Invoking Rules in Everyday Family Interactions: A Method for Appealing to Practical Reason

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Abstract

In this article we examine moments in which parents or other caregivers overtly invoke rules during episodes in which they take issue with, intervene against, and try to change a child's ongoing behavior or action(s). Drawing on interactional data from four different languages (English, Finnish, German, Polish) and using Conversation Analytic methods, we first illustrate the variety of ways in which parents may use such overt rule invocations as part of their behavior modification attempts, showing them to be functionally versatile interactional objects. Their interactional flexibility notwithstanding, we find that parents typically invoke rules when, in the course of the intervention episode, they encounter trouble with achieving an acceptable compliant outcome. To get at the distinct import of rule formulations in this context, we then compare them to two sequential alternatives: parental expressions of an experienced negative affective state, and parental threats. While the former emphasize aspects of social solidarity, the latter seek to enforce compliance by foregrounding a power asymmetry between the parent and the child. Rule formulations, by contrast, are designedly impersonal and appear to be directed at what the parents construe as shortcomings in common-sense practical reasoning on the child's part. Reflexively, the child is thereby cast as not having properly applied common-sense 'practical reason' when engaging in what is treated as the problematic behavior or action. Overt rule invocations can, therefore, be understood as indexical appeals to practical reason.

Keywords Rules · Rule formulations · Family interaction · Conversation analysis · Practical reasoning · Parental interventions

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Introduction and Background: Rules in Social Interaction

It is a widely held view that ordinary, mundane social life exhibits the stable and orderly features it does because those living it on a daily basis follow certain rules of behavior. As Liberman has aptly summarized it: "In most societies there is a kind of 'just-so story' that daily affairs are governed by rules and that these rules exist externally to those who 'follow' them" (2013: 83). One common consequence of this view is that rules tend to be understood somewhat mechanistically, as producing a particular behavioral output when fed with a particular input (i.e., participants' adequate recognition of a 'given' situation as calling for the application of the rule), much like algorithms. While, historically, this algorithmic view of rules appears to be a quirky peculiarity resulting from a twentieth-century (re)turn to rationalism (Daston, 2022; Erickson et al., 2015), it seems to be well and thriving in much of the social sciences (e.g., in cross-cultural psychological studies of 'rule-following,' see Gelfand, 2018).

Given the ostensible, typically taken-for-granted, governing role of rules for social behavior, they have been accorded a central place in many social theories, especially those dealing with the Hobbesian problem of social order (Sharrock, 1970).[1] One prominent way of thinking about rules in these terms is that we internalize the rules of our society or culture in a process of socialization, and that these internalized rules then guide our behavior and yield proper, rule-following conduct, which in turn produces stable, orderly social arrangements as an outcome. This line of theorizing is particularly prominent in the Parsonian theory of action (e.g., Parsons, 1937, 1951; Parsons & Bales, 1955; see also Heritage, 1984, Chapter 2), but it supplants many other theories of social behavior and action in traditional sociology and social psychology as well (Wilson, 1970).

Similar conceptualizations of rules as regulating behavior have also dominated much of (Western) philosophical thought, whether in political, moral, or language philosophy.[2] But plainly regulative conceptualizations of rules quickly reach an explanatory limit. A strategy commonly employed to deal with this issue has been to, analytically or theoretically, distinguish between different kinds of rules and to classify them into distinct types (e.g., prescriptive vs. proscriptive). One rather well-known distinction that has been made in linguistic and moral philosophy, for instance, is between rules that regulate

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[1] Or as Liberman puts it: "If a culture adopts a mythology of rule-governed behavior, then theorists would be happy to be the priests" (2013: 83).

[2] Needless to say perhaps, philosophical thinking tends to relevantly inform (social) scientific practice. With respect to the study of language, for example, Chomskyan grammar, with the status it assigns to rules of grammatical structure, while not phrased in such prescriptive terms, can count as a prime example of the manifold ways in which the aforementioned algorithmic view of rules has found its way into various (social) scientific disciplines, by way of their practitioners adopting a certain underlying (in this case, Cartesian) philosophy (Chomsky, 2009; see also Coulter, 2009: 394; see Baker & Hacker, 1984 for a detailed critical discussion).

or describe behavior in certain activities and those that at the same time constitute and define the very activities that they regulate (e.g., J. Rawls, 1955; Searle, 1969). And while such classifications typically allow those who create or advocate them to address specific philosophical problems, they are necessarily incomplete and at the very least oversimplify the empirical reality of things (as J. Rawls, 1955: 29, for example, is prepared to concede).[3] Moreover, they essentially sidestep the more general and fundamental issue of how rules *could* actually be understood to regulate, constrain or otherwise affect behavior in the first place, and how it would be possible to produce and/or recognize conduct that not just (fortuitously) happens to accord with a rule but instantiates actual rule-following. As famously problematized by Wittgenstein (2009 [1953]), rules are inevitably underdetermined and do not specify how they are to be used, especially if stripped from the context(s) that provide(s) for their sense and reference (see also Liberman, 2013, Chapter 3; Kew, 1992). As such, they cannot in and of themselves be used to explain rule-following behavior. Wittgenstein's work has been hugely influential for an alternative view of rules: as tools that are used and applied by agents in a context-sensitive manner. On this view, then, rather than to theorize about rules in the abstract, it is necessary to examine how persons interpret real-world situations as calling or allowing for the application of a particular rule, or, put more simply, how they *use* rules as part of their worldly affairs (Baker & Hacker, 2010: 50ff).

As far as sociological theorizing of human action and interaction is concerned, Wittgenstein's ideas on rules and rule-following have also left their mark in Garfinkel's work (Garfinkel, 2019; A. W. Rawls, 2019).[4] Like Wittgenstein, Garfinkel (1963, 1967, 1978) has argued that the practical doing of some activity does not depend on the application of (sets of) abstract, pre-existing rules, such that the latter cannot account for the observable stable orderliness of the former. Instead, rules are generally applied context-sensitively in (and to) situations that are already meaningful for their participants. Rules, then, are a device that members of a society or culture can use to account for conduct and make it interpretable in certain ways, for example, as having followed a rule or as having departed from a rule (Zimmerman & Wieder, 1978: 654ff.; see also Heritage, 1984, Chapters 5–6). More generally, a major implication of Garfinkel's line of work is that it urges analysts of human (inter)action to study when and how members come to employ or invoke rules on actual,

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[3] See also Bilmes (1988) for a discussion of how such classifications fare with respect to the "rules" described by Conversation Analysts (e.g., turn-taking 'rules,' membership categorization 'rules'). It bears mention that Schegloff later distanced himself from the 'rule' terminology employed in the Sacks et al. (1974) paper, stating that he would prefer to think of the 'rule set' they proposed for linking the turn-constructional and the turn-allocational component of the turn-taking system together in terms of 'practices' rather than 'rules' (Schegloff, 2003, lecture 4).

[4] Sidnell (2003) also provides an excellent and very accessible overview of parallels in Garfinkel's and Wittgenstein's thinking about rules and rule-following.

concrete occasions. From an ethnomethodological point of view, the relationship between rules and actual conduct can only be meaningfully explored by examining "features of the circumstances in which they are deemed relevant and used by members" (Zimmerman, 1970: 225), and specifically how they are rendered "relevant as prescriptions, justifications, descriptions, or accounts of their activities" (Zimmerman, 1970: 223; see also Coulter, 2009: 399; Wieder, 1974).

