

# THE GRAMMAR OF CLOSINGS: THE USE OF DISLOCATED CONSTRUCTIONS AS CLOSING INITIATORS IN FRENCH TALK-IN-INTERACTION

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## **Abstract**

*In this paper, we explore the role of left- and right-dislocated constructions in the closing down of topics and sequences in talk-in-interaction. We understand the grammatical properties of turns and turn construction units as instrumental parts of the action(s) that the turn or the turn construction unit is designed to perform within the moment-by-moment unfolding of talk. Consequently, we treat dislocated constructions as part of the resources speakers use to accomplish actions and to sustain their mutual coordination. Based on a corpus of 15 hours of informal research interviews involving 5 to 8 participants, the analysis reveals a complementary distribution of left- and right-dislocations in the closing down of sequences of talk: left-dislocations are used for same-turn closing initiation (i.e., closings initiated by the current speaker at the end of his or her lengthy turn) whereas right-dislocations are used for next-turn closing initiation (i.e., in closings initiated in a next turn by a next speaker).*

## **1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This paper explores two design features of turns at talk that occur within the closing of topics and/or action sequences. The first feature is the use of left-dislocated constructions (LDs) at the end-point of long turns, following lengthy elaborations by one and the same speaker. The second feature is the use of right-dislocated constructions (RDs) by a next speaker, following a lengthy elaboration by a preceding speaker. The first feature is illustrated in excerpt 1:<sup>2</sup>

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1. We thank two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments on an earlier version of this paper. We also wish to express our gratitude to Stéphane Jullien and Gabriele Müller, members of our research team who have also contributed to establishing the transcriptions of the data. The reflections presented in this paper have greatly profited from many discussions with Stéphane and Gabriele.
  2. The data are transcribed according to the Jeffersonian transcription conventions that may be found at the end of this volume. In addition, '+' indicates the onset of a stretch of talk to which a comment relates and '&' marks a turn's continuation after overlap.

## (1) FNRS C, 1500-1509

- 1 JOS ((turn continued)) y a quand-même un:e  
*there is still a*
- 2 responsabilité de lui apprendre des langues pour que:  
*responsibility to teach him languages so that*
- 3 euh (.) qu' il puisse après se débrouiller l' élève (.)  
*hum that he can then get through the pupil*
- 4 un peu partout.  
*a bit everywhere*
- 5 LIO mhm  
*mhm*
- 6 JOS (donc eh) (1.0) **apprendre des langues à l'école**  
*learn-INF DET languages at DET school*  
*(so hum) to learn languages at school*
- 7 **c'e::st quand-même °une chose° °essentielle°.**  
*it is nevertheless a thing essential*  
*that's still something essential*
- 8 LIO mhm  
*mhm*
- 9 GIS mais je pense que: .h c' est aussi u:n aux  
*but I think that it's also a up to the*
- 10 élèves de (..) de se prendre a- un peu a:- après  
*pupils to to look a- a little bit a- after*
- 11 en charge,  
*themselves*

At lines 6-7, Joséphine brings a lengthy elaboration (as well as a turn) to an end by means of a LD that proffers an assessment, which is followed by a new topic introduction and a shift in participation framework: Gisèle, who had remained silent for a while, takes up the turn and shifts the topic from talking about the school's responsibility in teaching languages to students' responsibility in learning languages.

The second design feature, i.e., the use of RDs in next turns, following the end of a preceding speaker's lengthy elaboration, is shown in excerpt 2:

## (2) FNRS J, 1093-1109

- 1 BRU mais c' est bien pour la prise de conscience [ aussi  
*but it's good for the awareness also*
- 2 GIO [ °mhm°
- 3 BRU de l' élève?  
*of the pupil*
- 4 (0.4)
- 5 LIO mhm
- 6 (0.4)
- 7 BRU parce que ce qu' il ose dire chez moi il le dit pas  
*because what he dares say with me he doesn't say it*

- 8           à la leçon d'italien.  
          *during the italian lesson*
- 9           (0.6)
- 10 LIO     voilà.  
          *that's it*
- 11           (.)
- 12 LIO     (°ouais°)  
          *yeah*
- 13           ((clicking noise of tape-recorder))
- 14 LIO     **c'est- c'est- c'est intéressant en tout cas cette**  
          *it is it is it is interesting in all case this*  
          *it's- it's- it's interesting in any case that*
- 15           **[question-là.**  
          *question there*  
          *question.*
- 16 BRU     [ ((clears his throat))
- 17           (0.3)
- 18 LIO     et tout à fait actuelle. .h et pis sonia vous- (.) vous  
          *and most current and then sonia you- you*
- 19           diriez que vous êtes bilingue, ou plurilingue, ou:,  
          *would say that you are bilingual or pluringual or*

At line 8, Bruno's long turn meets a transition relevance place (TRP), ending on falling pitch contour. Lionel subsequently provides an acknowledging *voilà* 'that's it' plus an assessment formatted as a RD (lines 14-15), followed by a short expansion (line 18). Lionel then initiates a shift in both topic and participation framework: he selects a next speaker, by means of an address term followed by a question, thereby also introducing a new topic and opening a new sequence.

Excerpts 1 and 2, which we will analyse in more detail further on, illustrate a regular distributional pattern of LDs and RDs found within transitions between topics and/or sequences in our data. Within such transitions, LDs are typically placed at the endpoint of long turns, i.e., they occur in the *same turn* as the main body of the conversational episode whose closing they initiate, and they are typically followed by a shift in topic and/or sequence initiated by a next speaker. By contrast, RDs within transition sequences occur most typically in *next turn* position with regard to the main body of the conversational episode being closed, i.e., they are not produced by the speaker whose turn comes to an end, but by the next speaker, who subsequently re-orient talk toward another topic and/or opens a new sequence. In both cases, the dislocated formats proffer some kind of assessment. These initial observations suggest that speakers use LDs and RDs differently to initiate the closing down of a conversational episode.

In what follows, we first provide some background regarding closings in talk-in-interaction and the linguistic features of dislocated constructions, and we

present the data used for this study. We then analyse selected excerpts which document different sequential placements for LD and RD respectively in closing sequences. We show that LDs are part of a practice of *same-turn closing initiation*, while RDs are part of a practice of *next-turn closing initiation*.<sup>3</sup> We hence posit a complementary distribution of LDs and RDs in the closing down of sequences and topics. Although there are a few exceptions to this distribution, the regularities are striking.

