Organizing interaction in large groups on a regular basis requires routines, particularly interactions with small children who do not yet fully dispose of cultural conventions of social conduct. Routines are hence a common feature in preschool interactions. They facilitate transitions between daily activities and are important for the functioning of instruction in the class.

The social organization of preschool routines not only develop out of a recurrent interactional format within a given classroom but always also constitute cultural practices that have socio-historically evolved and are dialogically interwoven with broader discourses of good child pedagogy. Routines in teacher-child interactions hence not only provide a platform for the acquisition of conventionalized means of communication but of culturally appropriate interactional roles that go beyond the classroom.

The present talk will look at interactional routines in a preschool in North India that has recently adopted a Montessori approach, which leads to novel and hybrid forms of interactions in the classroom. Analysis is based on a 3-months ethnographic study including several hours of video recording as well as interviews. It uses multimodal interaction analysis (Goodwin, 2000; Mondada 2011) and particularly looks at the use of diverse semiotic modalities, not only oral communication but also haptic scaffolding (Cekaite, 2015, 2016) and material devices (e.g. the use of a bell) to investigate how routines are organizing classroom interactions. Particularly, it looks at how children come to take up their role in routines and the ways in which children’s participation is scaffolded by the teacher and peers. The study shows that these routine practices served as multifaceted sites not only for organizing classroom interactions but also for socializing moral conduct in which children are assigned specific rights, duties, and obligations.