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Talking Video in 'Everyday Life'

Interactional Practices of Localising, Translating and Stretching Conduct in Reality TV Parenting Programmes

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TITLE

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ABSTRACT

For better or worse, video technologies have made their way into many domains of social life, for example in the domain of therapeutics. Techniques such as Marte Meo, Video Interaction Guidance (ViG), Video-Enhanced Reflection on Communication, Video Home Training and Video intervention/prevention (VIP) all promote the use of video as a therapeutic tool. This paper focuses on media therapeutics and the various *in situ* uses of video technologies in the mass media for therapeutic purposes. Reality TV parenting programmes such as *Supernanny*, *Little Angels*, *The House of Tiny Tearaways*, *Honey*, *We're Killing the Kids*, and *Driving Mum and Dad Mad* all use video as a prominent element of not only the audiovisual spectacle of reality television but also the interactional therapy, counselling, coaching and/or instruction intrinsic to these programmes. Thus, talk-on-video is used to intervene interactionally in the practices of 'everyday life' of the participants on such programmes.

As a supplement to the primary talk of therapy and counselling, each programme relies heavily on audiovisual surveillance and playback which can be technologically mediated using live CCTV camera footage, live audio/video monitors and displays or edited video footage. The main uses of video in these programmes can be categorised into the following: (a) live video monitoring/surveillance and commentary; (b) live video relay and instructional feedback from one space to another; and (c) video prompted recall. Examples from a corpus of audiovisual recordings are analysed to elucidate each of these usages as they are worked up, negotiated and contested interactionally by participants in the TV programmes already mentioned. Excerpts are used to analyse several key phenomena: 1) the interactional practices of live video observation and instruction (directives) relayed across different spaces; 2) the use of recorded video by participants to visualise, spatialise and localise talk and action that is distant in time and/or space; 3) the translating, stretching and cutting of social experience in and through the situated use of video technologies in interaction; and 4) the display and mediation of professional vision, ie. the therapist's perception of the mediated conduct of the parents and children under scrutiny.