### 1.1. Closings

Schegloff and Sacks in their seminal (1973) paper cast the issue of closings in terms of how to bring the turn-taking machinery to a stop. While Schegloff and Sacks are mainly concerned with the closing of “a single conversation”, they also point out the generative character of closing sequences. These provide for the in-built possibility of inserting unmentioned mentionables (i.e., new topics) and for re-opening the conversation (see also Button, 1987). In other words, while the closing sequence may bring to an end a conversational episode, it may thereby also generate a further conversational episode. Closings are thus relevant not only for the unit “a single conversation”, but also for parts of it.

As talk is organised both in terms of topics and of actions (i.e., both as “talk-about” and as “talk-that-does” (Schegloff, 1990), closings may involve the closing down of a topic and/or the closing down of a sequence. Sequences, according to Schegloff (2007:2), are “the vehicle of getting some activity accomplished”. The basic unit of a sequence is the adjacency pair; a sequence may hence minimally consist of one adjacency pair, which is the case for instance for a question-answer sequence. Closings themselves, as they are collaborative accomplishments, are typically formatted as sequences, so-called “sequence closing sequences” (see below). The closing of a sequence however, does not necessarily coincide with the closing of a topic (or vice-versa). Sequence structure can be topically disjunctive, and may for instance involve marked topic introductions. Also, while “a sequence is like a turn, a conversation, or any other recognisably structured unit which does not just end, but has a recognisable form

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3. The two anonymous reviewers who commented on this paper expressed some reservations regarding our use of the term ‘next-turn closing initiation’ which they found to be too reminiscent of ‘next turn repair initiation’ and awkward for a ‘backward looking construction’. We have chosen to retain the term. In our view, it adequately describes a sequential issue, namely the placement of a closing initiation within the turn-architecture of ongoing talk. Of course, the closing initiation is oriented both retrospectively (toward a stretch of talk whose closing it initiates) and prospectively (paving the ground for an upcoming closing and the possible opening of a new topic and/or sequence). As closing is a collaborative endeavour, we consider the dislocated formats under analysis as devices for closing *initiation* (i.e., proposing a closing for acceptance by the interlocutor), rather than closing devices as such.

of closure” (Schegloff, 2007:115; see also Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), topic closings can be more diffuse: “not all topics have an analyzable end” (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973:305).

According to Schegloff (2007:186-7) the basic form of a “sequence closing sequence” is minimally composed of three turns. This three-turn structure can be summed up as follows:

- (a) *closing initiation*: a speaker proposes a possible closing. The most common initiating turn-types, according to Schegloff (ibid) are returns to start of sequence or topic (often readdressing it, incorporating words from it, and thereby e.g., echoing the initiation of the sequence), summaries, assessments, idiomatic or aphoristic formulations of the upshot or outcome of the sequence;
- (b) *recipient alignment or disalignment*: recipient collaborates or withholds or resists compliance;
- (c) (if recipient aligns) *speaker’s optional third move*, a final closing token or assessment that functions as a ratification of the recipient’s alignment with the closing proposal, followed by a possible initiation of a new topic or sequence.

Schegloff signals further features of such sequence closing sequences, namely decline of volume and pitch, and new topic start in (c), typically with increased volume.

While this may be a recurrent pattern (see also Drew and Holt’s “standard sequence” (1998:506) for topical closure and transition to a new topic), one of the characteristics of closings is that they are accomplished in fairly heterogeneous ways (see Button, 1990; Schegloff, 2007:181). For instance, while Schegloff (2007) points out the “most common initiating turn types” (p.186), it remains unclear whether such initiating techniques can also be mere parts (turn construction units - TCUs) of an ongoing turn. Our data shows that the work of initiating closing does actually not need to be accomplished in a separate turn. We find indeed many instances of topic and sequence closing-initiations that occur at the end of lengthy stretches of talk by one speaker, typically initiating the closure of narrative or argumentative sequences. This is in line with earlier work, in particular on the role of proverbial and figurative expressions in closing sequences (see Sacks, 1992; Drew and Holt, 1998; Holt and Drew, 2005).

While the quoted studies and many others (e.g., Button, 1990; De Stefani, 2007; Mondada, 2006) have provided detailed accounts of the sequential organisation of sequence closing sequences, as well as of the type of moves that do the work of initiating closing, little is known about the grammatical resources that are involved in such initiations. Do we find any recurrent grammatical patterns implicated in closing sequences? In this paper, we are concerned with two grammatical resources that participants in our data regularly use when initiating the closing of sequences and topics. These constructions have classically been labelled left- and right-dislocation respectively.

## 1.2. Dislocated constructions

A dislocated construction (e.g., *the waiter he left*) is commonly defined as a sentence structure in which a referential element (most often a NP, *the waiter*) is located to the left or to the right of a matrix clause (*he left*) containing a pronoun (*he*) that is co-indexical with that element (Lambrecht, 2001). In French, the pronoun is a clitic, while in English it is a free morpheme (see Givón, 1983). The extra-clausal element can cover a range of grammatical functions and syntactic categories (see Lambrecht, 2001). The most recurrent cases documented in the literature as well as in the data analysed here are detached pronominal or lexical subjects, followed by objects – direct or indirect. The detached element hence most often consists of a simple or complex NP (as in ex. 2), but it can also consist, for example, of a non-finite VP (such as ‘to learn languages at school’, see ex. 1).

The discourse-functionalist literature conveys a topic promotion function to both LD and RD: both are understood to promote an accessible yet not active referent (i.e., assumed by the speaker not to be in the current cognitive state of attention of the interlocutor) to the status of topic (Chafe, 1976), but RDs are considered to presuppose a higher state of activation of the topic element than LDs (Givón, 1983).

While much of the work on dislocations is based on the study of monologic data, there exists a small number of studies of talk-in-interaction which document, across several languages, that dislocations do much more than just organising information structure: they are used by participants as a resource for organising actions, and for making that organisation mutually recognisable. It has been shown, for instance, that LDs serve as turn-entry devices (Duranti and Ochs, 1979; Pekarek Doehler, 2001) and that they provide a recurrent format for definition-requests (De Stefani, 2005) and for the construction of lists (Pekarek Doehler and Müller, 2006). De Stefani (2007) documents that LDs in specific sequential locations, where they are involved in the closing of episodes or topics, show rhythmic profiles that enhance their closing effect. RDs, in turn, present a privileged format for evaluative statements (Horlacher and Müller, 2005; Horlacher, 2008) and they are used to deal with issues of reciprocity, most typically calling for co-participants’ display of agreement (Horlacher, 2007).

