

Cultivating Affection-Laden Hierarchy: Embodied Moral Socialization of Vòng Tay (Khoanh Tay) with Children in Southern Vietnam

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Abstract By adopting a discursive practice approach, this work examines how embodied deference rituals were practiced by Vietnamese children in the Mekong Delta region. Sixty-two video-recorded events of *vòng tay/khoanh tay* performed by 23 children (ages 1.5 to 12 years) were identified; of those, 51 events performed by 12 preschool-aged children were most rigorous and demanding. On the occasions of greeting/departing, thanking, and apology/discipline and through various communicative channels, four-generation caregivers played different roles to coach children in proper postural display and verbal respect with affection. Children actively participated in these recurrent family interactions and acquired the cultural meaning of affection-laden social hierarchy at a young age. Such socialization practices ensure the stability of a hierarchical structure, strengthen the mutual bond between novices and their seniors or superiors, and lay the sociocultural foundation of politeness, filial piety, and sacrifice in the family and in society at large.[affection, embodied moral socialization, social hierarchy, Vietnamese children]

TÓM TẮT Bài viết này nghiên cứu cách thực hiện những lễ nghi thể hiện sự tôn kính của trẻ em Việt vùng Đồng Bằng Sông Mêkông. 62 sự kiện về *vòng tay/khoanh tay* thực hiện bởi 23 trẻ được ghi hình; trong đó, có 51 sự kiện được thực hiện bởi 12 trẻ trước tuổi tới trường với đòi hỏi nghiêm ngặt. Trong các dịp chào hỏi/cáo biệt, cảm ơn, tạ lỗi/dạy bảo, những người chăm sóc trẻ ở bốn thế hệ cùng luyện cho trẻ cách thể hiện lòng tôn kính có tình cảm qua hành vi và lời nói bằng các hình thức giao tiếp khác nhau. Trẻ chủ động tham gia vào các mối tương tác thường ngày, học được ý nghĩa của tôn ti từ nhỏ. Việc xã hội hóa này đảm bảo sự ổn định của một hệ thống tôn ti, nuôi dưỡng mối quan hệ giữa các thế hệ, đồng thời là nền tảng cho phép lịch sự, lòng hiếu thảo, sự hy sinh trong gia đình và ngoài xã hội.

Around noon, when Khanh (age three) was happily playing with his peers in the neighbor's house, his mother came to fetch him home for lunch. His neighbor's great-grandmother put candies and a toy into his hands for him to take home. Khanh's mother (Initiator) squatted down behind him and urged him to say goodbye to each adult. Each time, she gently turned Khanh's body so he faced and looked at the specific interlocutor (Addressee) and prompted him by employing an honorific verb/particle, *dạ* (to respectfully greet), as an imperative, followed by a proper address term (a kinship appellation) from the child's perspective. The neighbor's grandmother and aunt (Co-initiators) also joined in to prompt him (Appendix 1, Lns. 14 and 18). Although Khanh was reluctant to leave, upon request he immediately complied and responded with verbal and postural performance and a good attitude. *Verbally*, he loudly and clearly uttered, “*Dạ [Hồ], [Xưng] vè*” (Respectful goodbye [the address term, e.g., first

granduncle], [self-reference, child] I am leaving). *Posturally*, with both hands full, he cheerfully bent his right knee and leaned his upper body slightly forward as an innovative form of *khoanh tay* (the southern dialect for *vòng tay*, the postural display of respect, which is usually done by folding both arms together across the chest in a circle). His verbal and postural performance demonstrated a *decorous attitude* (*đẳng hoàng*). Within 33 seconds (Lns. 1–23), he had delivered the expected *three-in-one deference ritual performance* to each adult in the house: his neighbor's great-grandmother, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, aunt's friend, Heidi, and her assistant, Chi-han. The order was not random but followed the *hierarchical* order among them. After following his mother's modeling for excusing himself (Lns. 26–27), Khánh headed home in his mother's arms as we waved goodbye to each other, which drew an end to this *event of khoanh tay* (see Appendix A for the full transcript).

In the first author's (hereafter Heidi) ethnographic work in the rural Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam,¹ such embodied deference rituals (*khoanh tay/vòng tay lè phép*) were frequently performed by children, both boys and girls, from infants to teenagers. *Di thưa vè trinh*, respectfully greeting upon arrival and saying goodbye when departing, with the postural display of *khoanh tay*, is one of the most important things that children must learn. Children's rudimentary ability to perform it during infancy (by simply uttering *a*, the baby-talk equivalent for the full lexeme of the honorific particle/verb *dạ*) is a developmental milestone. For instance, after returning to Taiwan from the fieldtrip, Heidi received a text message from Hoa, who proudly announced the progress of her nine-month-old baby girl: "My baby is very well behaved and knows how to *a* now." Shohet's (2013) work in central Vietnam offers the first scholarly documentation of these linguistic and physical practices. Based on analyses of two instances performed by Em, who uttered *a* with the postural display of *khoanh tay* on greeting and leave-taking occasions at the ages of 13 and 15 months, Shohet maintains that, "Em's interactions with her relatives and neighbors are but glimpses into [the] general pattern of embodied hierarchy or asymmetrical reciprocity through which habits of non-negotiation and yielding, as well as devotion and respect, are apprenticed" (2013, 213). Such interactions encompass both situation-oriented demands to the novice and child-oriented accommodations from the caregivers and are thus termed asymmetrical reciprocity. Nevertheless, tied to displays of compliance and respect within social hierarchy, the child's good manners merely serve the function to honor her sociocultural superiors, and "no [praise/kisses] or demonstrative display of affection [like those in U.S. contexts] is enacted" (212). Thus, according to Shohet, these routinized socializing activities naturalize inequality as muted forms of suffering, and they ultimately cultivate the ethic of *hy sinh* (sacrifice).

In the current study, with a larger dataset covering a wider range of ages (62 video-recorded complete episodes of *khoanh tay* events spontaneously performed by 23 children ages 1.5 to 12 years), we systematically examine when, how, and what might have been socialized in children through daily *khoanh tay* practices at home in the Mekong Delta region. We argue that Shohet's (2013) work overlooks the child's agency as an active participant and the essential element of affection encoded in these interactional exchanges. Through recurrently participating in these socializing activities, young novices come to understand their

own social position in relation to others and acquire the verbal, nonverbal, and postural communicative resources for expressing deferential respect. Due to the inseparability of good morality and affection, social hierarchy (*tôn ti*), in Vietnamese terms, is not simply about ranks and orders but, even more importantly, is also about mutual affection (*tình cảm*), which is particularly evident when the kin-term-based, person-referential system (*đại tu¹ xưng bô*) is brought into the training process after infancy. Cultivation of mutual affection and moral respect for hierarchical orders are entwined and occur simultaneously in learning how to perform courteous greetings with proper address and self-reference terms. In this process, children's compliance and competence shows their attentiveness and affection towards their sociocultural superiors, which earns affection from their elders and strengthens personal bonds between them. Affection-laden social hierarchy, learned first at home and later in school, governs interpersonal relationships and lays the sociocultural foundation for politeness, filial piety, and sacrifice in the family and in society at large.