Despite this programmatic call for work along these lines, actual empirical investigations of how members use rules, how they employ, enforce or otherwise invoke them, as part of their ordinary daily affairs have remained surprisingly scarce. Most ethnomethodological and ethnomethodologically inspired interactional work following this line of inquiry has focused on rule use in institutional settings (e.g., Arminen, 2004; Zimmerman, 1970) or in games (e.g., Askins et al., 1981; Liberman, 2013, Chapter 3; Svensson & Tekin, 2021; Zinken et al., 2021; Kornfeld & Rossi, under review).[5] Both of these are, of course, conspicuous settings for investigating rule use, since they usually involve a set of codified rules or similar kinds of formal plans that are supposed to 'guide' actions, procedures and/or decisions in the respective settings and activities.[6]

Interactional research on how rules are used and invoked in more mundane settings, however, is comparatively rare. This is particularly true with respect to one of the major sites of socialization (Schegloff, 1989): mundane family interactions (but see Grieshaber, 1997 for a Foucauldian analysis). In fact, considerable analytic efforts have been invested into showing that, and how, children are socialized into standards of conduct and the social norms of a society/culture in and through interaction *without* recourse to explicit rules, simply by being increasingly treated as morally accountable agents (e.g., Fasulo et al., 2007; Keel, 2016; Sterponi, 2003, 2009; Vatanen & Haddington, 2021). In many studies of family interactions, overt parental rule invocations are only mentioned in passing (when they appear in specific data excerpts), while analytic attention is typically directed elsewhere. One common observation that has been made is that parents may invoke rules in directive sequences, especially when compliance with the directive is not immediately forthcoming (M. H. Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018: 116f.; Kim & Carlin, 2021). In such environments, rule formulations can serve as justificatory accounts for the parental directive and compete with other practices for enforcing the parental perspective, such as threats, admonishments, accusations, quid-pro-quo negotiations, etc. (M. H. Goodwin

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[5] In addition, there are more ethnographically driven analyses of rule use, but these, too, have regularly focused on rules in games (e.g., DeLand, 2021). A notable exception is Sidnell (2003), who discusses rules, rule use and rule-following with respect to their embeddedness in ordinary activities in an Indo-Guyanese community.

[6] It should be noted in this regard that Garfinkel did not view games as any different from other linguistic or social/cultural events with respect to their constitutive conditions and their need to be practically accomplished (see Garfinkel, 1963, 2019; A. W. Rawls, 2019). As such, studies of the use of rules in games can in principle also be informative about the use of rules in other fields of action. To what extent they actually are remains an empirical matter, though, to be determined and assessed by way of studying the situated use of rules in other real-world settings, including ones that are not underpinned by codified rules. The present article reports on rule use in one such setting.

& Cekaite, 2018: 116f.). Similarly, Aronsson and Cekaite (2011) note that parents may invoke (family) rules—and with them the local social and moral order—as part of parental attempts at making 'activity contracts' with their children (i.e., when negotiating verbal agreements about future compliance with directives aimed at specific target activities, such as cleaning one's room).

The most detailed interactional account of how rules are used in ordinary family life is Wootton's study of explicit rule statements. He identified two distinct types of rule statements (ones that exhibit a conditional structure and simple rule announcements), both of which he observed to commonly "occur in the environment of what can be called *untoward events*" (1986: 152, emphasis in original). Not only do both of these types of rule statements "locate the recipient as at fault" for the occurrence of the untoward event, they also "locate that fault as arising out of inadequate awareness of the precept being articulated" (1986: 157). As such, and by moving away from the particulars of the incident, the rule statements serve as instructive informings for the future of what proper behavior would (or could) look like. However, given the reflexivities that underpin actual rule use in ordinary life (Garfinkel, 1978; Liberman, 2013, Chapter 3), it is unlikely that this is the only way in which rules can (come to) be used in mundane family life (see also Wootton, 19861986: 161).

Our study seeks to build on and complement this earlier work by examining in greater detail how parents use overt rule invocations in mundane family life and by asking what (if anything) potentially unites the various ways in which they (come to) use them. To do this, we zoom in on one specific sequential environment in which parents appear to recurrently mobilize rules as practical devices for accomplishing specific interactional ends. We focus on parental interventions against what is thereby treated, and reflexively constituted, as problematic child behavior. This particular sequential environment combines features of the two environments that have been observed to engender overt parental rule invocations in prior research: Insofar as parents, through their interventions, seek to alter the child's conduct, we are essentially dealing with attempts at behavior modification, which may involve the production of directive or prohibitive actions. Moreover, by being recognizably aimed at getting the child to either stop and abandon, or at least adjust, what s/he is currently doing, such parental interventions orient to the child's action(s) or comportment as untoward, inappropriate, inacceptable or otherwise socially problematic. Finally, as a form of social sanctioning, such parental interventions can be understood to be implicated in the practical doing of 'normative socialization'. So if rules have any role to play in and for it, we would expect to see it there.

We will show that, even in such a narrowly confined sequential environment, overt rule invocations emerge as highly versatile interactional objects that parents can mobilize to fulfill a wide variety of interactional functions. By comparing them to other practices and techniques that parents may employ as part of their behavior modification attempts, we aim to get at the distinctive import of overt parental rule invocations vis-à-vis those other techniques. We will argue that parental rule invocations appear to construe the problem behavior as being rooted in shortcomings in the child's application of common-sense practical reasoning. Before we move into the analysis, however, we will elaborate on the focal sequential environment, our data material and our procedure in greater detail.

Materials and Methods

For this study, we draw on approximately 25 hours of video-recordings of interactions in family households, mostly but not exclusively during mealtimes. The recorded interactions involve up to three adults (one or two parents and occasionally one other care-giver) as well as one to nine children per family, aged anywhere between 3 months and 18 years. The data come from four different languages: English (8 h), Finnish (5,5 h), German (3,25 h) and Polish (7 h).

In this connection, it is important to note that our study was never intended to be comparative by design. Instead, our approach bears resemblance to what has previously been called cross-linguistic 'co-investigations' (Lerner & Takagi, 1999; Robinson & Bolden, 2010), whereby pertinent cases in each language are sequentially analyzed in their own right and independently from one another. This procedure is capable of revealing interesting parallels across languages and allows for the discovery of cross-culturally available, sequential-interactional uses of the targeted practice or action. Studying data from several languages/cultures may also lend further support to the idea that what we are dealing with are instances of a 'human phenomenon' that is somewhat independent of particular language-specific resources or practices for bringing it off (e.g., habitual aspect, impersonal pronouns, zero person-marking, etc.).

Still, we may well wonder about cultural diversity in our phenomenon. Participants in our data are concerned with such matters as the proper bins for disposing different kinds of waste, or proper behavior at the kitchen table. It is easy to imagine that rules concerning such matters will be far from universal. However, the 'contents' of rules are not the object of our study. Instead, we are interested in how participants use talk that recognizably formulates a rule as a method for achieving certain social ends. Research on social interaction has found that while the 'contents' of talk may differ widely across cultures, the organization of talk in social interaction, and the organization of social interaction through talk remain strikingly similar (Dingemanse & Floyd, 2014; Floyd, 2021). It is true that these findings concern generic facets of interactional organization, such as the taking of turns or the initiation of repair of troubles of hearing or understanding. Here, we are concerned with an interactional practice (rule formulation) that is more tightly bound to particular cultural activities, such as socializing children into proper (mealtime) conduct. It may be that such situation-specific practices are more open to cultural variation. Still, extant research on more circumscribed interactional practices (e.g., thanking others for assistance, Zinken et al., 2020) suggests that here, too, cultural diversity is constrained by a shared core of usage that makes the practice meaningful in the first place. Along these lines, we offer the present study as an examination of a cross-cultural (at least: European) home environment for the practice of explicitly invoking a rule.

As stated towards the end of the previous section, both prior research as well as early single case analyses suggested that direct parental/caregiver interventions against problematic child behavior constitute one sequential environment that tends

to recurrently engender overt rule invocations. In a first step, we therefore isolated episodes from our data in which parents or other caregivers intervene against what they thereby demonstrably orient to as problematic child behavior (Kidwell, 2013; Walker, 2013; Hepburn, 2020; Potter & Hepburn, 2020). The import of such parental/caregiver interventions is twofold: On the one hand, they involve an adult interfering with and demonstrably seeking to change (the trajectory of) a child's currently ongoing behavior. Irrespective of whether any particular intervention is aimed at a permanent abandonment or merely an adjustment of the targeted child behavior, they are generally aimed at achieving an immediate cessation of whatever in the child's *current* doings has been identified and is targeted as 'untoward'. Being, as they are, attempts at behavior modification, parental/caregiver interventions, therefore, have a clear deontic dimension (e.g., Stevanovic, 2018; Stevanovic & Svennevig, 2015; Craven & Potter, 2010; M. H. Goodwin & Cekaite, 2018). At the same time, such interventions have a normative and potentially moral import, in that parents' and caregivers' attempts at changing the child's behavior reflexively cast the targeted conduct as problematic, undesirable, bad, wrong or in some way deficient and untoward, i.e., as *mis*conduct or problem behavior (compare Austin, 1957: 2; see also Emerson & Messinger, 1977; Schegloff, 2005; Potter & Hepburn, 2020).[7]

In a second step, we then focused on those interventions in which the parent or caregiver could be understood to overtly invoke (state or otherwise expressly formulate) a rule as part of the larger behavior modification attempt. Given the pitfalls associated with trying to develop any watertight definition of what counts as a 'rule' by reference to formal criteria, we approached this rather generously, allowing for any turn with which its speaker could be understood to articulate a general precept for (social) behavior that extends beyond the here-and-now situation to count as an overt rule invocation, regardless of how the speaker accomplished this abstraction away from the thick particulars of the locally targeted infraction linguistically on any given occasion.[8]

A first, very basic observation to be made about such overt rule invocations in parental interventions (and in ordinary family interactions more generally) is that they are not very common. Indeed, our data lends cross-linguistic support

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[7] This feature can furthermore be connected to Garfinkel's (1967) remarks about the competences involved in being a bona-fide member of a collectivity. As he points out in a note:

> I use the term 'competence' to mean the claim that a collectivity member is entitled to exercise that he is capable of managing his everyday affairs without interference. That members can take such claims for granted I refer to by speaking of a person as a 'bona-fide' collectivity member. (Garfinkel, 1967: 57, fn. 8).