In this paper, we use the terms LDs and RDs for the sake of clarity, in accordance with the dominant literature concerned with these constructions. We have argued elsewhere that the view that ‘dislocated’ constructions derive from any more basic clause pattern is both pragmatically and cognitively implausible (Pekarek Doehler, 2011). Such a view disregards the fundamental moment-by-moment temporal unfolding of talk, and so its sequential character. As LDs are recognisable early in an ongoing turn-construction unit or turn and RDs late, the two constructions strongly differ in how they shape utterances on-line, that is: how they configure the temporal grammatical unfolding of talk, including the projections emanating from such talk. These properties are crucially relevant for

how participants treat LDs and RDs on-line and what interactional jobs these constructions accomplish (Pekarek Doehler, 2011).

### 1.3. Data and procedure

The present study is part of a larger research project<sup>4</sup> investigating the interactional functioning of what has traditionally been called ‘topic’ and ‘focus’ constructions (dislocations, clefts, presentative constructions, etc.). Because closings are eminently sensitive to their interactional environment (see above), we have chosen here to focus only on one speech exchange system, i.e., conversational interviews. The paper is based on a corpus of 15 hours of rather informal conversational interviews, each involving one researcher plus 4 to 7 participants. The data were collected in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and transcribed following the Jeffersonian transcription conventions. Dislocated constructions are highlighted in bold in the quoted excerpts, and word-by-word glosses are given on a separate line preceding the translation.

We have established an exhaustive collection of closing sequences involving dislocated constructions, and have then studied the sequential location of LDs and RDs respectively in these closing sequences. The following analyses rest on a basic distinction between two sequential locations of the closing-initiating move, namely closings initiated by the speaker who has been proffering the talk prior to the closing sequence (same-turn closing initiation), and closings initiated by a recipient of that prior talk (next-turn closing initiation). Our collection consists of 36 closing sequences comprising dislocated constructions as closing initiators. 25 of these comprise a LD and 11 a RD. 23 of the LDs are used as same-turn closing initiators, and 2 occur within next-turn closing initiation; 9 of the RDs are used as next-turn closing initiators, and 2 occur within same-turn closing initiation. This shows a rather stable distributional pattern, with 2 exceptions for each construction (i.e., 8.7% of exceptions for LDs; 18.2% of exceptions for RDs).

## 2. The role of left-dislocations in same-turn closing initiation: initiating closing as a current speaker

We will first focus on those cases where a LD at the end of one speaker’s elaboration participates in the closing down of a simple or complex question-answer adjacency pair. In the data, answers provided by interviewees are often lengthy, involving either narrative or argumentative moves, and their end is often displayed by the speaker by means of a summary assessment. We will call this practice *same-turn closing initiation*. Recurrently, we find LDs in this type of closing initiation.

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4. The project, entitled “Topic and focus constructions as interactional resources. A grammar-in-interaction account”, has been generously supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation for the periods 2003-2007 (no. PP001-68685) and 2007-2009 (no. FN 100012-117938/1). [http://www2.unine.ch/cla/page-10617\\_en.html](http://www2.unine.ch/cla/page-10617_en.html).

### 2.1. Left-dislocated summary assessments as same-turn closing initiators

The most recurrent feature of same-turn closing initiation found in our data is the occurrence of summary assessments. This finding recalls Drew and Holt's (1998) analysis of figurative expressions as closing devices, where the authors state that summary assessments are "commonly, indeed overwhelmingly, employed by speakers to summarise what they themselves have been telling/reporting, rather than what the other, their co-participant, has been telling" (p. 504). Drew and Holt focus on one particular linguistic feature of such closing assessments, namely that they are regularly done by means of figurative expressions. In a recent study on assessments, Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2010) document several occurrences of summary assessments in closing sequences that are linguistically shaped as extrapositions.<sup>5</sup> Our data show yet another linguistic feature: recurrently, summary assessments take the shape of left-dislocated constructions. An illustration is provided in excerpt 3 (which reproduces ex. 1 in its larger context):

#### (3) FNRS C, 1489-1509

- 1 LIO mais l' école là qui doit aller au-delà du du du  
*but school there that needs to go beyond the*
- 2 choix individuel, qui doit faire  
*individual choice that needs to produce*
- 3 u:n un programme en fait un peu pour tout le monde,  
*a program that is indeed a bit for everyone*
- 4 .h vous pensez qu' elle a cette responsabilité, (.)  
*do you believe that it has this responsibility*
- 5 de: donner eu:h (..) aux élè:ves eu:h l' occasion  
*to give the students the occasion*
- 6 de se former eu:h dans plusieurs langues?  
*to get acquainted with several languages*
- 7 (0.6)

5. Some of the extrapositions discussed by Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2010), such as 'it's sweet of you to think of me' (p. 459), show linguistic characteristics that are remarkably close to what we treat here under the heading of RD (see Lambrecht, 2001, for 'dislocations' of non-finite VP in French). Although in this paper we do not document any occurrence of RD with non-finite VP, we do find such patterns in our data:

- 1 BEN ça aurait été très compliqué autrement (...)  
*it AUX-COND be.PST.PTCP very complicated otherwise*  
*'it would have been very complicated otherwise'*
- 2 de réorganiser (.) la chose.  
*to reorganise-INF the thing*  
*'to reorganise things'*

Non-finite VPs are more frequent with LD, though. An illustration is provided in excerpt (3): *apprendre des langues à l'école c'est quand-même une chose essentielle*, literally: 'to learn languages at school, it's still an essential thing'.

- 8 GER mais oui [ça  
but yes that
- 9 LIO [ (que) c'est un MANda:t eu:h un rôle essentiel de  
that this is a mission a fundamental role of
- 10 [ l'écól:e européenne?]  
the schools of Europe
- 11 JOS [ben moi je pense] que **d'apprendre les langues ça**  
to learn-INF DET languages it  
well I think that to learn languages that
- 12 **ouvre des portes après à l'élève**, donc l'écól:e comme  
opens DET doors after PREP the pupil  
opens doors later on for the pupil so the school as it is
- 13 elle est quand même censée eu:h .h former l'élève  
still meant hum to train the pupil
- 14 pour pouvoir p- pour qu'il puisse se débrouiller bien  
to be able t- to be able to get through well
- 15 dans la vie plus tard, . (il est quand-même) (.)  
in life later he is still
- 16 presque: >je veux pas dire< obligé mais .h y a quand-  
almost I don't want to say obliged but there is still
- 17 même un:e responsabilité de lui apprendre des langues  
a responsibility to teach him languages
- 18 pour que: euh (.) qu'il puisse après se débrouiller  
so that that he can then get through
- 19 l'élève (.) un peu partout.  
the student a bit everywhere
- 20 LIO mhm
- 21 JOS (donc eh) (1.0) **apprendre des langues à l'école**  
learn-INF DET languages at DET school  
(so hum) to learn languages at school
- 22 **c'e::st quand-même 'une chose' 'essentielle'**.  
it is nevertheless a thing essential  
that's still something essential
- 23 LIO mhm
- 24 GIS mais je pense que: .h c'est aussi u:n aux  
but I think that it is also a up to the
- 25 élèves de (..) de se prendre a- un peu a:- après  
pupils to to look a- a little bit a- after
- 26 en charge,  
themselves

