



THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

A Multimodal Analysis of Complaining in French Interactions

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IMPRIMATUR

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Neuchâtel, le 23 octobre 2020



Le doyen
Pierre Alain Mariaux

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Summary

Second language (L2) learning is an incredibly intricate endeavor. To be able to participate effectively in real-life situations in the L2, it is not enough to learn vocabulary, grammar, and other linguistic skills. Speakers also need to develop an *interactional competence*. This dissertation investigates the development of interactional competence in L2 French. Drawing on ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis, the study documents longitudinally how speakers' multimodal practices for complaining about non-present third parties or state of affairs change over time. Data consist of video-recordings of small groups of students participating in a 'conversation circle' at a university in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The study concentrates on five focal participants at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels of French, and tracks their involvement in complaint sequences during three to 19 months. The analysis comprises three empirical sub-studies that examine three dimensions of complaining: (1) the structural organization of complaining, (2) the interactional resources people use in complaining, and (3) how speakers' shared interactional histories and their evolving social relationships affect complaint practices. The results of the three sub-studies contribute to a better understanding of a range of features involved in the development of L2 interactional competence. They show how speakers develop their ability to manage conversational turn-taking, to coordinate and co-construct larger sequences of actions with others, and to introduce delicate talk. They also demonstrate how speakers use increasingly diverse repertoires of linguistic resources for interactional purposes and assemble multisemiotic (verbal, paraverbal, embodied) conduct into multimodal 'packages' for action. Finally, they illustrate how speakers draw on their shared interactional histories with their coparticipants to produce recognizable, context-sensitive, and recipient-designed social actions. The findings have important consequences for our understanding of the development of L2 interactional competence and of L2 learning more generally. They underline the fundamentally multimodal, socially situated, and co-constructed nature of interactional competence and shed light on the role of socialization processes in the development of such competence.

Keywords: Interactional Competence, Second Language Acquisition, Conversation Analysis, CA-SLA, Complaining, French, Social Interaction, Multimodality, Development, Learning, Longitudinal studies, Applied Linguistics, Affiliation, Morality, Co-construction, Grammar

Résumé

L'apprentissage d'une langue seconde (L2) est un processus extrêmement complexe. Pour pouvoir participer de manière efficace à des situations authentiques en L2, il ne suffit pas d'apprendre le vocabulaire, la grammaire et d'autres notions linguistiques. Il faut aussi développer une *compétence d'interaction*. Cette thèse porte sur le développement de la compétence d'interaction en français L2. En se basant sur l'Analyse Conversationnelle, l'étude examine de manière longitudinale comment les pratiques multimodales des locuteurs pour se plaindre de tiers absents ou d'un objet évoluent à travers le temps. Les données sont constituées d'enregistrements vidéo de petits groupes d'étudiants participant à un 'cercle de conversation' dans une université de Suisse romande. L'étude se focalise sur cinq participants de niveau élémentaire et intermédiaire/avancé en français, et suit leur implication dans des séquences de plaintes sur une durée entre trois et 19 mois. L'analyse comprend trois sous-études empiriques qui se concentrent sur les dimensions suivantes : (1) l'organisation structurelle des plaintes, (2) les ressources interactionnelles mobilisées dans les plaintes et (3) la façon dont les histoires interactionnelles partagées par les locuteurs et l'évolution de leurs relations sociales affectent les pratiques de plainte. Les résultats des trois sous-études contribuent à une meilleure compréhension d'une série de composantes de la compétence d'interaction en L2 et de leur développement longitudinal. Ils démontrent comment les locuteurs développent leur capacité à gérer la prise de parole, à coordonner et à co-construire avec autrui des séquences d'actions plus larges, et à introduire des sujets délicats. Ils montrent également comment les locuteurs utilisent des répertoires de ressources linguistiques de plus en plus variés à des fins interactionnelles et comment ils assemblent des conduites multisémiotiques (verbales, paraverbales, corporelles) en des 'packages' multimodaux pour l'action. Enfin, ils illustrent comment les locuteurs s'appuient sur leurs histoires interactionnelles partagées avec leurs coparticipants pour produire des actions sociales reconnaissables qui sont sensibles au contexte et au destinataire. Les résultats ont des conséquences importantes pour notre compréhension du développement de la compétence d'interaction en L2 et de l'apprentissage des L2 en général. Ils soulignent la nature fondamentalement multimodale, socialement située et co-construite de la compétence d'interaction et ils mettent en lumière le rôle des processus de socialisation dans le développement de cette compétence.

Mots-clés : Compétence d'interaction, Acquisition d'une langue seconde, Analyse Conversationnelle, CA-SLA, Plaintes, Français, Interaction sociale, Multimodalité, Développement, Apprentissage, Etudes longitudinales, Linguistique appliquée, Affiliation, Moralité, Co-construction, Grammaire

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Transcription conventions

The following conventions are based largely on Jefferson (2004), with the addition of a selection of Mondada's (2019) conventions for annotating embodied conduct.

[Point of overlap onset
]	End of overlap
=	No break or gap
(0.0)	Pause length in tenths of seconds
(.)	Pause of approximately ten milliseconds
—	(Underscoring): Marked stress/emphasis
::	Elongation of sound (one colon per ten milliseconds)
↑↓	High versus low pitch
.	Falling intonation
,	Low-rising intonation, suggesting continuation
˘	Slightly rising intonation
?	Clearly rising intonation
–	Abrupt cut-off
CAP	Especially loud sound relative to surrounding talk
lower case	Normal conversational volume
°utterance°	Lower volume than surrounding talk
°°utterance°°	Whisper
£utterance£	Laughter voice
@utterance@	Creaky voice
.hhh	In-drawn breaths
hhh	Out-drawn breaths or laughter tokens, in parentheses within words: (h)
>word<	Speeded up delivery relative to surrounding talk
<word>	Slowed down delivery relative to surrounding talk
utterance&	Turn continues
&utterance	Continuation of turn
(xxx)	Unintelligible talk, one x per syllable
((comment))	Verbal description of conduct or voice quality
/symbol/	Phonetic transcription (IPA)
<i>Italics</i>	English translations of French talk
* / Ω / \$	Symbol indicates the start and end of embodied conduct in relation to talk.
§ / € / %	Embodied conduct is described in grey font.
÷ / ±	
#	Indicates timing of a figure (framegrab) in relation to talk.

To facilitate reading, embodied conduct is sometimes described in double brackets, for example: ((all participants nod))

Talk that is particularly important for the analysis appears in **bold**.

List of abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
CA-SLA	Conversation Analysis in/for Second Language Acquisition
DET	Determiner
DRS	Direct-Reported Speech
EMCA	Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IRS	Indirect-Reported Speech
LH	Left Hand
L1	First Language
L2	Second (unless specified, also foreign/additional) Language
PRT	Particle
RH	Right Hand
SING	Singular
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TCU	Turn-Constructional Unit

1. Introduction

Language ... is fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes.
(Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 296)

The majority of mortals, Paulinus, complain bitterly of the spitefulness of Nature, because we are born for a brief span of life ... the same feeling has called forth complaint also from men who were famous.
(Seneca, 49 AD/1932)

When looking back at my time as a foreign language teacher in Sweden, I remember the overwhelming answer I got when I asked my students what they most wanted to learn in my French and English classes: to speak! They wanted to go to Paris and be able to buy a baguette in a French *boulangerie* and to do small talk with people in the streets of New York. The possibility to use a second/foreign/additional language (henceforth *second language* or *L2*) for real-life communicative purposes can be extremely rewarding. It opens a window into new linguistic communities and offers insights into foreign cultures. For many people, there is much more than so at stake when it comes to L2 learning, however. Especially in *second language* settings (as opposed to the foreign language classroom), interactional skills are key to participation in the daily life of the L2 community and to long-term integration in the country. This is the case for most of the participants of the present study, who have come from abroad to study in Switzerland and possibly to stay for good. For them, learning how to interact in French is not a choice – it is a necessity for succeeding with their studies, work, and everyday lives. But as my students, the participants of this study, and most other people who have attempted to learn or teach a new language have experienced, developing L2 interactional skills is an incredibly challenging endeavor. Even after many years of study, and when having reached an advanced level of grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic skills, speakers struggle to participate effectively in authentic L2 interactions. Yet social interaction occupies only a small, backseat place in many second and foreign language courses.

Why is it so difficult to learn social interaction in an L2, and why do we not focus more on it in L2 instruction? As highlighted in the quote by Firth and Wagner (1997) above, language learning is inextricably related to language *use*. One cannot expect to become a proficient L2 interactant without actually practicing social interaction; without partaking in different types of conversations and social encounters in the L2. At the same time, learners and teachers need ecologically sound guidance on what is needed to participate effectively in L2 interactions. For a very long time, however, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research paid only marginal attention to the micro-details of interactional skills, and specialists on social interaction (such as researchers within the field of Conversation Analysis, CA), were rarely interested in L2 learning (Firth & Wagner, 1997). This likely contributed to the long-standing tradition within the educational domain to focus on distinct ‘speaking’ and ‘listening’ skills (in addition to ‘writing’ and ‘reading’), to the point that interaction still today is treated as a separate category next to ‘reception’ and ‘production’ in important policy documents such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2018). In addition, research on

the *longitudinal trajectories* involved in the development of L2 interactional skills is even more scarce (Pekarek Doehler, 2019b; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015), which means that we know very little about the different steps speakers go through on their way to master L2 interaction. Pedagogical resources for L2 learning therefore often fail to provide learners with empirically grounded advice on how to improve their interactional skills over time (Salaberry & Kunitz, 2019a). To change the view of L2 interaction and how it is treated within language instruction today, more research is needed on what it means to be interactionally ‘competent’ in an L2 and on the longitudinal trajectories involved in the development of such competence.

The present dissertation contributes to these lines of inquiries by investigating longitudinally how L2 speakers of French engage in a ubiquitous social activity: complaining. As seen in the observations by Seneca above, dating back to 49 AD, complaining has been a human concern since long. In layman terms, the notion of complaining typically refers to the action of expressing grief, discontent, or some other type of negative stance toward a person, an object, or a state of affairs. This can be done either informally, to a close person, a colleague, or a fellow commuter train passenger, or formally, to the electricity provider, workers union, housing agency, and so on. We complain about the weather, our bosses, in-laws, inability to remember to return overdue books to the library, and about broken heaters, unacceptable working conditions, and loud neighbors. At some point in life, we all complain about something to someone. Based on such experiences, we have likely acquired a basic appreciation, or commonsense ‘members’ knowledge’ in Garfinkel’s (1967) terms, of what it means to complain in different spheres of life. People’s basic awareness of and interest in complaining can even be seen in the vast domain of self-help books, with popular-science efforts to help people complain ‘the right way’ to improve various situations (e.g., Winch, 2011).

It is not until the last 40 years or so that complaining as a social, interactional activity has undergone systematic scientific scrutiny. While Seneca provides a rather negative account of complaining as something that people should avoid doing, recent micro-analytic interactional research has highlighted more positive dimensions of this activity and shown its ubiquity in ordinary interactions. Sharing our troubles and showing our frustration allow us to ‘vent’, ‘let off steam’, and typically exchange displays of affiliation and sympathy with others (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Selting, 2012). Contrary to popular belief, complaining thus has the positive potential of strengthening social relationships (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981). What is more important for this study, though, is that the interactional complexity of complaining makes this an ideal analytical object for investigating the development of L2 speakers’¹ interactional skills over time. As I illustrate below (Ch. 1.2), complaining is an incredibly intricate social-interactional endeavor, which entails the organization of long sequences of actions, fine-grained social coordination between participants, the management of delicate talk, stance-taking, and affiliation, and other related facets of interaction that are essential to ordinary conversation. Complaining thus opens a window into some of the central components of what it means to be interactionally competent;

¹ I use the term *L2 speakers* rather than *L2 learners* or *non-native speakers*, as I find *speakers* a more neutral term that does not presuppose an omnipresent orientation to learning (cf. Firth & Wagner, 1997).

yet it has never been investigated from a micro-analytic, action-oriented, and longitudinal perspective in SLA. This is precisely what I set out to do in this dissertation.

In what follows, I present the foundational principles involved in the use of a social-interactional approach to both language learning (Ch. 1.1) and complaining (Ch. 1.2). I then present the overall aim and research questions of the study (Ch. 1.3) and outline the structure of the dissertation (Ch. 1.4).

1.1 A social and praxeological perspective on L2 learning

The dissertation adopts a micro-level, social, and praxeological (action-oriented) research approach that draws on ethnomethodological CA to investigate L2 interaction and learning (also called CA in/for Second Language Acquisition, or CA-SLA). Excerpt 1.1, which comes from a recorded interaction between two university students and L2 speakers of French, serves to illustrate the epistemological and methodological foundations of this approach and some of its key principles (see particularly concepts marked in bold). The excerpt also exemplifies the kind of commonsense understanding people may have of complaining – we will come back to the formulation of this understanding in Chapter 1.2 below. Javier (JAV) has just told Suresh (SUR) that he needs to take many courses the following semester, but that he is fine with that and cannot complain (line 1). Suresh then initiates repair (line 6) on Javier’s use of the verb *se plaindre* (‘to complain’), which eventually leads Javier to explain this term for Suresh (lines 17, 20, 22).

Ex. 1.1, *Jeu_2018-05-17_10:12_se plaindre*

- 01 JAV: je peux pas me plaindre.
I can't complain
- 02 (0.3)
- 03 JAV: parce que j'ai tout ce qu'il faut.
because I have all that I need
- 04 (0.2)
- 05 JAV: °vraiment°.=
really
- 06 SUR: =tu peux pas quoi?
you can't what
- 07 (0.3)
- 08 JAV: je peux pas me plaindre.
I can't complain
- 09 (0.7)
- 10 JAV: [°(ouais), °]
(yeah)
- 11 SUR: [plaindre,
complain
- 12 [c'est quoi?]
what's that
- 13 JAV: [ouais c'e]:st (0.6) +(i can say that)+ ((in Eng.))
yeah it's

- 14 +in english is: (1.2) <i canno:t>+ (1.0) ((in Eng.))
 15 >non je sais pas comment le dire en anglais<.
no I don't know how to say it in English
 16 (1.1)
 17 JAV: **c'est quand tu es pas content avec une chose,**
it's when you are not happy with a thing
 18 SUR: mm-hm?
 19 (2.6)
 20 JAV: **et tu: dis des choses contre ça.**
and you say things against that
 21 (0.8)
 22 JAV: °et tu commences %à dire ↑a:h% ↑no:n# %↑(non mais)°,%
and you start saying oh no (no but)
 jav %LH-left----%RH-right%LH-left-----%
 fig #1

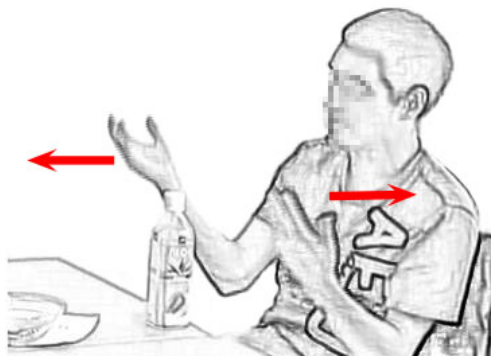


fig.1

- 23 SUR: +opposite.+ ((in Eng.))
 24 (0.9)
 25 JAV: +yes,+ ((in Eng.))
 26 °le sentiment oui°.
the feeling yes
 27 SUR: °a:h [okay°.]
oh okay
 28 JAV: [°ouais°.]
yeah

Because of its focus on social interaction, CA-SLA limits its scope of inquiry to **publicly observable conduct**. For example, when analyzing L2 talk it is easy to assume that all communication breakdowns are related to lacking language competency. We cannot know with certainty, however, whether Suresh's first repair initiation in line 6 (*tu peux pas quoi?*, 'you can't what') is due to problems of hearing or problems of understanding, because we do not have access to Suresh's mental processes. Instead, through **sequential analysis** of the participants' actions turn-by-turn, we are able to observe how the participants' themselves work out the trouble on the basis of their understanding of their coparticipant's actions. Here, Suresh pursues the repair sequence by first repeating *plaindre* ('complain', line 11) with prosodic stress and then asking what it is (line 12) to get a clarification of its meaning. Javier displays his understanding of this by first attempting to translate the term into English (lines 13-14) and then offering an explanation and demonstration of complaining in French (lines 17, 20, 22,

fig.1). This kind of analysis exemplifies CA's **emic perspective**, by which the analyst is interested in the participants' own orientations to the unfolding interaction. In the context of L2 research, this means for instance that the analyst disregards linguistic errors in the participants' talk unless they themselves orient to such errors as problematic for establishing mutual understanding. Javier's explanation of complaining furthermore highlights CA's **praxeological approach** to social interaction. The analytical focus is not on linguistic structures per se. Language is seen as only one of the various semiotic resources that humans deploy to *do* things (such as to assess, disagree, or explain a word) in interaction (Ochs et al., 1996). In his explanation, Javier uses changes in pitch, vowel elongation, and gestures to reenact what it means to complain (line 22, fig.1). **Video-recordings of interactions** allow the researcher to take into account the range of linguistic, prosodic and sometimes embodied² resources that speakers use to reach intersubjectivity (Goodwin, 2000; 2013; 2018; Keevallik, 2018; Mondada, 2014; 2018b). The dissertation is part of the growing efforts within CA-SLA to investigate L2 development from such **multimodal perspective**.

The social-praxeological approach has profound implications for the conceptualization of learning. Second-language learning is not understood as the individual learner's internalization of increasingly target-like linguistic structures, as is typically the case within 'cognitivist' SLA approaches (see Doughty & Long, 2003; Long, 1997; VanPatten & Williams, 2015, among others). Instead, both the goal and driving force of L2 learning are speakers' effective participation in real-life interactions. From this perspective, L2 speakers are seen as active agents who over time, in and through social interaction, work to become increasingly 'competent' members of the L2 community (Pekarek Doehler, 2010; Wagner & Gardner, 2004). While some research within CA-SLA focuses on L2 learning as an interactive process (e.g., Markee, 2008; Melander, 2012; Sahlström, 2011), this dissertation investigates the longitudinal outcomes, or 'products' of L2 learning. It does so by documenting changes in L2 speakers' interactional skills over time; in other words, the *development of L2 interactional competence* (Hellermann, 2008; Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-] Berger, 2015; 2018).

In the dissertation, I thus tackle L2 learning from a social and praxeological perspective that focuses on social action from a holistic, multimodal point of view and that considers L2 speakers as active social agents. The methodological principles of CA allow me to analyze the micro-level details of social interaction from a participant-relevant perspective. By investigating the longitudinal 'products' of L2 learning over time, this research contributes to the cumulative evidence about the overall trajectories involved in the development of L2 interactional competence, which ultimately has the potential to inform pedagogical practices for the teaching and learning of L2 interactional skills.

² My use of the term 'embodied' encompasses all types of bodily-visual conduct (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, shifts in gaze and posture) but excludes talk and other verbal and paraverbal conduct.

1.2 A social and praxeological perspective on complaining

The explanation of complaining provided by Javier in Ex. 1.1 above illustrates the kind of commonsense understanding that people often have of complaining. The explanation (highlighted in bold) invokes a person's discontentment with 'a thing' (line 17) and the expression of negative stance toward the thing (line 20). It also orients to the affect-laden, or emotional, dimension of complaining, expressed through direct-reported speech (Clift & Holt, 2007; Holt, 1996; 2000) delivered in high pitch (line 22) and accompanying waving gestures with both hands (fig.1). The explanation converges with some of the findings of scientific studies of complaining, highlighting several interactional resources people have been observed to use to construct complaints (verbal expressions of negative stance, marked prosody, embodied conduct). The explanation is not very detailed, however, and it does not say anything about the micro-details or interactive *process* of complaining, about recipients' roles in complaining, or about the interactional purposes of complaints.

It is precisely based on a micro-level, process-oriented, and 'dialogical' (Linell, 2009) perspective that a CA study can contribute to our understanding of complaining. Conversation analysts are interested in complaining as a **situated, social activity** and as an **interactive process**. Sequential analysis of authentic complaint sequences allows us to document the precise actions and interactional resources people use when complaining, in what way recipients contribute to the complaint activity, and how the **complainant** (the person complaining) works to enhance the possibility of receiving **affiliative** or **sympathetic responses** from coparticipants.

Excerpt 1.2 exemplifies why it may be relevant to investigate complaining from a conversation analytic and developmental L2 perspective. The excerpt shows a complaint made by the L2 French speaker Aurelia (AUR) to her coparticipant Mia (MIA). The object of the complaint, that is, the '**complainable**', is the conduct of people in Switzerland, a recurrent complaint topic in my data. In the analysis, I highlight some of the interactional resources participants regularly deploy to construct complaints (in bold) and I show the interactive process through which the participants negotiate the development of the sequence.

The complaint is already underway as we join the excerpt. Aurelia has criticized Swiss people for being aggressive and 'hostile with rules'. In lines 1-2, Mia elicits an account by asking Aurelia whether someone has been angry at her, and in line 12, Aurelia initiates a story through which she develops and backs up the complaint with a precise example (Günthner, 1995).

Ex. 1.2, Lun_2018-02-26_23:55_mieux dedans_a

- 01 MIA: mais qu'est-ce que- quelqu'un a:- (.) °a:° été:
but what- someone has- has been
- 02 euhm (1.3) +angry+ ch- à toi? ((Eng.))
at you
- 03 AUR: †ouai:s,
yeah
- 04 tout le te:mps,
all the time

- 05 MIA: †vrai†ment?
really
- 06 AUR: †ouai:s (.) tout le temps.
yeah all the time
- 07 AUR: .h pe: par exemple j'étai:s
fe for example I was
- 08 MIA: PHHhh,
- 09 AUR: il y avait de[:s]
there were some
- 10 MIA: [quand] tu changes le: le plan?
when you change the the (plan)
- 11 MIA: ou >quelque chose< comme ça?
or something like that
- 12 AUR: ouai:s c'étai:t (.) hie:r?
yeah it was yesterday
- ((27 lines omitted: AUR introduces story setting))
- 40 AUR: c'était pas- c'était pas dans la rue.
it was not- it was not in the street
- 41 MIA: mm-hm,
- 42 AUR: mais quelqu'u:n (.) e:h un homme a arrêté la voiture,
but someone a man stopped the car
- 43 .h il a dit eh *vous faites# mal,*
he said you do wrong
- aur *rhythmic pointing w RH index fing*
fig #1



fig.1

- 44 vous être da:ns- vous être dans le: eh pas le bon espace,
you are in- you are in the not the good place
- 45 *(0.5)#*
aur *frowns, flips palms up*
fig #2

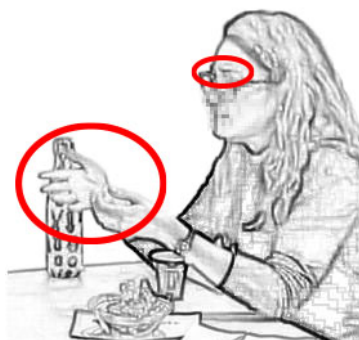


fig.2

CHAPTER 1

- 46 AUR: et j'ai dit e:h >excusez-moi< mais nous sommes (.) tous
and I said excuse me but we are all
- 47 (.) entre le: (.) zone (0.2)
between the zone
- 48 MIA: et l'homme c'était en- euh (chais pas) à voiture-
and the man it was in- (dunno) in car-
- 49 [en voiture?]
(in the car)
- 50 AUR: [*en- en voi][ture ici,]
(in- in the car) here
 aur *pulls LH back-forth on table, on her left side-->
- 51 MIA: [°huh° uh-huh,]
- 52 (1.1)*
 aur -->*
- 53 AUR: e:t il- il a: parlé avec nous parce que il a dit eu::h (0.4)
and he- he talked with us because he said that
- 54 pourq- pourquoi vou:s vous allez pa:s eh là-bas,
wh- why don't you go over there
- 55 à l'autre côté de la rue?
to the other side of the street
- 56 *(0.5)*
 aur *frowns, flips RH palm up*
- 57 AUR: mais pourquoi:?
but why
- 58 (0.6)
- 59 MIA: wo↓:w.
- 60 AUR: mais- *mais Ωc'était juste telleme:nt (.)# et ils font ça quand
but- but it was just really and they do that when
 aur *raises RH and scratches eye with full hand-->
 aur Ωcloses eyes-->
 fig #3
- 61 tu fai:s quelqueΩ chose eh* contre la règle,
you do something against the rule
 aur -->Ω -->*



fig.3

((AUR continues))

In the omitted lines (lines 13-39), Aurelia introduces the story setting, explaining that she and her friend were walking in the city and stopped in a space between two streets to greet some other friends. Having specified that it was not ‘in’ the street (line 40), Aurelia introduces the **antagonist** of the story (‘a man’, line 42) who stopped his car and started telling Aurelia and her friends off (lines 42-43) for not standing in the ‘good place’ (line 44). Aurelia then uses a range of verbal and embodied means to detail and criticize the man’s conduct and show how the situation affects her negatively. Through **direct-reported speech** (lines 43-44, 46-47, 53-55), **marked prosody** (vowel elongations, stress), and **gestures** (fig.1), Aurelia **reenacts** (Sidnell, 2006) the event and contrasts her own, morally defensible conduct with the **unreasonable** and **morally reprehensible** behavior of the man (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988). Twice, after each report of the man’s talk, Aurelia pauses (lines 45, 56) and **displays her stance** by frowning and flipping her hands palm up in an expression of disapproval and incomprehension (fig.2; see also line 56). With a **rhetorical question** (line 57), Aurelia concludes the telling and again shows her disapproval of the man’s conduct.

Mia participates in the complaint by eliciting elaborations and clarifications (lines 1, 5, 10-11, 48-49), granting Aurelia access to the floor for extended turns, and by producing listenership tokens at appropriate moments (lines 41, 51). Following the end of Aurelia’s telling, she also provides an **assessment of the story** in the form of a non-lexical vocalization, *wɔ↓:w* (line 59), by which she displays some emotional support, or **affiliation**, with Aurelia. As seen in Aurelia’s embodied completed **summary assessment** (line 60, fig.3) and **generalization** of her criticism (lines 60-61), Aurelia thereafter expands the complaint until she receives stronger displays of affiliation from her coparticipant (not shown).

The brief analysis of this excerpt illustrates what a CA analysis of authentic interactions can contribute to our understanding of complaining. In contrast to the layman account of complaining offered by Suresh in Ex. 1.1, the analysis of Ex. 1.2 has shed light on the immense interactional complexity of complaints. Besides exemplifying interactional resources for complaining, the excerpt demonstrated the interactive process involved in complaints, the status of complaints as social activities rather than actions produced by a single speaker, and the participants’ emic orientations to the interactional purpose of complaining, that is, to obtain affiliation or sympathy. But the excerpt also gives rise to questions regarding complaining from an L2-learning perspective. The sequence involved speakers with quite advanced proficiency of French. At some points in the interaction, the participants engaged in repair practices that displayed language-related difficulties (e.g., line 2), but these did not seem to threaten intersubjectivity. In many respects, the complaint resembles complaints of L1 speakers (similar structure and basic components, the use of negative assessments, direct-reported speech etc.). What about the complaints of L2 speakers with lower proficiency, who may not have as diverse interactional resources in the L2 at their disposal as more advanced speakers? How does the developmental trajectory of complaint practices look like over time? As mentioned above, we know near to nothing about how speakers engage in complaining in their L2 or how their practices for doing so develop over time.

1.3 Aim and research questions

The overall aim of this work is to contribute to a better understanding of the longitudinal trajectories involved in the development of L2 interactional competence. To do so, I investigate how L2 speakers of French over time change their practices for complaining about non-present third parties or state of affairs. In three empirical sub-studies, the dissertation addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1. How does the structural organization of L2 complaining change over time?** Do the core action components of complaint sequences change? Does the way in which speakers initiate complaints change over time? Do coparticipants' contributions to complaint sequences change longitudinally?
- RQ2. In what way do the interactional resources L2 speakers use for constructing complaints change over time?** Do speakers' expressions of negative stance and other resources for constructing 'complaint-worthiness', such as direct-reported speech, change over time?
- RQ3. How does L2 speakers' change in complaint practices intersect with larger socialization processes?** How does the change in complaint practices relate to evolving social relationships and shared interactional histories between the participants?

The data of the study consist of video recordings of adult L2 speakers of French participating in a 'conversation circle' in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. The recordings took place in a university cafeteria, where the participants met regularly to interact in French over a cup of coffee. Figures 1.1 and 1.2, which are anonymized video stills from one of the recordings, illustrate the interactional setting (Ex. 1.1-1.2 above are part of the same corpus).



Fig.1.1



Fig.1.2

The analysis adopts a longitudinal perspective, analyzing speakers' multimodal practices for complaining over time.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation comprises seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 situates the study in its larger theoretical research framework and reviews prior literature on (a) the development of L2 interactional competence, and (b) complaining-in-interaction. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach, provides an overview of the empirical material of the study, and discusses challenges associated with the research design. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of the three empirical sub-studies. In Chapter 4, I investigate the interactional organization of complaining. I show that the overall structural composition of L2 complaints remains the same over time, but that there is a longitudinal change in terms of practices for initiating complaints and in how participants together co-construct complaint sequences. Chapter 5 examines the multimodal interactional resources participants deploy to construct complaints. In this chapter, I demonstrate a longitudinal change in speakers' practices for negatively assessing and for reporting on other people's talk or conduct. Chapter 6 presents two case studies that longitudinally track specific recurrent complainables in two participants' interactions. I document how speakers draw on their shared interactional histories and deepened social relationships to engage in complaints in context-sensitive and recipient-designed ways. In Chapter 7, I summarize the results of the analyses, discuss how the documented change over time in complaint practices can be interpreted in terms of L2 development and learning, and suggest directions for future research.

2. Background

The dissertation has two primary research foci: on the one hand, the development of L2 interactional competence (IC); on the other hand, complaining-in-interaction. In this chapter, I first present an overview of the research strand concerned with the development of L2 IC and review empirical studies that contribute to our understanding of what this development involves (Ch. 2.1). I then turn to the main *analytical* focus of the dissertation, complaining, and review prior conversation analytic research that has investigated this topic primarily in first language (L1) ordinary and institutional interactions (Ch. 2.2). I conclude by discussing the rationale and the expected contributions of the dissertation in light of the identified research gaps (Ch. 2.3).

2.1 Interactional competence and its development

The past few decades have seen an unprecedented interest in the social dimensions of L2 learning. Social-interactional research strands that were until recently called ‘alternative approaches’ to SLA (Atkinson, 2011a) can hardly be qualified as such today, considering the substantial expansion of these strands and the increased interest in more holistic views of L2 learning and teaching across disciplines (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; although see also Atkinson, 2019, on the continued prominence of cognitivist SLA research). Specifically CA research on L2 interactions has expanded remarkably in the last ten years, establishing CA-SLA as a prominent research paradigm within applied linguistics. The same research has offered a wealth of empirical investigations into the nature of L2 IC and has increasingly documented the longitudinal trajectory of its development. In what follows, I outline the historical developments within SLA that have led to current understandings of L2 IC (Ch. 2.1.1). I then review a number of empirical CA studies on the development of L2 IC (Ch. 2.1.2) before synthesizing and identifying gaps in the reviewed literature (Ch. 2.1.3).

2.1.1 Epistemological roots and current understanding of L2 IC

The study is part of a research tradition within SLA that emerged in the 1990s as an attempt to reconceptualize language learning in social terms. In a seminal paper published in the midst of the SLA ‘paradigm wars’ (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 38), Firth and Wagner (1997) criticized mainstream SLA for being too individualistic, theory-driven, and concerned with learners’ errors. Instead they advocated for a social, data-driven, and emic approach to SLA (but see already Kramsch, 1986; Hall, 1993; 1995). The authors highlighted the crucial role of social interaction for language learning and the need for empirical research into what L2 speakers *can do* in social interaction rather than into what they *cannot do*. Firth and Wagner, together with other scholars who embraced the same ideas, embarked on an overarching endeavor to refine the understanding of social interaction in L2 learning (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Hellermann, 2008; Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee, 2000; 2008; Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Pekarek Doehler, 2010; Seedhouse, 2004). This movement, sometimes referred to as the ‘social turn’ in SLA (Block, 2003), also gave birth to the field of CA-SLA (Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee & Kasper, 2004), an approach to SLA that draws on the epistemological

underpinnings and methodological tools of CA³. Most recent research on the development of L2 IC emanates from this approach.

The interest in L2 speakers' IC can be traced back to early criticism of Chomsky's (1965) dichotomy between linguistic competence and performance, which presupposed that language competence was an innate capacity worthy of scientific inquiry, whereas language performance was merely a messy by-product that should be disregarded by linguists. Hymes (1972) was one of the first to voice criticism against this view, opposing the idea of a separation between the two (competence and performance) and instead arguing for a more holistic and contextual view of speakers' communicative abilities. He introduced the term *communicative competence* as an alternative; a notion that took into account speakers' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence in addition to purely linguistic knowledge. Others (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980) have later adopted and redefined the same term, and the study of communicative competence is still today a prosperous research field, for example within the strand of Interlanguage Pragmatics (see the chapters in Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993, among others).

Along with the conceptual expansions and transformations of SLA as a field around the 1990s came criticism also of the notion of communicative competence. Communicative competence was seen as too static of a notion, too focused on individual learners and their (in)capacities and not sensitive enough to the micro-level workings of social interaction. Within the fields of sociocultural learning and situated learning theory, researchers started documenting and advocating for studies on L2 speakers' 'interactive' or 'discursive' practices (Hall, 1993; 1995; 1997; He & Young, 1998; Young, 2000; 2003; 2008; Young & Miller, 2004). The term *interactional competence*, notably deployed by Kramsch (1986) in a critique of the accuracy-concerned language proficiency movements in the US, has later been adopted by researchers within CA-SLA. While the debate about the most suitable terminology is still ongoing (see Hall, 2018; Markee, 2019), most researchers presently conducting empirical developmental research using ethnomethodological CA (EMCA) deploy the term *interactional competence*.

From the perspective of EMCA, L2 IC may be described as L2 speakers' interactional 'methods' (Garfinkel, 1967) for accomplishing social actions and establishing mutual understanding in interaction. These methods involve systematic interactional procedures for managing for example turn-taking, repair, topic transitions, and disagreements, in a way that is sensitive to the recipient and to the local circumstances of the interaction (Hellermann, 2008; Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-]Berger, 2011; 2015; 2018). An important aspect of this competence, which I highlight throughout this dissertation, is its fundamentally socially shared and co-constructed nature (Greer, 2019; Kasper & Wagner, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b). The development of L2 IC, in turn, refers to change over time in L2 interactional methods.

The relationship between longitudinal change in interactional practices, the development of L2 IC, and language learning, is not unproblematic from a CA perspective, specifically as it concerns the possibility of maintaining a participant-relevant perspective when interpreting change over time in terms of development (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Wagner et al., 2018). If participants themselves do not orient to differences in their interactional conduct at one point in time vis-à-vis earlier occasions, how can we emically interpret longitudinal change

³ For more on ethnomethodological CA and its methodological premises, see Chapters 1.1 and 3.1.

in practices as development? As discussed by Wagner et al. (2018), one ‘solution’ to this problem is to rely on participants’ orientations to their coparticipants’ practices as more or less competent. Emically competent conduct is recognizable to coparticipants for what it is designed to do, and hence “provides no grounds for comment or repair” (Wagner et al., 2018, p. 27; see also Garfinkel, 1967; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970). As presented below, empirical studies on the development of L2 IC often document increased recognizability and local efficaciousness of interactional practices over time, and such change can hence be considered emic evidence for development (although this perspective comes with further challenges; see Ch. 7.2).

2.1.2 Empirical research on the development of L2 IC

The empirical research on the development of L2 IC has steadily grown in the last decade (for recent overviews, see Pekarek Doehler, 2019b; Skogmyr Marian & Balaman, 2018) and it has started uncovering the precise workings of this development. So far, studies have primarily focused on L2 speakers’ practices for accomplishing social actions and activities, but increasingly also document the emergence and interactional use of specific linguistic resources for action formation and interaction-organization, informing us about speakers’ development of their L2 ‘grammar-for-interaction’ (Pekarek Doehler, 2018).

Developmental studies on speakers’ practices for accomplishing social actions and activities include investigations of answers to routine inquiries (Waring, 2013), directives (Skogmyr Marian, 2018; Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017), disagreements (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011), displays of active listenership and other types of recipient responses (Dings, 2014; Ishida, 2011; Kim, 2016; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Sert, 2019; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019), humor accomplishment (Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017), the introduction of direct-reported speech (Hauser, 2013), the opening of phone calls, tasks, and storytellings (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Hellermann, 2007; 2008; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018), and storytelling more generally (Barraja-Rohan, 2015; Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018), repair (Balaman, 2016; Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Hellermann, 2009, 2011; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019), requests (Al-Gahtani & Roevers, 2012; 2013; Roevers & Al-Gahtani, 2015; Youn, 2015), telling of news (Greer, 2019), topic management (Kim, 2017; König, 2013; 2019; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Nguyen, 2011), as well as turn-construction and turn-taking (Barraja-Rohan, 2015; Cekaite, 2007; 2017; Nguyen, 2019; Pallotti, 2001; Watanabe, 2016, 2017; Young & Miller, 2004).

Longitudinal investigations taking specific linguistic resources as starting point typically document the emergence and use of particular discourse markers or grammatical constructions in interaction (Eskildsen, 2011; 2012; 2020; Ishida, 2009; Kim, 2009; Masuda, 2011; Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019), interactional uses of lexical items (Jung, 2004; Markee, 2008; Slotte-Lüttge et al., 2013), or change over time in the use of language-body assemblies for social action (Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.; Skogmyr Marian, 2020). Studies that document longitudinal change in the use of linguistic resources for accomplishing precise social actions, such as positive assessments (Nguyen, 2019) or directives (Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017) similarly contribute to our understanding of the development of L2 grammar-for-interaction.

Research on the development of L2 IC has become increasingly diverse not only in terms of analytic objects, but also in terms of the investigated languages, social settings, and participant frameworks. Starting out with studies of speakers of a few L2s (predominantly English and French as *second*, not *foreign*, languages) from a small set of countries (often the US, or a few European countries), the literature has now grown to include numerous second and foreign languages from various parts of the world. These languages include, besides the studies on English as a second (and less so, foreign) language (Balaman, 2016; Barraja-Rohan, 2015; Eskildsen, 2011; 2012; 2020; Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; Hauser, 2013; Hellermann, 2008; 2009; 2011; Markee, 2008; Nguyen, 2011; 2019; Sert, 2019; Waring, 2013; Watanabe, 2016, 2017; Young & Miller, 2004) and French as a second language (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018; König, 2013; 2019; Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-] Berger, 2011; 2015; 2018; Skogmyr Marian, 2018; Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017), also Chinese (Kunitz & Yeh, 2019), Finnish (Slotte-Lüttge et al., 2013), German (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019), Italian (Pallotti, 2001), Japanese (Ishida, 2009; 2011; Masuda, 2011), Korean (Kim, 2009), Spanish (Dings, 2014) and Swedish (Cekaite, 2007; 2017). As for the interactional setting, many studies have, quite naturally, been concerned with educational settings and other institutional contexts (for a recent volume, see Kunitz et al., in press/2021). Recently, however, an increasing number of studies have documented speakers' changing interactional practices 'in the wild' (Wagner, 2015; see also the studies in Hellermann et al., 2019), that is, in authentic interactions outside educational settings. These include study abroad contexts (Barraja-Rohan, 2015, Ishida, 2009; 2011; Masuda, 2011), homestay settings (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2019, Greer, 2019; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018; Skogmyr Marian, 2018), different types of conversations-for-learning (Kim, 2016; 2017; Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.; Sert, 2019), and business and service encounters (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004). Studies on computer-mediated online interactions (Balaman, 2016; Balaman & Sert, 2017) similarly contribute to the broadening of the scope of the examined settings.

The wide range of analytical objects and the increasingly diverse datasets investigated in these studies offer growing cumulative evidence for the developmental trajectories involved in increased L2 IC. In what follows, I present a selection of observations from these studies that are particularly relevant for the dissertation, before providing a summative picture of the cumulative research findings so far.

Increasingly elaborate prefatory work in storytelling openings

As exemplified in Chapter 1.2 and detailed in Chapter 2.2 below, complaining is a conversational *activity* that includes a series of distinct social actions. It centrally involves storytelling, as complainants regularly back up their complaints with 'exemplary stories' (Günthner, 1995) or present their complaints *through* complaint stories (Selting, 2010a; 2012). Successful complaining thus typically (but not always) requires the ability to introduce and manage storytelling in the L2. Prior work on L2 storytelling has documented change over time in how L2 speakers open storytellings (Hellermann, 2008; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018), or how they close these (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018), and has observed general differences as to the interactional complexity of storytellings between less and more advanced L2 speakers (Barraja-Rohan, 2015; Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Hellermann, 2008). As

for storytelling openings, Hellermann's (2008) and Pekarek Doehler and Berger's (2018) studies of L2 English and French, respectively, converge in documenting L2 speakers' use of progressively more elaborate prefatory work, whether in the classroom (Hellermann, 2008) or in mealtime conversations between an au pair and her host family (Pekarek Doehler, 2018).

Prefatory work serves multiple purposes in the opening phase of a storytelling. Future storytellers need to suspend the regular turn-taking machinery to secure the right to a longer turn, and typically they also establish the relevancy of the upcoming story to the prior talk and provide some indications about the nature of the story so as to help coparticipants anticipate appropriate responses (Jefferson, 1978; Mandelbaum, 2013; Sacks, 1974; 1978; 1992). Both Hellermann (2008) and Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018) show that L2 speakers without much L2 conversational experience may have difficulties accomplishing such prefatory work and instead initiate stories *in medias res*. Excerpt 2.1, from Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018), illustrates such initiation by an upper-intermediate L2 French-speaking au pair. The interaction takes place during the first few months of Julie's (JUL) nine-month stay with the host family.

Ex. 2.1, from Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018, p. 564)

- 01 MAR: †non mais: c'est- c'est tellement (con) quand elle †pleure
 no but it's it's so stupid when she cries
- 02 comme ça [pour †RIEN,]&
 like this for nothing
- 03 JUL: [(r::)e::h]
 (non-lexical))
- 04 MAR: &et [<†FOrt>],
 and loud
- 05 [((noise of a fork))]
- 06 et [ah::=
 and oh
- 07 JUL: [ou†i:] a:h.
 yes oh
- 08 (0.2)
- 09 JUL: et puis- euh une fois on est allé à l'école,
 and then one time we went to school
- 10 (0.8)
- 11 JUL: et:: ehm ils ont <couru:>?
 and they were running
- 12 (0.7)
- ((storytelling continued; Julie reports what they did while running,
 and how that ended with one of Manon's fits))

The story that Julie initiates in line 9 is a second story, offered at the end of the host mother Marie's (MAR) first story. As reported by Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018), the initiation is sequentially well-placed after Julie's own affiliative response to the first story (line 7), but its relatedness to the first story is not evident in the initiation. The story is opened with the continuity marker *et puis* ('and then', line 9), which suggest some kind of continuation but appears idiosyncratic in the particular interactional context, and a temporal framing of the talk

as pertaining to the past (with *une fois*, ‘one time’, and the past tense *on est allé*, ‘we went’, line 9). While the story is presented as another telling about the past, there is hence only minimal preparation for the telling and indications about its nature (as a similar or different story than the first one) are missing.

Much more elaborate prefatory work occurs in Julie’s storytellings toward the end of her stay with the host family. Excerpt 2.2 comes from a second story produced approximately five months after Ex. 2.1:

Ex. 2.2, from Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018, p. 571; only beginning of excerpt)

- 01 MAR: t’as l’impression qu’ils tiennent pas sur leurs jambes,
you get the impression that they won’t manage to stay on their legs
- 02 ils sont tellement petits: que:
they are so little that
- 03 (0.4)
- 04 JUL: +mh ((eating))+ (0.9) mais ((eating; 2.4)) .hh euhm (0.2)
but
- 05 les: enfants de: de Robert giroud là?
the kids of Robert Giroud you know
- 06 (1.1)
- 07 JUL: le: (1.2) le- le chef de sport [°je sais pas quoi°
the head of sports I don’t know what
- 08 MAR: [mh
- 09 (1.3)
- 10 JUL: eux ils vont euh partout.
they go everywhere
- 11 (0.9)
- 12 MAR: les petits [ou:
the little ones or

This time, Julie responds to Marie’s first story with the disjunct marker *mais* (‘but’, line 4), commonly found in the initiation of storytellings, but which as discussed by Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018) here also seems to work as a disagreement marker that signals that the nature of the upcoming talk contrasts somehow with Marie’s displayed stance. Julie then introduces the key referents of the story in a stepwise manner through a left-dislocation so as to check the recognizability of the referent to the recipient (lines 5, 7; see rising intonation in line 5 and Marie’s confirmation in line 8) before launching the story (line 10). The excerpt illustrates the general tendencies observed by the authors regarding Julie’s storytelling openings later during her stay, namely the use of more extensive prefatory work that displays relatedness to prior talk, secures reciprocity, and foreshadows the nature of the upcoming telling. These changes help Julie recruit aligning and affiliative responses, which was sometimes difficult for her at the beginning of her stay. While Hellermann’s (2008) findings show a change from no or extremely minimal to *some* prefatory work in storytelling openings by beginner and lower-intermediate level speakers of English, Pekarek Doehler and Berger’s (2018) observations illustrate what happens further on in the developmental trajectory. The findings concur with other studies documenting a progressive diversification of interactional methods over time (Pekarek Doehler

& Pochon-Berger, 2015). The observation that more advanced L2 speakers increasingly foreshadow the stance of the upcoming story in the story opening is also of high relevance for the present study, as stance displays are central to complaint activities.

Increased ability to collaboratively sustain a conversation

Complaint activities have been characterized in the literature as highly co-constructed activities that require close collaboration of coparticipants for their accomplishment (see Ch. 2.2). Developmental studies on how L2 speakers develop their practices for proffering topics and providing relevant recipient responses so as to co-construct interactions and maintain progressivity of talk (Dings, 2014; Ishida, 2011; Kim, 2017; König, 2013; 2019; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Sert, 2019; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019) are therefore of particular interest for the dissertation. Kunitz and Yeh (2019), Sert (2019), and Taleghani-Nikazm (2019) have observed that L2 learners at lower proficiency levels often have difficulties providing relevant responses to other participants' contributions. Focusing on third-position recipient responses, Taleghani-Nikazm (2019) shows that both elementary and intermediate level speakers of German orient to the relevance of providing timely responses but lack the appropriate linguistic means to do so. Kunitz and Yeh (2019), on the other hand, demonstrate how language instruction focused on recipient responses in L2 Chinese led to improved use of response tokens over time.

Similar to my study, Sert (2019) focuses on informal multi-party L2 interactions in which no L1 speaker is present, meaning that the L2 speakers carry the responsibility of sustaining the conversation themselves. Sert (2019) examines the development of practices for displaying active listenership and specifically collaborative turn completions in out-of-class interactions recorded over two semesters of university-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The author demonstrates the participants' tendency at the beginning of the first semester to organize their discussions in a rather 'monologic' manner, with longer turns by each speaker and few displays of active listenership from the coparticipants. Excerpt 2.3 comes from one of the groups' first interactions. The participants are discussing data privacy.

Ex. 2.3, from Sert (2019, p. 149)

177 SED: er: if government should access er our er (0.7)
 178 mails, er our messages: ou cal↑lings (.)
 179 er they can use (.) in e- politics i think be-
 180 >i don't know why:< (0.3) ↑but i er c:an't feel relax
 181 when i'm er (0.3) speaking er: (0.2) about (.9 politics
 182 er: in (.) on the phone.
 183 (1.1)
 184 >what do you think about this?<
 185 (2.3)
 186 BUS: i ↑think if (.) government access (0.4) er: (.) everyone's
 187 er: database (.) er unnecessarily: er::
 188 <it ↑cause to> er:: accuse er innocent people.
 189 maybe punish (.) them.

190 (1.0)
 191 AYS: and: er: (1.1) i: h er would like to add something about
 192 cri:me er: people er: in: a case of a cri:me er they can:
 193 er:: find >they can find< some proof.

As highlighted by Sert (2019), the lack of recipient responses is notable specifically in line 183, as SED has reached a transition-relevant place (line 182) after a longer turn but no coparticipant self-selects to respond. SED thus produces an open-ended question to recruit the coparticipants' expressions of opinions (line 184), and after a longer silence (line 185), BUS finally takes the turn (line 186). Once BUS's turn has come to an end (line 189), another silence ensues before AYS self-selects to express her own stance (line 191). The interaction hence adopts a 'round-robin format' in which the participants take longer turns one at the time and rarely offer verbal displays of reciprocity during other participants' turns.

Sert (2019) shows that, with time, the students' interactions become much more 'conversational' in nature, adopting a more conventional turn-taking system which involves considerably more verbal displays of active listenership including collaborative turn-completions. Excerpt 2.4 illustrates this change.

Ex. 2.4, from Sert (2019, p. 154)

12 SED: er: and (.) also there is a er: one view (.) in the soci↑ety
 13 .h er think (.) like ↑that (0.7) womansu get older er::
 14 >get older< (0.8) er: how can [i say ↑FASTER] ↑than,
 15 BUS: [the view of them]
 16 BUS: huh.=
 17 AYS: =°yes yes°=
 18 SED: =mans (.) because they er giv[e]
 19 AYS: [t]heir >biological<.=
 20 SED: their £biologica[l£]
 21 AYS: [si]tua↑t[ions.]
 22 SED: [ye::s] (.) .h because they,
 23 when they have a ba↑by .hh er::h (0.7) they effort (.)
 24 a lot of: (0.6) er °give effort how can [i say°?]
 25 [ye:s give] effort.

In this excerpt, coparticipants offer candidate turn-completions both in response to word-searches (line 15) and in an anticipatory manner (lines 19, 21, 22; see Lerner, 2004), showing their active listenership and contributing to the progressivity of talk. Overall, Sert (2019) observed an increased number of collaborative completions over time and a more diverse use of listenership tokens with growing interactional experience. The students' ability to complete other speakers' turns was closely related to their growing linguistic repertoires, observable in the emergence of subordinate clause completions, turn-initial conjunctions and candidate lexical items (Sert, 2019). This finding provides some evidence for the fact that L2 speakers' more complex grammars-for-interaction may allow them to participate as more active

interactants in the peer conversations. The study thereby contributes to our yet limited understanding of how L2 speakers develop their practices for managing turn-taking and jointly co-constructing social activities in ways that resemble ordinary L1 conversation; something which I build upon in Chapters 4 and 5 of the dissertation.

Developing and putting to use linguistic resources for action and interaction-organization

Also relevant for my study is the growing body of IC literature on the development of linguistic resources for action formation (e.g., Eskildsen, 2011; 2020; Hellermann, 2008; Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017) and interaction-organization (e.g., Ishida, 2009; Kim, 2009; Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019), as well as on the emergence and changing use of multimodal ‘packages’ for social action (see definition below) in L2 speakers’ interactional repertoires (Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.; Skogmyr Marian, 2020).

In terms of action formation, Hellermann’s (2008) observations about an English as a Second Language (ESL) student’s linguistic resources deployed in closing-implicative assessments over ten months provide some indications about the development of L2 assessment turn formats, something which I explore further in Chapter 5.1. Hellermann documents that the student goes from producing an “awkward sounding pronoun-adjective combination” (*everybody nice*) to the use of repetition of an assessment adjective (*nice grandfather nice*) to more canonical adverb-adjective combinations such as *very good* (2008, p. 123). These observations, although very limited in scope, suggest a possible trajectory of action formats specifically for high-grade first assessments, with repetition of assessment adjectives being used early on and the use of intensifying adverbials emerging later (see also Nguyen, 2019, for progressive diversification of assessment adjectives in L2 English).

As for studies on L2 speakers’ interaction-organizational uses of linguistic resources, Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2019), Pekarek Doehler and Skogmyr Marian (in prep.), and Skogmyr Marian (2020) show converging findings about L2 speakers’ progressive routinization of interaction-organizational markers for indexing cognitive search so as to hold the floor in word-searches. In these studies, the authors identify a general tendency for three different L2 speakers of French to initially deploy the expression *comment on dit* (‘how do you say’) and similar variants primarily to request assistance from a coparticipant to complete a word-search, while subsequently routinizing the same (or a related expression with *comment*, ‘how’ and the verb *dire*, ‘say’) as a marker of cognitive search serving floor-holding purposes. Excerpt 2.5 illustrates the first type of use, that is, *comment on dit* (here transcribed as *comment dit*, ‘how to/do you say’) deployed to request a French translation of the English word *download*.

Ex. 2.5, from Pekarek Doehler and Skogmyr Marian (in prep.; only part of excerpt)

01 MAL: parce que .hhh c'est- et- et tu peu:x e::h eh
because it's- and and you can

02 (trajeur-) #°° (trajeur) °°
(trajeu-) (trajeur)

fig #1



Fig.1

03 (0.5)

04 MAL: +down#load.+
+download ((in English))+

fig #2

05 (0.2)

06 MAL: °°d- d-°° comment dit down#load?
how (do you) say download

fig #3



Fig.2



Fig.3

07 THE: download.
download

08 THE: okay,
okay

Here Malia (MAL, positioned on the far-right side in the figures) first attempts to solve the word-search by offering candidate versions of the troublesome lexical item while gazing at one of the coparticipants (line 2, fig.1) and then producing the word in English while gazing at another coparticipant (line 4, fig.2). The metalinguistic expression *comment dit* ('how do you say') is used in a request for translation directed at the third coparticipant (line 6, fig.3). It is hence part of a full syntactic structure with the complement *download* and it is delivered in normal conversational volume. It is also treated by the coparticipant Theo (THE) as a request for help, as he confirms his understanding of the term (lines 7-8).

Excerpt 2.6 illustrates a very different type of use of the same expression, occurring nine months after Ex. 2.5 (Malia sits to the left in the figures).

Ex. 2.6, from Pekarek Doehler and Skogmyr Marian (in prep.)

01 MAL: par exemple la semaine (.) passée: euh (0.8) e:::h
 for example last week

02 (.) j'ai eu u::n (0.4) une séance avec les étudia:nts pou:r
 I had a a session with the students for

03 Ω(0.4) mm: Ω>comment# dit< séance de: questions etΩ ré#ponses.
 how (do you) say session of questions and answers

mal Ωgz-space--Ωgaze down-----Ωgaze-JAV-->>
 fig #1 #2

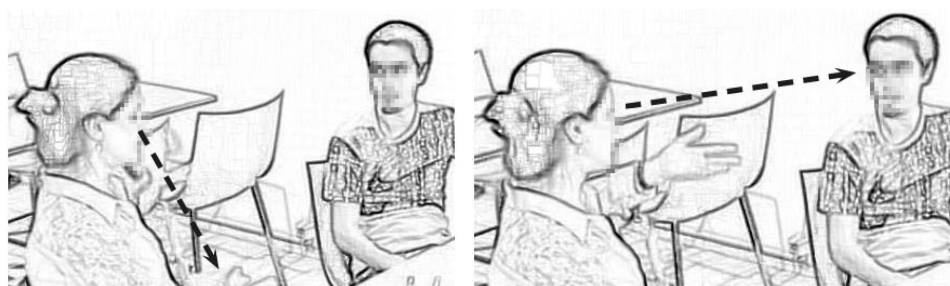


Fig.1

Fig.2

04 (0.3)

05 JAV: [oui.]
 yes

06 MAL: [pour] l'examen,
 for the exam

As discussed by the authors (Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.), here Malia employs *comment dit* ('how do you say') to display cognitive search and thereby hold the floor while seeking to solve the word-search herself – which she rapidly does (line 3). The prosodic delivery of the expression and the co-occurring embodied conduct are typical of this type of use: The expression is produced in fast pace and with gaze averted from the coparticipants until the end of the turn (fig.1-2). Javier's (JAV) understanding of Malia's verbal and embodied conduct as indexing cognitive search is visible in that he refrains from taking the turn and rapidly responds once Malia has returned her gaze to him (line 5). The excerpt is representative of a development observed with all three participants of the concerned studies, namely the emergence and progressive routinization of a discourse-marker-like metalinguistic expression used to hold the floor during word-searches (Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019; Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.; Skogmyr Marian, 2020).

While the finding about speakers' growing repertoires of discourse-organizational devices is interesting per se, the observation about co-occurring prosodic features and embodied conduct contributes to another facet of L2 IC studies, namely the still scarce research on the role of non-verbal conduct in the development of L2 IC. A growing number of studies primarily on L1 interactions document speakers' use of multimodal 'assemblies', 'bodily-verbal packages', 'action packages', 'contextual configurations', or 'laminations' (Goodwin, 2000; 2007; 2013; Hayashi, 2005; Kärkkäinen & Thompson, 2018; Lilja & Piirainen-Marsh, 2019; Lindström et al., 2019; Mondada, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019a) in diverse activity contexts. Such constellations (henceforth 'multimodal packages'), conceptualized by different researchers as involving varying degrees of fixedness in their composition, entail the systematic coordination

of verbal and embodied resources for precise action purposes (see also ‘complex multimodal Gestalts’ by Mondada 2014, which might most suitably be placed toward the ‘looser’ end of the loose–fixed continuum of constellations)⁴. When it comes to L2 interactions, we know near to nothing about how these multimodal packages emerge and routinize over time. Eskildsen and Wagner (2015; 2018) have taken some first steps to address these issues by investigating how the emergence and longitudinal use of, on the one hand, the prepositions *under* and *across* (Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015) and, on the other hand, constructions with the verbs *ask*, *tell*, and *say* (Eskildsen & Wagner, 2018) in ESL interface with hand gestures. In both cases, the authors observed a decrease in the scope of gestures as linguistic resources took more prominent interactional roles. While still at an early stage, the studies on the development of grammatical resources for action, on the one hand, and on co-occurring change in embodied conduct over time, on the other hand, provide important avenues for future research, avenues to which the present dissertation to some degree attempts to contribute (see Ch. 5).

Developing interactional routines and shared interactional histories

The development of L2 IC is intrinsically tied to socialization processes. Research within language socialization (e.g., Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) and situated learning theory (or ‘legitimate peripheral participation’; Lave & Wenger, 1991) has for long focused on the situated, locally specific nature of (language) learning and on participants’ socialization into precise communities of practice. Particularly some of the early studies on the development of L2 IC (or *interactive/discursive practices*) were inspired by these research traditions (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Cekaite, 2007; Young & Miller, 2004). For example, Brouwer and Wagner (2004) analyzed a series of telephone opening sequences between an L1 and L2 speaker of German and observed mutual adaptation by the participants over time which made the openings smoother and less problematic. Some more recent CA studies on the development of L2 IC have also begun to document, without recourse to exogenous learning theories, how speakers’ recurrent involvement in similar interactional events and with the same coparticipants affect their interactional methods longitudinally (Eskildsen, in press/2021; Greer, 2018; 2019; Kim, 2017; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019; Skogmyr Marian, 2018; Watanabe, 2016; 2017). Greer’s (2019) study of an L2 speaker of English and his host family’s interactional routine of inviting and responding to news-of-the-day tellings reveals similar adaptation processes as Brouwer and Wagner (2004) found, namely that both the L2 speaker and the L1 speaker(s) over time adjust their interactional practices to better fit the recipient in this particular interactional context. Greer (2019) thus speaks of a *joint* development of IC, involving all concerned parties as they together build shared interactional histories and interactional routines. I further explore the role of shared interactional histories and routines and evolving relationships for the development of L2 IC in Chapter 6.

⁴ My use of *multimodal package* implies a rather high degree of fixedness or ‘tightness’ in the constellation of semiotic resources. I use ‘assemblies’ and the verb ‘assemble’ to refer to combinations of multimodal conduct in a wider sense (see e.g. Goodwin’s 2013 use of ‘assemble’).

2.1.3 Cumulative evidence about the development of L2 IC

The developmental studies on longitudinal change in L2 speakers' practices for accomplishing social actions and activities and on the emergence and use of particular linguistic resources in interaction indicate that the basic mechanisms governing the generic features of interaction remain the same in L2 interactions regardless of speakers' proficiency levels. L2 interactions are not based on entirely different mechanisms for sequence organization, turn-taking, and repair than L1 interactions, but rather reflect the orderly, basic infrastructure for social interaction that all humans share (Levinson, 2006; see also Hall, 2018; Markee, 2019; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b; Wagner & Gardner, 2004). Accordingly, L2 speakers likely draw on certain aspects of their IC from the L1 and apply these in the L2. However, as argued elsewhere (e.g., Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015), IC is not simply *transferred* from the L1 to the L2. Speakers progressively 'recalibrate' and adapt their interactional practices, typically to increasingly approximate the practices of L1 speakers.

The reviewed studies provide cumulative evidence showing that the development of L2 IC involves:

- A progressive *diversification* of interactional procedures, or 'methods', for accomplishing recognizable social actions and organizing interaction. This diversification involves the systematic use of an increasingly varied set of practices for accomplishing locally more efficacious actions, such as opening or closing a phone call, giving a directive, or making a request.
- A *complexification* of interactional practices and sequences, with more elaborate, longer, and grammatically complex turn-constructive units (TCU) and turns, storytellings, prefaces for disagreements etc. This complexification seems to relate to an increased repertoire of linguistic resources, but also to the ability to put to use existing linguistic resources in new, context-sensitive ways, and to structure turns and actions in longer sequences.
- Increasingly more *fluent, synchronized, and co-constructed* talk, which allows for enhanced progressivity of interactions: less other-repair, more self-repair, smoother turn-taking, increased recipient responsivity and more frequent co-constructed utterances. This change appears to rely crucially on – in addition to more diverse and complex practices and resources generally – an increased ability to construct TCUs and longer turns and anticipate their boundaries, and to mobilize a more diverse repertoire of L2-compatible response tokens.

In addition, we have *some* evidence that:

- Speakers increasingly *routinize* locally efficacious patterns of language use, such as discourse markers that help structure the interaction.
- Speakers adjust their interactional practices based on interactional routines and evolving interactional histories with their coparticipants.
- As speakers' verbal practices develop, their embodied conduct changes.

The main consequence of these changes is an increased ability for *recipient-design* and *context-sensitivity* (Sacks et al., 1974). Speakers become interactionally more agile; they manifest a higher level of interactional flexibility to adjust to local contingencies. They also accomplish locally more efficacious actions that are recognizable for what they are designed to do (see discussion about competence above). These findings converge with socio-cognitive approaches to SLA (Atkinson, 2011b; 2012) that view L2 learning as crucially involving ‘learning how to fit in’ (Atkinson, 2019), but the research on the development of L2 IC does so by relying entirely on socio-praxeological evidence. If the ultimate goal of increased L2 IC is indeed interactional agility, the ultimate empirical proof of such development is precisely longitudinal change in micro-level adaptation processes.

While the abovementioned literature on the development of L2 IC has already provided many valuable insights into the nature of such development, there is yet much to discover. Some avenues for future research involve the examination of the following questions:

- How, more precisely, do L2 speakers develop their practices for jointly coordinating larger conversational *activities*? How does an increased ability for synchronizing and co-constructing conversational activities manifests itself?
- What is the role of, on the one hand, linguistic resources, and on the other hand, embodied conduct, in the development of L2 IC?
- How does the development of L2 IC interface with the development of social relationships and shared interactional histories?

Specifically studies involving L2 speakers interacting spontaneously with other L2 speakers would allow for a better understanding of what these speakers can do without the assistance of teachers or L1 ‘experts’. Such research can provide useful insights for example for the field of *lingua franca* studies (e.g., Mauranen & Ranta, 2009), but also for the many assessment contexts in which language students are assessed based on their interactional conduct with other L2 speakers (see Rydell, 2018; Sandlund et al., 2016). In Chapter 2.3 below, I discuss how the dissertation sets out to address some of the outstanding issues presented here.

2.2 Complaining-in-interaction

In this section, I turn to the main analytical focus of the dissertation, namely complaining, and review prior findings on this topic primarily in the CA literature. The section covers the definition and core features of complaints (Ch. 2.2.1), the difference between different types of complaints and their interactional purposes (Ch. 2.2.2), the structure of complaint activities (Ch. 2.2.3), recurrent action components and interactional resources deployed in complaints (Ch. 2.2.4), and how complaints have been addressed in the L2 literature (Ch. 2.2.5). The section closes with a summary and discussion of research gaps (Ch. 2.2.6).

2.2.1 Definition and core features of complaints

In Chapter 1.1, we saw an example of a commonsense understanding of complaining in the context of a repair sequence targeting the French word for ‘to complain’ (Ex. 1.1). I also illustrated what a detailed sequential analysis of a complaint sequence can contribute with to our understanding of complaining (Ex. 1.2). But while the growing number of interaction-based studies on complaining have started uncovering the micro-level workings of this activity, several researchers have noted the difficulty of clearly defining complaints. According to Edwards (2005, p. 7), “[c]omplaints’ elude formal definition, and remain a largely normative and vernacular, rather than technical, category”. The difficulty of defining complaints appears to relate to the ‘unbounded’ nature of complaint sequences (Dersley & Wootton, 2000; Edwards, 2005; Traverso, 2009), to the overlap between complaining and related activities and actions (see below), and to people’s unwillingness to characterize their own actions as doing complaining (Edwards, 2005). As a practical solution to these definitional difficulties, many researchers delimit their inquiries to a particular type of complaints and construct working definitions of such complaints for purposes of establishing sufficiently homogenous collections. The criteria used as basis for such definitions typically center around a series of key features, which I now review before presenting my own working definition of complaining.

Complaining involves the basic tenet of expressing negative stance toward a person, a thing, or an issue, that is, the *complainable* (the object of the complaint, see Schegloff, 2005), that has affected the *complainant* (the person complaining, see Drew, 1998) personally. While negative stance expressions sometimes are subtle (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), in many cases the complainant uses more overt interactional means that clearly index the unreasonable, egregious nature of the situation and show the speakers’ affective⁵ involvement in the activity (Drew, 1998; Günthner, 1997; 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012). To justify negative stance expressions, speakers engage in accounting practices, for example by detailing the complaint-worthy situation or conduct through reports or tellings (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Günthner, 1995; Selting, 2010a; 2012; see also Ch. 2.2.4).

Complaints bring morality to the interactional surface (Drew, 1998; Holt, 2012; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). When complaining, speakers show their orientations toward what is right and wrong, reasonable and unreasonable. They hold other people accountable for their behavior and make explicit how the reprehensible conduct breaches normative expectations of morality (Drew, 1988). Even in complaints about inanimate matters for which no one can be attributed responsibility – such as weather complaints – speakers engage in ‘micro-interactional moral calibrations’ (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 3) as they position themselves vis-à-vis a complainable and their interlocutors and thereby make relevant displays of alignment and affiliation.

Complaints are typically considered conversational *activities* rather than distinct actions (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009). Participants together negotiate the emergence and incremental development of complaints, by picking up ‘potential complainables’ (Schegloff, 2005), ratifying or denying their existence, and co-constructing their sequential development. The

⁵ Within CA and interactional linguistics, the term ‘affect’ typically refers to public displays of “feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes” (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989, p. 7) or, more generally, “displayed heightened involvement” in interaction (Couper-Kuhlen, 2009, p. 94; footnote 2).

incremental, stepwise progression of complaints is in part related to participants' orientations to complaints as delicate matters (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). Negative stance expressions and especially the act of criticizing others are often treated as delicate actions that require careful introductions (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Traverso, 2009). Complaints hence emerge incrementally in the interaction as participants negotiate their local legitimacy (see Ch. 2.2.3).

Complaints bear similarities with several other conversational phenomena, such as criticism, accusations, troubles talk, and gossip. As discussed by Edwards (2005), such phenomena may all be parts of complaining. Criticism and accusations are typical components of complaints about third parties (see particularly Günthner, 2000), used by complainants to convey what is complaint-worthy about the third party's conduct. This does not mean that all criticism and accusations are parts of complaints, however (cf. for instance the type of criticism given by instructors to students in educational settings). Troubles talk or troubles tellings (Jefferson, 1980; 1984a; 1984b; 1988; Jefferson & Lee, 1981) may also be part of complaints, or work as self-standing activities on their own. Both complaints and troubles talk involve longer sequences of actions in which the speaker expresses negative stance so as to recruit affiliative responses from coparticipants. Drew (1998) argues that complaints differ from troubles talk precisely in the moral dimension of complaints; in the complainant's expression of grievance and orientation to unfairness (see also Edwards, 2005). In troubles talk, issues of morality stay more implicit. Gossip, too, bears similarities especially with complaints about non-present third parties. Like complaints, gossip normally involves affect-laden storytelling, and there is a tendency to publicly deny the engagement in gossip (Bergmann, 1987). Similar to complaining, gossip invokes issues of morality, and the activity serves important interpersonal purposes (see Ch.2.2.2). However, gossip does not necessarily involve the speakers' expression of grievance.