The Intertwining Nature of Morality and Affection

In today's Vietnam, traditional core values, such as respecting the hierarchical structure in social relations, persist despite rapid socioeconomic development and politically embraced communist rhetoric (Burr 2014; V. Phạm 1999). The practice and norm of hierarchical respect, rooted in the spirit of *kính trên nhu²ng dưới* (showing respect to sociocultural superiors while yielding to sociocultural inferiors), is a key signifier of Vietnamese identity. In her thorough ethnographic accounts of how children, particularly girls, were socialized into locally approved models of morality in a rural commune in northern Vietnam, Rydstrøm notes that "good morality and tình cảm are intimately intertwined" (2003, 52). "Tình cảm" can be translated as "affection," "sentiment," or "feeling." Most of all, it implies social sensitivity. Neither good morality nor tình cảm are inborn; both have to be cultivated and acquired through recurrent social practices in everyday life. When someone displays good manners, it means that the individual must have experienced "a process of social education through which she has incorporated tình cảm for various day-to-day situations that continuously call for good manners" (80), and vice versa—those who have embodied a large amount of tình cảm would undoubtedly possess good morality. Not showing good manners is taken as a sign of not having learned tình cảm and can be condemned as "having lost social education" (*mất dạy*) and "being ugly" (*xấu*) (81–82). Rydstrøm claims that tình cảm is a female morality. Nevertheless, as expressed in a Vietnamese proverb, "a basket of rules cannot compete with a little affection," which is manifested in many aspects of Vietnamese moral norms and demeanors (Malarney 2002), such as the guiding principle for selecting proper self-reference and address terms in daily deference rituals.

In Vietnamese, a kin-term-based, person-referential system establishes and regulates the affection-laden hierarchical structure in the web of interpersonal relationships. Since the literal use of personal pronouns, that is, *mày* (you), *tao* (I), or *nó* (he or she), is *khiêm nhã*, "lack of grace" (Hoàng 2011), *thô lỗ*, "rude" (Truong 2012), or as a sign of anger, disrespect, or contempt (Thompson 1965), kinship appellations are extensively used as pronominals (Luong 1990, 2012; M. Phạm 2011). Due to the absence of a transparent form of personal

pronouns, speakers are forced to adopt a kinship role in relation to that of the interlocutor, which makes the Vietnamese language “an extreme example of ‘markedness’” (Szymanska-Matusiewicz 2014, 2). Address (*bô*) and self-reference (*xưng*) must be used in a paired manner. Lacking either, “the speaker would be seen as impolite (*mất lẽ phép*) and her sentence incomplete (*nói trống không* or *câu cùt lùn*)” (T.D.P. Nguyễn 2013, 348). In a conversation with multiple participants, the speaker must continually switch among multiple pairs of address and self-reference. Thus, the speaker constantly stays aware of “the two-way relation between contexts/relations on the one hand, and discursive forms and what can or cannot be said on the other” (Luong 2012, 121). Similarly, in literary works, pronominal references require one to read between the lines to understand their richly nuanced meanings, which provide the only clues to the relationships among the characters as well as the author’s hidden feelings and preferences about each. When translating Vietnamese literary work into other languages, since such a highly complex person-referential system can hardly find counterparts, it often results in severe meaning loss (Ngo 2011).

Since performing courteous greetings is the inferior’s moral responsibility, the burden of choosing appropriately paired address and self-reference terms mainly lies with the inferior speaker. Such decisions require cultural knowledge and social vigilance more than linguistic competence (K. Nguyễn 2016). When meeting a new acquaintance, asking their age is the rule of thumb. Other information, such as educational attainment, occupation, marital status, and birth order,² may also be necessary to determine which generation term (*thứ bâc*) should be employed (e.g., grandaunt, aunt, older or younger sister). Even among siblings, peers, or twins, the senior one always unambiguously enjoys a higher status (Luong 1984). Besides a formal/polite address term, the inferior speaker must also employ honorifics (*kính ngư*), such as the sentence-initial respect particle *đa* (*vâng* in the northern dialect) and the respect verb *đa* or *thưa*. In contrast, the superior one uses the unmarked initial particle *ū* instead and exercises greater freedom in the choice of address terms, including kinship appellation, proper noun, nickname, or even personal pronoun (Sidnell and Shohet 2013).

Apart from hierarchical orders, the kin-term referential system itself reportedly confers an image of “society as an extended family” and fosters a “quasi-family relationship” among people (K. Nguyễn 2016). Therefore, deferential greeting with a proper address term is not merely about politeness; it may also imply the speaker’s intent to establish and maintain a quasi-family relationship with the interlocutor (Phan and Le 2016). “The respect, affection, love, and consideration contained in greeting exchanges provide Vietnamese individuals with an irreplaceable element to start an everyday encounter” (K. Nguyễn 2016, 39). A change in address terms signals a plea to change the existing relationship or create a new interactional context, which applies to both fictive and true biological kin. For instance, to boost solidarity with her husband’s family, the second author’s (hereafter called Thu) maternal aunt-in-law requests her nieces and nephews to call her *cô Dùm* (paternal aunt + private nickname) instead of *thím Trang* (maternal aunt-in-law + official name). In this highly structured society, an inferior’s attempt to change an address term from polite/formal to affectionate/informal, without causing any offence or embarrassment, requires particular caution, that is, the tacit consent from the superior interlocutor based on the deep relationship between them. For

instance, not until Thu's grandparents reached their eighties and she herself was granted full adult status (in her thirties) did Thu, their youngest grandchild, dare to address them as *anh năm* (fourth older brother) and *chị muội* (ninth older sister) to cheer them up and make them feel young again.³

Striking a perfect balance between hierarchy and affection in the employment of address and reference terms "not only imposes difficulty for foreign learners of Vietnamese, but sometimes it is also hard for Vietnamese people to use them properly and appropriately" (T.H. Nguyễn 1999, translated by Ngo 2006), let alone young, naïve novices. In Vietnam, being a good child means understanding one's own social position within the hierarchical structure of the family and developing an extraordinarily fine-tuned awareness of and respect for the status of seniors and superiors (Burr 2014). According to Phạm, "a child never referred to himself as anything but con [child] when speaking to his parents, and cháu [grandchild] when speaking to his grandparents . . . by doing so, the person continually reminded himself that he was in a specific order to others, symbolizing thereby that he existed only in a relation to others" (1999, 23). Since, with age, the choice of proper self-reference and address terms becomes increasingly essential in embodied deference rituals, this work attempts to examine exactly what happens on the ground in daily socializing activities with children of different ages. We pay particular attention to whether and how affection has a place in caregivers' strategies and expectations, and whether and how children negotiate their agency in this learning process.