Lines 1 to 22 show a question-answer adjacency pair. The interviewer, Lionel, asks Joséphine about how she sees the importance of teaching languages at school (lines 1-10). Joséphine then develops a lengthy answer (lines 11-22; note her use of a LD construction in the opening of that turn (lines 11-12), to which we will come back later (see section 2.2 below). Her turn comes to a 'complex'

transition relevance place (see Ford and Thompson, 1996) at line 19, marked by syntactic and pragmatic completion plus falling pitch contour. It is noteworthy that, although at lines 18-19 Joséphine employs a right-dislocated structure (*qu'il puisse après se débrouiller l'élève*), this occurrence is not treated as a closing initiation: a comparison with the RDs analysed in section 3 will provide some indication as to why this may be so. While the RDs that initiate closings overwhelmingly express an assessment of preceding talk, the RD occurring at lines 18-19 does not provide an assessment. In addition, by producing a continuer (line 20), the interviewer displays that he does not treat Joséphine's argument as closed yet. Subsequently, Joséphine expands her turn (lines 21-22) adding another TCU. Given its sequential location, this expansion may be read as a means by which Joséphine clearly signals that her argument, and hence her answer, has reached its end. Her expansion shows several typical features of a closing initiation: it is introduced by the conclusive marker *donc* 'so' (line 21), it is produced with progressively decreasing volume, it ends on falling pitch, and it represents a summary assessment of the preceding talk. This assessment does not relate to the immediately preceding utterance, but rather sums up the gist of a longer stretch of talk (in fact, it mirrors the very opening statement of that talk, line 11, see section 2.2 below). Most importantly for our purpose here, the assessment is grammatically formatted as a left-dislocated construction: the VP *apprendre les langues à l'école* occurs to the left of a matrix clause (*c'est quand-même °une chose° °essentielle°*) containing a co-referential clitic pronoun (*c'*).

The analytically most robust evidence for the concluding effect of the left-detached summary assessments is provided by the fact that co-participants treat these assessments as bringing a preceding segment of talk to an end, in the case analysed here a question-answer adjacency pair. While the interviewer produces a mere continuer (line 23), Gisèle self-selects and launches a new sub-topic (line 24): Gisèle addresses the issue of students' responsibility in learning languages, whereas Joséphine's point was about the teachers' responsibility in teaching languages.

This excerpt, then, provides first evidence for LD used as same-turn closing-initiator: it brings an extensive answer to an end and hence also a question-answer adjacency pair, and it is followed by the initiation of a new topic in the next turn. In this particular case, topic shift also coincides with a shift in participation framework. While the closing here coincides with the end of a question answer-adjacency pair, and hence with the end of a sequence, it is hard to argue that what follows is the opening of a next sequence: the subsequent turn can be read as providing a further answer as to the interviewer's initial question, thereby extending the sequence beyond a first possible end-point.

In some cases, the sequence and/or topic-closing implicativeness of left-dislocated assessments is enhanced by the fact that the speaker was explicitly invited to proffer an assessment, for instance in a question-answer sequence. This

property, related to the fitting of adjacency pairs, may highlight the summary effect of the assessment in turn-final position. This is illustrated in excerpt (4). The interviewer, Lionel, has just shown the participants two contrasting definitions of bilingualism, and asks them how they view the first definition according to which a bilingual person shows perfect mastery of two languages.

(4) FNRS C, 355-380

- 1 LIO est-ce qu'y qu'y a y- y a quelqu'un qui comprend  
*is there there the- there someone who understands*
- 2 bien la première, et puis eu:h (...) °qui a envie  
*the first one well and then who would like*
- 3 de prendre position par rapport à la première  
*to comment on the first*
- 4 définition? soit pour dire que: (...) qu'on  
*definition be it to say that that you*
- 5 l'apprécie °ou non?=  
*like it or not*
- 6 GIS =mais je sais pas si je la comprends bien, mai:s  
*but I don't know if I understand it well but*
- 7 comme je la comprends moi ce qui me dérange c'est  
*as I understand it (me) what bothers me is*
- 8 le fait du: .h du:: de <nati:f> dans les deux  
*the fact of the of the of native in both*
- 9 langues.  
*languages*
- 10 LIO mhm=
- 11 GIS =pui:s ça pour moi on peut être tout à fait  
*and this for me one can be perfectly*
- 12 bilingue en ayant appris une langue, eu:h en ay-  
*bilingual having learned one language hav-*
- 13 en n' étant pas da:ns dans deux langues quoi.  
*not being in in both languages*
- 14 .h en aya:nt euh peut-être été e:n parlant en français  
*.h having perhaps been speaking in French*
- 15 toute sa:: jusqu'à k- VINGT ANS, et puis en étant  
*one's whole up to the age of twenty and then being*
- 16 parti euh je sais pas cinq dix ans dans un autre  
*gone I don't know five ten years in another*
- 17 pays, on (.) peut devenir tout à fait (m:) bilingue,  
*country one can become absolutely bilingual*
- 18 et p:arfait bilingue, parce que sa langue maternelle  
*and perfect bilingual because one's mother tongue*
- 19 o:n on la perd pas, et .h et dans en étant  
*one one doesn't lose it and and in being*



In our data, left-dislocated summary assessments typically occur at the end of question-answer adjacency pairs. They hence occur at points where a sequence is brought to an end. The sequence closing may be followed by new topic introduction or by a re-launch of the same topic. While their specific sequential location at the end of adjacency pairs may be a characteristic feature of the speech exchange system under analysis (see section 4 below), our findings are in line with Jefferson's (1984) observation that summary assessments can be topic termination implicative (see also Drew and Holt, 1998). In addition, the findings also suggest summary assessments may be closely related to sequence closings.