The present dissertation is concerned with complaints about non-present third parties, objects, or state of affairs. In line with the abovementioned key characteristics of complaints and in light of the discussed related conversational phenomena, I rely on the following working definition of complaints:

- (1) They include *expressions of negative stance* about an issue that, according to the speaker, has affected him/her personally in an unfair or unreasonable manner. This may be about either non-present third parties, inanimate objects, or state of affairs, but not present parties (as in direct complaints; see Ch. 2.2.2 below).
- (2) They to some extent carry an *affective dimension* (display of frustration or other negatively valenced emotion such as anger, despair).
- (3) They are interactional *activities* consisting of more than one adjacency pair; that is, more than one turn or action plus its response.

This working definition delimits the scope of the analysis to a particular type of complaints. Before reviewing research on the interactional workings of complaints that bear such features, I address differences between different types of complaints and their interactional purposes.

2.2.2 Different types of complaints and their interactional purposes

Complaints have been observed to serve a range of different purposes in interaction, and complainants design their complaints in particular ways depending on such purposes. Given the co-constructed and moral nature of complaining, it is not surprising that the interactional setting, participants' roles and relationships, and the nature of the complainable also affect the way complaints emerge, develop, and dissolve (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009).

Direct, indirect, and joint complaints

The terms 'direct' and 'indirect' complaints are sometimes used to distinguish complaints about the recipient (as individual or representative of an institution or group; cf. Ex. 2.7 below) from those about a (typically non-present) third party or state of affairs. These types are distinctly different. In direct complaints, the complainant expresses dissatisfaction with and holds the recipient accountable for an issue (e.g., Dersley & Wootton, 2000; Emerson & Messinger, 1977; Kevoe-Feldman, 2018; Laforest, 2009; Monzoni, 2009; Schegloff, 2005). Such complaints typically do not only serve to manifest the speaker's dissatisfaction or frustration, but often also to change the current, complaint-worthy, situation to the better in some way. In ordinary conversation, it could be to correct a family member's behavior (Laforest, 2009); in institutional interactions, it may be to obtain a specific service (Kevoe-Feldman, 2018). In informal settings, complainants and complaint-recipients have been observed to engage in accusations and responses to such accusations in straightforward and affective ways (Dersley & Wootton, 2000; Laforest, 2009). In institutional settings, direct complaints may involve more intricate interactional work, as complainants need to express the complaint-worthiness of the situation sufficiently enough to get their voices heard, while at the same time ensuring the accomplishment of the institutional activity. Complaint recipients typically also orient to their roles as representatives of the institution in their responses to such complaints, as they need to make sure that they respond in a professional manner (Kevoe-Feldman, 2018). Excerpt 2.7 illustrates this kind of complaint. Here a customer (CUS) calls an electronic repair facility and complains about the long time that has passed since he sent his camera for repair.

Ex. 2.7, from Kevoe-Feldman (2018, p. 105, boldface added)

01 ((Ring))
 02 Rep: Jack Camera. Sara speaking.
 03 May I help you?
 04 Cus: .hh Yes indee:d, ((throat clear)) .hh
 05 I=uh: sent my camera in:=uh you got it on
 06 thuh thirtieth of last month an' (.) .hh
 07 **((throat clear)) I still don't ha:ve it**
 08 an' I:'ve called a couple a ti:mes an:d
 09 uh:m in: to it. (.) An:d I should
 10 check back on thuh web=hh an: I see
 11 no changes.
 12 (.)
 13 Rep: What's thuh repair number?

The complaint, initiated in line 7, is used to account for the call. As discussed by Kevoe-Feldman (2018), the goal of the call itself is not to complain, but to find out the status of the repair process and possibly incite the repair facility to act more swiftly. As seen in the service representative's response (line 14), she does not engage in the complaint *per se* but instead orients to the relevant next step in the institutional activity. The complaint sequence is thus rather short, consisting of a single adjacency pair, which is something that has been observed with other direct complaints (Laforest, 2009; Schegloff, 2005).

In contrast, the present study is concerned with indirect complaints, that is, complaints about (typically) non-present third parties or inanimate state of affairs (e.g., Alexander, 2018; Drew, 1998; Drew & Walker, 2009; Drew & Holt, 1988; Holt, 2012; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Traverso, 2009, among others). The interactional purposes of indirect complaints are radically different from direct complaints, and this is reflected in their organization and in recipient responses. Such complaints rarely serve to change the status quo, since the recipient is not responsible for having caused the trouble. Instead, complainants express their discontent to 'let off steam' and seek affiliative or sympathetic responses from the recipients (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Holt, 2012). These complaints thus have a much more social-relational dimension than direct complaints, primarily serving interpersonal purposes (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981; although see also Alexander, 2018, on indirect complaints to service institutions). While these types of complaints have been observed as frequent components of ordinary interactions between people who already have an established relationship (e.g., Traverso, 2009), they also occur in institutional contexts. For example, Ruusuvuori and Lindfors (2009) observe that indirect complaints may be used to establish trust and rapport between patients and professionals in homeopathic medical settings. The social-relational aspects of indirect complaints have an impact on the structure of such complaints and on the semiotic resources complainants deploy to construct them, typically resulting in longer sequences of actions and radically different recipient responses than in direct complaints (see Ch. 2.2.3-2.2.4 below). In Chapter 6, I explore specifically the interpersonal dimensions of complaining, while also documenting how complaints about things like the weather may serve particular small-talk purposes in the opening of conversations (cf. also Boxer, 1993b).

Only a limited number of studies have investigated joint complaints (Drew & Walker, 2009; Edwards, 2005; Heinemann, 2009; Laforest, 2009; Rääbis et al., 2019). In these complaints, more than one speaker adopt the role of complainant expressing their dissatisfaction about a complainable. Joint complaints have been observed to serve specific bonding purposes between participants, allowing them to establish interactional 'coalitions' (Laforest, 2009) against the complained-about third party or issue. They typically involve an escalation of accusations (Drew & Walker, 2009) and affectivity (Rääbis et al., 2019). As noted by Drew and Walker (2009), however, sometimes co-complainants escalate the complaint beyond the comfort level of the person who initiated the complaint, leading this person to back out of the complaint and disaffiliate with the participants who took the complaint too far. Until now, little attention has been paid to the precise interactional practices by which complaints become jointly constructed, and this is something I build upon in Chapters 4 and 5.

Setting and participants

There is some evidence that the interactional setting and the roles and relationships between the participants influence how and why complaints are done (Edwards, 2005; Heinemann, 2009; Ruusuvuori & Lindfors, 2009). Drew and Walker's (2009) and Traverso's (2009) studies of everyday talk between friends and family members, for example, suggest that such coparticipants often are keen to accept and go along with complaints. In contrast, the tendency to accept complaint-initiations and assist in the co-construction of the complaint seems to be more variable in institutional settings. Heinemann (2009) demonstrates how caregivers in Danish home help visits respond differently to indirect complaints initiated by other caregivers than to those initiated by caretakers, ratifying (and co-constructing) their colleagues' complaint initiations while rejecting caretakers' initiations. Participants' institutional roles and responsibilities may thus take precedence, stopping complaint recipients from engaging affectively in such activities as they instead prioritize the maintenance of professional conduct, or leading them to express their affiliation in highly subtle ways (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019).

Type of complainable

Whether the type of complainable (person, object, state etc.) plays a role for how complaint sequences play out is still an outstanding empirical question. To my knowledge, no CA studies have specifically contrasted complaints about persons and those about inanimate matters. While the literature on direct complaints focuses on complaints about both people and state of affairs, studies on indirect complaining in most cases concern other people. This makes it difficult to pinpoint specific similarities or differences between complaints based on the nature of the complainable. Traverso (2009) and Mandelbaum (1991) exemplify studies that analyze complaints about both third parties, objects, and state of affairs, without discussing differences in the documented complaint practices based on the type of complainable. In Chapters 4 and 6 I revisit this question to some extent, with observations about the difference between distinct complainables based on the participants' epistemic access to the issue.

Complaining in different languages and cultures

No research has directly compared complaint sequences across languages or cultures. The reviewed literature represents several (primarily Indo-European) languages, such as Danish (Heinemann, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), English (Alexander, 2018; Dersley & Wootton, 2000; Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Drew & Walker, 2009; Edwards, 2005; Holt, 2012; Kevoe-Feldman, 2018; Mandelbaum, 1991; Ogden, 2010; Schegloff, 2005), Estonian (Rääbis et al., 2019), Finnish (Haakana, 2007; Ruusuvuori & Lindfors, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), French (Laforest, 2009; Traverso, 2009), German (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Günthner, 1995; 1997; 1999; 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012), and Italian (Monzoni, 2009). While the precise linguistic resources people mobilize to complain in these various languages naturally differ, the basic building blocks and practices that go into complaining do not seem to differ much across languages (see Ch. 2.2.3-2.2.4). Future research will likely reveal more about the similarities and differences between languages and cultures in complaining. My study also contributes to this line of inquiry by shedding light on how people from diverse backgrounds and with different L1s understand the activity.

All in all, there is still much to say about differences between distinct types of complaints and about the impact of various factors (participants' roles, relationships, the interactional setting, the nature of the complainable, language and culture) on the construction of complaint activities. Instead we now turn to research about the interactional organization of complaint sequences. The focus will be on the structure of complaints about non-present third parties or state of affairs, as these are the types of complaints investigated in the dissertation.

2.2.3 How speakers do complaining (1): Complaint structure

Limited research has addressed the structural and sequential organization of indirect complaining. As pointed out by Laforest (2009), the kind of adjacency pairs described by Schegloff (2005), consisting of a complaint proper and its response, sometimes applies for direct complaints (as in Ex. 2.7), but rarely for indirect ones. When such adjacency-pair complaint sequences do occur, they are typically preceded and succeeded by fine-grained interactional work that needs to be considered to understand the activity as a whole (Traverso, 2009). As an activity comprising several interactional 'tasks', complaints typically make up long sequences (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009). The development of complaint initiations into full-fledged complaint sequences and the subsequent organization of the activity are contingent on the coparticipants' contributions (Drew & Walker, 2009; Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Traverso, 2009); this makes complaints "less tangible objects" than what was suggested in the early literature (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009, p. 2382). As pointed out above, the difficulty of defining a complaint may be related to the difficulty of describing its formal structure, and this is likely why there is still much to discover about the structural organization of complaints. Most existing research (e.g., Edwards, 2005; Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Traverso, 2009) suggests that complaint sequences rarely are of the 'bounded' nature with clear beginnings and ends observed by Drew (1998).

Moreover, the central role of storytellings in complaints (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Günthner, 1995; 1997; 2000; Haakana, 2007; Selting, 2010a; 2012) often makes the structure of complaints resemble that of storytellings, and particularly troubles tellings (Jefferson, 1980; 1984a; 1984b; 1988; Jefferson & Lee, 1981). Only a few studies make observations about the structure of complaint stories (Günthner, 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012). These studies indicate that complaint stories to a high degree resemble other types of stories. Below I will focus primarily on the organization of complaints more generally, while providing some brief observations about the structure of complaint stories specifically.

Complaint initiations

The moral, and potentially delicate, nature of complaints affects how these are initiated. Existing research has shown that speakers often move into complaining in a stepwise manner in order to test the grounds of the complaint before launching the activity fully (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). Complaint initiations may be accepted, rejected, or merely disattended (Mandelbaum, 1991; Ruusuvuori & Lindfors, 2009; Schegloff, 2005), and the initiator orients to these contingencies already from the start of (or even before) the sequence (Edwards, 2005; Traverso, 2009). Some differences have been observed in the extent to which complaining is oriented to as a delicate, or even dispreferred,

activity in the initiation (cf. different observations in Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Günthner, 1997; 2000), which appears to be related to the interactional context and participant framework. In most cases, overt criticism or other strong expressions of negative stance are offered only after some more subtle hints at the complainable situation (Pomerantz, 1986; Schegloff, 2005; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019).

Traverso's (2009) analysis of indirect complaints in French interactions between friends provides some evidence for the way in which participants with well-established relationships initiate complaints in informal settings. The author observes that future complainants typically first do some work to gauge whether the coparticipants will recognize and accept the complaint initiation and give their go-ahead signal for the initiator to continue. Even before the initiation, however, the initiator may provide preliminary indications that signal a shift toward some kind of upcoming troubles talk, such as a heavy sigh. While at the initiation stage the complaint is only a 'potential' one, according to Traverso (2009) it nevertheless resembles actual complaints at the surface level, in that it is uttered with linguistic, prosodic and paraverbal features that are similar to those of full-fledged complaints. Consider Ex. 2.8. The original is in French, but Traverso also offers an English transcript version (forward slash indicates rising intonation).

Ex. 2.8, from Traverso (2009, p. 2389, the author's translation; boldface added)

01 M: ((coming back from the bathroom)) don't go thinking
 02 I've peed on the floor now
 03 C: is it wet/ again/
 04 M: yes it's still- it's oozing out
 05 C: **pffouh I'm fed up/ with this house**

According to Traverso (2009), the initiation occurs in line 5, where C sighs, thereby foreshadowing the stance of the upcoming turn, and then shifts topic slightly from the problems with the bathroom to the house as a whole. The sigh and the explicit expression of frustration and dissatisfaction make the turn hearable as a complaint-initiation, but whether it develops into an actual complaint depends on the recipient's response to the initiation. If the coparticipants ratify the initiation, the activity proceeds to what Traverso (2009) calls the 'complaint development'.

In contrast to Traverso (2009), Ruusuvuori et al.'s (2019) study of employees' complaints about co-workers in performance appraisal interviews in Denmark and Finland shows how people may go about to move into complaining in more formal, professional settings. While the example from Traverso's (2009) study above illustrates a rather direct complaint initiation, Ruusuvuori et al. (2019) observed much more subtle and careful ways in which the participants initiated complaints to display an orientation to these as delicate matters. An important finding was that the managers in their data recurrently created opportunities for the employees to complain about their co-workers and facilitated complaint initiations by collaborating in the expression of shared affective stances and joint epistemic access to the complainable. This happened for example through focused questions to the employee that explicitly invited negative observations about troublesome topics, or through implicit topicalizations of problematic issues that were in the shared epistemic domain. The employees, on the other hand,

used various means to delay and mitigate the complaint initiations, such as hesitation markers, restarts, and hedges, thereby indexing the delicacy involved in criticizing colleagues.

In the stepwise transition into complaints speakers thus regularly draw on different means to hint at the valence of the upcoming talk and delay delicate actions such as negative criticism. Besides non-linguistic resources, such as non-lexical vocalizations deployed to index negative stance (see Ch. 2.2.4), speakers habitually use what Sacks (1992, Vol. I, p. 359) refers to as ‘praise-but’-complaint initiations. By prefacing complaints with some kind of praise (which carries positive valence) and a ‘but’, what follows does not necessarily have to be clearly negatively formatted to be understood as a complaint. While not discussed as such by the authors, this kind of initiation occurs in several of the examples analyzed by Ruusuvuori et al. (2019), in which future complainants first produce self-praise or praise of another colleague before contrasting this with criticism about the third party who is the object of the complaint. As I show in Chapter 4.2, this practice regularly occurs in my data too. The use of self-praise is a way for speakers to manage what Edwards (2005) calls the ‘subjective side’ of complaining, namely the speakers’ portrayal of him/herself. According to Edwards (2005), such interactional work often takes place in complaint initiations, as speakers subtly try to convey their own reasonableness and legitimacy as complainants in face of the complainable situation. Speakers’ orientations to the delicacy of complaining are thus often dual in complaint initiations, seen in both the delay and mitigation of criticism and of speakers’ positive portrayal of themselves.

Not all subject-side work in complaint initiations are of subtle nature. As shown by Edwards (2005; see also Drew, 1998), in complaints between close friends or relatives complainants regularly announce the way they are affected by the complainable situation before describing it (see Ex. 2.11). This kind of announcement is similar to what has been observed for complaint story openings. As evidenced in CA research on storytelling (Jefferson, 1978; Mandelbaum, 2013; Sacks, 1974; 1978; 1992), story tellers normally do some prefatory work in the story opening that serves to secure a longer turn, provide some circumstantial information about the upcoming telling, and hint at the nature of the story so as to help recipients anticipate appropriate responses. Prefaces to complaint stories normally frame the story as a negatively valenced one through displays of frustration or anger, and hint at the expected affiliative or sympathetic responses (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Günthner, 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012).

Complaint development

What follows the initiation phase of the complaint depends on coparticipants’ responses to the initiation. While coparticipants sometimes immediately affiliate with the initiator, in Traverso’s (2009) data on ordinary French interactions this is rarely the case; more often there is a negotiation about the initiation of the complaint after ‘blatant’ or ‘subtle’ disattending responses (cf. Mandelbaum, 1991), requiring the initiator to deploy several attempts to move into the complaint proper. If coparticipants ratify the complaint initiation, the activity proceeds to what Traverso (2009) calls the ‘complaint development’. At this stage, the complainant works to attain further affiliation from the coparticipants by underlining the complaint-worthiness of the situation. In Traverso’s collection, this is most frequently done through repetitions, ‘amplification’, or tellings of stories or anecdotes. Excerpt 2.9 is the direct continuation of Ex. 2.8 above:

Ex. 2.9, from Traverso (2009, p. 2393, the author's translation; boldface added)

05 C: pffouh I'm fed up with this house
 06 M: oh oh well it's only water (.) I mean
 07 C: **ah but it's the same thing day in day out// (.) there's**
 08 **always water that seeps through [...]**

Here, C's initiation (line 5) is met by resistance by M (line 6). C then draws on various interactional resources to justify and stress the complaint-worthiness of the situation: After the exclamatory *ah*, C asserts the severity of the problem by referring to its frequency with the extreme-case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) *day in day out* (line 7) and *always* (line 8).

While not discussing complaint initiations, Drew and Holt (1988) identify two distinct activities in the formulation of complaints, which perhaps most correspond to the post-initiation phase described above in the context of Traverso's (2009) study. On the one hand, participants report on the details of the circumstances of the grievance, and on the other hand, they explicitly formulate, or name, the grievance through an idiomatic expression – the latter constituting the actual complaint (Drew & Holt, 1988). Consider Ex. 2.10.

Ex. 2.10, from Drew & Holt (1988, p. 404)

01 Emma: But wha:ta ga:l. Thirty eight year old gal;, 'n she (.)
 02 left me tonight she sais oh Emma yer so much she sais
 03 I love to have you rou::nd en in: yihknow yuh made me feel
 04 so go::d'n I thought why'n the hell my family be that wa:y.
 05 Lottie: Ye::ah.
 06 Emma: They don't give me two cents worth of:,h

In Emma's first turn (lines 1-4), she details the circumstances of the problem; in her last turn (line 6), she formulates it with the help of the idiomatic expression 'two cents worth'. According to Drew and Holt (1988), idiomatic expressions are typically used at points when there is a lack of alignment or affiliation on behalf of the recipient, such as in this case, where Lottie responds merely with a *ye::ah* (line 5) after Emma's detailed description of the problem. Idiomatic expressions serve to build the legitimacy of the complaint by underlining the severity of the reported transgressions in a way that cannot be 'tested' or refuted, in contrast to the circumstantial reporting of the transgressions that preceded (see Ch. 2.2.4 below).

Recipient responses to complaints

Indirect complaints are designed to recruit affiliative (and/or sympathetic) responses from the coparticipants (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Drew & Walker, 2009; Edwards, 2005; Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Holt, 2012; Mandelbaum, 1991; Ogden, 2010; Ruusuvaori et al., 2019; Selting, 2010a; 2012; Traverso, 2009). Affiliation is typically understood as a display of support and endorsement of another speaker's conveyed affective stance (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Stivers, 2008; Stivers et al., 2011). In contrast to alignment, which has to do with *structural* cooperation, affiliation thus works on the *affective* side of cooperation (Stivers, 2008; Stivers et al., 2011). When complainants express their affective

negative stance toward an issue, they expect their coparticipants to show affective support. If they do not (immediately) get such support, they typically extend the sequence to provide further opportunities for the coparticipants to affiliate (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Drew & Holt, 1988; Holt, 2012; Selting, 2010a; 2012; Traverso, 2009).

Documented practices and resources for displaying affiliation in response to complaints and complaint stories include, among others: claims of understanding, displays of agreement, negative assessments, non-lexical vocalizations, and embodied expressions of stance that match or upgrade the complainant's expressed stance, as well as second stories/complaints that are congruent with the first complaint (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Selting, 2010a; 2012). Couper-Kuhlen (2012) also shows that verbal affiliative responses typically are delivered in a timely fashion and with prosodic matching or upgrading of the complainant's talk. Merely vocal displays of affiliation, such as non-lexical vocalizations, are usually "reinforced verbally in following turns, suggesting that they may be perceived as momentary and fleeting" (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, p. 142) and not treated by participants as sufficient displays of affiliation on their own. Particularly strong displays of affiliation may lead to joint complaining (Edwards, 2005; Heinemann, 2009; Laforest, 2009; Rääbis et al., 2019), although, as mentioned above, sometimes coparticipants' attempts to affiliate go too far (Drew & Walker, 2009). As shown by Jefferson and Lee (1981) in connection to troubles talk, attempts by coparticipants to offer solutions to expressed difficulties may be rejected by the speaker, especially if such solutions are offered early in the sequence, before the speaker has had the chance to fully develop the story or report. This shows speakers' orientation to such talk as primarily a way of seeking emotional support rather than to find a solution to the problem.

Complaints are not always responded to with affiliation, however. Sometimes they are also rejected or merely disattended. As pointed out by Holt (2012), the moral work involved in complaining may make coparticipants reluctant to affiliate. Uncooperative complaint responses have been discussed in terms of *diffusing*, *disattending*, *preempting*, or *rejecting* the complaint underway (Holt, 2012; Mandelbaum, 1991; Ruusuvuori & Lindfors, 2009; Schegloff, 2005). Given the preference for cooperation in conversation (Stivers et al., 2011), participants develop methods for accomplishing non-cooperation in complaints that nevertheless permit them to maintain social solidarity with the complainant. In a case analysis of two disattended complaints in ordinary conversation between friends, Mandelbaum (1991) documents how the recipients accomplish 'subtle disattending' by attending to and developing factual points in the telling that lead away from the actual complainable, for example by eliciting more information about a specific point that is unrelated to the complainable or by providing a reciprocal account that displays an understanding of the telling as being something else than a complaint (Mandelbaum, 1991). Ruusuvuori and Lindfors' (2009) have shown similar practices deployed in institutional settings: In responding to criticism from patients about previous treatments, medical representatives often choose to disattend the potential complainable matters and instead focus on progressing the medically relevant task, thereby preventing a development of the sequence into a full-fledged complaint. Finally, Holt (2012) demonstrates how laughter can work to avert the development of a complaint without jeopardizing social solidarity.

Complaint closings

Even less has been said in the literature about complaint closings than about initiations. According to Traverso (2009), one of the differences between complaining and storytelling is that complaints lack the kind of early projection of the overall structure that storytellings typically have. This converges with Jefferson's (1988) observations about troubles talk, in which she proposes a 'sequence candidate' of sequentially ordered elements that reoccur to varying extent in her data rather than the interactional work-up to a projectable climax. In Jefferson's data, the closing of troubles talk often co-occurred with conversational closing, making troubles talk a 'last topic' after which no other topics should be introduced. If the conversation did go on, the conversational nexts were normally marked in some ways, showing the participants' 'deference' toward the troubles talk (Jefferson, 1988, p. 435-438; note, however, that Jefferson's data consisted of telephone calls). Traverso (2009) did not observe complaining as the last topic of conversations, but closings sometimes coincided with strong changes in the situation such as the arrival or departure of a participant, or occurred through conversational 'breaks' (whose meaning is unclear). In both Jefferson's (1988) and Traverso's (2009) collections, speakers show strong orientations toward the relevance of receiving affiliative or sympathetic responses before moving to a close.

In terms of interactional practices for moving toward sequence closure, Jefferson (1988) documented the use of 'optimistic projections', 'invocation of the status quo', and making light of the trouble (Jefferson, 1988). Another resource complainants deploy to close down complaints is prosody (Ogden, 2010). Comparing complaint turns designed to invite affiliation and complaint turns designed to close down the sequence, Ogden (2010) notes that speakers produce closing-implicative turns (typically consisting of summary assessments, idiomatic expressions, or lexical recycling of prior talk) with lower pitch onset than in prior turns, with relatively quiet and lax voice, and with narrow pitch span. These prosodic features differ from those used with turns designed to invite affiliation, and thus contribute to the various cues informing recipients about expected responses, although they also co-occur with other closing-implicative talk meaning that they are not specific to complaints. As described above, laughter seems to work as a particularly useful resource when coparticipants choose not to play along in the complaint sequence and set out to close it rather than develop it (Holt, 2012).

In the case of complaint stories, the literature suggests that these rely on similar principles for sequence closure as other types of complaints. If, after the delivery of the story climax, tellers do not receive sufficiently affiliative responses, they normally expand the sequence by further insisting on the complaint-worthiness of the reported situation (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Selting, 2010a; 2012). Complaint stories lend themselves particularly to the initiation of second complaints (Günthner, 1997; Selting, 2012). Similar to what was observed by Jefferson and Lee (1981) for advice given prematurely in response to troubles tellings, second stories initiated 'too early' may be oriented to as a non-affiliative move by the first complainant (Selting, 2012) as the first complaint is interrupted before the complainant had the chance to fully develop it.

The research presented in this section provides a complex picture of complaint sequences. Most available evidence converges around a characterization of complaints as highly contingent activities whose structure and sequential development depend strongly on coparticipants'

contributions and contextual factors. There is yet much to uncover about these questions, and this is something I address in Chapter 4.2.

2.2.4 How speakers do complaining (2): Action components and resources

One of the main job of complainants is to underline the unreasonable and egregious character of the reported situation so as to show that the complainable is worthy of complaining (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Holt, 2012; Pomerantz, 1986). At the same time, complainants often do interactional work to handle the ‘subjective side’ of complaints, to portray themselves as credible and legitimate complainants (Edwards, 2005). The literature highlights a few actions and activities complainants typically use to manage both the ‘objective’ and the ‘subjective’ side of complaints, such as negative assessments, precise descriptions of complaint-worthy conduct, and storytellings. Within and besides these components, complainants also deploy a range of linguistic, rhetorical, prosodic, and embodied resources to show negative stance and construct ‘complaint-worthiness’. While being far from exhaustive, I now address some of these components and resources. I refer to these as interactional ‘resources’ for complaining in a general sense, despite their different statuses as ‘actions’, ‘practices’, or ‘resources’ according to more traditional CA terminology (see e.g. Clift, 2016; ten Have, 2007; Heritage, 2010).

Verbal and linguistic resources

Negative assessments⁶ figure in the literature as key resources for formulating complaints and expressing the complainant’s stance toward the complainable (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Edwards, 2005; Rääbis, 2019). Drew (1998) refers to these as ‘overt expressions of moral indignation’, by which speakers morally condemn the behavior of the other, although sometimes through first-person assessments (e.g., ‘I was so upset’). Negative assessments are also used by coparticipants to respond affiliatively to other speakers’ complaints and to co-construct joint complaints (see Ch. 2.2.3 above).

While, to my knowledge, no study has systematically investigated the role of negative assessments in complaint sequences, existing evidence suggests that these typically are of low-grade nature or take rather implicit forms at the beginning of complaint sequences (Edwards, 2005; Ruusuvaori et al., 2019), and that high-grade assessments are used later as part of an escalation of the accusations against the third party or complainable (Drew, 1998; Pomerantz, 1986; Rääbis et al., 2019), for example in summary assessments. This converges with participants’ orientation to complaints as delicate matters that need to be introduced in a stepwise fashion. As pointed out above, even neutrally formatted descriptions may serve the purpose of a negative assessment by virtue of their placement after a positively valenced element and a contrastive marker. Excerpt 2.11 illustrates both the stepwise escalation of negative assessments and the use of contrastive formulations. The excerpt comes from a performance appraisal interview between a manager (M) and an employee (E) at a Danish company. M has just asked E how it is going with ‘the other departments’.

⁶ Some researchers documenting complaint practices refer to negative observations or criticism, without specifying precisely the difference of these terms vis-à-vis negative assessments. My use of *assessments* encompasses observations and similar terms.

Ex. 2.11, from Ruusuvuori et al. (2019, p. 50; only part of excerpt; gaze indications omitted)

- 04 E: =Generelt godt. .Hhhh synes jeg.
=Generally good. .Hhh I think.
- 05 M: Generelt godt.
Generally good.
- 06 E: J:#a# det mi::- generale:#:# det mit (.) generale billed.=
Y:#e#s this is my::- genera:#:#l this is my (.) general picture.=
- 07 E: =altså jeg ha::#r# lige sådan lidt det de:r
=well I ha::#v#e like a little bit about this
- 08 E: æ Blommeballe det har der været så meget i .HHH igennem
uh Blommeballe this has there has been so much f .HHH for
- 09 E: æhm månederna o' årene.
uhm months and years.
- 10 (.)
- 11 E: at at d:er=l- de:r lidt æ#:# (.) mt æ de:t forkert
that that there is=l-there is little u#:# (.) mt uh it is wrong
- 12 E: at si::ge .hh (.) dårligt, men de:r sådan et=
to sa::y .hh (.) bad but there is such an=
- 13 E: =kunstigt (.) æ: (.) forhold.
artificial (.) u: (.) relationship.

Upon M's request, E assesses the situation with the other departments as 'generally good' (line 4). This assessment, while positive, also implies a restriction, that there is something that is *not* good. According to Ruusuvuori et al. (2019), the manager's acknowledgment of this assessment – his repeat (line 5), displays an expectation that E should expand on the topic. E does so in the ensuing talk, as he claims that there is something that has been going on with the department 'Blommeballe' for months and years (lines 8-9). In lines 11-12, he offers a mildly positive assessment of the situation, that it would be wrong to call it 'bad'. Also this assessment indexes a negative undertone, and the more clearly negative assessment follows the contrastive conjunction 'but': The relationship is artificial. The 'complaint proper' (the main complaint formulation) is formulated only after further elaboration and takes the form of an idiomatic expression with clear negative connotations (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019).

In contrast to negative assessments about the complainable, **first-person assessments** (or subject-side assessments, see Edwards & Potter, 2017) recurrently occur in complaint initiations. Excerpt 2.12 provides an example.

Ex. 2.12, from Edwards (2005, p. 9; boldface added)

- 01 Rob: ↑Well ↓and **the other thing I wz disgusted b-** I'm
02 ↓sorry you're getting'n earful'v this you couldn't'v:
03 phoned't a better ↑ti:me,hheh ↑he[h
04 Les: [.hh ↑Oh that's
05 alri:ght,
06 Rob: Well **the** ↑**other thing** ↓I've (.) **found very strange**
07 is ↑there weren't any dictionaries in the classroom

- 08 Les: .t.k.hhh[h
 09 Rob: [Not actua[l
 10 Les: [↑No children's dih- e-w'l not
 11 many children's dictionaries, hh
 12 Rob: W'l, they ↑have those little (.) booklety ↓things

Here Rob announces his stance first with *I wz disgusted* (line 1) and then *the ↑other thing ↓I've (.) found very strange* (line 6) before formulating the complaint about the lack of dictionaries in the classroom (line 7; see further analysis by Edwards, 2005).

Second assessments often figure in complaints as recipients express their affiliation or sympathy with the complainant (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Drew, 1998; Selting, 2010a; 2012) or help constructing a joint complaint (Rääbis et al., 2019; Drew & Walker, 2009; Heinemann, 2009). Affiliative second assessments upgrade the first assessment (Pomerantz, 1984), and typically contribute to the escalation of affective stance (Rääbis et al., 2019). Excerpt 2.13 illustrates such case, in which three Estonian teenage girls complain about their physics teacher.

Ex. 2.13, from Rääbis et al. (2019, p. 29; only part of excerpt included)

- 04 H: [ma] pean ka mul=on keemias homme töö.
I have to (study) too I have a test tomorrow in chemistry
 05 R: haige füssaõps (0.5) Selma {-} töö.
sick physics teacher (0.5) Selma's {-} test
 06 J: see Selma on vana tebiil kuradi näss=[ä.]
that Selma is old moron damned runt
 07 R: [heh] (.) ol(h)e v(h)ait.
SMILE (.) shut up
 08 J: mis teha mis teha see ajab nii närvi. hea [klassijuhataja.]
what to do what to do this drives me nuts. good teacher.
 09 H: [on jah, ma] lööks ta maha.
yes (she) is, I would kill (lit. 'strike down') her.

In response to H's assertion that she needs to study for a test (line 4), R deploys a figurative expression that negatively assesses her teacher as 'sick' (line 5). J responds to this with the strongly upgraded second assessment of the teacher as an 'old moron damned runt' (line 6) and subsequently the ironic 'good teacher' (line 8). As a further escalation of the complaint, H asserts that she would 'kill' the teacher (line 9; see detailed analysis by Rääbis et al., 2019). The participants' high-grade assessments rely on another common resource deployed for constructing complaint-worthiness, namely **extreme case formulations** (Pomerantz, 1986). Extreme-case formulations are assessments or descriptions that contain extreme terms such as 'brand new', 'everyone', and 'all day Sunday' (Pomerantz, 1986). In the context of complaints, they may serve as a way "to defend against or to counter challenges to the legitimacy of complaints" (Pomerantz, 1986, p. 219).

Two related resources are **generalizations** and **idiomatic expressions**. Mandelbaum (1991, p. 120) notes that a statement such as 'he always gets mixed up' may be used to support the

recurrent nature of the complainable and thus the legitimacy of the complaint. Idiomatic expressions sometimes serve to create a similar, generalizing, effect, as these typically appeal to general, public wisdom. The use of idiomatic expressions in complaints has been documented specifically by Drew and Holt (1988), who noted that complainants recurrently deploy these in similar manner as summary assessments, to formulate the gist of the complaint. The figurative nature of idiomatic expressions makes them a particularly “powerful” resource for complaining: In contrast to descriptions with concrete facts that may be empirically tested and falsified, idioms “have a certain resistance to being tested or challenged on the empirical facts of the matter” (Drew & Holt, 1988, p. 406). This is why they often occur after insufficiently affiliative responses to a more factual description, as a means to increase the chances of obtaining affiliative displays (see also Ch. 2.2.3 above).

Other central tasks of complainants are to describe and account for the way in which the complainable situation constitutes a transgression. Through **descriptive detailing** complainants construct the conduct of the other as morally reprehensible and their own conduct as morally defensible (Drew, 1998), thereby justifying the complaint. **Storytellings** and other types of **tellings** are key resources for accomplishing such descriptive work. In some cases, tellings about past events are used as ‘exemplary stories’ (Günthner, 1995) providing precise examples of the complainable. In other cases, complaints emerge progressively *through* storytellings (Selting, 2010a; 2012). In both cases, the tellings detail the circumstances of the complainable situation in order to substantiate the complaint. One feature of descriptive accounts of complaint-worthy behavior is what Drew (1998) refers to as ‘**overdetermined descriptions**’. Such descriptions, related to hendiadys, occur when the speaker uses more words than necessary to describe something, such as “she stood up and walked out of the room” instead of simply “she walked out of the room”. Because the latter action (walking) presupposes the former (being in standing position), reporting on the former may not be considered necessary. Drew (1998) argues that such excessively specific description serves to “depict the complained-about conduct as not happenstance or inadvertent but as a deliberate action and therefore all the more reprehensible” (p. 319). By adding another element to the principal, complained-about action, the complainant underscores the carefulness or deliberateness undertaken by the third party in carrying out the action, which adds to its morally reprehensible character.

Moreover, recurrent features of storytellings are **reported speech** and **(re)enactments**, which have been observed to serve particular purposes in complaints. There are many alternative terms for referring to reports of talk and conduct, such as *reported talk/speech/discourse/thought*, *constructed dialog*, *conversational quoting*, *represented talk*, *enactments*, and *reenactments* (for literature reviews of these topics, see Clark & Gerrig, 1990; Clift & Holt, 2007; Prior, 2015); in this dissertation I will use the terms *reported speech* and *reenactments*. The term *reenactment* (sometimes merely *enactment*, see Holt, 2007) typically refers to reports of real or fictive embodied actions (Sidnell, 2006; see also Clark & Gerrig, 1990, for *demonstrations*), although studies of ‘reported speech’ regularly encompass reported non-verbal conduct. A basic distinction made in the literature is between *direct-reported speech* (DRS) and *indirect-reported speech* (IRS). When speakers deploy DRS, they claim to adopt the voice of the quoted person and reproduce his/her exact words; in IRS they integrate the reported talk in their own discourse by adapting it to the circumstances of the here-and-now

(Clift & Holt, 2007). As pointed out by numerous researchers, however, the distinction between the two is not always clear-cut (Clift & Holt, 2007; Günthner, 2000; Holt, 1996; 2000). A similar vagueness exists between reported speech and reported thought, as it often stays ambiguous whether the reported episode has actually taken place or not (Haakana, 2007).

Specifically DRS and reenactments are useful resources for speakers to scene-set their tellings in an animated and ‘witnessable’ way and for implicitly assessing the reported events. When ‘quoting’ or reenacting what another person has said or done, a speaker claims to provide an accurate, objective account of such conduct (Drew, 1998). At the same time, the speaker portrays the other’s conduct through the eyes of the speaker him/herself, thereby offering a highly subjective picture of the situation. In the context of complaints, complainants regularly deploy DRS and reenactments to show, rather than merely describe, in what way the conduct of the third party constitutes a complaint-worthy transgression and how this contrasts with their own, reasonable conduct (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015; Drew, 1998; Günthner, 1995; 1997; 2000; Holt, 1996; 2000; Kasper & Prior, 2015; Selting, 2010a; 2012; Sidnell, 2006). Through marked prosody, lexical choices and other interactional means, the complainant illustrates the offensiveness and unpleasantness of the third party (Drew, 1998). By instead deploying more neutral prosodic and paralinguistic resources when reporting on their own conduct, speakers portray themselves in more positive light (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015). Reported speech and reenactments thus increase the ‘witnessability’ of the complaint, which makes these resources particularly suitable for marking the climax of a complaint story (Drew, 1998; Holt, 2000). After the climax, there is not necessarily need for the complainant to explicitly evaluate the reprehensible behavior, instead s/he leaves the reported conduct to ‘speak for itself’.

Several studies have also shown that DRS and reenactments are effective means to engage coparticipants in the telling and recruit affiliative responses (Bangerter et al., 2011; Holt, 2000; Prior, 2015; Sidnell, 2006). Excerpt 2.14 provides an example, in which speaker D’s direct-reported dialog (lines 14-17) immediately receives an affiliative response from K:

Ex. 2.14, from Holt (2000, p. 446; boldface added)

- 14 D: no (.) so I went over to him and I said er you
 15 know last night after Richard’s gym I says I’ve
 16 just got a bill here for fifty quid he says ↑Oh
 17 I’m sorry it’s nought to do with me.
 18 K: **Oh:: the [rat**
 19 D: **[I know ↑O::h I was absolutely furious**
 20 K: can’t you cancel it?
 21 D: well I’ve told her now what can I do I’ve told
 22 her you know you’re having your party here.

K’s response in line 18 consists of a negative assessment of the third party, which shows affiliation with D’s complaint. As also invoked by Holt (2000), such recipient display of affiliation often results in a rapidly produced second assessment by the speaker him/herself

(line 19), which confirms the recipient's interpretation of the reported event and allows the participants to exchange mutual displays of alignment and affiliation.

Prosodic and other non-linguistic resources

The literature on complaining consistently reports that participants use marked prosody and certain non-linguistic resources such as non-lexical vocalizations and laughter to construct and respond to complaints (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Drew, 1998; Günthner, 1995; 1997; 2000; Holt, 1996; 2000; Holt & Drew, 1988; Kasper & Prior, 2015; Ogden, 2010; Selting, 2010a; 2012). Because a large proportion of the studies on complaining have relied on telephone data, less is known about speakers' use of embodied resources.

In terms of prosody⁷ and other non-linguistic resources, complainants recurrently modulate their prosodic delivery through shifts in pitch, volume, and tempo, to display their affective stances toward the complainable situation, to portray the characters reported on in their tellings (see above on DRS), and to animate their complaints (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Günthner, 1997; 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012, among others). While not all complaints involve strong displays of affect (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), many complaints do (Rääbis et al., 2019; Selting, 2012). Selting (2010a; 2012) has identified a range of prosodic features that complainants assemble in context-sensitive ways as 'bundles of co-occurring cues' to display their emotive involvement and particular affective stances such as annoyance and indignation. These include: accentuation on key terms, dense accentuation, marked changes in pitch and volume, distinct contrasts in contours, marked rhythm, syllable lengthening, laughter, and laugh particles. In the enactment of different voices in DRS, speakers have also been observed to use partly conventionalized stereotypic features such as falsetto voice quality and hyper- and hypoarticulation (Selting, 2012). In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3 above, prosody contributes to the different cues complainants use to index whether their complaint turns invite affiliation or are designed to close down the sequence (Ogden, 2010). Lastly, Edwards (2005) demonstrates that Jefferson's (1984b) observations about laughter as a means to show troubles-resistance also holds for complaints, as complainants work to portray themselves in good light.

As for responses to complaints, Couper-Kuhlen (2012) has found that recipients often prosodically match or upgrade the complainant's prior turns to show affiliation, whereas prosodic downgrading typically indexes non-affiliation. This was particularly true in the case of responses in the form of standalone non-lexical vocalizations, although – as also documented by Couper-Kuhlen (2012) – non-lexical vocalizations were typically accompanied by subsequent verbal resources (such as verbal assessments) and hence not treated as sufficient displays of affiliation on their own (see also Kupetz, 2014). Outside the literature on complaining, research on non-lexical vocalizations (also called 'sound objects', Reber, 2012, or merely 'vocalizations', see Keevallik & Ogden, 2020) has shown that these may be used both as assessments on their own and as displays of stance and affect more generally (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; Couper-Kuhlen, 2009; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Hoey, 2014; Tolins, 2013; Wiggins, 2002; 2013; 2019; see also Goffman's notion of *response cries*, Goffman, 1981).

⁷ Drawing on a broad definition of prosody, I use this term to refer to "all suprasegmental phenomena that are constituted by the interplay of pitch, loudness, duration and voice quality ... as long as they are used ... as *communicative signals*" (Selting, 2010b, p. 5, the author's emphasis).

Several studies document the use of non-lexical vocalizations in turn-initial positions within assessment turns, in which the sound object forecasts the negative valence of the upcoming turn (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; González Temer, 2017; Hoey, 2014; Traverso, 2009). Excerpt 2.15 offers an example, here with the frequently occurring *pf* in French talk-in-interaction. The excerpt comes from a complaint story in which speaker N complains to P about having almost swallowed a staple that was inside her bread.

Ex. 2.15, from Baldauf-Quilliatre (2016, p. 93; boldface added)

- 01 N: mais c'est DANS mais c'est sorti [de mon morceau,]
but it's in but it came out of my piece
- 02 P: [oui c'est dans le pain ça?]
really it's in the bread
- 03 N: mais c'est dAns l'PAIN?
but it's in the bread
- 04 P: **pf: c'est incroyable [ça.]**
pf: unbelievable
- 05 N: [alors] j'ai mordu dans mon PAIN
so I bit into the bread
- 06 vous savEZ comme on fait- hein;
you know how you do huh

According to Baldauf-Quilliatre (2016), P's *pf*: in line 4 works together with the high-grade assessment *c'est incroyable ça* ('unbelievable') to display affiliation with N and close down a sequence about the nature and placement of the staple. The author suggests that *pf*-sounds always express affectivity in some way, and in some cases also work as assessments on their own. Together, the abovementioned studies thus demonstrate the varying degrees of evaluative and affective work speakers accomplish with non-lexical vocalizations. The flexibility of these vocalizations makes them useful resources for accomplishing the kind of interactional work involved in complaint activities. Importantly, the studies all show that the evaluative and affective character of the sound object emerges through the local interactional context, based on the position of the vocalization within the turn and sequence and its prosodic delivery.

Only a few studies on complaining address how speakers' embodied conduct contribute to the accomplishment of the activity. As with prosodic features and non-lexical vocalizations, embodied displays become meaningful communicative cues in their interactional context and in concert with other resources. Analyzing first and second complaint stories, Selting (2010a; 2012) documents the use of the following visual displays by complainants and complaint recipients: facial expressions (raised eyebrows, frowning, smirking, smiling versus unsmiling), gaze shifts, head movements (head nods/shakes, head postures), hand movements (knocking/pointing with finger, slashing with arm), and conventionalized postures of 'helplessness' and 'no understanding' such as raised shoulders and eyebrows and arms spread. Particularly in the context of DRS and reenactments, speakers combine multiple semiotic resources to display their stances and heightened affective involvement in the complaint (Günthner, 1997; 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012; see also Sidnell, 2006).

Also relevant for complaining, research on assessments has documented the highly multimodal nature of assessment turns and activities. Speakers deploy prosody and bodily conduct to

foreshadow incipient assessments, modulate the strength of verbal assessment segments, mobilize recipient assessments, and more generally display their affective involvement in the assessment activity (González Temer, 2017; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992; Haddington, 2006; Lindström & Mondada, 2009; Mondada, 2009). Ruusuvuori and Peräkylä's (2009) analysis of stance-displays in storytelling is also informative in this regard. These authors demonstrate that stance-displays in the form of facial expressions can help stretch the temporal boundaries of assessments of stories and topics, thereby offering different affordances for exchanges of affiliation than verbal resources. To my knowledge, no CA study has systematically investigated the role of co-occurring embodied conduct in the context of negative assessments such as those commonly occurring in complaints. Some efforts within Construction Grammar are nevertheless interesting in this context. Bressemer and Müller (2017), for example, demonstrate that a recurrent, conventionalized 'Throw Away' hand gesture co-occurs systematically with particular linguistic elements to form a "negative assessment operating in a meta-communicative manner on the speakers' own utterance or the utterance of others" (p. 4). These kinds of studies lay important grounds for more praxeological and sequential analyses of how grammar and the body interface in the context of assessments. As shown in Chapter 5, my study offers a small contribution to such research endeavor.

In this section, I have reviewed literature on specific actions and semiotic resources that have been identified in prior research as particularly relevant for complaint activities, such as negative assessments, extreme-case formulations, generalizations, idiomatic expressions, storytellings and descriptive accounts, reported speech and reenactments, as well as a range of prosodic, non-lexical, and embodied means to express stance and affectivity. Particularly in Chapter 5, I address how the L2 speakers of my study make use of these resources in constructing and responding to complaints.

2.2.5 Complaining in L2 interaction

To my knowledge, no longitudinal study on the development of L2 IC has yet investigated the topic of complaining. The SLA literature more generally is similarly scarce particularly as it concerns indirect complaints (for research on direct complaints within the field of Interlanguage Pragmatics, see Hilliard, 2017; Li & Suleiman, 2017; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Wijayanto et al., 2017; Trosborg, 1995). A few studies are nevertheless relevant to my work; these include non-CA studies on indirect L2 complaining and CA studies on related issues that have some bearing on the analysis of L2 complaints.

The topically most relevant study that informs my research is Boxer's (1993a; 1993c) ethnographic study of complaints as speech acts among L1 American students, faculty, and a group of Japanese ESL students studying at the same American campus. Boxer compared (primarily) audio-recorded complaint sequences among the L1 speakers with sequences in interactions between L1 and L2 speakers (some complaints were merely documented based on the author's recollection of past encounters). Findings showed that complaints were much more frequent in L1 speaker interactions than in L1-L2 speaker interactions. In L1-L2 interactions, almost 70% of the complaint sequences were initiated by L1 speakers. Complaints formulated by L2 speakers were most often elicited by a question from the L1 speakers, and according to the author, many of the complaint initiations by the L2 speakers were problematic in that they

were not recognizable as such to the L1 speakers. In addition, over half of the responses by L2 speakers to L1 complaint initiations were ‘zero-answers’ or topic shifts (in L1 conversations, these responses were very rare), meaning that the L2 speakers failed to respond in an affiliative way that allowed for development of the complaint. The author gives the following example:

Ex. 2.16, from Boxer (1993a, p. 159; boldface added)

01 NS: I found it very hard in France, when I was
 02 there to take a regular French university
 03 course because it was structured differently.
 04 NNS: **Yeah.**
 05 NS: And I found it really hard to understand
 06 the structure and to be able to
 07 understand what he wanted us to read
 08 and what kind of things to do.
 09 Sometimes I didn't study the right thing.
 10 NNS: **∅ response.**

In this case, the L2 speaker's (NNS) minimal response *yeah* (line 4) and lack of response (*∅ response*, line 10) were insufficient support for NS to elaborate on the complaint and rapidly led to abandonment of the sequence (Boxer, 1993a).

Boxer's (1993a; 1993c) findings indicate that complaining, albeit frequently occurring in L1 talk (“abundant in almost every conversation in which native speakers were involved in social conversation”, Boxer 1993a, p. 34), may be difficult for L2 speakers, both in terms of initiating sequences and responding to others' initiations. Alternatively, some of the observed differences between the American and Japanese participants may be due to cultural differences (see particularly Boxer, 1993c). Since Boxer investigated distinct groups of L1 and L2 speakers, and merely briefly analyzed the complaint sequences qualitatively, her research opens up for additional inquiries into L2 speakers' interactional management of complaints.

In terms of CA research, a series of investigations of different aspects of the au-pair girl ‘Julie’s’ interactions with her host family in L2 French are pertinent to my work. While not focusing on Julie's interactional skills as an L2 speaker, Berger (2017) documents Julie's and the host family parents' orientations to epistemic and deontic rights in complaints about the host family children. When Julie produces a second, affiliative complaint story about one of the children after a first complaint story by the host mother, she receives strongly affiliative responses from the mother. In contrast, when Julie tells a complaint story in first position, the complaint is not treated as legitimate by the parents. Berger (2017) argues that the different responses to Julie's complaints are related to the participants' orientations to distinct knowledge domains and their respective rights as parent versus au pair to criticize the children. In the context of the au-pair setting, complaint activities thus constitute a site for managing issues of epistemic and deontic rights related to the participants' roles as caregivers.

More related to L2 IC, Berger and Fasel Lauzon's (2016) study on emotion displays in dinner-table conversations between the same au-pair girl (Julie) and her host family offers some insight

into the kind of resources deployed by L2 speakers of French to respond to other speakers' displays of affect and what consequences this has for the management of interpersonal relationships. The authors demonstrate that Julie recurrently shows understanding of and affiliation with the host mother's affective stance through second assessments, affect-laden sound objects, recycling of the mother's prior turns, prosodic matching, and laughter. Such affiliative responses lead to mutual displays of 'emotional solidarity' that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the social relationship between the participants. According to Berger and Fasel Lauzon (2016), the participants do not orient ostensibly to Julie's status as an L2 speaker in these contexts, and Julie's responses to the mother's affect-laden talk testify to a high level of L2 IC. Interestingly, however, while not investigated specifically by the authors, several of Julie's second assessments and displays of affiliation are delayed, requiring some kind of repair (see Berger & Fasel Lauzon, 2016, Ex. 1, p. 91; Ex. 3a, p. 93-94; Ex. 5a, p. 99-100). Consider Ex. 2.17:

Ex. 2.17, from Berger and Fasel Lauzon (2016, p. 91, boldface added)

- 01 Mom: je trouvais tellement bizarre,
I found so weird
- 02 que dans un livre de grammaire,
that in a book of grammar
- 03 il °y ait même pas ça.°
it there was even not that
I found it so weird that in a grammar book there was not even that.
- 04 Jul: **<ouais.>**
yeah
Yeah
- 05 (0.6)
- 06 Jul: **oui c'est bizarre.**
yes it's weird
Yes it's weird.

In response to Mom's assessment of the missing element in the grammar book as *tellement bizarre* ('so weird', lines 1-3), Julie first responds with the acknowledgment token *<ouais>* ('yeah', line 4). The silence in line 5 indicates potential trouble with Julie's response (cf. Ex. 2.16 above), which Julie repairs by offering a second assessment (*oui c'est bizarre*, 'yes it's weird', line 6) that shows understanding of and affiliates with Mom's affective stance. The several instances of delayed and repaired responses in the presented data indicate that it may be difficult even for quite advanced L2 speakers (which Julie was) to produce timely second assessments and stance displays in response to other speakers' affect-laden talk. My study develops these observations by investigating more in detail L2 speakers' practices for assessing and responding to assessments and how such practices develop over time (see Ch. 5.1).

Finally, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.2 above, some of Pekarek Doehler and Berger's (2018) observations about Julie's story opening practices are relevant for my study. For instance, Julie showed a growing ability over time to index stance in story openings. Considering the importance of stance displays in complaint stories, Pekarek Doehler and Berger's (2018)

findings are indicative of a possible development over time in L2 speakers' means for designing recognizable complaint story initiations in a similar way as L1 speakers (see Ch. 2.2.4 above).

As presented in this section, there is a lack of research on L2 complaining-in-interaction. In both the few non-CA studies on complaining and the series of CA investigations on an individual speaker's contributions and responses to affect-laden talk in L2 French there are indications about difficulties for L2 speakers to effectively engage in these types of interactional activities. There is therefore room for further inquiries into the precise interactional workings of L2 complaints and their development over time. In the next section, I summarize the literature on complaining-in-interaction and outline existing research gaps in detail.

2.2.6 Cumulative evidence about complaining and research gaps

The cumulative empirical evidence about complaining-in-interaction provides a complex picture of this social activity. An important, basic distinction to make when referring to complaining is the one between so-called 'direct' complaints and 'indirect' complaints. Speakers use direct and indirect complaints for distinctly different social purposes and these activities take different interactional forms. In terms of indirect complaining, which is the focus of the dissertation, the literature so far has revealed the following:

- Complaints are moral activities involving speakers' expression of and account for how someone or something has affected them in an unjust, unreasonable, or morally indefensible way.
- Complaints are interactional *activities* composed of several distinct interactional 'tasks'.
- While complaining may be used to accomplish different things in interaction, the main concern of complainants is to seek displays of affiliation and/or sympathy from coparticipants. This makes complaining a highly social-relational activity, which offers opportunities for bonding experiences, the establishment of alliances, and the development of social relationships more generally.
- Because complaints are interactional activities, their sequential unfolding is highly contingent on coparticipants' responses. Coparticipants have means to facilitate, disattend, diffuse, join, and even take over other speakers' complaints. Coparticipants' willingness to display affiliation and/or engage in co-complaining may depend on the interactional setting and the participants' relationship with each other.
- Complainants deploy a range of interactional practices and resources to convey their (typically affective) negative stances, construct the complaint-worthiness of the complainable, and portray themselves as legitimate complainants. Important components of complaints include negative assessments, storytellings, and DRS. Among recurrent semiotic resources are extreme-case formulations, marked prosody, non-lexical vocalizations, laughter, and embodied conduct, which speakers assemble in context-sensitive ways.

In addition, we have some evidence about the following aspects of complaining:

- Complaints across different languages, interactional settings, and participant frameworks involve largely the same action components, but we still know little about the precise interactional organization of these activities. Only a few attempts to identify the sequential organization of complaints have been made, although several studies have demonstrated that speakers initiate complaints in a way that orients to the contingent and delicate nature of the activity.
- Joint complaining appears to involve the progressive escalation of expressions of (affective) negative stance toward a common complainable, but few studies have addressed in more detail how speakers accomplish such escalation.
- In face-to-face complaining, embodied resources play important roles in the expression of stance and affect and in doing reenactments of past events, but a limited amount of research on complaining has systematically investigated the use of these resources.

The research on complaining-in-interaction leaves room for further investigations of this phenomenon both in L1 and L2 interactions. Some avenues for future research include studies of the following issues:

- How generalizable are the limited existing findings about the interactional organization of complaint activities? What differences exist across interactional settings and participant frameworks?
- How, more precisely, do participants engage in co-complaining? By which interactional resources do they construct joint complaints?
- Is it possible to identify systematic uses of embodied conduct or recurrent multimodal packages used by complainants to construct complaint-worthiness?
- How do L2 speakers engage in complaint activities, and how do their practices for doing so change over time?

There is clearly much left to uncover about indirect complaining-in-interaction, and specifically as it concerns L2 speakers' practices. In the next section, I synthesize the research on the development of L2 IC and on complaining-in-interaction, and outline in what way the dissertation contributes to these respective research endeavors.

2.3 Synthesis, rationale, and expected contribution

In terms of the development of L2 IC, the rapidly growing research has documented a range of systematic longitudinal changes that occur as speakers increase their interactional experiences in the L2. Speakers diversify their interactional ‘methods’ for action and increase and complexify their interactional repertoires in the L2. In addition, they ameliorate their ability to synchronize and co-construct their interactional contributions with others. The result is increasingly context-sensitive and recipient-designed talk; in other words, heightened interactional flexibility or ‘agility’ in the L2.

As for complaining-in-interaction, research has highlighted the difficulty of formally defining and delimiting the phenomenon. This difficulty seems to relate to the highly contingent nature of complaining as an activity typically stretching over a longer sequence rather than a distinct action within an adjacency-pair structure. Complaints involve varying degrees of affectivity, but they always include expressions of negative stance. Complainants typically back up their negative assessments and criticism about the complainable through detailed descriptions or storytellings, often with DRS or reenactments and marked prosody. The successful outcome of a complaint involves affiliative or sympathetic responses from the coparticipants, but even the development of a complaint initiation into a full-fledged complaint depends strongly on the coparticipants’ collaboration.

Taking the existing research findings and gaps outlined in Chapters 2.1.3 and 2.2.6 into account, the dissertation seeks to contribute to the literature in the following ways:

By investigating how L2 speakers of French develop their practices for doing indirect complaining-in-interaction over time, the dissertation tackles an analytical object that has not yet been examined in the research on the development of L2 IC and for which only scarce findings exist regarding L2 speakers’ practices generally. As shown above, complaining is a ubiquitous social activity that occurs in both L1 and L2 interactions, yet it has not been addressed from a conversation analytic developmental perspective. The study thus contributes to the research base on L2 IC by adding a relevant analytical object to the existing range of investigated social actions and activities.

Importantly, the focus on complaining lends itself to findings about other aspects of the development of L2 IC. Focusing on a complex activity that has been characterized in the L1 literature as delicate, co-constructed, and highly contingent on coparticipants’ contributions, the dissertation aims to contribute to the cumulative evidence about how L2 speakers develop their practices for synchronizing and jointly constructing actions and larger activities with others, for managing delicate talk, for expressing stances and affect, and for displaying affiliation and sympathy; issues that are still under-researched in the literature on the development of L2 IC (see Ch. 4-6).

By adopting a multimodal analytical approach and systematically investigating both the linguistic and non-linguistic (prosodic, embodied) resources by which speakers engage in complaining, the dissertation wishes to contribute to the understanding of the multimodal aspects involved in L2 development and complaining-in-interaction. Both of these research strands lack more in-depth studies of how speakers assemble interactional resources from

different semiotic fields to accomplish recognizable social actions. In the case of L2 IC, we know near to nothing about the development over time in the use of multimodal practices. The longitudinal analyses of speakers' multimodal practices for accomplishing two recurrent complaint components – negative assessments and direct-reported speech – promise important contributions to the literature on both the development of L2 IC and complaining-in-interaction. These analyses also lend themselves to new insights into the development of L2 grammar-for-interaction (see mainly Ch. 5).

In addition, the social-relational purposes of indirect complaining and the fact that the interactional unfolding of the activity seems to depend strongly on the interactional setting and the nature of the participants' relationship provide for the relevancy of investigating how the development of complaint practices relates to evolving social relationships and participants' shared knowledge. By conducting two longitudinal case analyses on this topic, the dissertation aims to contribute both to the CA-SLA literature and to CA research more generally that investigate the role of speakers' shared interactional histories for recipient-design (see Ch. 6).

Finally, while the main objective of the dissertation is to increase our understanding of the development of L2 IC, the study also lends itself to contributing to the literature on complaining-in-interaction generally. As argued in the CA-SLA literature for many years (e.g., Wagner & Gardner, 2004), L2 interactions are 'normal conversations' that are based on the same generic organizational principles as L1 interactions (Hall, 2018; Markee, 2019; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b). Moreover, considering the high proportion of multilinguals worldwide and the prevalence of L2 interactions in all kinds of social settings, findings about L2 complaining are relevant also for research not focusing specifically on L2 speakers or L2 talk.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological framework of the dissertation, discusses the analytical procedures involved in longitudinal CA, and presents the empirical data of the study. I first review some of the methodological implications of using ethnomethodological CA within the framework of SLA studies (Ch. 3.1). I then describe the principles underlying the longitudinal research design of the study and discuss challenges involved in conducting developmental studies of L2 IC (Ch. 3.2). In the third section of the chapter, I present the empirical material used as basis for the investigation by outlining the steps involved in collecting data and establishing collections, by describing the participants and the inventory of complaint sequences, and by discussing limitations of the analytical framework (Ch. 3.3).

3.1 EMCA and CA-SLA as methodological frameworks

We will be using observation as a basis for theorizing. Thus we can start with things that are not currently imaginable, by showing that they happened.
(Sacks, 1984, p. 25)

The methodological approach of the dissertation is firmly grounded in ethnomethodological CA (EMCA). Ethnomethodology is a branch of sociology that investigates the interactional ‘methods’ (Garfinkel, 1967) by which ordinary people make sense of their social world. CA has developed in part as an offspring of ethnomethodology, focusing on the sense-making practices people deploy as they engage in non-elicited, naturally occurring talk, or *talk-in-interaction*. CA aims to discover and describe people’s orderly, recurrent, and systematic practices for managing different aspects of social interaction, such as turn-taking (Sacks et al., 1974), sequence organization (Schegloff, 2007), and repair (Schegloff et al., 1977). CA therefore documents the kind of everyday competence people rely on when engaging in ordinary conversation (Heritage, 1984b); in other words, their IC. While some researchers deploy CA merely as a methodological tool within other epistemological frameworks (e.g., ethnography of communication, language socialization), EMCA adheres strongly to the principles of ethnomethodology as an inductive, data-driven, and emic discipline that stays indifferent to a priori theory (for detailed introductions to CA, see Clift, 2016; ten Have, 2007; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Norrby, 2014; Psathas, 1995; Sidnell, 2010; among others).

To respect EMCA’s “distinctive way of seeing and thinking of the world” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 7), conversation analysts draw on a specific set of methodological procedures for analyzing social interaction. Observation lies at the heart of this method (see Sacks’ famous quote above). With the help of fine-grained transcripts of recorded talk (see Jefferson, 2004), the researcher analyzes the unfolding interaction sequentially, that is, turn by turn, to document how participants accomplish social actions and reach intersubjectivity. Initially CA was concerned mainly with people’s verbal practices, since much of the data consisted of telephone recordings and audio-recorded face-to-face interaction. While technological advances have permitted widespread use of video data for many years now, CA’s focus on the verbal aspects of interaction remained strong until recently. The field’s ‘embodied turn’ (Nevile, 2015) around the year 2000 occurred through a marked rise of empirical studies on embodiment, and has

contributed to a more holistic understanding of how people interact (see the contributions in Deppermann & Streeck, 2018; Goodwin, 2000; 2013; Keevallik, 2018; Mondada, 2014; 2018b). Many conversation analysts (e.g. Mondada, 2019) transcribe and analyze a range of different semiotic resources that participants deploy to accomplish social actions, including embodied conduct (gaze, gestures, postures, facial expressions etc.) and cultural artifacts (for a recent volume on object use in interaction, see Day & Wagner, 2019). While some CA research focuses on participants' practices in unique interactional encounters, most studies rely on collections of cases for purposes of grasping the recurrent, systematic nature of members' methods. The cumulative findings of these studies shed light on the generic organizational principles of social interaction (Schegloff, 2007). Empirical observations about real-life encounters thus form the basis for theorizing about the 'machinery' underlying human social conduct (Sacks, 1984, pp. 25-26).

As outlined in Chapter 2.1, the field of CA-SLA draws on the methodological foundations of CA to investigate L2 interaction, learning, and development. In this line of research, some scholars ground their theoretical and methodological approach exclusively in CA; others combine CA with particular learning theories such as sociocultural theory or language socialization (see some of the contributions in Atkinson, 2011a). A contentious issue still debated between those who advocate for one approach or the other concerns the ability of CA to address issues of learning (Markee & Kunitz, 2015). Some empirical studies therefore examine L2 speakers' practices for 'doing learning', that is, observably orienting to learning processes (Melander, 2012; Sahlström, 2011). Sometimes these studies adopt a (micro-)longitudinal perspective that documents change over time in participants' *learning behaviors* (Markee, 2008; 2011; Kunitz & Skogmyr Marian, 2017). In research on the development of L2 IC, scholars often avoid the term and discussion about learning. As mentioned in Ch. 2.1, they instead focus on documenting change over time in how L2 speakers accomplish social actions or activities in the L2. These studies rely on the presumption that change over time in interactional practices is indicative of developmental trajectories. Such research contributes to our understanding of the 'products' of L2 learning – how developmental trajectories of L2 learning look like – without addressing how the learning takes place (Nguyen, 2011; Pekarek Doehler & Fasel Lauzon, 2015). In this dissertation, I similarly do not tackle the process of language learning in my empirical analyses; I do however discuss the implications of my findings for L2 learning (Ch. 7.2).

3.2 Longitudinal CA: Research design and challenges

Research on the development of L2 IC is fundamentally comparative: In order to say something about change over time, the analysis has to document differences in practices or interactional resources across chronologically ordered (collections of) cases (Wagner et al., 2018). Most studies on the development of L2 IC adopt a longitudinal research design. These studies focus on one or a few target participants and conduct a 'vertical' analysis (Zimmerman, 1999) comparing practices for accomplishing particular social actions or activities at different points in time (for longitudinal CA studies not focusing on L2 talk, see Heritage & Clayman, 2013; several contributions in Pekarek Doehler et al., 2018; Wootton, 1997). As a concrete example, König (2019) tracked three French L2 speaker's practices for opening, shifting, and closing

topics at the beginning, middle, and end of a period of six to ten months. As discussed in Chapter 2.1, some longitudinal studies take defined semiotic resources as starting point rather than a social action, such as a grammatical construction or discourse particle, and track how the target participants change their interactional uses of the resource longitudinally (e.g., Ishida, 2009; Kim, 2009). The granularity of the analysis varies across studies: Some studies compare practices at two different points in time; others take a more fine-grained perspective and analyze practices on multiple occasions at regular intervals. Instead of using a longitudinal research design, certain studies on the development of L2 IC (e.g., Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011) draw on a cross-sectional design to compare the interactional conduct of groups of participants at different proficiency levels. While such approach has some practical advantages, observed differences across groups are merely indicative of a potential longitudinal trajectory, as they do not represent actual change.

The present study relies primarily on a longitudinal research design, by using longitudinal data from several participants at different proficiency levels and by comparing interactional practices both within participants over time and between participants. To enhance the robustness of the findings (see below), I have also included data from additional participants who stayed at the same proficiency level over time or for whom a longitudinal analysis was not possible. This research design maintains the benefits of a longitudinal analysis, while also allowing for observations past the individual level.