By interfering with another's ongoing action, the interventions considered here thus call into question, and sometimes challenge (if only momentarily), the other's competence and therewith their status as a bona-fide member of the relevant collectivity (e.g., the family).

[8] As Liberman points out, "[i]t is inherent in any notion of 'rules' that they apply without variance across persons" (2013: 87). Further, their atemporal character implies "consistency in their application" (Liberman, 2013: 87). With respect to overt rule *invocations*, both of these characteristics suggest that, in formulating the relevant rule, speakers need to accomplish some level of abstraction from the here-and-now particulars of the situation to/in which the rule is asserted and/or enforced.

to Wootton's observation that sequences "where rules are explicitly invoked […] are unusual in that they occur very infrequently" (1986: 151). The roughly 25 hours of video-taped material at our disposal yielded only a handful of relevant cases for each language, suggesting that the interactional circumstances in which parents overtly appeal to rules in the course of their 'interventions' are rather special. These episodes were then analyzed on a case-by-case basis, using Conversation Analytic methods (e.g., Clift, 2016; Schegloff, 1996; Sidnell, 2013). Special emphasis was placed on the role of the rule-invoking turn in the larger sequential trajectory of each parental intervention episode and cases were then grouped based on (functional) similarities and differences, i.e., in terms of how these turns were deployed as part of these episodes across languages. Transcriptions follow the conventions developed by Jefferson (2004), with interlinear glosses and free translations added for non-English language data. A mixture of still frames and multimodal transcript lines, largely following Mondada (20192019), is used to represent relevant embodied behavior.[9]

Instructing, Admonishing, Pursuing Compliance: The Versatility of Overt Rule Invocations in Parental Interventions

A small subset of the overt rule invocations in our data exhibit the features previously described by Wootton: They emerge as part of parental interventions in which children are treated as previously unaware, or at least inadequately aware, of the precepts being articulated and therefore come off as instruction-like informings (1986: 155ff.). In those cases, the rule invocations have a distinct pedagogical quality in that they not only inform the targeted child(ren) of the possible untowardness of their conduct, but, at least as far as practical actions and activities are concerned, typically also go along with, or segue into, demonstrations of the 'proper way of doing things' (compare Råman, 20192019). The following Finnish example is a case in point. Here, 3-year-old Sasu comes into the kitchen from the living room, holding a paper leaflet in one hand (referred to with the demonstrative pronoun *tää* 'this' in lines 01 and 03) and a banana in the other. His younger sister Pihla is also in the room, carrying a banana as well, as she watches the following scene unfold.

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[9] Embodied behavior is represented in gray font underneath the transcript line for talk. Asterisks (*), at-signs (@), or plusses (+) on both lines mark the beginning point of the described embodied behavior. Figures (still frames) are marked on a separate line, underneath the lines for talk and embodiment, with hash signs (#) denoting the moment during the verbal turn at which the image has been taken. For detailed explanations of the transcription conventions for embodiment developed by Mondada, see https://www.lorenzamondada.net/multimodal-transcription.

Extract (1): 'Food waste' (7 kids, Kitchen GoPro, GP060054_07:40)

```
01   SAS:   tää o jikki äiti.
             this is broken mum.

02   MOM:   mikä.*#
             what.
                  *turns around to look at SAS
     fig          #1

03   SAS:   tää?
             this

04   MOM:   jaa; no anna tähä se.*
             oh, give it here then.
                            *walks twd SAS, arm extended

05   SAS:   jots-# pitää jaittaa jotskiks#ee [(tä*hä).
             wast-  must be put into the wastebin (here)
                                         *puts the paper in the bin
     fig          #2                    #3

06   MOM:                            [jaa.
                                      yeah okay
```



```
07   SAS:   te o jik-
             it is bro-

08   MOM:   elä       paa# *siihe-
             NEG.IMP.2SG put  DEM3.ILL
             don't put ((it)) there-
                            *bends down to take the paper
     fig                   #4

09          ei      *saa        siihen  ruokaroskikseen * laittaa,
             NEG.3SG be.allowed DEM3.ILL food.waste.bin.ILL put.INF
             ((this)) must not be put in the food waste bin
                     *takes the paper in her hand       *looks at the paper

10          (5.5) ((Someone is talking in the living room.
                   MOM folds the paper in her hand.))

11   MOM:   pannaan tänne,   toiseen  ros#kiks*een.
             put.PASS DEM1.LOC other.ILL waste.bin.ILL
             let's put ((it)) here in the other bin.
                                        *puts the paper in the bin
     fig                          #5

12 ->       .nff ruokaroskikseen    pannaan vaan
                  food.waste.bin.ILL put.PASS only
             .nff only banana peels and such things

13 ->       banaaninku#oria ja sem*mosia.
             banana.skin.PL.PAR and DEM3.ADJ.PL.PAR
             are to be put in the food waste bin
                            *turns and starts to walk away
     fig          #6
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14   SAS:   j*o↑o:,
             yes
                *starts to run around the open drawer twd PIH

15          (1.2) ((Sasu reaches Pihla's position))

16   PIH:   ↑(j)uu:,
             yes

17          ((The kids start to peel their bananas and ultimately
              put the skin in the food waste bin.))
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As Sasu enters the kitchen, he produces a troubles announcement *tää o jikki äiti* ('this is broken mum,' line 01). His mother (Mom) then moves into recipiency and aligns as a troubles recipient, by turning around, showing her availability, and producing the

category-specific repair initiator *mikä* ('what,' line 02, Fig. #1) (Haakana et al., 2016). Sasu then shows her the leaflet, while repeating the deictic demonstrative *tää* ('this,' line 03) as a repair solution (Schegloff et al., 1977). This occasions an offer of assistance from Mom, who walks over with her arm extended (line 04, Fig. #2; see also Kendrick & Drew, 2016). As she does so, Sasu declines her offer of assistance by producing a competence display: he formulates the necessary action as a way of demonstrating that he knows what to do, which Mom acknowledges, and so Sasu moves over and throws the leaflet into the trash (lines 05–06, Fig. #3). As he does this, Mom launches an intervention. She produces a prohibitive *(elä paa siihe*, 'don't put ((it)) there,' line 08) and undoes Sasu's action by bending forward to take the leaflet back out from the trash (Fig. #4). She then produces an impersonal prohibitive (*ei saa siihen ruokaroskikseen laittaa*, '((this)) must not be put in the food waste bin,' line 09), which serves to inform Sasu about his 'wrongdoing' and treats him as unaware of his mistake. The impersonal construction Mom uses here works to avoid formulating Sasu as the responsible actor/agent of the observed "unhappy incident" (Pomerantz, 1978). Likewise, the remedial or 'corrective' action she proposes after a bit of silence (lines 10–11), by being morpho-syntactically formatted in the passive, circumvents the issue of formulating a particular agent. While notably impersonal, all of Mom's talk from lines 08–11, together with her embodied actions, is (still) hearable as referring to the here-and-now situation, and to the specific leaflet Sasu has just thrown away in particular. Moreover, by combining this with a demonstration of which bin to actually throw the damaged leaflet into (Fig. #5), Mom works to transform this intervention episode into an instruction sequence (compare Levin et al., 2017). And it is only at this point that she overtly invokes a general rule *ruokaroskikseen pannaan vaan banaaninkuoria ja semmosia* ('only banana peels and such things are to be put in the food waste bin,' lines 12–13, Fig. #6), which, in this sequential context, serves as an instructive informing. The instructive character of this overt rule invocation is exhibited in the way in which Mom elects to exemplify the larger category of items that would properly go into the bin Sasu 'mistakenly' selected as the target for the disposable leaflet, viz. organic materials and food waste. Her choice to specifically mention banana peels as a representative exemplar[10] of this category is not as arbitrary as it may initially seem if it is recalled that Sasu and his sister are both holding bananas in their hands, to be eaten shortly. Mom's instructive rule formulation can, therefore, be understood to be carefully crafted with an eye to an impending, situated application of the precept it articulates.[11] And indeed both children not only acknowledge its receipt and claim to have understood it (lines 14 & 16), they also follow the instruction (and thereby act in accordance with the rule) shortly thereafter (line 17).

It is perhaps not surprising to find that overt rule invocations can be used for doing instructive work in everyday family life, especially in interactions with very young children, who are regularly treated as 'novices' in what emerge as locally occasioned pedagogical exchanges (see also Schegloff, 1989). It is precisely because of their pedagogical

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[10] Note the *ja semmosia* 'and such things' in line 13 in this respect.

[11] We note that this particular case squares extremely well with some of Wittgenstein's (2009 [1953]) remarks on rule-following. Wittgenstein emphasized the process of practical entrainment into the activity 'guided' by a particular rule, without which—so he argued—a rule cannot be meaningfully applied. Here, the rule is formulated to enable such practical entrainment as part of the circumstances in which it is produced.

character that such rule invocations cannot be clearly distinguished from generalized instructions and similar deontic actions that primarily concern the transmission of practical (e.g., procedural) knowledge (see again Wittgenstein, 2009 [1953]).[12]

Drawing on rule formulations to bring off 'instructive informings' is far from the only way in which rules come to be asserted among family members, however. Another common use is illustrated in the following English example, in which 2-year-old Deedee and her mother have just been washing their hands together. Deedee is standing on a stool in front of the sink.

Extract (2): 'Knives' (BB-6-1, 01:05-01:20)