## 2.2. Lexico-syntactic echoing techniques in closing initiations

In our data, left-dislocated summary assessments in closing sequences are often combined with another common sequence-closing initiation technique, pointed out by Schegloff (2007:186): returns to the start of a sequence or a topic, often readdressing it or incorporating words from it. An example was provided in (3), quoted earlier: Joséphine starts answering by pointing out that she considers language learning as substantial for the student's future: it opens doors (lines 11-12). This statement is provided by means of a left-dislocated construction, where the non-finite VP *d'apprendre les langues* 'to learn languages' is fronted and then co-indexed within the matrix clause by the neutral clitic pronoun *ça* (lines 11-12). Her argument comes to a potential end at lines 21-22, displayed by means of a summary assessment that is lexico-syntactically mapped onto the opening statement of her turn: *d'apprendre des langues ça ouvre des portes...* 'learning (learn-INF) languages that opens doors' is echoed by means of *apprendre les langues à l'école c'est quand-même une chose essentielle* 'learning (learn-INF) languages at school that's still an essential thing'.<sup>6</sup> The echoing effect is reinforced by means of the mirroring not only of lexical items, but of a salient constructional pattern: a LD. The very saliency of this pattern renders it particularly appropriate to scaffolding the recognisability of the final summary assessment as returning to the start of the speaker's elaboration.

Such features are common in our data. Excerpt (5), taken from the same interaction, provides a further example.

### (5) FNRS C, 720-738

- 1 LIO vous avez l'impression que l'école pourrait quand-  
you have the impression that school could any-
- 2 même eu::h (..) aménager les cours différemment pour  
way organise classes differently in order to

6. Note that in French, the left-detached non-finite VP can optionally be introduced by means of 'de', here appearing in its contracted form 'd'. Also the 'ce' (contracted to 'c') in the second formulation corresponds to the 'ça' in the first wording, 'c' being the conventional form for the third person neutral pronoun when followed by the copula 'être', 'to be'.

- 3 eu:h (...) pour euh rendre plus profitable en fait  
*in order to render more profitable in fact*
- 4 eu:h le temps °que vous passez à l'école°, (.)  
*the time that you spend at school*
- 5 à apprendre [des langues étrangères.  
*learning foreign languages*
- 6 JOS [>moi je sais pas< parce que là  
*I don't know because there*
- 7 le **l'école elle nous apprend quand-même les bases.**  
 DET DET school it to-us teaches nevertheless the foundations  
*school it teaches us nevertheless the foundations*
- 8 (.) après c'est aussi à nous si on veut vraiment  
*then it's also up to us if we really want*
- 9 plus parler la langue, s'intéresser plus .h puis  
*to speak the language more be more interested and*
- 10 rien que:: apprendre: (.) m:ieux peut-être le vocabulaire  
*simply learn better maybe the vocabulary*
- 11 qu'on aime bien ou n'importe, (.) je crois que c'est aussi  
*that we like or whatever I believe that it's also*
- 12 à nous à faire les efforts,=**l'école elle peut pas**  
 DET school it can NEG  
*up to us to make an effort, school (it) cannot*
- 13 **tout nous donner de toute façon.**  
 all to-us give in any case  
*give us everything in any case*
- 14 SAN puis on n'a pas assez d'heures.  
*also we do not have enough hours*
- 15 JOS mhm (.) °et on en veut pas plus°.   
*and we do not want more*
- 16 MUR non.  
*no*
- 17 ((general laughter))
- 18 LIO il y a deux choses là qui m'intéressent, (.)  
*there are two things there that I am interested in*
- 19 d'une part ((turn continued))  
*on the one hand*

The excerpt again shows an adjacency pair, opened here by means of the interviewer's question as to how language teaching in school can be optimised (lines 1-5). Joséphine's answer shows a mirroring lexico-syntactic pattern. After an initial 'I don't know' (pronounced rapidly), which most likely functions as a marker of a dispreferred response, she adds an explanation: school provides the basics – and it's up to the students to take care of the rest. This core argument, mapped as a LD (line 7), is then further developed and its gist is taken up again at the end of Joséphine's turn: in any case school cannot provide everything (lines 12-13). Both the opening and the final statement are formatted as LDs, including

word-by-word repetitions of *l'école elle ... nous ...* and ending on falling pitch contour. Again then, the resumptive character of the last statement (here heightened by means of *de toute façon* 'in any case'), and its lexico-syntactic echoing effect serve to display it as the final point in Joséphine's argument, and hence as an end-point to the adjacency pair. While a sequence-closing is so initiated, another speaker, Sandrine, produces a post-expansion, by adding a further argument, which is then confirmed by Joséphine, reconfirmed by Muriel, followed by general laughter and the initiation of a new sequence and sub-topic by the interviewer (line 18).

In both excerpts (3) and (5), the re-use of a salient constructional schema highlights the resumptive nature of the final statement. Its recognisability for the participants as a closing initiation device is evidenced by the minute coordination of next speakers' actions with regard to the closing initiation as well as by the absence of such actions during the preceding talk. Thereby, a long turn comes to an end, and the closing of a sequence, as well as of a topic is initiated. The long turn is constructed so as to provide the gist of the talk to come from the onset and to be repeated at the end. The occurrence of summary assessments in turn-final position parallels what we have documented for excerpt (4), and is reminiscent of what Drew and Holt (1998:503) have observed for figurative expressions in topic transition sequences: these do not add further empirical details, but rather sum up what precedes by means of some generalised statement. What is specific about excerpts (3) and (5) is that the summarising effect is enhanced by means of both lexical and syntactic mapping of a final statement onto an opening statement. LD, as a salient structure, is instrumental in this display of parallelism.

### **3. Right-dislocated constructions in next-turn closing initiation: initiating closing as a next speaker**

Closing initiations can occur in next-turn position with regard to a preceding lengthy turn. In our data the interviewer often initiates the closing of a topic or a sequence by means of some display of appreciation of what has been said by the preceding speaker. In these cases – which we subsume under the heading *next-turn closing initiation* – we observe recurrently right-dislocated formats.

#### **3.1 Right-dislocated summary assessments as next-turn closing initiators**

RD represents a frequent format for assessments in closing sequences, just as LD does. What is different though is that RD assessments occur in next turns, following the end of a lengthy elaboration by a preceding speaker, while LD assessments are produced by the same speaker at the end of his or her own telling. Their sequential placement accounts for RDs as pertaining to a practice of *next-turn closing initiation*. Also LDs as same-turn closing initiators and RDs as next-turn closing initiators differ as to the object of the assessment: while the former are summary assessments referring to *the content* of the speakers' talk, the latter are meta-

discursive appreciations of the other speaker's *activity of talking*: they assess the relevance, importance or quality of a co-participant's contribution to the ongoing interaction.