Socializing Practices of Embodied Deference Rituals During Childhood

When Heidi conducted her fieldwork in the Mekong Delta villages, most houses were still built of bamboo, wooden boards, iron sheets, and water coconut tree leaves, with no solid lock on the door or concrete walls inside the house. Neighbors and relatives came and went as they pleased. Literally, the whole village was entitled to be moral socializers, and they freely shared childcare and discipline with the family. In such an open space, children were constantly exposed to multiparty interactions that might not necessarily be relevant to or directed at them. Among all the potential learning channels and opportunities, the frequently observed and routinely occurring training activities of embodied deference rituals was one of, if not the most important means for, guiding children to the communicative resources and cultural norms of social hierarchy.

Following in the footsteps of scholars in the fields of language socialization and cultural psychology, we adopt a discursive practice approach to the study of early socialization (Miller 2014; Miller et al. 2012; Ochs and Schieffelin 1984; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986a, 1986b). The discursive practice approach privileges the analysis of speech events (Hymes 1972), which are "beyond lexical and grammatical meaning to encompass how speech forms implicitly index or point to dimensions of interactional and sociocultural context" (Miller 2014, 418). Moreover, "it is crucial that events singled out for micro-analysis are representative of patterns in everyday life" (Brown and Gaskins 2014, 210). The presumption of the current study is that children acquire moral knowledge of hierarchy through participating in

recurrent semiotically mediated events of embodied deference rituals in daily family interactions, which are situated in multileveled contexts and open to observation and interpretation (Fader 2012; Fung 1999, 2011; Goodnow, Miller, and Kessel 1995). During the process, caregivers employ, consciously or unconsciously, various strategies to coach the young novice on how to appropriately, effectively, and meaningfully display their knowledge of and respect for hierarchically structured interpersonal relationships. Recurrent participation in these mundane rituals of deference and respect “make[s] children aware of the meanings of social hierarchy in their communities as well as the communicative resources for inhabiting it” (Howard 2012, 344). Such a dynamic interactional process is an ongoing accomplishment of all participants, including the novice, who actively makes sense of the world around her and may comply, negotiate, remain silent, or even resist the socializer’s requests.

In this work, the unit of analysis is the speech event of *khoanh tay*, which is defined as a stretch of interaction in which at least one participant requests the focal child to greet or express respect to the interlocutor(s) by performing *khoanh tay*. Its boundaries encompass all the consequent instructions or activities directed toward the child, organized around her verbal and nonverbal deferential performances, until all participants’ attention and shared topic shift. After excluding incomplete or fragmented instances,⁴ 62 complete episodes of *khoanh tay* events caught on Heidi’s camcorder were identified for further analysis. These spontaneous events were performed by 23 children: 13 boys and 10 girls, ages 1.5 to 12 years. Since this study is cross-sectional, we cannot address the children’s individual developmental changes. Nevertheless, within this age range, there existed three qualitatively distinct training patterns related to age and, perhaps, cognitive ability. The earliest training was found to appear in the single-word stage of language development during infancy (five events performed by three boys and two girls, mean age = 1.5, with one exception⁵). Like Em, in Shohet’s (2013) study, and Hoa’s baby girl, mentioned earlier, both the caregiver’s verbal initiation prompt and the child’s expected verbal utterance was *a*, the simplified baby-talk form for the respect verb *da*. As shown in Figure 1, coached through somatic means (in this case, by the child’s four-year-old cousin, Ngoc), the main training objective was the child’s postural control techniques (on average, each event lasted 13.3 seconds and involved 8.5 turns at speaking).

The most intensive and rigorous training occurred during the preschool years (51 events performed by six boys and six girls, mean age = 2.4, range: 2–5). After having passed the single-word stage, the simple response of “*a*” no longer met sociocultural superiors’ expectations. Trainings took place on various occasions and, like Khanh (Appendix A), children were now expected to deliver a three-in-one package: postural display of *khoanh tay*, proper verbal performance (i.e., self-reference and address terms + respect verb), plus a good attitude (details are reported in the next section). Such training could also be seen in kindergartens (see Figures 2 and 3).

When children were of school age, the training pattern became rather brief and relaxed (six events performed by four boys and two girls, mean age = 10.2, range: 7–12; on average, each event was about 9.2 seconds or 5.7 turns at speaking). Children were now able to self-initiate



Figure 1. Infancy [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

Note. Ngoc (age 4) coaches her cohabiting cousin, Tiên (held by Ngoc's mother), on how to properly greet the guests by folding her arms together and pressing her head slightly forward for her.

the proper embodied deference ritual with little prompting, and, after delivering a flawless deferential performance, adults simply acknowledged it without praise or reward. By now, caregivers seemed to have full confidence in children's acquisition of communicative ability and internalization of cultural norms regarding hierarchical respect.

Later, when reaching late adolescence (age 15–19), children gradually enter adulthood. During adulthood, due to the changing status with age, formal postural displays of khoanh tay tended to be seen on ceremonial occasions, such as weddings, funerals, or religious services, instead of being a requirement in daily deference rituals (see Figure 4). To conclude, childhood, particularly the preschool years, is the most critical period for the embodied moral socialization of hierarchical respect. Therefore, in the following section, we will focus on trainings of three-in-one deference ritual performances among preschool-aged children in the Mekong Delta region.

Rigorous Training in the Preschool Years

As seen in Table 1, of the 51 identified events of khoanh tay performed by preschool-aged children in the study, most (43%) occurred on the prototypical occasion of greeting



Figure 2. Preschool Years: Learning at Home [This figure appears in color in the online issue]



Figure 3. Preschool Years: Learning in School [This figure appears in color in the online issue]



Figure 4. Adulthood [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

and departing (hereafter greeting events) as shown below, which, interestingly, was an imaginative play:

Early one morning, when all adults were busy packing and preparing for a trip to visit out-of-town relatives, Vinh's mother took advantage of a real departure situation to playfully rehearse the "leaving for school" deference ritual with the child, who had not yet had schooling experience. She helped the two-year-old put on a hat and a backpack in the yard and urged him to go inside to say goodbye to his aunt (Initiator), as if he were ready to go to school. As soon as he walked inside and saw Grandmother, he folded his arms to perform *khoanh tay* and said goodbye to her (Appendix B, Ln. 3). With their hands full, no one paid much attention, except his blind grandfather. Grandfather acknowledged his performance and joined Mother to further prompt him (Co-initiator). Both caregivers employed the honorific verb *thưa* as an imperative (Lns. 1, 4, 6, 13, 15, and 21). In the bustling room, Vinh also walked up to Aunt (Ln. 8) and Heidi (Ln. 17) to perform *khoanh tay* to each, while uttering "*Thưa* [Hô], [Xung] *đi hoc*" (Respectful goodbye [the address term], [self-reference, child/I] am going to go to school). Vinh also followed Grandfather's modeling (Lns. 22) to greet Chi-han, but he spontaneously changed the self-reference, *con* (child), to his own name (Ln. 23), which amused his grandfather and the two researchers (Lns. 24–25; see Appendix B for the full transcript).