The comparative approach involves several methodological challenges. A basic requirement when tracing changes in the accomplishment of an action or an activity is to show that the action or activity remains the same while the participants' practices for accomplishing it change (Koschmann, 2013). Wagner et al. (2018) highlight three methodological difficulties associated with this premise: (1) warranting comparability, (2) building collections, and (3) providing robust evidence for longitudinal change. The first of these concerns the interactional context of the cases. To argue that a change in practices for accomplishing an action or activity has taken place, one must ensure that observed differences are due to a change in practices and not a change in the interactional context. Therefore, the analyst needs to use cases where the speech exchange system, the (type of) participants, the activity type, and the sequential environment are comparable. The second challenge concerns the procedures for establishing collections that allow for a longitudinal comparison. Instead of drawing on one homogenous collection, as in 'regular' CA, one must build several collections of the studied phenomenon at different points in time. This requires designing the data collection in a way that provides sufficient comparable interactional data and cases over an extended time period. Third, Wagner et al. (2018) invoke the challenge of providing robust evidence for the documented change. To prove that a longitudinal development has taken place, one needs to show *systematic* change – that a change in practice is not just a one-time happenstance. While it is impossible to determine exactly how much evidence is needed, some quantification may be useful considering that we know that “the proportion of occurrence of an interactional phenomenon changes as part of people’s (increased) adaptation to the local circumstantial details of the ongoing interactions” (Wagner et al., 2018, p. 25). Although not always necessary or possible in all studies, quantification thus helps showing systematicity and routinization of interactional practices over time. Finally, as discussed in Chapter 2.1, a further challenge with these kind of studies is how to warrant an

emic perspective in discussing longitudinal development (Wagner et al., 2018). Since this pertains to the interpretation of the findings rather than to research design, I return to this issue in Chapter 7.2. As shown below, I have collected the data and established collections in ways that take into account the discussed methodological challenges (see particularly Ch. 3.3.7-8).

3.3 This study: Empirical material

This section describes the empirical material used in the study. I first present the interactional setting that provided the basis for the data collection – an L2 French conversation circle – and its participants (Ch. 3.3.1). I then describe the procedures for conducting the recordings and obtaining the supplementary data material (Ch. 3.3.2), and for transcribing and anonymizing the data (Ch. 3.3.3). In Chapter 3.3.4, I outline the process of determining the analytical focus and establishing collections. The subsequent section (Ch. 3.3.5) presents the five focal participants of the analysis. In Chapter 3.3.6, I provide an overview of the inventory of complaint sequences used as basis for the analyses, and in Chapter 3.3.7 I discuss the comparability of the collections before addressing limitations in the research design (Ch. 3.3.8).

3.3.1. Setting and participants

The primary empirical material of the dissertation consists of video recordings of L2 French speakers participating in French-language conversation groups that took place between October 2016 and June 2018. The ‘conversation circles’, as these were called, were offered as an informal conversation-practice activity for students attending a French-language institute at a university in the French-speaking part of Switzerland (for other types of conversation-for-learning settings, see Barraja-Rohan, 2015; Hauser, 2003, Kasper, 2004; Kivik, 2012). The participants were, with the exception of one person, university students enrolled in either an L2 French ‘support course’ or in a more comprehensive L2 French language program. The support courses were normally offered at four different proficiency levels of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018) scale: A1, A2-B1, B2, and B2-C1. The more comprehensive language courses were intensive programs with B1 and B2 prerequisite levels, respectively, in which students took French courses either full-time or as one of their main subjects within a three-year bachelor’s program. The conversation circle offered an optional, complementary activity allowing students to practice their spoken French in an informal setting.

The participants were between 21 and 42 years old and came from various countries (Brazil, China, Greece, India, Iran, Italy, Spain, Sweden, the UK, etc.). They were placed in groups of three to four people with similar estimated proficiency level and based on their study schedules. Five participants, who attended four different conversation groups, were chosen as focal participants of the study (see Ch. 3.3.5 below). The meetings took place in a small university cafeteria every two weeks during the semester, with longer breaks during the academic holidays. The participants were free to speak about whatever they wished during these meetings. Most meetings lasted 30 to 60 minutes.

In line with standard research ethics guidelines, the participants were informed about the general aims of the research, its methods, data handling, and the fact that participation was

voluntary and may be terminated at any time. All participants signed a written consent form, provided in French and English, at the start of their participation in the research.

3.3.2 Recordings, supplementary material

The meetings were recorded with two video cameras and an external audio recording device. The use of two cameras aimed to ensure that the participants' embodied conduct would be captured in the recordings to allow for a detailed multimodal analysis. The recording devices were positioned as discreetly as possible in the cafeteria so as to minimize their intrusion on the interaction (cf. the 'observer's paradox', Labov, 1972), while nevertheless showing the interaction from different angles (see Ch. 1.3, Fig.1.1-1.2).

A total of 63.5 hours of recordings were included in the study. These came from four conversation groups, referred to as Lundi ('Monday'), Mercredi-1 ('Wednesday-1'), Mercredi-2 ('Wednesday-2'), and Jeudi ('Thursday') based on the day of the recording. Besides these recordings, I used an online background questionnaire to collect complementary information about the participants at the start of their participation. Unless the participants already had a recent certificate indicating their level of French, they were asked to complete the online proficiency test Dialang, which is based on the CEFR scale.⁸

3.3.3 Transcription and anonymization

The interactions were transcribed according to standard Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004), at first in rough form, and then with increased level of detail. In addition, I used Mondada's (2019) conventions for transcription of multimodal conduct, with some modifications (see p. ix). While some recordings were transcribed in their entirety, in other cases potentially relevant sequences for the analysis were transcribed. In order to enhance legibility of the final transcripts, I have only included descriptions of embodied conduct to the level of detail deemed necessary for the points made in the analysis. Framegrabs with video stills show particularly important embodied conduct.

Participants' names, references to places, and other sensitive information have been replaced by pseudonyms and fictive names in the transcripts. The town in which the recordings took place is consistently referred to as 'Launève'. Although many participants agreed to appear in video stills in scientific publications without anonymization, all participants' faces have been blurred or otherwise anonymized to some extent when included in the analysis.

English translations of French talk appear in italics below the original line. I have attempted to find a balance between providing as idiomatic translations as possible and maintaining features of the original turn design. I have typically not translated non-lexical vocalizations (*eu:h*, *pf*, *o:h*, etc.) or response tokens such as *mm-hm*, *uh-huh*, or *okay* unless these have conventional meanings in English that are different from French (for example, *ah* used as change-of-state token in French typically corresponds to the English *oh* and has therefore been translated as such). In the case of non-standard or unintelligible talk, I have offered best guesses of the target

⁸ This proficiency measure is provided by Lancaster University and is available online for free. See <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/researchenterprise/dialang>.

item (particularly the complex morphology of French sometimes made it difficult to ‘translate’ the participants’ talk into written form).

For identification purposes, excerpt headers include information about the conversation circle group (abbreviated as ‘Lun’, ‘Mer1’, ‘Mer2’, ‘Jeu’), the date of the recording, the time of the excerpt in the recording, and a keyword/phrase from the sequence.

3.3.4 Determining the analytical focus and establishing collections

Treating some actual conversation in an unmotivated way, that is, giving some consideration to whatever can be found in any particular conversation we happen to have our hands on, subjecting it to investigation in any direction that can be produced from it, can have strong payoffs.
(Sacks, 1984, p. 27)

The decision to focus the analysis on indirect complaints was not motivated by an a priori interest in complaining. In accordance with EMCA’s principle of *unmotivated looking* (Psathas, 1995; Sacks, 1984), I did not determine the analytical focus of the dissertation before conducting the recordings. The decision to investigate complaining was thus data-driven and emerged as I started working with the recordings. It was based on a wish to focus on an analytical object that was salient in the conversational data at hand, which had not yet been examined in the research on the development of L2 IC, and which afforded the opportunity to concurrently examine several aspects of the development of IC (action formation, sequence organization, etc.). The initial screening of the recordings showed that complaining occurred relatively frequently in the interactions and therefore was representative of the type of activities in which the participants regularly engaged in the conversation circle. It is thus an analytical object that is sufficiently frequent to allow for longitudinal analysis, and which no prior study has investigated from a CA-SLA perspective.

The collections were established with the help of the transcription software Transana⁹, which allows for the organization and annotation of sequences of transcribed interactions in multiple simultaneous collections. I initially collected cases broadly while screening the recordings. I then revised my collections as I more clearly defined the criteria for inclusion. I finally delimited my collections in accordance with the working definition of complaints presented in Chapter 2.2.1. Sequences involving an expression of negative stance, criticism, dislike etc. that lacks affective involvement, or single turns of expressions of negative stance that include affect and personal involvement but that are not responded to as complaints by the coparticipants and not pursued as such by the speaker were not included in the collections. Similarly, troubles tellings that do not exhibit any orientation to the troublesome issue as being unfair or unreasonable, and thus complaint-worthy, have been excluded.

⁹ See <https://www.transana.com/>.

3.3.5 Focal participants

The longitudinal analysis focuses specifically on five of the conversation circle participants. These participants were chosen because they represent distinct proficiency levels at the start of their participation in the recordings: elementary (A1-A2) and upper-intermediate/advanced (B2-C1), and because of their extended participation (except for Mariana). The choice to group upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers together was due to the low number of participants at more advanced levels, which prevented separate comparisons between for instance intermediate and advanced levels (in addition, the B2-C1 grouping corresponds to the more advanced support courses given at the French-language institute). Table 3.1 shows an overview of the participants included in the analysis.

Pseudonym (abbreviation)	Mariana (MAR)	Suresh (SUR)	Aurelia (AUR)	Malia (MAL)	Cassandra (CAS)
Starting level	A1-A2	A1	A2	A2	B2
Length of participation	2.5 months	19 months	15 months	16 months	9 months
Estimated finishing level	A1-A2	B1	B2-C1	B2-C1	B2-C1

Table 3.1. Focal participants.

In what follows, I present each focal participant in detail. The personal details about the participants come from information provided in the background questionnaires, through proficiency measures, and in personal communication with the participants.

Mariana

Mariana is a 24-year-old PhD student from Spain. Besides Spanish, she speaks English and some Italian. She participates in the conversation circle approximately two and a half months, in the group Mercredi-1, which is the same as Malia (see below). The combined information about Mariana's French skills (prior experience, support course level, Dialang grammar score, self-assessment) suggests that Mariana is an elementary (A1-A2) speaker of French. She is the main or one of the main complainants in seven complaint sequences (Table 3.2).

Time	Number of recordings	Number of complaints	Estimated proficiency level
Semester 1 Months 1-3 (Oct.–Dec.)	6	7	Elementary
Total	6	7	

Table 3.2. Mariana's complaints.

Because of the short time span of Mariana's participation in the recordings, it was impossible to analyze her complaint practices longitudinally. Instead the analysis of her complaints serves to complement the overall observations about the practices of elementary level speakers.

Suresh

Suresh is a 27-year-old master's student of Indian origin. Besides speaking Hindi, his L1, he is highly proficient in English. Suresh participates in two different groups (first Lundi, then Jeudi) during approximately 19 months but with certain breaks. The combined information about Suresh's French skills (prior experience, support course level, self-assessment) suggests that Suresh is a lower-elementary (A1) speaker of French at the beginning of his participation in the conversation circle. Because Suresh is enrolled in an English-language master's program and reports to mainly interact in English in his everyday life, Suresh's experience with French is limited. During his first three semesters in the conversation circle, his French-language contributions in the interactions are limited compared to other participants. During the fourth semester, he participates more actively and interacts freely with his coparticipants, showing interactional skills of a lower-intermediate (B1) speaker. He participates actively in seven complaints. Table 3.3 shows an overview of these sequences.

Time	Number of recordings	Number of complaints	Estimated proficiency level
Semester 1 Months 1-3 (Oct.–Dec.)	5	1	Elementary
Semester 2 Months 4-9 (Jan.–June)	10	1	Elementary
Semester 3 Months 11-14 (Aug.–Nov.)	8	2	Elementary
Semester 4 Months 16-20 (Jan–May)	5	3	Intermediate
Total	28	7	

Table 3.3. Suresh's complaints across time and proficiency levels.

Aurelia

Aurelia is a 25-year-old PhD student from England. Besides English, Aurelia also speaks fluent Spanish. The available information about Aurelia's French skills (prior experience, support course level, self-assessment) suggests that she is an upper-elementary (A2) speaker of French at the beginning of her participation in the conversation circle. She participates during approximately 15 months, but most regularly in the first and second semester. In her third semester, she takes the B2-C1 course, and she assesses her proficiency level as at least B2 at this point. Aurelia participates in the group Lundi, which is the same as Suresh. Aurelia is a highly active interactant who speaks a lot in the conversations. She is the main or one of the main complainants in 35 complaint sequences (Table 3.4).

Time	Number of recordings	Number of complaints	Estimated proficiency level
Semester 1 Months 1-4 (March–June)	7	16	Elementary (m. 1-2 included in analysis, n=11)
Semester 2 Months 6-9 (Aug.–Nov.)	7	10	Intermediate
Semester 3 Months 11-15 (Jan.–May)	4	9	Upper-intermediate/advanced
Total	18	35	

Table 3.4. Aurelia’s complaints across time and proficiency levels.

The longitudinal nature and relatively high number of complaints in Aurelia’s recordings allow for a longitudinal analysis of her practices. To include a comparable number of complaints by Aurelia vis-à-vis the other participants, only the complaints from the first two months (eleven sequences) have been included in the elementary level collection used in Chapters 4 and 5. Ten sequences from Aurelia’s second semester of participation in the recordings (months 6-9) have been included in the intermediate level collection, and nine sequences from the last semester (months 11-15) have been included in the upper-intermediate/advanced level collection.

Malia

Malia is a 30-year-old PhD student from Iran. Besides Farsi, Malia speaks fluent English. She participates in the conversation circle during approximately 16 months. The cumulative evidence about Malia’s French skills (prior experience, support course level, Dialang vocabulary and grammar test, self-assessment) places Malia as an upper-elementary (A2) speaker of French at the beginning of her participation. In her third semester, Malia takes the B2-C1 support course at the university, as she has already completed a B2-level summer course. She participates in the group Mercredi-1 (the same as Mariana). Like Aurelia, Malia is a highly active interactant. In the 23 recordings with Malia, she is the main or one of the main complainants in 35 complaint sequences (Table 3.5). The longitudinal analysis of Malia’s complaints is based on the first ten complaints (from the first semester, months 1-3), eight sequences from the second semester (months 7-9), and eleven sequences from the third semester (months 11-15).

Time	Number of recordings	Number of complaints	Estimated proficiency level
Semester 1 Months 1-3 (Oct.–Dec.)	6	10	Elementary
Semester 2 Months 4-9 (Jan.–June)	9	14	Intermediate (m.7-9 included in analysis, n=8)
Semester 3 Months 11-15 (Aug.–Dec.)	7	11	Upper-intermediate/advanced
Semester 4 Month 16 (Jan.)	1	-	Upper-intermediate/advanced
Total	23	35	

Table 3.5. Malia's complaints across time and proficiency levels.

Cassandra

Cassandra is a 23-year-old bachelor's degree student from Italy. At the start of the recordings, she has lived in Launève for three years. She studies L2 French as one of her main subjects in her bachelor's degree, with courses at B2 level. Besides Italian and French, she speaks intermediary English. She participates in the conversation circle during approximately nine months, in the conversation group Mercredi-2. She is the main or one of the main complainants in 16 complaints (Table 3.5).

Time	Number of recordings	Number of complaints	Estimated proficiency level
Semester 1 Months 1-3 (Oct.–Dec.)	5	3	Upper-intermediate/advanced
Semester 2 Months 4-9 (Jan.–June)	8	13	Upper-intermediate/advanced
Total	13	16	

Table 3.5. Cassandra's complaints across time and proficiency level.

The limited number of complaints particularly at the beginning of the recordings makes a longitudinal analysis of Cassandra's complaint practices difficult. A preliminary analysis of her complaints did not reveal any distinct changes in complaint practices over time. This may be due to her already high level of French at the beginning of her participation (for similar observations about topic management, see König, 2019). The analysis therefore includes all of Cassandra's complaint sequences in the upper-intermediate/advanced level collection.

3.3.6 Overview of collections

The focus on the five focal participants presented above allows for an analysis of complaint practices longitudinally within participants and across proficiency levels. In total, I have analyzed 89 complaint sequences, distributed across three collections: (1) elementary, (2) intermediate, and (3) upper-intermediate/advanced level (Table 3.6).

Participant	Elementary	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate/advanced	Total
Mariana	7	-	-	7
Suresh	4	3	-	7
Aurelia	11	10	9	30
Malia	10	8	11	29
Cassandra	-	-	16	16
Total	32 sequences	21 sequences	36 sequences	89 sequences

Table 3.6. Overview of complaint collections.

While I initially included all three levels in my analyses, in Chapters 4 (on the structural organization of complaining) and 5 (on interactional resources for complaining) I only compare elementary level (32 sequences) and upper-intermediate/advanced level (36 sequences) complaints. My preliminary analysis did not reveal any distinct properties of the intermediate level sequences as compared to neither the elementary nor the upper-intermediate/advanced level sequences, suggesting that these sequences represent an ‘in between’ stage between elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels. Considering the lengthy nature of many complaint sequences, the choice to exclude the intermediate level complaints from Chapters 4 and 5 is also due to practical reasons. In contrast, the two case studies presented in Chapter 6 (on the interactional history of a complainable) track all complaints in the data made by Suresh and Malia, respectively, about two particular complainables, including complaints from the intermediate level collection.

3.3.7 Comparability

To enhance the comparability of my analyses, I have kept the speech exchange system, the (type of) participants, and the activity type constant over time and across participants. More specifically, the conversation circle setting provides for a speech exchange system consisting of small group interactions that closely resemble ordinary conversation. This speech exchange system remains constant over time. The participants are L2-speaking peers, who are (all except one participant) university students. Upon their start in the conversation circle, participants were matched with other speakers of approximately the same level of French. Over time, a few participants left the conversation circle, and a few joined. In both Aurelia and Malia’s cases, comparability is nevertheless high since the coparticipants of both groups (Lundi and Mercredi-1) changed in the third semester. Both the elementary level collection and the upper-intermediate/advanced level collection thus include complaints made by Aurelia and Malia to relatively new acquaintances (the same applies to Mariana). As for Cassandra, her later

sequences are from interactions with coparticipants that she knows since quite a while. These later sequences thus illustrate the practices of the most proficient speakers among well-known acquaintances. See Table 3.7 for an overview of the focal participants' relationships with their coparticipants at the start of each proficiency level.

Participant	Elementary	Intermediate	Upper-intermediate/ advanced
Mariana	New acquaintances	-	-
Suresh	New acquaintances / well-known peer*	New acquaintances	-
Aurelia	New acquaintances	Well-known peers	New acquaintances**
Malia	New acquaintances	Well-known peers	New acquaintances***
Cassandra	-	-	New acquaintances / well-known peers****

Table 3.7. Status of the participants' relationship at the beginning of each proficiency level.

* One of Suresh's coparticipants is a well-known classmate of his.

**One of Aurelia's prior coparticipants participates in one of these recordings.

*** One of Malia's prior coparticipants participates in two of these recordings.

**** One of Cassandra's coparticipants is a well-known classmate of hers.

Naturally, this overview is a very static representation of the participants' relationships. These relationships also change as the participants meet regularly over time and increasingly get to know each other, and this may affect the observed complaint practices (see Ch. 2.2 on indications in prior research about how participants' relationships may affect complaint practices). Chapter 6 addresses these questions specifically, by investigating how the observed changes in participants' complaint practices intersect with the development of shared interactional histories and evolving social relationships.

The activity type is kept constant over time since the analysis only investigates sequences with indirect complaining. While many studies on indirect complaining focus on complaints about third parties, I also include complaints about inanimate objects and state of affairs. This was a data-driven decision, as many of the complaints in fact concern these types of complainables, such as the French language, Swiss society and culture, and university courses. These are topics that the participants have in common as university students and newcomers to Switzerland. A small difference is observable between the complaints of elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers, with a slightly higher proportion of complaints about third parties among more advanced speakers than among elementary level speakers.

As for sequential environment, which is also mentioned by Wagner et al. (2018) as a relevant factor for enhancing comparability, I decided not to control for this in the establishment of my collections. In contrast with investigations of distinct social actions, such as questions, responses to questions, or requests, which often are done in particular sequential positions, the nature of complaints as social activities consisting of larger sequences of actions (with several adjacency pairs) would make such control difficult. Instead I discuss the sequential position of complaint *initiations* in Chapter 4.2.

3.3.8 Limitations

The research design is not without limitations. Potential shortcomings include the minor differences between the datasets mentioned above (certain changes in the group constellations over time, some differences in complaint topics across proficiency levels), and the possible impact of individual differences between the participants on the overall observations. As for the change in group constellations, this is an inherent risk with longitudinal studies, as participation is voluntary and participants' life situations may change considerably over time, prompting them to leave the research prematurely (as in the case of Mariana). The fact that the change in participant constellations is similar across several groups mitigates the potential impact of this change on my findings about complaint practices generally. When it comes to differences in complaint topics, I consider this observation a potentially relevant finding about change over time *per se*, which may relate to participants' proficiency levels and/or the nature of the participants' relationships. I therefore chose not to control for complaint topics in my analyses, and instead briefly discuss this question in relation to my observations about change over time (see specifically Ch. 4 and 6). Finally, the issue of individual differences between participants deserves some attention. While prior research on L2 learning has revealed that individual differences between learners have considerable impact on, for example, the speed and ultimate attainment of L2 learning (for a recent overview focusing on L2 French, see Arvidsson, 2019), whether the developmental trajectory of complaint practices varies across individuals remains unknown. Since my main interest is in systematic practices observed across several speakers, I only briefly address individual differences in my analyses.

4. The structural organization of complaining

This first analytical chapter concerns the structural organization of indirect complaints in L2 French. It focuses on the core actions involved in complaining, how speakers sequentially move into complaints, and how participants together co-construct complaint sequences. The analysis draws on the elementary level (A1-A2) and upper-intermediate/advanced level (B2-C1) data presented in Chapter 3.3. It demonstrates both similarities and differences in how these groups of speakers structurally organize their complaints. I first show that the overall structural composition of complaining is essentially similar among elementary and more advanced speakers when it comes to recurrent action components of complaint sequences (Ch. 4.1). I then document differences in the way complaints are initiated (Ch. 4.2) and in how they are co-constructed by the participants (Ch. 4.3). I close the chapter by discussing the implications of these findings for our understanding of the development of L2 IC (Ch. 4.4).

4.1 Interactional building blocks of indirect complaints

As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, research focusing on the structural and sequential organization of complaining is scarce. We know that complaint sequences tend to be long and complex, and that their structure is highly contingent on coparticipants' contributions. Since storytelling often assumes a central role in complaints, the structure of the activity itself is in many cases closely connected to the structure of storytellings, and specifically troubles tellings. However, as also mentioned in Chapter 2.2.3, the available literature suggests that both troubles talk and complaining lack the kind of projection-points that storytellings tend to have, since the overall interactional project is not to tell a particular story but to obtain affiliation and/or sympathy with a frustrating or troublesome situation. Jefferson (1988, for troubles talk) and Traverso (2009, for complaints) instead identify overall sequence structures of these activities. The sequence structure documented by Traverso (2009) in her study of indirect complaints in French consists of an *initiation*, *core part*, *complaint development*, and *closing* (see Ch. 2.2.3 for details).

The contingent and variable nature of complaint sequences is most obviously evidenced in my data by the fact that sequences are between 30 seconds and more than 20 minutes long. However, despite this apparent variability in length, the basic building blocks of the sequences, or *core action components*, as I call them, remain stable, even when comparing the complaints of elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers. In a similar vein as Jefferson (1988) and Traverso (2009), I now present the “sequence candidate” (Jefferson, 1988, p. 418) of indirect complaints observed in my collection of complaints. This sequence candidate does not present an exhaustive structure that accounts for all possible sequential developments, but rather outlines a recurrent pattern for complaining in my data.

I present the core action components with the help of two complaints. Excerpt 4.1 shows a complaint by speakers at elementary (A1-A2) level, and Ex. 4.2 presents a complaint at upper-intermediate/advanced (B2-C1) level.

4.1.1 Elementary level

In Ex. 4.1, Malia (MAL) initiates a complaint about the fact that she did ‘nothing’ (presumably nothing fun or interesting) last weekend because she had to study as preparation for her students’ upcoming exam (as a PhD assistant, Malia occasionally administers exams to students). The omitted lines at the beginning of the excerpt include a pre-sequence in which Malia produces a brief circumstantial preface framing her upcoming talk as a telling about the past and the coparticipants confirm their listenership (see Ch. 4.2 for more on this pre-complaint work). In lines 5-7, Malia presents what will become the object of her complaint:

Ex. 4.1, Mer1_2016-12-07_14:00_week-end passé

((4 lines omitted))

05 MAL: la week-end passé .hhhh e:h je f:- je f::ai::(té)¿
last weekend I d- I (did)

06 (0.4) °non°. *no*

07 je faisai:s Ω*rien.#Ω
I did nothing
 mal Ωcloses eyesΩ
 mal *shakes head-->1.13
 fig #1



fig.1

08 §(0.7)§
 mar §tilts head back, smiles§

09 MAR: £h-hh£,
 10 (0.4)

11 THE: \$£m:[hhh£,]§
 the \$eyebrow flash§

12 MAL: [non,]
no

13 (0.5) vraiment.*
really
 mal -->*

14 (0.4)

15 MAL: £eh parce que je- eh je£ devai:s .hhh étudie:r,
because I- I had to study

16 (0.3) e::h pour- pour le (.) examen (0.4)
for- for the exam

17 ZAR: £hhh[hhh£]

18 MAL: [£ex(h)a]m(h)en£=
exam

- 19 MAR: =de [fran]çais?=
of French
- 20 MAL: [ou-]
or-
- 21 MAL: =des étudiants,
of students
- 22 MAL: o:h ↑non,
no
- 23 pas [françai]:s,
not French
- 24 MAR: [↑a::h,]
oh
- 25 (0.4)
- 26 MAL: même (0.3) ɛm(h)ême une feuilleɛ,
even even one sheet
- 27 (0.5)
- 28 MAL: non,
no
- 29 rien.
nothing
- 30 MAL: mais ɛs(h)eulem(h)entɛ (.) étudie:r pour le::s
but only study for the
- 31 ɛex(h)ame(h)nsɛ,
exams
- 32 MAR: ɛ.hh (.) pour les [ét(h)ud°iant(h)s°ɛ.]
for the students
- 33 MAL: [pour les exa]mEŞ:NS (.)
for the exams
- 34 de les étudiants.
of the students
- 35 (0.4)
- 36 MAR: °ɛhmɛ°,
- 37 THE: [°mm°,]
- 38 MAL: [Ωc'est]Ω très- (.) Ωpffffh Ωdrôle.Ω
it's very- funny
mal Ωgz-MARΩgz-THE&MAR-Ωgz-downΩgz-MARΩ
- 39 Ω(0.7)
mal Ωgazes down-->1.45
- 40 MAL: .HH [mais c'est] ça.=
but that's that
- 41 MAR: [ɛhe-huhɛ,]
- 42 MAL: =ɛHhhe[hh-hhɛ.]
- 43 THE: [ɛhh-hhɛ]
- 44 (0.9)
- 45 MAL: non c'est- non,
no it's- no

- 46 ce n'est pasΩ drôle.Ω
 it is not funny
mal -->Ωgz--MARΩ
- 47 Ω(0.2)
mal Ωgazes down-->1.49
- 48 MAL: £hh c'e:st£=
 it's
- 49 ZAR: =£hh-h-h-[°hahahah°£]
- 50 MAL: [°£c'est horrib(h)l(h)e£°Ω]
 it's horrible
mal -->Ω
- 51 MAL: [((laughs: 2.5s))]
- 52 ZAR: [((laughs: 2.5s))]
- 53 (0.7)
- 54 MAL: £.HH[HHH£]
- 55 THE: [°(c'est)] fatigué°,
 (it's) tired
- 56 MAL: °>oui oui c'est c'est< très fatigant°.
 yes yes it's it's very tiring
- 57 Ω(0.3)
mal Ωgazes into empty space-->>
- 58 MAL: .MFT
- 59 (1.6)
- 60 MAL: +mais c'est ça.+ ((sighing voice))
 but that's that
- 61 (2.1)
- 62 MAR: ±est-ce que tu vas faire l'examen de fran↑çais ou: n:on.±
 are you going to do the French exam or not
mar ±gazes at THE-----±

In lines 5 and 7, Malia asserts that she did *rien* ('nothing') last weekend. While the propositional content of the assertion could be interpreted as a neutral report of her past days, the extreme-case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) *rien*, the prosodic stress on the same word and Malia's embodied conduct of closing her eyes and shaking her head (fig.1) make the assertion understandable as a negatively valenced one. By virtue of its negative valence, the assertion projects a complaint as *possibly* upcoming. Mariana (MAR) and Theo (THE) respond to this assertion with verbal and embodied conduct (lines 8-9, 11) that Malia treats as expressions of doubt, as she in lines 12-13 insists on the veracity of her assertions (*non*, 'no', *vraiment*, 'really'). She then develops an account in which she details and justifies the expressions of negative stance.

In the account, Malia explains that the reason for why she did not do anything last weekend is that she had to study for her students' exam (lines 15-34). The format and delivery of the account express the unreasonable and complaint-worthy nature of the situation, first through the verb *devoir* (*devai:s*, 'had to', line 15), which reports an obligation, and the prosodically marked *étudie:r* ('study', line 15), and then, after Malia has responded to a clarification request from Mariana regarding the exam (lines 19-24), through the emphatic assertion that it was only

one paper sheet that took such long time to study; see stress on the first *même* ('even') and *une feuille* ('one sheet', line 26). After repeating *rien* ('nothing', line 29), Malia restates the reason for why she did nothing: She had to study for her students' exam (lines 30-31, 33-34).

As seen in lines 36-37, Malia's account is responded to with only some alignment tokens from Mariana and Theo. What follows is a typical sequence-closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007), which allows Malia to initiate the move toward closure while simultaneously seeking more affiliative responses from her coparticipants. She initiates a summary assessment with *c'est très-* ('it's very', line 38). By gazing from one coparticipant to another during the delivery of this turn, Malia seeks close embodied engagement with her coparticipants – likely to recruit their engagement and affiliative responses – but she encounters difficulties with producing the assessment segment of her turn (see micro-pause, lowered gaze, and the non-lexical vocalization that delays the delivery of the adjective). She settles on the adjective *drôle* ('funny'), and then gazes down (line 39). As no response to the assessment is forthcoming, Malia offers the closing-implicative statement *mais c'est ça* ('but that's that', line 40; cf. Jefferson, 1988). Mariana and Theo eventually respond by laughing (lines 41, 43), after which Malia takes back her assessment of the situation as 'funny' (lines 45-46). Instead she assesses the situation as *horrible* ('horrible', line 50), an assessment segment that on a semantic level more accurately matches Malia's expressed stance. By lowering the volume and producing the extreme-case formulation in laughter-infused smiley voice while still gazing down, Malia both embodies her claimed negative stance and shows some 'troubles-resistance', displaying her ability to take the troubles light-heartedly (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984b).

Whereas Zarah merely laughs with Malia (lines 51-52), Theo shows his understanding of Malia's situation and offers a token of sympathy through the assessment adjective *fatigué* ('tired', line 55) in low volume. Malia immediately (line 56) confirms Theo's interpretation and upgrades it (see Holt, 2000). She then gazes into empty space (line 57), embodiedly disengaging from the sequence. After the final closing of the sequence (lines 58-61), Mariana initiates a new sequence by asking Theo a question (line 62).

In this sequence we have thus observed an elementary level complaint consisting of: (1) a statement of a 'potential' complainable in the form of a negatively valenced assertion (lines 5, 7), (2) an account that details and underlines the negative situation (lines 15-34), (3) a summary assessment of the complaint-worthy situation (lines 38, 50), (4) a display of sympathy from a coparticipant (line 55), and (5) sequence closure (lines 56-61). As illustrated through Ex. 4.2 below, the complaints of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers typically comprise the same components.

4.1.2 Upper-intermediate/advanced level

Excerpt 4.2 shows a complaint sequence at upper-intermediate/advanced level, in which Aurelia (AUR) complains to Jordan (JOR) about her previous flatmate. The complaint is offered in response to a question from Jordan about Aurelia's reasons for moving out of her old apartment. In the omitted lines at the beginning of the excerpt, Aurelia presents a first reason for leaving the apartment, namely its size, and she then produces a long pre-complaint sequence in which she prepares the grounds for her upcoming complaint (see Ch. 4.2 below). In lines 89-92, she formulates what will be the object of the complaint, namely her previous flatmate's failure to live up to the expectations involved in sharing a household.

Ex. 4.2, Lun_2018-05-28_09:56_partager

((88 lines omitted))

- 89 AUR: .h et l'autre coloc eu:h moi j'ai trouvé: au: à- à la fin,
and the other flatmate me I found at a- at the end
- 90 §(1.0)§
jor §nods-§
- 91 AUR: de l'année que j'étais là que: en fait elle aime pa:s
of the year that I was there that in fact she does not like
- 92 *elle aime pa:s (0.5) partager.*
she does not like sharing
aur *shakes head-----*
- 93 AUR: Selle était§ énervée tout le te:mps,
she was upset all the time
jor §nods-----§
- 94 .hh si tu laisses,
if you leave
- 95 *>je pense que peut-être c'est quel quo-<*&br/>I think that perhaps it's somethi-
aur *leans forward and takes pen on table----*
- 96 >quelque chose de suisse aussi tu s-< si tu laisses
something Swiss too you i- if you leave
- 97 par exemple *ça* (.) là,
for example that there
aur *puts pen between them on table*
- 98 (0.3) .h elle va laisser ça: (0.4) là (.) pendant six mois.
she will leave that there during six months
- 99 JOR: [((laughs))]
- 100 AUR: [elle va pas touche:r] parce que c'est à toi de: (0.4)
she will not touch because it's for you to
- 101 AUR: Ω*.hhhhh # (0.4)Ω et c'est #okay eu:h*
and it's okay
aur Ωrolls eyes----Ω
aur *leans back, lifts shoulders & hands*
fig #1 #2

196 AUR: ouais.
 yeah
 197 (0.4)
 198 AUR: .h et maintenant tu habites avec qui?
 and now you live with whom?

While the valence of Aurelia's assertion in lines 89 and 91-92 might be heard as equivocal (like Malia's first assertion in Ex. 4.1), Aurelia's headshakes and general social norms regarding apartment sharing make the formulation *elle aime pas (0.5) partager* ('she does not like sharing', line 92) interpretable as a criticism of the flatmate (see also Ch. 4.2 for details on how the pre-complaint work helps disambiguating the valence of the assertion).

After this expression of a 'potential' complainable, Aurelia details the reproachable behavior of the flatmate: She was upset all the time (line 93), and if you put something like a pen on a table (lines 96-97), she would leave it there for six months (lines 98). The specific example with the pen illustrates and underlines the unreasonableness of the third party's conduct (Günthner, 1995), and thus accounts for and adds evidence in favor of the complaint-worthy situation (Drew, 1998).

As Jordan merely laughs in response (line 99), in lines 101-102 Aurelia offers an embodied completed turn (see Ch. 5.1) that expresses her strong negative stance and affect (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016) and works as a summary assessment of the complaint-so-far. She first takes a deep in-breath while rolling her eyes, lifting her hands to her sides and leaning her head back (fig.1-2), then produces *c'est okay eu:h* ('it's okay eu:h', line 101), which she completes embodiedly with a loud sigh as she lowers her hands (line 102). Jordan, who has been nodding and laughing a bit throughout Aurelia's telling (lines 90, 93, 99) again nods but refrains from taking the turn (line 103). Aurelia therefore offers an upshot formulation that verbalizes the consequence of the described situation (Heritage & Watson, 1979): *ça m'a (coûté) un peu d'énergie quoi* ('it cost me a bit of energy PRT', line 104).

Although Aurelia's upshot offers another chance for Jordan to affiliate (see particularly Drew & Holt, 1988, for the use of idiomatic expressions to augment the pressure for affiliative responses in this sequential position), Jordan remains silent (line 105), and Aurelia therefore expands with more 'evidence' in support of her complaint (omitted lines). Throughout this time, Jordan responds primarily with laughter tokens, brief expressions of agreement and a clarification question regarding the flatmate. In line 181, Jordan for the first time offers a more elaborate response with his own interpretation of Aurelia's situation by suggesting that the last months were difficult for Aurelia. He thereby more clearly affiliates and displays some sympathy with Aurelia's situation. Aurelia receipts this by expanding a bit (lines 182-191), after which Jordan again confirms his understanding of Aurelia's situation and expresses further sympathy (lines 192-194). Aurelia accepts and confirms Jordan's interpretation (lines 195-196) and initiates a new sequence by inquiring about Jordan's living situation (line 198).

Similar to Ex. 4.1, this sequence consists of: (1) a statement of a 'potential' complainable (lines 89, 91-92), (2) an account and detailing of the negative situation (lines 93-98, 100), (3) a verbally incomplete summary assessment and an upshot (lines 101-102, 104), (4) displays of affiliation and sympathy from a coparticipant (lines 181, 192-194), and (5) sequence closure

(lines 195-197). In this sequence, the complainant performed elaborate pre-complaint work and also expanded the complaint by adding more ‘evidence’ for the complaint-worthy situation (omitted lines), but the core components and overall structural organization of the sequence remain similar to those in Ex. 4.1.

4.1.3 Summary: Interactional building blocks of indirect complaints

The sequential unfolding and action components of Ex. 4.1 and Ex. 4.2 are representative of the complaints at both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level in my data. The sequence candidate may be summarized as follows:

(1) An expression of a potential complainable

This typically takes the form of a negative assessment turn or an assertion with underlying negative valence. It presents a problem or a criticism of a non-present third party or state of affairs. While many complaint sequences start with this component, at this point, the sequence has not yet developed into a complaint (cf. the ‘initiation phase’ in Traverso, 2009), as the speaker’s action of (potentially) initiating a complaint has not yet been ratified by the coparticipants. As seen in Ex. 4.1-2, extreme-case formulations, marked prosody, and embodied conduct are some of the resources used to characterize the expressed issue as a complainable. In some sequences, the first expression of the complainable is more subtle, to the point that it is merely implied (cf. Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; see also Ch. 4.2 below). It is typically responded to by the coparticipants with displays of listenership or alignment tokens that ratify the speaker’s course of action and allow him/her to continue (Ex. 4.2), or by some signs of resistance (Ex. 4.1). Alternatively, coparticipants may actively add to the sequence with own assessments or assertions that align with or upgrade the first assessment/assertion; sometimes this leads to joint complaining (see Ch. 4.3).

(2) A detailing of the complainable situation or behavior

This is where the sequence more clearly develops into a complaint. This component often consists of a storytelling or a report that outlines, exemplifies, and accounts for the complaint. It is similar to what Drew and Holt (1998) call the circumstantial detailing of the complaint, in which descriptions of concrete facts are offered as ‘evidence’ for the complaint, and to the ‘development phase’ outlined by Traverso (2009). The detailing can be of varying length, consisting of a few turns (Ex. 4.1) or of a longer series of examples and tellings (Ex. 4.2). DRS and reenactments are regularly used to animate complaint stories, show affective stance, illustrate how the third party’s complaint-worthy conduct contrasts with the own, reasonable conduct, and mark the climax of the complaint story (see Ch. 2.2.4). Tellings often adopt a humorous tone despite the underlying negative valence (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984b).

(3) A summary assessment, restatement, or formulation of the complaint

This component summarizes, restates, formulates (sometimes in the form of an upshot, see Heritage & Watson, 1979) the complaint-so-far, and typically takes the form of a high-grade negative assessment (Ex. 4.1) or (more rarely in my data) an idiomatic expression (Ex. 4.2; see Drew & Holt, 1988; Rääbis et al., 2019, Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). This component is similar to

what Drew and Holt (1988) refer to as the explicit formulation or naming of the complaint. As pointed out by the authors, if recipient responses have been lacking or minimal so far, the formulation may work to elicit further displays of alignment or affiliation. It also serves to mark the end of the telling or report, and thereby prepare for potential sequence closure (cf. Schegloff, 2007, on sequence-closing sequences).

(4) Recipient recognition of the complaint as a complaint

While affiliative recipient responses are not limited to particular sequential positions, more elaborate (non-minimal) responses are expected at the end of a complaint telling and/or after the formulation or restatement of the complaint. Preferred responses include displays of affiliation or sympathy, whereby coparticipants at the very least recognize the legitimacy of the complaint (see Ch. 2.2.2-2.2.3). At elementary level, affiliative displays are often verbally minimal (as in Ex. 4.1); at upper-intermediate/advanced level, they tend to be more elaborate (see Ch. 4.3). In cases where coparticipants have epistemic access to the complainable, affiliative responses may include displays of agreement and upgrades of negative assessments, sometimes leading to joint complaints (see Ch. 4.3). Not all responses are affiliative, however. Coparticipants sometimes resist the complaint by rejecting its grounds or by working to close or defuse it (Holt, 2012; Mandelbaum, 1991).

(5) Expansion/Closing

After the coparticipants' displays of recognition of the complaint as a complaint, complainants often expand the sequence with further stance displays (see Holt, 2000) or by offering more 'evidence' in support of the complaint. Coparticipants may also contribute to the expansion by producing my-side tellings (second complaint stories; see Selting, 2012) or reports that support the overall complaint. Expansions may be quite elaborate especially at upper-intermediate/advanced level. Alternatively, participants immediately move to close the sequence once the complaint recipients have shown affiliation or sympathy, or they transition into another activity after unsupportive responses. In my data, most complaints eventually receive affiliative responses of some kind (see Ch. 4.3).

It is typically the complainant who ratifies the closure of the sequence, by offering sequence-closing thirds (Schegloff, 2007) following displays of affiliation and by displaying that s/he is 'done' with the complaint and ready to move on to other business. Final closing moves include conventional closing statements (Ex. 4.1) and the initiation of a new sequence by the complainant him/herself (Ex. 4.2). In addition, similar to what has been observed by Traverso (2009), complaint closings are recurrently interrupted rather than progressively closed, for example by the arrival of a new participant or by the abrupt invocation of the time and the necessity to leave. Such marked closings have been shown to be a regular feature of talk about difficult subject matters (cf. Jefferson, 1984a, on the closings of troubles talk). For reasons of space, I do not analyze complaint closings in detail in the dissertation.

The sequence candidate presented here is the result of a retrospective analysis. The first expression of a potential complainable cannot be considered a complaint component from the participants' perspective, since the sequence at this point has not yet developed into a complaint (although see Edwards, 2005, on speakers' general reluctance to characterize what they are

doing as complaining). The ‘point of no return’ for complaint sequences seems to lie rather after the speaker’s detailing of the problematic circumstances or transgression of a third party, as seen in the complainant’s orientation to the relevance of obtaining affiliative responses to this detailing.

These observations concur largely with the findings of Traverso (2009) about L1 French speakers (see also Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). Rather than speaking of distinct ‘phases’ involved in complaining, however, I would suggest that the overall sequence structure reflects the orderly unfolding of the different interactional ‘tasks’ involved in complaining. Essentially, complaining boils down to the following tasks: On the one hand, complainants need to (1) present the object of the complaint, the complainable, and (2) justify the complaint; show its complaint-worthiness (Drew, 1998). Complaints and the negative assessments they include are accountable acts that need to be justified (cf. Lerner, 1996, on negative assessments warranting an account). These tasks correspond to points 1-3 in the sequence candidate. On the other hand, complaint recipients need to (1) align as recipients of a longer turn, and (2) express their own stance toward the complaint, ‘preferably’ through displays of affiliation and/or sympathy with the complainant. The first of this task is a pre-requisite for the complaint to come about; the second corresponds to point 4 above. Finally, the participants need to move out of the complaint (point 5). The lack of difference over time in basic action components shows the participants’ convergent understanding of the activity, and also concurs with the fact that indirect complaining has been described in the literature in largely similar terms across the languages and cultures investigated so far (see Ch. 2.2.2). On a methodological level, this similarity helps warranting comparability in the comparative analysis (see Ch. 3.2).

But if the core action components of complaints are the same among both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers of French, what *changes* in the structural organization of these sequences? As hinted at in the analyses of Ex. 4.1 and 4.2, there are distinct differences in the ways speakers initiate and co-construct complaints, which is something that I address in the following sections (Ch. 4.2-4.3).

4.2 Moving into complaints

The moral, delicate, and contingent nature of complaining has consequences for the initiation of complaint activities. Research on both everyday conversations and institutional interactions has shown that speakers often move into complaining in a stepwise manner in order to test the grounds of the complaint before launching the activity fully (see Ch. 2.2.3). Future complainants regularly hint at the upcoming criticism before formulating it overtly and escalate negative stance expressions progressively. They may also preemptively account for and build the credibility of the upcoming complaint, and portray themselves in positive light before launching overt criticism. As also discussed in Ch. 2.2.3, complaints emerging through complaint stories are typically initiated in similar ways as other types of stories. Before and in the opening of a story, tellers normally do some interactional work to secure reciprocity for a longer turn, provide necessary circumstantial information about the upcoming telling, and help recipients anticipate what kind of story will follow. In the context of complaint stories, such

prefatory work involves a projection of the negative valence of the story, displaying the teller's frustration or anger and hinting at the expected affiliative or sympathetic responses.

The longitudinal analysis of complaint initiations in my data shows a change over time in (a) the sequential positioning of complaint initiations, and (b) the pre-complaint work speakers accomplish before overtly launching a complaint:

- At *elementary level (A1-A2)*, most complaints are initiated in first position, often as part of volunteered status updates or tellings of past events. Second-position complaints are rare, and occur mainly within answers to neutral, open-ended questions. The pre-complaint work is typically limited to brief circumstantial story prefaces that rarely include any signs about the nature of the following talk (i.e., a complaint). Speakers sometimes index the delicacy of complaining by delaying overt negative stance expressions with simple contrastive formulations or by offering embodied stance expressions before verbal ones.
- At *upper-intermediate/advanced (B2-C1) level*, complaints are more frequently initiated in second position than at elementary level. First-position complaints often topically relate to an ongoing discussion. Second-position initiations are either produced as part of answers to questions or done in response to coparticipants' negatively valenced talk. These speakers in part deploy the same practices as less advanced speakers to index delicacy. However, elaborate pre-complaint sequences also occur, in which future complainants work to establish the complaint-worthiness of the upcoming complaint, portray themselves as credible complainants, and move into complaining in a stepwise manner.

I illustrate these differences based on empirical examples from speakers at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels.

4.2.1 Elementary level

The large majority of complaints (25 of 32, or 78%) of elementary level speakers are initiated in first position, whereas second-position initiations are less common (7 of 32, or 22% of sequences). Because many of the complaints are offered in the form of first-position tellings, they are often initiated in ways that resemble storytelling openings. Excerpts 4.3-4.6 exemplify typical complaint initiations at elementary level.

Excerpt 4.3 is the beginning of the complaint with Malia presented in Ex. 4.1. Before the start of the excerpt, Theo asked Malia whether she has been to a place that Mariana said she went to the previous weekend, which Malia has not. Theo assessed the place as very nice, and 2.9 seconds of silence follow (line 1), during which the participants look down or into empty space, thereby orienting to the prior sequence as closed. Malia then initiates the sequence that develops into a complaint about the fact that she did not do anything at all last weekend besides studying. I only present the beginning of the sequence until Malia begins the detailing of the complaint:

case formulation (*rien*, ‘nothing’), the prosodic emphasis and Malia’s embodied conduct of closing her eyes and shaking her head (line 7, fig.1) convey negative stance. Following the coparticipants’ laughter and embodied responses (lines 8-9, 11), Malia insists on the veracity of her assertion (lines 12-13) and subsequently develops the complaint (see Ex. 4.1).

Malia’s circumstantial preface with the time reference ‘last weekend’ establishes the topical relevancy of the upcoming talk after the prior sequence, which was about Mariana’s weekend. It is similar to the story-prefaces produced by a less proficient L2 speaker in Pekarek Doehler and Berger’s (2018) study in that it secures reciprocity and frames the talk as being about a past event, but does not convey any particular stance and hence does not project that it will be a complaint story (which has been noted a common practice among L1 speakers, see above).

Excerpt 4.4 contains a similar circumstantial preface, but also what according to Sacks (1992, Vol. I, p. 359) appears “with an immense regularity” in the complaints of some people, namely a complaint-initiation that is preceded by a positive assessment (what Sacks calls ‘praise’) and the contrastive conjunction ‘but’ (*mais*, in French). What follows (‘something else’, in Sack’s terminology), is recognizable as a complaint-initiation in the context of the praise. If the second assertion/assessment is not already formatted in a way that clearly indexes negative stance, it is understandable as such against the background of what came before. Besides disambiguating the second, negatively valenced part, the contrastive format resembles what has been identified as a recurrent practice for prefacing criticism and other types of dispreferred first actions (Clayman, 2006; Golato, 2005; Svinhufvud, 2008), namely the use of a positive assessment or compliment that delays and mitigates the dispreferred first action. In my data, this format is recurrently used by Aurelia and Malia (at elementary and more advanced levels) and by Cassandra (advanced level).

In Ex. 4.4, Aurelia initiates a storytelling about her trip to Zürich last Saturday. She begins with a circumstantial preface situating the story in time and place (lines 3-6). She later develops the telling into a complaint about the fact that it was impossible for her to communicate with people there because they could not (or would not) speak English to her. In line 2, Rameh (RAM) re-does the closing of the prior sequence.

Ex. 4.4, Lun_2017-03-13_06:50_communication impossible

```

01          (0.3)
02  RAM: [ah.]
03  AUR: [.hh] cette e::hm (1.4) °°(xxx)°° (0.5) week-end,
           this                                weekend
04          °(fin:e)° (1.6) >samedi<,
           (end)          Saturday
05          %cette% samedi,
           this Saturday
ram %nods-%
06          *(0.5) °mm°* e::h j'ai: eh voyagé à:: e::hm (.) zurich;
           I          traveled to          Zürich
aur *circles RH index bwd*
07  RAM: à zurich,
           to Zürich

```

08 AUR: oui.=
yes
09 RAM: =°↑a:h°,
oh
10 (0.9)
11 AUR: °mm° *c'est beau,##*
it's beautiful
aur *RH horiz line*
fig #1



fig.1

12 *mai:s# (0.5)* e::h je ne peux *(.) pas (.) parler * (.)
but I can not speak
aur *index fing up* *waves RH back-forth*
fig #2

13 *allemand.##*
German
aur *opens RH, shakes head*
fig #3



fig.2



fig.3

14 (0.6)
15 RAM: mais tu peux pa[rler en-] en anglais.
but you can speak in- in English
16 AUR: [*ɛhhuhhɛ*]
aur *shakes head*
17 (0.2)
18 AUR: ɛhhuh hahɛ,
19 ɛ.hhɛ *no:n mai:s eu:hm:* .mt (.) e::h
no but
aur *shakes head-----*
20 °les-° les gens *(.) non.*
the- the people no
aur *shakes head*

21 *(0.6)*
 aur *shakes head slightly*

22 AUR: je *(0.6) [je parle an]glai:s,*
 I I speak English
 aur *circling gestures with RH-*

23 RAM: [oui- oui.]
 yes yes

24 %(0.6)%
 ram %nods slightly%

25 AUR: e:::t ils like Ω*(0.6)# ÷bah#ghrgrh.Ω*÷
 and they like
 aur Ωcloses eyes-----Ω
 aur *shakes head slightly-
 aur ÷chin down, grimace÷
 fig #4 #5



fig.4



fig.5

26 AUR: [£hhh >heheh<£]
 27 RAM: [£haha haha]hahh£
 28 RAM: [£oui: c'est difficile£.]
 yes it's difficult

29 AUR: [£.hhhh£ c'était *im]#possible.*
 it was impossible
 aur *RH horiz line*
 fig #6



fig.6

30 (0.3)

31 RAM: oui.
 yes

32 (0.4)

33 AUR: communication *impo#ssible.*
 impossible communication
 aur *RH horiz line*
 fig #7



fig.7

34 RAM: °ʔahʔ°,

35 (0.2)

36 AUR: ʔ.hhhʔ e:h mai:s il y a beaucoup de: (.) eu:hm:
but there is a lot of

37 (0.8) e::hm (1.8) pour faire shoppingç
for doing shopping

38 RAM: mm-hm,

Aurelia's circumstantial preface is similar to Malia's preface in Ex. 4.3. Through verbal and embodied means, Aurelia incrementally frames her upcoming talk as a telling or report about the past (first through time references in lines 3-5 plus a backward circling gesture with the right hand index finger in line 6, and then by reporting on her trip to Zürich, line 6) and she recruits Rameh's attention and listenership (lines 5, 7). After Rameh's receipt (line 9), Aurelia produces a positive assessment of Zürich: *c'est beau* ('it's beautiful', line 11), and she intensifies this assessment (Kendon, 2004, p. 259) by moving her right hand, palm downward, in a horizontal line in front of her (fig.1; see also Selting, 2012).

Having positively assessed Zürich, Aurelia extends her turn with a prosodically marked *mai:s* ('but', line 12), as she raises and points upward with her index finger (fig.2), thereby projecting a continuation that distinctly contrasts with the positive assessment. In the following assertion, Aurelia expresses her inability to speak German: *je ne peux (.) pas (.) parler (.) allemand* ('I cannot speak German', lines 12-13). This assertion does not in itself convey any problem or criticism. In its local context, however, following the positive assessment of Zürich and the prosodically and embodiedly marked *mais*, the assertion is recognizable as an announcement of a problem (Sacks, 1992). The contrastive nature of the assertion and its negative valence are further emphasized by Aurelia's embodied conduct of waving her right hand back and forth in front of her during the production of *pas parler* ('not speak', line 12) and subsequently opening it up, palm upward, while shaking her head (line 13, fig.3) – the latter gesture indexing some sense of helplessness (Kendon, 2004, p. 275).

Rameh's response displays his interpretation of Aurelia's assertion as the announcement of a problem. Although Aurelia formulates the problem as pertaining to her own language skills, it implies a problem with being able to communicate with the German-speaking people in Zürich. Rameh does not align or affiliate with Aurelia, but instead he counters with a solution suggesting that she can speak English (line 15), thereby rejecting the grounds for the problem yet recognizing Aurelia's action *as* formulating a problem. This leads to further expansions by Aurelia, who insists on the problematic situation (lines 19-20) and thereafter provides

supporting evidence for it by reenacting what happened to her when she attempted to speak English (lines 22, 25). The unreasonable conduct of the people in Zürich, which legitimizes the complaint (Drew, 1998), is portrayed by Aurelia through the sound object *bahghrghrh* (line 25) accompanied by distinct embodied conduct: Aurelia closes her eyes, shakes her head (fig.4) and lowers her chin in a grimace (fig.5) during the reenactment of the German-speakers' response to her. In response, Rameh expresses his affiliation through laughter and the assessment *oui c'est difficile*, ('yes it's difficult', line 28), showing his understanding and acknowledging Aurelia's claimed difficulty. Aurelia, in overlap, expands with the summary assessment *c'était impossible* ('it was impossible', line 29), which she upgrades through prosodic stress and embodied conduct (fig.6). Likely in response to Rameh's rather minimal acknowledgment token *oui*, ('yes', line 31), Aurelia re-issues the summary assessment as *communication impossible* ('impossible communication', line 33); this assessment is also gesturally enhanced (fig.7). Again, Rameh responds only minimally (line 34), and Aurelia abandons the complaint in favor of more positive talk about Zürich (lines 36-37).

In contrast to Ex. 4.3, in which Malia, after a brief preface, immediately issued a negatively valenced assertion expressing the object of her upcoming complaint, in this sequence the negatively valenced assertion is preceded by a positive assessment. The contrastive formulation does not only disambiguate the valence of the assertion in lines 12-13 (as a negatively valenced one), it also minimally indexes an orientation to the delicate nature of complaining by pushing back the expression of negative stance further in the turn.

A similar pattern is seen in Ex. 4.5. In this excerpt, Malia will initiate a complaint story about her difficulties speaking French at work, especially when it comes to speaking with the professor who is also her boss. The laughter in line 1 closes the prior activity, in which the participants engaged in a longer repair sequence.

Ex. 4.5, Mer1_2016-11-16_01:55_parler avec prof

01 ((MAL and ZAR laugh: 2.6s; MAL gazes down-->1.4))

02 MAL: $\text{ɛ}(\text{et}) \text{je}:\text{ɛ}$,
(and) I

03 (0.6) oui je pense que (1.0) mt *e::h *
yes I think that
mal *sits up*

04 (1.9) °°every day°° .h jour après Ω jour?
day after day
mal --> Ω gazes at MAR-->

05 MAR: mm- Ω [hm?]
mal --> Ω

06 THE: [mm-]hm,

07 (0.3)

08 MAL: e:h je: (0.9) je- j'essaie eu:h mt j'essaie étudier
I I- I try I try study

09 *beaucoup,*
a lot
mal *circling both hands, frowns*

- 10 (0.5) ÷**et écouter** *>**beaucoup et beaucoup**<* **mai:s**
and listen a lot and a lot but
mal ÷finger snap÷
mal *fast circling by ears*
- 11 ZAR: °**£hhhh£**°
- 12 MAL: ÷.**hh je pense que: £hhu hh** **Ωquand je peux-£Ω**
I think that when I can-
mal ÷finger snap÷
mal Ωgazes at MAR---Ω
- 13 **Ωquand je veux .hh parler** **Ωspécialement avec mon Ωprof,Ω**
when I want to speak (especially) with my prof(essor)
mal Ωgazes into empty space---Ωgazes at THE-----Ωgz-MARΩ
- 14 ***Ω.hhh# (0.4) .hh[h Ω] [*HHHΩhuhhh*]**
mal *drops hands, small headshakes*leans fwd, larger headshakes*
mal Ωrolls then closes eyesΩ Ωgazes at MAR then THE-->
fig #1
- 15 MAR: [£c'est-] [très diffici:le£,]
it's- very difficult
- 16 ZAR: [£ça marche pas£,]
it doesn't work



fig.1

- 17 ZAR: [£.hhh£]
- 18 MAL: [aujourd']hui:,Ω
today
mal -->Ω

Malia initiates the new sequence while keeping her gaze lowered (see line 1). After a restart, she offers an announcement about something that pertains to *jour après jour* ('day after day', line 4). By delivering the end of her turn with rising intonation and gazing at Mariana, she invites recipient response, and both Mariana and Theo confirm reciprocity (lines 5-6). This sequence works as a preface that frames Malia's upcoming talk as concerning a recurrent event and recruits the coparticipants' attention for a longer turn.

Malia then asserts that she tries to study 'a lot' and listen 'a lot and a lot' (lines 8-10). The fact that her efforts pertain to studying and listening to French is understandable against the background of the prior repair sequence and considering the conversation circle setting. Malia's accompanying embodied conduct (gestures, finger snapping, frowning, lines 9-10) upgrades the strength of the already high-grade assertions. The claim that she studies and listens a lot works as subtle self-praise, by which Malia portrays herself as an eager and studious L2 learner.

The immediately following and prosodically marked *mais* ('but', line 10) projects a continuation that contrasts with Malia's attempts at studying and listening every day. Zarah's laughter (line 11) shows her anticipation of the projected contrast. Malia's contrasting assertion concerns what happens to her when she wants to speak to her professor (lines 12-13). The contrast takes the form of a compound TCU (Lerner, 1991; 1996) of which the first part is the subordinate clause of a bi-clausal pattern, syntactically projecting another (main) clause. Instead of verbally completing the turn, Malia drops her hands on the table, rolls her eyes before closing them and shaking her head, while first breathing in and then letting out a loud sigh (line 14, fig.1). The embodied and vocal conduct are clear displays of negative affective stance (Selting, 2010a; 2012), non-verbally expressing Malia's difficulties associated with speaking with her professor – which will be the object of the upcoming complaint.

As shown by Iwasaki (2009; see also Hayashi, 2005), speakers regularly use embodied conduct (gaze, gestures, shifts in posture, facial expression etc.) to invite coparticipants into the production of turns-in-progress. When Malia produces the first part of the compound TCU, she looks first at Mariana (line 12) and then, after a repair, at Theo followed by Mariana again (line 13), seeking close embodied engagement with the coparticipants and preparing for her upcoming actions. Mariana and Zarah's syntactically fitted collaborative completions (Lerner, 1996) *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult, line 15) and *ça marche pas* ('it doesn't work', line 16) show the coparticipants' close monitoring of Malia's projection, namely the expression of a problem related to speaking. By completing Malia's turn and participating in the 'evaluative loading' (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992, p. 157) of Malia's talk, Mariana and Zarah both display their understanding of and ratify Malia's course of action, and affiliatively support the sequential development (Lerner, 2013). In initiating a retelling of a specific troublesome event the same day (line 18), Malia accepts the coparticipants' completions and develops the complaint (not shown).

The contrastive formulation following the circumstantial preface in this sequence is similar to the one in Ex. 4.4 above in that it works to delay the initiation of the complaint. More so than in the last excerpt, in this sequence the first, positively valenced part, also allows the speaker to do some subject-side (see Edwards, 2005) pre-complaint work. Through the self-praise, Malia portrays herself as a studious French learner who complains only about especially difficult situations – such as when speaking to her superior at work – rather than being a perpetual 'whiner' (Edwards, 2005). The strong projective force of the contrastive formulation (here combined with embodied conduct inviting coparticipant participation) also allows the speaker to convey the object of the complaint without verbalizing it herself. In Ex. 4.4, Aurelia presented the object of her complaint through a subject-side assertion that was recognizable as criticism in the context of the preceding positive assessment and the accompanying embodied conduct. In Ex. 4.5, it is the coparticipants who verbalize the problem while Malia produces a non-lexical vocalization and embodied conduct expressing negative stance. The contrastive formulations thus work as simple yet effective means to display some orientation to the delicacy of complaining before moving into the complaint.

In terms of complaint initiations in *second* position, all but one second-position complaints that occur among elementary level speakers are initiated as part of an answer to a question, typically an open-ended question such as a status-update inquiry inviting a longer answer (see Ex. 4.11

for the exception). In these cases, securing reciprocity for an extended turn is therefore not an issue. Speakers may nevertheless accomplish some pre-complaint work to deal with the delicacy of producing a negatively valenced answer to an open-ended, neutrally formatted question. One documented practice among elementary level speakers is to offer embodied displays of stance, sometimes together with non-lexical vocalizations, before a verbal answer. Such embodied displays push back negative talk further in the turn or sequence and may work to elicit coparticipant ratification of the course of action.

Excerpt 4.6 illustrates such initiation. Before this excerpt, Zarah has given a status update about herself, telling about some difficulties related to her university application. After sequence closure, Malia invites Mariana to provide a status update about herself (line 3):

Ex. 4.6, Mer1_2016-11-02_21:04_la banque

- 01 MAL: oka::y.
 02 Ω(0.3)
 mal Ωgazes at MAR-->>
 03 MAL: et toi?
 and you
 04 ±(0.3)#±
 mar ±closes eyes, lets hs fall on tablet±
 fig #1
 05 ZAR: ±\$£hehh .hu .hu [.hhh#][hhh]±\$.hh h£\$
 mar ±gazes down-----±
 mar \$leans fwd, lowers head, smiles\$raises head\$
 fig #2
 06 MAL: [£HIHI] [HE::H£]
 07 THE: [£hhh£]



fig.1



fig.2

- 08 MAL: £fatiguée:: [hehehe£]=
 tired
 09 MAR: [£yea:h£.]=
 10 MAL: =£hehehh£.=
 11 MAR: =£je suis très fatiguée£ je: (0.5) suis allée à la banque.
 I am very tired I went to the bank
 ((MAR continues))

In the brief gap that follows Malia's question (line 4), Mariana closes her eyes and lets her hands fall to the table; her head is already slightly tilted down (fig.1). Zarah immediately starts laughing (line 5), orienting to Mariana's embodied conduct as a response signaling a non-straight-forward and potentially negatively valenced answer to come (cf. Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009, for embodied displays of stance foreshadowing verbal stance expressions). At the same time, Mariana leans forward, lowering her head even more, while smiling (line 5, fig.2), thus further delaying her verbal response. In partial overlap with Zarah's laughter, Malia also produces a loud laughing sound, but elongates the last vowel so that it sounds more whining than a sincere laughter (line 6), as Mariana raises her head and posture again to face her coparticipants. Malia's next action shows her understanding of Mariana's embodied displays. She offers a candidate formulation of Mariana's expressed stance as *fatiguée*:: ('tired', line 8). The delivery of this turn, with a pitch upgrade on the last, elongated syllable, and the laughter that follows immediately afterwards, indicate that Malia is in fact offering a mocking reenactment of Mariana's yet unarticulated answer. Mariana confirms Malia's candidate (line 9), and some more laughter from Malia follows (line 10).

In line 11, Mariana recycles Malia's *fatiguée* and integrates it in the self-assessment *je suis très fatiguée* ('I am very tired') followed by an account initiation explaining why she is tired: *je: (0.5) suis allée à la banque* ('I went to the bank'). This constitutes the first step of developing the sequence into a complaint about being tired after having to go to the bank and not understanding anything when speaking to the staff in French (see Ex. 5.6). By pushing back her verbal answer while offering embodied stance displays, Mariana manages to index the delicacy involved in expressing negative stance in response to an open-ended question without using linguistic means. The same stance displays also recruit coparticipants' responses, which in turn offer an opportunity Mariana to expand the sequence.

In sum, Ex. 4.3-5.6 have shown recurrent ways for speakers at elementary level to move into complaining. Focusing mainly on the most common type of complaint initiations at this level – complaints initiated in first position as part of storytellings – I have shown the general tendency among elementary level speakers to initiate complaints following limited pre-complaint work such as circumstantial prefaces that situate the upcoming talk in time and place but do not project its negative valence. While in some sequences the complainable is introduced without any orientation to delicacy (e.g., Ex. 4.3), in other cases speakers use embodied conduct (Ex. 4.6) or simple contrastive formulations with a first positively valenced element (positive assessment/self-praise; Ex. 4.4-5.5) to delay (and foreshadow) the verbal expression of negative stance and to some extent portray the speaker in positive light. In some cases, the use of such contrastive formulations also allows the speaker to express the complainable in more neutral terms, thereby approximating the more subtle ways of introducing complaints observed among L1 speakers (e.g. Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). As I show in the next section (Ch. 4.2.2), with time speakers diversify their practices for moving into complaining in ways that index the moral, delicate, and contingent nature of complaints.

4.2.2 Upper-intermediate/advanced level

Speakers at upper-intermediate/advanced level initiate complaints in first position in 13 of 36 sequences (36%) and in second position in 23 of 36 sequences (64%), thereby more frequently in second position than elementary level speakers (who initiate complaints in second position in 22% of cases). Second-position initiations occur both in answers to questions and in response to other speakers' stance displays. While some complaint initiations at this level resemble those at elementary level, the excerpts presented below (Ex. 4.7-4.9) show that the initiations of more advanced speakers often differ from those of less advanced speakers. Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers typically initiate complaints about a complainable that is topically related to the ongoing talk. The initiations therefore rarely involve the kind of circumstantial preface used by elementary level speakers to situate the complaint in its interactional context. Since such complaints often 'compete' with other talk, participants may have to do more work to secure a longer turn in which they can express their complaint (Ex. 4.7). As with elementary level speakers, more advanced speakers sometimes launch complaints without or with only limited orientation to delicacy. In some cases, however, these speakers accomplish elaborate pre-complaint work in which they progressively escalate expressions of negative stance and preemptively work to establish the legitimacy of the complaint and of themselves as complainants (Ex. 4.8-4.9). We hence see a diversification of practices over time, manifested in changes in both sequence organization and in the interactional resources deployed in complaint initiations.

Excerpt 4.7 exemplifies the initiation of a first-position complaint that occurs in the course of an ongoing discussion on a related topic and through the contrastive format shown with elementary level speakers above. Malia has just asked Javier and Jordan whether you say *aider quelqu'un* ('help someone') or *aider à quelqu'un* (with the preposition *à*), that is, whether the verbal construction takes direct or indirect object. Javier suggests that it is without preposition, and that the whole construction is *aider quelqu'un à faire quelque chose* ('help someone to do something'). He then invokes a list of verbs and says that they use this list in the French support courses (which they all have attended; lines 1-2). It is within this discussion that Malia initiates a complaint about the difficulty of learning French verbal constructions. The excerpt comes from a recording in the fall of 2017, a year after the excerpts with Malia presented above.