```
01    MOM:    And I'll get a towel for you.

02            (0.6) ((As MOM goes away from the sink, DEE reaches for something in
                    the dish dryer, presumably a ladle or an ice cream scoop))

03    DEE:    Mummy,

04            (1.5) ((MOM briefly looks at DEE, but moves on. DEE takes an
                    object from the dish dryer and moves it toward the tap))

05    DEE:    Do dis.

06            (0.5) ((DEE begins to lean over into the sink, reaching for
                    the tap))

07    DEE:    Ah- h°#
      fig          #7
```



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08            (0.9) ((DAD briefly moves the chair on
                    which DEE is standing to close a
                    cupboard door. He then brings his
                    gaze up and monitors DEE's doings))

09    DAD:    @Hey=hey=hey=hey=hey=hey_=@
              @-reaching over DEE's back@

10            @=No:# no no no no=no=no (my dear).
              @pulling DEE back & taking object away from her->
      fig          #8
```



```
11            (0.7) # (0.3)
      fig          #9
```


((DAD is taking a knife from the dish dryer with his left hand, as he begins to move the object he just took away from DEE toward the dish dryer with his right hand; MOM sees this as she returns with a towel [black arrow]))

```
12    DEE:    Mu:m(h)m@y:(h):y[(h):y] (.) [°hi::h]
      dad     --1---->@--begins to move and carries the knife away-->>
                 1-puts object into dish dryer

13    DAD:                     [°No:°]

14 -> MOM:                     [!Kni:]ves! [You do]n't play with knives.=

15 ->         =You know you don't play with kni:ves,

16            (3.2) ((MOM begins to dry DEE's hands.))
```

As Deedee leans over into the sink, presumably so as to turn on the tap to wash the object she just took a hold of (see Fig. #7), her father (Dad), possibly anticipating some sort of impending danger (e.g., Deedee falling from the stool), intervenes both verbally and physically. He launches a turn consisting of two multiple sayings (of *hey* and *no*, respectively, lines 09–10), designed to get Deedee to stop what she is currently doing (Stivers, 2004). As he articulates this turn, he is, however, already reaching over Deedee's back, pulling her back and taking the object away from her to put it back into the dish dryer (lines 09–11, Fig. #8). In the process of returning the object, he seizes the opportunity to also pick up a knife from the dish dryer with his left hand—as it turns out, in order to remove it further away from Deedee. Now as Deedee's mother (Mom) returns, the scene therefore presents itself to her as if Deedee had been playing with a knife and as if this was the source of Dad's intervention (i.e., as if he had taken the knife away from Deedee; see Fig. #9). Indeed, this understanding is what Mom publicly registers with her exclamative *!Kni:ves!* (line 14) and which she subsequently addresses with two utterances that are hearable as invoking a rule. Both of them are designed to convey a sense of generality, such that their prohibitive character is detached from, and extends well beyond, the here-and-now situation. Note in particular the use of the simple present tense and the plural form *knives* (as compared to something like "You shouldn't be playing with the knife"; see also Edwards, 1994).[13]

Like other rule invocations (see again Wootton, 1986), these utterances propose a specific version of the preceding event and of Deedee's role in it, namely that she was *playing* with a knife (as opposed to simply *holding*, *touching*, or *using* it). Formulating Deedee's prior action as *playing* is inference-rich in a number of ways. Most importantly, it can be understood to relevantly invoke the category 'child' (Sacks, 1972) and, with it, perhaps an attendant lack of care in handling a sharp and potentially harmful object like a knife. In any case, the explicit action categorization of Deedee's doings as *playing* is a way of invoking and foregrounding its accountability (Enfield & Sidnell, 2017; Sidnell, 2017). It casts Deedee as having selected and used an object that is potentially harmful, and thus inappropriate for play, as a toy, with apparent disregard for the possible self-endangering consequences of such an action. Deedee's conduct is therefore construed, and framed, as departing from common sense, as resulting from a shortcoming in properly applying mundane practical reason on Deedee's part. Moreover, and quite unlike the rule statement in the previous Finnish example, this one is incrementally built to incorporate an explicit knowledge attribution concerning the precept it articulates (*you know you don't play with kni:ves*, line 15).[14] It therefore attends to Deedee's action[15] as a 'knowable wrongdoing,' i.e., as a morally accountable transgression. Far from serving as an instruction-like informing, then, this rule statement does admonishing work (Potter & Hepburn, 2020). Another noteworthy sequential feature of Mom's rule invocation is that it is produced in response to Deedee's whining summons of her (line 12). By formulating what Mom takes to have been the circumstances

---

[13] The personal pronoun *you* in these two utterances is ambivalent in this regard. In contrast to the *you* in Mom's *you know*-frame (line 15), which specifically refers to Deedee, the *you*s in *you don't play with knives* may also be heard generically.

[14] The stress on the predicate of *you know* makes this hearable as a complement-taking matrix clause with full, literal semantics (see Thompson, 2002), rather than a semantically bleached discourse-marking *you know* (on which, see, e.g., Schiffrin, 1987; Clayman & Raymond, 2021a, 2021b).

[15] Or rather what it was perceived to be—recall that Mom operates with an understanding of the prior events based on how the scene presented itself to her upon her return. While this understanding is not 'factually accurate' (in that Deedee never actually touched a/the knife), it is allowed to stand (also by Dad).

that have given rise to Dad's prior parental intervention, it attends to Deedee's whining summons as a form of protest against this interference (Butler & Edwards, 2018) and also serves to defend, warrant, and buttress Dad's action in the face of such protest.

Indeed, it appears that, across the languages in our sample, and in line with earlier casual observations in the extant literature, overt rule invocations tend to be produced as part of parental interventions when achieving compliance is somehow problematic and/or it is not (immediately) forthcoming, with protest or defiance from the party whose action is being interfered with being common forms of 'trouble with achieving compliance'. The following Finnish case shall serve as an illustration. Viola (3 years) is currently drinking milk with a straw, while her mother (Mom) is feeding Viola's brother, Aku, with porridge. At line 02, Viola starts to blow bubbles in her drink through the straw.