The following excerpt shows a RD that is not produced by the speaker whose turn comes to an end, but by the interviewer, who subsequently opens a new sequence by offering the floor to other participants:

(6) FNRS C, 1230-1252

- 1 GIS moi j'arrive eu:h j'arrive pis c'est- automatiquement  
me I manage I manage and it's- automatically
- 2 je parle en allemand. je sais que dans ce lieu-là c'est  
I speak German I know that in that place there it's
- 3 allemand. donc [je branche automatiquement allemand. (.)  
German so I automatically switch to German
- 4 LIO [mhm
- 5 GIS °.h:° alors <quand il faut changer de langue>((laughing)) ben:  
so when you have to change the language well
- 6 j'ai: .h je suis encore parfois branchée allemand [°quoi.°  
I have: I'm still sometimes switched to German
- 7 LIO [ (°ouais°)  
yeah
- 8 (1.6)
- 9 LIO ou:ais c'es:t=  
yeah it's
- 10 GIS =<c'est- non non mais c'est très drôle>((laughing))  
= it's- no no but it's very funny
- 11 ((small [laughter]))
- 12 ? [ ((small [laughter]))
- 13 LIO [ ((laughter))
- 14 GIS [ <x (enfin) parfois disons que les autres  
[ (well) sometimes let's say the others
- 15 trouvent ça très drôle aussi quand même.>((laughing))  
find that very funny also anyway ((laughing))
- 16 ((small laughter))
- 17 (1.0)
- 18 LIO °j' imagine°.  
I can imagine
- 19 .h (..) °mai:s m- **c'est intéressant ça.**°  
bu:t b- it's interesting this
- 20 (0.6)
- 21 LIO est-ce qu'y en a d'autres qui aimeraient réagir par rapport  
are there others who would like to react with regard
- 22 à ces images?  
to these pictures
- 23 (3.5)

The excerpt is taken from a conversation between a researcher (Lionel) and four adults speaking about their experiences with bilingualism in their everyday lives. Lionel has just asked his co-participants to comment on some pictures that represent different perceptions of how a bilingual's brain is structured. Gisèle is explaining that whenever she finds herself in a German speaking area she "automatically" (line 3) starts to speak German. Lionel acknowledges Gisèle's explanations (lines 4, 7) but does not claim the floor. His second acknowledgement (line 7) coincides with Gisèle's turn reaching a TRP, and is followed by a lengthy pause (line 8). Lionel then initiates a turn (line 9) that is completed again by Gisèle, who assesses her habit of switching to German when surrounded by German speaking people as *very funny* ('très drôle'; line 10). To this assessment, by means of which Gisèle possibly displays her orientation toward closing and which she accompanies by laughter, her co-participants respond in turn with laughter (lines 12-13). There is thus possibly joint orientation toward closing here. Subsequently, however, Gisèle adds further talk (lines 14-16) and Lionel responds (after a one second pause) with an aligning, soft °*j' imagine*° 'I can imagine' (line 18), ending with falling pitch indicative of a TRP. Lionel then extends his turn, providing a TCU that is constructed as a RD: when he says °*mai:s m- c' est intéressant ça*° 'but that's interesting' (bu:t b- it's interesting this) (line 19), he actually proffers an assessment that does not relate to the content of Gisèle's talk (i.e., her habit of switching language, as did Gisèle's own *très drôle*), but rather to Gisèle's talk as such, which is treated as an adequate and complete response to the interviewer's initial question. It is in this sense that Lionel's right-dislocated assessment can be heard as officially initiating the closing down of the question-answer adjacency pair that he had initiated earlier. Also, Lionel subsequently initiates a change in participation framework: at lines 21-23 he solicits the other participants to comment on the pictures that he has shown to them, a task that Gisèle has just completed successfully. Thanks to Lionel's turn at line 19, the participants can recognise the successful completion of Gisèle's talk. The architecture of his contribution between lines 18 and 19 is noteworthy: the affiliative *j' imagine*, is immediately followed by an in-breath projecting more to come, a pause and finally the RD assessment: this way of structuring the transition between a previous and a next sequence (here: adjacency pair) is recurrent in our data, as shown in the next two excerpts. In excerpt (7), quoted earlier as (2), Lionel is talking to teachers, asking them about how they experience bilingual classes:

(7) FNRS J, 1093-1109

- |   |     |   |
|---|-----|---|
| 1 | BRU | mais c' est bien pour la prise de conscience [aussi de&<br>but it's good for the awareness [also of |
| 2 | LIS | [ °mhm°   |
| 3 | BRU | &l' élève?<br>the pupil   |

- 4 (0.4)
- 5 LIO mhm
- 6 (0.4)
- 7 BRU parce que ce qu' il ose dire chez moi il le dit pas  
because what he dares saying with me he doesn't say it
- 8 à la leçon d'italien.  
during the Italian lesson
- 9 (0.6)
- 10 LIO voilà.  
that's it
- 11 (.)
- 12 LIO (°ouais°)  
yeah
- 13 ((clicking noise of tape-recorder))
- 14 LIO **c'est- c'est- c'est intéressant en tout cas cette**  
it is it's it's interesting in all case this  
it's- it's- it's interesting in any case that
- 15 **[question-là.**  
question there  
question
- 16 BRU [ ((clears his throat))
- 17 (0.3)
- 18 LIO et tout à fait actuelle. .hh et pis Sonia vous- (.) vous  
and most up to date and then Sonia you- you
- 19 diriez que vous êtes bilingue, ou plurilingue, ou:,  
would say that you are bilingual or plurilingual or

Preceding the excerpt, Bruno has just explained how he teaches geography in Italian, while being in a French-speaking region. At lines 1 and 3, Bruno presents a positive assessment as regards his way of teaching. While co-participants provide continuers (lines 2 and 4), Bruno (lines 7-8) presents an account for his previous positive assessment.

It is noteworthy that Bruno's account at lines 7-8 is itself formatted as a LD construction, ending on clear falling intonation. While the construction does not present a summary assessment, as the LDs discussed above, it may be closing implicative, as Lionel's *voilà* (line 10) may be heard as aligning with a potential closing of the preceding sequence of talk, and in particular with the end of a question-answer adjacency pair (see De Stefani, 2007 for an analysis of the rhythmic pattern and the possible closing implicative nature of the LD at lines 7-8). Clearly, however, Lionel backs his *voilà* up with a further move towards closing, proffering a RD assessment at lines 14-15. It is only after this assessment, shortly extended at line 18, that Lionel opens a new sequence (a new question-answer adjacency pair), introducing a new topic of talk while selecting another speaker (Sonia) (lines 18-19) and thereby shifting the participation framework.