Besides greeting and departing, events of *khoanh tay* were also found to occur on the occasions of thanking and apologizing to others (27% and 29% of the total events, respectively; hereafter called thanking and apology events). For greeting and thanking events,

Table 1. Preschool Years—Initiation Imperatives in the Identified Events ($N = 51$)

Occasion		# of Events	CG's Initiation Imperatives	C's Expected Verbal Responses
Greeting/ Departing (<i>đi thua vè</i> <i>trìnhh</i>)	General greetings (good morning, good day)	1		[X] <i>chào</i> [H]. (I greet [H].)
	Welcoming a guest	9		<i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [H] <i>mói</i> <i>đến/toi</i> . (Respectfully greet [H], who has just arrived.)
	Sending off a guest	2		<i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [H] <i>vè</i> . (Respectfully say goodbye to [H], who is leaving.)
	Upon arriving at other's house	6		<i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [X] <i>mói</i> <i>đến/toi</i> . (Respectfully greet [H], I just arrived.)
	Upon departing other's house (to family members)	2	<i>Dạ</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i> <i>Thua</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i> <i>Chào</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i>	<i>Thua/Dạ/Chào</i> [H], [X] <i>vè</i> . (Respectfully say goodbye to [H], I am leaving.)
	Entering home (to family members)	1	<i>Hỏi</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i> <i>Khoanh tay lại.</i>	<i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [X] <i>đi hoc</i> (<i>mói</i>) <i>vè</i> . (Respectfully greet [H], I just came back from school.)
	Leaving home (to family members)	1		[H] <i>(oi)</i> , [X] <i>mói</i> <i>vè</i> . <i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [X] <i>vè ngoại</i> . (Respectfully greet [H], I just came back home.)
	Leaving home			<i>Thua/Dạ</i> [H], [X] <i>đi hoc</i> . (Respectfully say goodbye to [H], I am going to school.)
Thanking	Upon receiving a gift or a favor	14	<i>Cảm ơn</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i> <i>Con dặ</i> [H] <i>đi/kia.</i> <i>Khoanh tay lại.</i>	[X] <i>dặ/cảm ơn</i> [H]. (I thank [H].)

Continued

Table 1. Continued

Occasion		# of Events	CG's Initiation Imperatives	C's Expected Verbal Responses
Apology	Due to wrongdoing or misdeed	15	<i>Xin lỗi</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa con.</i> <i>Con da</i> [H] <i>đi/kìa.</i> <i>Khoanh tay lại.</i>	[X] <i>da/xin lỗi</i> [H]. (I apologize to [H].) <i>Xin lỗi</i> [H], [X] <i>biết lỗi rồi.</i> (Sorry [H], I know it's my fault.) [X] <i>không dám nữa.</i> (I dare not to do it again.)
Total		51 events; 12 children (6 ♂ and 6 ♀); mean age = 2.4 (range: 2–5)		

* Note 1: [H] stands for hó, the second- and third-person references. In CG's initiation prompts, con (child) is used as the second-person reference, you.

* Note 2: [X] stands for xưng, self-reference. When the interlocutor is an elder, [X] is con/cháu (child/grandchild). When talking to an older peer/sibling, [X] is em (younger brother/younger sister).

* Note 3: When placing *đi* (to go) after a verb or at the end of a sentence, it becomes a modal particle that suggests or hurries the interlocutor to do/say something. The final particle, *kìa*, also serves a similar function.

although the children's compliance rate was high (86% and 71% respectively), a correction sequence may have also happened (about 30%). Regardless of whether they complied or not, most of these events (about 60%) were wrapped up with a final phase, in which the child was praised by or earned affection from their sociocultural superiors. On average, each event lasted about 27 seconds or 13 turns at speaking,⁶ likely developing in real time as follows:

Initiation	→	Correction	→	Final Phase
C complies (or not)		C complies (or not)		C being praised
CGs being satisfied (or not)		CGs being satisfied (or not)		Showing mutual affection

For apology events in disciplinary encounters, the caregivers' prompts almost always followed someone's accusation of the child's wrongdoing (all related to physical aggression). Thus, before initiation, there existed an accusation phase, when time was spent confirming the suspected misdeed, settling the fight or dispute between children, calming the crying one, or removing the mischievous one from the spot. The child's compliance rate was high (80%). This might be followed by a correction sequence (about 30%). In nearly 90% of apology events, there was a lengthy final phase, in which discipline was intertwined with peacemaking and reestablishing the mutual bond between the "transgressor" and "victim." On average, each event lasted about 80 seconds or 44 turns at speaking and unfolded in the following sequence:

Accusation	→	Initiation	→	Correction	→	Final Phase
Confirming C's wrongdoing		C complies (or not)		C complies (or not)		Disciplining/reasoning
		CGs being satisfied (or not)		CGs being satisfied (or not)		Peace-making

As shown in Table 2, on average, 9.3 participants of four generations were present and played different or multiple roles during different phases as an event unfolded.⁷ Except

Table 2. Preschool Years—Participant Structure in the Identified Events ($N = 51$)

Role/Occasion	Greeting & Departing ($n = 22$)		Thanking ($n = 14$)		Apology ($n = 15$)	
	mean age = 2.7	mean age = 2.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	mean age = 2
Accuser	Grandparent generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 (GM)
N/A	Parent generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8
N/A	C's own generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2 (CSN: 6 and 7 yr. old)
Initiator	Great-grandparent generation	1 (GGM)	—	—	1 (GGM)	
21/22	Grandparent generation	10	5	5	6	
14/14		(GM 7, GF 1, GA 2)		(GM 3, GF 1, GA 1)	(GM)	
15/15	Parent generation	10	8	(M 5, F 3, A 2)	7	
				(M 1, F 1, A 4, U 2)	(M 1, A 6)	
	C's own generation	1	1	(C: 2 yr. old)	1	
				(CSN: 9 yr. old)	(NEB: 9 yr. old)	
Co-Initiator	Great-grandparent generation	2 (GGM)	3 (GGM)	3 (GGM)	2 (GGM)	
19/14	Grandparent generation	8	3	(GM 1, GA 1, GU 1)	1	
11/6		(GM 2, GF 5, GA 1)		(GM)		
11/8	Parent generation	8	5	(M 2, A 4, U 2)	8	
				(M 2, A 3)	(M 2, F 3, A 3)	
	C's own generation	1	—	—	—	
		(CSN: 29 yr. old)				
Addressee	Great-grandparent generation	4	1	1	—	
35/22	Grandparent generation	(GGM 2, GGA 2)	(GGA)	—	—	
16/14		(GM 1, GA 5, GU 3)	(GM 1, GA 1)	2	2	
17/15	Parent generation	22	8	(GM 1; GF 1)	6	
				(A 3, U 3, R 2)	(A 3, R 3)	
	C's own generation	—	5	—	9	
				(CSN: 4~9 yr. old)	(CSN: 4~7 yr. old)	