Extract (3): 'Bubbles' (9 kids, Kitchen-jvc_1:42:25)

```
01    MOM:   no  nii, sit[te i-]*
             PRT PRT  then
             okay, then e-

02    VIO:             [krl k]*rl krl[  krl  krl  krl ] ((blows in straw))
      mom                      *puts spoon into AKU's mouth

03    MOM:                        [e#i    sil*lai.]
                                  NEG.3SG DEM3.ADV
                                  not like that
                                          *puts spoon on AKU's plate
      fig                               #10
```



```
04    VIO:   .H#H* krl [krl  krl  krl  krl krl            ]
      mom         *grabs hold of VIO's glass
      fig       #11

05    MOM:             [kuulikko.        kato    tullee   ↑y]li;#
                       hear.2SG.PST.Q-CLI look.IMP come.3SG over
                       did you hear? Look (it) will flow over!
      fig                                                      #12

06           (0.3)

07    MOM:   ↑nyt ↑juot#      ↑kaikki siel[tä.*]
             now  drink.2SG  all    DEM3.LOC
             now you('ll) drink it all.
                                        *releases hold of VIO's glass
      fig              #13

08    VIO:                           [(nni] nni nni nni nni) ((babbles,
                                                                shakes head))

09 -> MOM:   nii. ei    saa       sillai  puhaltaa.
             PRT  NEG.3SG be.allowed DEM3.ADV blow.INF
             yes, it's not allowed to blow like that.

10           Aku    juo         kaikki. ((MOM gets up))
             1nameM drink.IMP.2SG all
             Aku, drink everything.

11           (2.0)
```

As can be seen, Mom is quick to launch an intervening move, consisting of the simple prohibitive *ei sillai* ('not like that,' line 03, Fig. #10), which seeks to stop Viola from blowing bubbles in her drink. This prohibitive action does not merely display Mom's orientation to the bubble-blowing as untoward behavior (Walker, 2013). The minimal and highly indexical design with which it is issued, specifically the fact that the problem behavior—and with it the action to be abandoned—is not formulated, also treats Viola as a recipient who is capable of figuring out herself what Mom might be targeting and orienting to as problem behavior. Just as Viola prepares another blow into her straw by taking a big inbreath at the beginning of line 04, thereby projectably defying her mother's prohibitive, Mom begins to reach over and grabs a hold of Viola's glass (see Fig. #11). Moreover, as Viola does indeed begin to blow bubbles again, Mom intensifies her attempts at inhibiting this (mis)behavior (Hepburn, 2020). Verbally, she produces what Potter and Hepburn (2020) have called a "shaming interrogative" *kuulikko* ('did you hear?'), which serves to foreground the child's moral accountability for defying her mother's prior prohibitive, followed by an attention-directing *kato* ('look') (Hakulinen & Seppänen, 1992; Siitonen et al., 2021) and a warning that the milk will flow over if she continues to blow (line 05), which construes Viola as not being fully aware of the possible consequences of her actions. Meanwhile, Mom supports her intervention in an embodied way by moving the glass further away from Viola, preventing her physically from blowing further (see Fig. #12–#13). Finally, she follows up on this with a turn that seeks to restore "order at the table" by redirecting Viola to resume her drinking of the milk (line 07, note the *nyt* 'now'-preface). Again, Viola refuses to comply as embodied in her lateral head shake and a burst of babbling noises (line 08). Given that Viola can actually speak, these babbling noises might very well represent a form of 'mocking,' designed to signal to Mom that she is 'nagging a bit too much'. But even if they do not, Viola has visibly displayed her disinclination to comply with her mother's directive in line 07. And it is in this environment of continued resistance that Mom appeals to a rule with the impersonal prohibitive *ei saa sillai puhaltaa* ('it's not allowed to blow like that,' line 09) to insist that Viola stop the problem behavior.[16]

Again, it can be noted that, at least by the time the rule-like prohibition is produced, the problem behavior is treated as a 'knowable' transgression (given the prior attempts at stopping it). The rule invocation itself is deployed as a way of dealing with continued resistance (both defiance and refusal) and to pursue compliance with an earlier 'simple' prohibitive (line 03). In its sequential context, following an explication of the possible negative consequences of Viola's doings in the form of a warning, Mom's rule invocation appeals to Viola's practical reason that complying

---

[16] Note also the turn-initial *nii* 'yes,' in this respect, which serves to reassert the speaker's prior turn and resume its activity (i.e., the main line of action) after a non-aligning turn from the co-participant, here: Viola (see Sorjonen, 2001: 195ff., 267ff.). At the same time, the *nii*, being anaphoric by nature, connects the subsequent rule invocation to the larger directive sequence. We gratefully acknowledge Marja-Leena Sorjonen's valuable feedback on our analysis of this particular case.

and stopping the bubble blowing is commonsensically the better way to proceed (for, as a matter of common-sense experience, continuing it is liable to produce adverse outcomes). Moreover, the rule invoking turn presents the prohibition as timeless, transcendent, impersonal and detached from Viola's particular instantiation of the problem behavior (i.e., it is generically tied to the situation: 'when drinking with a straw, one must not blow'). This enables Mom to tacitly disclaim being personally invested in the prohibition's execution. As such it is perhaps also less "arguable with," and we can note that no such arguing, nor any other form of resistance for that matter, follows from Viola (lines 10–11). Indeed, in our data, overt rule invocations tend to be deployed rather late sequentially—if not as a practice of last resort (but see below on threats as a sequential alternative to overt rule invocations that tends to be placed even later sequentially). This does, of course, not mean that they would guarantee compliance as an interactional outcome, but participants may be seen to reserve them for those 'special' occasions where compliance is not (immediately) forthcoming.

Beyond Overcoming Resistance: Using Overt Rule Invocations to Manage Other Problems in Achieving Compliance

Although direct non-compliance or defiance of a parental directive/prohibitive constitutes a recurrent environment for the overt invocation of rules in our data, there are other kinds of trouble with achieving compliance that may prompt their use. At times, these may be quite complex and subtle, as is illustrated by the following case from the English data, where a general rule is invoked in a context in which it is not entirely transparent whether problem behavior (or more of it) is on its way or not, i.e., in an environment of local ambiguity or indeterminateness of the child's action and its import for the trajectory of the ongoing sequence (compare Stivers et al., 2022). The fragment begins as Jake (2 years) announces an action with what is very likely a babble-y version of "do that in there" (line 01).

Extract (4): 'Food goes on the plate' (BB-4-2, 04:21-4:45)
((Jake has just lifted his cup and summoned his father, who has answered with a go-ahead "What."))

```
01    JAK:    Doo d+ a : h+d=in   de:(t);+          ┌─────────┐
                  +points+puts down cup-+          │ #14     │
                                                    
02            +  (0.2)  +
      jak    +lifts cup+

03    DAD:   +No it's got-=
      jak    +places food in cup holder-->

04           =#No the food does+n't go in the:re,
      jak                    -->+lets go of food->
      fig      #14

05    MOM:    °No.°                                 ┌─────────┐
                                                    │ #15     │
06    DAD:   +((sni@ff))        No+@::,+            
                    @lat headshake-@
      jak    +touches food again----->
      jak-g                 +....+

07           +@   (0.7) #  +(0.2)+@
      jak-g  +looks at DAD-+,,,,,+
      dad      @lat headshake------@
      fig             #15

08 -> DAD:   Food goes on +the #plate.
      jak                 +puts down cup in holder
      fig                 #16

09           +No:      @Ja+ke,=                     ┌─────────┐
                    @puts down cutlery->            │ #16     │
      jak    +glance at DAD+lifts cup               ⌐…plate⌐

10           =That's n@aughty,
                    -->@reaches over-->

11           (.)

12    DAD:   ((sniff))                              ┌─────────┐
                                                    │ #17     │
13           (0.2)                                  

14    DAD:   @Come #on,@
             @points---@
      fig          #17

15           @Take it out,>@
             @retracts arm-@

16           (0.3) +   (0.7)  + (.) @   (0.2) +   (0.7)    +
      jak           +LH to food-+glance at MAR--+picks up food-+
      dad                             @incipient nod

17    DAD:   That's better;=

18           =Good boy.
```

As Jake begins to put food into the cup holder of his high seat and lets go of it, his father (Dad) intervenes with a prohibitive (lines 03–04, Fig. #14), which Jake's mother supports (line 05). Just as Dad produces another *No::* (line 06), accompanied by a lateral headshake, Jake touches the food he just placed into his cup holder again. At this point in the sequence, the situation could develop either way: Jake's touching could be viewed (by Dad) as a move towards incipient compliance (Kent, 2012), if he were to take the food out of the cup holder again. Alternatively, it could be understood (again, by Dad) as a re-initiation of the problem behavior and thus an act of incipient defiance. And as can be seen in Fig. #15, Dad is monitoring this development closely (prior to and) during line 07, while also producing a lateral head shake when Jake locks eyes with him. It is at this point that Dad follows up

on his prior prohibitive turns with the rule formulation *food goes on the plate* (line 08; see again Edwards, 1994), in an attempt to encourage compliance with them. However, as it happens, Jake puts down his cup into the cup holder shortly before Dad finishes his turn (Fig. #16). Jake thereby squishes his food and essentially defies his father's prohibitions. This then leads to further admonishing actions, namely another addressed prohibitive *No: Jake* (line 09) and an admonishing assessment *that's naughty* (line 10), which could either refer to this kind of conduct more generally, or specifically to Jake's here-and-now non-compliance. As Dad produces the address term, Jake quickly moves into incipient compliance by lifting his cup again, thereby demonstrating his understanding of his father's disapproval of his actions and pre-empting Dad's subsequent physical intervention of reaching over to rescue the situation (see line 10). Dad then transforms this move into a 'mere pointing' (Lerner & Raymond, 2017) and accompanies it with attempts at cajoling Jake into 'full compliance' (lines 14–15, Fig. #17), leaving it to Jake himself to remedy the problem behavior (Hepburn, 2020). In the end, Jake complies (line 16), which earns him praise from his father (lines 17–18).