Ex. 4.7, Mer1_2017-10-25_46:59_constructions verbales

- 01 JAV: parce que dans le cours de soutien ils donnent aussi
because in the support course they also give
- 02 la [liste.]
the list
- 03 MAL: [oui,]
yes
- 04 JOR: [AH] OUI j'ai appris ça:,
oh yes I've learned that
- 05 JAV: des [construc]tions verba:les [(multiples)&]
of verbal constructions (multiple)
- 06 JOR: [da:ns-] [ah ouai:s,]
in- oh yeah

07 JAV: &c'est la [%fpar°t(h)ie°f%]
it's the part
 jav %lowers head--%

08 MAL: [mais c'est-] c'est c:'est %(.)
but it's- it's it's
 jav %covers face w hands-->

09 très [trè:]:[:s&#]
very very

10 JOR: [aiΩder,] [mais je] pense qu'il-Ω%
to help but I think that there-
 mal Ωgazes at JOR-----Ω
 jav -->%
 fig #1



fig.1

11 [il y a les deux en] [fait.]
there are both in fact

12 MAL: [&*effiΩ%ca:ce* mais] [*c'est] [°(x-)°]
efficient but it's (x-)
 mal *lifts, opens RH* *lifts bottle w LH, to RH-->
 mal Ωgazes at JAV-->
 jav %gazes at MAL-->1.16

13 JAV: [oui] [c'est] >oui oui oui< ,=
yes it's yes yes yes

14 MAL: =c'est [*vrai#ment* ↑dU:r,Ω]
it's really tough
 mal -->*large gest unscrewing cap*
 mal -->Ω
 fig #2

15 JOR: [°(aider quelqu'un)°]
(to help someone)

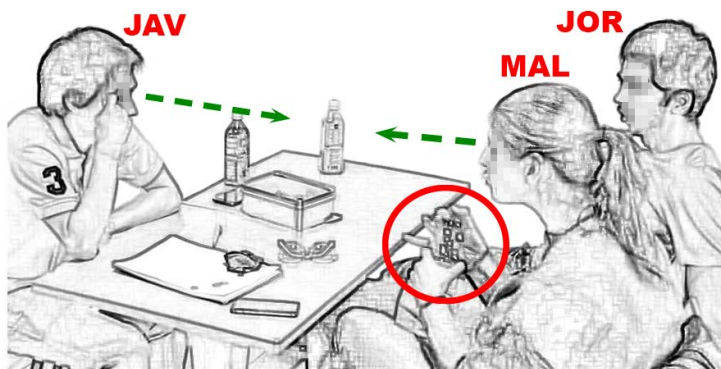


fig.2

16 JAV: mais *#ouiΩ mais# pour apprendre εç(h)aΩ c(h)'estε%
 but yes but to learn that it's
 mal *slams bottle hard on table*
 mal Ωgazes at JAV, eyes wide openΩ
 jav -->%
 fig #3 #4

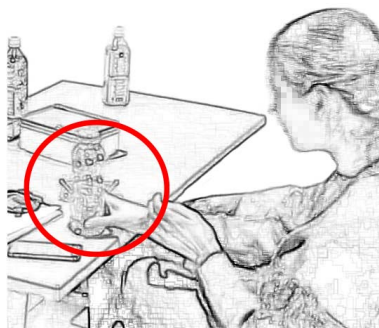


fig.3

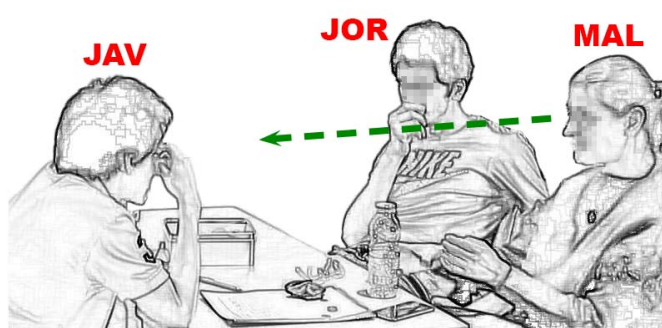


fig.4

17 [εpas v(h)][raiε,]
 not true
 18 MAL: [εhhhε]
 19 JOR: [aid]e:r,
 to help
 20 [°quel][qu'un°,]
 someone
 21 JAV: [εc'est][°(xx)ε]
 it's (xx)
 22 MAL: [εHhhε]
 23 MAL: ε.hh mais on peut pa::s comment d/i:/ε (.) mm e:h °rely on°,
 but we can not how to say

In line 7, Javier initiates what it is retrospectively recognizable as a negative assessment of the part of the French support courses that covers the verbal constructions (line 7). He completes the projected assessment segment embodiedly by lowering his head and covering his face with his hands (lines 7-8, fig.1), but the assessment segment is not attended to by Malia who herself initiates an assessment in overlap with Javier's verbal turn. Malia asserts that it (probably the list of verbal constructions) is *très très::s efficace* ('very very efficient', lines 8-9, 12) but *vraiment* ↑*dU:r* ('really tough', line 14). While the multiple restarts, repetitions, and the vowel lengthening in lines 8 and 9 may be indicative of a production problem, they in fact seem to be used by Malia to search reciprocity for her turn (cf. Goodwin, 1979; 1981), since at this point Javier has his head lowered in his hands and Jordan still attends to the existence of the two forms of the verbal construction (lines 10-11). As Malia offers the assessment segment of the positive assessment, *efficace* ('efficient'), she lifts and opens up her right hand toward Javier so as to recruit his attention (Streeck, 2009) and add emphasis to the already prosodically stressed assessment segment. In response, Javier indeed gazes up at Malia while she initiates the contrastive part of her turn with *mais* ('but', line 12). Malia lifts the bottle in front of her and grabs it with both hands (line 12), and at the delivery of the intensifying adverb *vraiment* ('really', line 14), she does an excessive enactment of unscrewing the cap of the bottle, without actually doing so (fig.2). This embodied conduct, together with the prosodic stress, pitch upgrade and increased volume on ↑*dU:r* ('tough', line 14), upgrade the strength of the

assessment while also animating it (and showing Malia's affective involvement; Kupetz, 2014; Selting, 2010a). As Javier aligns and affiliates with Malia by offering a second assessment (lines 16-17), Malia slams the bottle hard in the table (line 16, fig.3) and gazes at Javier with her eyes wide open (fig.4), further expressing her frustration.

Javier responds to Malia's excessive conduct by interspersing his talk with laughter, and also Malia laughs (line 18) as Javier produces the assessment segment *pas vrai* ('not true', line 17). Throughout this exchange, Jordan orients to the verb *aider* and its object and seems to disattend Malia and Javier's stance displays (lines 10-11, 19-20). Malia subsequently expands the complaint with an account for why the constructions are so difficult and with several high-grade affective displays of negative stance (line 23 and onward).

In this excerpt, Malia's deployment of the contrastive *positive assessment + contrastive marker + negative assessment* serves several distinct pre-complaint purposes. First of all, it establishes the topical relevancy of the upcoming talk vis-à-vis the ongoing discussion. The push-back of the negative assessment in the turn and the assemblage of verbal, paraverbal and embodied resources also allow Malia to secure the attention of the coparticipants (in this case, at least Javier) so that she has an attentive recipient by the time she reaches the negative assessment that introduces what will be the object of her complaint. As argued before, the contrastive formulation also minimally helps legitimizing the complaint and the complainant herself, in that Malia portrays herself as someone who recognizes the efficiency of the list of verbs and only complains about the unreasonable difficulties associated with it.

Excerpt 4.8 (in part shown as Ex. 4.2 above) demonstrates the more elaborate kind of pre-complaint work advanced speakers may do to prepare the grounds for the upcoming complaint and move into complaining in a stepwise manner that indexes the delicacy of the activity. Before the start of the excerpt, Aurelia and Jordan have discussed the new apartment that Aurelia just moved into. In lines 1-3, Jordan asks why Aurelia moved from her old place. Although formatted as a polar question, the negative polarity *c'était pas bien là-bas* ('was it not good there', lines 1-2) projects an account of what was not good with Aurelia's old apartment. In line 4, Aurelia initiates her answer, indeed immediately starting to offer an account. In the 50 omitted lines, Aurelia provides the first reason for leaving the old apartment, namely that it was too small. In line 56, she starts formulating a second reason, which is related to her old flatmate. It is within this part of her answer that she will launch a complaint about the flatmate. The excerpt comes from a recording one year after the excerpts with Aurelia shown in Chapter 4.2.1.

Ex. 4.8, Lun_2018-05-28_09:56_partager

01 JOR: mais c'était (.) mais c'était- (1.1) c'était
but it was but it was- it was

02 pas (.) bien là-bas pour: (0.8) >parce que t'as<
not good there for because you've

03 décidé de: déménagement::r,
decided to move

04 AUR: parce que: [en fait] (.) bon.
because in fact well

05 JOR: [(s:)]

((50 lines omitted: AUR presents a first reason, that the old apartment was too small))

- 56 AUR: .hh et aussi: eu::h .h si tu:: si tu habites avec
and also if you if you live with
- 57 eu::hm: (0.7) ts .h des personnes,
people
- 58 \$dans un >appartement\$ comme< ça,
in an apartment like that
 jor \$fast nods-----\$
- 59 tout peti:t.
really small
- 60 >c'est important< que les deux personnes aiment Ω(0.3) partager.
it's important that the two people like sharing
 aur Ωgazes at JOR-->
- 61 \$(0.6)\$
 jor \$drinks\$
- 62 JOR: \$mm-h[m:,\$]
- 63 AUR: [.hh]Ω e::t un coloc là-bas,
and one flatmate there
 jor \$slowers bottle\$
 aur -->Ω
- 64 il est <incroyable>,
he is incredible
- 65 \$(0.3) il est français.\$
he is French
 jor \$nods-----\$
- 66 .hhh e::::t en fait,
and in fact
- 67 j'ai passé un >tellement bon moment< avec \$lui::
I've had a really good time with him
 jor \$nods-->
- 68 je:\$ je rentrais de travail:.,
I I came home from work
 jor -->\$
- 69 \$>il était là< tout le te:mps eu:h .hh on prenait
he was there all the time we had
 jor \$nods-->
- 70 une <bière>,
a beer
- 71 comme ça:
like that
- 72 tranquille.\$
calm
 jor -->\$
- 73 (0.2)
- 74 AUR: .hhhh (0.4) e::::t (.) et- >parce que tu vois<
and and- because you see
- 75 (.) >quand c'est tout petit< il fau::t partager
when it's really small one has to share

76 la cuisi:ne et [tout ça.]
the kitchen and all that

77 JOR: [\$ouais,]
yeah
 jor \$nods-->

78 JOR: mm-hm.=

79 AUR: =.hh e:::t\$ (0.6) mt en fait (1.1) mt ça c'est oka:y,
and in fact that it's okay
 jor -->\$

80 si la personne aime partager.
if the person likes sharing

81 \$(0.4)
 jor \$small nods-->

82 AUR: tu vois?
you see

83 (0.7)

84 AUR: s- on peut >tout le temps< trouver une solution.\$
you can all the time find a solution
 jor -->\$

85 AUR: .h mais si c'est quelqu'un qui aime pas (0.3) \$tro:p
but if it's someone who does not really like
 jor \$nods-->

86 (.) partager,\$
sharing
 jor -->\$

87 c'e:st >difficile de \$vivre comme ça parce que: en fait<
it's difficult to live like that because in fact
 jor \$nods-->

88 il faut *partager.*#\$
one has to share
 aur *opens hands on table*
 jor -->\$
 fig #1



fig.1

89 AUR: .h et l'autre coloc eu:h moi j'ai trouvé: au: à- à la fin,
and the other flatmate me I found at a- at the end

90 \$(1.0)\$
 jor \$nods-\$

91 AUR: de l'année que j'étais là que: en fait elle aime pa:s
of the year that I was there that in fact she does not like

92 *elle aime pa:s (0.5) partager.*
 she does not like sharing
 aur *shakes head-----*

93 AUR: \$elle était\$ énervée tout le te:mps,
 she was upset all the time
 jor \$nod\$-----\$

(AUR continues, see Ex. 4.2 above)

In line 56, Aurelia initiates the second part of her answer, projecting a second reason for moving from her old apartment (*et aussi*, ‘and also’). She formulates an *if*-conditional with a hypothetical statement about what is important if one lives with other people in a small apartment: One must like sharing (*si tu habites avec des personnes, dans un appartement comme ça, tout petit, c’est important que les deux personnes aiment partager*, ‘if you live with people, in an apartment like that, really small, it is important that the two people like sharing, lines 56-60). The impersonally formulated ‘it’s important’ carries a moral dimension, as it invokes “normative standards of conduct” (Drew, 1998, p. 297) and thereby normatively reasonable behavior associated with sharing an apartment. After gazing at Jordan and leaving time for him to stop drinking and to acknowledge her assertion (lines 61-62), Aurelia positively assesses one of her other old flatmates, with whom she had a really good time (lines 63-72). The description of the other flatmate as *<incroyable>* (‘incredible’, line 64) and someone with whom she could have a beer when coming back from work (lines 68-72) portrays an ‘ideal’ case of a flatmate, with which Aurelia’s subsequent criticism of her other flatmate will strongly contrast. Jordan displays his attentiveness and listenership by nodding at key moments in Aurelia’s telling (lines 65, 67-72). Before issuing the implicitly projected contrast, Aurelia again describes some of the obligations that come with living in a small place, now using a different impersonal expression that invokes normative rules of morality: *il faut partager la cuis:ne et tout ça* (‘one has to share the kitchen and all that’, lines 75-76), and Jordan agrees (lines 77-78). Aurelia expands by repeating that it is okay (to be in a small apartment) if the person likes sharing (lines 79-80), because one can always find a solution (line 84).

Until now, Aurelia has: (1) invoked normative moral expectations associated with apartment sharing and hinted at a problem with this, (2) described an ‘ideal’ flatmate who surpassed such normative expectations, and (3) portrayed herself as a person who gets along with other, reasonable flatmates. Only after this, Aurelia introduces the projected negative contrast.

Also the contrast takes the form of a hypothetical *if*-conditional (initiated with *mais*, ‘but’, line 85), which asserts what happens if the flatmate is someone who does not really like sharing (lines 85-86). Aurelia assesses through another generic statement that ‘it’s difficult to live like that’ (line 87) because one has to share (line 88). As Aurelia restates the social norms associated with living together (*il faut partager*, ‘one has to share’, line 88), she opens up her hands with her palms on the table (fig.1) so as to underline the obviousness of the assertion (Kendon, 2004, p. 277). Only after this does Aurelia offer an explicit formulation of the problem, and thus of the object of the complaint: In the end, Aurelia realized that the other flatmate in fact did not like sharing (lines 89, 91-92; see also headshakes expressing further disapproval). She then initiates a report with specific examples of the transgressions made by the roommate (starting in line 93), which accounts for and constructs the complaint (see continuation in Ex. 4.2 above).

This excerpt illustrates the elaborate kind of pre-complaint work that occurs among more advanced speakers in my data. While the basic contrastive format whereby a criticism is preceded by something positively valenced is similar to that seen among less advanced speakers, it is structurally more complex and goes further in its moral dimension. Aurelia uses the contrastive format to compare normative codes of conduct with the complained-about third party's transgressions of these. By expressing the minimal requirements for sharing an apartment as general norms (through impersonal formulations such as *c'est important*, 'it's important' and *il faut*, 'one must'), she constructs such requirements as social norms of common knowledge and thus something for which people can be held accountable in case of a breach of these norms (Drew, 1998). By describing how another flatmate lived up to, or even exceeded, such minimal requirements, Aurelia further portrayed the reasonableness to which the complainable conduct of the other flatmate contrasted. In addition, she portrayed herself in positive light by claiming her own reasonableness as someone who gets along with other flatmates. This extended pre-complaint work thus functions to construct a morally defensible ideal and portray the future complainant as a reasonable and credible person who does not complain or whine (Edwards, 2005) about all types of flatmates, but only about those with normatively unreasonable conduct. It also allows Aurelia to move into the complaint in a stepwise manner (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), by which the object of the complaint is first implied through a hypothetical situation before being described in detail and explicitly formulated (see Ex. 4.2). Some of the interactional resources used by Aurelia to accomplish the pre-complaint work include *if*-conditionals, impersonal constructions used for invoking normative moral expectations (*il faut*, *c'est important* etc.) and left-dislocations that allow the insertion of framing information before completing the grammatical projection (see line 89).

As a final example of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers' complaint initiations, in Ex. 4.9 Cassandra (CAS) uses similar pre-complaint practices as Aurelia above to move into the complaint in a stepwise manner and portray herself as a legitimate complainant. The complaint concerns Cassandra's requirement to write a literature essay for one of her university courses. This sequence too begins with an information request from a coparticipant (lines 1-4).

Ex. 4.9, Mer2_2017-06-21_06:17-07:42_dissertation

- 01 XIA: et comment tu vas faire (0.4) eh te::s (0.9)
and how are you going to do your
- 02 te:s tes travaux eh (1.0) écrits,
your your written works
- 03 est-ce que tu dois rendre de:s (0.3)
do you have to turn in
- 04 des dossie[:rs et tout cela,]
portfolios and all that
- 05 CAS: [oui: mais-] ça- ça dépend
yes but- it- it depends
- 06 si c'est en psychologie,
if it's in psychology
- 07 (0.2)
- 08 XIA: °mm-hm°,

09 CAS: je veux pas dire que c'est simple,
I don't mean that it's easy

10 °parce que° pas- c'est pas simple.
because not- it's not easy

11 mais quand même je me débrouille.
but still I manage

12 (0.2) je me débrouille assez bien.
I manage quite well

13 §(0.3)
 xia §small nods-->

14 XIA: °uh-huh°.§
 xia -->§

15 CAS: je le fais depuis- (le) première année.
I do it since- (the) first year

16 (0.3)

17 CAS: donc euh (.) je suis en troisième année.
so I am in the third year

18 §(0.4)
 xia §small nods-->

19 CAS: £(phhiu)£,§
 xia -->§

20 £c'est pas si:mple£,
it's not easy

21 mais quand même (.) je sais comment- comment ça marche
but still I know how- how it works

22 [°>comment] ça fonctionne<°,
how it functions

23 XIA: [mm-hm,]

24 CAS: .hhh (0.3) °mh-° mai::s e§:h si je dois faire§
but if I have to do
 xia §gaze down at coffee§

25 §une dissertation littéraire,
a literature essay
 xia §gazes at CAS-->1.36

26 Ω>que j'ai< jamais# fait Ωdans ma vie,
that I've never done in my life
 cas Ωrolls eyes-----Ωgazes at XIA-->
 fig #1



fig.1

Through these assertions, Cassandra thus constructs a nuanced picture of her prior study experiences and of her abilities as a student in a way that implies her epistemic access and deontic right (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012) to assess the reasonableness of her coursework.

In line 24, Cassandra introduces the projected negatively valenced part of her answer with an elongated *mai::s* ('but'), describing hypothetically what would happen if she needs to write a literature essay (lines 24-25). Exploiting the grammatical projection of the *if*-clause, she adds some epistemic framing information about her lack of experience with literature essays (line 26) while rolling her eyes (fig.1) and then looking at Xiang. The verbal and embodied conduct allows Cassandra to convey a strong contrast between the literature essay and the psychology assignments (which she has had experience with for several years) and to foreshadow the upcoming verbal expression of negative stance (Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). The second part of the compound TCU (initiated with *si*, 'if') consists of an idiomatic expression without exact equivalent in English: *moi je me prends la tête* (approx. 'me I'm having a hard time', line 27), which expresses the gist of what will be Cassandra's complaint (Drew & Holt, 1988), namely the difficulties related to a literary essay she needs to do.

Xiang does not respond, but merely gazes back at Cassandra (line 28). Cassandra then reformulates the hardship with the high-grade *c'est horrible* ('it's horrible') three times, all produced with marked prosody: low volume, pitch shift the second time, and smiley voice and interspersed laughter the last time (lines 29-30, 32). Through the repetition and marked prosody, Cassandra underlines the severity of the situation, affectively animates her talk, and adds a humorous layer to the complaint (Edwards, 2005; Selting, 2010a; 2012). Only after this, in partial overlap with Xiang's laughing response (line 33), does Cassandra explain that what she presented as a hypothetical situation is something that she in fact has to do (line 34); her two consecutive eyebrow flashes reinforce the expressed negative stance (fig.2, see Selting, 2012). During an extended silence (line 35), the participants gaze at each other until Xiang finally offers an affiliative assessment in the form of a non-lexical vocalization (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012) as she shifts her gaze into empty space (line 36). Xiang's 'thinking face' (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986), observed in previous research in word or grammar search contexts (e.g., Hayashi, 2003; Markee & Kunitz, 2013), works to index her cognitive activity of taking in the serious situation described by Cassandra. After some shared laughter, Cassandra develops a long complaint about all the problems related to her assignment (not shown).

Cassandra's way of moving into complaining resembles that of Aurelia (Ex. 4.8) in several ways, in that Cassandra over several turns first constructs her own legitimacy as a complainant before explicitly introducing the topic of her complaint. In this case, the complaint is not related to the transgressions of a specific third party, but to Cassandra's unreasonable coursework. Similar to Malia in Ex. 4.5 above, but in a more elaborate manner, Cassandra orients to the relevancy of portraying herself as a studious learner who is capable of coping with reasonably difficult studies. Cassandra's self-praise about her ability to handle psychology assignments and the assertions about her status as an experienced student thus work to underline her own legitimacy as a complainant; to allow her to criticize her studies without sounding like a whiner. These actions can be seen as pre-positioned accounting practices, offered preemptively before any high-grade negative stance expressions. The result is a different sequential organization

than in most elementary level complaints, in which accounts typically *follow* strong negative stance expressions. Some of the interactional resources used by Cassandra in the pre-complaint work are the projector device *ça depend* ('it depends'), *if*-conditionals, and the colloquial self-praise construction *je me débrouille* ('I manage'). Interestingly, Cassandra too uses an idiomatic expression in the first formulation of the complainable, like Aurelia attempts to do in Ex. 4.2/4.8. The effect is similar to the non-verbal stance expressions discussed in connection to Ex. 4.5 above, in that it allows the complainant to depict the complaint-worthiness of the situation (cf. Drew & Holt, 1988) before verbalizing the complainable in precise terms.

4.2.3 Summary: Moving into complaints

The comparison between complaint initiations at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels has revealed differences in the sequential position of complaint initiations (Table 4.1) and in the pre-complaint work that speakers accomplish before launching their complaints.

Proficiency level	First-position	Second-position
Elementary (n=32)	78% (n=25)	22% (n=7)
Upper-intermediate/ advanced (n=36)	36% (n=13)	64% (n=23)

Table 4.1. Proportion of complaints initiated in first versus second position.

As seen in Table 4.1, the distribution of sequential positions of complaint initiations are almost reversed across the two proficiency levels. Noteworthy is that second-position initiations occur both as answers to questions and as response to (typically as upgrades of) first negative stance expressions. As I show in Chapters 4.3 and 5.1, upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers' increased ability to offer affiliative and upgrading second assessments contributes to the increase in second-position complaints over time.

The different distribution of complaints initiated in first versus second position over time has consequences for the ways in which the complaints are initiated. At elementary level, complaints recurrently occur in the form of first-position tellings that often include a circumstantial preface that situates the upcoming talk in time and place without framing it as a complaint story (Ex. 4.3-4.5). Such topical prefacing work is often not necessary in the complaints at upper-intermediate/advanced level, since these complaints typically emerge in the midst of an ongoing discussion (Ex. 4.7) and/or are offered in second position (Ex. 4.8-4.9). Instead, more advanced speakers regularly accomplish turn-taking-related work to secure reciprocity for an extended turn (Ex. 4.7).

Both elementary and more advanced speakers at times display an orientation to the delicate and contingent nature of complaining in their initiations. Elementary level speakers sometimes push back the production of verbal negative stance expressions in the turn/sequence with the help of embodied stance displays (Ex. 4.6) or simple (1-2 TCU long) contrastive formulations in the form *positive stance expression + contrastive marker + negative stance expression* (Ex. 4.4-4.5). Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers in part draw on the same kind of practices as elementary level speakers to delay their complaint initiations (Ex. 4.7). Among these speakers,

however, more elaborate pre-complaint work also occurs, including longer pre-sequences through which speakers carefully prepare the grounds for the complaint and transition into complaining in a stepwise manner (Ex. 4.8-4.9). Grammatical resources for projection, conditional clauses, and left-dislocations, are some of the linguistic resources these speakers deploy to introduce their complaints progressively. The observed differences thus pertain to both sequence organization and to the precise interactional resources used by speakers to initiate complaints. In Chapter 4.4, I relate these findings to prior literature and discuss the implications of the observed changes for the development of L2 IC.

4.3 Co-constructing complaints

As already discussed extensively (see Ch. 2.2.1; 2.2.3), complaints have been described in the literature as co-constructed activities, since they rely on several participants' cooperation for their emergence and development. The extent to which complaints are co-constructed is however contingent on the coparticipants' responses to the complainant's actions. A 'successful' complaint leads to affiliative and sometimes sympathetic responses. Affiliative responses can take different shapes. On the one hand, coparticipants can show their affiliation as *recipients* to individual complaints. On the other hand, if the complaint concerns an issue to which coparticipants have epistemic access, they can also join the complaint as *co-complainants*, thereby contributing to the construction of a joint complaint. While the literature on joint complaining is still limited, existing research portrays joint complaints as involving fine-grained social coordination, since participants work together to construct the complaint-worthiness of the issue, for example by agreeing, repeating, and upgrading each other's negative stance expressions (see Ch. 2.2.2).

In this section, I document a difference over time in the level of co-construction of complaint activities, which is manifest both in the coparticipants' responses to individual complaints and in the construction of joint complaints. While most complaints in my data eventually lead to some kind of affiliative responses, there are longitudinal differences in the type of affiliative responses and in terms of the proportion of joint complaints:

- At *elementary level*, most complaints eventually receive an affiliative response, but a considerable proportion of sequences are closed or interrupted after only limited displays of affiliation. Coparticipants' contributions to complaints are usually verbally minimal (e.g., laughter, non-lexical assessments, embodied displays of sympathy). At times, more elaborate contributions are offered to address issues of intersubjectivity. Overt signs of affiliation typically come once the complainant has started moving toward closure. Most complaints remain individual complaints.
- All complaints at *upper-intermediate/advanced level* lead to affiliative or sympathetic responses, although in a few of these sequences coparticipants offer only limited displays of affiliation. Coparticipants typically contribute more actively to the construction of the complaints (e.g., with negative assessments, accounts) than among elementary level speakers, and they often offer clear displays of affiliation throughout the sequences. In a considerable proportion (around two fifths) of the sequences, the complaint becomes a joint complaint.

I illustrate the observed differences between speakers at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels by means of four empirical examples. In all excerpts, the complaint concerns an issue to which several participants have epistemic access.

4.3.1 Elementary level

The overwhelming majority of the elementary level complaints (27 of 32, or 84%) lead to some kind of affiliative responses. In 12 (or 38%) of these sequences, however, coparticipants offer only limited displays of affiliation before the complaint is abandoned or interrupted, indicating some problems with either the design of the complaint and/or with the recipients' ability or willingness to offer clear signs of affiliation. Affiliative displays in the form of laughter, non-lexical assessments, embodied conduct, or other verbally minimal responses that only to some extent contribute to the sequential development are common.

Excerpt 4.10 provides an example of recurrent coparticipant responses to elementary level complaints. Before the start of the excerpt, Aurelia has asked Mia what French courses she takes, and the participants have established that they take the same A2-B1 course but have missed each other in class so far. Having explained why she takes both the A1 and A2-B1 courses, in line 2 Aurelia initiates a negative assessment of the A2-B1 course. Although Mia clearly has epistemic access to the issue at hand (see Ruusuvuori et al., 2019, for the calibration of epistemics in complaints), Mia responds with only limited displays of affiliation and Aurelia rapidly abandons the complaint.

Ex. 4.10, Lun_2017-03-27_37:20_pas intéressée

- 01 MIA: †a::h [okay les deux cours.]
oh okay the two courses
- 02 AUR: [mai:s je pense] que: (.) euhm (0.3) de a: deux
but I think that (from) a two
- 03 (0.3) bé un,
b one
- 04 (0.3) pour moi †c'e::st† Ω*°Hhnh°#Ω* ce n'est Ωpa::s
for me it's it is not
- aur †headshakes†
aur Ωfrowns--Ω Ωgazes-MIA-->1.9
aur *opens-closes-RH*
fig #1
- 05 †*(1.0)#*† °hm:°=
aur †shakes head slightly†
aur *shakes hands palm up*
fig #2



fig.1



fig.2

- 06 MIA: =mm-hm.
- 07 MIA: (non te-) je te comprends.
(no yo-) I understand you
- 08 (0.2)
- 09 AUR: oui:,Ω
yes
aur -->Ω
- 10 AUR: [c'est-] ce n'est pas e::h (1.0)
it's- it is not
- 11 MIA: [mm,]
- 12 MIA: beaucoup de-
a lot of-
- 13 (0.5)
- 14 AUR: utile,
useful
- 15 Ωpour moi,
for me
aur Ωgazes-MIA-->
- 16 MIA: uh-huh okay.=Ω
aur -->Ω
- 17 AUR: =parce que:: moi je Ω*veux parler.#*
because me I want to speak
aur Ωgazes-MIA-->
aur *2 beats w open hands*
fig #3
- 18 (0.5)
- 19 MIA: [mm-hm:]
- 20 AUR: [*>je veux parler<.#]
I want to speak
aur *opens hands palm up-->
fig #4



fig.3



fig.4

- 21 MIA: mm-hm,Ω*
aur -->Ω
aur -->*
- 22 AUR: je veu:x eu:hm: (0.3) mt (0.5) s:::avoir¿
I want to know
- 23 e:h comm:e (s'écrit) e:h un emai::l normal,
how (is written) a normal email

- 24 MIA: mm-h[m:,]
- 25 AUR: [ehm] pour tous les jours.
for everyday
- 26 (0.6)
- 27 MIA: uh-huh [oui.]
yes
- 28 AUR: [°eh°] je ne- .h je n'ai pas intéressé *pour écrire eh
I d- I don't have interest for writing
aur *enacts writing-->
- 29 (0.7) .hh un nou[vel:* £hhh] c(h)omme* Ωça(h)£,=#
a short story like that
aur -->*points to books--*lifts hands high-->
aur Ωgazes-MIA-->
fig #5
- 30 MIA: [seulement la]
only the



fig.5

- 31 MIA: =[uh-huh uh-huh £okay(h) hhh£]
- 32 AUR: =[£.hh* ce n'est pa(h)s(h)] .hh important pour moi£.
it is not important to me
aur -->*
- 33 (0.4)
- 34 AUR: £mm:£Ω moi seulement je veu:x vivre (0.2) eu::h
me only I want to live
aur -->Ω
- 35 ici à launè[ve,]
here in Launève
- 36 MIA: [uh-][huh okay.]
- 37 AUR: [e::t] e:hm (0.5) mt mais aussi
and but also
- 38 °m° je vais à la classe,
I go to the class
- 39 (0.6) e::t (0.5) mt je fai:s de: euh devoi:rs
and I do ho homework
- 40 [ou] quelque chose en français,
or something in French
- 41 MIA: [mm-hm,]
- 42 AUR: .h e:t si: il eh parle (.) de quelque chose (0.4) intéressant=
and if he speaks of something interesting

- 43 MIA: =uh-huh,
- 44 AUR: *°(x x)°.*
aur *enacts writing w finger in air*
- 45 MIA: ah [tu peux-]
oh you can-
- 46 AUR: [à écrire,]
to write
- 47 MIA: uh-huh,
- 48 AUR: mai:s comm:e (0.3) mt (0.4) c'e:st e::h heureuse;
but (since) it's lucky
- 49 (0.4)
- 50 MIA: mm-hm,
- 51 (1.2)
- 52 AUR: oui c'est- (0.3) oh non- heureusement,
yes it's- no- luckily
- 53 eu:h [c'e:st&]
it's
- 54 MIA: [uh-huh okay] £>heureusement<£.
luckily
- 55 AUR: mm::: (1.6) c'est gratuit;
it's free
- 56 (0.4)
- 57 MIA: oui,
yes

Before verbally completing her assessment of the A2-B1 course, Aurelia shakes her head and hands palm up and frowns (lines 4-5, fig.1-2), showing negative stance embodiedly (Selting, 2010a; 2012) and foreshadowing (Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009) a negative assessment segment. Even before the delivery of the complete assessment segment (initiated with *pas*, 'not', lines 4, 10, and completed with *utile*, 'useful', line 14), Mia shows understanding of Aurelia's expressed stance (lines 6-7). Having attempted to assist Aurelia in completing her turn (line 12), thereby showing some alignment and affiliation with Aurelia (Lerner, 1996, 2013), Mia receipts the full assessment neutrally (line 16). Aurelia offers an account for her characterization of the course as not useful by invoking what she *wants* to do (and thereby implying what the course lacks), namely, to speak (line 17). By opening her hands palm up in two beats synchronized with the prosodic stress of her talk and gazing at Mia (line 17, fig.3), she upgrades the strength of the assertion, portrays it as obvious (Kendon, 2004, p. 277), shows her affective involvement (Selting, 2010a; 2012), and invites Mia to respond (Stivers & Rossano, 2010). As Mia receipts this with *mm-hm*: (line 19), Aurelia repeats the assertion and the open hand gesture (line 20, fig.4) and holds it until Mia has provided another receipt token (line 21; see Floyd et al., 2016; Streeck, 2009; on the use of such forward-gesture suspensions). Aurelia then expands, asserting what she wants to know (in French): how to write normal emails for everyday use (lines 22-23, 25). As Mia again responds with neutral alignment and confirmation tokens (lines 24, 27), Aurelia invokes what she does not want (writing a story, lines 28-29); hence again implying what is problematic with the course. She animates (Günthner, 1997; 2000) this assertion by enacting writing, pointing to the books behind her,

and at the end of her turn, she lifts her hands high (fig.5) while interspersing the end of her turn with some laughter, again underlining the obviousness of her claims and adding a humorous layer to the complaint (Edwards, 2005).

This time, Mia responds slightly more affiliatively by repeating the response token *uh-huh* (see Norrick, 1987, for self-repetition to express affiliation) and offering a laughter-interspersed *£okay(h) hhh£*, (line 31). However, following Aurelia's next assertion (line 32), Mia remains silent, and Aurelia offers another account (lines 34-35) that Mia again responds to with neutral alignment tokens (line 36) that treat Aurelia's talk as *informing* rather than *stance-taking*. At this point, Aurelia initiates what at first appears to be an expansion of the account, but she restarts (line 37) and more neutrally reports on how she goes to class and does her homework and takes notes when the professor says something interesting (lines 38-40, 42, 44, 46). This works as a transition into a 'bright side' (Holt, 1993) assertion about the course, by which Aurelia abandons the complaint and invokes that luckily the course is free (lines 48, 52-53, 55). The participants subsequently shift topic and do not revisit the complaint.

In this excerpt, Aurelia offered a series of criticism toward an object that was clearly in the epistemic domain of both participants. Through embodied conduct and prosody, Aurelia conveyed her affective negative stance and invited Mia to participate in the assessment activity (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992). Mia, however, aligned as a *recipient* by granting Aurelia an extended turn, showing her understanding of Aurelia's stance expressions, and by receipting Aurelia's turns in a timely fashion with response tokens such as *mm-hm*, *uh-huh*, *okay*. While Mia displayed some level of affiliation (e.g., through laughter and by attempting to assist Aurelia linguistically), the majority of her responses were neutrally valenced and did not contribute to the evaluative loading of the complaint. This led Aurelia to rapidly abandon her criticism in favor of more positive talk. While some elementary level complaints are more 'successful' in that they lead to more clearly affiliative responses, coparticipants' contributions often resemble the ones seen in this excerpt. Besides embodied and verbal response tokens (head nods, *uh-huh*, *mm-hm*, *yeah*, *oui*, 'yes', *ouais*, 'yeah', *okay*, etc.), these speakers regularly respond with laughter and non-lexical vocalizations (see particularly Ch. 5.1), by which they align and affiliative with each other but to a weaker degree than with for example verbal assessment turns (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Kupetz, 2014). As seen in Ex. 4.1 above, elementary level speakers' sometimes offer slightly more elaborate affiliative responses once the complainant has clearly moved toward sequence closure (see Theo's turn in line 55).

One result of the kind of elementary-level complaint responses illustrated in Ex. 4.10 is that most complaints remain individual complaints (26 or 81% of 32 sequences). Only a few sequences develop into joint complaints (6 or 19% of the sequences, but in 3 of these the participation of the person who initiates the complaint is marginal). The only jointly constructed complaint in which one of the focal elementary level participants joins the complaint by upgrading a first assessment is in what develops into a complaint about the weather (Ex. 4.11). Before the start of the excerpt, Zarah has told the coparticipants about her hometown in Sweden. Malia and Mariana have suggested that it must be cold there now, which Zarah confirms asserting that there is even snow (line 1). In line 4, Theo assesses the temperature in Launève as very cold, thereby launching a sequence that leads to a joint complaint about the current weather conditions:

Ex. 4.11, Mer1_2016-12-07_07:01_brouillard

01 ZAR: $\text{\textit{fouil}}$ [y a de $\text{\textit{f}}$] neige maintenant aussi en suède.
 yes there is snow now also in Sweden

02 THE? [$\text{\textit{fhhh}}$]

03 (0.4)

04 THE: trè:s froi:d ici.
 very cold here

05 MAL: oui oui:,
 yes yes

06 *c'est très fro[id aujourd'hui: ohhh.*]
 it's very cold today
 mal *fumbles with jumper sleeves-----*

07 ZAR: [$\text{\textit{f'c'est parce que j'ai dit que-f}}$]
 it's because I've said that-

08 MAR: je==
 I-

09 ZAR: =* $\text{\textit{f'c'est pas froid}}$.*
 it's not cold
 mal *lifts hands to mouth, then lowers them*

((21 lines omitted: ZAR disagrees with THE and MAL, and MAL shows the 5 layers of clothing she uses to protect herself against the cold))

31 ZAR: $\text{\textit{fhuh .HHH}}$ [$\text{\textit{ehhh}}$]

32 MAR: [j'ai-]
 I've-

33 MAL: [c'est] trop froid,
 it's too cold

34 §(0.6)§
 mar §nods-§

35 MAR: pou[r moi,]
 for me

36 MAL: [>vrai $\text{\textit{m}}$ ent< [oui,]
 really yes

37 MAR: [ah-] pour moi $\text{\textit{§eh je pense:::}}$ (.)
 for me I think
 mar $\text{\textit{§points twd window-->}}$

38 eh le brouillard? $\text{\textit{§}}$
 the fog
 mar --> $\text{\textit{§}}$

39 $\text{\textit{§brouillard la: fog}}$; $\text{\textit{§}}$
 fog the
 mar $\text{\textit{§round gestures w b hands}}$

40 (0.4)

41 MAL: AH oka[y,]
 oh okay

42 THE: [mm-]hm, =

43 MAL: =>m-hm-hm<, =

44 MAR: \$.h PFFFFf[#ffff\$ c'est-]
it's-
 mar \$shakes head-->

45 MAL: [c'est ho-] [c'est horrible.]
it's ho- it's horrible

46 MAR: [c'est\$ ho]rri[::bl]e.
it's horrible
 mar -->\$

47 MAL: [oui:,,]
yes

48 MAL: >oui oui oui<.
yes yes yes

49 (0.5) \$(1.0)#\$
 mar \$shrugs shoulders, shakes hands to sides-->
 fig #1

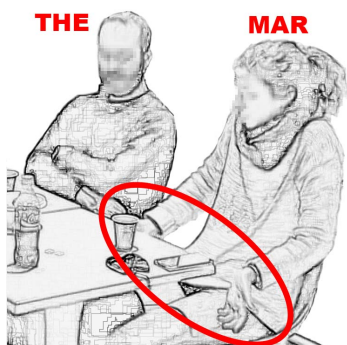


fig.1

50 MAL: >oui oui \$[oui<,]
yes yes yes

51 MAR: [\$ech\$]::
 mar -->\$drops hands hard on lap\$

52 MAL: pas solei:l,
no sun

53 pas- (0.6) ri[en.]
no- nothing

54 MAR: [yeah,]

55 MAR: a- [et- c'e:st le:] l'humide- [l'humi::fedité?f]
a- and- it's the the humi- the humidity

56 MAL: [et nous *besoin de:] [oui:# vit-*(vi*ta]fmi:n).
and we need yes vit- (vitamins)
 mal *vivid gests to sides w both hands* *drops hands*
 fig #2

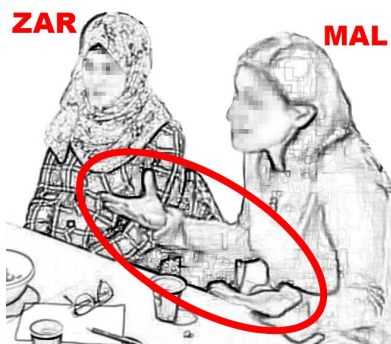


fig.2

57 ZAR: [((laughs: 2.1s))]
 58 THE: [((laughs: 2.1s))]
 59 MAL: §[((laughs: 2.1s))#§
 mar §crosses arms, shrugs§
 fig #3



fig.3

60 MAR: c'est- (0.9) je pense je suis à launè:ve
 it's- I think I am in Launève
 61 §ou:: # (0.5)
 or
 mar §raises shoulders & hands, palms up-->
 fig #4

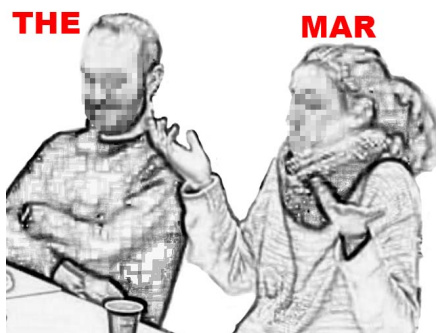


fig.4

62 MAL: [ehHEHE[hehhε]
 63 MAR: §[je ne] sais [pas §(crois] que[:] parce q]ue *(0.5)#§
 I do not know (think that) because
 mar -->§ §stretches out RH, waves-----§
 mal *RH up-->
 fig #5

64 ZAR: [εhhe hhhε]
 65 MAL: [fou le pôleε]
 or the pole

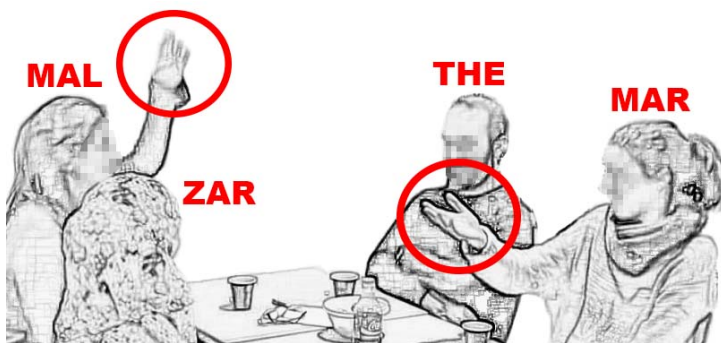


fig.5

66 ZAR: £.hhh£*
mal -->*

67 (0.4)

68 MAL: mt [ah oui] °non°.
yes no

69 MAR: [§o:hh.]
mar §gazes at MAL, small head shakes-->1.76

70 MAL: oui.
yes

71 (0.3)

72 MAL: °mt je n'sais pas mais n- oui°,
I don't know but n- yes

73 Ωc'est horrible pour moi aussi°.Ω
it's horrible for me too
mal Ωgazes at MAR-----Ω

74 *(1.8)*
mar *nods-*

75 MAR: [°c'est-°]
it's-

76 MAL: [et-] et c'est§ très (0.3) dé (.) preΩssant?Ω
and- and it's very de pressing
mar -->§
mal Ωgz-THEΩ

77 MAR §oui,
yes
mar §nods-->>

Theo's assessment (line 4) is neutrally formatted, but understandable as negative in the context of the preceding discussion about the cold weather in Sweden. It is also responded to as such by Malia, who agrees with *oui oui* ('yes yes', line 5) and repeats it in a full clause: *c'est très froid aujourd'hui*: ('it's very cold today', line 6) while fumbling with her jumper sleeves so as to partly cover up her hands. At the end of her turn, she adds the non-lexical vocalization *ohhh* to index her affective negative stance toward the cold. By integrating Theo's assessment in her own turn and producing a modified repeat (Stivers, 2005), Malia asserts epistemic independence (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) and thereby contributes not only as a recipient of Theo's potential complaint-to-be but also as a prospective co-complainant. As Zarah initiates a disagreement asserting that she does not think it is cold in Launève, Malia continues to embody 'being cold' by lifting her hands to her mouth as if heating them up (line 9). In the 21 omitted lines, Malia counters Zarah's disagreement by pointing to the many layers of clothing that Malia is currently wearing.

In line 33, Malia produces an assessment of the temperature as *trop froid* ('too cold'). Mariana agrees (line 34) and initiates an expansion with a negative assessment about the fog (lines 35, 37). After a repair sequence targeting the word *brouillard* ('fog', lines 37-43), Mariana produces the non-lexical vocalization *PFFFffff* accompanied by headshakes (line 44) to express her affective negative stance (see Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016) toward the weather conditions. In response, Malia offers the high-grade negative assessment *c'est horrible* ('it's horrible', line 45), by which she aligns and affiliates with Mariana. Mariana lexically repeats

Malia's turn (line 46) but elongates the second syllable so as to upgrade the assessment and claim her own epistemic independence. As Malia continues expressing her agreement (lines 47-48), Mariana shrugs her shoulders, lifts her hands to the sides and shakes them palm up, further expressing her frustration (and inability to do something about the situation, see Kendon, 2004, p. 275) about the fog until she drops her hands hard on her lap while uttering another non-lexical vocalization (line 51) to close her embodied expression of negative stance.

Malia expands the sequence by adding another piece of 'evidence' in support of the complaint: There is no sun, nothing (lines 52-53), while in fact they need vitamins (line 56; supposedly Malia refers to getting vitamins from the sun). By vividly gesturing to her sides with both hands palm up (fig.2) and then dropping them on the table toward the end of her turn, Malia indexes the obviousness of the claims (Kendon, 2004, p. 277) and upgrades her affective involvement in the complaint so as to justify its legitimacy (cf. Selting, 2010a; 2012). Mariana, in turn, invokes the humidity involved in the foggy weather (line 55), and crosses her arms and shrugs (fig.3) to embody her reaction to the weather conditions, and she then suggests that she does not know whether she is in Launève or somewhere else (lines 60-61; see embodied turn-completion following *ou::* in line 61, fig.4). After a laughing response from Malia (line 62), Mariana reissues her turn, but also this time embodiedly completes it with a hand gesture (line 63, fig.5) while Malia offers the candidate *ou le pôle* ('or the pole', line 65) plus a stretched out hand above the head probably suggesting 'north pole' (fig.5). Using limited linguistic means, Malia and Mariana thus co-construct an account for their complaint about the weather in Launève by comparing it to the weather on the north pole. Thereafter, they continue expressing their disapproval and negative stances and further develop the sequence (line 68 and onward).

In sum, this excerpt has illustrated an 'early' version of what occurs more frequently at upper-intermediate/advanced level, namely the construction of joint complaints. Starting with a negative assessment of the temperature by one participant (Theo), the sequence developed into a joint complaint (by Malia and Mariana) about the weather through the coparticipants' second assessments, expansions with affiliative negative stance expressions and 'evidence' supporting the overall complaint, and the joint construction of an account that worked to legitimize the complaint. The excerpt showed how elementary level speakers may accomplish second assessments with the help of lexical repeats of first assessments with non-lexical or embodied upgrades (see Ch. 5.1), and how gestures may serve to complement verbal descriptions in the production of an account. Drawing on these interactional resources, the participants demonstrated their epistemic independence and agency as co-complainants rather than merely complaint recipients (as in Ex. 4.10). The fact that the complaint is about the weather is not insignificant in this context, I would suggest, as this is something to which all participants have epistemic access and entitlement (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012) to speak about, and is a recurrent topic of conversation that seems to be interactionally available also to very early-stage speakers (see also Ch.6.1). The excerpt thus demonstrates that, even if it is uncommon in my data, under the right conditions elementary level speakers may produce joint complaints. As I show in the next section, with time speakers increase their ability to build upon and synchronize their actions with others, which results in a higher level of co-construction and more joint complaints.

4.3.2 Upper-intermediate/advanced level

All upper-intermediate/advanced level complaints eventually lead to affiliative or sympathetic responses from coparticipants, although in four (or 11%) of the 36 sequences only limited displays of affiliation occurs before complaint closure. Coparticipants regularly offer clear displays of affiliation throughout sequences and contribute actively to the construction of the complaints by for example offering negative assessments and accounts in favor of the complaint. In 14 (or 39%) of the sequences, the complaint develops into a joint complaint. Excerpts 4.12 and 4.13 illustrate the higher level of co-construction of complaint sequences at upper-intermediate/advanced level vis-à-vis elementary level. In these complaints, the focal participants (Malia, Cassandra) contribute to the construction of joint complaints by aligning and adding elements to coparticipants' first negative stance expressions.

Excerpt 4.12 shows a joint complaint by Javier and Malia about some of the professors at their current university. The participants have been talking about an interview Malia is going to have at a different university in the city Baleux, and Javier is comforting Malia by telling her not to be afraid (line 1) because the professor who will interview Malia is a person (lines 2-3) and not a monster (line 5). He contrasts this with some of the professors in Launève, who he assesses as *difficiles* ('difficult', line 9), after which he offers a more clearly positive assessment of the professors in Baleux as *plus ouverts* ('more open', line 12). Malia agrees with *oui c'est vrai*, ('yes it's true'), which she repeats (lines 14, 16).

Ex. 4.12, Mer1_2017-11-22_26:00_le contraire

- 01 JAV: il faut pas avoir peur,
you shouldn't be scared
- 02 (.) (comme dit xx) c'est pa:s (0.6) c'est une
(like said xx) it's not it's a
- 03 personne qui est en face de toi c'est pas (1.3)
person who is in front of you it's not
- 04 MAL: °oui oui°,
yes yes
- 05 JAV: c'est pas un monstre (hein).
it's not a monster (huh)
- 06 (0.4)
- 07 MAL: °£huhuf°
- 08 JAV: £non parce que£ ici à launève il y a des profs qui
no because here in Launève there are some professors
- 09 qui sont difficiles.
who are difficult
- 10 (0.2)
- 11 MAL: [oui:,]
yes
- 12 JAV: [mais] à baleux je crois qu'ils sont plus ouverts,
but in Baleux I think that they are more open
- 13 MAL: oui,
yes

14 oui c'est vrai.
yes that's true

15 (0.2)

16 MAL: oui c'est vrai.
yes that's true

17 (1.0)

18 JAV: parce qu'ici il y a quelques-uns que \$(0.8)#\$
because here there are some who

jav \$eyebrow flash, shakes head\$
fig #1

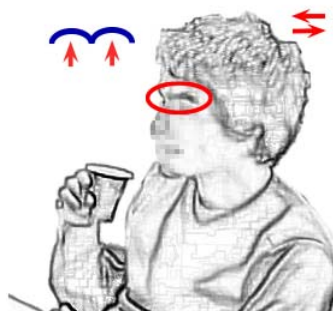


fig.1

19 MAL: [°eh oui°.]
yes

20 JAV: [(tu connais)] (.) même les personnes parce que (0.3)
(you know) even the people because

21 MAL: fhu[hɦf]

22 JAV: [\$ils] croient qu'ils sont# (.)
they think that they are

jav \$both hands up-down high above head-->
fig #2



fig.2

23 MAL: oui:,
yes

24 JAV: fhhuhh£,\$
jav -->\$

25 MAL: ET- oui eh- eh c- c'est pa:::s >comment d/i/< (0.4)
and- yes i- it's not how to say

26 c'est pas juste parce que (.) °l'université c'est°
it's not fair because the university it's

27 (1.4) trop peti:t,=
too small

28 JAV: =oui c'est petite ça c'e:st ça se prête pour être
yes it's small that that's it lends itself to being

whom he is referring). She assesses the situation described by Javier as *pas juste*, ('not fair', line 26) because the university is so small (line 27). Through this assessment and account, Malia upgrades Javier's third-party criticism and invokes a moral dimension to the reproachable behavior, suggesting that the professors' conduct is not justifiable according to "normative standards of conduct" (Drew, 1998, p. 297) and thereby complaint-worthy. By doing so, Malia transforms the criticism made by Javier into a joint complaint.

Javier, in turn, agrees and builds on Malia's account by repeating it and suggesting that the university should allow for closer or more informal relationships between students and professors (lines 28-29, 31). Malia agrees before the end of Javier's turn (line 30), and by tilting her head and opening her right hand with her palm up (fig.3), she underlines the obviousness of the situation. She thereafter provides a contrast to Javier's claim about how it should be by asserting that the reality is exactly the opposite: *mais (.) c'est (.) exactement (.) contraire^o(ment)^o* ('but it's exactly opposite', line 33). The prosodic delivery of this turn, with micro-pauses between every word, and the fast flipping hand gestures (fig.4) further enhance the affective strength of the negatively valenced contrast. Javier collaboratively completes Malia's turn with *le contraire* ('the opposite', line 34) in partial overlap with Malia, displaying his alignment and affiliation (Lerner, 2013). Malia's assertion shows the participants' joint understanding of Javier's embodied completed assessment in line 22 about the concerned professors, and it summarizes the gist of the complaint about the professors being the opposite of familiar/informal (e.g., formal and 'above others', as implied by Javier's gesture above his head in fig.2). While Javier initiates an expansion (line 37), the activity is interrupted and later abandoned as Malia orients to her glasses, which lay on the table and came in the way of Jordan's action of reaching for a paper sheet (lines 36-37).

While this sequence starts with a series of criticism of a third party (or group of third parties) by only one participant, it develops into a joint complaint. After first having merely offered tokens of alignment, Malia joins the complaint as a co-complainant by adding new elements to the sequence in the form of a negative assessment invoking moral unfairness and an account on which Javier builds to expand the complaint. The coparticipants coordinate and finely synchronize their contributions to show alignment and affiliation, build on each other's turns, and anticipate assessment segments before their verbal production.

The next complaint (Ex. 4.13) emerges in the context of a discussion of the French grammar rules for adjectives, and specifically colors. It is Xiang who first formulates a problem about the difficulty of getting it right in *dictées* ('dictations'), an activity she did earlier the same day in her French course. In lines 2-8, she asserts that the problem is that if you have misunderstood (the rules for conjugating colors in French), you easily accumulate twenty errors (on the dictation). At the end of her turn, she utters a sigh expressing her frustration about the situation (line 9). Cassandra then intervenes to ratify the topic as a complaint-worthy one and contribute to the construction of a complaint.

Ex. 4.13, Mer2_2016-11-16_09:02_la couleur

01 CAS: =ʔahuhuhu[h .hhhʔ]

02 XIA: [le problème] si tu- (0.5) mal compris,
the problem if you- misunderstood

03 .hh tu veux me- (.) t'as vu avant tu dis alors
you want to pu- you've seen before you say alright

04 tous les couleurs tu mets pas,
all the colors you don't put

05 voilà ça c'est faux.=
PRT that it's wrong

06 XIA: =.hhh ces petits choses tu sais,
these small things you know

07 une fois deux fois c'est très vite ça a accumulé,
one time two times it's very quickly it has accumulated

08 après c'est devenu vingt fautes e:h tranquillement.
then it has become twenty mistakes easily

09 XIA: .hhhhh (0.2) [ouhhhhh.]

10 CAS: [il y aura] dans les dictées moi °j'ai peu:r°
there will be in the dictations me I'm scared

11 °il y avait° (.) il y a de la couleur,
there was there is color

12 (0.2)

13 XIA: [ouais.]
yeah

14 CAS: [et] ils [font exprès c'est <juste>],
and they do it on purpose it's (true)

15 XIA: [ça c'est vraiment diffi][ci:le,]
that it's really difficult

16 CAS: [°uh-huh°,]

17 XIA: .hhh ce chapitre j'ai peu à peu: [eu::h] euh arrivé:&
this chapter I've little by little (managed to)

18 CAS: [HHuhhh]

19 XIA: &réussi euh à maîtriser,
managed to master

20 .hhh >mais le problème c'est< les mots,
but the problem it's the words

21 (0.3) ʔhh (l(h)aisse t(h)omber)ʔ
(forget it)

22 CAS: [ah ouais ça-]
oh yeah that-

23 XIA: [.hhh aujourd'hui] (c'est) un peu vraiment déçu:e
today (it's) a bit really disappointed

24 j'ai refait le chapitre ou premier (des) chapitres
I redid the chapter or first (of the) chapters

25 >parce que j'ai déjà arrivé< à la onze chapitre,
because I've already gotten to the eleven chapter

- 26 [(xx),]
- 27 CAS: [mm-hm,]
- 28 XIA: .hhh le premier (.) des- (.) alors ça reste encore
the first of- so left are still
- 29 *ɛvin- v(h)ingt-c(h)inq [alorsɛ,]*
twe- twenty-five so
- 30 CAS: [uh-huh,]
- 31 XIA: .hh vingt-quatre j'ai pas fait,
twenty-four I haven't done
- 32 CAS: mais [je sais et c'est- >c'était< horrible d'étudier ça.]
but I know and it's- it was horrible to study that
- 33 XIA: [ça c'est une grande chose c'est une grande cha-]
that it's a big thing it's a big cha-
- 34 °une grande charge°,
a big burden
- 35 .hhh et l- le deuxième,
and t- the second
- 36 (0.4) alors j- j- j'arrivais pa:s (.) maîtriser même que
well I- I- I didn't manage to master even though
- 37 j'ai- >quelque chose que j'ai déjà< fait.
I've- something that I've already done
- 38 CAS: °>ouais ouais ouais ou[ais ouais<°.]
yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
- 39 XIA: [°mais-°] mais ç- ça me rend
but- but i- it makes me
- 40 vraiment [°un peu°]
really a bit
- 41 CAS: [>non non-<] °c'est- (.) c'est- c'était là.°
no no it's- it's- it was there
- 42 CAS: °j'ai jamais étudié quelque chose Ωde si horrible°.
I've never studied anything so horrible
 cas Ωgazes at XIA-->
- 43 # (0.6)Ω
 cas -->Ω
 fig #1

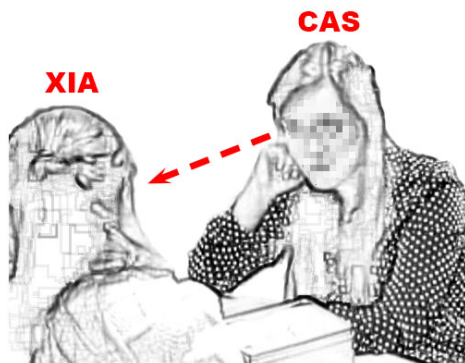


fig.1

- 44 CAS: et je- [e:t-]
and I- and-
- 45 XIA: [ɛhh][hehehehehh .hhhɛ]
- 46 CAS: [ɛje ta j- je te] ju:ref,
I you I- I promise you
- 47 CAS: .h[hh]
- 48 XIA: [ɛuh]hu[hhɛ]
- 49 CAS: [je] (préfèrais) apprendre la mémoire libre,
I (preferred) to study (the free memory)
- 50 parce que (.) moi [je suis] bonne en mémoire,
because me I am good (at memorizing)
- 51 XIA: [ɪmm::,]
- 52 CAS: °plutôt que faire ces dictées je l'ai fait° quelques fois
rather than do these dictations I did it a few times
- 53 vraiment je- (0.2) mais même non plus cinq fois j'ai essayé,
really I- but even not even five times I've tried
- 54 mais c'est horrible,
but it's horrible
- 55 j- j'ai même °non >plus de cinq fois<°,
I- I've even no more than five times
- 56 .hh mais (.) je l'ai fait (0.5) peu de fois.
but I did it few times
- 57 CAS: parce que (.) me mettre (.) [°la°]
because get myself into there
- 58 XIA: [°mm]:°,
- 59 (0.3)
- 60 CAS: °(pour xx)° (0.6) avoir une liste,
(for xx) have a list
(0.3)
- 61 CAS: après voir la correction,
then see the correction
- 62 et voir ɛ(tout(h) que t(h)u [manques)ɛ]
and see (everything that you miss)
- 63 XIA: [mais le-] le- problème c'est
but the- the- problem it's
- 64 après quelques (.) minutes si tu détestes d- d-
after some minutes if you hate d- d-
- 65 ce genre de choses-là,
that kind of thing
- 66 après tu veux (.) endormir.
after you want to fall asleep

Cassandra first expresses her own fear of colors appearing in the dictations (lines 10-11). She then produces an explicit criticism of a third party, likely the instructors responsible for the dictations: *ils font exprès* ('they do it on purpose', line 14). With this criticism, Cassandra invokes not only the wrongdoings of the third party, but also suggests that the transgression is deliberate, and thereby all the more complaint-worthy (Drew, 1998). In partial overlap, Xiang

herself offers the high-grade negative assessment *ça c'est vraiment difficile* ('that it's really difficult', line 15), with which Cassandra agrees (line 16). As Xiang initiates a report that will detail the complaint, Cassandra produces a short sigh (line 18), further displaying her own frustration about the issue.

Xiang expresses her difficulties with learning 'the words' (line 20) and gives a specific example of her disappointment earlier the same day (lines 23-31). Cassandra shows her alignment through small agreement tokens and continuers timed precisely with the transition points of Xiang's turn-constructural units (lines 22, 27, 30). When Xiang approaches an upshot formulating the consequence of her report so far (projected by *alors*, 'so', in line 28 and completed in lines 33-34), Cassandra agrees and claims her own epistemic access to the experience: *mais je sais* ('but I know', line 32), followed by the high-grade negative assessment *c'était horrible d'étudier ça* ('it was horrible to study that', line 32), thereby aligning and affiliating with Xiang while asserting her epistemic independence vis-à-vis the complainable.

Xiang subsequently expands the sequence further, underlining the burdensome nature of the task by asserting that she was unable to learn something that she had already learned before (lines 36-37). Cassandra again strongly agrees (line 38), and as Xiang initiates what seems to be a summary assessment of how it all makes her feel (lines 39-40), Cassandra joins the complaint more actively as a co-complainant by expanding on her own experience studying the same thing.

Using an extreme-case formulation, Cassandra asserts that it was not just horrible to study the particular subject, it was the worst thing she has ever studied (line 42). At the end of her turn, she looks straight at Xiang with an upset expression (fig.1), showing strong affective stance (Selting, 2010a; 2012). Xiang laughs in response (line 45), and Cassandra insists on the veracity of her assertion with *je te jure* ('I promise you', line 46), upgraded with prosodic stress on *jure*. She then herself develops a report of how she tried to memorize the words but could only do it five times because it was so horrible (lines 49-54). While this report accounts for her assertions, it also supports the participants' joint complaint about the difficulty of the French grammar rules. Cassandra offers a detailed report of the study process, and her use of a three-part listing format (*avoir une liste*, 'have a list', *après voir la correction*, 'then see the correction', *et voir tout ce que tu manques*, approx. 'and see everything that you miss', lines 60-63) helps portraying the situation as a long and arduous process (cf. Jefferson, 1990; Lerner, 1994). In overlap with the end of Cassandra's listing, Xiang intervenes by adding another element to the complaint which she accounts for with a telling (lines 63-66 and onward).

In this sequence, similar to in Ex. 4.12, the complaint becomes a joint accomplishment, in which two participants finely synchronize their respective contributions to the complaint by offering strong negative assessments and affective stance expressions, accounts, and other types of evidence in support of the overall complaint at precisely fitted moments in the interaction. With the help of epistemic claims such as *je sais* ('I know'), *je te jure* ('I promise you'), and retellings of past experiences, the participants construct their own independent epistemic access to the complainable while also supporting the joint complaint. The complaint involves an escalation of affectivity (Rääbis et al., 2019), whereby the speakers progressively upgrade displays of emotive involvement (as seen for instance in Cassandra's extreme-case formulation with

accompanying embodied conduct in lines 42-43). Like the complaint in Ex. 4.12, this sequence is representative of the complaints at upper-intermediate/advanced level that concern issues to which more than one participant has epistemic access.

4.3.3 Summary: Co-constructing complaints

In this section I have documented a difference in the degree of co-construction of complaints between speakers at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels. This is visible in the ways in which complaints are responded to by coparticipants, that is, in the proportion of sequences with (clear) affiliative displays from coparticipants and in the number of joint complaints (Table 4.2).

Proficiency level	Affiliative responses	Only limited affiliation	Joint complaints
Elementary (n=32)	84% (n=27)	38% (n=12)	19% (n=6)
Upper-intermediate/advanced (n=36)	100% (n=36)	11% (n=4)	39% (n=14)

Table 4.2. Proportion of complaint sequences with affiliative responses and joint complaints.

As seen in the table, only the elementary level collection includes complaints that are abandoned or closed before they lead to any affiliative or sympathetic response from the coparticipants, although these sequences are relatively few (16% of sequences). However, the elementary level speaker collection includes considerably more complaints that are met with only limited displays of affiliation (through non-lexical assessments, embodied conduct, laughter etc.) before sequence closure. More advanced speakers more frequently than elementary level speakers engage in joint complaining. This distributional difference manifests itself in an overall higher level of co-construction of the complaints of more advanced speakers vis-à-vis the complaints of elementary level speakers.

The complaints at elementary level are thus mainly individually produced, and coparticipants typically contribute only to a limited degree to the sequential development. As seen in Ex. 4.10, coparticipants may offer displays of alignment and affiliation throughout the sequence through verbal and non-verbal response tokens (e.g., *mm-hm*, *uh-huh*, *oui*, ‘yes’, *ouais*, ‘yeah’, *okay*, nods), and laughter, but they rarely produce more substantial contributions before the complainant shows clear signs of moving to a close (see also Ex. 4.1/4.3). Excerpt 4.11 showed an exceptional case among the elementary level speakers: a complaint about the weather that was jointly constructed by several participants. The excerpt showcased the type of interactional resources used by these speakers to jointly advance the sequence and construct complaint-worthiness, such as second assessments in the form of lexical repeats that were upgraded with embodied and paraverbal means, and embodied completed accounts.

Among more advanced speakers, coparticipants often contribute more actively to the sequential unfolding of the complaints. Excerpts 4.12 and 4.13 illustrated how our focal participants built on a coparticipant’s negative stance expressions to develop the sequence into a complaint and thereafter took turns with the co-complainant to escalate the complaint (Rääbis et al., 2019) by adding reproaches of a third party, invoking moral dimensions of the third party’s misconduct,

upgrading first assessments, reporting on specific past events, and showing shared affective stances (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Selting, 2010a; 2012).

The emergence of joint complaints relies on the participants' shared epistemic access to the complainable. As seen in both Ex. 4.10 and 4.12, speakers regularly explicitly invoke the participants' epistemic access to what will become a complainable by inquiring about other participants' access to the issue (preceding Ex. 4.10) or merely claiming it (Ex. 4.12; see Ruusuvuori et al., 2019, for similar calibration of epistemic stances in complaint sequences). In other cases, such as when the participants initiate stance-taking about the weather (Ex. 4.11) or common French courses (Ex. 4.13), the participants' shared epistemic access can be presumed and is left unaddressed. As seen for example in Ex. 4.10, the establishment of shared epistemic access to a particular issue does not always lead to joint complaining, however, even if coparticipants express aligning stances toward the issue. The few joint complaints among elementary level speakers, even though these speakers regularly talk and complain about issues that are in the shared epistemic domain (the participants' French studies, Swiss society, the weather, etc.), indicate that the production of joint complaints may be difficult for speakers at lower proficiency levels. As seen in the more advanced speakers' complaints, these speakers are able to more finely synchronize their contributions and build upon other speakers' actions, and this seems to help them accomplish joint complaining (see Ch. 5.1 for more on the use of second assessments in joint complaining). In the following section, I relate these observations to the development of L2 IC.