Continued

Table 2. Continued

Role/Occasion	Greeting & Departing (n = 22)		Thanking (n = 14)		Apology (n = 15)	
		mean age = 2.7		mean age = 2.3		mean age = 2
Mitigator	Great-grandparent generation	—	—	1 (GGM)	—	—
3/3	Grandparent generation	1 (GF)	3 (GM 2, GA 1)	—	—	—
4/4	Parent generation	2 (M 1, A 1)	—	—	—	—
Corrector	Great-grandparent generation	2 (GGM 1, GGA 1)	—	—	—	—
10/7	Grandparent generation	4 (GM 3, GA 1)	3 (GM 1, GF 1, GA 1)	3 (GM 1, F 1, A 1)	3 (GM)	3 (GM)
6/4	Parent generation	4 (F 2, A 1, U 1)	3 (A)	3 (M 1, F 1, A 1)	3 (M 1, F 1, A 1)	3 (M 1, F 1, A 1)
Praiser	Great-grandparent generation	4 (GGM)	1 (GGM)	1 (GGM)	N/A	N/A
34/16	Grandparent generation	11 (GM 4, GF 2, GA 2, GU 3)	1 (GU)	1 (GU)	N/A	N/A
10/7	Parent generation	19 (F 1, A 7, U 4, FF 1, R 6)	5 (M 1, F 1, A 3)	5 (M 1, F 1, A 3)	N/A	N/A
	C's own generation	—	2 (CSN; 4~9 yr. old)	2 (CSN; 4~9 yr. old)	N/A	N/A
Peacemaker	Great-grandparent generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	4 (GGM)	4 (GGM)
N/A	Grandparent generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	7 (GM)	7 (GM)
N/A	Parent generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	15
27/13	C's own generation	N/A	N/A	N/A	(M 2, F 2, A 10, U 1) 1 (NEB)	(M 2, F 2, A 10, U 1) 1 (NEB)

Continued

Table 2. Continued

Role/Occasion	Greeting & Departing (n = 22)		Thanking (n = 14)		Apology (n = 15)	
	mean age = 2.7	mean age = 2.3	mean age = 2.3	mean age = 2.3	mean age = 2	mean age = 2
Onlooker	Great-grandparent generation	5 (GGM) 15 (GM 3, GF 4, GA 5, GU 3)	3 (GGM) 12 (GM 2, GF 4, GA 4, GU 2)	3 (GGM) 12 (GM 1, GF 3, GA 4, GU 2)	1 (GGM) 10 (GM 1, FF 4, R 15)	1 (GGM) 10 (GM 1, FF 3, GA 4, GU 2)
126/22	Grandparent generation					
58/14						
44/15						
	Parent generation	65 (M 8, F 3, A 12, U 11, FF 3, R 28)	38 (M 2, F 1, A 7, U 5, R 23)	38 (M 2, F 1, A 7, U 5, R 23)	28 (M 4, F 1, U 4, FF 4, R 15)	28 (M 4, F 1, U 4, FF 4, R 15)
	C's own generation	41 (YGB 1, CSN 33, NEB 7)	5 (CSN)	5 (CSN)	5 (CSN)	5 (CSN)
	Total participants (average in each event; range)	234 10.6; 6-16	118 8.4; 4-14	135 9; 4-12		

*Note 1: Abbreviations for the four-generation participants:

The great-grandparent generation: GGM = Great-grandmother; GGU = Great-granduncle;

The grandparent generation: GM = Grandmother; GF = Grandfather; GA = Granduncle;

The parent generation: M = Mother; F = Father; A = Aunt; U = Uncle; R = Researcher; FF = Family Friend;

The C's generation: C = Child; OLB = Older Brother; YGB = Younger Brother; YGS = Younger Sister; CSN = Cousin; NEB = Neighbor

*Note 2: Total participants include the focal child. If one person plays multiple roles in an event, he or she would only be counted once in total participants.

for one self-initiated greeting event, all events commenced with an Initiator's prompting effort to have the young novice greet, thank, or apologize to the Addressee(s). In more than half of the events, other caregiver(s) also joined in as Co-initiator(s). Other than one adult peer, all the Initiators and Co-initiators in the greeting events were elders in the previous generations: parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. Thanking and apology events could be initiated by peers or siblings (4%). On average, each event required five initiation requests, and nearly half of the events involved multiple prompting strategies.⁸ Employing imperatives to urge the child was the most frequently adopted strategy (77%). As shown in Table 1, in addition to the respect verbs *dạ* (also see Appendix A) and *thưa* (also see Appendix B), the prototypical imperatives also involved *chào* and *hoi* for greeting, *cám ơn* for thanking, and *xin lỗi* for apology events. The imperative of *khoanh tay lại* was also used interchangeably with other imperatives across all occasions. The next most frequently adopted strategy was questioning or interrogating the child in greeting and thanking events (8% and 9%, respectively); for instance, "Haven't you greeted Great-grandauant yet?" or "I am leaving now; don't you want to say goodbye to me?" For apology events, the second most common strategy was threatening or warning the child (11%): "Apologize to him now, otherwise the duck is going to bite you" (while holding a live duck) or "Can I spank him now?" (while holding a twig). Other minor strategies included encouraging the child ("first uncle loves you, say 'thank you' to him"), invoking empathy ("Greet Grandaunt now; otherwise, she'll cry"), and making disparaging or sarcastic comments ("You are being very naughty").

All the Addressees in the greeting events were elders in the previous generations, whereas in thanking events, about one-third were peers, and in apology events, over half were peers. Young children were always requested to address their sociocultural superiors formally and politely, including older peers and siblings. In 94% of all the identified events, two types of proper formal and polite address terms (*hô*) were provided by the Initiator (and Co-initiator[s]) in the initiation phase:

1. Generation (*thú¹ bâc*)

Applied to the child's great-grandparents (*bà cố*, *ông cố*), grandparents (paternal: *ông nội*, *bà nội*; maternal: *ông ngoại*, *bà ngoại*), parents (*ba*, *me*), and the researchers (*cô⁹*); and

2. Generation + birth order (*thú¹ bâc + thú¹ hàng*)

Examples included first granduncle (*ông bai*), second uncle (*đường ba*), second aunt (*mợ ba*), fourth aunt (*dì năm*), and first elder sister (*chi hai*).

In over 30% of events, there was a correction sequence in which the dissatisfied Caregiver(s)/Corrector(s) made about 1.4 requests, on average, to correct the child's performance. No corrections were directed at failing to display *khoanh tay* or the improper use

of self-reference and address terms, but to the quality of the performance (e.g., vocally: to speak faster or louder; and posturally: to stand up, come closer, or face and look at the interlocutor), with particular regard to the display of a respectful and decorous attitude. The compliance rate to the correction requests was about 70%. In about 20% of the greeting and thanking events, an adult played the role of Mitigator, who attempted to alleviate the tense or embarrassing atmosphere by sympathetically describing the uncomplying child as being shy (*măc cō*) or afraid (*sō*). Interestingly, no one assumed this role in the disciplinary apology events.