The point to be taken away from this example is that overt rule invocations are not merely apt devices for responding to and dealing with actual non-compliance or defiance *ex post facto*. Their generality and deontic force also allows them to be used in environments in which the further development of the ongoing sequence is not yet clear or is locally indeterminate. They then work to persuade or encourage the recipient to act in accordance with the precepts they articulate, rather than to overcome actual resistance.

In fact, non-compliance or resistance (whether actual or possible) need not be in-play at all when parents decide to invoke rules. Consider the following case from the Polish data. Here, Mom is in the middle of telling her husband something when their teenaged daughter Marysia initiates what will be treated as problem behavior. She uses her fingers to take food from the casserole in front of her. Although Mom monitors this for quite a while (about one second) during her production of line 5 (see Fig. #18), she ultimately self-interrupts and initiates an intervention by using an address term in the vocative case to scold Marysia (line 06).

Extract (5): 'Grabbed is the grabber's' (PP3-1_922252)

```
01    MOM:    =dzisiaj cały dzień;=słuchaj-=(bo)od samego rana;=słuchaj-=
              today   all  day   listen.IMP from same  morning listen.2SG
              all day today, listen, from the very morning, listen

02             =ja tylko wstałam,
              I  only  get.up.PST.F.1SG
              I had only (just) got up

03    HEN:    mhm;

04             (0.2)

05    MOM:    to ten.=to::: #y::::: no było tak t-=
              then this then/that PTCL was so (w-)
              then, (you know), (it) was so h-
         fig               #18

06             =Marysiu:-
              NAME.VOC
              Marysia!

07    MAR:    Prze#praszam,
              Excuse.1SG
              Sorry
         fig       #19

08             (0.2)

09    MOM:    No ale to teraz [przepraszam;=(już hy)]
              PTCL but that now excuse.1SG (already)
              Now "sorry", come on

10    MAR:                    [hehehehehehehe    ].h

11 -> MOM:    [Towar macany nal#e[ży do macanta;=tak?=[˚n:o.˚#
               That gr- grabbed.PTCP belong.3S to grabber.GEN yes PTCL
               What was grabbed is the grabber's, right, ok
         fig                  #20                      #21

12    MAR:    [hyhy              [hyhy

13    ZOS:                                             [t(h)y

14             (1.7) ((shared laughter))

15    MOM:    No.
              PTCL

16             (0.2)
```


Unlike the children in the previous cases, Marysia is quick to respond to the parental intervention. She apologizes and, in an attempt to rectify the problem behavior, quickly shakes the piece she took back into the casserole (line 07, Fig. #19). As it turns out, however, this remedial action is similarly problematic for Mom. This is rendered visible by her response, in which she admonishes the remedial action (line 09) and does so in a way that treats Marysia as knowing very well what the problem is with it (see also Marysia's early laughter in line 10 which can be understood to align with this tacit epistemic attribution). Mom's response also

reveals that her intervention was aiming for a display of contrition from Marysia, but not necessarily a concurrent 'reversal' of her problematic action. She then follows up on her admonishment of Marysia's remedial action by overtly invoking a rule which is similar to the touch-move rule in chess and other board games, and may accordingly be glossed as a 'touch-keep' or 'touch-eat' rule: *towar macany należy do maCANta* ('what was grabbed belongs to the grabber,' line 11). The fact that Marysia already starts to retrieve the piece she threw back into the casserole early on during the production of Mom's turn in line 11 (see Fig. #20–#21) suggests that this overt rule invocation cannot be understood as dealing with a *lack* of compliance. Quite to the contrary, and notably, it is dealing with Marysia's *way of complying* with Mom's initial intervention in line 06 (i.e., her shaking the piece back into the casserole). The issue here is thus not whether or not compliance is forthcoming, but resides in the specific manner in which the recipient has chosen to comply, which is itself treated as inadequate and sanctionable, as not abiding by common-sense standards of conduct in such situations. The rule is thus invoked in a sequential environment in which there is trouble associated with *achieving* compliance with the parental intervention, but in the sense of arriving at an *acceptable compliant outcome*.

Analytically, this mandates a broader characterization of the use of overt rule invocations in the parental intervention episodes that are of primary interest here. Rather than saying that rule statements have special prominence in response to non-complying or resisting actions (see Kim & Carlin, 2021), we would instead want to argue that they tend to be deployed when there is *trouble* associated with *achieving* compliance (with an acceptable compliant outcome), regardless of whether it was preceded by non-compliance or resistance. This "higher order generalization" (see Schegloff, 1968) has the benefit that it can also capture cases like the above in which non-compliance or resistance is at best one of several possible sequential scenarios (as in Extract (4)) or not implicated at all (as in Extract (5)).

The preceding observations on when and how participants explicitly invoke rules in the parental intervention episodes we considered throw into sharp relief the functional versatility of overt rule invocations as interactional objects and as elements of social practice (see also Baker & Hacker, 2010: 46ff.). This functional versatility rests, to a considerable extent, on the dual orientations that can be taken up toward 'rules' whenever they are invoked: On the one hand, they may be oriented to (i.e., treated, used, and understood) in terms of their *prescriptive* import, i.e., in terms of "what is/ought to be done" or "how one is/ought to behave". On the other hand, they may be oriented to in terms of their *proscriptive* import, i.e., in terms of "what should not be done" or "how one ought not to behave". As far as our parental interventions are concerned, these differential orientations toward 'rules' appear to interlock in interesting ways with the different uses we can observe in our data, which differentially foreground distinct dimensions in the interactional management of social action. Orientations to the prescriptive import of 'rules' tend to go together with overt rule invocations that are prospectively oriented and appear to foreground the deontic dimension of action more strongly. This is evident in cases like Extracts (1) ('Food waste') and (4) ('Food goes on the plate') above, where a 'rule,' and the precept it articulates, is mobilized to generate 'proper behavior' in the immediate or (more) distant future, i.e., by way of drawing on a 'rule' as a pedagogical or

persuasive device. Orientations to the proscriptive import of 'rules,' on the other hand, tend to go together with rule invocations that are predominantly retrospective in character and appear to emphasize the moral dimension of social action more strongly.[17] This is particularly clear in cases like Extract (2) ('Knives'), where a rule is asserted as part of an admonishment for an ostensible prior transgression and with reference to the known-in-common character of the proscription it articulates. But it is also visible, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent, in cases like Extract (3) ('Bubbles'), where a proscription is articulated to deal with a recalcitrant child and her continued resistance to an earlier injunction. In this connection, it is important to emphasize, however, that we do not wish to propose these as binary and mutually exclusive distinctions, or as particularly tight associations. Overt rule invocations generally have the potential to be attended to in both ways, and so participant orientations to them on particular occasions can transcend the (analytic) dualities we have invoked in this paragraph in multifaceted ways.

Sequential Alternatives for Overt Rule Invocations

So far, our analysis has focused on the use of overt rule invocations in episodes of parental interventions against problem behavior. We have seen that 'rules' are commonly asserted when there is (more or less persistent) trouble associated with the achievement of acceptable compliant behavior on the part of the sanctioned child(ren). To get a clearer sense of the distinct import of overt rule invocations in this context, as compared to other possible ways of handling such situations, we will now look at some actual sequential alternatives in comparable sequential environments. We will argue that overt rule invocations are distinct from these other methods in that they construe the problem behavior as having its source in, or being the outcome of, the child's insufficient application of common-sense practical reason (i.e., of 'what everybody knows about how to conduct themselves in the situations they find themselves in or when taking part in the activities they are engaged in'). The sequential alternatives we consider here, by contrast, emphasize aspects of the social relationship between the participants more strongly, especially as they pertain to the problematic behavior.