4.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I have sought to uncover systematic ways in which L2 speakers of French organize complaints about non-present third parties or state of affairs, and how this organization changes over time. While I have not been able to address any subtle differences in practices between individual participants, overall developmental patterns emerge when comparing practices of, on the one hand, elementary level speakers, and on the other hand, upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers. The analysis has revealed that the overall structural composition of complaints (i.e., the basic building blocks) remains largely the same over time. In contrast, notable differences occur in terms of speakers' methods for moving into complaints and in the degree of co-construction of complaint sequences.

In Chapter 4.1, I identified a 'sequence candidate' structure (cf. Jefferson, 1988) of complaint activities that consists of a number of recurrent action components. Complaint sequences minimally include a subtle or overt expression of a potential complainable, a detailing of the reproachable conduct or the complainable situation (often in the form of storytellings), a summary assessment, restatement, or formulation of the complaint (e.g., through a high-grade negative assessment or idiomatic expression), a recipient response that acknowledges the complaint *as* a complaint, and some kind of closing. In many cases, complaints are expanded beyond the minimal sequence structure, with additional stance expressions, tellings, etc. that further express the complaint-worthiness of the complaint so as to enhance the chances of obtaining affiliative or sympathetic responses. The identified sequence candidate resembles the structural observations made by Traverso (2009; see also Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), and seems

to reflect a shared understanding across several languages and cultures of the different interactional ‘tasks’ that go into complaining. In terms of the development of L2 IC, this observation supports the idea that L2 speakers bring certain aspects of IC with them from the L1 into the L2, such as a basic understanding of the generic organizational principles of interaction (Schegloff, 2007; see Hall, 2018; Markee, 2019; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b) – or a basic understanding of the core components of some interactional activities. This does not mean that speakers can directly transfer the L1 practices to the L2; instead they have to ‘recalibrate’ certain aspects of their general IC to fit the L2 (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015). In terms of complaint organization, such recalibration process can be seen in the way in which complaints are initiated and in the social coordination involved in co-constructing complaints.

The proportionally more varied complaint initiations and the more elaborate pre-complaint work observed at upper-intermediate/advanced level testify to a diversification over time of interactional methods for initiating complaints. Concerning the position of complaint initiations, elementary level speakers’ tendency to initiate complaints in first position and the more advanced speakers’ proportionally more diverse initiations (with more complaints initiated in response to questions and as upgrades of first assessments/stance expressions) concur with a change in the overall organization of the conversations. The elementary level conversations, especially at the beginning, typically take a ‘round robin’, one-speaker-at-the-time format (see Sert, 2019), with many longer tellings, reports etc. by one speaker with little intervention from coparticipants, whereas the upper-intermediate/advanced level interactions adopt a more conventional turn-taking format. This longitudinal change is similar to what Sert (2019) documented among EFL peer interactions. With time, the participants increasingly ask each other questions, offering opportunities for their coparticipants to initiate complaints in second position, and they volunteer more substantial interactional contributions. The initiation of complaints by upgrading other speakers’ negative stance expressions presupposes fine synchronization of one’s action with those of coparticipants, something which requires speakers to anticipate the syntactic and sequential trajectories of the ongoing talk and to produce suitable ‘seconds’ (e.g., upgraded assessments) in a well-timed manner. My observations suggest that this implicates conversational and linguistic skills that are available primarily at higher L2 proficiency levels (but see the ‘early’ example in Ex. 4.11).

The finding about an increase in second-position complaints over time may seem contradictory to some of the previous observations about the development of L2 IC. Berger and Pekarek Doehler (2018), for example, found that their focal participant at first mostly opened storytellings in second position and with time increasingly offered first-position stories. Their findings concur with the idea that it is easier for speakers to initiate tellings in second position since openings in second position requires less prefatory work than first-position tellings – for instance to secure the floor for a longer turn and to establish topical relevancy. The discrepancy between their findings and mine, I suggest, may have to do with the different participant frameworks. Berger and Pekarek Doehler investigated interactions between an L2-speaking au pair and the L1-speaking host family parents; a setting with more asymmetrical participant relationships both in terms of linguistic resources and institutional roles (but less so with time, see Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019). The focal participant’s increasingly more frequent first-position stories may be due not only to her developing interactional abilities, but also to her

growing agency within the family. In my data, a similar concurrent change occurs, but considering the different participant framework (with L2 peers), the result is the opposite. As mentioned in Chapter 3.3, most of the focal participants in my study (particularly Aurelia and Malia) were energetic interactants who already as elementary level speakers took active responsibility for advancing the conversations in their respective groups – and this can be seen for instance in volunteered status updates leading to complaints among these speakers. With time and at higher proficiency levels, other participants took similar active responsibility for maintaining progressivity of talk, in part leading to more frequent second-position complaints (by building upon other speakers' stance expressions and asking each other questions).

In terms of practices for initiating complaints, the longitudinal analysis shows a diversification over time in speakers' methods for moving into complaining. While both elementary level and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers sometimes launch complaints in straightforward, unmitigated ways, more advanced speakers deploy a more varied set of practices than elementary level speakers to initiate complaints in ways that index the contingent and delicate nature of the activity. More frequently than elementary level speakers, they prepare the grounds for their complaints by doing interactional work to build their credibility as complainants and account for the complaint-worthiness of the situation before explicitly formulating the complaint. The result is a more subtle, stepwise entry into complaining (Ruusuvaori et al., 2019), which displays a high level of sensitivity to the interactional context.

This longitudinal development pertains both to a change in sequence organization and to a diversification in the participants' use of linguistic resources. While the complaint initiations of elementary level speakers sometimes include some kind of brief prefacing and delay before the production of verbal negative stance expressions (such as the contrastive 'praise-but' formulations), the initiations of more advanced speakers regularly include longer pre-sequences in which the speaker only hints at the complainable situation. To accomplish such pre-complaint work, upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers deploy a range of linguistic resources for projection, such as conditional clauses, specific multi-word expressions, impersonal verbal constructions, and left-dislocations (as well as 'first verb' constructions and pseudo-clefts, see Skogmyr Marian, forthcoming), that allow them to secure a longer turn and provide elaborate framing information before overtly launching the complaint. The findings concur with prior work on L2 speakers' ability to accomplish delicate and dispreferred actions, such as disagreements (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger's, 2011) and requests (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; 2013; Roever & Al-Gahtani, 2015; Youn, 2015), which has shown that L2 speakers over time diversify their interactional methods for accomplishing these actions with an orientation to the delicate or dispreferred nature of the action and in ways that are better adapted to the interactional context and the recipient.

Another observed difference between elementary and upper-intermediate level speakers pertains to the way in which complaints are responded to by coparticipants, affecting the degree of co-construction of complaint sequences. The fact that most complaints eventually lead to some exchanges of affiliation and/or sympathy shows that speakers at all proficiency levels can successfully participate in complaining to some extent. But considering the interpersonal dimensions of indirect complaining and specifically of joint complaining (see Ch. 2.2), speakers' ability to exchange overt displays of affiliation and engage in joint complaints may

have important interpersonal consequences (cf. Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c, Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981; see also Berger & Fasel Lauzon, 2016, on the social-relational potentials of reciprocal emotion displays). My findings suggest that the successful co-construction of complaints relates both to speakers' ability to introduce and format complaints in recognizable and context-sensitive manners, and to their capacity to respond affiliatively in ways that promote sequence expansion.

The observations about upper-intermediate/advanced speakers' ability to build up their complaints progressively may in part explain why certain complaints recruit affiliative responses more efficaciously than other. But as indicated by Boxer's (1993a; 1993c) findings and mine alike, it seems that L2 speakers at lower proficiency levels have difficulties responding to complaint-initiations in ways that favor the joint development of complaints. The higher level of co-construction of complaint sequences and the more frequent joint complaints among more advanced speakers testify to these speakers' growing ability for social coordination; that is, to build upon and synchronize their actions with others. Participants who wish to contribute to a sequence with more than minimal response tokens need to anticipate the syntactic and sequential trajectories of the ongoing talk and be able to instantaneously build on these in the formulation of the response. This, of course, necessitates particular linguistic skills in the L2, such as knowledge of syntactical structures and a mastery of certain vocabulary. The joint weather complaint in Ex. 4.11 showed some ways in which elementary level speakers may contribute more actively to the sequential development despite limited linguistic means, such as through modified repeats (Stivers, 2005; for L2 speakers' use of repetition to participate in multi-party interactions, see Berger, 2016; Pallotti, 2001). The more advanced speakers' larger set of linguistic resources and their enhanced ability to produce timely second assessments (see also Ch. 5.1) thus seem to afford more possibilities to participate in joint complaining.

The findings about co-construction of complaints resonate with observations about L2 speakers' increasing capacity to accomplish humor in interaction (Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017), another conversational activity that relies on speakers' ability to finely synchronize their actions on a syntactic and sequential level. They also relate to research on L2 speakers' growing practices for providing relevant recipient responses (Dings, 2014; Ishida, 2011; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Sert, 2019; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019), which shows that L2 speakers over time tend to diversify and more finely synchronize response tokens and more elaborate contributions such as collaborative turn-completions. More generally, the findings about increased co-construction of complaints highlight the fundamentally co-constructed and socially distributed nature of L2 IC (Greer, 2019; Kasper & Wagner, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b), whereby specifically the longitudinal development of interactional organization constitutes a joint accomplishment.

5. Interactional resources for complaining

This chapter examines interactional resources speakers deploy for constructing complaint-worthiness and participating in complaint sequences, and documents change over time in the use of these resources. As presented in detail in Chapter 2.2.4, complainants draw on various multisemiotic resources, practices, and actions to display negative stance and show that their complaints are worth complaining about (see also Günthner, 1997; Rääbis et al., 2019; Selting, 2012, for overviews). I refer to these as *interactional resources for complaining* in a general sense. The chapter zooms in on two central resources, namely (1) negative assessments and non-verbal expressions of negative stance (Ch. 5.1), and (2) direct-reported speech and reenactments (Ch. 5.2). The focus on these interactional phenomena offers an opportunity to document changes in L2 speakers' use of precise linguistic and embodied resources over time. I conclude with a discussion of the findings in terms of the development of L2 IC (Ch. 5.3).

5.1 Negative assessments and non-verbal expressions of negative stance

Negative assessments¹⁰ and other expressions of negative stance are central for complaining. Speakers deploy these resources to show the complaint-worthiness of the complainable, to pursue complaints after insufficient displays of affiliation from coparticipants, to display affiliation and sympathy with the complainant, and to join other speakers' complaints (see Ch. 2.2.4). In this section, I compare the elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level focal participants' use of negative assessments and non-verbal expressions of negative stance. I show a longitudinal difference in these speakers' lexico-syntactic practices for proffering negative assessments:

- At *elementary level (A1-A2)*, speakers deploy a limited repertoire of linguistic formats for accomplishing high-grade first assessments and for upgrading first assessments. This concerns both the variety of assessment adjectives and assessment intensifiers and, to some extent, the grammatical format of assessment turns. These speakers also exhibit high reliance on non-linguistic resources for displaying negative stance, with standalone non-lexical vocalizations serving as an important resource for negatively assessing.
- At *upper-intermediate/advanced level (B2-C1)*, speakers deploy a wider range of linguistic resources for assessing than at elementary level, observable in more diverse lexical and syntactical formats for proffering high-grade first assessments and upgraded second assessments. While these speakers also deploy non-verbal resources for assessing, they rely less on standalone non-lexical vocalizations and other non-verbal means to perform the same kind of evaluative work that elementary level speakers do with these resources.

¹⁰ In this chapter, I use the term 'negative assessment' to refer to distinct turns used by speakers to express a clearly negative stance toward a person, object, or state of affairs (see Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992).

The difference over time has interactional consequences for speakers' participation in complaint sequences, particularly in the context of joint complaining.

5.1.1 Elementary level

As shown in Chapter 4, both first and second assessments (Pomerantz, 1984) occur abundantly in complaints, and are used by both complainants and recipients. I now show typical first and second assessments produced by elementary level speakers and demonstrate these speakers' high reliance on non-linguistic resources for displaying negative stance.

First assessments

Already from the beginning of their participation in the recordings, elementary level speakers normally produce assessments that are linguistically marked as negative assessments. An exception to this is the least proficient speaker, Suresh, who in the few complaint sequences in which he participates sometimes produces assertions that are linguistically formatted as neutral, but which are treated by his coparticipants as negative assessments (see specifically Ex. 6.2). Assessment turns hence need not be linguistically formatted with negatively valenced components to be understood as expressions of negative stance. Most assessment turns at elementary level are however linguistically marked as carrying negative valence. A distinctive characteristic of the elementary level assessments is the recurrent use of specific linguistic formats, particularly the precise assessment *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult').

Excerpt 5.1 illustrates three occurrences of *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult') in the same sequence, deployed by both the complainant (Mariana) and one of the coparticipants (Malia). It also demonstrates the highly multimodal nature of many assessment turns, whereby speakers assemble verbal and embodied resources to form 'multimodal packages' (see Ch. 2.1) for negatively assessing. Before the start of the excerpt, Malia told the coparticipants about her ongoing process of learning French. In line 2, Mariana offers a negative assessment of her own situation, and she will initiate a complaint about her difficulties with French pronunciation.

Ex. 5.1, Mer1_2016-10-19_00:52_pratiquer prononciation

```
01  THE: [°oui°.]
      yes
02  MAR: [pour ] moi $(.) c'est $%#(0.9)$% très difficile.
      for me it's very difficult
mar $points-self$two horiz RH beats, lets RH fall$
mar %small headshakes, leans head fw%
fig #1
```



fig.1

- 03 MAR: .hhh a:: (1.5) je voulais mm (0.7) euh proposer?
I wanted to propose
- 04 MAR: [ʃhhhʃ]
- 05 MAL: [>mm-hm-][hm<,]
- 06 THE: [o]kay,
- 07 MAR: .hh a::hm (0.6) parce que (0.3) .hhh eu::h (.) tu: sa::
because you (know)
- 08 (.) l:a dernière (0.3) semai:ne;
the last week
- 09 MAL: la semaine dernière,
last week
- 10 MAR: la: semaine (.) >der<nière,
last week
- 11 MAR: [.hh]
- 12 MAL: [mm-]hm,
- 13 MAR: eh j'ai: (0.5) mt le: professeur (0.6) [(said)] (0.7)&
I've the professor (said)
- 14 MAL: [mm-hm,]
- 15 MAR: &de:: je [(dé:)] pratiquer (.) /3/::[::]]
(of) I (had to) practice
- 16 MAL: [/3/::] [/3/::]:,
- 17 §(0.7)§
 mar §raises RH, shakes head slightly§
- 18 MAR: §PH[FFf]#fhhh°huhh°§
 mar §large horiz gest w RH, shakes head§
 fig #2
- 19 MAL: [oui,]
yes



fig.2

- 20 (0.3)
- 21 THE: §ʃhehhhhʃ§
 mar §horiz gest w RH§
- 22 MAL: [c'est très difficile] [pour][toi.]
it's very difficult for you
- 23 MAR: [c'est §trè::s] [d i:][f f i]cilef,
it's very difficult
 mar §lets RH fall on table
- 24 THE: [oui,]
yes

25 MAL: *ƒouais okayƒ,=*
yeah okay

Mariana's turn-initiation *pour moi* ('for me', line 2) and her subsequent pointing at herself frames the upcoming talk as pertaining to her own situation. After the first part of the assessment turn, *c'est* ('it's'), she does two horizontal beats with her right hand before letting the hand fall on the table, while shaking her head slightly and leaning forward (fig.1). The embodied conduct foreshadows the upcoming negative assessment (*très difficile*, 'very difficult'). Following this, Mariana reports that she has a proposal to make (line 3), and she initiates a telling about her professor's instruction that she needs to practice the phoneme /ʒ/ (lines 7-10, 13, 15). Through a loud and stretched *pf*-sound (see Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016) and a repeated, enlarged version of the same embodied conduct as before (larger horizontal hand gestures, larger headshakes, fig.2), Mariana again expresses her negative stance and affect. This embodied conduct too precedes a negative assessment turn, and Malia's affiliative assessment *c'est très difficile pour toi* ('it's very difficult for you', line 22) testifies to her anticipation of this. Mariana's assessment comes in overlap, and while it lexically repeats her prior assessment, this time she produces it with elongated vowel sounds (line 23) that upgrade the strength of the negative valence and show heightened affective involvement (Ogden, 2006; Selting, 2010a; 2012). Thus, in this excerpt the assessment turn *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult') is used three times by two different speakers, to convey the speaker's own difficulties and to express affiliation with a coparticipant. The accompanying embodied conduct is reproduced (by the complainant) in both cases, just prior to the verbal assessment (segment). This conduct thus foreshadows the upcoming negative assessment (cf. Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009) and shows Mariana's orientation to the verbal and embodied elements as belonging to the same multimodal package. Prosody and more amplified embodied conduct furthermore work as resources to upgrade a lexical repeat of a first negative assessment.

The recurrence of the negative assessment *c'est (très) difficile* ('it's (very) difficult'; sometimes *très* is absent) among elementary level speakers can in part be explained by the fact that these participants frequently talk about the challenges of learning French and of being newcomers in Switzerland and at their workplaces; topics that warrant talk about *difficulties*. Furthermore, research on assessments by L1 speakers of English (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992) and of French (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2015) has shown that assessment turns very often take the format [neutral third person singular pronoun/pronoun clitic] + [copula] (+ [adverbial intensifier]) + [assessment term], such as *it's very good* in English or *c'est très bien* ('it's very good') in French. The high frequency of the precise lexico-syntactic string *c'est (très) difficile* at elementary level is nonetheless noteworthy: 21 (or 26%) of the 81 assessment turns are initiated with *c'est* ('it is') and contain the assessment adjective *difficile* ('difficult'), most commonly with the intensifying adverb *très* ('very') preceding the adjective. A more in-depth look at the elementary level speakers' use of the intensifier *très* reveals that this intensifying adverb is used in 39 (or 89%) of 44 tokens of intensifiers. The two other intensifiers used at this level are *trop* ('too much') and *plus* ('more'). Moreover, the lexico-syntactic format *c'est très* ('it's very') + [assessment adjective] is heavily recurrent; appearing in 28 or 35% of all 81 assessment turns (although primarily in the assessments of Suresh, Mariana, and Malia, in which the format appears in 46-51% of all negative assessments). It seems that with these

speakers, the particular assessment segment *difficile* ('difficult'), the intensifier *très* ('very'), and the precise lexico-syntactic format *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult') serve as *partout* assessments for expressing negative stance at this particular moment in their L2 developmental trajectory (cf. Nguyen, 2019, on an L2 speaker's use of *beautiful* as *partout* positive assessment adjective).

Excerpts 5.2 and 5.3, which come from two complaints about the same past event, provide two more examples of elementary level speakers' use of *c'est très* ('it's very') plus assessment term to offer high-grade negative assessments. In Ex. 5.2, Malia tells about her first day at work. In the initiation of her telling, after having introduced the story setting (lines 1-18; see Ex. 6.7), she assesses her experience as *un peu horrible* ('a bit horrible', lines 19, 21), and she starts complaining that she thought that she would be able to speak English during her first year, but that everybody spoke French to her (omitted lines) and that her professor also asked her colleagues to only speak with her in French (lines 41-42). Our main interest is in the high-grade assessments offered in lines 53, 55 and 57, produced by Malia in face of too early bright-side responses (Holt, 1993) from the coparticipants.

Ex. 5.2, Mer1_2016-11-02_01:58_commencé travail_a

((18 lines omitted: MAL introduces setting))

19 MAL: .mt (0.7) e::h (0.8) [e:t c'était:t] (0.4) &
and it was

20 THE: [à la faculté de:]
at the faculty of

21 MAL: &un peu horrible parce que
a bit horrible because

((19 lines omitted: MAL reports on her first day at work))

41 MAL: <seulement> parlez avec malia,
only speak with Malia

42 (0.3) français.
French

43 (0.4)

44 ZAR: .mth fhehuhuh * .hHHhhf
mal *lets RH fall on table*

45 *Ω(1.0) #
mal *lowers head in LH-->
mal Ωgazes down-->
fig #1



fig.1

46 MAL: [o::]:h,
 47 THE: [°no:n°.]
 no
 48 (0.7)
 49 MAL: [°a::h°.]
 50 ZAR: [mais c'est-] (.)Ωmais c'est bien pour toi.Ω*
 but it's- but it's good for you
 mal -->Ωturns and gazes at ZAR---Ω
 mal -->*
 51 MAL: apffΩfhhΩ °°ouais°°.
 yeah
 mal Ωrolls eyesΩ
 52 ZAR: [tu tu (émé)[liore:r)] [ton fr-]
 you you (improve) your Fr-
 53 MAL: [Qui: mai:s c'est-]
 yes but it's-
 Ωgazes at ZAR-->
 54 THE: [ce serait]
 it would be
 55 MAL: Ω[trè:s *stre]#ssant.Ω*
 very stressful
 mal -->Ωgazes at THE, eyebrow flashΩ
 mal *shakes RH fing up*
 fig #2
 56 Ω(0.4)
 mal Ωgazes at ZAR, eyebrow flash-->
 57 MAL: très *#stressant.Ω*
 very stressful
 mal -->Ω
 mal *shakes RH fing up*
 fig #3

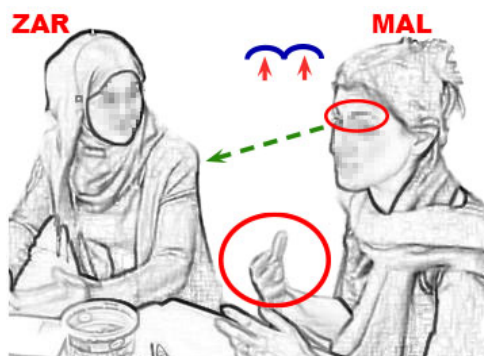


fig.2

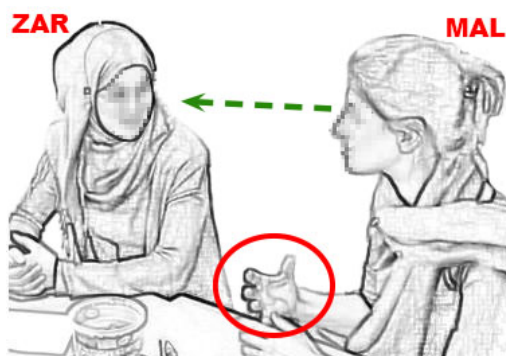


fig.3

58 MAL: .HHHHH et eh je- [eh je devais parler avec] (0.2)
 and I- I had to speak with
 59 THE: [\$.hhh hhhh-°hhh°\$]
 the \$small nods-----\$
 60 MAL: tou:s en français et Pffhhh (1.0) ((continues))
 everyone in French and

In response to her complaint telling, Malia does not receive the expected, sympathetic responses from the coparticipants. Zarah first starts laughing (line 44), treating Malia's reported speech (until line 42) as the climax of a funny story, and this leads Malia to vocally and embodiedly display her negative stance and affect (lines 44-45, fig.1). Theo seems to object to Malia's high-grade embodied display with his quiet *no:n* ('no', line 47), whereas Zarah suggests that the situation in fact is good for Malia (line 50). Through another non-lexical vocalization, a quiet *ouais* ('yeah') and by rolling her eyes (line 51), Malia displays her reluctance to accept Zarah's suggestion (Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Pudlinsky, 2002). As Zarah initiates an account for her own position (line 52), Malia further objects to Zarah's bright-side response, by producing a high-grade negative assessment (preceded by the alignment token *oui*, 'yes'): *c'est- trè:s stressant* ('it's very stressful', lines 53, 55). Elongating the vowel of the intensifier and stressing it while also shaking her right hand with her fingers pointing upward and flashing her eyebrows toward Theo (fig.2), Malia further upgrades the assessment (see Ogden, 2006, on prosodic upgrading). Shifting her gaze back to Zarah (line 56) and flashing her eyebrows toward her, she repeats the assessment segment again stressing the first part of *très* and redoing her hand gesture (fig.3). She then expands with a report on her obligation to speak French (line 58), and she pursues her complaint until the coparticipants display sufficient recognition of the claimed difficulty.

In this excerpt, Malia thus produces a high-grade negative assessment in response to her coparticipants' bright-side responses to her complaint story, and she repeats this assessment directed to each of her coparticipants. The high-grade nature of the assessment is accomplished through what works as a *pas-partout* adverbial intensifier among these speakers, *très* ('very'), prosodic stress, and accompanying embodied conduct. Similar to in Ex. 5.1 above, the embodied conduct (here eyebrow flash and a hand gesture) is reproduced in the repeat of the assessment, making up a multimodal package for assessments.

Interestingly, in Ex. 5.3, which takes place a little later in the same conversation, we see how Malia, in retelling the same story for a newly arrived coparticipant – Mariana – introduces the telling with an upgraded version of the same first assessment as in Ex. 5.2 (lines 19, 21). Here the extreme-case nature of the assessment works to prevent receiving unsympathetic responses (Pomerantz, 1986) from Malia's new story recipient.

Ex. 5.3, Mer1_2016-11-02_33:18_commencé travail_b

- 01 MAR: tu as commencé: [fle: doctora:t£?]
 you have starte:d the: doctorate
- 02 MAL: [£>oui-oui-oui-oui-oui-oui] oui-oui<£.
 yes-yes-yes-yes-yes-yes yes-yes
- ((7 lines omitted: MAL says that she has already told about it))
- 10 THE: [£°hhh°£]
- 11 MAL: [£hhh][HHi hhihihi hh£]
- 12 MAR: [£hhe yeah£.]

assessment and complaint activity (for participation in assessment activities, see Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Pomerantz, 1984).

The number of upgraded assessments in the elementary level speaker complaints is low, and such assessments typically take the form of an exact or modified repeat (Stivers, 2005) of the first assessment. Quite often, speakers use prosody or other non-linguistic means (such as non-lexical vocalizations) to produce an upgraded version of the first assessment (Ogden, 2006) or to underline the epistemic independence of the second assessment (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). At elementary level, speakers thus use linguistic means for upgrading first assessments only to a very limited extent, and instead they resort to prosody and other extra-linguistic resources (including embodied conduct). Excerpts 5.4. and 5.5 illustrate these observations.

Excerpt 5.4 reproduces the joint weather complaint presented in Ex. 4.11. As mentioned in Chapter 4.3, joint complaints are rare among elementary level speakers. Since the accomplishment of joint complaints *as* joint complaints is closely tied to the participants' coordination of stance expressions (Rääbis et al., 2019), a possible reason for the few joint complaints at elementary level is precisely the difficulty of producing sequentially relevant and timely second assessments. Here the complaint is triggered by Theo's assessment of the temperature in Launève (line 4), which leads to a series of second assessments in the form of modified repeats.

Ex.5.4, Merl_2016-12-07_07:01_brouillard

01 ZAR: *£oui il [y a def] neige maintenant aussi en suède.*
yes there is snow now also in Sweden

02 THE? *[£hhh£]*

03 *(0.4)*

04 THE: ***trè:s froi:d ici.***
very cold here

05 MAL: *oui oui:,*
yes yes

06 ****c'est très fro[id aujourd'hui: ohhh.*]***
it's very cold today
 mal **fumbles with jumper sleeves-----**

07 ZAR: *[£c'est parce que j'ai dit que-£]*
it's because I've said that-

08 MAR: *je==*
I-

09 ZAR: ***==£c'est pas froid£.****
it's not cold
 mal **lifts hands to mouth, then lowers them**

((21 lines omitted: ZAR disagrees with THE and MAL; MAL shows the 5 layers of clothing she uses to protect herself against the cold))

31 ZAR: *£huh .HHH[£hhh£]*

32 MAR: *[j'ai-]*
I've-

33 MAL: ***[c'est] trop froid,***
it's too cold

34 §(0.6)§
mar §nods-§

35 MAR: **pou[r moi,]**
 for me

36 MAL: [>vrai↑m]ent< [oui,]
 really *yes*

37 MAR: **[ah-] pour moi §eh je pense::: (.)**
 for me *I think*
mar §points twd window-->

38 **eh le brouillard?§**
 the fog
mar -->§

39 **§brouillard la: fog¿§**
 fog *the*
mar §round gestures w b hands§

40 (0.4)

41 MAL: AH oka[y,]
 oh okay

42 THE: [mm-]hm, =

43 MAL: =>m-hm-hm< ,

44 MAR: **§.h PFFFFf[§ffff§ c'est-]**
 it's-
mar §shakes head-->

45 MAL: **[c'est ho-] [c'est horrible.]**
 it's ho- *it's horrible*

46 MAR: **[c'est§ ho]rri[::bl]e.**
 it's *horrible*
mar -->§

47 MAL: [oui:,]
 yes

48 MAL: >oui oui oui<.
 yes yes yes

As discussed in Chapter 4.3, Theo's turn in line 4 (*très froid ici*, 'very cold here') is neutrally formatted, merely characterizing the temperature as *cold* without indexing any positive or negative valence, but it is understandable as a negative assessment. Malia offers an agreement (line 5) and the second assessment *c'est très froid aujourd'hui* ('it's very cold today') followed by the non-lexical vocalization *ohhh* (line 6). She simultaneously fumbles a bit with her jumper sleeves, as if trying to cover up her hands to protect them from the cold. Through the non-lexical vocalization and the embodied conduct, she adds an affective layer to her assessment (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; Reber, 2012) and indexes her negative stance toward the cold. The modified repeat (Stivers, 2005) allows Malia to align with Theo while also asserting her epistemic independence (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). As seen in line 9, Zarah too recycles Theo and Malia's assessments, but in producing a disagreement: *c'est pas froid* ('it's not cold'). By doing so, she format-ties her talk to both display relatedness with prior talk and express a contrasting stance (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011).

Malia pursues her argument that it is cold by pointing to her many different layers of clothing (omitted lines). She then offers an upgraded version of her (and Theo's) prior assessment: *c'est trop froid* ('it's too cold', line 33). The upgrade is done both lexically and prosodically, by replacing *très* ('very') with *trop* ('too') and through strong prosodic stress on both the intensifying adverb and the assessment adjective. Mariana agrees with Malia, by nodding (line 34) and offering another piece of evidence supporting the weather criticism, this time about the fog. The assessment of the fog as 'horrible' is done collaboratively with Malia over several turns, starting in line 35. After an overlap with Malia, who insists on the veracity of her high-grade assessment of the cold (line 36), Mariana restarts to introduce her opinion (line 37) and the assessable, the fog (lines 38-39). Following confirmations of understanding from the coparticipants (lines 41-43), Mariana produces a loud *PFFFFffff*-sound and headshakes showing her affective involvement and negative stance toward the fog (line 44). Malia, in overlap, initiates an assessment with *c'est ho- c'est horrible* ('it's ho- it's horrible', line 45). Mariana's *c'est horri::ble* (line 46) is delivered in overlap with Malia's assessment but each element is slightly delayed. By elongating the last vowel sound, the main part of the assessment segment is produced in the clear and heard as a slightly upgraded version of Malia's already high-grade assessment. Offering further agreement tokens (lines 47-48), Malia confirms the participants' alignment on the issue.

In sum, this excerpt exemplifies ways in which elementary level speakers accomplish both aligning and disaligning second assessments, namely through modified repeats – built through the addition or replacement of precise lexical elements (adverbials, negation markers) – and through prosody. While other-repeats have been observed as an important resource for low-level L2 speakers to participate in multi-party interactions (Berger, 2016; Pallotti, 2001), modified repeats specifically allow the participants to draw on the linguistic material of the first assessments while simultaneously showing epistemic independence; something which constitutes a key concern of interactants (Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Stivers, 2005).

Excerpt 5.5 shows the use of a modified repeat of a first assessment to accomplish another recurrent action in complaints, namely, to receipt a coparticipant's display of sympathy (Holt, 2000). The excerpt includes the end of Ex. 4.1, in which Malia complained about having so much work to do during the weekend that she had no time for anything else.

Ex. 5.5, Mer1_2016-12-07_14:00_week-end passé

- 49 ZAR: =£hh-h-h-[°hahahah°£]
- 50 MAL: [°£c'est horrib(h)l(h)e£°]
 it's horrible
- 51 MAL: [((laughs: 2.5s))]
- 52 ZAR: [((laughs: 2.5s))]
- 53 (0.7)
- 54 MAL: £.HH[HHH£]
- 55 THE: [°(c'est)] *fatigué°*,
 (it's) tired
- 56 MAL: °>oui oui c'est c'est< *très fatigant°*.
 yes yes it's it's very tiring

57 (0.3)
 58 MAL: .MFT
 59 (1.6)
 60 MAL: +mais c'est ça.+ ((sighing voice))
 but that's that

After Malia's summary assessment (line 50) and some laughter (lines 51-52), Theo offers the assessment *c'est fatigué* ('it's tired', line 55) in low volume, showing his sympathy with Malia's situation. Malia receipts this by repeating his assessment, also in low volume, albeit in a slightly modified form: °>oui oui c'est c'est< très fatigant° ('yes yes it's it's very tiring', line 56). Through the alignment tokens and repeated assessment, Malia confirms Theo's understanding of the situation as tiring, but the addition of the intensifier *très* ('very') simultaneously upgrades his assessment. The second assessment emphasizes the complaint-worthiness of Malia's reported situation: The workload is not just tiring, it is 'very' tiring. The ability to mark epistemic independence through a modified repeat may be of particular importance for Malia here since the complaint concerned an issue within the epistemic domain of Malia herself.

Non-verbal displays of negative stance

Besides using verbal assessment turns, speakers also produce assessments and display their stance non-linguistically (e.g. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). While all speakers in my data to some extent deploy non-verbal (embodied, vocal) conduct to show negative stance, at elementary level standalone non-lexical vocalizations with accompanying embodied conduct are particularly common means to index negative stance or accomplish precise negative assessments (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Hoey, 2014; Wiggins, 2013). Excerpts 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4 already exemplified this, with complainants deploying sighs and other vocalizations to show complaint-worthiness and display their reluctance to accept coparticipants' bright-side responses. Excerpt 5.6 (which shows the continuation of Ex. 4.6) further illustrates the recurrence of such non-verbal conduct among elementary level speakers. Mariana initiates a telling about her difficult experience at the bank, where she had to speak French, which made her very tired (line 11). Mariana's own display of negative stance and her coparticipants' responses rely heavily on embodiment and non-lexical vocalizations.

Ex. 5.6, Mer1_2016-11-02_21:04_la banque

11 MAR: =ɛje suis très fatiguéeɛ je: (0.5) suis allée à la banque.
 I am very tired I went to the bank
 12 (0.8)
 13 MAR: mt [ɛhhɛ]
 14 THE: [o:] [:h.]
 15 MAL: [ɛehɛ] [o::] ::ps::ɛ

16 MAR: £eh [hah-ha::#:h£.]
 17 MAL: [\$£eh HEHE\$]HEhehehe£
 the \$raises & waves fists, slight smiling\$
 fig #1

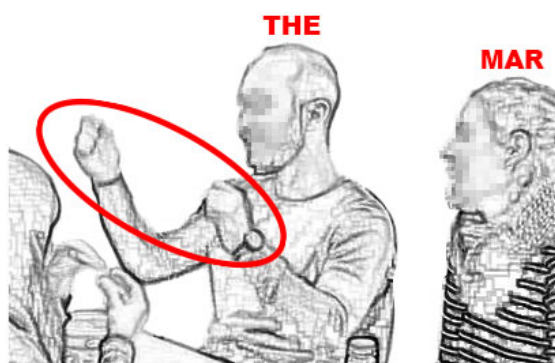


fig.1

18 (0.6)
 19 MAL: £.hhh [en fran]†çai:s£?
 in French
 20 MAR: [ma je:]
 (but) I
 21 (0.2)
 22 MAR: .hhhhh yeah ma: (0.2) mais (0.2) mais [°mais°.]
 (but) but but but
 23 MAL: [°oui°,]
 yes
 24 (0.2)
 25 THE: no:n,
 no
 26 MAL: mais,
 but
 27 (0.5)
 28 MAL: [okay.]
 29 MAR: [mai:s] †(0.5) a::h (0.5) je ne com::prends pas (0.5)
 but I don't understand
 mar †gazes down-->1.32
 30 [mt]
 31 MAL: [£hh] rien£.
 nothing
 32 MAR: £eh †[hahahahaha .hhh£]
 mar -->†
 33 MAL: [£†HEHEHEHEhehehe]hehe£
 34 MAR: a: je: de: †paye:r l:'assurance† maladie.
 (and) I (had to) pay the medical insurance
 mar †gazes at MAL-----†gazes down-->
 35 (0.5)†
 mar -->†

36 MAL: \$a[::o]#ups:.\$
 the \$lifts & lowers hands\$
 fig #2

37 MAR: [MT]



fig.2

38 (0.5)

39 MAR: ±\$a: hhh±hh\$
 mar ±gz down±
 mar \$shakes head\$

40 \$(0.3)\$
 the \$lifts & lowers shoulders\$

41 THE: m[h,]

42 MAR: \$[c']est très mal.\$
it's very bad
 mar \$smiles, shakes head\$

43 (0.6)

44 MAR: £heh-heh [huh-huh£.]

45 ZAR: [£hh-hh£]

46 (0.7)

47 ZAR: £°uh-huh .hh°£

48 ±(0.3)±
 mar ±closes eyes±

49 MAR: ±\$£hhh£ .hhh# ahh.±\$
 mar ±gazes down-----±
 mar \$leans fwd, elbows on table\$
 fig #3



fig.3

50 MAL: .hhhh e:t tu as- tu euh tu m'as dit que: (0.3) .mt (0.9)
and you've- you you've told me that
 ((MAL asks question about medical insurance))

In response to Mariana's announcement that she is very tired because she went to the bank, Theo and Malia each offer non-lexical vocalizations of evaluative nature (lines 14-15). Theo's *o::h* (line 14), produced with falling intonation, treats Mariana's announcement as news (Heritage, 1984a) while simultaneously indexing a less than enthusiastic stance, while Malia's laugh particles and the following *o:::ps::* (line 15) signal a stronger negative affective stance. These response tokens, in Goffmanian terms *response cries* (Goffman, 1981), work as assessments (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000), by which Theo and Malia show their recognition of Mariana's reported trouble and treat her announcement as newsworthy, while also showing some level of affiliation with her (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Kupetz, 2014). Mariana responds by producing a non-lexical vocalization herself, something in between a laughter and a sigh (line 16), which works like a sequence-closing third (Schegloff, 2007). In the meantime, Theo raises and waves his fists, as if figuratively embodying the 'fight' involved in going to the bank (fig.1), thereby embodiedly showing his engagement in Mariana's telling. Malia's laughter (line 17), on the other hand, orients to the humorous layer of Mariana's described situation, and her subsequent question whether Mariana's bank visit was in French (line 19) anticipates the reason for the reported trouble. In response, Mariana more explicitly expresses why the situation was difficult for her – because she did not understand (lines 22, 29), which Malia completes with the adverbial *rien* ('nothing', line 31).

Following the coparticipants' laughter (lines 32-33), Mariana expands the sequence by reporting on the reason for her bank visit, that she had to pay the medical insurance (line 34). This information too is treated by the coparticipants as the expression of something negative, to which they display their affiliation. Malia offers another non-lexical vocalization: *a::oups:* with falling intonation (line 36), while Theo lifts and lowers his both hands palm up (fig.2) as if recognizing the helplessness of the situation (Kendon, 2004, p. 275). Again, Mariana receipts these displays with her own non-lexical vocalization, a voiced sigh accompanied by lowered gaze and headshakes (line 39). Theo continues his embodied display of stance by lifting and lowering his shoulders (line 40), whereas Mariana offers a verbal negative summary assessment of her telling: *c'est très mal* ('it's very bad', line 42), as she shakes her head and smiles, thus showing her negative stance while simultaneously displaying some troubles-resistance (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984b). Following some laughter (lines 44-45, 47), Mariana closes her eyes (line 48) before gazing down and sighing again (line 49), as she leans forward and rests her elbows on the table, further embodying the difficult situation and her tiredness. At this point, Malia asks Mariana a question about Mariana's obligation to pay the medical insurance, after which Mariana resumes her complaint (line 50 and onward).

As shown in this section, elementary level speakers rely heavily on a rather limited repertoire of linguistic resources for negatively assessing in the context of complaints. The precise assessment segment *difficile* ('difficult'), the adverbial intensifier *très* ('very'), as well as the precise assessment turn *c'est très difficile* ('it's very difficult') recur frequently in these speakers' assessments. In addition, non-lexical vocalizations and embodied conduct are key resources for displaying both negative stance and affiliation among these speakers. Excerpt 5.6 exemplified this by showing the reproduction of two very similar sequences: (1) the expression of a problem/difficulty by the complainant; (2) affiliative non-verbal (embodied, vocal) negative assessments by coparticipants, and (3) a non-verbal (embodied, vocal) sequence-

closing third by the complainant. While non-verbal conduct is also present in the complaints at upper-intermediate/advanced level, more advanced speakers rely less so than elementary level speakers on standalone non-lexical vocalizations to perform the same types of actions.

5.1.2 Upper-intermediate/advanced level

This section focuses on the differences observed in the assessments of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers in comparison to elementary level speakers. The main difference is that more advanced speakers deploy a more varied repertoire of assessment formats. A total of 41 different assessment adjectives and 8 different intensifiers are used in 93 assessment turns, as opposed to 21 different assessment adjectives and 3 different intensifiers in 81 assessment turns with elementary level speakers (for type-token ratio comparison, see Ch. 5.1.3 below). The assessments of these speakers also more often take other grammatical formats than the canonical *c'est* (+intensifier) + assessment adjective, and they recurrently include phatic prefaces such as *je te jure* ('I swear/promise you'). The diversification of interactional resources to accomplish negative assessments allows speakers to rely more heavily on *linguistic* means to do high-grade first assessments and to adapt their second assessments to first assessments in fine-grained ways.

First assessments

Starting with first assessments, Ex. 5.7-12 illustrate assessment turns found in the complaints at upper-intermediate/advanced level that differ from those at elementary level in their lexical and/or grammatical format. Excerpt 5.7 shows the use of both an assessment term and an intensifier that do not occur in the complaints of elementary level speakers. Cassandra is complaining about her time as a student at a particular university institute. After producing a report about what always annoyed her when she did her bachelor's studies (lines 2-18), she offers a high-grade assessment of her experience (line 19).

Ex. 5.7, Mer2_2017-06-21_15:24_méthodiques_a

```
01  CAS: pour moi en plus:,
      for me in addition

02      moi quand j'étais en bachelor,
      me when I was in the bachelor

03      ça- >c'est ça qui m'énervait<,
      it- that's what annoyed me

04      >qui m'a toujours énervé<,
      that always annoyed me

((14 lines omitted: CAS tells about her bachelor's studies))

19  CAS: .hhh (0.7) Ωet c'est- tellement <inflexible>,
      and it's really inflexible
      cas      Ωgazes at XIA-->
      cas
      xia      *vertic tap w RH in table*
      fig      $lifts cup-->
              #1
```



fig.1

- 20 (0.2) §±(0.4)§
 xia -->§lowers cup§
 xia ±gazes at CAS-->>
- 21 CAS: **tellement**Ω ***<inflexi#>ble**.=*
 really *inflexible*
 cas -->Ω
 cas *lifts & lowers vertic RH, bends fw*
 fig #2



fig.2

- 22 CAS: =>↑moi ↑si ↑je vais-< (.) pas au cours de::-
 me if I don't go to the course of-
- 23 en psycho ou en socio,
 in psycho(logy) or socio(logy)

The assessment (line 19) takes a canonical format (*c'est*, 'it's' + *intensifier* + *assessment term*). It is produced as a high-grade assessment, with the intensifier *tellement* ('really') preceding the slowly delivered and prosodically stressed *<inflexible>* ('inflexible'). Cassandra gazes at Xiang during the production of the assessment, and while uttering the adjective, she leans forward slightly and taps her right hand, which she holds vertically but with her thumb and index finger together, on the table (fig.1), so as to upgrade and animate the assessment. Toward the end of the assessment, Xiang lifts and looks into her cup (line 19), refraining from responding. Cassandra then repeats the assessment segment (line 21), again prosodically stressing the adjective, and also repeats her embodied conduct in a more marked way, by leaning forward more distinctly and redoing the hand gesture at slower pace (fig.2). As Xiang still does not answer, but merely shows her attentiveness by maintaining her gaze at Cassandra (line 20), Cassandra pursues the complaint by expanding on her account (line 24 and onward).

In this excerpt, Cassandra thus repeats a first assessment by recycling the verbal, prosodic, and embodied aspects of the assessment segment while slightly augmenting the prominence of the embodied conduct, similar to what we have seen with elementary level speakers (Ex. 5.1). The

assessment is composed of the intensifier *tellement* ('really') and the assessment adjective *inflexible* ('inflexible'), which do not occur in the assessments at elementary level. The excerpt provides just one example of how the linguistic resources deployed for negative assessments diversify over time. Similarly to what we saw in Ex. 5.2 and 5.3 above, the repeated assessment segment constitutes a multimodal package comprising both verbal and embodied components.

Another intensifier that occurs only in the negative assessments of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers is *vraiment* ('really'). Excerpt 5.8 shows the beginning of a complaint by Malia about the difficulty of French verbal constructions (see Ex. 4.7). To initiate the complaint, she produces a contrastive formulation with a high-grade negative assessment prefaced by a high-grade positive assessment. As discussed in Chapter 4.2, the alternation between two different adverbial intensifiers serves distinct practical purposes in the interaction.

Ex. 5.8, Mer1_2017-10-25_46:59_constructions verbales

- 05 JAV: des [construc]tions verba:les [(multiples)&
of verbal constructions (multiple)
- 06 JOR: [da:ns-] [ah ouai:s,]
in- oh yeah
- 07 JAV: &c'est la [ɛpar°t(h)ie°ɛ]
it's the part
- 08 MAL: [mais c'est-] c'est c:'est (.)
but it's- it's it's
- 09 très [trè:]:[:s&]
very very
- 10 JOR: [aider,] [mais je] pense qu'il-
to help but I think that there-
- 11 [il y a les deux en] [fait.]
there are both in fact
- 12 MAL: [&*effica:ce* mais] [*c'est] [°(x-)]
efficient but it's (x-)
mal *lifts, opens RH* *lifts bottle w LH, to RH-->
- 13 JAV: [oui] [c'est] >oui oui oui<,
yes it's yes yes yes
- 14 MAL: =c'est [*vrai#ment* ↑dU:r,]
it's really tough
mal -->*large gest unscrewing cap*
fig #1
- 15 JOR: [°(aider quelqu'un)°]
(to help someone)

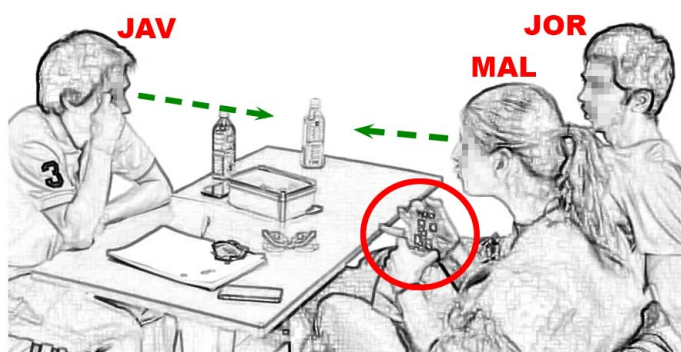


fig.1

- 16 JAV: mais *oui mais pour apprendre fç(h)a c(h)'estf
 but yes but to learn that it's
 mal *slams bottle hard on table*
- 17 [ɛpas v(h)][raiɛ,]
 not true
- 18 MAL: [ɛhhhɛ]

Malia's assessment is produced in overlap with both Javier and Jordan's talk (lines 7, 10-11), and the restart and multiple repetitions at the beginning of her turn (line 8) work to gain the coparticipants' attention (see Ch. 4.2). The repeated, elongated *trè:::s* ('very', line 9) simultaneously upgrades the strength of the upcoming assessment segment and attends to the overlapping talk. At the production of the first, positive, assessment segment *effica:ce* ('efficient', line 12), Malia lifts and opens her right hand toward Javier, so as to gain his attention (Streeck, 2009) and add further emphasis to the assessment segment. She then, as she launches a contrastive comparison (initiated with *mais*, 'but', line 12), lifts the bottle she has in front of her. Precisely timed with the delivery of the adverbial intensifier *vraiment* ('really', line 10), she imitates, in an expressive way, the act of unscrewing the cap of the bottle (fig.1). She then offers the negatively valenced assessment segment $\uparrow dU:r$ ('tough', line 14), delivered in high pitch with prosodic stress and partly raised volume. As Javier begins an expression of alignment with Malia (line 16-17), she slams the bottle hard on the table, further showing her negative affective stance (Selting, 2010a; 2012). Malia thus deploys two different intensifying adverbs (*très* and *vraiment*) to produce two high-grade assessments of opposite valence. The alternation between the different intensifiers – together with the excessive embodied conduct during the production of the second assessment segment – highlight the contrast between the positive and negative so as to underline the difference between the two.

Besides including a lexically more diverse set of assessment adjectives and adverbial intensifiers, the first assessments of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers sometimes take comparative or superlative adjective forms that present the assessment as an *upgraded* or extreme-case assessment despite its sequential location as a first assessment. While these turns do not immediately follow an assessment turn, they are typically produced after a first complaint story or report or another action expressing negative stance.

Excerpt 5.9 is from the extended sequence in which Aurelia complains about Swiss society and the mentality and behavior of people in Switzerland (Ex. 1.2). She has just told about the incident in which a man stopped his car to reproach Aurelia and her friends for standing in the road. In lines 1-2, she produces what works both as a reported answer to the man and as a display of Aurelia's stance toward the event (that it was not so bad). Mia receipts Aurelia's telling with the change-of-state token *a::h* and a *oui* ('oh yes', line 3) in low volume, by which she aligns with Aurelia without displaying any strong signs of affiliation. Aurelia then expands the sequence to seek a more affiliative response (line 6).

Ex. 5.9, Lun_2018-02-26_23:55_mieux dedans_b

01 AUR: mais en fait non mais c'est juste (.) comme (0.2)
but in fact nō but it's just like

02 calme-toi::: c'est pas- c'est pas grave quoi:[:,]
calm down it's not- it's not so bad PRT

03 MIA: [°a]::h [oui°.]
oh yes

04 AUR: [pfffh]

05 (0.5)

06 AUR: et t- tous les jours j'ai- >j'ai un problème comme ça<,
and e- every day I have- I have a problem like that

07 **.h mais c'est pire maintenant parce que:** je sui:::s (0.8)
but it's worse now because I am

08 e:h revenue de:: buenos aires et c'est juste trop de: de
back from Buenos Aires and it's just too many

09 (0.2) d'changements,=
changes

10 MIA: =mm-hm,

By claiming that the just reported problem happens all the time (line 6), Aurelia generalizes her complaint as being part of a larger issue so as to legitimize it (Drew, 1998; Mandelbaum, 1991). She then upgrades this generalization by producing a high-grade negative assessment about her *current* situation: *c'est pire maintenant* ('it's worse now', line 7) and by initiating an account (lines 7-9, continuation not shown). The assessment is done with the comparative form of the adjective *mauvais* ('bad'), namely *pire* ('worse'). With this assessment, Aurelia hence upgrades the severity of the described situation to add further support to her overall complaint and pursue displays of affiliation from her coparticipant (which she eventually gets).

Excerpt 5.10 demonstrates the use of an assessment adjective in superlative form to introduce a my-side story that supports a joint complaint. The excerpt comes from the same complaint as shown in Ex. 5.7 above. Xiang produces an embodiedly completed summary assessment of her criticism toward the teaching methods of the institute that the participants are complaining about (lines 1-3, see embodied completion in fig.1). After receipting Xiang's summary assessment with laughter (line 4), Cassandra agrees with Xiang (line 6) and initiates a my-side story in support of the overall complaint.

Ex. 5.10, Mer2_2017-06-21_15:24_méthodiques_b

01 XIA: ça c'est le méthodique ça- ça me semblai:t ±(0.2)
that it's the method it- it seemed to me
 xia ±gz into void-->

02 CAS: fouai§:s£,#
yeah
 xia §lfts RH in grappolo gesture-->
 fig #1



fig.1

- 03 XIA: [°excu°sezi\$-moi,]
excuse me
 xia -->±
 xia -->\$
- 04 CAS: [fɛh heh-heh-]hehehhɛ,
 05 XIA: [.hHH Hhh]
- 06 CAS: [Ωɛ.HH non mais-ɛ] je suis d'accord il y avait des choses que
no but- I agree there were things that
 cas Ωgazes down-->
- 07 j'ai trouvées (1.0) a- pour moi: (1.1) (alors et-)Ω
I found to me (well and-)
 cas -->Ω
- 08 Je te jure l'examen le plus difficile de- de ma
I swear the most difficult exam of- of my
 cas Ωgazes at XIA-->
- 09 *vie#:,*
life
 cas *horiz stroke with RH over table*
 fig #2

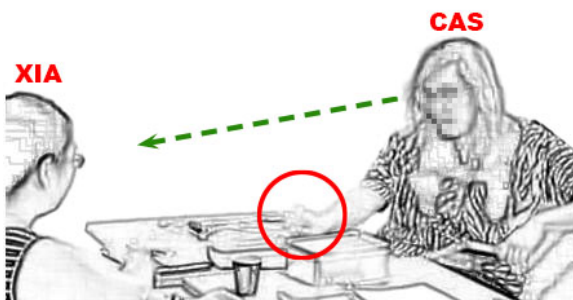


fig.2

- 10 §(0.6)Ω c'és*tai:t* (.)
it was
 xia §small nods§
 cas -->Ω
 cas *taps finger twice in table*
- 11 XIA: oui mais [à la fin c'est-]
yes but in the end it's-
- 12 CAS: [l'examen (de)] l' [A B C D,]
the exam (of) ((INSTITUTE))
- 13 XIA: [il est pas] conseillé:
it's not recommended

- 14 [si:] si haut niveau comme (ils- ils soient être).
so so high level as (they- they should be)
- 15 CAS: [°.heh°]
- 16 CAS: °>ouais<°,
yeah
- 17 CAS: .hh o- par exemple,
o- for example

After aborting an assessment responding to Xiang’s assessment (lines 6-7), Cassandra restarts the syntactic trajectory of her turn and initiates what will become a my-side complaint story. With *pour moi*: (‘to me’, line 7), she signals that the upcoming talk will be a report of her own experiences. She then prefaces her turn with *je te jure* (‘I swear’, line 8) before introducing the topic of the upcoming complaint story: *l’examen le plus difficile de- de ma vie*: (‘the most difficult exam of- of my life’, lines 8-9), which took place at the institute (lines 10, 12). The superlative negative assessment is thus produced as the left-peripheral constituent of a left-dislocated turn. The superlative form *le plus difficile de ma vie* characterizes the upcoming talk as being not just about a difficulty, but about an unreasonable, complaint-worthy situation, and the left-dislocation allows Cassandra to give this assessment prominence in the turn (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2015). In addition, the preface *je te jure* (‘I swear’, line 8) works as an intensifier that shows Cassandra’s commitment to the incipient assessment and projects something noteworthy coming up. Xiang’s early response initiation (line 11) demonstrates her anticipation of the reference, that Cassandra is still referring to the same institute, and her contribution in lines 13-14 constitutes an affiliative move displaying Xiang’s epistemic access to and personal engagement in Cassandra’s situation (Xiang’s turn shows her agreement that the institute exams are on too high of a level). In what follows, Cassandra accounts for the high-grade negative assessment through a concrete example of the complaint-worthy experiences at the institute (line 17 and onward). Besides the superlative assessment adjective, the excerpt hence demonstrates two other novel resources for assessing used by upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers: the preface *je te jure* (‘I swear’), and an assessment offered in the left-peripheral constituent of a left-dislocated turn – which is something that regularly occurs in L1 French (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2015).

The two preceding excerpts have shown more advanced speakers’ use of comparative and superlative adjective forms in first assessments. While the precise comparative adjective form *c’est plus difficile* (‘it’s more difficult’) occurs three times in the negative assessments of elementary level speakers (twice with Malia, once with Aurelia), there are no occurrences of other types of comparative forms in the elementary level data. Therefore, it seems that the more advanced speakers’ more diverse repertoire of negative assessment formats in part rely on these speakers’ ability to produce comparative and superlative adjective forms.

Another difference between elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers pertaining to the grammatical formatting of negative assessments is that the latter more often produce assessment turns with left-dislocations of the assessable (only one negative assessment with a right-dislocated assessable occurs in the collection). Dislocations, and specifically left-dislocations, are frequently used for doing assessments in L1 French, especially in assessments of the format *c’est* (‘it’s’) plus assessment segment (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2015). Assessment

turns in French often take routinized forms, which may be schematized as follows, in which the clitic pronoun is co-indexical with the right or left-peripheral assessable.

Left-dislocated assessment:

[assessable] + [clitic pronoun] + [copula] + [assessment segment]
 [le français] + [c'] + [est] + [très difficile]
 ['DET French'] + ['it'] + ['is'] + ['very difficult']

Right-dislocated assessment:

[clitic pronoun] + [copula] + [assessment segment] + [assessable]
 [c'] + [est] + [très difficile] + [le français]
 ['it'] + ['is'] + ['very difficult'] + ['DET French']

As demonstrated by Pekarek Doehler et al. (2015), in assessment turns left-dislocations, by virtue of placing the referent (the assessable) in turn/TCU-initial position, highlight the referent/assessable and project the TCU as being primarily about this referent. In assessments with right-dislocations, the placement of the assessment segment near the turn/TCU-start makes the projection highlight the turn/TCU in the first place as doing an assessment. This difference in projection serves useful interaction-organizational purposes, for example in the context of sequence closings (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2011; 2015).

While a few left-dislocations occur in the negative assessments already at elementary level, these become more frequent with time. More advanced speakers' tendency to produce left-dislocations in their assessments indexes the increased similarity of their L2 'grammars-for-interaction' (Pekarek Doehler, 2018) with those of L1 speakers and offers interaction-organizational affordances for the expression of complaint-worthiness.

Excerpt 5.11 further illustrates this. In the same extended complaint sequence as in Ex. 5.9 above, Aurelia has claimed that it is more important for people in Switzerland to be precise than to be friendly. With some linguistic help from Mia, she adds that it is not necessary for people to smile (lines 1-7). A first left-dislocation in the form of *ça c'est* (that it's) occurs in Aurelia's repetition of her assertion that it is not necessary (to smile, line 7). In line 8, Aurelia elaborates that if you do not want to do that, you do not have to, and Mia agrees and claims her own epistemic access to the issue (lines 9, 12). Next, Aurelia offers an assessment turn with two negative assessments, initiated with a left-dislocation which ties back to Aurelia's turn initiated in line 1 (line 15).

Ex. 5.11, Lun_2018-02-26_23:55_mieux dedans_c

01 AUR: c'est pas *nécessaire de: *s: Ω%de:::% (0.6)
 it's not necessary to s to
 aur *lifts hands----*outward gest from mouth-->
 aur %smiles%

02 comment tu dis*
 how do you say
 aur -->*

- 03 MIA: *sourire?
smile
 aur *opens hands, large smile-->
- 04 (0.2)*
 aur -->*
- 05 AUR: si,
yes
- 06 ouais.
yes
- 07 AUR: ça c'est pas nécessaire ici.
that it's not important here
- 08 AUR: s- si tu- si tu veux pas faire ça tu:: (.) tu fais pas ça.
i- if you- if you don't want to do that you you don't do that
- 09 MIA: oui je- j'ai (vou) parce que: (.) personne (.) °sourit°,
yes I- I've (seen) because no one smiles
- 10 (0.5)
- 11 AUR: non.=
no
- 12 MIA: =sourire.
smile
- 13 AUR: [non.]
no
- 14 MIA: [non.]
no
- 15 AUR: **ça c'est- Ωça c'est déprimant pour moi >c'est difficile<.=**
that it's- that it's depressing for me it's difficult
 aur -->Ωgazes down-->>
- 16 AUR: =.hh parce que: ((continues))
because

Aurelia's assessment *c'est déprimant pour moi* ('it's depressing for me, line 15) refers to the lack of smiles among Swiss people. The repeated left-dislocation *ça c'est* ('that it's) helps re-establishing and tying the referent, introduced over several turns and through other-repair (lines 1-6), to the assessment. The prosodic stress on *déprimant* ('depressing') strengthens the grade of the first assessment segment (Ogden, 2006), and by immediately launching a second assessment, *c'est difficile* ('it's difficult', line 15), Aurelia further enhances the complaint-worthiness of the situation: Swiss people's conduct is not only depressing to Aurelia, it also makes her life difficult. While referring back to the preceding talk, the assessments also serve as a pivot into further talk, as Aurelia immediately expands with another account for her negative claims (line 16 and onward). The left-dislocated assessment format hence works primarily on the structural level of the interaction, to tie an assessment offered in the canonical format *c'est + assessment term* to its (long ago introduced) assessable.

Excerpt 5.12 includes two left-dislocations in negative assessment turns. Xiang has just criticized Liang for not having produced the linking sound (*liaison*), and Liang admits that sometimes French-speakers indeed have difficulties understanding her when she omits the *liaison* (lines 1-2). In Liang's defense, Cassandra negatively assesses the Swiss (lines 4-5) and launches a complaint about them not making an effort to understand foreigners.

Ex. 5.12, Mer2_2017-03-29_07:00_petit effort

01 LIA: euh parfois quand je f- euh quand je fais pa:s la liaison,
sometimes when I (do) when I don't do the (linkage)

02 le: le francophone comprend pas.
the the French-speaker doesn't understand

03 (0.5)

04 CAS: **ah non- Ω*euh mais ils sont- ÷les suisses tu sais**
no but they are- the Swiss you know
 cas Ωcloses eyes, keeps closed/squinting-->1.10
 cas *leans head back, shakes it slightly-->1.8
 cas ÷waves right hand toward LIA-->

05 **ils sont# vraiment <nuls>.÷**
they are really (approx. bad/stupid/useless)
 cas -->÷
 fig #1



fig.1

06 (0.2)

07 XIA: [°hheheheh heh£°]

08 CAS: [ouais >je sais je sais je sais<.*]
yeah I know I know I know
 cas -->*

09 MIR: £ah [hahahah£]

10 CAS: [mais ça] c'est en généra:lΩ hein,
but that it's in general huh
 cas -->Ω

((14 lines omitted: CAS offers example))

25 XIA: [°mais-] [le-] le français la langue c'e:st °vraime:nt
but- the- the French the language it's really

26 >le français< c'e:st (0.2) précise°.
French it's precise

27 (0.5)

28 CAS: °mm m- mais ils sont nu:ls hein°.
b- but they are (bad/useless) huh

29 CAS: £>Hhehuh<£ **eux aussi °<ils sont nuls hein>°.**
they too they are (bad/useless) huh

30 LIA: °£eheheh£°

In the initiation of her turn (line 4), Cassandra first deploys the pronoun *ils* ('they') but restarts to introduce the referent *les suisses* ('the Swiss'), thereby specifying that her upcoming talk refers to Swiss people (rather than French-speakers in general). Inserting parenthetically *tu sais* ('you know'), she prefaces the assessment with a phatic element that draws attention to the upcoming talk and serves to enhance the chance of receiving affiliative responses (Andersen, 1997; Fiedler, 2020). The assessment proper is introduced with another pronominal reference: *ils sont vraiment <nuls>* ('they are really bad/stupid/ useless', lines 4-5). The self-repaired turn-initiation with the left-dislocation allows Cassandra to insert and emphasize the correct referent of her upcoming assessment, while parenthetically adding the phatic construction *tu sais* ('you know') before the assessment proper. During the production of the turn, Cassandra displays embodied conduct that reinforces the strength of the assessment and shows a high level of affective involvement: She closes her eyes, leans back her head, and starts waving her hand toward Liang in a 'brushing off' gesture (fig.1). The assessment is responded to with laughter (lines 7 and 9), after which Cassandra expands by claiming the generalizability of her assessment (line 10) and justifying this with an example (omitted lines).

The second left-dislocated assessment turn occurs in response to Xiang's receipt of Cassandra's example. Xiang asserts that the French language is very precise (lines 25-26), insisting on the importance of precision when speaking French and thereby subtly justifying her prior correction of Liang's pronunciation. Cassandra again objects, by recycling her prior assessment, first in low voice: *°mais ils sont nu:ls hein°* ('but they are bad/useless huh', line 28) and then, preceded by a short laughter, *eux aussi °<ils sont nuls hein>°* ('they too, they are bad/useless huh', line 29). Exactly what the disjunctive pronoun *eux* ('they') refers to here is not clear, but it may indicate Cassandra's understanding of Xiang's *le français* (line 25) as *les Français*, as in 'the French (people)'. The left-dislocation again allows Cassandra to reinsert and emphasize the assessable while lexically repeating the same assessment turn as just before.

Second assessments

Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers more frequently than elementary level speakers produce second assessments, and these take more varied lexico-syntactic forms than those at elementary level. For example, speakers use superlative adjective forms (Ex. 5.13) and other types of extreme-case constructions in assessment segments (Ex. 5.14), as well as linguistically downgraded second assessments that work as upgraded assessments by virtue of irony (Ex. 5.15). As discussed above, aligning and upgrading assessments are key resources for constructing joint complaints and exchange displays of affiliation between the coparticipants (see Ch. 4.3), and the more advanced speakers' larger repertoires for proffering context-sensitive upgrades contribute to their increased ability to accomplish such assessments.

In Ex. 5.13, Cassandra uses a superlative assessment adjective to produce a my-side complaint story in support of the coparticipant's complaint, thereby assisting in the production of a joint complaint. Xiang has complained about the difficulty of learning the correct inflections of color terms in preparation for French-language dictations (see Ex. 4.13). In line 39, she initiates a summary assessment of how her failed learning efforts made her feel. Before the delivery of any assessment segment, Cassandra intervenes to report on her own experience studying the same thing, and she produces a complaint story that supports Xiang's argument.

Ex. 5.13, Mer2_2016-11-16_09:02_la couleur

- 36 XIA: alors j- j- j'arrivais pa:s (.) maitriser même que
 well I- I- I didn't manage to master even though
- 37 j'ai- >quelque chose que j'ai déjà< fait.
 I've- something that I've already done
- 38 CAS: °>ouais ouais ouais ou[ais ouais<°.]
 yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
- 39 XIA: [°mais-°] mais ç- ça me rend
 but- but i- it makes me
- 40 vraiment [°un peu°]
 really a bit
- 41 CAS: [>non non-<] °c'est- (.) c'est- c'était là.°
 no no it's- it's- it was there
- 42 CAS: °j'ai jamais étudié quelque chose de si horrible°.
 I've never studied anything so horrible
 cas Ωgazes at XIA-->
- 43 (0.6)Ω
 cas -->Ω
- 44 CAS: et je-
 and I-

Cassandra's *c'était là* ('it was there') in line 41 works as an anaphoric reference to the object of Xiang's complaint (i.e., learning to write the colors in French) which establishes the topical relevancy of Cassandra's upcoming talk, that it is about the same thing (Selting, 2012). She then launches a high-grade negative assessment in the form of a superlative: *j'ai jamais étudié quelque chose de si horrible* ('I've never studied anything so horrible', line 42). The assessment serves as a second assessment that upgrades the negative stance expressed by Xiang through the complaint and the projected summary assessment. With this assessment, Cassandra both affiliates with Xiang and claims her own epistemic access to the negative characterization of the described study experiences. By offering an extreme-case formulation, she simultaneously shows the severity of the lived experiences, which prepares the ground for her upcoming complaint story. The study experience which she is about to report on was not just negative, it was the most horrible study experience ever. This type of superlative adjectival form in assessment segments (*jamais ... quelque chose de si + adjective* 'never ... anything so + adjective') do not occur with the elementary level speakers, which indicates that this is a grammatical format that becomes a resource for assessing primarily at higher proficiency levels.

Similarly, Ex. 5.14 shows the use of another linguistic construction to accomplish an extreme-case second assessment that upgrades a first assessment. Aurelia has in a longer sequence complained about her prior flatmate (Ex. 4.2/4.8). In line 181, Jordan offers a display of sympathy with Aurelia by suggesting that the last months were *pas facile* ('not easy') for her. Although formatted as a question, the turn shows Jordan's understanding of Aurelia's telling-so-far and works like a 'candidate' summary assessment that presents the gist of Aurelia's difficult situation. Aurelia receipts this by confirming and upgrading Jordan's assessment.