In the final phase of greeting and thanking events, there appeared the role of the Praiser(s), who complimented (in 40% of their utterances) or showed affection (the remaining 60%) to the child. In four greeting events, praises came from the researchers, who were also Addressees. The praising comments could be explicit or implicit and indirect. Examples of explicit praises included “very well behaved,” “very good,” and “how composed his posture is.” Implicit or indirect ones could involve delightfully quoting the focal child’s words (e.g., Appendix B, Lns. 24 and 25) or proudly announcing the child’s performance to others. For instance, as soon as the child greeted Granduncle, who had complained about the child being inattentive to him upon his arrival, Grandmother loudly announced, “See, she has greeted first granduncle; haven’t you all seen it?” As to affection, in addition to verbal means, it could be subtly expressed through nonverbal or sensory means. The focal child was often asked to kiss,¹⁰ hug, caress, care for, or share food with the addressed superior. Adults also often did one or more of the following to the child as ways to express affection: (1) kissing, hugging, softly touching, or caressing the child’s cheek or chin, patting the shoulder, back, or buttock, or playfully grabbing or rubbing a boy’s penis; (2) sharing food with or feeding the child; and (3) social grooming, for example, straightening the child’s clothes, combing or braiding a girl’s hair, or massaging.

The final phase of apology events involved the caregiver(s) playing the role of Peacemaker(s), which involved both discipline (in 40% of their utterances) and reconciliation efforts (the remaining 60%). This phase was, on average, five times longer than the final phase in greeting and thanking events. The most common discipline strategy was to reason with the child (about 60%). When the addressed person was of an older generation, three interrelated moral messages often appeared: being impolite, not knowing one’s own social position, and becoming less lovable. For instance, Grandmother and Aunt explained to the child why he could not be physically aggressive towards his grandfather: “Have you ever seen first elder brother and second elder sister dare to hit their father? Have they ever dared to be impolite to Grandfather? . . . How dared you, being the smallest/youngest in this family . . . This is very impolite; do you hear me? . . . Being like this, no one will love you anymore, understand?” A smaller proportion of disciplinary utterances (about 20%) were threats of punishment (e.g., “If you hit older brother again, I’m going to spank you,”) and disparaging comments (e.g., describing the child as “very naughty”). Actual corporal punishment only occurred in three events and was done in a playful manner (e.g., asking the child, “Which hand? Give me the hand that you just hit your older brother with,” and then tapping on his

hand once.) The child was also often asked to promise that he would not misbehave again, “*không dám nǔa*” (as seen in Table 1).

Perhaps due to its repairing nature, the expression of affection in the final phase of apology events was much more elaborate than in greeting and thanking events. The Peacemaker(s) might even coach the young novice on how to express affection through nonverbal or sensory channels. For instance, after a child had performed *khoanh tay* and apologized to his cousin, Aunt asked the cousin to accept his apology by giving him a hug. Mother, Grandmother, and Great-grandmother also asked the child to kiss his cousin’s cheeks and mouth. While kissing, he affectionately touched his cousin’s chin, which made the adults laugh. Aunt then demonstrated for the child how to do it, “Do it like this, with love, with love. Caress him with both of your hands, with both hands.” The two-year-old followed the instructions but with much force. Grandmother advised him to be gentle, “Caress him gently, just gently, gently.” Finally, Aunt drew a happy ending to the children’s reconciliation, “first elder brother also loves you Although you hit him, first elder brother still loves you. Your kissing and caressing make him completely forget about your wrongdoing.”

When the “victim” was an adult, reestablishing the mutual bond between the transgressing child and the elder was often done in a playful and loving manner too. For instance, after the child had apologized to Aunt, she still complained about his rude behavior of pushing her away and not sharing food with her. Grandmother, therefore, drilled the child on a ritualized caregiver-child routine, which was frequently practiced in nondisciplinary encounters in most families, by asking him questions: “Do you love first aunt?” “Do you love her much?” “Where do you put your love for her?” The child answered each question, “[I] love [her],” “Very much,” and pointed to the top of his head, indicating that his abundant love for Aunt was safeguarded in the highest position of his body, a childish way to express affection and hierarchical respect towards caregivers. Aunt repeated these questions again while sniffing (kissing) the child’s arm and hand. Grandmother further told a story about how the two-year-old was concerned about Great-grandmother’s health when seeing her take a long rest on the hammock, as a further testimony of his capacity to love.

Of all the above active trainers, over 75% were female, while Mother, interestingly, only occupied a small proportion: 14% among all Initiators or Co-Initiators in the initiation phase and 7% among all Praisers and Peacemakers in the final phase (see Table 2). In addition, in each event, about 4.5 persons, including same-generation cousins and peers, were not active in training but present at the scene as onlookers who witnessed what happened to the child. Of all the participants, the most crucial one was the child, who actively contributed 25% of total turns in greeting and apology events and 20% in thanking events. There was one self-initiated greeting event, in which the two-year-old spontaneously performed *khoanh tay* to send Great-grandaunt off. When adults were busy helping Great-grandaunt get on the road, he quietly said to her, “Take care and goodbye” (*Về khoe nghen*). Grandmother and Aunt overheard it and quoted his words with amusement. Adults corrected him by adding a proper address, *bà cô*, for him. In response, he further added the honorific verb *dạ* at the beginning to make the whole sentence flawless, “*Dạ bà cô về*

Table 3. Preschoolers' Spontaneous Uses of Affectionate Address Terms in the Identified Events

Child	Age	Relationship	Polite/Formal Address	Affectionate/Informal Address Being Used	Self-Reference Being Used
Vinh ♂	2	father's eldest sister	<i>cô</i> /paternal aunt (generation)	<i>cô Thao</i> /paternal aunt Thao (generation+name)	<i>con</i> /child <i>Vinh/Vinh</i>
			<i>cô hai</i> /1 st paternal aunt (generation+birth order)	<i>cô hai Thao</i> /1 st paternal aunt Thao (generation+birth order+name)	
		mother	<i>me</i> /mother (generation)	<i>me Huong</i> /mother Huong (generation+name)	
Bin ♂	2	great-grandmother	<i>hù cô</i> /great-grandmother (generation)	<i>cô</i> /great-grandmother (generation)	
		close family friend/neighbor	<i>dì Quyên</i> /maternal aunt Quyen (generation+name)	<i>bàu Quyên</i> /seven Quyen (birth order+name)	<i>con</i> /child
		father's eldest sister	<i>cô</i> /paternal aunt (generation)	<i>cô hai Nguin</i> /1 st paternal aunt Nguan (generation+birth order+name)	
Tú ♀	3	mother's older sister	<i>dì</i> /maternal aunt (generation)	<i>dì ba</i> /2 nd maternal aunt (generation+birth order)	<i>con</i> /child
		wife of mother's youngest brother	<i>mợ</i> /aunt (generation)	<i>mợ út</i> /youngest aunt (generation+birth order)	<i>it Giang</i> /youngest Giang (birth order+name)
		neighbor peer	<i>chi</i> /older sister (generation)	<i>chi nho</i> /little or youngest sister (generation+birth order)	<i>em</i> /younger brother
Khang ♂	5				

khoe ngaben." There was also a semi-self-initiated event: when coming home from school and seeing Heidi and Chi-han inside the house, the five-year-old spontaneously folded her arms together and bashfully waited to be given proper address terms for the foreign strangers.