Lionel's *voilà* hence does not initiate a closing. Rather, at this point of the interaction, *voilà* may be heard as a mere agreement token. It is only thanks to Lionel's following RD assessment that the unit *voilà* is retrospectively interpretable as oriented towards closing. This sequential pattern consisting of a recipient's agreement token (e.g., *voilà* 'there you go', *d'accord* 'okay', *j'imagine* 'I can imagine'), plus pause, plus RD, followed by new topic and sequence opening, is recurrent in our data (see also ex. 8)

It is noteworthy that the object of the assessment is cast here, as in excerpt (6) and in most other next-turn closing initiations in our data (see also ex. 8), in generalised terms: it relates not to a singular referent or action but rather to a broader subject matter (*cette question-là*. 'that question', lines 14-15). Also, typically, it is meta-discursive in nature, proffering a positive evaluation which, rather than relating to a single or immediately preceding statement, addresses the co-participant's contribution to the ongoing interaction as a whole (see also ex. 6 and 8).

Another case of a RD displaying a sequence closing is shown in excerpt (8). The interviewer, Monica, is asking four 12-13 year-old children about their use of a language other than French (their mother tongue) in their everyday life:

(8) FNRS F, 1352-1372

- 1 MON *mai::s donc t'as parlé l'italien, (.) en dehors de l'école toi.=*  
*but so you spoke Italian outside of school (you)*
- 2 VAL *=mhm ouais=*  
*mhm yeah*
- 3 MON *=pas avec tes parents, mais avec eu::h avec tes copains?=*  
*not with your parents but with with your friends*
- 4 VAL *=mhm*
- 5 MON *mhm=*
- 6 VAL *=parce que mes parents ils savent- (.) (à peu) près rien en*  
*because my parents they know next to nothing about*
- 7 VAL *il italien,*  
*Italian*
- 8 MON *[ouais*  
*[yeah*
- 9 VAL *ils pourraient pas dire un mot. ((laughing))*  
*they couldn't utter a word*
- 10 MON *d'accord ((laughing))*  
*alright*
- 11 *(0.4)*
- 12 MON *et puis toi ben t'as parlé avec ta famille en ita[lie quoi.*  
*and you well you spoke with your family in ita[ly didn't you*
- 13 JOE *[ouais*  
*[yeah*

- 14 et puis aussi avec Marilyn on a parlé encore pour pas que: .h  
and also with Marilyn we spoke 'also to prevent
- 15 JOE [ (.) les autres sachent ce qu'on dise.  
[ other people from understanding what we were saying
- 16 MON [a::h
- 17 (0.2)
- 18 MON ah^a::h
- 19 (0.5)
- 20 MON (pour vos dis-) petits seCRETS?  
for your dis- little secrets
- 21 (0.2)
- 22 JOE ouais=  
yeah
- 23 MON =d' accord.  
=alright
- 24 (0.2)
- 25 MON .h BON alors- (1.0) >ben c' est très bien. **c'est très intéressant**  
it is very interesting  
well so- well that's very good it's very interesting
- 26 **tout ce que vous me racontez là en tout cas.<**  
all that what you to-me tell there in all case  
all what you are telling me (there) in any case
- 27 .hh et j'aimerais qu'on termine (.) par (.) un petit truc?  
and I would like to end with a small thing

The excerpt shows how the interviewer addresses the same question about the pupils' competences in Italian successively to two different speakers, first to Valentine (lines 1-10), then to Joëlle (lines 12-24). Monica ends this serial questioning again by means of a three-step procedure. At line 23, she provides an agreement token (*d'accord* 'alright', which she had already used at line 10 to mark the end of the preceding answer-question sequence), which is followed by a pause. She then self-interrupts what possibly was designed to initiate an abrupt shift (*BON alors-* 'well so-', line 25) and instead provides an assessment (lines 25-26), using a RD format. This time, in fact, two subsequent assessments are provided (*c'est très bien* 'that's very good', *c'est très intéressant* 'it's very interesting') in the initial part of the turn, whereas the object of the assessment is again placed in TCU-final position and has again a generalised meta-discursive character (*tout ce que vous me racontez là en tout cas* 'all what you are telling me in any case', line 26). Finally, Monica opens a new sequence: *j'aimerais qu'on termine (.) par (.) un petit truc?* 'I would like to end with a small thing' (line 27).

While the structural similarity between the sequence closing sequences in excerpts (6), (7) and (8) is apparent, *what* is being closed in (8) is different. Whereas excerpts (6) and (7) showed the closing of an adjacency pair that coincided with the reorganisation of the participation framework, in excerpt (8) it

is not just the *prior* question-answer sequence that is closed down, but rather a *series* of preceding question-answer sequences. The RD assessment is an efficient resource for doing so: indeed, while Monica uses *d'accord* 'alright' to mark the closing of a question-answer sequence (as in line 9), she uses *d'accord* + RD assessment to close down a course of action (see Heritage and Sorjonen, 1994) that comprises a series of similar sequences. In fact, speakers can often be seen to assess actions that are not accomplished in the immediately previous turn: this has, for instance, been observed by Drew and Holt (1998:503) with regard to topic closing figurative expressions used as assessments and is also the case for the closing down of a course of actions as shown in excerpt (8).

The three excerpts presented in this section show several recurrent features of next-turn closing initiations.

First, by contrast to the use of LD in same-turn closing initiations, next-turn closing initiations often involve right-dislocated assessments: they occur after the end of a preceding turn and are typically preceded by a minimal agreement token, and followed by the opening of a new action sequence (e.g., a new adjacency pair or a new course of action), most often coinciding with the introduction of a new topic.

Second, the object of the assessment is cast in generalised terms, proffering a positive meta-discursive evaluation regarding a co-participant's contribution to the ongoing interaction. This contrasts with the LDs found in same-turn closing initiations, which, rather than commenting on the appropriateness of another speaker's talk/action, provide a speaker's summary assessment of some contents that she herself has proffered.

Third, by contrast to Drew and Holt's (1998) "standard sequence" of topic transition (and also Schegloff's 2007 account of sequence closing sequences), where the closing initiation by speaker A is followed by displays of alignment by speaker B, next-turn closing initiations in our data (just like same-turn closing initiations) are typically not followed by any such display. This may be a characteristic feature of the specific speech exchange system under analysis (see below).