Ex. 5.15, Mer2_2017-01-11_13:44_pas isolés

- 01 ANG: **=et après il fait super froid (.) #dans la maison#.**
 and then it is super cold in the house
- 02 (0.3)
- 03 XIA: *ɛh Hehhhɛ*
- 04 XIA: tu [(t'es enrhumée) un petit] peu?
 you (got a bit of a cold)
- 05 CAS: **[ɛahah >un petit peu heh<ɛ]**
 a little bit
- 06 ANG: c'est pas (.) comme ici,
 it's not like here

Cassandra's second assessment in line 5 (>*un petit peu*<, 'a little bit') linguistically *downgrades* Angelina's assessment *super froid* ('super cold', line 1). The laughter particles preceding and following the assessment and the smiley voice during its delivery make it hearable as an ironic statement, however, which aligns and affiliates with the first assessment and gives a go-ahead for Angelina to continue (which she does by comparing the situation in Italy with the one in Switzerland; line 6 and onward). Cassandra's use of an ironic second assessment testifies to her fine-grained ability to adjust to the interactional contingencies: Angelina's first assessment (line 1) is linguistically already marked as a high-grade, extreme-case assessment: *super froid* ('super cold'). The possibilities for linguistically upgrading such high-grade assessment segment are therefore limited. Cassandra solves this practical problem in a resourceful way, by mobilizing an interactional resource typically used for low-grade assessments (the downgrading construction *un petit peu*, 'a little bit') combined with paraverbal resources to accomplish an ironic statement that is recognizable as an upgraded assessment (cf. Rääbis et al., 2019). The excerpt hence provides another example of how more advanced speakers draw on their (more diverse) linguistic repertoires to produce negative assessments that are subtly tuned to the interactional context.

Verbally incomplete negative assessments and expressions of negative stance

As mentioned above and shown in the examples, speakers at all levels use non-linguistic (vocal, embodied) resources to express negative stance. A difference between elementary and more advanced speakers is that the latter rely less on *standalone* non-lexical vocalizations than elementary level speakers to produce negative assessments and display negative stance. In contrast to standalone vocalizations, non-verbally completed negative assessments do not decrease from elementary to upper-intermediate/advanced levels, and this is congruent with the L1 literature that shows that verbally incomplete utterances are pervasive features of ordinary conversations (Chevalier, 2008; 2009; Chevalier & Clift, 2008; Ford et al., 2012; Hayashi, 2003; 2005; Keevallik, 2013; 2014; Li, 2016; 2019; Mori & Hayashi, 2006).

Excerpts 5.16 and 5.17 illustrate recurrent uses of non-lexical vocalizations in upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers' complaints. These excerpts show turns that are initiated verbally but never brought to lexico-syntactic completion, yet they are retrospectively recognizable as doing negative assessments (see also Skogmyr Marian, in prep.). In Ex. 5.16 (same as Ex. 5.14; see also Ex. 4.2/4.8), Aurelia has given a specific example of a complaint-

recognizable as a negative assessment that is brought to completion with non-verbal means. Jordan displays his alignment by nodding (lines 102-103), but refrains from taking the turn, and Aurelia's subsequent *c'est un peu: ça m'a (coûté) un peu d'énergie quoi* ('it's a bit it (cost me) a bit of energy PRT', line 104) works as a gloss (Keevallik, 2013) of the prior turn that offers another occasion for Jordan to affiliate. As Jordan again merely nods, albeit with larger head movements (lines 104-106), Aurelia continues with another account for her criticism of the flatmate (lines 106-107 and onward). In the literature, the practice of leaving one's negative assessment lexico-syntactically incomplete has been discussed in terms of offering an opportunity for the speaker to convey negative stance without having to verbalize negative assessment terms (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; Chevalier, 2008; 2009; Chevalier & Clift, 2008; Ford et al., 2012; Li, 2016; 2019). Research on complaining has also shown that complainants regularly formulate or express the gist of complaints through idiomatic utterances after a descriptive telling (Drew & Holt, 1988; Rääbis et al., 2019; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). In the present case, Aurelia deploys both of these practices by first producing a verbally incomplete negative assessment and then glossing it through a non-literal expression. Through these actions, she displays her ability to put to use specific interactional (linguistic, non-linguistic) resources for particular, context-sensitive interactional purposes.

Excerpt 5.17 exemplifies a verbally incomplete turn that is recognizable as an expression of negative stance *before* the initiation of a complaint. In this case, the speaker accomplishes a disagreement with a first assessment and shows the negative valence of the upcoming talk. Prior to the excerpt, Cassandra and Angelina have told Xiang and Liang how they get from Switzerland to their hometowns in Italy, which are not so far apart. Angelina suggests that the trip from Rome is not too long (lines 1-2). Cassandra disagrees (line 3) and develops a complaint about how long the trip gets in total with all the different legs of the journey.

Ex. 5.17, Mer2_2017-01-11_09:28_deux heures

- 01 ANG: c'est pas trop loi:n à la fin c'est deux heures
 it's not too far in the end it's two hours
- 02 [ça va.]
 it's okay
- 03 CAS: [.nhhh]h *ça va: Ωfmai:(h)sf phfff[#ffffffhh,*]
 it's okay but
 cas *tilts & shakes head to right-----*
 cas Ωgazes down at cup-->
 fig #1
- 04 ANG: [£hehehehehh£]

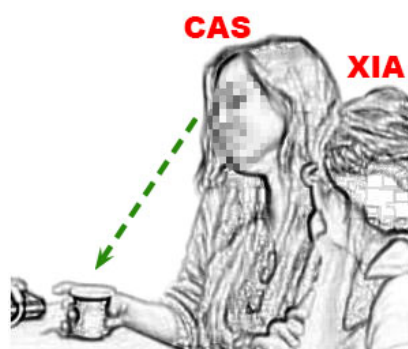


fig.1

- 05 CAS: .hh une HEU:RE pour *arriver àΩ baleux aéroport,
 one hour to arrive at Baleux airport
 cas *taps LH index fing in table
 cas -->Ω
- 06 depuis laun[ève,]
 from Launève
- 07 ANG: [ʔoui] c'est vrai [aprè::sʔ]
 yes that's true after/then
- 08 XIA: [(mm:),]
- 09 ANG: [ʔehhhhʔ]
- 10 CAS: [ʔet après] tu atte:nds >je sais pas< [combienʔ.]
 and then you wait I don't know how much

In response to Angelina's assertion that the two-hour trip is okay, Cassandra offers a disagreement in a classical yes-but dispreferred action format (Pomerantz, 1984). She first verbally aligns with Angelina by repeating her *ça va*: ('it's okay', line 3). By initiating her turn with an audible in-breath, tilting and shaking her head to her right and slightly elongating the vowel on *va*:, Cassandra nevertheless offers some embodied and prosodic cues that contrast with her alignment (Ogden, 2006; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009). She then, by lowering her gaze and producing an emphasized and elongated *mai:s* ('but', line 3) in smiley voice followed by a long *phffffffh* (line 3), offers a non-verbal negative stance expression and thus disagreement with Angelina's positive assessment of the journey. The expressive nature of Cassandra's turn-completion with the elongated *pf* and the accompanying embodied conduct adds a humorous layer to the negative stance expression and occasions Angelina to laugh (line 4). Cassandra then develops the sequence into a complaint by listing the many steps involved in the trip and how long they take (lines 5-6, 10 and onward). The non-lexically completed turn forecasts the negative valence of the upcoming talk – the complaint – and signals incipient dispreferred response (Hoey, 2014). The stretched non-lexical vocalization displays Cassandra's negative affect and simultaneously allows her to introduce the disagreement and complaint with a non-serious layering (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984b). This practice delays the complaint initiation (see Ch. 4.2), as the speaker before offering an overt negative portrayal non-lexically and embodiedly displays negative stance (Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009).

5.1.3 Summary: Negative assessments

The comparison between the negative assessments of the elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level focal participants has revealed a series of differences in these speakers' practices for negatively assessing and showing negative stance. Characteristic of the negative assessments at elementary level is a high reliance on a small number of linguistic resources for assessing. These speakers deploy a limited repertoire of both assessment adjectives and intensifying adverbials as well as of syntactic formats for assessment turns. In addition, they draw heavily on non-linguistic and embodied resources in showing negative stance, as manifested for example in the many standalone non-lexical vocalizations used as precise assessments. The negative assessments at more advanced level incorporate a larger repertoire of lexical resources (assessment adjectives and intensifying adverbials) and take more diverse

syntactical formats. These assessment turns also more frequently include prefaces and epistemic or phatic markers that work to further reinforce the strength of the assessment and recruit affiliative responses. Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers also more often than elementary level speakers incorporate idiomatic expressions in their negative assessments.

A quantitative comparison of assessment adjectives and intensifiers over time allows for observations about overall developmental tendencies (see Wagner et al., 2018). Importantly, the relevancy of such comparison emerged from the initial qualitative analysis of the data. On the lexical level, upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers deploy a larger repertoire of assessment adjectives and intensifiers than elementary level speakers. In the 81 negative assessment turns¹¹ of elementary level speakers, 21 different assessment adjectives (71 tokens) and 3 different intensifiers (44 tokens) are used. In the 93 assessment turns of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers, 41 different assessment adjectives (77 tokens) and 8 different intensifiers (41 tokens) occur. Table 5.1 presents the type-token ratios of negative assessment adjectives and intensifiers in the complaints at both proficiency levels.

Proficiency level	Types (NAA)	Tokens (NAA)	TTR (NAA)	Types (INT)	Tokens (INT)	TTR (INT)
Elementary	21	71	0.30	3	44	0.07
Upper-intermediate/advanced	41	77	0.53	8	41	0.20

Table 5.1. Type-token ratio of negative assessment adjectives (NAA) and intensifiers (INT) in complaint sequences. Note: Two English-language assessments have been excluded from the upper-intermediate/advanced level data.

The type-token ratio of both negative assessment adjectives (NAA) and intensifiers (INT) is considerably higher for upper-intermediate/advanced speakers than for elementary level speakers, going from 0.30 to 0.53 for assessment adjectives and from 0.07 to 0.20 for intensifiers. These numbers show that L2 speakers go from a limited to a broader repertoire of lexical resources available for negatively assessing, allowing them to increasingly diversify the lexical composition of their negative assessments. This finding concurs with the observations of Nguyen (2019), who documented a diversification over time in *positive* assessment segments in the interactional repertoire of a Vietnamese L2 speaker of English.

In terms of lexico-syntactical formatting, we see a similar pattern, with more advanced speakers deploying a larger set of lexico-syntactical formats in their negative assessments. The qualitative analysis revealed some syntactical formats found only or predominantly among upper-intermediate level speakers, such as superlative adjective forms (Ex. 5.10, 5.13) and left-dislocated assessment turns (Ex. 5.11-5.12), as well as prefacing and parenthetical constructions like *je te jure* ('I swear', Ex. 5.10) and *tu sais* ('you know', Ex. 5.12). These general observations hence support the idea that L2 speakers move from a limited to a larger

¹¹ Note that one assessment turn can comprise several assessment adjectives and intensifiers, or none at all. This explains the discrepancy between the number of assessment turns and the number of tokens of assessment adjectives and intensifiers.

set of lexico-syntactic formats for negatively assessing over time, allowing speakers to more easily vary their high-grade assessments and upgrade first assessments so as to underline the complaint-worthiness of the complainable and participate in joint complaints.

To shed further light on the distribution of lexico-syntactic formats for negative assessment, I conducted a quantitative analysis of speakers' use of the precise construction *c'est très* ('it's very') plus assessment adjective. This analysis was data-driven, warranted by the high recurrence of specific lexical and syntactic resources for proffering negative assessments among elementary level speakers observed in the qualitative analysis, such as *c'est* ('it's') plus the intensifier *très* ('très', making up 39 of 44 tokens of intensifiers). Table 5.2 shows the number and percentage of use of the lexico-syntactic string *c'est très* ('it's very') plus assessment adjective in the negative assessments at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels.

Participant	<i>c'est très</i>	Total NA	Percentage
Suresh	2	4	50%
Mariana	5	11	46%
Malia (beginning)	20	39	51%
Aurelia (beginning)	1	27	4%
Average elementary level	28	81	35%
Malia (end)	0	28	0%
Aurelia (end)	0	29	0%
Cassandra	1	36	3%
Average upper-intermediate/ advanced level	1	93	1%

Table 5.2. Number and percentage of the construction *c'est très* ('it's very') in the negative assessments (NA) at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels.

As seen in the table, the construction occurs in 35% of all assessment turns of elementary level speakers (28 occurrences) and in only 1% of the assessment turns of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers (1 occurrence). Notable differences between speakers also exist: While at the elementary level Suresh, Mariana, and Malia deploy *c'est très* in 46-51% of their assessment turns, Aurelia uses the same construction in only 4% of her assessments. As upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers, neither Malia nor Aurelia uses the precise construction in their negative assessments¹². As discussed above, *c'est* + [assessment segment] are highly frequent components of assessment turns in L1 French (Pekarek Doehler et al., 2015); the L2

¹² As upper-intermediate/advanced level speaker, Malia deploys the construction *c'est vraiment* ('it's really') in 8 out of 28 assessment turns (29%).

speakers' use of the same format is therefore not surprising. But the frequent combination of *c'est* ('it's') plus the precise adverbial *très* ('very') among several elementary level speakers and its decline over time indicate that this lexico-syntactic string constitutes a kind of passe-partout, 'standard solution' for the accomplishment of negative assessments among some speakers at the early stages of L2 learning, and that the developmental trajectory involves a diversification of action formats over time.

The speakers' ability to accomplish high-grade negative assessments and specifically upgrade negative assessments is consequential not only for their ability to construct complaint-worthiness generally, but also for their participation in joint complaint activities and for contributing to other participants' complaints (see Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; 1992; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Pomerantz, 1984, for the participatory work of joint assessment activities). The few upgraded assessments occurring in the elementary level speakers' data correspond to the low number of joint complaints among these speakers (see Ch. 4.3). My findings suggest that the precise *jointness* of complaining often boils down to the ability to proffer timely and relevant second assessments, which is something that may be difficult for less proficient speakers. In the few aligning second assessments that occur with the elementary level speakers, lexical repeats of and lexico-syntactic format-tying to first assessments are key practices, typically used in concert with prosody and embodied resources. With the help of alignment tokens such as *oui* ('yes') and, occasionally, the substitution or addition of an intensifier (see Ex. 5.4), these speakers accomplish modified repeats (Stivers, 2005) that allow them to establish the epistemic independency of their second assessments while simultaneously aligning with the first assessment (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). These findings bear similarities with Goodwin's observations about the aphasic man Chil's high reliance on recycling practices and prosody for meaning-making (Goodwin, 2018; Goodwin et al., 2002), showing the affordances these resources present for speakers with limited linguistic means. Among more advanced speakers, speakers' more diverse repertoires of linguistic resources for assessing allow them to proffer second assessments in more subtle and context-sensitive ways. Excerpt 5.15 offered a prime example of this, showing how an upper-intermediate/advanced level speaker mobilized a linguistic construction typically used for downgrading combined with marked prosody to align with a hyperbolic first assessment. In all, the diversification of lexical and syntactic resources for assessing manifests itself in a heightened interactional 'agility' in negative assessment activities and an increased participation in complaint sequences over time.

The analysis has illustrated the key role of non-lexical and embodied resources in negatively assessing and expressing negative stance. These resources are regular features of negatively valenced talk of all participants and L1 speakers alike (e.g., Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Hoey, 2014; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009; Wiggins, 2013). Both elementary and more advanced speakers deploy marked prosody, gestures, headshakes, changes in posture, and distinct facial expressions to foreshadow negative assessments and to intensify or upgrade verbal assessment adjectives. As seen throughout the excerpts, the fine-grained synchronization of embodied and verbal resources regularly creates multimodal packages for negatively assessing.

Despite the above, the high recurrence and the interactional purposes of non-verbal resources in the elementary level speaker complaints are noteworthy. Both complainants and complaint

recipients frequently deploy standalone sighs, *pf*-sounds and other non-lexical vocalizations, combined with embodied conduct, to display their own negative stance and to respond to other participants' stance expressions. Excerpt 5.6 illustrated the recurrence of three-part sequences in which both affiliative assessments in response to an expressed difficulty and sequence-closing thirds were accomplished through standalone non-lexical vocalizations. Similar reliance on non-lexical resources has not been observed with more advanced speakers, who instead primarily use linguistic resources to accomplish the same kind of actions. This shows the participants' interactional competency in doing what they can with the resources they have at their disposal, but also that speakers may favor linguistic means of expression when their linguistic repertoires allow for it. A multimodal phenomenon that does not decrease over time, on the other hand, is the use of non-lexical vocalizations and/or embodied resources to complete what becomes recognizable as verbally incomplete negative assessments or expressions of negative stance (Ex. 5.16-5.17). The occurrence of such turns among both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers concurs with L1 research showing that they can be used by speakers as means to display negative stance without having to verbalize negative assessment terms (see above). As seen in Ex. 5.17, such turns can also be deployed for precise complaint-initiation purposes. Verbally incomplete negative assessments or stance expressions should therefore be seen as an interactional accomplishment rather than a shortcoming.

5.2 Direct-reported speech and reenactments

As presented in Chapter 2.2.4, CA research on reported speech and reenactments has shown that these often are used by complainants to depict complaint-worthy behavior of others, portray themselves in good light, and to animate and show their affective involvement in complaint stories. Direct-reported speech (DRS) has been identified as a particularly effective means for providing 'evidence' for the complaint as it allows the coparticipants to witness the complained-about transgression themselves. As invoked by Couper-Kuhlen (1999), however, the introduction of DRS involves a number of interactional challenges for the speaker, such as conveying that reported talk is forthcoming, whose voice is being reported, and the interactional purpose of the reported speech. These observations open up for inquiries into L2 speakers' use of DRS, as L2 speakers rely on a more limited repertoire of linguistic resources than L1 speakers (for a Japanese ESL speaker's longitudinal use of DRS, see Hauser, 2013).

In this sub-chapter, I analyze the participants' use of DRS and reenactments to identify any differences over time in how and for what interactional purposes these are used in complaint sequences. While I included both indirect reported speech (IRS) and DRS in my original analysis, I focus particularly on the use of DRS below, since this type of reported speech is the most common in the complaint sequences and has been identified in the literature as a key resource for the construction of complaints. As invoked in some studies (Holt, 1996; 2000; Clift & Holt, 2007; Günthner, 2000), the distinction between DRS and IRS is nevertheless not always clear-cut, and this is also apparent in some of my examples, especially in cases in which the participants encounter difficulties marking their upcoming reported talk as either DRS or IRS. The analysis includes examples of what Sidnell (2006) refers to as *reenactments* and Holt (2007) as *enactments*, namely reports of (real or fictive) embodied actions. I only focus on instances of DRS or reenactments that convey negative stance.

The analysis shows that speakers at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels deploy DRS and reenactments for similar interactional purposes. At both levels, the episodes of DRS and reenactments are highly embodied in nature, with speakers drawing on a range of verbal, paraverbal, and non-verbal resources to embody the reported characters and show affective stance. In addition, the analysis reveals the following differences over time:

- At *elementary level*, DRS and reenactments occur mostly with Malia, whereas Mariana and Aurelia use these resources less frequently and Suresh never. The DRS-initiations often involve ‘broken’ turn starts (Gardner, 2007) and repair sequences that interrupt the progressivity of talk, sometimes involving problems with the establishment of person references and, especially with one speaker, repairs from IRS to DRS. Elementary level speakers deploy a range of enquoting devices to signal incipient DRS, both canonical French and idiosyncratic quotatives.
- At *upper-intermediate/advanced level*, DRS and reenactments occur regularly with all participants. The initiations are typically fluent and unproblematic, involving less repair than at elementary level. While upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers too deploy a range of enquoting devices, these are rarely idiosyncratic and proportionally more L1-like (with high reliance on the canonical French *dire*, ‘to say’).

In what follows, I first present the qualitative findings pertaining to elementary level speakers (Ch. 5.2.1) and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers (Ch. 5.2.2), before briefly addressing some quantitative differences and discussing the results (Ch. 5.2.3).

5.2.1 Elementary level

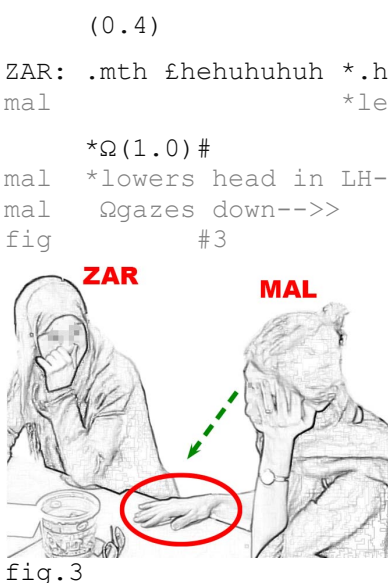
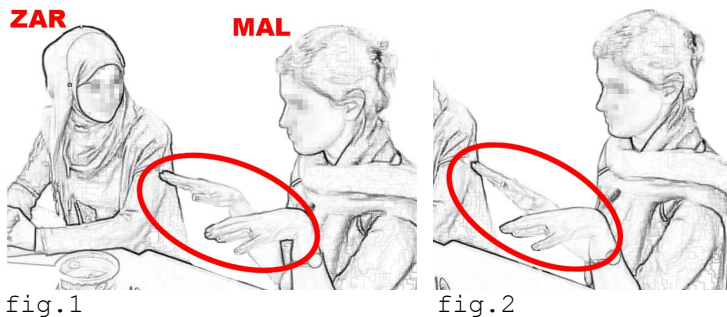
All elementary level speakers except Suresh deploy reported speech and reenactments at some point in the data, although Aurelia and Mariana less frequently than Malia. Excerpts 5.18-21 demonstrate for what purposes these speakers use DRS and reenactments and illustrate some of the typical formal properties of these resources.

Other-reported speech as concrete ‘evidence’ supporting complaint formulation

Just like L1 speakers (see Ch. 2.2.4), the L2 speakers of my data recurrently use DRS as concrete ‘evidence’ for complaints, to *show* rather than *retell* past events and thereby increase the realistic character of the reported event and let coparticipants judge for themselves the complaint-worthiness of the situation. Excerpt 5.18 presents an episode of other-reported talk that serves to concretely exemplify the complainable. Before the start of the excerpt, Malia assessed her first day at work as ‘a bit horrible’ (see Ex. 5.2). To account for the assessment, she explains that she thought that she would be able to speak English the first year, but in fact, everybody started speaking French with her (lines 31-32). The DRS that follows provides specific details supporting the claimed seriousness of the situation: Malia’s professor even asked her colleagues to only speak French with her (lines 34-35, 41-42).

Ex. 5.18, Mer1_2016-11-02_01:58_commencé travail_a

- 31 MAL: ɛmai:s hheh-hehɛ,
but
- 32 ɛhie:rɛ (.) tout le mo:nde parlait avec moi en français,
yesterday everyone spoke with me in French
- 33 ZAR: [ɛhh-hhɛ]
- 34 MAL: **[et mon] prof (0.3) demande (0.3) .HHh (.) e:hm**
and my prof(essor) asks
- 35 **(0.2) .mt °lui demand(é/ait)°?**
him/her asked?
- 36 (0.3)
- 37 MAL: °(je-)°
(I-)
- 38 THE: mm-hm,
- 39 (0.4)
- 40 THE: [a demandé.]
asked
- 41 MAL: [.hhh *que] j- (.) *<seulement># **parlez*** avec malia,
that I- only speak with Malia
mal *lifts hands-*spreads hands horiz*
fig #1
- 42 **(0.3) *français.#***
French
mal *redoes horiz gesture*
fig #2
- 43 (0.4)
- 44 ZAR: .mth ɛhehuhuhuh *.hHHhhɛ
mal *lets RH fall on table*
- 45 *Ω(1.0) #
mal *lowers head in LH-->>
mal Ωgazes down-->>
fig #3



46 MAL: [o::]:h,

47 THE: [°no:n°.]
no

Malia's introduction of the reported speech is somewhat problematic in that it leads to a repair-sequence in the production of the quotative (precise marker of DRS, see Clift & Holt, 2007) *demander* ('to ask') in past tense plus pronominal references (see hesitations and self-repair of the quotative in lines 34-35 and the other-completed repair by Theo in line 40). As she continues her turn, Malia first offers the subordinate marker *que* ('that') and a cut-off *je* ('I', line 41), which projects IRS to follow, but she self-repairs to DRS: <*seulement*> *parlez avec malia, (0.3) français*. ('only speak with Malia French', lines 41-42). With the help of slow delivery and prosodic stress on key terms as well as horizontal hand gestures (fig.1-2), Malia animates the reported talk, portrays the professor's action as a strict order or directive rather than a request, and displays her own affective involvement in the telling (Günthner, 1997; 2000; Selting, 2010a; 2012). The DRS works as the climax of the story (Drew, 1998; Holt, 2000), and Zarah's laughing response (line 44) shows recognition of this, but the response is problematic in that it only attends to the non-serious layer of the telling and not the complaint itself. To recruit more appropriate responses, Malia lets her right hand fall on the table and lowers her gaze and her head in her left hand (fig.3) and produces the non-lexical vocalization *o:::h* (line 46), showing her despair, and she subsequently pursues the complaint by insisting on the complaint-worthiness of the situation (see Ex. 5.2 above).

This excerpt hence shows the use of DRS to provide a concrete, witnessable example supporting the formulation of the complaint, similar to what has been observed in the L1 literature. As seen in the excerpt, especially at elementary level the introduction of reported speech is regularly problematic, involving repair sequences and what Gardner (2007) refers to as 'broken starts': turn-beginnings with hesitation markers, pauses, and other types of self-repair produced as the speaker attempts to find appropriate linguistic material to construct the turn. In this case, Malia's mid-turn shift from IRS to DRS does not engender any apparent difficulties for intersubjectivity, likely because of her use of marked prosody and embodied conduct together with the first name self-reference (see Couper-Kuhlen, 1999, for an analysis of problematic introductions of reported speech). Instead, another interactional problem appears, namely the recognizability of the DRS as the climax of a funny versus a troublesome story. The recurrence of DRS in story climaxes in both amusing and complaint stories (Holt, 2000; 2007) and the tendency of reenactments to create humorous effects (Sidnell, 2006) likely contribute to this problem, with the reported talk creating an ambiguity as to the expected responses from coparticipants. As seen in Ex. 5.20 and 5.21 below, this ambiguity can also be used as resource by complainants to show their ability to cope with troubles.

DRS to support portrayal of self as reasonable and of third party as unreasonable

Another use of DRS in complaint stories is to portray the complainant's own conduct as reasonable in face of another party's unreasonable and complaint-worthy conduct (cf. Bangerter et al. 2011; Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015). Speakers typically use marked prosody and embodied conduct to differentiate between their own and the third party's behavior in the reported situation. Excerpt 5.19 illustrates such use, while again exemplifying a problematic turn beginning and difficulties with the use of pronominal references. This sequence is in another complaint by Malia about speaking French at work. After receiving insufficiently affiliative responses to her complaint-so-far, Malia expands the sequence with a retelling of an event that happened the same day, when she met her professor in the elevator and the professor told Malia that she soon needs to be prepared to teach courses in French and speak French well.

Ex. 5.19, Mer1_2016-11-16_13:50_come on

- 01 MAL: *mt .hh e:t (.) eh elle m'a dit que: (.) en janvier?*
and she told me that in January
- 02 (0.5) *mm: eh (.) *tu:# *(0.4)# e*lle *m'a# dit&**
you she told me
*mal *point-fw*pt--left* *point-self**
fig #1 #2 #3



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3

- 03 MAL: *&*que [#tu,*]*
that you
*mal *circling gest pointing fwd, nods**
fig #4
- 04 MAR: [*£>mm-*]hm-hm<*£,*



fig.4

- 05 MAL: .nhHHHH [Hhh *ɛt(h)u] *huhuhu#*[HEHEHEheheɛ]
you
 mal *lifts hands, citation mark gestures*
 fig #5
- 06 THE: [mm-hm,]
- 07 ZAR: [ɛ.hHH Hhhhɛ]
- 08 MAR: [°ɛmm-hm-hmɛ°,]



fig.5

- 09 MAL: ɛ.HH[Hɛ tu] doi::s eh commence:r eh les cou:rs,
you have to start the courses
- 10 THE: [°okay°?]
- 11 MAL: mt pour le- pour le bachele:r,
for the- for the bachel(or)
- ((25 lines omitted: MAL describes teaching obligations))
- 37 MAR: =mm-hm?
- 38 MAL: .hh e:t (0.4) do:nc,
and so
- 39 (0.5) e:h tu: (.) eh tu doi::s être (0.9) eh prête,
 40 *you you have to be ready*
- 41 THE: prête °(okay)°.
ready (okay)
- 42 (0.4)
- 43 MAL: e:h pour- eh pour les questio:ns,
for- for the questions
- 44 pour le:s (.) °#eh eh#° *(0.5) tout#*.
for the everything
 mal *spreads hs wide*
 fig #6



fig.6

- 57 THE: [non,]
no
- 58 MAR: [ɛhh] [oui ouiɛ,]
yes yes
- 59 MAL: [ɛjanvier] [hhhhhɛ]
January
- 60 MAR: [ɛmh-hehehɛ,]
- 61 MAL: ɛ.hh †b(h)ien †sû::r(h)ɛ,
of course
- 62 (0.3)
- 63 THE: [°oui°,]
yes
- 64 MAR: [ɛhehe]hehɛ,
- 65 THE: °ciao°.
- 66 (0.2)
- 67 MAL: ɛhu-[huHA]HA .HHH[HHh huhu-][hehe][he][hehehhhɛ]
- 68 MAR: [mais-] [mais c'e][:st] [beau:cou:p&]
but- but it's a lot
- 69 ZAR: [ɛhhh][hɛ]
- 70 MAR: [&de::] [pre][ssure,]
of (pressure)
- 71 ZAR: [ɛ.hhh] [hhɛ]
- 72 THE: [non][mais parles] [très bie:n en fran]çais.
no but speak very well in French
- 73 MAR: [pressure.]
(pressure)

Malia's turn in line 1 announces incipient IRS about something pertaining to the month of January: *elle m'a dit que: (.) en janvier* ('she told me that in January'). After some hesitation (line 2), Malia continues with what becomes recognizable as DRS. Offering the personal pronoun *tu*: ('you.SING', line 2) while pointing forward (fig.1), and then restarting with *elle m'a dit que tu* ('she told me that you', lines 2-3) with accompanying pointing first to the left at *elle* ('she', fig.2), at herself at *m'a dit* ('told me', fig.3) and a circling gesture with the index pointing forward (fig.4) at *que tu* ('that you', line 3), Malia embodiedly works to convey the person references in the reported speech. Having received a continuer as response from Mariana (line 4), Malia produces a loud in- and outbreath followed by a repetition of the pronoun *tu* ('you.SING', line 5) and a 'citation mark gesture' with both hands (fig.5) followed by laughter, again highlighting the second person pronoun as belonging to the reported world and simultaneously orienting to her laborious efforts as a laughable. After more signs of understanding and some laughter from the coparticipants (lines 6-8), Malia continues the reported episode in direct-reported form (lines 9, 11), reporting how her professor told her that she needs to start teaching courses for the bachelor's students (lines 9, 11).

In the 25 omitted lines, Malia provides details about her upcoming teaching obligations (it is unclear whether this is part of the reported speech or not). In line 38, she clearly resumes the DRS with an upshot of the talk so far: Malia needs to be ready for the student questions and

‘everything’ (lines 39, 43-44). Through prosodic stress on key terms and a large hand gesture on the extreme-case formulation *tout* (‘everything’, line 44, fig.6), Malia conveys the large scope and seriousness of her work obligations. So far, Malia has thus deployed DRS to provide a concrete example of the complaint-worthy obligations associated with her work. In what follows, she pursues the telling with evidence as to the involved parties’ personal characters, portraying her professor as a complaint-worthy person and herself as a legitimate complainant.

In lines 46-47, Malia steps out of the reported frame to offer a meta-comment on the professor’s embodied conduct during the reported talk (see Heinemann & Wagner, 2015, for the temporary abandonment of reported talk to introduce contextualizing information), namely that she said it with a large smile (fig.7) – thereby portraying the professor as taking enjoyment from telling Malia about her work obligations. Again changing footing (Goffman, 1981), Malia expands the reported talk with an embodied reenactment. Raising her eyebrows, pointing with her right-hand index finger and nodding (lines 51-53, fig.8), Malia reenacts the professor giving her a directive: *tu dois parler bien °le français°* (‘you have to speak French well’, line 53). The embodied conduct (see also Malia’s stiff body posture, fig.8), which embodies stereotypical images of adults lecturing children, conveys the strictness of the professor and stands in stark contrast to what follows, namely Malia’s reenactment of her own response.

With two cut-off syllables followed by a small °*mm*° in low-volume and while nodding and pursing her lips firmly (line 56), Malia reenacts her difficulties producing a response to her professor’s firm directive, and she subsequently expands with a prosodically marked confirmation: *£janvier hhhhh ↑b(h)ien ↑sú::r(h)£* (‘January, of course’, lines 59, 61). Through this verbal and embodied conduct, Malia conveys her own, compliant response, and portrays herself as an acquiescent assistant in face of a boss who takes pleasure in inflicting painful experiences on Malia. The other- and self-reported speech thus works to contrast Malia’s own, reasonable conduct with the complained-about person’s unreasonable acting (Bangerter et al., 2011; Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015) and supports the legitimacy of Malia’s complaint. As seen in the coparticipants’ responses, the reported dialog is successful in recruiting affiliation and sympathy (line 63 and onward).

To sum up, the example shows the use of DRS and embodied reenactments not only to exemplify the seriousness of a claimed situation, but also to portray the complained-about party as unreasonable and complaint-worthy and the speaker as a reasonable and legitimate complainant. Prosody, gestures, shift in posture and lexical choices serve as useful resources to signal a shift in footing in portraying the contrast between the own and the other party’s behavior. The excerpt also provides another example of elementary level speakers’ regularly problematic introductions of reported speech, with broken starts and repairs targeting the establishment of person references which interrupt the progressivity of talk. In this case, Malia deployed a series of deictic pointing and large ‘citation mark’ gestures to disambiguate the references of personal pronouns. Interestingly, one year later (see Ex. 5.22), Malia uses another, verbal, resource to accomplish similar disambiguation.

DRS and reenactments of hypothetical situations to support criticism

Not all DRS and reenactments are used to retell past events. Holt (2007) uses the term ‘enactments’ to refer to hypothetical cases of reported conduct, often deployed in jokes. In my data, speakers sometimes use reported talk or embodied behavior to illustrate recurrent events or complaint-worthy conduct more generally – and sometimes it stays ambiguous whether the reported event has occurred or not (cf. Haakana, 2007). In Ex. 5.20, Aurelia reenacts what usually happens to her when she goes to the store. She contrasts her own attempts to speak French (lines 1-2) with Swiss people’s reaction, which she embodied reenacts. Note also Aurelia’s use of the English quotative *like* (line 4).

Ex. 5.20, Lun_2017-03-27_09:00_dans le magasin

- 01 AUR: ʔhehh huhh .hh moi je-ʔ eh j'essaie de parler euh-
me I- I try to speak
- 02 en français,=
in French
- 03 MIA: =mm-hm,
- 04 AUR: **mai:s** [euhm ʔhehehh tous les per]sonnesʔ ʔlike (0.2)#
but all the people
aur ʔdrops shoulders
aur ʔblank face exp-->
fig #1
- 05 MIA: [ʔtu- te parlent en anglaisʔ,]
you- talk to you in English
- 06 MIA: ʔ(oh juste)ʔ,
just
- 07 AUR: [ʔhmʔ heheh .hhhh huhu *.hh*] [hehʔ ʔcomme] ʔça.#
like that
aur *pulls LH in front of face*
aur ʔdrops should, blank face-->
aur -->ʔ ʔcloses eyes-->
fig #2
- 08 MIA: [((laughs silently))] [ʔ↑a:↓:hʔ.]



fig.1



fig.2

- 09 MIA: *(x),
10 (0.3)

11 MIA: \$fini(t)±Ω de# français,\$
 (*finished with*) *French*
 mia \$lifts hands palms forw-\$
 aur -->±
 aur -->Ω
 fig #3



fig.3

12 AUR: [((laughs))]
 13 MIA: [((laughs))]
 14 AUR: e:t ehm (0.8) il:s (1.6) commencent [à me] parler&
and they start talking to me
 15 MIA: [mm-hm,]
 16 AUR: &toujours toujours toujours anglais.
always always always English

In overlap with Mia's anticipatory turn-completion (line 5; see Lerner, 1991), Aurelia introduces her reenactment with *tous les personnes like* ('all the people like', line 4). On the quotative *like*, she drops her shoulders and produces a 'blank', expression-less facial expression (fig.1) that she holds until she starts laughing in line 7, thereby illustrating the uncomprehending reactions she gets from people when she makes an effort to speak French. As Mia laughs with her (line 8), Aurelia redoes the expression by pulling her left hand in front of her face and repeating the dropped shoulders and facial expression, this time introducing it with *comme ça* ('line that', line 7) and with closed eyes (fig.2). After Mia's continued displays of understanding and affiliative laughter (lines 8-9, 11-13, see also Mia's embodied contribution to Aurelia's enactment, in which she reenacts the role of the imagined third party, fig.3), Aurelia expands by reporting verbally the responses she gets (lines 14, 16 and onward).

The excerpt illustrates how elementary level speakers may support complaints about third parties with the help of reenactments of habitual or general complaint-worthy conduct. Here, Aurelia criticizes the Swiss people for reacting in an ignorant or unhelpful way when she makes an effort to learn their language, and the animated embodied conduct helps reinforcing the contrast between her own, positive behavior and the third party's negative behavior and displays Aurelia's heightened affective involvement in the telling (Selting, 2010a; 2012). The reported episode is also effective in engaging coparticipant participation in the telling (Bangerter et al., 2011; Holt, 2000; Sidnell, 2006), as seen in Mia's contributions to the reenacted episode. Finally, the excerpt shows how elementary level speakers sometimes resort to English quotatives such as *like* in reported speech or reenactments; further illustrating the potential difficulty involved in introducing these types of episodes (Couper-Kuhlen, 1999).

self-reported talk often is used in the context of humorous talk. It also exemplifies how complainants make use of this non-seriousness to display ‘troubles resistance’ (Edwards, 2005; Jefferson, 1984b): Here Mariana contents herself with the coparticipants’ laughing responses and does not further pursue the complaint. In terms of interactional resources, the excerpt illustrates elementary level speakers’ high reliance on non-lexical vocalizations to convey negative stance (see Ch. 5.1.1). Mariana’s use of the present-tense quotative *je suis* (‘I am’) to refer to a past event may be seen as non-standard use, indicative of low linguistic competence. However, in this case the rhetorical potential of these resources should not be overlooked, as repetition and format-tying techniques have been observed as effective means to do humor among L2 speakers (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2004). Moreover, historical present is deployed among L1 speakers too in the context of reported speech and is often cited as a resource for enhancing the authenticity of the reported events by portraying them as unfolding in the here-and-now (Johnstone, 1987; see also Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015). Mariana’s deployment of this quotative may thus be considered context-sensitive interactionally competent conduct.

In sum, elementary level speakers deploy DRS and reenactments for a range of different interactional purposes in complaining, such as to provide concrete ‘evidence’ in support of complaint formulations, to contrast the complaint-worthy conduct of a third party with the reasonable own conduct, and to show one’s own despair in face of a troublesome situation. The excerpts have exemplified the difficulties these speakers regularly encounter in introducing DRS and reenactments in French, manifested in broken turn starts, problems with establishing person references, and with formulating past tense quotatives. The examples have also shown several different quotatives used at elementary level, such as the verbs *dire* (‘to say’), *demander* (‘to ask’), *être* (‘to be’), and the English-language *like*. The canonical French quotative *dire* (Moreno, 2016) occurs in 9 of 30, or 30% of the cases.

5.2.2 Upper-intermediate/advanced level

This section presents four excerpts with DRS and reenactments produced by upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers to illustrate these speakers’ use of such resources and highlight differences in their use vis-à-vis elementary level speakers. Notably, all upper-intermediate/advanced level participants recurrently deploy DRS and reenactments in their complaints. Aurelia now more regularly deploys reported speech in her complaints, while the occurrences with Malia are slightly fewer yet recurrent. The interactional purposes of these episodes are similar to what we saw with elementary level speakers: to provide a concrete example supporting a negative observation (Ex. 5.22), to portray the speaker as reasonable and the third party as unreasonable (Ex. 5.23-5.24), and to offer a hypothetical illustration of a general negative tendency (Ex. 5.25).

As for the formal properties of the reported speech, there are some differences compared to elementary level speakers in terms of the initiation of reported episodes. The initiations of more advanced speakers are typically more fluent, including fewer broken turn starts and longer repairs that interrupt the progressivity of talk. In addition, there is a difference in the type of quotatives used to introduce reported talk and actions. Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers deploy as many different quotatives as the elementary level speakers, but the verb *dire* (‘say’) is used more frequently (17 or 53% of 32 cases), and no quotatives in languages other

than French occur. This indicates a routinization and possible ‘streamlining’ of quotatives, which concurs with findings about the use of *dire* to introduce DRS in ordinary L1 French conversations (see Moreno’s study from 2016, in which *dire* is used in 62.5% of cases).

Other-reported speech as concrete ‘evidence’ supporting complaint formulation

As with elementary level speakers, DRS constitutes an important resource for concretely exemplifying the complainable in retellings of past events used as accounts for criticism. Excerpt 5.22 shows such use with upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers and illustrates a difference in the formal properties of DRS vis-à-vis the elementary level speakers. Excerpts 5.18 and 5.19 above exemplified how elementary level speakers sometimes manifest difficulties with establishing person references in the reported speech and may deploy embodied conduct, such as deictic pointing and ‘citation mark’ gestures, to disambiguate pronominal references. Excerpt 5.22 demonstrates how Malia, now at upper-intermediate/advanced level, uses a linguistic resource to accomplish similar disambiguating work, namely the multi-word construction *ça veut dire* (‘it means’) to introduce contextualizing information (cf. Heinemann & Wagner, 2015) with a specification of meaning. Malia complains about the (lack of) indoor heating in her apartment, and she pursues the complaint with a generalized claim, that it is like a ‘strategy’ in the whole country not to heat the apartments. To support this negative observation, she reports what a neighbor told her, namely that people just need to dress warm enough. While the episode at first is introduced with the subordinate marker *que* (‘that’, line 1), projecting IRS (as in Ex. 5.18-19 above), what follows is DRS.

Ex. 5.22, Mer1_2017-11-22_15:33_chauffage

- 01 MAL: e:t il m'a dit que: (.) en fait *nous,#*
 and he told me that in fact we
 mal *small citation mark gest*
 fig #1
- 02 *>ça# veux* dire< eh ils,
 that means they
 mal *points up/right w LH index*
 fig #2



fig.1

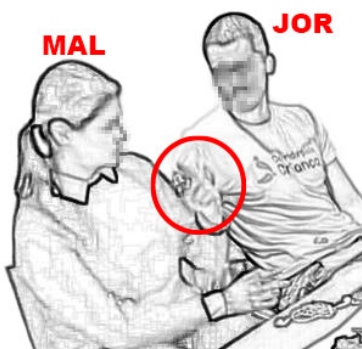


fig.2

- 03 fhhih e:hf les sui:sses (0.3) e:h pensent que: (0.5)
 the Swiss think that
- 04 #eu:h e:::h# (0.9) c:'est nou:s (0.2) qui:: (0.6) e:::h (.)
 it's we who
- 05 qui: (0.2) >comment dit< qui nous devo:ns (.) e:::h porte:r
 who how (to say) who we have to have

- 06 **les vetê[me::nts,]**
 the clothes
- 07 JAV: [couvrir?]
 cover
- 08 MAL: **et tout,**
 and all
- 09 (0.3)
- 10 MAL: mais p- c'est pa:s la chauffage eh qui fdo(h)nne- eh quif
 but n- it's not the heating that gives- that
- 11 fdonne le:: eh la bon .hh e::h#m:# mt (.) °>comment dit<°
 gives the the good how (to say)
- 12 (.) la bon clima- clima°tation°?
 the good (clima- climatation)
- 13 (0.2)
- 14 MAL: #eh [(le# climat)?]
 (the climate)
- 15 JAV: [oui le- le] (climat) oui,
 yes the- the (climate) yes
- 16 °le- le bon tempera[ture,]
 the- the good temperature
- 17 MAL: [oui,]
 yes
- 18 temperature.
 temperature
- 19 (0.2)
- 20 MAL: phh
- 21 (0.2)
- 22 JAV: [ah ouais.]
 oh yeah
- 23 MAL: [et donc] (.) >NON MAIS VRAI↑MENT<,
 and so no but really

To mark the talk as DRS, and particularly the pronoun *nous* ('we', line 1) as a first-person pronoun deployed by the third party, Malia again deploys a 'citation mark' gesture (fig.1). In contrast to the use of this gesture in Ex. 5.19, however, in this case the gesture is brief and very small in scope, produced by Malia as she maintains her hands low, near the table (cf. the large gesture in fig.5, Ex. 5.19). She then verbally announces a reformulation or specification with the construction *ça veut dire* ('it means', line 2), as she briefly points up/right with her left hand index finger (fig.2), and offers the third-person pronoun *ils* ('they', line 2), thereby stepping out of the DRS frame and clarifying to whom the pronoun *nous* ('we') referred. Malia continues with another third-person reference, *les suisses* ('the Swiss', line 3), which further works as a disambiguation device, and then reports on what this third party 'thinks' (line 3), namely that it is *nous* ('we', line 4) who have to wear sufficient clothing (lines 4-6). After what appears as further reported talk with a contrastive formulation about the heating (lines 10-12, 14, 17-18), and some tokens of affiliation from Javier (line 22), Malia pursues the complaint by expressing her frustration in an animated fashion (line 23 and onward).

In this sequence, DRS is thus used as concrete evidence in support of the formulation of the complaint. Similar to some earlier episodes with reported speech by Malia, she first introduces the reported speech as IRS through the use of the subordinate marker *que* ('that'), but what follows is DRS. In this excerpt, we see a new interactional resource being deployed to disambiguate person references, namely the construction *ça veut dire* ('it means') – typically used to announce an upcoming complementary specification (Franckel, 2017) – deployed together with brief pointing. Since this multi-word construction figures in Malia's interactional repertoire already at elementary level, her use of the construction here shows Malia's ability to draw on existing linguistic resources to address interactional problems that she earlier solved with non-verbal means (Ex. 5.19). Similar to in Ex. 5.19, here Malia also deploys a 'citation mark' gesture together with a personal pronoun, but this gesture is brief and much less pronounced than earlier (cf. Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; 2018).

DRS to support portrayal of self as reasonable and of third party as unreasonable

Excerpt 5.23 illustrates the use of DRS and reenactments to portray the complainant in good light and the third party as unreasonable. As with elementary level speakers, the contrast between the reasonable 'self' and the unreasonable 'other' is accomplished through an assembly of verbal, paraverbal and embodied means, but the excerpt also demonstrates the more advanced speakers' ability to report talk and actions in a fluent, unproblematic way. The excerpt comes from Aurelia's long complaint about Swiss people and society presented before (see Ex. 1.2 and 5.9/5.11). Aurelia retells the story of when a man stopped his car to blame Aurelia and her friends for standing in the middle of the road (which they were not, according to Aurelia; see line 40). The analysis will focus on Aurelia's use of self- and other-DRS and how she steps in and out of the reported talk.

Ex. 5.23, Lun_2018-02-26_23:55_mieux dedans_d

- 40 AUR: c'était pas- c'était pas dans la rue.
it was not- it was not in the street
- 41 MIA: mm-hm,
- 42 AUR: **mais quelqu'u:n (.) e:h un homme a arrêté la voiture,**
but someone a man stopped the car
- 43 **.h il a dit eh *vous faites# mal,***
he said you do wrong
- aur *rhythmic pointing w RH index fing*
fig #1



fig.1

44 **vous être da:ns- vous être dans le: eh pas le bon espace,**
you are in- you are in the not the good place

45 *(0.5)#*
 aur *frowns, flips palms up*
 fig #2

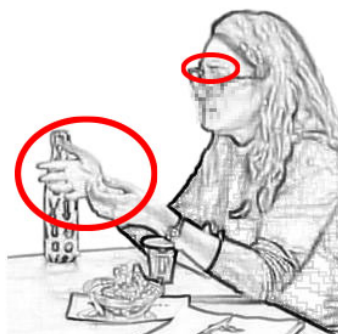


fig.2

46 AUR: **et j'ai dit e:h >excusez-moi< mais nous sommes (.) tous**
and I said excuse me but we are all

47 **(.) entre le: (.) zone (0.2)**
between the zone

48 MIA: **et l'homme c'était en- euh (chais pas) à voiture-**
and the man it was in- (dunno) in car-

49 [en voiture?]
(in the car)

50 AUR: [*en- en voi][ture ici,]
(in- in the car) here
 aur *pulls LH back-forth on table, left side-->

51 MIA: [°huh° uh-huh,]

52 (1.1)*
 aur -->*

53 AUR: **e:t il- il a: parlé avec nous parce que *il a dit eu::h (0.4)***
and he- he talked with us because he said that
 aur *points high-RH index*

54 **pourq- pourquoi *vou:s vous allez pa:s eh* là-bas,**
wh- why don't you go over there
 aur *points high/right-LH index*

55 **à l'autre côté de la rue?**
to the other side of the street

56 *(0.5)#*
 aur *frowns, flips RH palm up*
 fig #3



fig.3

- 57 AUR: mais pourquoi:?
but why
- 58 (0.6)
- 59 MIA: wo↓:w.
- 60 AUR: mais- mais c'était juste telleme:nt (.) et ils font ça quand
but- but it was just really and they do that when
- 61 tu fai:s quelque chose eh contre la règle,
you do something against the rule

The DRS is introduced with the quotative *il a dit* ('he said', line 43). Precisely timed with the beginning of the quoted talk, *vous faites mal* ('you do wrong', line 43), Aurelia starts rhythmically pointing with her right-hand index finger toward her coparticipant Mia (fig.1) so as to embody the man's scolding. Using prosodic stress on key words (lines 44-45), Aurelia animates and upgrades the strength of the third party's conduct, portraying his reaction as overly dramatic. Before reporting on her own response to the man, Aurelia pauses (line 45), frowns and flips her hands palms up (fig.2) to display her irritation and incomprehension (Kendon, 2004; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009), momentarily abandoning the reported frame to question the man's conduct from her own perspective. The self-reported talk, which presents Aurelia's excuse to the man and an objection to his scolding (lines 46-47), is produced in a prosodically more neutral way than the other-reported talk, thereby contributing to the portrayal of Aurelia's own acting as reasonable in face of the overreacting man.

Following a side-sequence, in which Aurelia clarifies the man's positioning (lines 48-52), Aurelia resumes the reported dialog. This piece of reported talk is accomplished in a similar way as before: Again quoting the man with *il a dit* ('he said', line 53), Aurelia deploys large pointing gestures to affectively animate the man's continued scolding (lines 53-54). At the end of the reported segment, she pauses (line 56) and produces a comparable embodied expression of frustration and incomprehension as before (fig.3). This time, however, she does not continue reporting on her own response to the man, but instead produces a rhetorical question (line 57) that questions the man's acting and recruits a small token of affiliation from Mia (line 59), before she expands the complaint (lines 60-61 and onward).

The excerpt illustrates Aurelia's now recurrent use of DRS and reenactments in her complaints, which she typically introduces unproblematically with the canonical French quotative *dire* ('to say') in past tense (here *il a dit*, 'he said', *j'ai dit*, 'I said'). Through marked prosody and animated gesturing, Aurelia creates a contrast between the third party's over-reacting, unreasonable behavior and her own reasonable conduct – thereby highlighting the legitimacy and complaint-worthiness of the complaint (Drew, 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988). This contrast is further strengthened by Aurelia's embodied expressions inserted between the episodes of reported talk, which allow her to transcend the reported world and offer her own embodied evaluations of the situation (cf. Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009).

In a similar, but even more affect-laden way, Ex. 5.24 exemplifies the contrastive use of self- and other-DRS to portray oneself in good light and the third party as unreasonable. Cassandra and Xiang are co-complaining about the teaching methods at a particular university institute (see Ex. 5.7/5.10), and Cassandra reports on the rather aggressive ways in which a certain instructor (*lui*, 'he', line 1) makes his students answer questions. While the story is introduced

as a telling about another student (*cette fille*, ‘this girl’, line 2), the DRS incorporates Cassandra herself as one of the main participants:

Ex. 5.24, Mer2_2017-06-21_15:24_méthodiques_c

- 01 CAS: *mais lui* *il était vraiment >FOCALISÉ<*
but he he was really focused
 cas *rhythmic beats w vertical RH-*
- 02 (.) *avec cette* *fi:lle*.
with this girl
 cas *shakes RH-*places hands & elbows on table*
- 03 (0.6)
- 04 XIA: °°(pour[quoi]°°?)
(why)
- 05 CAS: [il a] **insisté*,*
he insisted
 cas *3 taps w RH index in table, wrinkles nose*
- 06 (0.4)
- 07 XIA: °°mais pour[quoi]°°?
but why
- 08 CAS: [comme] si (j'étais x xx *x)-
as if (I was x xx x)-
 cas *leans fwd-->
- 09 **±ma#± ÷↑VAS-↑Y RE↑PONDRE,÷***
(but) go on answer
 cas -->*
 cas ±shakes RH palm up±
 cas ÷fast nods, then tilts head to side÷
 fig #1



fig.1

10 *°>et tu dis<° (.) >>↑mais ↑je ↑sais# * ↑pas ↑répon↑dre<<,
and you.SING say but I don't know how to answer
 cas *sits up, retracts hands, raises should*
 fig #2



fig.2

11 *mais ±VAS-#↑Y:± réfléchi§sse,*
but go on think
 cas *leans forward over table-----*
 cas ±waves hands-self±
 xia §turns away from CAS, eyebrows up-->
 fig #3



fig.3

12 CAS: *£.hHH heh-hehh£.*§
 cas *sits back up----*
 xia -->§

13 XIA: °okay°.

14 CAS: £e:t£ (1.7) °et cette fille (1.0) >tout d'un-<°
and and this girl suddenl-

15 (.) °elle- elle en pouvait plus°.=
she- she couldn't take it anymore

16 °elle a arrêté £(L(H)E(H)S) C(H)OU(H)RS(H)£,
she stopped the course(s)

Producing rhythmic beats in the air with her right hand held vertically, shaking the hand and then leaning her hands and elbows on the table, and using marked prosody on key terms (lines 1-2), Cassandra vividly portrays the instructor's intense 'focus' with her classmate and shows her affective involvement in the story. Displaying her affiliative incomprehension and eliciting a clarification, Xiang supports Cassandra's continued telling (lines 4, 7). Having reported and embodied how the instructor 'insisted' on getting an answer (line 5), Cassandra leans forward over the table and produces what is recognizable as the instructor's aggressive

elicitation of an answer: *ma* ↑*VAS*-↑*YRE*↑*PONDRE* ('but go on answer', line 9). Through loud volume and raised pitch and by shaking her right hand palm up (fig.1) and then nodding and tilting her head to the side, Cassandra enhances the intensiveness of the instructor's reenacted conduct and portrays it as excessive and unreasonable.

Lowering her voice and speeding up the delivery, Cassandra subsequently produces her own response to the instructor, expressing her inability to answer (line 10). Also this turn is produced with distinct embodied conduct: Cassandra sits back up in her chair, retracts her hands and raises her shoulders (fig.2), embodying her frightened reaction to the instructor's yelling and her inability to comply with his request, thereby portraying herself as something of a helpless victim of the third party's rage (cf. Selting, 2012). Again with marked prosody and while leaning forward, waving both hands toward herself, Cassandra reenacts the instructor's continued elicitation of an answer in an animated, excessive way: *mais VAS*-↑*Y: réfléchisse* ('but go on think', line 11, fig.3). At this point, Xiang provides an embodied expression of disapproval by raising her eyebrows while slightly turning away (lines 11-12), showing support of Cassandra's portrayal, to which Cassandra laughs (line 12). After Xiang's quiet *okay* (line 13), by which she receipts Cassandra's reported episode without treating the telling as completed, Cassandra offers the climax of the story (lines 14-16).

The excerpt offers a prime example of how complainants use DRS and reenactments to depict stark contrasts between their own and a third party's conduct and thereby convey both the complaint-worthiness of the other's conduct and their own reasonableness. In this case, the reported speech is introduced without quotatives and with *tu dis* ('you.SING say'), and instead the deictic shift, semantic content, marked prosody, and embodied conduct index to whom the reported talk belongs (Couper-Kuhlen, 1999; Günthner, 2000). As shown by Moreno (2016), the absence of quotative is common in ordinary French conversation (occurring in more than a fifth of the cases in her study). The present-tense quotative *tu dis* ('you.SING say') marks the use of historical present, as discussed above commonly deployed to enhance the authenticity of the reported episode and the 'witnessable nature' of the events (Johnstone, 1987; see also Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015). The excerpt also illustrates more advanced speakers' typically fluent uses of DRS, with unproblematic introduction of the reported dialog and talk in fast pace (see also the quotative in line 10 delivered in fast pace and low volume).

DRS and reenactments of hypothetical situations to support criticism

As with elementary level speakers, some instances of DRS and reenactments of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers portray hypothetical situations for purposes of supporting claims of general negative tendencies. In Ex. 5.25, Cassandra produces DRS to exemplify the general tendency of Swiss people not to make an effort to understand L2 speakers:

Ex. 5.25, Mer2_2017-03-29_07:00_petit effort

09 MIR: £ah [hahahah£]
 10 CAS: [mais ça] c'est en généra:l hein,
 but that it's in general huh
 11 .hh >c'est pas uniquement la liaison<.=
 it's not only the (linkage)
 12 CAS: =>même si tu dis< les mo:ts .hh les m-
 even if you say the words the w-
 13 **si tu dis +<bordello>,+ ((in. Italian))**
 if you say bordello
 14 que c'est bordel en français,
 that it's bordel ('brothel') in French
 15 **[*i Ωfont] †hein# †quoi?**
 they do huh what
 cas *wobbles head & torso up/forward-->
 cas Ωcloses eyes-->
 cas †lifts RH to ear-->
 fig #1



fig.1

16 LIA: [°uh-huh°,]
 17 CAS: **qu'est-ce #queΩ t'as [dit?]*†**
 what did you say
 cas -->Ω
 cas -->*
 cas -->†
 fig #2
 18 MIR: [£eh]hehe huhaha£.



fig.2

19 CAS: =tu vois?
 you see
 20 LIA: °o:kay°.

- 21 LIA: ʃheh-heh-[hehʃ,]
- 22 CAS: [font-] °font euh° (.) font PAS le petit effort
 do- do don't do the little effort
- 23 °de te (comp[rendre°].]
 to (understand) you
- 24 MIR: [ouai] [::s,]
 yeah

The reported talk is introduced in an *if*-conditional presenting what happens if one (here *tu*, ‘you.SING’ used as impersonal pronoun) pronounces a word like *bordel* (literally ‘brothel’, but typically used for ‘mess’ or ‘disorder’) as *bordello* (the Italian equivalent, lines 12-14). The reenactment with DRS is introduced with *i font* (‘they do’) and produced with marked prosody and embodied conduct (line 15). While initiating the reenactment, Cassandra moves her head and torso up and forward in a wobbly manner and closes her eyes (fig.1) as she offers the open-class repair initiator ↑*hein* (‘huh’, line 15) in high pitch and with prosodic stress. As she continues with another repair-initiation, *quoi* (‘what’, line 15), she lifts her right hand to her ear (fig.2) and maintains it there during the first part of the expansion *qu’est-ce que t’as dit?* (‘what did you say’, line 17). The assembly of verbal, paraverbal, and embodied conduct excessively depicts Swiss people’s inability to understand a mispronunciation and provides a ridiculing portrayal of them. Cassandra’s actions are responded to by laughter from Miranda (line 18) and later Liang (line 21), and this leads Cassandra to summarize her telling with a serious criticism, namely that the Swiss do not make an effort to understand (lines 22-23).

In this excerpt, the DRS and reenactment hence do not refer to a specific past event, but rather work as an example supporting a generalized claim about the complained-about party’s behavior. Using excessive embodied conduct and marked prosody, Cassandra offers a ridiculing portrayal of the ‘other’ that serves to underline complaint-worthiness while simultaneously creating a humorous effect. The excerpt shows the use of a quotative that occurs at upper-intermediate/advanced but not elementary level, namely the verb *faire* (‘to do’), which announces a reported action rather than talk, and which is a relatively common quotative in informal spoken French (Moreno, 2016). As a final note, Cassandra’s criticism (*font PAS le petit effort de te comprendre*, ‘don’t do the little effort to understand you’, lines 14-15), by which she resumes the serious layer of her complaint after the non-serious reenactment, shows more advanced speakers’ tendency to draw on idiomatic expressions and figurative language (such as the expression *faire un petit effort*, ‘make a little effort’) to convey negative stance.

5.2.3 Summary: Direct-reported speech and reenactments

Elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers deploy DRS and reenactments in the context of complaints for similar interactional purposes: to provide concrete examples of complaint-worthy past, hypothetical, or recurrent situations, to convey the reasonableness of their own conduct and the unreasonable, complaint-worthy conduct of others, and to illustrate their own despair in face of complaint-worthy events. All but the last of these are interactional purposes of DRS and reenactments often cited in the L1 literature (see Ch. 2.2.4). The fact that speakers at both elementary and upper-intermediate levels were able to produce recognizable episodes of DRS and reenactments testifies to their high level of L2 IC despite sometimes

limited linguistic means. It is primarily the frequency of and the way these episodes of reported talk and reenactments are initiated that differ across proficiency levels.

In terms of frequency, DRS and reenactments are used relatively rarely or never with three out of four elementary level speakers. The distribution in use between the participants is thus unequal, with Malia producing 25 or 68% of all DRS or reenactments (37 in total). In contrast, all upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers regularly use these resources for complaining, and the distribution between participants is more even, with all speakers producing between 31% and 36% of the 42 occurrences (see Table 5.3).

Participant	DRS/reenactments	Quotative <i>dire</i> (reenactments excl.)
Suresh	0	-
Mariana	6 (16%)	3 of 4 DRS
Malia (beginning)	25 (68%)	6 of 22 DRS
Aurelia (beginning)	6 (16%)	0 of 4 DRS
Total elementary level	37	9 of 30 (30%)
Malia (end)	14 (33%)	6 of 12 DRS
Aurelia (end)	13 (31%)	6 of 10 DRS
Cassandra	15 (36%)	5 of 10 DRS
Total upper-intermediate/ advanced level	42	17 of 32 (53%)

Table 5.3. Frequency and distribution of DRS and reenactments and of the quotative *dire* ('to say') across participants.

The quantitative analysis of the frequency of occurrence of DRS/reenactments across proficiency levels indicates that these actions may be challenging for speakers with low L2 proficiency (prompting speakers to avoid them), but it does not explain why. In contrast, the qualitative analysis sheds some light on *in what way* these may be challenging.

As discussed above, the introduction of reported talk is a complex act, as speakers must convey not only *that* reported talk is underway, but also *who* they report on and *what purpose* the reported speech serves (Couper-Kuhlen, 1999). The deictic shifts involved in DRS-initiations may furthermore cause referential ambiguities. Most excerpts with elementary level speakers illustrated some kind of non-standard introductions of reported speech or reenactments, with speakers having difficulties with verb tense and word order (Ex. 5.18), introducing DRS first as IRS (Ex. 5.18-5.19), and deploying idiosyncratic enquoting devices such as the English *like* (Ex. 5.20). A survey of the quotatives deployed by all speakers reveals that both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers rely on a range of quotative verbs and

expressions to introduce DRS/reenactments, more precisely 8 different ones per proficiency level. However, again there is a difference in distribution, with the verb *dire* ('to say') deployed to a higher extent by more advanced speakers (in 53% of DRS) than by elementary level speakers (30%; see Table 5.3). The difference in distribution of quotatives suggests a streamlining over time in the use of quotatives, with more advanced speakers routinizing the use of a canonical enquoting device (Moreno, 2016). These findings to some extent concur with Hauser's (2013) observations about a Japanese ESL speaker's resources for introducing DRS over seven months. Hauser documented a decreased use of Japanese quotatives and the emergence of the pattern 'person reference + English-language quotative' (almost exclusively the English canonical quotative *say*) over time.

While the uneven distribution of enquoting devices between speakers at different levels provides some indications of these speakers' evolving L2 grammars-for-interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2018), it is noteworthy that only the first of the investigated excerpts (Ex. 5.18-5.19) showed the participants' orientations to the elementary level speakers' introductions of reported speech as interactionally problematic, leading to repair sequences with interruptions in progressivity of talk. *That* participants introduced DRS or that particular quotatives were used rather than others hence did not pose particular difficulties; instead it was the establishment of person references – *who* was reported on – that proved challenging for intersubjectivity.

In the case of elementary level speakers' problems with ambiguity in the introduction of DRS, embodied conduct was a key resource for the resolution of such problems, with deictic pointing and 'citation mark gestures' accompanying talk deployed to disambiguate person references (Ex. 5.18-19). Excerpt 5.22 exemplified how the same participant, Malia, resolved a similar problem almost a year later, in a much faster and smoother way than before. This time Malia deployed a specific multi-word construction to signal an incipient specification before repairing the person reference. This repair was also accompanied by embodied conduct, but by gestures of much smaller scope than observed in the same interactional environment a year earlier. On the one hand, this observation converges with research showing that the development of L2 IC in part involves learning how to put to use existing interactional resources to accomplish new actions (e.g., Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015; Pekarek Doehler, 2018). On the other hand, it supports the findings of Eskildsen and Wagner's (2015; 2018) studies on gesture-talk constellations in L2 development that show a change over time in gesture use with decrease in gesture scope (and ultimately disappearance) as linguistic resources serve more prominent and precise interactional purposes.

As seen in several excerpts, reported speech and reenactments were sometimes responded to by laughter rather than sympathetic responses attending to the seriousness of the complaint, suggesting some difficulties related to the recognition of action-formation. When such responses were oriented to as problematic, speakers deployed means to bring back the talk to the serious framework of the complaint, such as affective non-lexical vocalizations and embodied conduct (elementary level speaker: Ex. 5.18) and a negatively loaded assertion (upper-intermediate/advanced level speaker: Ex. 5.25). In other cases, the potential of DRS and reenactments to create humorous effects allowed for these being used as a resource for conveying one's ability to cope with troubles in a light-hearted way rather than posing an interactional problem.

5.3 Discussion

In this chapter, I set out to shed light on some of the interactional resources L2 speakers of French deploy in constructing their complaints *as* complaints, and how their use of these resources changes over time. The choice to focus on negative assessments/non-verbal expressions of negative stance and on DRS and reenactments was grounded in the central role of these resources for constructing complaint-worthiness as identified in prior literature (see Ch. 2.2) as well as in their prominence in the data under scrutiny. At the same time, these analytical objects also encompass various smaller units of interactional means observed as resources for complaining, such as negatively loaded lexical items and expressions, extreme-case formulations, marked prosody, affect-laden non-lexical vocalizations, and embodied conduct expressing negative stance. I therefore hope to have demonstrated the participants' use of such resources more generally. While only to some extent addressing individual participants' longitudinal trajectories, the analysis revealed larger developmental patterns in L2 speakers' use of negative assessments/non-verbal expressions of negative stance and of DRS and reenactments in complaints. The findings converge with and add to prior literature on both complaining-in-interaction and on the development of L2 IC.