Children had little trouble expressing formal respect to their seniors and superiors per request, but they could also be innovative and creative in an informal manner. For instance, in Appendix A, Khánh displayed postural respect by bending his knee instead of folding his arms in a circle, and, in Appendix B, Vinh unexpectedly changed the self-reference to his own name. They sometimes spontaneously and purposely switched formal addresses to informal ones. For instance, when Father held up a twig to threaten Vinh for his wrongdoing, he turned to his mother for help by calling her *me Hương* (generation + name), instead of *me* (generation). More examples are presented in Table 3. Children's naughty and adorable postural and verbal modifications effectively boosted the solidarity with their sociocultural superiors while still maintaining a sense of propriety (*chừng mức*).

Discussion and Conclusion

All societies are inevitably hierarchical to some degree, underpinned by evolutionary origins and neural mechanisms for various reasons, such as allocating limited resources, facilitating social organization, and achieving self-improvement. Nevertheless, to what extent it is seen as a valued moral norm, how deeply such valued norm permeates people's actions in their daily life, when its socialization process begins, and what cultural meaning it carries, may all vary across cultures. Our discursive analysis of the 62 events of *khoanh tay* reveals that, starting from a tender age, before formal schooling, village children in the Mekong Delta were socialized to the cultural and communicative norms of social hierarchy. Training efforts were collectively accomplished by four-generation caregivers, primarily women, who assumed different or multiple roles as events naturally unfolded in sequences of initiation, correction, and final wrap-up phases. Our findings resonate with LeVine and Norman's (2001) claim that caregivers everywhere promote culturally desirable behavioral patterns by giving their young novices a head start on becoming virtuous. Its impact is usually apparent by three years of age and, therefore, renders "observable precocity" in children, as seen by people from another culture. Vietnamese children's readiness to comply with the wishes of sociocultural superiors to display postural, verbal, and attitudinal respect as daily deferential rituals, on the one hand, demonstrates their precocious competence in these linguistic and corporeal routines, while on the other, reflects the prevailing cultural ideologies of affection-laden social hierarchy held by members of their speech community.

The cultural sanction of the inseparability and overlapping nature of good morality and affection is instantiated in the linguistic constraints and resources of the Vietnamese pronominal reference system and the culturally endorsed communicative norms and strategies for performing deferential respect. In the socialization process, caregivers simultaneously cultivated children's social sensitivity and fostered their mutual bond through verbal, nonverbal, and sensory channels, particularly in the final phase of socializing events. Growing up in an

environment with complex social networks and multiparty interactions around them, children also participated as “legitimate peripheral participants” with well-attuned “third-party attention” (Correa-Chávez and Rogoff 2009; Lave and Wenger 1991; Paradise and Rogoff 2009). They were not only the focus of *khoanh tay* events (as described in this article), but also bystanders to parallel events; these routinely co-occurring configurations magnified the import of *khoanh tay* in children’s lives. Thus, Vietnamese children’s precocious knowledge and overtly docile conduct regarding deferential respect should not be misinterpreted as passive submission to authority figures as incipient forms of sacrifice. Through actively engaging and participating in the culturally defined contexts at a young age, they exercised their agency through various ways, including attentive listening to elders, being onlookers in other children’s socializing events (as shown in Table 2 and Figure 2), coaching younger peers (as shown in Figure 1), and modifying address and reference terms for their own purposes (see Appendices A–B and Table 3). With time, they come to understand and appreciate the intertwining nature of good morality and affection in interaction and communication with people in a hierarchical structure. Such affection-laden hierarchy, in Vietnamese terms, ensures the stability of a complex web of interpersonal relationships and lays the foundation for politeness, filial piety, and sacrifice in the family and in society.

These findings underscore an important direction for future research: to better understand how children make sense of their world, studies of language learning and moral socialization would benefit greatly from encompassing a full range of participant roles beyond the child-centered and child-directed interaction norm. Attentive listening and observing should also be regarded as moral, social, and cognitive abilities (Brown and Gaskins 2014; Fung, Miller, and Lin 2004; Miller et al. 2012; Sperry, Sperry, and Miller 2018). Another important implication of this work is that it is impossible to access the extraordinary complexity of early socialization without adopting a range of methods from across disciplines. Long-term ethnography is needed to identify significant events and situate them in local ecologies and meaning systems. Video recordings and photographs are needed to capture details of posture and bearing difficult to describe in words or even to notice across cultural boundaries. Microanalysis of transcribed interactions is needed to reveal the intricacy of verbal and nonverbal interactions as they unfold. Frequency counts are also needed to establish that key events recur as part of the fabric of everyday life. Inclusion of a range of methods not only creates more rigorous accounts of early socialization but also helps build bridges between different fields and disciplines.

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Appendix A

Upon departing other's house: Khanh (♂ age 3)

1.	Mother (to C):	Dạ bà cô. Respectfully say goodbye to Great-grandma.
2.	Khanh:	Dạ bà cô. Respectfully say goodbye, Great-grandma.
3.	Mother (to C):	Dạ ông hai kia. Respectfully say goodbye to first granduncle.
4.	Khanh:	Dạ ông hai. Respectfully say goodbye, first granduncle.
5.	Great-grandma (to C):	U, con vè đi. Oh, you're leaving.
6.	Grandma (to C):	U. Oh.
7.	Mother (to C):	Rồi dạ, dạ, dạ bà hai kia. And respectfully say goodbye to first grandma.
8.	Khanh:	Dạ bà hai. Respectfully say goodbye, first grandma.
9.	Grandma (to C):	Ơ. Oh.
10.	Mother:	Dạ, dạ cô kia. Respectfully say goodbye to Aunt.
11.	Khanh:	Dạ cô. Respectfully say goodbye, Aunt.
12.	Mother:	Dạ, dạ cô hai con vè. Respectfully say goodbye to first aunt (Aunt's friend), you are leaving.
13.	Aunt (to C):	Ơ. Oh.
14.	Grandma (to C):	Dạ cô giáo nữa kia. Respectfully say goodbye to Teacher too (referring to Heidi).
15.	Khanh (to Aunt's friend):	Con vè. I am leaving. [C feels shy and turns back to M's chest.]
16.	Mother (to C):	Đây nè dạ cô giáo . . . (redirecting C's attention) Here, respectfully say goodbye to Teacher.
17.	Mother (to Heidi):	Nó ôm cái này vè. He's taking (candies and a toy) back home (explaining why he could not fold his arms together).
18.	Aunt (to C):	Dạ cô giáo nè Khanh. Hai cô giáo, dạ cô giáo đi con. Khanh, respectfully say goodbye to Teacher. The two teachers, respectfully say goodbye to them.
19.	Khanh:	Dạ cô con vè. Respectfully say goodbye, Teacher, I am leaving.
20.	Aunt (to Heidi in Chinese):	"Dạ cô con vè," he said goodbye to you and he's going home.