As a matter of fact, what the right-dislocated assessments do in our data is quite similar to what Antaki, Houtkoop-Steenstra and Rapley (2000:236) have described for the use of "brilliant" in interviews: "They signal movement through a series of interactional units: the completion of individual question-answer pairs, interview schedule sections, and the whole series of questions". In this sense, they "are task-oriented, rather than content-oriented". More than assessing the content of the previous material, they project a move to a next topic/sequence.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The analyses presented in this paper lead us to distinguish two practices that speakers use for initiating a closing of a topic or sequence: *same-turn closing initiation* and *next-turn closing initiation*. We ground this distinction in a series of features of talk-in-interaction, as observed in our data:

1. Speakers initiating the closing: While *same-turn closing initiations* are accomplished by a current speaker, typically engaged in a lengthy turn, *next-turn closing initiations* are provided by a subsequent speaker, who thereby treats the immediately preceding contribution as having come to an end (of a sequence and/or a topic);
2. Syntactic format: in closing sequences, LDs are typically used for *same-turn closing initiation* while RDs are typically used for *next-turn closing initiation*. In *same-turn closing initiations*, the closing effect may further be enhanced by echoing practices accomplished by means of the recycling – at the end of one speaker’s elaborations – of lexico-syntactic patterns that occurred at the very start of these elaborations. LDs, as salient patterns, are particularly apt for making such echoings recognisable to co-participants.
3. Co-occurring units: *Same-turn closing initiations* are characteristically introduced by means of a conclusive marker such as *donc* ‘so’ that foreshadows the upcoming closing, while *next-turn closing initiations* are preceded by an alignment token (*j’imagine* ‘I can imagine’, *voilà* ‘that’s it’, *d’accord* ‘okay’).
4. Assessments: Both kinds of closing initiations are regularly done by means of assessments. This is in line with Goodwin and Goodwin’s (1987:38) observation that assessments are one of the characteristic activities used to exit from larger sequential units in talk such as stories and topics and thus to move towards closure. It is also in line with Jefferson’s (1984) interpretation of summary assessments as potentially topic closure implicative. Our findings, however, reveal that the nature of the assessment differs between same- and next-turn closing initiation. *Same-turn closing initiations* show summary assessments relating to the content of the ongoing talk. *Next-turn closing initiations* are not done by means of summary assessments, but involve typically generalised assessments that relate, to a preceding speaker’s conversational activity *per se*. Quite similarly to what Antaki, Houtkoop-Steenstra and Rapley (2000) have described for the use of “brilliant” in interviews, these right-dislocated summary assessments do more than assessing the content of previous talk: they project a move to a next topic/sequence.

Thus, our data show a *complementary distribution* of LD and RD respectively in closing sequences. We explain this complementary distribution by how LD and

RD shape utterances on line: in the cases under analysis, LDs make recognisable early in the TCU what the TCU is *about* (i.e., they display the topic, e.g., *l'école* in *l'école elle ne peut pas tout nous donner*, 'school (it) cannot give us everything'), while RDs make recognisable early in the TCU what action the TCU is *performing* (i.e., they display the speaker making an assessment, e.g., *c'est intéressant* in *c'est intéressant...cette question là* 'it's interesting that question there'). These features then may be relevant for how speakers use LD and RD in closing-initiating assessments: speakers close their own talk by returning to the core topic of that talk, and they use LDs to make that return recognisable early in the closing-initiating TCU; recipients initiate closings by positively evaluating the preceding speaker's talk, and they use RDs to make that evaluation recognisable early in their talk. In other words, what may be most relevant for self-turn-initiation is the display of the fact that *what we have talked about* is coming to an end; while what may be relevant in the first place for next-turn closing initiation is the display of a *positive evaluation* of what the other speaker was doing. LD and RD respectively allow for the fronting of either of these elements within the unfolding TCU. The on-line formatting of utterances, as implemented by grammatical formats, may thus be a crucial feature explaining why next-turn closing initiations regularly take the shape of RD, while same-turn closing initiations regularly take the shape of LD. This is one way that speakers use grammar to warrant the mutual coordination of talk-in-interaction.

In this light, our findings provide further empirical support for a conceptualisation of grammar as an *emergent* phenomenon (Hopper, 1987) that is deployed *on-line* (Auer, 2009), along the moment-to-moment unfolding of talk, and that is tightly related to the accomplishment of socially relevant actions – such as organising the sequential, topical and participatory features of interaction. The findings also provide new insights into the interactional jobs that so called 'dislocated' constructions accomplish in conversation, thereby providing an interactional perspective on constructions which, in the French linguistic tradition in particular, have so far been discussed from a (broadly speaking) formal or a discourse-functional perspective. Finally, our findings contribute to a better knowledge of the linguistic features of closings, which have remained largely unexplored so far.

It is important to point out, however, that the use of dislocated formats as closing initiators may be specifically noteworthy for French, where dislocated constructions are frequent. In other languages, participants may regularly use other linguistic means for initiating closing of conversational sequences. It may be symptomatic, in this regard, that our data do not present any significant number of formulaic sequences, which have been shown to be frequently used as closing devices in English telephone conversations (Drew and Holt, 1998).

The results of the above analyses also draw our attention to specific sequential properties of closing. In the data, the work of initiating closing is often not

accomplished in a separate turn, but as the final component of one long turn: initiations often occur at the end of speakers' long turns. Also, the closing-initiations we find in our data are most often not followed by co-participants' displays of alignment or disalignment, but by unilateral new topic or sequence opening. This is different from Schegloff's (2007) account of sequence closing sequences (see section 1.1 above), as well as from Drew and Holt's (1998:506) "standard sequence" of topic transition, confirming the very heterogeneity of shapes that closing sequences may take (see Button, 1990). This sequential property of the closings in our data may be due to the specific speech exchange system that we are investigating: multi-party conversational interviews. In most of the excerpts analysed above (though not all), it is the interviewer who opens a new sequence, e.g., by addressing another co-participant. The sequential 'shortcut' in closing sequences may therefore be a distinctive feature of this type of speech exchange system, differentiating it from ordinary conversation, and in particular from telephone conversations. But it may also be a more general feature of question-answer sequences. As Sacks (1992:264) has pointed out, after an answer to a question, the person who asked the question has the chance to speak again. As the questioner may ask another question, this may, in some way, also favour more or less unilateral new topic and new sequence openings by the questioner. Future research may provide more insights into the context-sensitivity of closing sequences and in particular into the relation between same- and next-turn closing initiation and the occurrence of co-participants' display of (dis)alignment.

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