The study of negative assessments and non-verbal expressions of negative stance showed that L2 speakers move from deploying a limited to a wider repertoire of linguistic resources for assessing. This change manifests in a more diversified set of assessment formats over time, both on the lexical and syntactic level, with upper-intermediate/advanced speakers deploying a greater variety of assessment adjectives and intensifiers and producing syntactically more diverse assessment turns than elementary level speakers. The more diverse formats for negatively assessing has interactional consequences for the construction of complaint-worthiness, as they allow speakers to more readily produce high-grade assessments and upgrades of first assessments in context-sensitive ways, for example to participate in joint complaining. The findings about longitudinal diversification concur with and expand on Nguyen's (2019) observations about one L2 English speaker's progressive diversification of positive assessment segments and Hellermann's (2008) observations about one ESL speaker's longitudinal use of closing-implicative assessments. My findings also support prior studies on the development of L2 IC that suggest that such development crucially involves the progressive diversification of methods for action (see Ch. 2.1). They furthermore complement research on complaining more generally, by systematically documenting some of the specific purposes of negative assessments in complaint sequences (such as constructing joint complaints) – something which, to my knowledge, has not been done before (but see Drew & Walker, 2009; Rääbis et al., 2019, for brief observations about resources for joint complaining).

Both the analysis of negative assessments and the analysis of DRS and reenactments contribute to our understanding of the development of an L2 grammar-for-interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2018). In addition to showing a general diversification of grammatical formats over time, the developmental trajectory for negative assessment turns observed with some participants is indicative of exemplar-based learning (see Eskildsen, 2011; 2012; 2015), with speakers starting out with producing negative assessments in the form of a particular lexico-syntactic pattern which subsequently 'loosens up' to allow for the incorporation of other components (such as

different adverbial intensifiers). Similarly, both sub-studies of this chapter documented an increased use of multi-word constructions and figurative expressions expressing negative stance with higher proficiency levels, in line with what has been observed in functional and psycholinguistic studies of such linguistic resources (Arvidsson, 2019; Erman et al., 2016; Forsberg, 2008). In contrast, the comparison of enquoting devices deployed by elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers in the initiation of DRS revealed a pattern going in the other direction, namely a ‘streamlining’ of quotatives over time, with more advanced speakers to a higher extent deploying the canonical quotative verb *dire* (‘to say’) than less advanced speakers, who exhibited more variation in their enquoting devices. We thus see the development presented in Fig. 5.1:

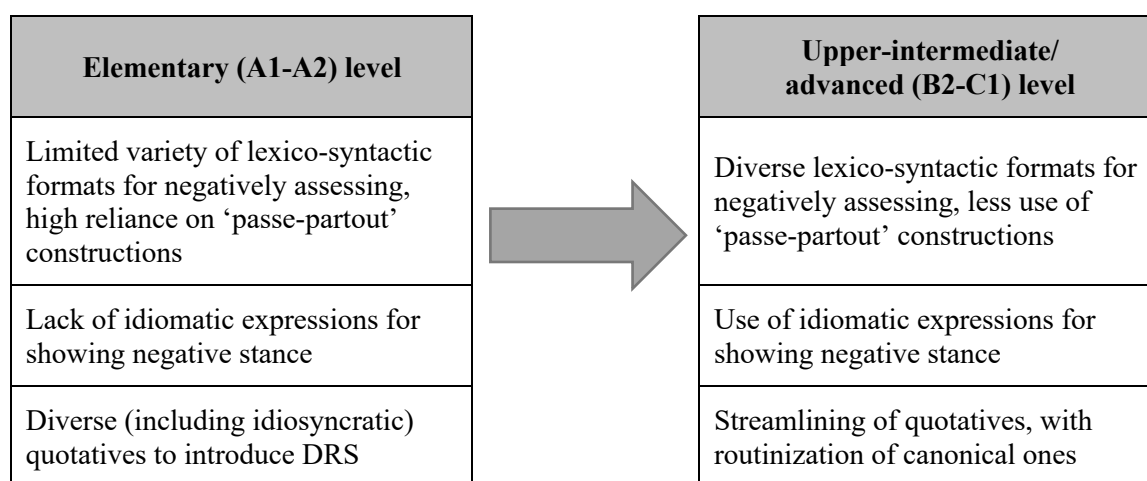


Fig. 5.1. Development over time in linguistic resources for negatively assessing and introducing DRS.

The comparison in Fig. 5.1. shows developmental patterns going in opposite directions when it comes to the reliance on particular linguistic constructions. While at elementary level, speakers rely heavily on certain types of linguistic constructions for expressing negative stance and use these in diverse interactional contexts (such as *c’est très difficile*), at more advanced levels a different type of linguistic constructions is found, namely those in idiomatic expressions and figurative language. These findings may seem contradictory, but they are not necessarily: As suggested in a few recent and ongoing L2 IC studies on speakers’ development of grammatical resources for action (Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Balaman, forthcoming; Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.; Skogmyr Marian, 2020), while progressively diversifying certain action formats (such as for disagreeing: Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011; opening tasks and storytellings: Hellermann, 2008, or taking turns: Cekaite, 2007; Watanabe, 2017), L2 speakers also routinize patterns of language use to accomplish particular interactional tasks and organize their discourse. This latter process manifests itself in a ‘streamlining’ of action formats over time, that is, in *less* diverse formats used for routine actions. Such streamlining works in favor of efficacy, as the speaker can select one particular linguistic resource that proves locally efficient and stick to that in similar interactional contexts (for example, to hold the floor, see Pekarek Doehler & Skogmyr Marian, in prep.). In terms of resources for introducing DRS, it is possible that a larger dataset would allow for more conclusive observations regarding a streamlining of quotatives over time. In any case, the more advanced speakers’ more frequent use of the quotative *dire* (‘to say’) concurs with what has

been observed about French L1 speakers' use of this quotative (Moreno, 2016), suggesting that the L2 speakers' grammars-for-interaction progressively approximate the ones of L1 speakers (see Pekarek Doehler, 2018).

Moreover, both sub-studies highlighted the fundamentally multimodal nature of expressions of negative stance (including assessments) and of DRS and reenactments. Speakers at both proficiency levels deployed paraverbal and non-verbal resources such as prosody, non-lexical vocalizations, gaze direction, facial expressions, gestures, and change in posture in concert with verbal resources to upgrade negative stance displays, show affective involvement, and construct contrasts between self and others, much like what has been observed in the L1 literature (see Ch. 2.2.4). Some particular observations regarding speakers' use of these resources are noteworthy, however: (1) speakers recurrently finely synchronize specific embodied conduct with the delivery of negative assessment segments and treat these as multimodal packages in the repetition of assessments. This observation contributes to the growing body of research focusing on specific constellations of linguistic and embodied resources for action formation (Goodwin, 2007; 2013; Hayashi, 2005; Kärkkäinen & Thompson, 2018; Lilja & Piirainen-Marsh, 2019; Lindström et al., 2019; Mondada, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019) by offering evidence of such constellations in a new action context (see also Bressemer & Müller, 2017, for a Construction Grammar study on a multimodal 'negative-assessment-construction'). (2) While non-verbal conduct in certain action contexts and positions remains constant over time (such as the multimodal packages just described, non-verbal completions of verbally incomplete turns, and non-verbal conduct embodying characters in DRS and reenactments), the use of standalone non-lexical vocalizations and their accompanying embodied conduct to produce precise negative assessments decreases over time. In addition, the analysis of DRS-introductions also provided some evidence as to the progressive decrease in gesture use and gesture scope for specific action purposes. While tentative in nature, these observations are in line with recent work in usage-based linguistics and CA (Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; 2018) that has documented a progressive decrease in gesture use (and in gesture scope) as verbal resources take more prominent roles in particular multimodal packages in the L2. To some extent, L2 speakers' use of embodied conduct thus seems to work compensatorily, helping speakers effectively participate in social activities (such as assessment activities) despite limited linguistic means. More systematic studies of for example the precise interactional purposes of non-lexical vocalizations and other non-linguistic conduct in L2 speakers' interactions over time would likely offer more robust evidence regarding these issues.

6. The interactional history of a complainable

This chapter offers an exploratory investigation of how the development of complaint practices relates to larger socialization processes, particularly as it concerns the establishment of shared knowledge over time and evolving social relationships. I first briefly discuss prior L1 and L2 studies that address the relationship between the development of interactional practices and socialization processes (Ch. 6.1). I then present two longitudinal case studies that explore this line of inquiry in the context of L2 complaining, focusing on the participants Suresh (Ch. 6.2) and Malia (Ch. 6.3). In Chapter 6.4, I discuss the implications of the results of the two case studies for our understanding of the development of L2 IC.

6.1 Interactional practices and socialization processes

As discussed in Chapter 2.1.2, there is limited EMCA research directly addressing the link between the development of L2 IC and socialization processes, such as evolving social relationships. A few studies on L1-L2 conversations (Greer, 2019; Kim, 2017; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019; Skogmyr Marian, 2018) indicate that people who are in the process of getting increasingly acquainted adjust their interactional practices to each other as they engage in similar types of interactional encounters over time. Some recent longitudinal CA studies on L1 talk have also shown the effects of speakers' shared interactional histories on recipient-design (Deppermann, 2018; Norrthon, 2019; in press; see also González-Martínez & Giglio, 2020; Mondada, 2018a; Voutilainen et al., 2018). The term *interactional history* refers to participants' shared interactional experiences, and has been used by Deppermann (2018) as a way to conceptualize the development of *common ground* (Clark, 1996); that is, shared meanings ascribed to semiotic resources and shared expectations about coparticipants' actions and language use. This emergent research strand demonstrates that it is possible to trace back speakers' use of particular action formats and syntactic and lexical choices to distinct interactional encounters, supporting the idea of change in language use as a publicly observable social process (cf. also the CA-SLA literature on micro-genetic change discussed in Ch. 3.1).

Although not longitudinal in nature, the works of Goodwin on co-operative accumulative action (Goodwin, 2013; 2018; Goodwin et al., 2002) are also relevant for the study of interactional histories and recipient-design. This research shows that practices of recycling and building upon other speakers' linguistic material in prior utterances are pervasive in human interaction and may constitute especially important resources for meaning-making for interactants with limited linguistic repertoires (as seen in the studies on the aphasic man Chil's interactions). It also illustrates how particular groups of participants (such as Chil and his family members) may develop an efficient in-group speech-exchange system that relies strongly on shared knowledge and joint experiences for the establishment of intersubjectivity. In all, the studies on both L1 and L2 interactions highlight the need for more research on the relationship between changing interactional practices, the development of social relationships, the establishment of shared knowledge, and speakers' repeated engagement in similar interactional encounters over time.

I pursue this line of inquiry by exploring how the development of practices for complaining relates to participants' shared interactional experiences and evolving relationships. As discussed in Ch. 2.2.2, research on complaints indicates that these are highly sensitive to the interactional context and to the nature of the relationship between the participants. It has been suggested that complaining is particularly common within participant frameworks involving close friends and relatives, in which participants recurrently talk about their everyday problems and struggles. Complaining has also been argued to constitute an important mechanism for socialization processes (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981). Highlighting speakers' common interests and values, complaining allows participants to increase their sense of solidarity within the particular membership group. By participating in complaining, participants show their willingness to engage in co-member conduct and contribute to the development of their social relationship with their coparticipants (Hanna, 1981). Complaints thus both *reflect* and *reshape* the nature of the participants' relationship and may therefore be a specifically suitable analytical object for examining the role of socialization processes in language learning. My data lend themselves well to an exploratory investigation of these issues, as they allow for the longitudinal study of complaint practices with speakers who are in the process of getting increasingly acquainted.

Based on two longitudinal case studies, I illustrate how the participants' increasing shared experiences and evolving social relationships affect the way they invoke and recipient-design their own complaints and respond to other speakers' complaints. In these case studies, I track how the participants of two different conversation circle groups orient to and invoke a specific, recurrent complainable over time. In other words, instead of tracking the speakers' entire shared interactional histories (as in some of the longitudinal CA studies presented above), I trace the interactional histories of the complainables themselves. I will not offer any conclusive findings about the role of socialization processes in the development of L2 IC, but merely shed light on some of the aspects of such processes that are relevant for the particular data at hand.

Case study 1 shows how Suresh, a beginner speaker of French, draws on his prior interactional experiences with one of his coparticipants to produce complaint proffers about the outdoor temperature that are specifically designed to match his coparticipant's previously expressed stance. Case study 2 demonstrates how Malia and her coparticipants over time talk into relevance and co-construct a recurring complainable pertaining to Malia's professional situation. These case studies illustrate how the long-term monitoring of other people's stances toward specific issues and the progressive establishment of shared knowledge may provide affordances for participation in complaint activities and for the exchange of affiliation and sympathy. They also provide emic evidence for the social-relational purposes of complaining. The findings open avenues for future, more in-depth EMCA studies into the relationship between L2 development and socialization processes.

6.2 Case study 1: Suresh

In Chapter 4.3, I showed that negative stance expressions about complainables that lie within the epistemic domain of the coparticipants offer opportunities to engage in co-complaining, allowing participants to exchange displays of affiliation. In this section, I document how Suresh, elementary level speaker of French, draws on his interactional history with his coparticipant Aurelia to produce assessments about the temperature that match Aurelia's previously expressed stance, thereby providing an opportunity for the participants to engage in co-complaining. The analysis focuses on Suresh's participation in the conversation group of Aurelia, Mia, and Natascha; participants with an estimated proficiency level of A2 at start (Suresh's estimated level was slightly lower, A1). During the ten months that Suresh participates in this group, he contributes actively to only three complaint sequences. All three complaints are about the weather. These complaints are not about exactly the same complainable, in the sense that the weather changes from one day to another. The first complaint is about the heat, the second about rain, and the third about the cold. They are all complaints about weather conditions, however, and they serve similar interactional small-talk purposes. They all take place at moments when Suresh is alone with Aurelia, meaning that these are interactions in which Suresh is obliged to contribute actively to the conversation instead of merely listening to his coparticipants – which he often does when more participants are present.

The analysis presents two sets of related interactions in which Suresh and Aurelia partake in stance-taking about the temperature, making up a total of five chronologically ordered excerpts (Ex. 6.1-6.2 are about the heat; Ex. 6.3-6.5 concern the cold). Only two of the excerpts (Ex. 6.2 and 6.5) develop into actual complaints. In the analysis, I show how Suresh relies on his interactions with Aurelia in the preceding excerpts (Ex. 6.1, and Ex. 6.3-6.4, respectively) to offer opportunities for Aurelia to complain.

6.2.1 Proffering a complaint about the *heat*

Excerpts 6.1 and 6.2 demonstrate how Suresh draws on his shared interactional experience with Aurelia to facilitate complaining about the heat. Excerpt 6.1 comes from the end of Suresh and Aurelia's third conversation with each other. This is the first time they meet alone, and they are about to end the conversation. After establishing that they will see each other again in two weeks (lines 1-7), they both stand up (line 9) to pursue the leave-taking. Aurelia then utters a non-lexical vocalization (line 12) and assesses the temperature as *chaud* ('warm', line 14).

Ex. 6.1, Lun1_2017-05-29_28:26_dans deux semaines

01 AUR: eu:hm (.) on se voit (e:n) deux semaines.
we see each other (in) two weeks

02 (0.6)

03 SUR: oui.
yes

04 AUR: parce que: (0.4)
because

05 SUR: °mm-hm°,

06 (0.3)

07 AUR: >ouais.<
yeah

08 AUR: £°nh-heh-hmh£°,

09 +*\$(0.6)*\$+ ((noise from chairs moving))
aur *stands up*
sur \$stands up\$

10 AUR: +£↑co:↑o:l£,+ ((noise from chairs moving))

11 +(1.6)+ ((noise from chairs moving))

12 AUR: **ou°ffhhh°.**

13 +*(0.8)*+ ((noise from chair moving))
aur *moves chair*

14 AUR: °il fait° ↑**chaud** ↑**mainte**↑**nant**,+
it is warm now

15 *\$(7.6)\$*
aur *leaves table*
sur \$moves chair, leaves table\$

While Aurelia's °il fait° ↑**chaud** ↑**mainte**↑**nant** ('it is warm now', line 14) is neutrally valenced in that 'warm' could be interpreted as either positive or negative, the just preceding non-lexical vocalization *ou°ffhhh°* as well as the prosodically marked delivery of the second part of the turn (with change in pitch and stress on *chaud*, 'warm') makes the turn understandable as a negative assessment of the heat. Whether Suresh interprets it as such is not clear from the excerpt, as he does not respond and both participants leave the table (line 15), but Suresh's actions in Ex. 6.2 indicates that he has paid attention to Aurelia's turn.

Excerpt 6.2 takes place two weeks after Ex. 6.1, right at the beginning of Suresh and Aurelia's next meeting. The participants have just sat down at the table, and Suresh initiates the conversation through a conventional how-are-you inquiry to Aurelia (line 2). After minimally responding to Aurelia's reciprocating question (line 6), Suresh produces a topic proffer (line 8) that is oriented to by Aurelia as an occasion to complain about the heat.

Ex. 6.2, Lun_2017-06-19_00:00_avec chaleur

01 (6.5)

02 SUR: ça va?
how are you

03 (0.7)

04 AUR: oui ça va et toi?
yes I'm good and you

05 (0.2)

06 SUR: mm-hm,

07 (1.5)

08 SUR: **mt il fait chaud.**
it is warm

- 22 SUR: °le travail°,
the work
- 23 (0.3)
- 24 AUR: huh?=
25 SUR: na avec eu:h (1.6) avec la vie,
(na) with with life
- 26 (0.7)
- 27 SUR: [beaucoup de stresse,]
a lot of stress
- 28 AUR: [avec eu:h-] parce qu'il fait chaud.
with because it is warm
- 29 AUR: ɛhhh[hhhɛ] (.) ɛhah-hahɛ,
- 30 SUR: [a:h.]
oh
- 31 SUR: ɛhhhɛ
- 32 (1.5)
- 33 AUR: °ɛhm: hhɛ°
- 34 ASS: °alors à tout à l'heure°.
well see you later

Besides the omission of the adverbial *maintenant* ('now'), Suresh's turn in line 8 precisely repeats Aurelia's assessment two weeks earlier: *il fait chaud* ('it is warm'). In contrast to Aurelia in Ex. 6.1, however, neither Suresh's turn delivery nor his accompanying embodied conduct conveys any particular stance. Suresh's assertion is nevertheless oriented to by Aurelia as a negative assessment and an opportunity for her to express her frustration about the temperature. By rolling her eyes, raising her right hand (fig.1) and then starting to wave it in front of her as a fan while producing a long sigh followed by *ouais* ('yeah', line 10, fig.2), Aurelia offers an embodied expression of negative affective stance that transforms Suresh's assertion into an invitation to complain. Aurelia subsequently develops the sequence into a small complaint by offering several negative stance expressions and asserting the negative consequences of the heat (lines 13, 17, 28). Suresh, however, refrains from contributing to the complaint. Instead he displays puzzlement (line 19) as to Aurelia's reference to stress (line 17) and does not verbally affiliate or expand on her stance expressions. By not contributing to the expansion of the sequence, Suresh does not orient to his initiation as an invitation to produce a joint complaint. Instead it seems to have been delivered as a mere topic proffer, in which "a speaker proposes a particular topic ... but does not actively launch or further develop the proposed topic" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 169-170), which is treated by Aurelia as a *complaint proffer* that she accepts by treating the proffer as a negative assessment and by expanding the sequence. Likely due to the lack of affiliative displays from Suresh, Aurelia quickly abandons her attempts to get him on board with the development of the complaint and the sequence closes upon a greeting from the assistant (who has been arranging with the technical set-up of the recording, line 35).

By analyzing Ex. 6.1 and Ex. 6.2 chronologically, we have thus seen two consecutive sequences (the closing of one conversation and the opening of the next) in which Suresh and Aurelia topicalize (first Aurelia, then Suresh) and engage in stance-taking (primarily Aurelia) about the

heat. In the second of these excerpts, Suresh uses what could be considered a modified repeat (Stivers, 2005) of Aurelia's assessment of the heat two weeks earlier to initiate the sequence.

6.2.2 Proffering a complaint about the *cold*

Excerpts 6.3-6.5 show a similar chronological chain of events, although here Suresh *changes his stance-taking* toward the outdoor temperature from two interactional encounters (Ex. 6.3-6.4) to another (Ex. 6.5), thereby proffering a joint complaint about the cold.

Excerpt 6.3 comes from a recording almost four months after Ex. 6.2. The participants (Mia, Natascha, Suresh, Aurelia) have been talking about the fact that it is still warm outside despite it being October. Natascha has said that she thinks that the winter will be cold, and after asserting that she likes the cold, she asks Aurelia whether she likes the winter (line 1). In the talk that follows, Aurelia and Suresh display conflicting stances toward the cold: Aurelia expresses her strong dislike of the winter and the cold, whereas Suresh claims that he likes the winter and cold temperatures (see particularly turns marked in bold):

Ex. 6.3, Lun_2017-10-16_33:35_sensible

- 01 NAT: mais ↑j'aime- tu aimes le::: (.) °l'hiver°?
but I like- you like the the winter
- 02 (0.2) °l- l- (.) l'hiver°,
th- th- the winter
- 03 (0.3)
- 04 NAT: [°l'hiver°.]
the winter
- 05 AUR: [**non.**]
no
- 06 NAT: l'hiver?
the winter
- 07 (0.2)
- 08 AUR: **mm- [hm.]**
- 09 NAT: [non?]
no
- 10 (0.3)
- 11 AUR: **non.**
no
- 12 NAT: ah parce que (0.2) §mais tu viens de angleterre.
oh because but you come from England
sur §smiles-->1.24
- 13 (0.2)
- 14 AUR: [ouais,]
yeah
- 15 NAT: [ɛtu as] beauc(h)oup l(h)e hheh[kheh .hehhɛ]
you have a lot the
- 16 SUR: [ɛhehehehɛ]

- 17 SUR: [ʃhehhʃ]
- 18 NAT: [ʃc'est] [assez hehe]he[hehʃ]
it's enough
- 19 MIA: [ʃhehehehhʃ]
- 20 AUR: [oui] non j'aime [pas.]
yes no I don't like
- 21 NAT: [ʃ.he][hhʃ]
- 22 AUR: [ʃhh]hhhʃ
- 23 NAT: ʃeh [heh hehhʃ]
- 24 AUR: [°heheheh°]§
sur -->§
- 25 AUR: **non j'aime pas du tout parce que:: (0.4) n::on**
no I don't like at all because no
- 26 **c'est pas pour moi.**
it's not for me
- 27 (0.3)
- 28 NAT: oui.
yes
- 29 AUR: c'est juste e::h j- (0.4) je sui::s (0.3) sensible eh au froid,
it's just I- I am sensitive to cold
- 30 (0.3)
- 31 NAT: mm:-mm,
- 32 AUR: et je préfère e::h quand il fait beaucoup chaud,
and I prefer when it is a lot warm
- 33 c'est mieux pour moi.
it's better for me
- 34 NAT: oui,
yes
- 35 AUR: parce que j- >je sais pas<.
because I- I don't know
- 36 (0.2)
- 37 AUR: **mais avec le froid non j'aime pas.**
but with the cold no I don't like
- 38 NAT: mm: ,
- 39 §°d'accord°.
alright
sur §nods slightly-->
- 40 AUR: non.§
no
sur -->§
- 41 %(1.1)
nat %shifts gaze to SUR%
- 42 NAT: et [toi?]
and you
- 43 AUR: [°e:h°]

- 44 SUR: **e:h [j'aime] beaucoup.**
I like a lot
- 45 NAT: [tu-]
you-
- 46 NAT: m- eh tu préfères [l'hiver?]
you prefer the winter
- 47 SUR: **[ouais.]**
yeah
- 48 SUR: **ou↑i:,**
yes
- 49 NAT: ↑a:h,
oh
- 50 [cool.]
- 51 SUR: [ɛhh]heha[hehhɛ]
- 52 NAT: [parce que] tu n' (ai) pas- eh en- en- eh indie;
because you (don't have-) in- in- Indie
- 53 (0.3)
- 54 SUR: [e:::h]
- 55 NAT: [e:h le] le très froi:d,
the the very cold
- 56 SUR: mm,
- 57 NAT: [non,]
no
- 58 SUR: [pas] très froid.
not very cold
- 59 NAT: okay d'a[ccord.]
okay alright
- 60 SUR: [pa]::s [la neige,]
not the snow
- 61 NAT: [c'est exo]tique,
it's exotic
- 62 (0.3) encore.
still
- 63 SUR: ouais.
yeah
- 64 NAT: ɛh [ou(h)ais(h)ɛ]
yeah
- 65 SUR: [ɛencoreɛ.]
still
- 66 SUR: ɛhh hehe [hehɛ]
- 67 AUR: [ɛhh-][hh- hhhɛ]
- 68 NAT: [ɛhh .hehhɛ]
- 69 NAT: °ɛhm:ɛ°
- 70 (0.3)
- 71 SUR: **mai:s (0.8) je préfère (1.6) froid?**
but I prefer cold

- 72 (0.4)
- 73 NAT: oui,
yes
- 74 (0.7)
- 75 AUR: mais c'est Ωparce que \$tu sors pas de la maison,
but it's because you don't go out of the house
aur Ωgazes at SUR-->
sur \$gazes at AUR-->
- 76 (1.0)
- 77 NAT: £mh huhh£\$
sur -->\$
- 78 SUR: °mm:°
- 79 AUR: £HHHΩ[Hhhh£]
aur -->Ω
- 80 MIA: [£heh][eh eh hah£]
- 81 SUR: [£heh hahah]haha[hahh£]
- 82 AUR: [£parce que] si tu aimes sortir£
because if you like going out
- 83 £e:h (.) °c'est difficile [hein°£.]
it's difficult huh
- 84 SUR: [£.hhh] ehHehh£,
- 85 \$(1.0)\$
sur \$nods-\$
- 86 NAT: ↑non ↑mai:s [j'ai:-] [mais- mais] j'aime qua:nd tu-&
no but I've- but- but I like when you-
- 87 AUR: [£hhhh£]
- 88 SUR: [£eh heheh£]
(NAT says that she likes going out when it is cold)

In response to Natascha's question, Aurelia asserts several times that she does not like the winter (lines 5, 8, 11). Natascha questions Aurelia's answer by suggesting that Aurelia, who comes from England, should be used to cold weather (lines 12, 15). Aurelia then asserts more explicitly that she does not like the winter (lines 20, 25) because she is sensitive to the cold (line 29) and prefers when it is very warm (lines 32-33). Natascha subsequently requests Suresh's opinion (lines 41-42), leading Suresh to express his contrasting stance toward the winter and the cold: He asserts that he likes (the winter) *beaucoup* ('a lot', line 44) and in fact prefers the winter (lines 47-48). Following an exchange about the climate in India, Suresh's country of origin (lines 52-65), Suresh again claims that he prefers the cold: *je préfère (1.6) froid* ('I prefer cold', line 71). At this point, Aurelia objects by suggesting that it is because Suresh does not leave the house (line 75), and this leads to laughter (lines 77, 79-81), possibly to mitigate the potential awkwardness created by Aurelia's objection (Petitjean & Cangemi, 2016; Petitjean & González-Martínez, 2015). Another objection by Aurelia follows (lines 82-83), and Natascha then expresses her own opinion about the cold (line 86 and onward).

In this sequence, Aurelia and Suresh hence express conflicting stances toward the winter and cold temperatures, with Aurelia strongly asserting her dislike of the cold and Suresh claiming

that he in fact likes the winter and the cold. While Suresh remains mostly silent during Aurelia's stance displays, he shows his attentiveness to her talk by smiling and laughing at appropriate moments (lines 12-24). Aurelia engages more actively in response to Suresh's stance expressions, rejecting these by suggesting that Suresh does not go out of the house. Suresh and Aurelia's sustained attentiveness to and long-term remembering of each other's stance expressions about the cold are visible in the next excerpt.

Excerpt 6.4 takes place four weeks after Ex. 6.3. Suresh and Aurelia are alone this time. Now Aurelia is the one to initiate talk about the temperature right at conversation start, and the participants again express conflicting stances toward the cold. The excerpt begins as Aurelia is approaching the table where Suresh is sitting (see line 2).

Ex. 6.4, Lun_2017-11-13_02:25_trois vêtements

- 01 AUR: **ça va avec- avec le froid?**
are you okay with- with the cold
- 02 *(0.6)*
aur *approaches table*
- 03 SUR: **oui::,=**
yes
- 04 AUR: =t'as dit que tu aimes bien non?
you've said that you like it a lot no
- 05 SUR: **oui: j'aim::e (0.6) froid beaucf(h)oup(h) [hhh£]**
yes I like cold a lot
- 06 AUR: [£ou(h)]ai(h)s£?
yeah
- 07 AUR: £heheh£
- 08 SUR: **°ou j'aime beaucoup le froid°.**
or I like a lot the cold
- 09 (0.5)
- 10 AUR: uh-huh,
- 11 AUR: **ouais moi ne- moi j'aime pas du tout.**
yeah me no- me I don't like at all
- 12 (0.5)
- 13 SUR: ah.
oh
- 14 AUR: **c'est juste trop pour moi,**
it's just too much for me
- 15 en fait j'ai- j'ai deux ou trois (0.4) [e::]:h (0.3)&
in fact I've- I've two or three
- 16 SUR: [mm:,]
- 17 AUR: &vêtements;
clothes
- 18 SUR: ouais,
yeah
- 19 (0.3)
- 20 AUR: au-dessus ici j'ai de:s collants,
over here I have tights

CHAPTER 6

- 21 SUR: mm-[hm,]
- 22 AUR: [ʔhh]hh [.hhhʔ]
- 23 SUR: [ʔhehe]he[hehʔ]
- 24 AUR: [ʔc'est] un peuʔ dramatique
it's a bit dramatic
- 25 mai:s euh (0.2) pour moi [c'est °juste°]
but for me it's just
- 26 SUR: [ouais >mais<] mai:s tu
yes but but you
- 27 viens de: (0.6) °mm° [bretagne,]
come from Britain/Brittany
- 28 AUR: [d'angleterre,]
from England
- 29 SUR: [°bretagne°,]
Britain/Brittany
- 30 AUR: [°mm-hm-]mm°,
- 31 SUR: °bretagne°.
Britain/Brittany
- 32 (0.4)
- 33 AUR: mm-hm?
- 34 SUR: mt (0.5) e:t il y a beaucoup:p froid,
and there is a lot cold
- 35 (0.4)
- 36 AUR: ouai:s,
yeah
- 37 mai::s m >j'sais pas< **j'aime pas (.) °quand même°.**
but I don't know I don't like anyway
- 38 (0.9)
- 39 SUR: that's why,
- 40 (0.5)
- 41 AUR: ouais,
yeah
- 42 (0.5)
- 43 SUR: °that's why°?
- 44 (0.4)
- 45 AUR: °c'est pour ça°,
that's why
- 46 SUR: mt [°c'est pour] ça (ouais)°,
that's why (yeah)
- 47 AUR: [°mm°.]
- 48 (1.0)
- 49 SUR: °c'est pour ça°,
that's why

- 50 (2.6) tu:: [détestes.]
 you hate
- 51 AUR: [ɛhhhɛ]
- 52 AUR: [ɛouai:sɛ,]
 yeah
- 53 SUR: [ɛhheheh]ah [hehe .hhhɛ]
- 54 AUR: [>ouais ouais ouais<] je suis trop habituée,
 yeah yeah yeah I am too used to (it)
- 55 peut-être.
 perhaps
- 56 SUR: ouais.
 yeah

By asking Suresh about his stance toward the cold (line 1) and holding him accountable for his stance expression four weeks earlier (line 4), Aurelia explicitly talks-into-being their shared interactional history (Mondada, 2018a; Skogmyr Marian, 2018; Voutilainen et al., 2018) and again orients to weather talk as a relevant first activity to launch the conversation between her and Suresh (as in Ex. 6.2). Following Suresh's confirmation about his positive stance (lines 5, 8), Aurelia expresses her own, conflicting opinion that she strongly dislikes the cold (lines 11, 14) because she needs to wear so many layers of clothing (lines 15, 17, 20). Suresh first resists Aurelia's position by recycling Natascha's objection four weeks earlier that Aurelia is from England (lines 26-27, 29, 31) where it is very cold (line 34; cf. Ex. 6.3 above). Upon Aurelia's insistence that she nevertheless dislikes the cold (line 37), Suresh suggests the possible explanation that this is indeed the reason for Aurelia's opinion (lines 39, 43, 46, 49-50), which Aurelia confirms (line 52).

In the four excerpts seen so far, Suresh and Aurelia have thus engaged in several different stance takings toward the temperature. In Ex. 6.1. and 6.2, which took place in the summer, Aurelia expressed her dislike of the heat. In Ex. 6.3 and 6.4, which come from recordings in October and November, Suresh expressed his liking of the winter and the cold whereas Aurelia strongly asserted her dislike of the cold. In the next, final excerpt, Suresh produces a negative assessment about the cold, which hence conflicts with his claimed opinion in the two preceding excerpts. Doing so, he again uses his shared interactional history with Aurelia to proffer weather talk – and a complaint. In contrast to in Ex. 6.2, however, this time his proffer is clearly negatively valenced and it leads to exchanges of affiliation between the participants.

Excerpt 6.5 comes from Suresh and Aurelia's next meeting, two weeks after Ex. 6.3. The participants are again alone, and they have just sat down at the table. After an exchange of how-are-yous (lines 1-4), Suresh produces a high-grade negative assessment of the cold (line 6).

Ex. 6.5, Lun_2017-11-27_01:45_chaque semaine

01 AUR: donc toi ça va?
so you are well

02 SUR: .h oui et toi?
yes and you

03 AUR: ouais ouais,
yeah yeah

04 ça va.
I'm good

05 (0.3)

06 SUR: **mai::s c'est tro:p (.) froid.**
but it's too cold

07 AUR: .h [OUI:]:S,
yeah

08 SUR: [très froid,]
very cold

09 AUR: OUI: :S.
yeah

10 (0.3)

11 AUR: **ohhh.**

12 AUR: on dit la mê- la même chose chaque:: (.) chaque semaine non,
we say the s- the same thing every every week no

13 AUR: £hhhhhh£

14 SUR: £hhh [huhuheheh] .hh£

15 AUR: [mais c'est vrai.]
but it's true

16 SUR: £ouais£.
yeah

17 AUR: **ou(h)ai:s il fait très- >trop trop trop< froid.**
yeah it is very- too too too cold

18 SUR: \$mm-hm,
sur \$large nods-->

19 (1.1)\$
sur -->\$

20 AUR: mai:s eu:h (.) normalement *#e::hm# (.) mt (0.3)
but normally
aur *lifts RH high, points RH/up-->

21 parce que il faut *Ω(.) eh descendre* (.) à pied,
because you have to go down by foot
aur -->*points down-----*
aur Ωgazes at SUR-->

22 (0.7) [pour venir] i[ci,]Ω
to come here
aur -->Ω

23 SUR: [\$oui: oui,] [ou]i.
yes yes yes
sur \$large nods-->

24 (0.7)§
 sur -->§
 25 AUR: parce que Ω*il n'y a #pas* un bus qui passe e:h (.)
because there is not a bus that passes
 aur Ωgazes at SUR->1.30
 aur *opens hs, shakes head & shoulders*
 fig #1

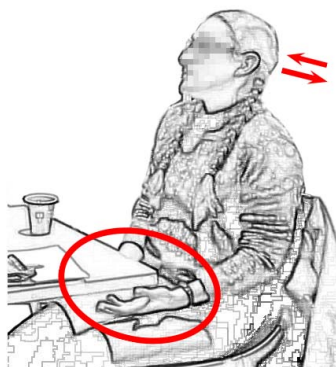


fig.1

26 *de la faculté des sciences,*
from the science faculty
 aur *lifts RH, points fwd/right-*
 27 [*eh] jusqu'à ici non?
until here no
 aur *points down-->
 28 SUR: [mm,]
 29 (0.6)
 30 AUR: [c'est] vrai* ou?Ω
it's true or
 aur -->*
 aur -->Ω
 31 SUR: [\$.hh]
 sur \$gazes up/left-->
 32 (2.2)
 33 SUR: e:h§ il y a mai[::s] **pou:r bus aussi:&**
there is but for bus too
 sur -->§
 34 AUR: [ah ouais?]
oh yeah
 35 SUR: **&(il faut) marcher,**
(you have to) walk
 36 **(0.5) pou:r quel[ques minutes,]**
for a few minutes
 37 AUR: [ahh *ouais,]
ohh yeah
 aur *small headshakes-->1.40

Aurelia subsequently expands with what will become a jointly constructed account for the weather criticism, namely that because there is no bus that goes from Aurelia and Suresh's institutes to the building where the conversation circle takes place (lines 25-27), they have to walk (line 21) and are therefore affected by the cold weather. By opening her hands to the sides and shaking her head and shoulders slightly as she suggests that there is no bus from their faculty (fig.1), Aurelia laminates an embodied expression of frustration upon the neutrally formatted assertion. Through confirmation requests in declarative format, she formats her account as a 'candidate account' in which she recruits Suresh's co-engagement with the help of gestures and gaze conduct (Streeck, 2009; Stivers & Rossano, 2010) – indexical pointing up/right and then down during the reference to the descent from the science faculty (lines 21-22, 26-30) and gaze at Suresh at key moments (lines 21-22, 25-30). Suresh first confirms Aurelia's assertion about going by foot (line 23). He then, in overlap with Aurelia's response-pursuit in line 30 and after a moment of thinking (see inbreath and gaze aversion in lines 31-33 indexing cognitive activity; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1986; Hayashi, 2003; Markee & Kunitz, 2013), asserts that there is a bus (*il y a*, 'there is', line 33), but he immediately thereafter adds that even for the bus you have to walk a few minutes (lines 33, 35-36). Doing so, Suresh aligns with Aurelia's suggested account despite disconfirming its factual grounds. He then lifts and lowers his shoulders while simultaneously opening up and closing his hands slightly and making small headshakes, embodiedly expressing the negative consequence of his assertion and a sense of hopelessness; that there is nothing to do about the situation (lines 38-39, fig.2-4; see Kendon, 2004; Selting, 2012). This assembly of embodied conduct closes Suresh's turn, which Aurelia receipts with a small *ahh ouais* ('ohh yeah', line 37) and small headshakes (lines 37-40). She then, in line 40, herself initiates what seems to be the beginning of an upshot or summary statement (*donc e:h*, 'so uh'), but abandons it, thereby aligning with Suresh's embodied expression and treating it as a sufficient characterization of the situation. She subsequently transitions into related talk about winter clothes (line 44).

In contrast to his stance-taking two weeks earlier when he asserted that he *likes* the cold 'a lot', in this sequence Suresh occasions a joint *complaint* about the cold. Similar to in Ex. 6.2, the assertion about the temperature works as an effective conversation starter that progresses the conversation past the exchange of how-are-you inquiries. Contrary to the assertion about the temperature in Ex. 6.2, however, this one is clearly negatively valenced. Similar to before, it is Aurelia who does most of the work developing the sequence into a complaint. In this sequence, though, Suresh participates actively to a higher extent, as he aligns with Aurelia's stance expressions more explicitly through verbal and embodied means and contributes to the construction of an account about the complaint-worthiness of the situation.

6.2.3 Suresh: Summary and discussion

The analysis of Ex. 6.1-6.5 has provided a concrete example of how participants' shared interactional histories may serve as an important resource for accomplishing context-sensitive and recipient-designed social actions (Deppermann, 2018). This was particularly visible in Ex. 6.5. By proffering a topic that had previously worked well to advance the conversation past the exchange of greetings (Ex. 6.2 and 6.4), and by expressing a stance that Aurelia had earlier expressed herself (Ex. 6.3 and 6.4), in Ex. 6.5 Suresh both actively contributes to progressing the conversation and initiates an activity in which the coparticipants can exchange displays of affiliation. While for most participants in my data these actions are not particularly noteworthy, it is worth considering Suresh's low L2 proficiency and his rather passive participation in most conversation circle meetings. By offering an opportunity to engage in joint complaining, in Ex. 6.5 Suresh shows interactional agency and demonstrates his ability to draw on prior interactional experiences to accomplish context- and recipient-designed actions; abilities that have been observed as key components of increased L2 IC (Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-] Berger, 2015; 2018). These findings are similar to those of Brouwer and Wagner (2004), who analyzed the openings of two series of professional phone calls between L2 speakers and L1 speakers of Danish. The authors observed how the speakers with each call subtly adapted their opening conduct so as to more smoothly accomplish the opening sequence in coordination with their interlocutor. Suresh and Aurelia's repeated engagement in how-are-you inquiries followed by weather talk develops into a similar kind of conversational routine by which the speakers longitudinally work to come together as conversation partners (see Greer, 2019, for the joint establishment of conversational routines).

Moreover, Suresh's contradictory stance expressions toward the cold from one interactional encounter to another provide evidence as to participants' emic orientations to the interpersonal purposes of complaining. Suresh and Aurelia's recurrent weather talk after the exchange of greetings and how-are-you inquiries in Ex. 6.2, 6.4, and 6.5 works as a way to enter into and advance the conversation for speakers who perhaps do not have so many things in common besides being foreign students at the same university. While the weather has previously been considered a neutral and 'safe' topic for small talk (Laver, 1975; Svennevig, 1999) that can work as a transition into other topics (Sacks, 1992), the fact that Suresh changes his expressed opinion about the cold from one interactional encounter to another so as to ensure an affiliative response from his coparticipant shows that he treats this talk as an important opportunity to do relational work, similar to what has been noted for complaining generally (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981). This change also shows the fundamentally interactional nature of stance-taking. While we have no idea about Suresh's actual opinion about the heat and the cold, this is not so relevant; what is emically important to Suresh is what he can accomplish with his stance-taking in the socially situated interaction (cf. Sacks', 1975, observation that 'everybody has to lie' in how-are-you inquiries).

As a final point, Suresh's repeated reuse, or recycling, of his coparticipants' turns and linguistic material from one conversation to the next (assessments about the temperature, objections) testifies to the powerful potential of *accumulation* (Goodwin, 2018) as resource for human social action:

[t]he ability to reuse materials created earlier, including, crucially, materials produced by others, and, moreover, not simply to copy those resources, but transform them, creates forms of action with an unfolding, historical sedimentation of accumulative, contingent structure that has great power". (Goodwin, 2018, p. 31)

While such ability is central to human social action in general, it might, as also discussed by Goodwin, be particularly important in processes involving the socialization of speakers into "competent speakers in their community" (2018, p. 24). By repeatedly invoking the weather and each other's stances in their interactional encounters, Suresh and Aurelia establish a relevant component of what it means to be a competent speaker in their local speech community, and repetition and recycling practices constitute central resources in Suresh's construction of competency in this context. The importance of recycling practices and participants' ability to draw on shared past experiences for meaning-making in interactions with not-fully-competent speakers is notably evidenced in Goodwin's work on the aphasic speaker Chil (Goodwin, 2018; Goodwin et al., 2002; see also discussion about recyclings in Ch. 5.1), which shows an extreme-case example of how participants together can co-construct interactional competence despite severe linguistic limitations. In Chapter 6.3.2 below, I pursue this line of inquiry by investigating the cumulative results of joint experiences for elementary level speakers' complaint practices.

6.3 Case study 2: Malia

The second case study focuses on a more personal type of complainable: a participant's difficulties with learning and using French for work. As presented in Chapter 3.3, Malia was an upper-elementary level speaker (A2) at the beginning of the recordings. During the 16 months of her participation, she advances to upper-intermediate/advanced level (B2-C1). Malia is a doctoral assistant, and according to what she invokes on numerous occasions in the recordings, she experiences problems at her workplace, specifically with the professor who is her dissertation advisor and boss. According to Malia, these problems are primarily related to Malia's French skills and the professor's expectations that Malia uses French all the time. In 23 sequences over the 16 months, Malia expresses negative stance toward her work and/or her professor. These stance expressions often (but not always) develop into complaint sequences.

The analysis documents how the specific complainable¹³ is talked into relevance, constructed, and re-constructed by Malia's conversation group over three semesters. Because of the many occurrences of the complainable, I do not present all instances here. Instead, the analysis is divided into three parts, representing three phases of Malia's participation in the conversations:

¹³ While the main focus of the complaint sometimes varies slightly (difficulties with speaking French at work, Malia's professor's expectations, etc.), I have counted all complaint sequences that concern Malia's workplace as pertaining to the same overall complainable.

- (1) Fall semester of 2016 (months 1-3). During these months, the coparticipants stay the same (Mariana, Theo, Zarah).
- (2) Spring semester of 2017 (months 4-9). One of the coparticipants (Mariana) has left the group; another joins the group mid-term (Catarina). The other two coparticipants (Zarah, Theo) remain the same.
- (3) Fall semester of 2017 (months 11-15). The coparticipants are new (Jordan, Javier, Adriana), but Zarah joins the group for a few meetings. By the fall of 2017, the new coparticipants and Malia herself are intermediate or advanced level speakers of French.

The change in participants between the second and the third semester allows for a comparison over time between Malia's complaints with, on the one hand, well-known coparticipants versus new acquaintances, and on the other hand, elementary versus intermediate/advanced level coparticipants (Table 6.1).

Time	Fall semester 2016 (months 1-3)	Spring semester 2017 (months 4-9)	Fall semester 2017 (months 11-15)
Coparticipants	Mariana Theo Zarah	Theo Zarah (m. 4-6) Catarina (m. 6-9)	Zarah (m. 11-13) Jordan Javier Adriana
Proficiency levels	Elementary (A1-A2)	Intermediate (B1-B2)	Intermediate/advanced (B1-C1)
Excerpt numbers in analysis	Ex. 6.6-6.7	Ex. 6.8-6.11	Ex.6.12a-6.12d

Table 6.1. Malia's coparticipants, estimated proficiency levels, and excerpt numbers in the analysis.

Below I present six chronologically ordered excerpts from the 23 sequences in which Malia and/or her coparticipants invoke the specific complainable, distributed over the three investigated semesters (Table 6.1). I show how the topical focus, the way the complainable is talked into being, and the nature of the coparticipants' contributions to the complaint sequences vary as a function of both their shared interactional histories, the nature of their relationships, and their proficiency of French.

6.3.1 Fall semester of 2016 (months 1-3)

During the first few conversations, the participants spend considerable time getting to know each other by telling about themselves and their lives. A recurrent conversation topic is the participants' attempts to learn French. This period also coincides with the start of Malia's doctoral assistantship, which is something she often discusses with her coparticipants. On seven occasions during the first three months Malia complains about her work. These complaints are all related to the difficulty of using French. Five of the sequences are initiated in first position, by Malia herself. The remaining two are initiated in response to open-ended, neutral K-questions (Heritage, 2012) from Mariana that do not index any *a priori* knowledge of or orientation to trouble. The coparticipants' participation in the sequences is typically limited. Besides resolving issues of intersubjectivity or helping with linguistic problems, the coparticipants mostly stay silent during Malia's complaints and provide signs of affiliation and

sympathy through minimal linguistic or non-verbal means. Excerpts 6.6 and 6.7 illustrate the type of initiations that occur during the first few months and the coparticipants' typical level of participation in the sequences.

Excerpt 6.6 shows the very first time Malia complains about having to learn French for work. The excerpt comes from the participants' second meeting. Malia has asked Theo and Mariana whether they have to teach any courses at the university. Mariana has confirmed that she will, but that she does not know yet whether it is in English or French. Mariana then reciprocates the question to Malia (line 2). In response, Malia invokes a 'problem' (line 5) – that her supervisor expects her to learn French so that she can teach – and Malia subsequently produces a complaint about the difficulty of this requirement (starting in lines 35-37).

Ex. 6.6, Mer1_2016-10-19_15:27_enseigner

- 01 MAL: [oui.]
yes
- 02 MAR: [et] toi?
and you
- 03 (0.3)
- 04 MAR: [e:h]
- 05 MAL: [c'est-] c'est exactement mon- (.) m probl^ème,
it's- it's exactly my- problem
- 06 \$parce que mon\$ (0.4) e::h (0.8) Ω°mm e:h°
because my
mar \$nods-----\$
mal Ωgazes down-->
- 07 °supe:rvis: (0.5) +<superv/ai/ser°>¿+ ((Eng. pronunciation))
(supervis-) (supervisor)
- 08 (0.7)
- 09 THE: °suΩperviseur°,
supervisor
mal -->Ω
- 10 MAL: superviseu:r merci,
supervisor thank you
- 11 °superviseur°.
supervisor
- 12 MAL: .hhh e::h (0.8) mm elle a (.) di:t (.) il a me dit que:
she has said he has me said that
- 13 je- je doi:s par[le:r&]
I- I have to speak
- 14 MAR: [°oui°,]
yes
- 15 MAR: °mm°,
- 16 MAL: &f:[:&]
- 17 THE: [fr]an[çais.]
French
- 18 MAL: [&fran]çai::s (0.2) e:::h (0.4) mt .hh
French

- 19 l'année prochaine.
next year
- 20 §(0.3)
mar §nods-->
- 21 MAL: pa:s§ °mm:h° (0.2) °#euh#° le semestre prochain.
not next semester
mar -->§
- 22 MAL: l'année prochaine.
next year
- 23 THE: mt oui.=
yes
- 24 MAR: =à: septembre?
(in) September
- 25 MAL: septembre.
September
- 26 MAR: mm-hm.
- 27 MAL: mai:s (0.3) e::n fait (0.5) mt de novembre,
but in fact from November
- 28 (0.7) je devai:s- je d- je dois .hh e:h (0.5) alle:r
I had to- I h- I have to go
- 29 aux classes (.) pour (.) juste anglais.
to classes for just English
- 30 (0.7)
- 31 MAL: °pa:s° (0.5) français.
not French
- 32 MAR: mm-h[m?]
- 33 THE: [o]kay.
- 34 (0.6)
- 35 MAL: **mai:s .hh e:h c'est très: hh (0.7) mt .hh (tran°quille-)°**
but it's very (calm-)
- 36 °(tranquière)° (.) **pour moi: parce que je pense que:**
(xxx) for me because I think that
- 37 **o:h m- (0.5) £°(ouais)° (.) Ωoh #mon dieuf.Ω**
(yeah) oh my god
mal Ωraises eyebrows, gz upΩ
fig #1



fig.1

38 MAL: £HEH \$HEHEH .HHIH .hhh .hheh *je #n'peux pas* par[*#le::rf,*\$]
I cannot speak
 mar \$smiles, nods-----\$
 mal *hds to sides-* *LH in RH*
 fig #2 #3
 39 MAR: [£(yea:h)£]

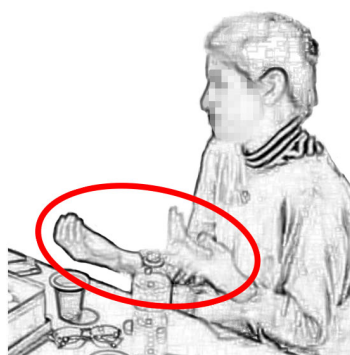


fig.2



fig.3

40 MAL: £.HHH£ e:t *que je: peux (0.4)
and that I can
 mal *large gestures w both hands-->
 41 <ensei[#gner>*] en fran*çais,*
teach in French
 mal -->* *lets hands fall on table*
 fig #4

42 MAR: [£yeah£,]

43 MAL: Ω#£ohh-mhh£
 mal Ωblinks then gazes to side-->
 fig #5
 (0.4)

44 MAL: *°c'est° (.) Ω*tR:#ès*↑di↑ffi↑ci::le.
it's very difficult
 mal -->Ωgazes at MAR-->
 mal *lifts hands--*hs fwd*
 fig #6



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6

45 MAR: \$°très [diffiΩcile°.\$]
very difficult
 mar \$nods-----\$
 mal -->Ωgazes at THE-->1.49

46 THE: [.hh (a)] tu dois faire:::: (1.3) le travail
(and) you have to do the work

- 47 en français,
 in French
- 48 (0.7) le::
 the
- 49 MAR: °docΩtorat°?
 doctorate
mal -->Ω
- 50 (1.2)
- 51 THE: non le: le cours,
 no the the course
- 52 (0.7)
- 53 MAR: °mm:°,
- 54 (0.3)
- 55 MAL: °mm°,
- 56 °e:[:h°]
- 57 THE: [le] prochain année,
 the next year
- 58 MAL: m-hm-hm,
- 59 (0.8)
- 60 THE: tu dois faire:: la: l'enseignement (0.2)
 you have to do the the teaching
- 61 [à::] en fran[çais?]
 (in) in French
- 62 MAL: [>oui oui<,) [en fran]çais.
 yes yes in French
- 63 THE: **\$#o:h h. # \$**
 the \$tilts head & gaze to side, then back\$
fig #7 #8

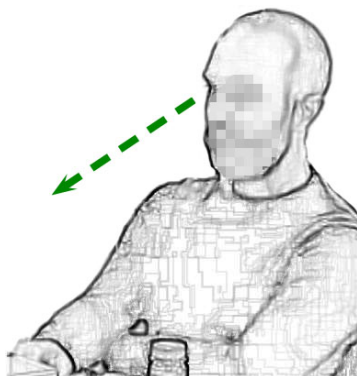


fig.7

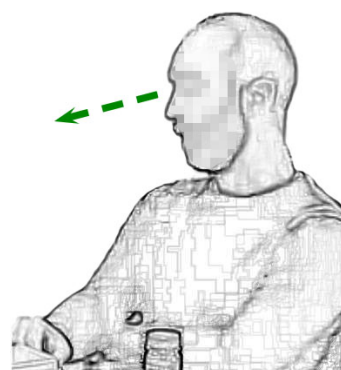


fig.8

- 64 (0.3)
- 65 MAL: °>oui oui oui< (.) en français°.
 yes yes yes in French

Mariana's *et toi* ('and you', line 2) is recognizable as a reciprocating inquiry about teaching requirements, whereby Mariana gives back the floor to Malia and offers her the opportunity to tell about her own situation. Its open-ended format indexes the speaker's low epistemic status (Heritage, 2012) and does not manifest any a priori knowledge about the possible answer. In

response, Malia starts telling about her ‘problem’ (line 5). After a side-sequence in which Theo helps Malia resolve a word-search targeting the word for ‘supervisor’ (lines 6-11), Malia reports that her supervisor has told her that she has to speak French next year (lines 12-13, 16, 18-19, 25), as this semester she only needs to go to classes in English (lines 27-31).

Following this, Malia expands with affect-laden negative assessments, accounts, and stance displays to portray her requirement to speak French as an unreasonable difficulty worth complaining about. While in a first assessment (lines 35-36) Malia initially deploys the assessment adjective for ‘calm’, *tranquille* (which she self-repairs to a related non-targetlike form), her turn-initial ‘but’ and her next actions make the assessment recognizable as a negative one. She offers an account reporting on her own thoughts or perception (lines 36-38). At the expressive *oh mon dieu* (‘oh my god’, line 37), Malia markedly raises her eyebrows and looks up (fig.1), upgrading the affective loading of the expression (Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009), and then produces a loud laughter and the direct-reported *je n’peux pas parler* (‘I cannot speak’, line 38). The reported thought (Haakana, 2007) is animated with prosodic modulations and with gestures that display both the obviousness and seriousness of the situation (hands to side palm up, fig.2, and clapping the left hand in the right hand, fig.3; see Kendon, 2004). The coparticipants do not join in Malia’s laughter (cf. Jefferson, 1984b), but Mariana smiles and nods a bit, displaying her attentiveness to Malia’s actions (line 39).

Malia expands with *e:t que je: peux (0.4) <enseigner> en français* (‘and that I can teach in French’, lines 40-41). The prosodic realization of this turn and the accompanying large gestures (fig.4), that end with Malia letting her hands fall on the table at the production of the last syllable, make the turn recognizable as an extreme-case formulation expressing the unreasonableness of the propositional content: that Malia, who cannot speak French, would be able to teach in French. After uttering a small whining sound with smiley-voice and accompanying embodied conduct expressing the difficulty of the situation (line 43, fig.5), Malia offers the summary assessment *c’est tR:ès di↑ffi↑ci::le* (‘it’s very difficult’, line 44). Also this turn is delivered with prosodic features and embodied conduct that further emphasize the already strong formulation (fig.6). Through the assemblage of verbal and embodied conduct, Malia thus summarizes her supervisor’s expectations as generating unreasonable difficulties for Malia and therefore being complaint-worthy (Drew, 1998). At this point, Mariana offers a token of affiliation and sympathy with Malia by repeating *très difficile* (‘very difficult’, line 45) in low volume. After having requested (lines 46-48, 51, 57, 60-61) and received a clarification regarding Malia’s obligation to speak French (line 62), Theo also expresses his sympathy through the non-lexical vocalization *o:h* (line 63) and by tilting his head slightly to the side (fig.7-8). Malia then repeats her confirmation (line 65), and the participants expand the sequence with further talk about Malia’s situation.

In sum, the sequence exhibits several features that characterize it as a first complaint about Malia’s difficulties associated with speaking French at work and that index the participants’ relatively novel relationship. The complaint is initiated in response to the open-ended question *et toi* (‘and you’), which shows Malia’s coparticipant’s lack of epistemic access to Malia’s professional situation and which does not display any awareness of potential problems. The coparticipants’ contribute to the development of the sequence by helping to complete Malia’s word searches, through small acknowledgment tokens, and by asking clarification questions.

- 33 ZAR: [ʃhh-hhʃ]
- 34 MAL: [et mon] pro:f (0.3) demande (0.3) .HHh (.) e:hm
and my prof(essor) asks
- 35 (0.2) .mt °lui demand(é/ait)°?
him/her asked?
- 36 (0.3)
- 37 MAL: °(je-)°
(I-)
- 38 THE: mm-hm,
- 39 (0.4)
- 40 THE: [a demandé.]
asked
- 41 MAL: [.hhh *que] j- (.) *<seulement># parlez* avec malia,
that I- only speak with Malia,
 mal *lifts hands-*spreads hands horizontally*
 fig #4
- 42 (0.3) *français.#*
French
 mal *redoes hz gesture*
 fig #5

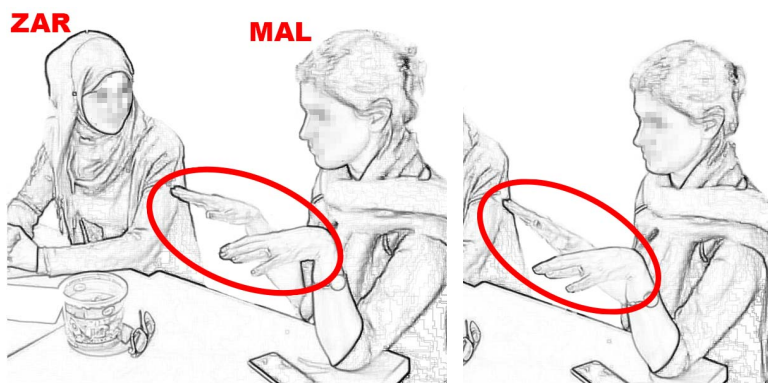


fig.4

fig.5

- 43 (0.4)
- 44 ZAR: .mth ʃhehuhuhuh * .hHHhhʃ
 mal *lets RH fall on table*
- 45 *Ω(1.0)#
 mal *lowers head in LH-->
 mal Ωgazes down-->
 fig #6

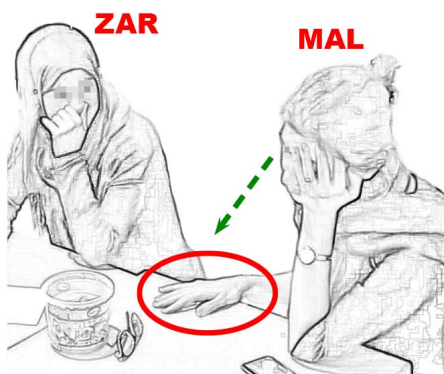


fig.6

46 **MAL:** [o::]:h,
 47 THE: [°no:n°.]
 no
 48 (0.7)
 49 MAL: [°a::h°.]
 50 ZAR: [mais c'est-] (.) Ωmais c'est bien pour toi.Ω*
 but it's- but it's good for you
 mal -->Ωturns and gazes at ZAR---Ω
 mal -->*

51 MAL: apffΩfhΩ °°ouais°°.
 yeah
 mal Ωrolls eyesΩ

52 ZAR: [tu tu (émé)[liore:r)] [ton fr-]
 you you (improve) your Fr-

53 MAL: [Ωoui: mai:s c'est-]
 yes but it's-
 Ωgazes at ZAR-->

54 THE: [ce serait]
 it would be

55 MAL: Ω[trè:s *stre]ssant.Ω*
 very stressful
 mal -->Ωgazes at THE-----Ω
 mal *shakes RH palm up*

56 Ω(0.4)
 mal Ωgazes at ZAR-->

57 MAL: très *stressant.Ω*
 very stressful
 mal -->Ω
 mal *shakes RH palm up*

58 MAL: .HHHHH et eh je- [eh je devais *parler avec] (0.2)*
 and I- I had to speak with
 mal *lifts both hands--*

59 THE: [\$.hhh hhhhh-°hhh°\$]
 the \$small nods-----\$

60 MAL: *tou:s#* en français et *Pffhhh# (0.5) *Ω(0.5)Ω*
 everyone in French and
 mal *opens hs* *opens hs twice*keeps hs up*
 mal Ωgz-ZARΩ
 fig #7 #8



fig.7



fig.8

- 171 ZAR: =£hhh£
 172 THE: [£yes hh£]
 173 MAL: [£huh hu]huh .HH[HHH£]
 174 ZAR: [£.hhh£]

When initiating the report of her first day, Malia first lowers her head and covers her face with her hands (fig.2) in a way that conveys negative stance. She thereafter assesses her experience as *un peu horrible* ('a bit horrible', line 21) while flashing her eyebrows (fig.3) and then looking down to her right and eventually starting to smile. The oxymoronic yet strongly negative assessment explicitly frames the telling as a troubles telling, but Malia's smile as she initiates an account (line 21) adds a humorous layer to the talk (Edwards, 2005), and Theo responds accordingly with laughter (line 22). In her account, Malia presents a discrepancy between her expectations about her job and the reality: She thought that she could speak English the first year (lines 23-24, 27: cf. also Malia's description of her expectations in Ex. 6.6), while in fact, today everyone spoke French with her (lines 31-32). This turn provides the first concrete details about why her first day of work was horrible and complaint-worthy – she unexpectedly had to speak French already on her first day. Malia then develops the detailing by reporting what her professor asked (lines 34-35), namely that the colleagues should only speak French with Malia (lines 41-42). Through DRS, prosodic emphasis, and horizontal hand gestures (fig.4-5), Malia animates and upgrades the affective loading of what works as the climax of the troubles telling.

As discussed in Chapters 5.1.1 and 5.2.1, the complaint story climax does not get the expected affiliative or sympathetic responses, as the coparticipants instead suggest that the situation is good for Malia (lines 50, 52, 54). Malia therefore expands with further negative stance displays (lines 44-46, fig. 6; lines 51, 53, 55, 57) and she eventually initiates an expansion invoking her obligation to speak to everyone in French (lines 58, 60). Also this assertion is strengthened through verbal, paraverbal and embodied means (see extreme-case formulation, marked prosody and gestures, fig.7-8) and completed with another non-lexical vocalization expressing frustration. As Malia moves into yet another expansion (line 61), Zarah requests a clarification about Malia's job (line 62), which momentarily steers away the focus from the complainable as Malia clarifies what her work as a doctoral assistant implies (omitted lines).

Following this, Malia returns to underlining the complaint-worthiness of the situation, reporting on another specific interaction she had at work (also not shown). Malia's attempts to gain her coparticipants' affiliation and sympathy continue until Theo finally offers a verbal recognition that he understands that the situation is difficult for Malia and suggests that it will be better in the future (lines 161-163). Malia initially receipts this with some display of skepticism, flashing her eyebrows, tilting her head while flipping her hand palm up as if indexing the hopelessness of the situation (fig.9). She then raises and crosses her fingers (fig.10), as if suggesting that she hopes for the situation to be better in the future, and Theo affiliates by copying her gesture (fig.11) and verbally 'glossing' it (line 170, see Keevallik, 2013). The participants then laugh together before closing the sequence (lines 172-175). With these actions, Theo thus finally displays some sympathy for Malia, whereas Malia herself shows troubles resistance toward the problematic situation by showing her ability to laugh at it.

Similar to Ex. 6.6 above, the sequential development of this sequence reflects the participants' relatively new relationship and unfamiliarity with each other. Malia's sequence-initiating announcement (lines 3-4) signals a potential common knowledge about the fact that she would start her job, but the following sequence establishing the place reference indexes the participants' low epistemic status concerning Malia's workplace. This is further underlined by Zarah's question about what Malia actually works with (line 62). Zarah's too early bright-side response to Malia's telling (line 50) and the relative difficulty with which Malia gets her coparticipants to recognize the legitimacy of the complaint also reflect their unfamiliarity with Malia's situation.

To sum up the beginning phase of the recordings, Malia's complaints about her workplace and her coparticipants' responses to these reflect both the participants' still novel relationship and process of 'coming together' as a group, and their status as elementary level speakers of French. The complaints are all closely tied to Malia's difficulties with French. Malia's recurrent topicalization and complaints about her difficulties at work indicates that she starts treating the conversation circle as a 'safe space' to tell about her difficulties in a context where the coparticipants, also L2 speakers and university students/collaborators, are bound to understand her problems. Doing so, she orients to herself and the coparticipants as belonging to the same membership category, and her complaints can be seen as a contribution to the socialization process of establishing of a common 'we' (Hanna, 1981). That the participants are only at the beginning of such socialization process is visible in Malia's unsuccessful attempts to immediately gain affiliation and sympathy from her coparticipants (as in Ex. 6.7), and in the coparticipants' generally limited contributions to the complaint sequences. In most sequences, Malia volunteers her complaint initiations in first position (as in Ex. 6.7). In the two exceptions, the coparticipants' initiating actions are linguistically minimal, merely nominating Malia to talk about an already established topic without displaying any knowledge of potential troubles (as in Ex. 6.6). The coparticipants support the progressivity of talk by helping Malia complete word searches, but their expressions of affiliation typically consist of minimal linguistic and/or non-verbal contributions (repetitions, vocalizations, embodied conduct). On the one hand, the limited contributions from the coparticipants reflect their status as elementary level speakers of French. Repetitions of Malia's own assessments, non-lexical vocalizations, laughter, and embodied conduct offer ways to express some level of affiliation without relying on sophisticated linguistic resources (as shown in Ch. 4.3). On the other hand, such expressions also reflect the nature of the participants' relationship and the epistemic asymmetries that exist between the participants, with the coparticipants still having limited knowledge of Malia and of her professional situation. Through their linguistically minimal expressions of affiliation, the coparticipants show sympathy without claiming independent epistemic access (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) to Malia's situation (see also Couper-Kuhlen, 2012). As I show in the next section, with time the coparticipants start offering more extensive displays of affiliation with Malia and contribute more actively to the construction of the sequences.

6.3.2 Spring semester of 2017 (months 4-9) – same coparticipants

During the second semester of the conversation circle, Malia expresses negative stance about her workplace in eleven sequences. Not all of these sequences develop into complaints, as in some cases the negative stance displays are limited to a series of critical remarks. In the fall of 2016, Malia's complaints typically focused on her difficulties with French and references to her professor occurred primarily in accounts for the negative stance expressions, working as 'evidence' for the complaint-worthiness of the situation. By contrast, in the spring of 2017, Malia starts developing complaints specifically *about* the professor and about the professor's actions that make Malia's work conditions complaint-worthy. The complaints therefore become more personal than when Malia was complaining about the difficulty of French more generally. The coparticipants nevertheless start participating more actively in Malia's complaints. They show an interest in Malia's personal issues by inquiring about them (Ex. 6.10) and by more actively contributing to the sequential development (Ex. 6.8 and 6.11), thereby demonstrating increased epistemic access to Malia's personal situation and more explicitly expressing their sympathy with her.

One way the coparticipants contribute more actively to Malia's complaints is by offering accounts on her behalf, by which they display their familiarity with and understanding of Malia's situation. Excerpt 6.8 illustrates this point. In this sequence, Malia initiates a news telling about a question-answer session she had to participate in the same day at work (lines 1-5), and she develops the sequence into a complaint about her difficulties with speaking French. Our focus is specifically on Theo's turn in lines 16 and 18, in which he offers a candidate account for Malia's negative assessment in line 13. I only show the beginning of the sequence.