21. Mother (to C): *Lai đây **dạ** cô này nín nè.*
Come over to respectfully say goodbye to this teacher too. (pointing to Chi-han)
22. Heidi: (laughs)
23. Khánh (to Chi-han): *Dạ cô con vè.*
Respectfully goodbye, Teacher, I am leaving.
24. Heidi (to Aunt in Chinese): Is she his mother? (pointing to Khánh's mother)
25. Aunt (to Heidi): Yes.
26. Mother (modeling for C): *Nói chiều . . . vè con ăn cơm chiều con ra con Choi.*
Say, "This afternoon . . . I am going home for lunch, and this afternoon, I will come out to play."
27. Khánh: *Chiều con ra con Choi.*
This afternoon, I will come out to play.

[M laughs, carries C on her hip, and waves goodbye.]

Appendix B

Upon leaving home for school (a pretend play): Vinh (δ age 2)

1. Mother (pushes C inside): *Đi vô đi **thưa** cô bai con đi học. Rồi, đi lên **thưa** cô bai con đi học. **Thưa** cô bai con đi học, rồi rồi đó đi lên.*
Go inside to respectfully say goodbye to first aunt. You're going to school.
Ok, go and respectfully say goodbye to first aunt, respectfully say goodbye to first aunt, you're going to school. Ok, ok, go inside.
- [C walks inside the house; no one but his grandfather, who is blind, pays attention to him.]
2. Grandfather (to C): *Ô, cô hai.*
Oh, first aunt.
- [C goes to GM, who is changing his cousin's clothes behind a curtain.]
3. Vinh (to GM): ***Thưa** bà nội con đi học.*
Respectfully goodbye, Grandma, I'm going to school.
4. Grandfather (to C): *Ô, **thưa** bà nội đi học kia. Con lại **thưa** cô hai đi học kia.*
Oh, respectfully say "goodbye, Grandma, I'm going to school." Also respectfully say goodbye to first aunt.
5. Grandmother (to C): *Đi ra, đi ra đi.*
Go outside, go outside.
- [M brings C out.]
6. Mother: *Nà, đi, đi lại **thưa**, **thưa** cô bai đi.*
Go, go to respectfully say goodbye to first aunt.
7. Grandfather: ***Thưa** cô hai đi học.*
Respectfully say goodbye to first aunt.
- [C walks up to Aunt, who is busy packing.]
8. Vinh: ***Thưa** cô hai con đi học.*
Respectfully goodbye, first aunt. I'm going to school.

Continued

-
9. Aunt (turns to C): *Ō, con đi học, ō.* (laugh)
10. Aunt (to Heidi in Chinese): He said that he's going to leave for school.
11. Grandfather: (laughs) *Ō.*
12. Heidi: (surprised) Wah, “*đi học*,” wow.
[C walks toward the yard, and M calls him back.]
13. Grandfather (to C): *Cô giáo nùa nè, thưa cô giáo con đi học nè.*
(laughs) Also Teacher, say goodbye to Teacher. You're going to school.
14. Mother (to GF): *Thưa rồi, nó thưa cô giáo.*
He has greeted [first aunt]; he now says goodbye to Teacher.
15. Grandfather (to C): *Thưa cô giáo* (unintelligible).
Say goodbye to Teacher.
16. Heidi: (laughs) Wah, “*đi học*.”
17. Vinh (to Heidi): *Thưa cô giáo con đi học.*
Goodbye, Teacher, I'm going to school.
18. Grandfather: (smiles) *Ō.*
19. Researchers: Wow! (laughing)
20. Vinh: (unintelligible) *đi học* (still folding his arms).
21. Mother: *Thưa cô giáo.*
Say “goodbye Teacher.”
- [C walks toward the yard.]
22. Grandfather (to C): *Nói lại, “thưa cô giáo con đi học.”*
Say it again, say “goodbye, Teacher, I'm going to school.”
- [C walks back to Chi-han]
23. Vinh (to Chi-han): *Thưa cô giáo Vinh đi học.*
Goodbye, Teacher, Vinh is going to school.
24. Grandfather (to everyone): (laughs and quotes C's words) “*Vinh đi học.*” “*Vinh đi học.*”
25. Researchers (to each other in Chinese): (laugh) “*Vinh đi học; Vinh đi học!*” His grandfather said *con*, but he changed it to *Vinh!* That's amazing! Amazing!
- [C walks outside, and M follows after him.]
-

Notes

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1. This study is part of a larger project exploring how Vietnamese migrant mothers in Taiwan socialize their mixed-blood children born to Taiwanese men. Driven by economic reasons, these women married Taiwanese men and migrated to Taiwan through for-profit brokers. Before their marriage, they had little or no knowledge about Taiwan and their future husbands. They often describe their marriage and migration as “a sacrifice for the family” (*hy sinh cho gia đình*) and have suffered from one-dimensional stereotypes in both their birth and adopted

countries (Bélanger et al. 2013; Hsia 2007; Lan 2008). Over the past decade, in addition to intensive and longitudinal observations in seven Vietnamese migrant mothers' conjugal homes in Taipei, Heidi also conducted fieldwork in their natal homes in the Mekong Delta (in the provinces of *Đồng Tháp*, *Vinh Long*, *Tiền Giang*, and *Tây Ninh* in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2014). In this article, we report findings from observations of Vietnamese children in Heidi's overseas fieldwork.

2. All siblings, regardless of gender, are ranked by birth order. In southern Vietnam, the eldest child ranks as second in the family (*anh hai/chị hai*—second elder brother/second elder sister), the second child ranks as third, and the third child ranks as fourth. Parents' position as number one is a possible explanation for this ranking scheme. For simplicity, in this essay, we use the person's real biological birth order in our English translation, that is, *anh hai* = first elder brother; *chị ba* = second elder sister.
3. Thu has to carefully employ these changing addresses in private settings, without the presence of outsiders, while her self-reference, *con/cbáu* (grandchild), must always remain unchanged.
4. Over 30 transcribed instances were excluded from further analysis due to their incomplete or fragmented nature, for example, occurring only on rare occasions, containing less than three turns at speaking, or lacking complete visual representation of its nonverbal and postural information.
5. The one exception was a five-year-old, intellectually disabled girl, Vy. When all the prompting attempts failed, adults simply requested that she utter “*dạ*,” while folding her arms for her as if she were an infant.
6. A turn is defined as an interaction unit of talk that continues until another speaker talks or until there is a marked pause. These turns could be verbal or behavioral, or a combination of both, and had to be produced by the participants in their exchanges of interaction during the ongoing event and directly related to the focal child.
7. The terms of the participant roles were named by the authors due to their pragmatic and social functions in these socializing events.
8. The unit for measuring prompting strategies is utterance. Following the definition in Fivush et al. (2000) and Li et al. (2014), an utterance is seen as a subject-verb structure (SVS); for instance, “*Đánh đòn nó được chưa? Khoanh tay lại thua ông hai con*” (Can I spank him yet? *Khoanh tay* and greet first granduncle) would be counted as two utterances comprising two strategies: threatening and stating an imperative. Likewise, utterance is also used to measure the verbal strategies and expressions in the correction and final phases (i.e., praises, discipline, and affection).
9. Heidi and Chi-han were addressed as *cô* (aunt) or *cô giáo* (teacher), as shown in Appendices A and B.
10. Kissing the Vietnamese way is to sniff by nose, which could go unnoticed by foreign observers.

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