Consider first the following case from the Finnish data in which Julius (4 years) has just risen from the kitchen table to take a bucket with pencils from a side table. He empties it out on the floor and puts the bucket on his head, while his father (Dad) and Julius's two younger siblings are sitting at the table, having their evening meal. At line 01, Dad begins to take issue with Julius's conduct by inquiring him about his actions. Dad's question treats Julius's actions as incomprehensible and holds him accountable for them (Sterponi, 2003).

---

[17] These empirical observations square with Rawls's theoretical discussion of the legislator's and the judge's differential orientations toward "punishment" (1955: 6), especially with regard to the prospectivity vs. retrospectivity of their perspectives in relation to the system of rules that makes up the institution of the "criminal law".

Extract (6): 'It irritates me' (3 kids and dad, Kitchen GoPro, GP020196_07:00)

```
01    DAD:    hei mitä Julius sää* oikein teet nytte.=
              hey what Julius are you exactly/actually doing now.
      jul                    *begins walking twd table-->>

02    JUL:    =kaadoin.
               I tipped (over).

03            (1.5)

04    DAD:    kerrääppä           tak*asin?
              collect.2SG.IMP.CLI back
              collect (them) back.
      jul                    -->>*stops

05            *(0.4)
      jul     *starts turning around

06    JUL:    mi[ksi.
              why

07    DAD:     [mää eilen*    illalla    ker*äsin        ne.
               1SG yesterday evening.ADE collect.1SG.PST DEM3.PL
               last night I collected them.
      jul            *starts walking twd the pencils-->>
      jul                         *takes the bucket off his head

08            (0.3)

09 -> DAD:    mulla   ärs*yttä#ä   ku   siell=  on    lattialla
              1SG.ADE irritate.3SG when DEM3.LOC be.3SG floor.ADE
              it irritates me when there's stuff on the floor
      jul            *fixes gaze to the pencils
      fig                 #22
```
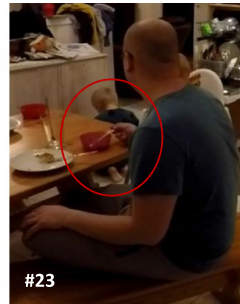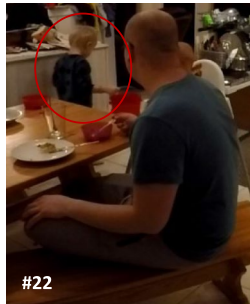

#22   #23

```
10 ->         tav*araa  joitten    päälle# pittää   kävellä.
              stuff.PAR REL.PL.GEN on.ADE  must.3SG walk.INF
              that Ø has to walk over/on.
      jul     ->>*kneels down on the floor
      fig                          #23
```

Julius responds to Dad's question by answering it literally, reporting that he tipped something over (line 2). After a short gap (line 03), Dad directs Julius to collect the pencils back up again and to clean up the mess that he created (line 04). Although Julius turns around to the "scene of the crime" (line 05), he does not begin to move towards compliance and challenges his father's directive by soliciting an account for it (line 06; see Bolden & Robinson, 2011). In partial overlap with this, Dad produces a turn that is hearable as a morally charged account (line 07): His

reporting that he picked up the pencils the night before foregrounds the anti-social character of Julius's scattering of the pencils and serves to aggravate the offense that it might otherwise have been seen to constitute. During this turn, Julius takes the bucket off of his head and starts to move in the direction of the pencils. Although these actions can be viewed as preparatory to compliance with his father's directive (Kent, 2012), Julius stops short of fully complying and fixes his gaze on the pencils (see Fig. #22). As we have seen above (compare Extract (4) 'Food goes on the plate'), this is an environment in which Dad could overtly invoke a (family) rule (e.g., 'one mustn't drop stuff on the floor,' 'what one scatters around, one must pick back up,' 'pencils don't belong on the floor'). He doesn't. Instead, he formulates an emotional state of distress that results from Julius's action of cluttering the floor ('it irritates me when there's stuff on the floor one has to walk over,' lines 09–10). As it turns out, this affectively charged display of disapproval is successful in mobilizing Julius's compliance (see line 10, Fig. #23).

Expressing the experience of a negative or undesirable personal affective state as a result of the child's action(s) can, therefore, be viewed as a relevant sequential alternative to overtly invoking rules when achieving compliance with a parental intervention is somehow problematic (compare C. Goodwin, 2007). The example also renders visible the distinctness of these two methods: The approach Dad chooses to achieve compliance throughout lines 07–10 appeals to Julius's social conscience and emphasizes aspects of social solidarity as a vital ingredient of their living together. When parents invoke rules, by contrast, they do not so much foreground the social significance of the child's action(s). Rather, such rule formulations appear to be directed at what the parents construe as shortcomings in common-sense practical reasoning. These shortcomings may have to do with a child not being able to foresee the full range of possible consequences of their actions, which may be undesirable, unfortunate or even harmful (e.g., when playing with knives could lead to injury, when blowing bubbles into a straw could lead to an overflowing drink, etc.). But they may also have to do with a failure to act in accordance with how things are conventionally organized in this world, or specific parts of it (e.g., that one does not mix paper waste and organic waste in Finland, that one ordinarily puts food on one's plate in Western societies).

This particular feature of the practice of overtly invoking rules becomes even more apparent when it is compared to another sequential alternative in the environment of parental intervention episodes, viz. threats. Extract (7) shows an example of a threat from our Polish data. The family sat down for their meal some four minutes before the fragment below begins. During all this time, Leszek, one of the sons, has not touched his soup at all. Instead, he has engaged in various kinds of mischief, which he formulated early on as making 'jokes on camera' (*dowcipy na kamerze*). His parents have repeatedly taken action against his fooling around (five times prior to the fragment below), telling him time and again to eat his soup. On one of those occasions (the third one), Dad has issued a rule-like appeal to Leszek's common sense ('who drinks juice with soup,' invoked as part of an intervention against Leszek trying to steal his brother's and his mother's glasses of juice). Here, on the sixth occasion of taking measures against Leszek's clowning behavior, occasioned by Leszek's grimacing to the camera while producing a series of high-pitched

vocalizations (see Fig. #24), Dad (off camera) and Mom collaboratively build a threat.

Extract (7): 'And it won't happen' (PP5-1_232165)

```
01    Les:    ↑hu:::::::.
              ((making silly faces and vocalizing to the camera))

02    Dad:    Les#zek po*wiem     ci      jedną   rzecz
              NAME    tell.1SG.PFV you.DAT one.ACC thing
              Leszek, I'll tell you one thing
      les           *turns to his plate
      fig     #24

03            khkhkhrm ((clears his throat))

04            dzisiaj mnie   prosiles     o    cos
              today   me.ACC plead.2SG.PST PREP something
              today you asked me for something

05            (0.2)

06    Dad:    ja się zgodziłem
              I  RFL agree.1SG.PFV.PST
              I said yes

07            (0.7)

08    Dad:    ale jak ja ciebie proszę, ↑↑to <loud<[widze  ] ze=jest
              but how I  you.ACC plead.1SG  then     see.1SG  that is.3SG
              but when I ask you, then I see that (it) is-

09    Mum:                                    [(xx xx)]
                                              ((gaze to Leszek))

10    Dad:    w   druga      strone   nie>> ma      tak. [>tak?
              PREP other.ACC side.ACC not   have.3SG so    yes
              in the other direction it doesn't work, yeah?

11 -> Mum:                                        [i tego
                                                  and this.GEN
                                                  and that

12 ->         czegos       nie bedzie#
              something.GEN not be.FUT.3SG
              something won't happen
      fig                           #25

13 -> Dad:    *i   nie bedzie    tego
              and not be.FUT.3SG this.GEN
              and that won't happen
      les     *gets up, leaves room

14            (0.2)
```


Like the father's action in the preceding Finnish example, this threat is morally charged and appeals to Leszek's social conscience. In building the threat, Dad reminds Leszek of how he did him a favor earlier that day by acceding to a request that he (Leszek) made (lines 04, 06). Dad then turns to describe the current situation as one in which Leszek fails to comply with his (Dad's) request (lines 08, 10), thereby characterizing the current situation in terms of a lopsided, and therefore unsatisfactory, quid-pro-quo arrangement. At this point, Mom chimes in with a turn that is designed as a delayed incremental addition to Dad's reminder in lines 04–06 and retroactively transforms it into a threat (lines 11–12, see Fig. #25), which Dad then ratifies and actively endorses as his own viewpoint by effectively repeating it (line 13). Like other threats described in the literature (Church & Hester, 2012; Hepburn & Potter, 2011), this one rests on an underlying conditional logic which projects negative consequences in case the problem behavior is continued. That is, if

Leszek continues to not comply with the parental requests or directives, then they will not feel obligated to stick to their earlier granting of Leszek's request either.

