appropriate behavior in the classroom. However, children's local reproduction of teachers' rules was also *transformative*, in the sense that their motives seemed to go beyond institutional aims and ideologies. If teachers usually formulated norms in pedagogically-oriented terms (e.g. to manage classroom discipline or socialize children to the expectations of the context), children were also reproducing them to address peer concerns and purposes. The study shows that deontic rule formulations were germane to children's negotiations of deontic authority within the peer group. By mobilizing the institution as an authoritative source, children indexed an authoritative stance towards their classmates and claimed the right to determine desirable courses of action. In turn, these authoritative stances were indexical of specific identities and relationships between children. Specifically, formulating a rule of appropriate conduct seemed relevant to the construction of a valued identity as the more competent member of the group. Being a competent member involved both the epistemic order [i.e. which child is (perceived as) more knowledgeable], and the moral order (i.e. which child can claim to be "a good pupil"). In this regard, the analysis integrates previous work on children's authoritative stances in the peer group by focusing on (L2) classroom settings.

Notably, although rule formulations index non-negotiability and have the potential to close the sequence, in most cases they were resisted, that is their implied claims of deontic authority were questioned and resulted in prolonged disputes around local identities and hierarchies. This happened both in dyadic interactions, where children's roles were more definite and stable (i.e. the 'transgressor' and the 'reprimander'), and in multiparty interactions, which

involved complex participation frameworks and shifting roles. The relevance of social hierarchy in the peer group is especially visible in extract 5, where institutional rules were first made relevant by children, but then relegated in favor of other priorities. Arguably, the normative frame of classroom rules provided a benchmark around which children's local identities and authoritative positions were played out and disputed.

The local negotiations of peer hierarchies appear relevant in light of the dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. Although rule formulations carry a socializing potential, a strict normative view of classroom conduct can lead to practices of exclusion among peers. Specifically, institutional rules might be used as resources to sanction (alleged) breaches in the social order and hold the transgressor as individually responsible for what is constructed as a moral failure. This sanctioning is often accomplished in an aggravated manner and forces on the recipient the identity of the non-competent child, or that of the outsider. Furthermore, the analysis shows how children might form local alliances and develop participation frameworks that potentially lead to the exclusion of a targeted child in terms of his/her ability to participate in the interaction at hand. Deontic rule formulations are thus one of the resources that children might deploy to index and construct exclusion in the peer group.

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Appendix

Glossary of transcript symbols, adapted from Jefferson (2004).

- .,?! Punctuation markers are used to indicate the ‘usual’ intonation: a full stop indicates a falling intonation, a question mark a rising intonation, a comma a slightly rising intonation and an exclamation mark an exclamative intonation.
- ↑ The arrow indicates a shift into an especially high pitch.
- :
- Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.
- abc Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.
- ABC Upper case indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.
- °abc° Degree signs bracketing an utterance indicates that the sounds are softer than the surrounding talk.
- < > Left/right carats bracketing an utterance indicate that the bracketed material is slowed down, compared to the surrounding talk.
- ab- A dash indicates a cut-off.
- (()) Doubled parentheses contain transcriber’s descriptions.
- (abc) Parenthesized words are especially dubious.
- (0.4) Number in parentheses indicate elapsed time by tenths of seconds.
- (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a brief interval (less than 2 tenths of a second) within or between utterances.
- [A left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.
- ^ This symbol indicates the point of overlap onset of non-verbal actions.