As Hepburn and Potter note, one basic feature of threats is that the negative consequences they project are the product of the agency of the issuer of the threat (2011: 107ff.). As such, they are a way of invoking the threatening party's power to engender such negative consequences and their readiness to exert it (if necessary) (Hepburn & Potter, 2011: 116). Unlike threats, rule formulations do not invoke such power differentials. To the contrary, because of their atemporal and impersonal character, they do not depict anyone as agentively involved or particularly invested in the recipient's behavioral adjustment towards compliant conduct. Rule formulations point to depersonalized and generic standards of conduct that are presented as having their source in everyday common-sense practical reasoning, rather than being rooted in anyone's power, interests, or desires. Consequently, overt rule invocations draw attention to departures from, or shortcomings in the competent use of, common-sense practical reasoning as manifestly exhibited in the child's prior action(s).[18] This is also why (and how) overt rule invocations but not threats can work as instructive informings. In this connection, it is important to bear in mind, however, that they need not (and typically do not) fully explicate the reasoning procedures that inform their use (see, e.g., Extract (2) 'Knives' or Extract (4) 'Food goes on the plate'). In fact, part of the practical utility of such rule formulations might be that they can be treated as self-contained/self-sufficient and precisely *not* in need of further explanation or accounting, where this may bestow a particular 'that's-just-the-way-things-are' character on the precepts they articulate. As such, they can come to be understood as indexical appeals to practical reason (i.e., to 'what every competent member of this society knows about how it works').

Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, we have reported insights from a study of overt rule invocations in everyday family interaction. We have zoomed in on a situation that may, prima facie, be seen to invite the explicit formulation of rules: parental interventions against problematic child behavior. Indeed, parents do draw on explicit rule formulations in this context, although apparently less frequently than one might intuitively expect. This observation is consistent with earlier research on rule formulations in family interactions (Wootton, 1986). A first upshot of the present study then is that the explicit formulation of rules does not seem to play a prominent role in parental interventions against problem behavior. Most of the time, parents manage these situations perfectly well without recourse to explicit rules.

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[18] Parental threats, by contrast, typically position the recipient as deliberately disobedient, which parents may orient to as legitimizing their exertion of power qua their parental authority. A corollary of this difference can be seen in the later sequential positioning of threats relative to overt rule invocations in extended sequences in which both are being used (see also Hepburn, 2020). Overt rule invocations, and with them appeals to common-sense reasoning, typically precede threats in such sequences.

The few occasions on which the parents in our data *do* overtly invoke rules as part of their interventions against problematic child behavior lend empirical support to Wittgenstein's (2009 [1953]) and Garfinkel's (1978) ideas that, if anything, 'rules' are tools that social actors apply context-sensitively in and to situations that are already meaningful to them, so as to render conduct interpretable in certain ways. Rule use in parental intervention episodes is evidently no exception, as the occasions on which 'rules' are overtly invoked appear to be characterized by specific, and sometimes highly particularized, interactional circumstances (compare Zimmerman, 1970: 223ff.). These may be pedagogical in nature, as when parents find the problematic behavior to have its origins in the child's insufficient awareness of the 'wrongness' of his/her doings. Formulating rules then works prospectively and pedagogically as part of an instructional activity (as already noted by Wootton, 1986). By contrast, where parents presuppose or ascribe knowledge of the 'unto-wardness' of their conduct to their child(ren), formulating the rules they can be seen to have transgressed can be a way of doing moralizing or admonishing work. We have argued that these different ways of mobilizing 'rules' reflect the dual orientations that can be taken up towards rules, viz. in terms of their prescriptive or their proscriptive import, and that they appear to differentially foreground distinct dimensions in the interactional management of social action (the more prospectively oriented deontic and the more retrospectively oriented moral dimension, respectively). While, as noted above, this account appears to echo parts of J. Rawls's (1955) theoretical discussion in *Two Concepts of Rules*, rather than aiming to propose distinct concepts of rules, we offer it as an empirically derived initial observation about possibly relevant interactional features of ordinary rule use, to be explored in further detail by future research.

Most commonly, the parents in our data appear to overtly invoke rules when they encounter trouble associated with achieving compliance. The kinds of trouble that may give rise to overt rule formulations are varied, contingent, and emerge locally over the course of the intervention episodes in which the rule formulations are produced. As one might expect, such episodes may involve actual or potential child resistance against the parent's action agenda. But they need not do so. As we have shown, inadequate compliant behavior can attract overt rule invocations in much the same way as non-compliant or defiant behavior can.

This creates a bit of a puzzle: If the compliance/non-compliance distinction cannot adequately account for parents' overt invocation of rules in these episodes, what else might? Is it at all possible to specify a kind of situation that can be understood to attract the formulation of a rule? Our findings suggest that, after all, there may be something systematic to be said about everyday rule use. To be sure, our data demonstrate that invoking a rule is a functionally versatile interactional practice (see also Baker & Hacker, 2010: 46ff.). However, a comparison of parental intervention episodes that feature overt rule invocations with cases in which parents draw on alternative practices in this particular environment suggests that, in and by overtly invoking a rule, parents cast the child as not having acted in accord with standards of common-sense practical reason when engaging in what is treated as the problematic behavior or action. As such, rule formulations tackle problems with the child's 'praxis,' understood in the sense originally developed by Aristotle, as the

skills of living and acting well as a member of a 'polis' (Bernstein, 1999), which might explain their relative scarcity compared to other parental practices aimed at behavior modification. The possibility of such a treatment ties in with one of Garfinkel's (1967) central tenets: that, rather than being an actor's attribute, rationality is an incarnate feature of, and exhibited in, any (sequence of) action. To the extent that common-sense knowledge and practical reasoning manifest themselves in and through ordinary action, parents are able to find in the child's actions a possible diagnosis for their untowardness—the insufficient application of practical reasoning. Unlike threats, for example, rule formulations are capable of indexically pointing to such shortcomings and may enable transgressors to engage with their "wrongdoings" in a remedial manner on their own initiative (see also Hepburn, 2020).

As such, overt rule formulations can (and evidently sometimes do) play a role in socialization: they have a place in parents' socialization practices. It would seem foolhardy to deny that rule invocations have a basic capacity to be used as methods for teaching children how to act properly in a world shared with others. But as has been argued extensively in the interactional literature on socialization, this socialization work is pervasive in interaction with children and happens largely implicitly (e.g., Fasulo et al., 2007; Keel, 2016; Sterponi, 2003, 2009; Wootton, 1997). The account we have offered here of parental rule invocations in dealing with problematic child behavior is both broader and more specific than that. By understanding rule invocations as indexical appeals to practical reason which point to shortcomings in its application, we can account for other uses of 'rules' than plainly (or narrowly) instructive ones, while at the same time allowing for their invocation to have pedagogical value in the long run (i.e., even a moralizing or admonishing rule invocation can have a 'socializing' effect by virtue of its flagging a failure to have acted in accordance with common-sense standards of practical reasoning on part of its recipient).

Of course, failures to abide by common-sense standards of practical reasoning may befall each and every one of us from time to time—not just children. If our account is correct, we would expect that overt rule invocations can be shown to have a similar import in intervention episodes against problem behavior among adults (though, expectably, they might be even less common than in child-directed talk). If that turns out to be the case, rule formulations may be understood to participate in a much larger, infinite process of acquiring practical-procedural reasoning skills from individual encounters with others (a kind of lifelong learning). On this view, then, socialization is perhaps best understood as the "progressive and never-ending acquaintance people get with the logical constraints of everyday life as they experience them in each social occasion they happen to attend from childhood on" (Ogien, 2009: 464; see also Bloor, 2002).

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