Ex. 6.8, Mer1_2017-01-11_11:25_séance

- 01 MAL: eu::h (0.4) oui,
yes
- 02 (0.3) et aujourd'hui: nous- eh j'ai:: (0.7) j'ai eu u:n:
and today we- I've I've had a
- 03 (0.6) séance,
session
- 04 (0.5) avec les étudiants,
with the students
- 05 (0.4) pour le:s (.) .hh eh questio:ns et eh (.) réponses,
for the questions and answers
- 06 THE: mm-hm,
- 07 (0.3)
- 08 MAL: e:h pour le (.) exame:n e::@:h@ (0.3) °que- eh qui s:-°
for the exam that- that
- 09 (.) qui: arri:ve .hh eh an- en fi::n (.) eh janvier?
that comes (at-) at the end of January
- 10 (0.4)
- 11 THE: okay.
- 12 (0.4)

- 13 MAL: et donc c:'était (.) *trè:s trè:s £difficile£.*
and so it was very very difficult
mal *3 horiz beats fwd w LH--*
- 14 (0.5)
- 15 MAL: £je-£ (0.4)
I-
- 16 THE: >parce [que tu devais-< tu- tu] devais parler&
because you had to- you- you had to speak
- 17 MAL: [£je n'pouvais pas£.]
I couldn't
- 18 THE: &e::[:n en français.]
in in French
- 19 MAL: [*en françai::s £bien sûr et donc£
in French of course and so
mal *flips open LH palm up*
- 20 £.hHHHAH[Hhhhh£] *(0.2)# mm- (0.5)* non *c'était&*

no it was
mal *covers face w LH* *shakes head*
fig #1
- 21 THE: [£hhhh£]



fig.1

- 22 MAL: &très difficile parce que (.) eh ces (.) modules,
very difficult because these modules

Malia's negative assessment of the event as *trè:s trè:s difficile* ('very very difficult', line 13) is strengthened through prosodic and embodied means (vowel lengthening and horizontal hand gestures). As she is about to expand (line 15), Theo offers a candidate account on Malia's behalf: >*parce que tu devais-< tu- tu devais parler e::n en français* ('because you had to- you- you had to speak in in French', lines 16, 18). This account offers a potential explanation for why the session was so difficult for Malia, namely that she had to speak in French. Malia confirms and builds upon Theo's candidate account by repeating *en françai::s* ('in French', line 19) and offering a summary assessment consisting of *et donc* followed by a loud in-breath vocalization (line 20) and the covering of her face with her hand (fig.1). She thus embodiedly expresses the unreasonable difficulty encountered at the question-answer session before again verbalizing it (lines 20-21). In what follows, Malia pursues the complaint by starting to elaborate on why it was so difficult for her (lines 22 and onward).

By offering the candidate account for Malia's problem announcement, Theo demonstrates his familiarity with Malia's recurring work difficulties related to her obligation to speak French.

As shown in Chapter 4.2, complaint initiations are often done through high-grade negative assessments followed by accounts among elementary level participants. By preemptively producing the next relevant action following Malia’s negative assessment, Theo contributes actively to the development of the sequence into a complaint, and also shows his affiliation with Malia in verbally more elaborate ways than he did during the fall of 2016. Theo’s shared interactional history with Malia – his knowledge of her recurrent work-related problems – hence allows him to participate actively in the construction of the complaint and show compassion with his coparticipant with practices typically used by more advanced speakers.

As mentioned above, Malia’s talk about her work progressively starts including more explicit criticism of her supervisor. While these discussions typically still relate to Malia’s difficulties with working in French, the criticism increasingly targets the professor’s personality and her wrongful conduct related to matters other than French. As exemplified in Ex. 6.9, Malia constructs a picture of her workplace environment and her professor’s conduct as a ‘nightmare’ (line 13). Before the start of the excerpt, Malia asserted that she wants to find a French course that takes place during lunch time. The reason for this is that her colleague soon will quit (lines 1-2) and leave Malia to do all work (lines 3-5).

Ex. 6.9, Mer1_2017-02-08_20:05_cauchemar

01 MAL: .hh ɛm(h)a collègue e:h elle va partir (.) eh da:ns
my colleague she will leave in

02 (0.4) °je n’sais pas° dans s:ix mois,
I don’t know in six months

03 et donc (.) après: s (.) lui: ,
and so after him

04 (0.4) >après elle<,
after her

05 (0.2) je doi:s (.) e:h faire (0.3) *tous Ωles choses, #*
I have to do all the things
 hz gs w RH, frowns
 Ωgazes at ZAR-->
 #1

mal
 mal
 fig

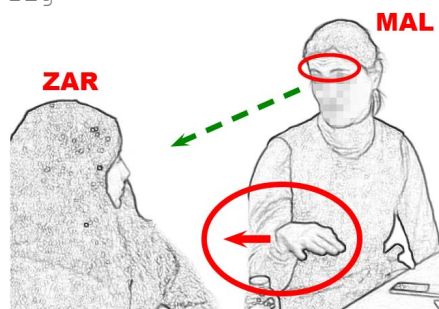


fig.1

06 §(0.7)§Ω
 zar §nods-§
 mal -->Ω

07 MAL: et c'est *tr[ès difficile.*]
and it's very difficult
 mal *shakes RH-----*

08 ZAR: [°seule oui°.]
alone yes

- 09 MAL: °e::t phuhh°.
and
- 10 (0.3)
- 11 MAL: **SETS AVEC cette professeure:*** (.) ***oufhh=#***
and with this professor
zar \$nods\$
mal *claps LH-RH* *crosses hs horiz*
fig #2 #3



fig.2



fig.3

- 12 ZAR: =£hhh£=
- 13 MAL: =c'est- \$(0.2) °c'est\$ **cauchemar°**.
it's- it's nightmare
the \$nods-----\$
- 14 (0.2)
- 15 MAL: .hhh £e(h)t d(h)onc(h)£,
and so
- 16 oui je doi:s eh pratiquer >beaucoup °beaucoup°<.
yes I have to practice a lot a lot

Through prosodic modulations, the extreme-case formulation *tous* ('all'), and a horizontal gesture toward Zarah (fig.1), Malia constructs the consequence of her colleague's departure as a clearly negative one, implying a lot of work for her (line 5). She then assesses the situation as very difficult (line 7), as Zarah offers a small token of affiliation (line 8). Next, Malia further constructs the complaint-worthiness of the situation through verbal and embodied means: *e::t* ('and', line 9) plus the sound object *phuhh* is followed by a strong negative assessment of the situation with her professor: In marked prosody, Malia offers *ET AVEC cette professeure*: ('and with this professor', line 11). At the mentioning of the professor, she claps her left hand hard in her right hand and keeps it there for a moment (fig.2) to add emphasis and perhaps enact the strictness of the professor, and she then offers the sound object *oufhh* as she crosses her hands horizontally (fig.3), also embodying the affective negative stance associated with the professor. Zarah laughs briefly (line 12), after which Malia verbally assesses the situation as a *cauchemar* ('nightmare', line 13). With no uptake from the coparticipants after this strongly negative assessment (although see Theo's anticipatory nodding in line 13), Malia returns to the topic of her French skills (lines 15-16).

In this short sequence, Malia thus deploys negative stance expressions about her workplace and the situation with her professor as an account for why she wants to find lunch-time French courses. Through verbal and embodied stance displays, she constructs the situation as a 'nightmare'. Although brief, the sequence contributes to the cumulative interactional history of

the complainable as complaint-worthy and to the coparticipants' overall understanding of Malia's difficult situation.

That the complainable becomes a shared concern in the group is manifested in the fact that the coparticipants start initiating talk about Malia's troubles and difficulties related to work, thereby offering opportunities for Malia to complain (see Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). Excerpt 6.10 takes place a month after Ex. 6.9. It shows the first time a coparticipant asks Malia about the situation with her professor. After the closure of the prior sequence and a longer gap (line 1), Zarah turns to Malia and asks *comment ça va avec ta prof?* ('how is it going with your professor?', line 2). In response, Malia uses high-grade negative assessments to express the difficulty of her situation and subsequently develops a long complaint about all the problems she has related to her workplace and boss, particularly as it concerns the PhD registration application that her professor has to approve (I only show the beginning of the sequence).

Ex. 6.10, Mer1_2017-03-08_17:11_ça va avec ta prof_a

- 01 (4.8)
- 02 ZAR: §.hhh comment [ça va] avec ta prof?
how's it going with your prof(essor)
 zar §turns slightly toward MAL-->
- 03 MAL: [*pfhhh*]
 mal *turns to ZAR*
- 04 *(0.4) #
 mal *turns head left, covers face w LH-->
 fig #1



fig.1

- 05 MAL: [ohhhh. #*]
 mal --> *
 fig #2



fig.2

- 06 ZAR: [ɛhhehh\$] *hehe[°huhuh°]
 zar -->\$
 mal *shakes head--*
- 07 THE: [ɛa:hhɛ,*]
 oh
- 08 MAL: [***°terrible°**,]
 terrible
 mal *removes LH from face*
- 09 ZAR: [ɛhuh .h][ahɛ,]
 10 THE: [\$ɛou]i:ɛ,\$
 yes
 the \$eyebrow flash\$
- 11 (0.2)
- 12 ZAR: [ɛ.HHhɛ]
- 13 MAL: [**terrible**] ***°terrible°.#**
 terrible terrible
 mal *leans head in LH-->
 fig #3



fig.3

- 14 THE: [°(parce que-)°]
 (because-)
- 15 MAL: [.hhh*] e:t [°mm:°]
 and
 mal -->*
- 16 THE: [pourquoi?]
 why
- 17 (0.4)
- 18 MAL: je pense que: vraiment euh je pense que:
 I think that really I think that
- 19 e:h la l'université de: launève,
 the the university of Launève
- 20 (0.6) v:eu::t (0.3) me refuser.
 wants to refuse me

The format of Zarah's question in line 2, particularly with the use of the feminine pronoun *ta* in *ta prof* ('your professor'), shows Zarah's orientation to the topic as a matter of which both she and Malia have prior knowledge (*ta prof* referring to the specific, known professor). While the question in some circumstances could be interpreted as a question about the professor's well-being, in this situation, it is clearly an inquiry about how it is going with Malia's dealings

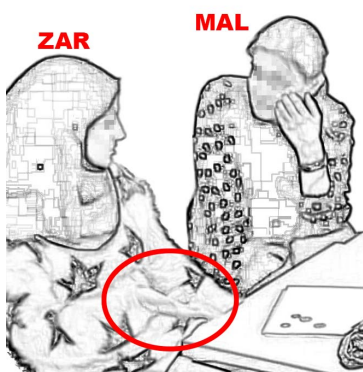
with the professor. Through this ‘itemized news inquiry’ (Button & Casey, 1985), by which Zarah asks for news about a known troublesome situation, Zarah invites Malia to talk about troubles (Button & Casey, 1985; Jefferson, 1988). Malia accepts this invitation by stopping her movement toward Zarah (line 3) and instead starting to cover her face with her left hand (line 4, fig.1-2) and uttering a sigh (line 5). She thus expresses stance embodiedly and vocally instead of providing an immediate verbal answer. Zarah’s instant laughter (line 6) shows the recognizability of Malia’s embodied conduct as the first part of a non-straightforward answer (cf. Ex. 4.6) and Zarah’s anticipation of the answer based on her prior knowledge of Malia’s situation. After removing her hand from her face, Malia provides a first verbal answer in low voice: *terrible* (‘terrible’, line 8), which she repeats (line 13) after the coparticipants’ receipts (lines 9, 10, 12), again embodying trouble by leaning her head in her hand (fig.3). In overlap with Theo’s attempts to elicit an account for why it is terrible (lines 14-16), Malia expands the sequence (lines 18-20 and onward).

This excerpt hence shows how a coparticipant talks Malia’s recurrent complainable into relevance through a K+ question (Heritage, 2012) and thereby offers her an opportunity to complain (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). In displaying her interest in Malia’s personal issues and their development over time, Zarah orients to the longitudinal nature of the participants’ relationship and to the relevance of talking about and sharing personal problems. At the same time, by inquiring about Malia’s situation after a lapse in the conversation (see 4.8 seconds of silence in line 1), Zarah also shows initiative in maintaining the progressivity of talk and takes responsibility for sustaining the conversation (cf. Kim, 2017; Nguyen, 2011). Similar to what Kim (2017) observed in an L1-L2 conversation-for-learning setting, a particular topic (here Malia’s workplace situation) “seems to have gained an omni-relevant status” which “can be broached at any topic-bounding sequential environments” (p. 98). Since the coparticipants by now are familiar with Malia’s eagerness to talk about this topic, it works as a ‘safe’ solution for restarting talk after a conversational lapse. Theo’s contribution to the sequence manifests itself in his attempt to elicit an account from Malia, showing his agency in advancing the relevant actions following Malia’s negative stance expressions (as in Ex. 6.8 above).

As a last example testifying to the participants’ increased joint attention and contributions to Malia’s complaints about her workplace situation and to their growing personal relationships, Ex. 6.11 shows how Zarah displays her sympathy with Malia through epistemically strong assertions about Malia’s needs. The excerpt takes place approximately twenty minutes after Ex. 6.10. Malia has told Zarah about her difficulties getting officially admitted as a PhD student due to her professor’s unwillingness to accept her foreign university certificates. Just before the start of the excerpt, Malia suggested that her professor’s reluctance to help may be due to Malia’s difficulties with French. Zarah objected to this reason, referring to the fact that most of Malia’s research is in English. In lines 1-3 and 5, Malia agrees with Zarah’s objection.

Ex. 6.11, Mer1_2017-03-08_17:11_ça va avec ta prof_b

- 01 MAL: mai:s .hh #eu:h# je suis a- d'accord avec (.) toi.
but I ag- agree with you
- 02 MAL: fthhɛ ce n'est pas quelque chose très très: s nécessaire pour moi,
it is not something very very necessary for me
- 03 [c- et] je n'sais pas- je n'suis pa:s .hh euh un doctorant&
i- and I don't know- I am not a PhD-student
- 04 ZAR: [oui,]
yes
- 05 MAL: &d'économie suisse.
of Swiss economics
- 06 §(1.1)§
zar §nods-§
- 07 MAL: non,
no
- 08 eh c- c'est [économie(internatio-)]
i- it's (internatio-) economics
- 09 ZAR: [.hh §tu habites en#] suisse §e::t .hh§
you live in Switzerland and
zar §lifts RH palm up-----§circling gs§
fig #1



- 10 e:hm: (0.2) dans- (0.7) °dans-° §dans ta vie,§
in- in- in your life
zar §circling gs-§
- 11 MAL: °m-hm°,
- 12 (0.4)
- 13 ZAR: en- (0.7) f°>je s(h)ais pas<° §dans ta vief,
in- I don't know in your life
zar §circling gestures-->
- 14 .hh tu vas- tu va:s apprendre le français parce que
you will- you will learn French because
- 15 tu§ habites §en sui:#sse,§
you live in Switzerland
zar ->§ §opens hs palm up§
fig #2

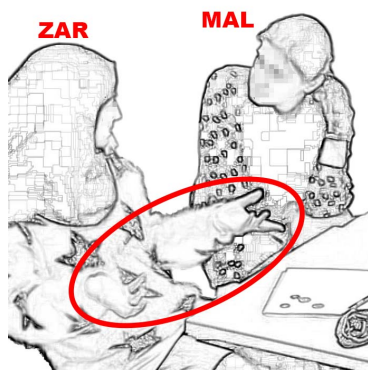


fig.2

- 16 .hh tu \$parles avec\$ des gens mais maintenant tu .hh tu dois
 you speak with people but now you you have to
 zar \$circling gs\$
- 17 commen\$ce:r\$ (0.3) °dans° ton doctora:t ton °étude°.
 start in your doctorate your study
 zar \$taps LH in RH\$
- 18 (0.4)
- 19 MAL: exacte↑me:nt,
 exactly
- 20 (.)
- 21 ZAR: [°donc°]
 so
- 22 MAL: [°exacte] \$ment°, # \$
 exactly
 zar \$opens hs palm up\$
 fig #3

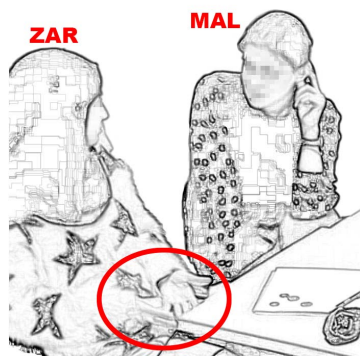


fig.3

- 23 MAL: c'est- [c'est pour ça que je suis (très)]
 that's- that's why I am (very)
- 24 ZAR: [°c'est-° c'est ça le plus im]port[ant,]
 that's- that's what's the most important
- 25 MAL: [exa][ctement,]
 exactly
- 26 ZAR: [\$pas#\$]
 not
 zar \$opens hs\$
 fig #4
- 27 le [français.]
 the French

- 28 MAL: [°c'est° *pas]# le français,*
 it's not the French
 mal *opens hs palm up--*
 fig #5

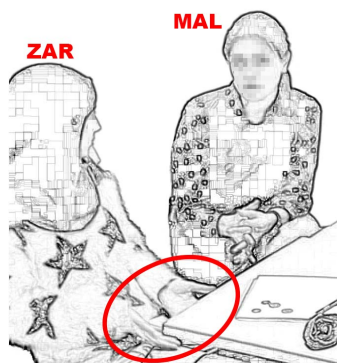


fig.4

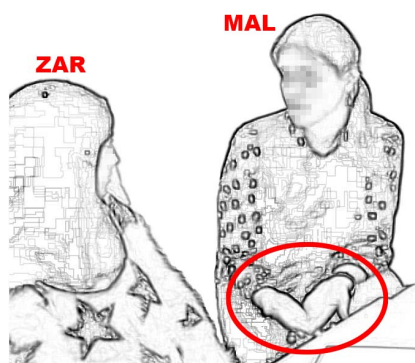


fig.5

- 29 MAL: et- et j- .hh je euh j: #euh# c:'est vraime:nt c'est pour ça que
 and- and I- I I it's really that's why
 30 je suis très déçue,
 I am very disappointed

Zarah receipts Malia's agreement by nodding (line 6). As Malia is about to expand (lines 7-8), Zarah initiates a formulation of her own perception of Malia's situation, namely that because Malia lives in Switzerland, she will learn French just by talking to people (lines 9-10, 13-16). The formulation is in declarative syntax, indexing a high level of epistemic certainty. By opening up her hands palm up (fig.1-2) she underlines the obviousness of the assertion (Kendon, 2004, p. 277), and through circling gestures she further animates and displays her affective involvement in the talk (Selting, 2010a; 2012). She then adds *mais maintenant tu .hh tu dois commence:r* (0.3) °dans° ton doctora:t ton °étude° ('but now you have to start in your doctorate your study', lines 16-17), asserting her own understanding of Malia's needs. Through prosodic emphasis on *commence:r* ('start') and by tapping her right hand in her left hand she enhances the strength of these assertions. The declarative format and deontically strong *tu dois* ('you have to') again index a high level of certainty and entitlement (Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012) about something that actually lies within the epistemic and deontic domain of Malia herself. Through these actions, Zarah shows not only her understanding of Malia's situation but also her strong affiliation with her and produces something to which Malia herself can agree, which Malia emphatically does (lines 19, 21). In overlap with Malia's second *exactement* ('exactly', line 22), Zarah embodiedly invokes the consequence of the situation with *donc* ('so', line 21) followed by the gesture of opening up her hands palms up, again expressing obviousness (fig.3). She then claims that that is what is most important (line 24), not the French (lines 26-27). Malia again agrees and shows her affiliation with Zarah (Holt, 2000) by repeating *c'est pas le français* ('it's not the French', line 28) in a prosodically similar manner as Zarah (with stress on *pas*) and by copying her open hand gesture on this last word (fig.4-5; see Couper-Kuhlen, 2012, for affiliative displays through prosodic matching). Malia subsequently expands and continues expressing her strong discontentment with the situation (lines 29-30 and onward).

While Zarah in earlier sequences has displayed affiliation with Malia through agreement tokens and similar rather small contributions, in this sequence she expresses her sympathy by making

an epistemically and deontically strong assertion about Malia's situation and needs. Zarah's assertions are based on her interactional history with Malia and her familiarity with Malia's difficulties related to her PhD work and studies. The high epistemic and deontic stance-taking is also indicative of the deepened social relationship between the participants as compared to the beginning of the recordings. What Zarah formulates about Malia is hardly something a stranger says to another; it is the result of a longer history between the participants and displays a level of intimacy established between them. That Malia recognizes Zarah's actions as displays of affiliation is not only observable on the verbal level, but also in her gestural and prosodic matching of Zarah's conduct.

In this section, I have shown how the participants' process of coming together as a group manifests itself in the recurrent activity of talking about Malia's workplace problems. During this time, Malia's complaints become less concerned with her ability to learn and speak French (Ex. 6.8), and more related to her workplace relationships (Ex. 6.10-6.11), specifically as it concerns the 'nightmare situation' with her professor (Ex. 6.9). The participants now show a joint, sustained, interest in Malia's personal difficulties, and orient to talk about her difficulties as a relevant dimension of their relationship (cf. also Berger & Fasel Lauzon, 2016). At the same time, the participants' proficiency of French increases. The effect of this concurrent change is visible both in the ways in which the complainable is talked into relevance and in the coparticipants' affiliative displays. Now the coparticipants invite Malia to talk about her complaint-worthy situation through inquiries about the complainable (Ex. 6.10). They also help co-constructing complaint sequences by providing and eliciting accounts (Ex. 6.8, 6.10) and by making strong assertions about Malia's needs (Ex. 6.11), showing their affiliation and sympathy with Malia in explicit ways.

6.3.3 Fall semester of 2017 (months 11-15) – new coparticipants

In the fall semester of 2017, Malia meets with new coparticipants (with the exception of Zarah who attends two of the same conversations as Malia). Malia's level of French has now increased considerably. According to the certificates from her French-language summer school, she has attained the level of B2. The new coparticipants are at similar levels, ranging from B1 to C1 (intermediate to advanced level). Because the participants are new to each other, in the first few recordings they spend time telling about themselves and getting to know each other, like Malia did with her coparticipants one year earlier. The topics of French skills and French learning frequently arise, and Malia's complaints and negative talk about her work (five sequences) emerge primarily in connection with talk about difficulties with French. Also similar to the early examples, Malia's references to her professor occur mostly as means to support complaints about work and French instead of as complaints *about* the professor. Thematically, these sequences are thus similar to the sequences in the conversations one year earlier.

A notable difference between the fall of 2016 and the fall of 2017, however, is that the coparticipants in the fall of 2017 more actively contribute to the development of the sequences. These sequences are thus *structurally* more similar to those in the spring of 2017 than those in the fall of 2016. The participants' limited interactional history nevertheless has an impact on the type of contributions offered by the coparticipants. While several of the complaints are initiated in second position, only one of the sequences includes the type of K+, 'itemized news

inquiry' shown in Ex. 6.10 above, and this is produced by Zarah in one of the two recordings in which she participates. Instead Malia initiates complaints and troubles talk in response to K-, neutral questions or questions that rely on knowledge inferred from the immediately preceding talk. In responding to Malia's complaints, the coparticipants typically express their alignment and affiliation based on the information provided by Malia in the same sequence, thereby relying on the participants micro-level interactional histories (pertaining to the same conversation) rather than their macro-level histories (see Deppermann, 2018).

In this section, I analyze only one, but rather long, excerpt from the fall of 2017 (Ex. 6.12). This sequence, from the participants' first meeting, illustrates how Malia, in response to a series of neutral questions from Jordan, invokes her difficulties with speaking French at work. To show sympathy, Jordan makes a comparison with himself and his own struggles with French, but his comparison does not match Malia's experience and therefore fails as an affiliative move. Malia consequently pursues the complaint with specific examples from her workplace and by invoking her professor's high demands on her until Jordan and Javier better succeed at showing their understanding of Malia's particular situation and sympathize with her. For the ease of reading, the excerpt has been divided into four parts (Ex. 6.12a-d). In Ex. 6.12a, after the closing of a prior sequence in which Javier has been telling about himself, Jordan asks Malia about her PhD studies (line 3). His questions (lines 3, 6, 13) lead Malia to initiate a longer telling about herself, eventually invoking her difficulties associated with working in French.

Ex. 6.12a, Mer1_2017-08-23_13:50_bachelers

- 01 (1.2)
- 02 JAV: [°non mai:s (xx)°]
 no but
- 03 JOR: **[et toi tu e:s do]ctorant ouais?**
 and you you are a PhD student yeah
- 04 MAL: doctorant,
 PhD student
- 05 (0.6) en économique°de[:°]
 in economics of
- 06 JOR: **[en] économie?**
 in economics
- 07 MAL: oui,
 yes
- 08 JOR: °économie°,
 economics
- 09 (0.6)
- 10 JOR: £eh HUH[héh£.]
- 11 MAL: [£oui£.]=
 yes
- 12 JAV: =(c'est assez [x].)
 (it's rather x)
- 13 JOR: **[et] t'as fait ton maste:r (0.7) où?**
 and you've done your master where

((20 lines omitted, MAL says that she has done 3 masters, all in English))

- 34 MAL: **mai:s ici: mm: parce que je travaille et donc je**
but here because I work and so I
- 35 **dois parler (0.5) en français (.) couramment.**
have to speak in French fluently
- 36 JOR: ah [ouai:s?]
oh yeah
- 37 MAL: [parce que] oui:,
because yes
- 38 (0.4) par exemple la semaine (.) passée: euh (0.8) e:::h
for example last week
- 39 (.) j'ai eu u::n (0.4) une séance avec les étudia:nts pou:r
I had a a session with the students for
- 40 (0.4) mm: >comment d/i/< séance de: questions et réponses.
how to say session of questions and answers
- 41 (0.3)
- 42 JAV: [oui.]
yes
- 43 MAL: [pour] l'examen,
for the exam
- 44 (0.4) °**et donc c'était vraiment difficile**°,
and so it was really difficult
- 45 \$spécialement\$ parce que (0.2) quand °>>comment d/i/<<°
especially because when how to say
 jor \$small fast nods\$
- 46 (0.5) les bachelers,
the bachelors
- 47 *(0.4) #
 mal *shakes hands in front of her-->
 fig #1



fig.1

- 48 JAV: (£mm ils [prononcent-£])
they pronounce
- 49 JOR: [mm-hm,]*
 mal -->*
- 50 JAV: £eh ou(h)i:£,
yes
- 51 [£hh heh£,]
- 52 MAL: [£parlent£] *(0.9) £eh£ françai::s* (0.6)
speak French
 mal *lifts RH, waves once-*

- 53 *très très vite,#*
 very very fast
 mal *rhythm beats w RH*
 fig #2
- 54 JOR: les jeunes \$non,=\$
 the young no
 jor \$shakes head\$
- 55 MAL: =oui::,=
 yes
- 56 JOR: =£eh HE[HE .HEHE .hh] hehe hehehh£
- 57 MAL: [£°ouhhhh°£#]
 fig #3



fig.2



fig.3

- 58 JOR: [°ah ouais°.]
 oh yeah
- 59 MAL: [et tou]jou::rs,
 and always
- 60 eh seulement je devin,
 only I (guess)

((14 lines omitted: repair sequence, MAL says that she only guesses when she answers the students))

- 75 MAL: **mt mais c'est- c'est parfois c'est vraiment difficile.**
 but it's- it's sometimes it's really difficult
- 76 (.)
- 77 MAL: .hh mai::s (0.5) ou↑i:: parce que j'ai (.) mm:: commencé:
 but yes because I've started
- 78 (.) d'apprendre le français i- il y a un an?
 learning French o- one year ago
- 79 JOR: [mm-hm,]
- 80 MAL: [et donc] je pense que oui,
 and so I think that yes
- 81 (0.6) je peux améliorer [aprè:s] (0.9)
 I can improve after
- 82 JOR: [mm-hm.]
- 83 MAL: £q(h)ue- quand je fini ma thèse eh hehe[heheheh£]
 what- when I finish my thesis
- 84 JOR: [£hhihihi£]
- 85 JAV: [£ah oui] non
 oh yes no

- 86 mais ça:ɛ,
 but that
- 87 [ɛça va être] [sûr.ɛ]
 that will be sure
- 88 MAL: [((laughs))] [((laughs))]

Through his series of biographical questions (Svennevig, 1999), Jordan invites Malia to tell about herself and her study background (lines 3, 6, 13). Jordan's questioning is typical 'first encounter conduct' used by the more advanced participants in my data to get to know each other in the first few meetings (among less advanced participants, initial encounters typically involve longer tellings by one speaker at the time with limited intervention from coparticipants). Jordan's assumption that Malia is a PhD student is likely based on some information he has received in or implied from the conversation so far. The basic nature of the questions shows Jordan's unfamiliarity with Malia and her professional circumstances. While directing the topic to Malia's studies, the questions do not in any way orient to any troubles related to Malia's studies or work (cf. Mariana's question to Malia in Ex. 6.6 above).

In answering Jordan's question about the location of Malia's master's studies, Malia adds that all three degrees were in English (omitted lines). The topicalization of language works as a steppingstone into an account for her current need to learn French fluently (lines 34-35) and into talk about her difficulties at work. To exemplify her need to speak French fluently, Malia tells about a question-answer session with her students she had the preceding week (lines 37-40). She assesses this session as *vraiment difficile* ('very difficult', line 44), especially since the bachelor's students speak French *très très vite* ('very very fast', line 53). The description of the students' talk is accompanied by embodied conduct enhancing the verbal expressions and indexing them as negative (see shaking, waving, and rhythmical hand gestures, and facial expression conveying frustration, lines 46-47, 52-53, fig.1-2).

Malia's actions are understood by Jordan as a complaint about the students, as seen by the fact that he produces a non-serious criticism of young people (*les jeunes non*, 'the young no', line 54, see also accompanying headshakes) to align with Malia on the surface level of her actions without seriously engaging in co-complaining. Malia, however, responds seriously to Jordan's alignment (line 55), and produces a voiced outbreath with her lips rounded and chin pushed forward (fig.3) in an embodied expression of negative affective stance. She then asserts that she always has to guess what to say to her students (lines 59-74), which she assesses as sometimes *vraiment difficile* ('really difficult', line 75). Perhaps due to the lack of immediate responses from the coparticipants (line 76), Malia returns to the issue of her French learning (lines 77-78), suggesting that she thinks that she will be able to improve after having finished her dissertation (lines 80-81, 83). She delivers the end of the turn with smiley voice and then starts laughing (line 83), thereby showing her ability to take her difficulties light-heartedly. Jordan affiliates by laughing with her (line 84), and Javier offers his sympathy by expressing his certainty that Malia will indeed improve after finishing the dissertation (lines 85-87).

After some more laughter by Malia (line 88), Jordan produces another follow-up question to Malia, thereby supporting the continued development of the topic and displaying his further interest in Malia's situation. He uses her answer to produce a my-side story, by which he claims similarity with Malia's situation (see Selting, 2012), but this story fails as an affiliative move:

Ex. 6.12c, Mer1_2017-08-23_13:50_bachelers

- 143 JAV: [°mm°,]
- 144 JOR: [°ouais°,]
yeah
- 145 MAL: [**mais**] **c'est un peu difficile pour moi parce que ma prof,**
but it's a bit difficult for me because my prof
- 146 (0.5) **ell:e vraie:nt** (0.2) .hh e:hm m::m'attend de parler
she really expects me to speak
- 147 **en français seulement.=**
in French only
- 148 MAL: =[parce que] °pfhh° e::h elle a beaucoup de cours,
because she has a lot of courses
- 149 JOR: [mm:-hm.]
- 150 §(0.2)§
jor §small nods§
- 151 MAL: seulement en fran[çais,]
only in French
- 152 JOR: [mm-]hm,=
- 153 MAL: **=et donc tou:jour:s les étudia:nts .hh e::h envoient emai:ls,**
and so always the students send emails
- 154 (0.4) **et donc *e::#*:::h# ils posent quesΩ*tio::ns toujou::rsΩ**
and so they ask questions always
mal *hands fw* *large hand gests-->
mal Ωfrowns-----Ω
- 155 **et donc*,**
and so
mal -->*
- 156 (0.3) ***oui je sais que je dois parler en français.=***
yes I know that I have to speak in French
mal *rhythmical head nods & beats with right hand*
- 157 JOR: =feh h-h-h-hm-hm [hh hh£]
- 158 MAL: [c- c-] **ce n'est pas quelque chose euh pour**
i- i- it is not something for
- 159 °a:h >comment< d/i/° (0.4) **plaisir ou (0.3) eh comme**
how to say pleasure or like
- 160 **aventure Ω*non.Ω***
adventure no
mal Qeyes closedQ
mal *horiz gest w b hands*
- 161 MAL: fhuhh£
- 162 JAV: °ouais°.
yeah
- 163 (0.4)
- 164 JAV: **pour toi c'est un [besoin] que tu [°as maintenant°.]**
for you it's a need that you have now
- 165 MAL: [oui.] [°oui oui] oui°.
yes yes yes yes
- 166 (0.5)

- 167 MAL: .mt °et donc (.) oui°.
and so yes
- 168 (0.5)
- 169 MAL: je suis (0.4) toujou:rs estressée,
I am always stressed
- 170 mais °c'est° fh [hhh£]
but it's
- 171 JOR: [£ehh] HE HE HE hehehh£
- 172 JAV: £ah oui le français c'est toujours comme çaf.=
oh yes French it's always like that
- 173 =tu arrêtes pas de te stresser.
you don't stop stressing
- 174 JAV: .hh £non mais c'est °(xx x)°£.
no but it's (xx x)
- 175 \$(1.2)\$
jav \$small headshakes\$
- 176 JAV: le français c'est très joli.
French it's very pretty
- 177 (0.2)

In her expansion, Malia uses adverbial intensifiers (line 146), extreme-case formulations (lines 153, 154), prosody (vowel elongation, stress on key terms), a non-lexical vocalization (line 148), animated hand gestures, frowning, and rhythmical head nods (lines 154-156, 160) to portray her work demands as something out of the ordinary (and thus complaint-worthy) that requires her to speak French whether she wants to or not. In response, Jordan offers small acknowledgment tokens, nods, and some laughter (lines 149-150, 152, 157), and Javier eventually formulates the gist of Malia's argument in his own words, suggesting that learning French is a need that she has (line 164). Doing so, Javier affiliates with Malia by acknowledging the grounds for her complaint and showing his understanding of her difficulties, which Malia confirms (line 165).

As none of the coparticipants self-selects, Malia again expands the sequence by expressing the implication of her difficult situation, that she is always stressed (line 169). She then abandons her continued turn and starts laughing (line 170). Jordan joins her laughter (line 171), while Javier agrees with Malia (line 172), asserting that French always is like that, *tu arrêtes pas de te stresser* ('you don't stop stressing', line 173). In agreeing and upgrading Malia's assertion as a general fact, Javier displays his affiliation with Malia by showing that she is not alone with her difficulties. He produces what appears to be an assessment (line 174), after which he shakes his head in silence (line 175). Finally, he contrasts the negative stance expressions with a positive assessment of the French language (line 176). This last assessment works as a bright-side contribution, by which Javier displays some resistance toward the struggles that they are all going through. Doing so, he nevertheless minimizes Malia's difficulties, and this leads her to initiate another objection in which she insists on her problems:

Ex. 6.12d, Mer1_2017-08-23_13:50_bachelers

- 178 MAL: **oui: le français c'est (.) très joli mais quand .hh tu (.)**
yes French it's very pretty but when you
- 179 **DOI:S faire quelque chose,**
have to do something
- 180 **c:'est °h[m° c'est] comme le (0.5) °pressure°?**
it's it's like the (pressure)
- 181 JAV: [mm:.]
- 182 MAL: °non +pressure+°. ((Eng. pronunciation))
no
- 183 (0.4)
- 184 MAL: [et °(do-)°]
and (s-)
- 185 JOR: [ah ouais] [c'est vrai.]
oh yeah that's true
- 186 JAV: [°la pre]ssion°.
the pressure
- 187 MAL: **et donc,**
and so
- 188 ***pfHHh.#***
 mal *lifts & lowers hs*
 fig #4



fig.4

- 189 JOR: °ouais°.
yeah
- 190 (0.4)
- 191 JOR: °ouais [ouais.°]
yeah yeah
- 192 MAL: [par] **exemple eu::#:h# toujours quand ma prof,**
for example always when my prof
- 193 **elle m'appelle,**
she calls me
- 194 (0.4) **et j'ai- je dois parler au téléphone,**
and I've- I have to speak on the phone

- 195 **c'est Ω*.hhh#[hhhΩ*]**
it's
mal Ωrolls eyesΩ
mal *leans back, raises LH*
fig #5
- 196 JOR: **[>ouais c'est] plus diffi[cile< au téléphone.]**
yeah it's more difficult on the phone
- 197 MAL: **[*o:HHHhhh.#*]**
mal *covers face w LH*
fig #6



fig.5



fig.6

- 198 MAL: o:h [oui::.]
yes
- 199 JOR: [>c'est plus diffi]cile au téléphone<.=
it's more difficult on the phone
- 200 JAV: =£(s'angoisse) ou(h)i [(auss(h)i)] oui£.
(is worried) yes (too) yes
- 201 MAL: [£hhh£]
- 202 MAL: £et donc£ *.hHHHH quand je >parle< .hHH Hh ou(h)i .HH*
and so when I speak yes
mal *holds LH by ear as if talking on the phone-*
- 203 je suis comme- *(0.3) e:h je monte (0.2) à la* montagne.=
I am like- I climb on the mountain
mal *both hs up-down as if climbing*
- 204 JOR: =a: [£HA HA HA huh]hh .hh£
- 205 MAL: [£hhh vraiment£.]
really
- 206 JOR: le cœur comme ça [£tum-tum £t(h)um£ heheh£+]
the heart like that
jor £knocks on chest£
- 207 MAL: [oui: exacte] °exactement°.
yes exact exactly
- 208 MAL: °£oui exacte£°.
yes exact
- 209 (0.4)
- 210 MAL: et je n'peux pa::s comprendre eh (0.3) tous les mo:ts,
and I cannot understand all the words
- 211 (0.7) et donc oui (.) c'est °vraiment difficile°.
and so yes it's really difficult
- 212 (0.5) ((MAL smiles a bit, looks at JOR))

- 213 JOR: ɛmh-h-h-[hehehɛ]
- 214 JAV: [mais sur]tout qu'il y a une chose que je sais pas
but especially there is a thing that I don't know
- 215 pourquoi (.) ça arrive,
why it happens
- 216 (0.5) mais quand tu parles avec quelqu'un,
but when you speak with someone
- 217 (0.6) qui est francophone,
who is French-speaking
- 218 ou quelqu'un qui (.) connaît bien la langue,
or someone who knows well the language
- 219 (1.4) les mots (.) que tu connais,
the words that you know
- 220 (0.3) ça s'envo[le.]
it disappears

Malia's objection takes a conventional *yes-but* dispreferred turn-design (Pomerantz, 1984), and invokes the pressure (lines 180-182) that comes with the obligation to speak French. Jordan now agrees (line 185), whereas Javier confirms the word *pression* that Malia had been searching for in a word-search (line 186). Malia then embodiedly expresses the negative affective stance associated with the pressure of having to speak French by completing the verbal fragment *et donc* with a non-lexical vocalization and a falling hand gesture ('and so', lines 187-188, fig.4), and Jordan aligns through repeated *ouais* ('yeah', lines 189, 191).

Having received her coparticipants' claims of understanding, Malia expands with a specific example, reporting on what happens when her professor calls her on the phone (lines 192-194). At this point, Jordan offers some more elaborate displays of affiliation by completing Malia's non-verbally completed negative assessment (lines 195, 197, fig.5-6) with *>ouais c'est plus difficile< au téléphone* ('yeah it's more difficult on the phone', line 196). Malia agrees with a long *oui::* ('yes', line 198) while Jordan repeats his turn (line 199), further expressing his affiliation with Malia. Javier also agrees (line 200), after which Malia reenacts in a humorous manner how she sounds like she is climbing up a mountain when she is on the phone (lines 202-203). This reenactment is successful in further engaging the coparticipants' participation (Sidnell, 2006): Jordan first laughs loudly (line 204) and then himself adds to the story by enacting heavy heartbeats (line 206). By building on Malia's story and contributing to its development, Jordan both aligns and affiliates with Malia, and Malia shows her appreciation through strong tokens of agreement (lines 207-208). She then upgrades the troubles talk by adding another difficulty; that she cannot understand all the words (lines 210-211). Javier finally builds on this to invoke yet another difficulty that occurs when speaking with French-speaking people (lines 214-220). At this point, the coparticipants thus all agree on and co-construct a complaint about the difficulties associated with talking French on the phone.

This long excerpt has shown typical features of Malia's complaints about her workplace and her obligation to learn French taking place in the fall of 2017, with new coparticipants. The sequence indexes the participants' novel relationship in several ways. Topically, the complaint emerges from 'first encounter talk', after a series of biographical information-questions from Jordan about Malia's studies and professional situation. The complaint takes its starting point

in Malia's difficulties with French, and not in Malia's more personal problems related to her relationship with her professor. Jordan's unsuccessful attempt to show sympathy by invoking his similarity with Malia further demonstrates the participants' limited familiarity with each other, as his second story fails to accurately capture Malia's situation. After several expansions with specific examples and strong stance expressions, Malia nevertheless manages to secure affiliation from the coparticipants. Similar to the coparticipants' expressions of affiliation later in the spring semester (as in Ex. 6.10), Javier and Jordan show their affiliation through declarative formulations (e.g., lines 164-165) and assessments (e.g., line 199) that index the participants' epistemic independence. These assertions are not based on shared macro-level interactional histories with Malia, but on their current interaction with her.

In all, Malia's complaints and negative stance expressions about her workplace and the way this complainable is talked into relevance and constructed during the fall of 2017 reflect both the new participant framework and the participants' estimated level of French¹⁴. While the lack of shared macro-level interactional histories in certain respects makes the complaints similar to those in the fall of 2016 (fewer sequences than in the spring of 2017, topical focus on French skills, initiations through neutral information questions, etc.), in other respects they resemble those in the spring of 2017 (e.g., active contributions from the coparticipants, verbally more elaborate displays of affiliation). This finding suggests that the coparticipants' generally higher level of L2 proficiency allows them to participate actively in the sequences without relying on prior knowledge about Malia or her personal and professional situation.

6.3.4 Malia: Summary and discussion

As shown through the empirical examples above and summarized in Table 6.2 below, there is a change over time in terms of topical focus, how the complainable is talked into being, and how it is constructed by the coparticipants. This development is tied to, on the one hand, the participants' proficiency in French, and on the other hand, the nature of their relationship and their shared interactional histories (or absence of such histories).

¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that the last sequence in which Malia expresses negative stance about her professor also indicates that the relationship between the two has started to ameliorate, which perhaps to some extent reflects Malia's fewer complaints about the situation during the fall of 2017.

Time	Main complaint foci	Complaint initiations	Coparticipant contributions
Fall 2016 (m. 1-3)	Using French at work References to professor mostly to back up complaints	Primarily first position Second-position initiations in response to K- questions	Limited (verbal) contributions from coparticipants
Spring 2017 (m. 4-9) <i>same coparticipants</i>	Professor/using French at work/ university administration Frequently complaints about professor	First and second position Second-position initiations in response to K+ questions	Accounts, neg. assessments, more elaborate expressions of affiliation (based on shared interactional histories)
Fall 2017 (m. 11-15) <i>new coparticipants</i>	Using French at work References to professor mostly to back up complaints	First and second position Second-position initiations in response to K- questions	Accounts, neg. assessments, more elaborate expressions of affiliation (not based on shared interactional histories), failed my-side telling

Table 6.2. Overview of the interactional history of the complainable over time.

(1) Topical development: In both the fall of 2016 and the fall of 2017, Malia complains primarily about the obligations to speak French, and references to her professor are made mostly as evidence to back up the complaints. By contrast, in the spring of 2017, the complaints often target her relationship with her professor directly, and the issue of French skills is less central. While this topical development in part probably reflects changes in Malia's workplace situation, it also indexes the level of intimacy of the relationship between Malia and her coparticipants. As discussed by Hanna (1981), complaining can be a way of constructing co-membership to specific categories. In this case, Malia's complaint initiations about the struggles of learning French with her new coparticipants (in both the fall of 2016 and 2017) may be seen as an attempt to establish co-membership to categories such as 'foreign students' and 'PhD students' by topicalizing issues and experiences that the coparticipants are likely to have in common. In contrast, the transition to complaints about more personal issues in the spring of 2017, such as Malia's relationship with her supervisor, reflects the participants' now closer relationship. Because these complaints target a specific third party, they are also bound to be more delicate in nature and perhaps not something one discusses with new acquaintances.

(2) Complaint initiations: Proportionally speaking, the number of complaint initiations in first and second position changes from the fall of 2016 to the spring of 2017, and remains approximately the same in the fall of 2017. This change reflects the coparticipants' level of agency in taking responsibility for the progressivity of talk, and the nature of their relationship with Malia. While in the fall of 2016 the coparticipants do not themselves talk-into-being Malia's workplace problems, in the spring of 2017 they initiate sequences by relying on their prior knowledge about Malia's problematic work situation. It seems that the coparticipants develop a personal interest in longitudinally monitoring how it is going for her, orienting to their relationship as closer to that of friends than merely conversation partners, and this

manifests itself in their K+ inquiries inviting Malia to talk about complaint-prone topics. While the finding about the participants' reliance on their shared interactional histories to initiate talk on particular topics is similar to the observations by Kim (2017), they can also be related to Berger and Fasel Lauzon's (2016) observations about participants engaging in talk promoting 'emotional solidarity' when they are in the process of getting increasingly acquainted. In the fall of 2017, the new coparticipants do not have any *a priori* knowledge about Malia's problems. Instead they seem to rely on their micro-level interactional histories with Malia to produce K- sequence-initiating actions that allow her to launch complaints in second position.

(3) Coparticipant contributions: In the fall of 2016, the coparticipants contribute only to a limited degree to the sequential development of complaints and they show their sympathy with Malia through linguistically limited means. With time (both in the spring and the fall of 2017), the coparticipants produce verbally more elaborate responses, including epistemically and deontically strong assertions expressing sympathy with Malia's situation. As seen in Chapter 4.3, the complaints among elementary level speakers generally involve less active participation from coparticipants, whereas the complaints among more advanced speakers are co-constructed to a higher degree. Similar to the analysis of Suresh's stance-taking in Chapter 6.1, the analysis here sheds some light on ways in which less advanced speakers may contribute more actively to complaint sequences, namely by relying on their shared interactional history with the complainant (as in the spring of 2017). More advanced speakers (in the fall of 2017) contribute actively to the sequences without any shared macro-level interactional histories.

6.4 Discussion

In 2004, Brouwer and Wagner suggested that "studies of language learning have to be sensitive to the ways in which participants establish and nurse social relations" (p. 35). This argument came from the perspective of situated learning theory, conceptualizing learning as socially situated and intrinsically linked to speakers' participation in social encounters (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In most studies on the development of L2 IC, which typically do not adopt any exogenous learning theory, the analytical emphasis has been on speakers' systematic methods-for-action and their development over time without much consideration of changes in the social relationships between the participants (but see Greer, 2019; Kim, 2017; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019; Skogmyr Marian, 2018). This was also the approach I adopted in Chapters 4 and 5, where I showed systematic changes over time in how speakers at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels of French do indirect complaining-in-interaction. In this chapter, I have attempted to shed some light on the role of socialization processes for the development of complaint practices with the help of two longitudinal case studies. These studies are exploratory in nature and should be seen merely as a first step toward more in-depth inquiries about the relationship between the development of interactional skills, shared interactional histories, and evolving social relations. The findings of the two studies are complementary. Importantly, they converge on the following point: The way speakers accomplish complaints is inextricably tied to the nature of the relationship between the participants and to what the participants know about each other from prior encounters. As the relationship and the participants' shared interactional history develop, so do the participants' complaint practices.

Case study 1 showed how Suresh and Aurelia's shared interactional history served as an interactional resource for Suresh, elementary level speaker of French, to produce recipient-designed assessments about the weather, recognizable as complaint proffers, to effectively advance the conversation past the exchange of greetings. While at first (Ex. 6.2) Suresh's minimal contributions to the sequence led to rapid abandonment of the complaint by his coparticipant, in the latter case (Ex. 6.5) Suresh's slightly more heightened involvement offered an opportunity for the participants to exchange aligning and affiliative stances. The findings are similar to those of Brouwer and Wagner (2004) and Greer (2019), showing how participants engaging in repeated encounters draw on their prior joint experiences to establish recipient-designed conversational routines. Suresh and Aurelia's longitudinal monitoring of and invocations of each other's stances toward the outdoor temperature and Suresh's repeated recyclings of his coparticipants' linguistic material furthermore demonstrate the participants' own orientations to the longitudinal nature of their relationship. Suresh and Aurelia show that they remember past exchanges with each other, and that it is not the first time they engage in topically similar talk. For Suresh, elementary level speaker with a limited linguistic repertoire in French, reuse and recyclings of his coparticipants' talk also constituted an important resource for action-formation, offering affordances for effective participation in the interactions (cf. Goodwin, 2018). Moreover, Suresh's expression of contrasting stance from one interactional encounter to another, designed to match his coparticipant's stance, provides emic evidence for the interpersonal and relational purposes of complaining (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981); something which was further demonstrated in Case study 2.

Case study 2 showed various ways in which cumulative shared knowledge and the nature of Malia's relationship with her coparticipants affected her complaints about her workplace. By comparing, on the one hand, Malia's complaints with the same participants over time, and on the other hand, Malia's complaints with new, more advanced coparticipants, the analysis highlighted how less advanced speakers may rely on their growing interactional histories with their coparticipants to produce the kind of context-sensitive complaint contributions that more advanced speakers do without having much prior knowledge about their coparticipants, such as verbally more elaborate ways of showing affiliation and sympathy. The ability to recipient-design context-specific actions is a key feature of increased L2 IC (Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon]-Berger, 2015; 2018). By for example starting to produce status update inquiries that target known troubles and accounts for negative assessments, the participants in my study showed their growing ability to recipient-design their actions based on their shared interactional history (Greer, 2019; Kim, 2017). This finding resonates well with Pekarek Doehler and Berger's (2019) observation that the growing 'relational material' that comes with more extended joint interactional histories affects micro-level interactional practices (in their case, repair practices) and should be taken into account when discussing the development of L2 IC. Moreover, when it comes to complaining (and probably other delicate activities), my findings suggest that it is not only the participants' shared *knowledge* that plays a role, but also how readily they display agency and authority in relation to each other, something which likely relates to how the participants see the nature of their relationship. For example, compared to earlier in the data, Zarah's deontically strong assertions about Malia's situation and needs in

the spring of 2017 and Malia's acceptance of these showed the participants' willingness to engage as confidants rather than merely conversation partners. These observations hence support the idea that complaints are highly affected by the status of the relationship between the participants (e.g., Edwards, 2005; Heinemann, 2009; Ruusuvaori & Lindfors, 2009, and Ch. 2.2.2), and again underline the important role of evolving social relationships for the development of L2 IC.

As pointed out by Pekarek Doehler and Berger (2018, p. 575), the fact that we cannot separate speakers' changing practices for action from their evolving social relationships is "not a problem of analysis, but a problem of interpreting the findings". By conceptualizing the development of IC as a holistic process that involves adaptation to constantly changing social circumstances, it is less interesting to try to isolate for example the development of linguistic competence from other aspects of language learning than to see it as an integrated whole. In line with this, the findings of both Case study 1 and Case study 2 support the idea that the ability to draw on shared interactional histories should be considered a key dimension of the development of L2 IC. In both studies, the participants' use of knowledge from prior interactional encounters resulted in higher level of co-construction of complaints and enhanced participation in the interactions more generally. The speakers' ability to mobilize such knowledge in context-sensitive ways thus demonstrates increased L2 IC.

The two case studies show the role complaining (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981) and talk promoting emotional displays (Berger & Fasel Lauzon, 2016) can play in building social rapport and strengthening relationships. As seen throughout the analysis, participants recurrently talk their interactional histories into relevance (Mondada, 2018a; Skogmyr Marian, 2018; Voutilainen et al., 2018), and they use their increasing common ground to accomplish recipient-designed and context-specific social actions (Deppermann, 2018; González-Martínez & Giglio, 2020) that allow them to exchange displays of affiliation with each other. Doing so, they orient to the longitudinal nature of their relationship and to the relevancy of strengthening such relationship over time. My findings contribute to the literature on how participants create conversational routines over multiple encounters (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Greer, 2019). More broadly, they support the arguments made in language socialization research (e.g., Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) about participation as a key driver of and manifestation of increased interactional skills (see also Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Cekaite, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Nguyen, 2011; Young & Miller, 2004), but they do so without recourse to exogenous learning theory. While exploratory in nature, the findings offer a small contribution to our understanding of the role of socialization processes for the development of L2 methods-for-action.

7. Discussion

In this final chapter, I discuss the implications of the empirical findings of the dissertation. I first return to the three research questions that the dissertation set out to address and summarize the empirical findings (Ch. 7.1). I then discuss the implications of these results for our understanding of the development of L2 IC and L2 learning (Ch. 7.2) and highlight the contributions of my study to the research on complaining-in-interaction (Ch. 7.3). I conclude by reflecting on outlooks for future research including possible applications of the findings within the field of language education (Ch. 7.4).

7.1 Summary of findings

The overall aim of the dissertation was to contribute to a better understanding of the longitudinal trajectories involved in the development of L2 IC. To do so, I conducted a longitudinal investigation of speakers' practices for doing indirect complaining-in-interaction in L2 French. The investigation was designed to address several research gaps in the literature (see Ch. 2.3). On the one hand, no prior study on the development of L2 IC has examined indirect complaining, despite the ubiquitous nature of this activity in both institutional and ordinary interactions. On the other hand, the focus on a complex interactional activity provided an opportunity to shed light on a range of dimensions of L2 IC, such as how speakers develop their ability to coordinate and synchronize actions and larger interactional projects with each other and how they engage in stance-taking. In addition, by adopting a multimodal analytical approach, the study set out to enrich the cumulative evidence about the role of embodiment in the development of L2 IC – another under-researched area. Considering the social-relational dimensions of complaining and the fact that prior literature has revealed differences in complaint practices across settings and participant frameworks, the study also lent itself to an exploratory investigation of how the development of L2 complaint practices relates to longitudinal change in social relationships and to the accumulation of shared knowledge.

To address these research gaps, I conducted three empirical sub-studies focusing on three aspects of how L2 speakers of French change their interactional methods for doing indirect complaining over time (Research questions 1-3). These studies concerned: (1) the structural organization of complaining, (2) interactional resources used in complaining, and (3) the way in which change in L2 complaint practices intersects with larger socialization processes. In what follows, I summarize the main findings of each study, before discussing the theoretical implications of these findings in relation to prior research (Ch. 7.2).

7.1.1 RQ1: The structural organization of complaining

Chapter 4 compared the complaints of elementary (A1-A2) and upper-intermediate/advanced (B2-C1) level speakers of French to answer Research Question 1:

RQ1. How does the structural organization of L2 complaining change over time?

Do the core action components of complaint sequences change? Does the way in which speakers initiate complaints change over time? Do coparticipants' contributions to complaint sequences change longitudinally?

The analysis revealed both similarities and differences across proficiency levels.

The **overall structural organization** of complaint sequences is similar at elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels in that sequences recurrently contain the same action components: (1) an expression of a 'potential' complainable; (2) a detailing of/account for the complaint; (3) a summary assessment, restatement, or formulation of the complaint; (4) coparticipant recognition of the complaint as a complaint, and (5) sequence closure.

There is a difference in the **initiation** of complaints, both in terms of the sequential position of complaint initiations and in the pre-complaint work speakers accomplish before launching high-grade expressions of negative stance.

Elementary level speakers initiate complaints mainly in first position, often in the form of volunteered status updates or tellings about past events. Second-position complaints occur primarily in answers to neutral, open-ended questions. As for pre-complaint work, elementary level speakers launch overt criticism or high-grade expressions of negative stance directly in their sequence initiations more often than upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers do. In the context of first-position complaints, elementary speakers regularly produce brief circumstantial prefaces that situate the upcoming talk in time and place without displaying any orientation to the delicate nature of complaining. In some cases, they express negative stance embodiedly before verbalizing it, or they deploy brief contrastive ('praise-but') formulations that delay negatively valenced talk.

The complaint initiations of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers are more varied. First-position initiations regularly occur as extensions of ongoing topical talk. Second-position initiations are frequent and emerge either in answers to questions or in response to (typically as upgrades of) other participants' negatively valenced talk. These speakers in part rely on the same practices as elementary level speakers to initiate complaints. In addition, they regularly initiate complaints in a stepwise manner, whereby they work to preemptively account for and establish the complaint-worthiness of the upcoming complaint and portray themselves as credible complainants before launching overt criticism.

Another observed difference pertains to coparticipants' **responses to complaints**, affecting the level of **co-construction** of the sequences. Most complaints of both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers eventually obtain some kind of affiliative responses. However, the complaints of more advanced speakers typically involve more elaborate exchanges of affiliation or sympathy and more often than the elementary level complaints lead to joint complaining. Most complaints of elementary level speakers remain individual

complaints, and the coparticipants' contributions to the sequence are often limited to small response tokens (brief acknowledgment or alignment tokens, laughter). Coparticipants normally offer more elaborate signs of affiliation or sympathy only once the complainant has clearly signaled a readiness to move toward sequence closure. Among upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers, coparticipants participate more actively in the construction of complaints, both by contributing with substantial affiliative displays supporting individual complaints throughout sequences and by joining the complaint as co-complainants.

7.1.2 RQ2: Interactional resources for complaining

Chapter 5 zoomed in on two particular resources people regularly use to construct complaints, namely negative assessments and direct-reported speech/reenactments, to answer Research Question 2:

RQ2. In what way do the interactional resources L2 speakers use for constructing complaints change over time? Do speakers' expressions of negative stance and other resources for constructing 'complaint-worthiness', such as direct-reported speech, change over time?

The analysis of **negative assessments** revealed several differences between elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers' use of this resource in complaints. Elementary level speakers deploy a limited repertoire of linguistic resources for negatively assessing. This concerns both assessment adjectives and adverbial intensifiers, as well as the grammatical formatting of assessment turns. These speakers also rely heavily on non-linguistic resources, such as standalone non-lexical vocalizations and embodied conduct, to produce negative assessments. The relatively small repertoire of linguistic resources for negatively assessing limits elementary level speakers' ability to vary their first assessments and to produce upgrading second assessments, and thereby their ability to participate in joint complaining.

Upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers deploy a more diverse repertoire of lexical and syntactical resources for negatively assessing. This manifests itself in a greater variety of assessment adjectives, adverbial intensifiers, and syntactical formats of assessment turns. While also regularly deploying non-linguistic resources for expressing negative stance, these speakers rely less heavily than elementary level speakers on standalone non-lexical vocalizations and embodied conduct to produce precise negative assessments. The larger repertoire of resources for assessing allows upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers to more easily vary their first assessments to underline complaint-worthiness and to produce upgraded second assessments, for example to affiliate with coparticipants or participate in joint complaining.

Direct-reported speech and reenactments are used for similar interactional purposes by both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers. The distribution in use of these resources across speakers and the way in which episodes of reported speech/conduct is introduced nevertheless differ between proficiency levels. Three out of four elementary level speakers deploy DRS or reenactments in their complaints relatively rarely or never. The initiations of DRS/reenactments among elementary level speakers regularly include 'broken' turn starts and repair sequences that suspend the progressivity of talk. Recurrent problems

involve difficulties with pronominal references used to establish person references and the different marking of DRS versus IRS. Elementary level speakers also deploy rather diverse, and sometimes idiosyncratic, enquoting devices to signal incipient DRS. Embodied conduct serves important purposes in the resolution of referential ambiguities in these speakers' DRS-initiations. In terms of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers, DRS and reenactments occur regularly in the complaints of all participants. These speakers normally introduce DRS and reenactments in more fluent and unproblematic ways than elementary level speakers, with fewer broken turn starts and repair sequences. The enquoting devices used by these speakers are also diverse, but typically more L1-like. A larger proportion of the cases than among elementary level speakers involves the quotative *dire* ('to say'), which suggests a 'streamlining' of enquoting devices and the routinization of a canonical French quotative.

7.1.3 RQ3: Complaint practices and larger socialization processes

Chapter 6 presented the results of two longitudinal case studies designed to address Research Question 3:

RQ3. How does L2 speakers' change in complaint practices intersect with larger socialization processes? How does the change in complaint practices relate to evolving social relationships and shared interactional histories between the participants?

Instead of documenting recurrent complaint practices across proficiency levels, in this chapter I tracked interactional processes involved in complaining over a longer time span. In each case study, I focused on one focal participant and traced the occurrence of a particular complainable that was frequent in this participant's interactions, to analyze how the complainable over time was talked into relevance and constructed within the conversation group.

Case study 1 tracked the elementary level speaker Suresh's involvement in stance-taking about the weather during ten months. The analysis showed the emergence of an interactional routine in the openings of conversations between Suresh and his coparticipant Aurelia. Suresh drew on his interactional history with Aurelia to produce recognizable complaint proffers that advanced their conversations past an exchange of greetings and eventually allowed the participants to exchange displays of aligning and affiliating stances. Suresh's longitudinal monitoring of his coparticipant's expressed stance toward the outdoor temperature and his use of this knowledge to proffer a complaint that contrasted with his own previously expressed stance demonstrate how participants draw on joint past experiences to recipient-design future actions. This observation also provides emic evidence for participants' orientations to their shared past experiences and to the social-relational purposes of indirect complaining.

Case study 2 tracked Malia's (initially upper-elementary level speaker) complaints about using French at her workplace during three semesters. The analysis demonstrated changes over time in the main topical focus of the sequences, in the ways in which the complaints were initiated, and in the coparticipants' contributions to the sequences. During the first semester, Malia's complaints focused primarily on the difficulty of using French at work. Most sequences were initiated by Malia herself, in first position, and coparticipants' displays of affiliation and

sympathy were typically verbally minimal and offered late. In the second semester, Malia's complaints turned more personal: While still focusing on Malia's French abilities, the complaints increasingly concerned her problematic relationship with her professor. The coparticipants now drew on their shared interactional history with Malia to facilitate second-position complaints about her difficulties and to offer more elaborate displays of affiliation and sympathy than before. Doing so, they showed their sustained interest in Malia's personal situation and oriented to it as a common concern. In the third semester, Malia's new, more advanced, coparticipants had no prior knowledge about Malia's long-term difficult situation. The topical focus of the complaints resembled that in the first semester, focusing on the difficulty of French more generally. Yet the proportion of second-position complaints and the coparticipants' contributions to the sequences were similar to the second semester. The analysis hence shows both how shared interactional histories can impact overall complaint practices among less advanced L2 speakers and what more advanced L2 speakers can accomplish in complaint sequences without any shared interactional history.

7.1.4 Change over time: An overview

Table 7.1 presents an overview of the observed changes in complaint practices over time.

	Elementary level (A1-A2)	Upper-intermediate/advanced level (B2-C1)
Structural changes	- mostly first-position complaints; second-position complaints are rare	- more equal distribution of first- and second-position complaints
	- direct launch of complaint; limited pre-complaint work	- regularly stepwise launch of complaint; more pre-complaint work
	- few joint complaints; limited co-construction of sequences	- frequently joint complaints; high level of co-construction of sequences
Interactional resources for complaining	- limited linguistic diversity in negative assessments turns (assessment adjectives, intensifying adverbials, syntactic formats)	- higher linguistic diversity in negative assessment turns (assessment adjectives, intensifying adverbials, syntactic formats)
	- high reliance on non-linguistic resources for expressing negative stance and negatively assessing (standalone non-lexical vocalizations, embodied conduct)	- lower reliance on standalone non-lexical vocalizations and embodied conduct for negative assessments; high reliance on embodied conduct together with linguistic resources
	- limited use of DRS/reenactments among several speakers	- regular use of DRS/reenactments among all speakers
	- often problematic introductions of DRS; idiosyncratic use of enquoting devices	- few problematic introductions of DRS; more target-like use of enquoting devices

Table 7.1 Overview of observed changes in complaint practices over time.

In addition, the findings of Chapter 6 shows that shared interactional histories may help elementary/intermediate level speakers proffer complaints, create interactional routines involving stance-taking, offer accounts for negative stance expressions, and show affiliation

and sympathy in the context of complaints, while more advanced speakers may accomplish similar actions and participate actively in complaints without shared interactional histories.

7.2 Understanding L2 interactional competence and its development

The empirical findings have important implications for our understanding of the development of L2 IC. Before addressing these implications, however, I discuss how, from a CA perspective, the observed changes over time can be conceptualized in terms of L2 development.

The longitudinal changes in complaint practices presented above cannot, outright, be equated with L2 development or learning. The methodological principles of EMCA (see Ch. 3.1), which presuppose a data-driven, participant-relevant perspective that is indifferent toward *a priori* theory, pose great challenges for longitudinal studies of change over time and for the interpretation of documented change in terms of L2 development and learning. To ensure a basic emic perspective in my study, I have applied sequential analysis of the data and not relied on any exogenous theoretical framework, which was regularly the case in the early works on the development of L2 interactional competence (see Ch. 2.1). However, in the interpretation of the findings I touch upon the boundaries of the emic perspective. As discussed in Chapter 2.1 (see also Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Wagner et al., 2018), participants typically do not ostensibly orient to change or development over time in their interactional practices. While in Chapter 6 I showed examples of how speakers may invoke their interactional histories, it would be difficult – and unfortunate, for the field of CA-SLA – to limit longitudinal studies to instances in which people explicitly talk about their past.

I do not have a firm solution to the challenge of maintaining an emic perspective on change over time, and I believe that this is something that will receive considerable attention in the future, both in the fields of CA-SLA and among CA scholars interested in longitudinal change generally (for a recent contribution to this debate, see the forthcoming special issue on longitudinal CA edited by Pekarek Doehler and Deppermann, forthcoming). A proposed solution to the interpretational conundrum resides in EMCA's conceptualization of competence. As discussed by Wagner et al. (2018; see also Ch. 2.1), speakers sometimes orient to their coparticipants' interactional conduct as more or less competent. Such emic orientations, in turn, can be used for an interpretation of change in terms of the development of interactional competence. In my data, certain observed changes, such as in participants' practices for introducing DRS and reenactments, led to less repair over time and can therefore be discussed in terms of increased local recognizability (cf. Garfinkel, 1967; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970; Wagner et al., 2018). In other cases, it was not the recognizability of actions that was at stake for participants, but rather their local efficacy (for example, high-grade negative assessments were typically effective means for elementary level speakers to make their complaint initiations recognizable as such, yet with time speakers diversified their initiation practices to be able to accomplish other complaint-relevant interactional work before launching overt criticism). A difficulty with this perspective is the general 'permissiveness' observable in interactions among L2 speakers, whereby recipients typically show a higher threshold of acceptance toward interactional conduct that would be treated as problematic in L1 talk (cf. Firth, 1996, on *lingua*

franca interactions). As seen throughout the analyses, linguistic errors, slow conversation pace, long word-searches, and other phenomena that may be treated as accountable conduct in L1 interactions often go unaddressed by my participants, and are thus constructed as orderly and ‘normal’ phenomena in the interactional setting at hand (although explicit orientations to language difficulties and the participants’ status as L2 speakers are also common, as manifested for example in the many complaints about these issues). The general ‘let it pass’ (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 3) strategy in these interactions reveals the challenges involved in adopting an emic perspective on competence and longitudinal change.

So what warrants an interpretation in terms of L2 development when documenting change over time in conduct that was not initially treated as problematic by coparticipants? I would argue that there is another dimension to the emic perspective involved in such interpretation that should not be overlooked, which is observable when documenting longitudinal change in the practices of several participants in a given setting. A difference in one speaker’s interactional practices at two points in time may not be enough to speak about development, as such difference could just be due to chance or individual peculiarities. But the cumulative findings of my study show convergent trajectories across several participants, whereby speakers increasingly deploy interactional conduct that approximates the conduct of more advanced L2 speakers and ultimately L1 speakers. The participants’ convergent orientations to what interactional conduct is normatively ‘better’ than other in a particular setting (such as in an L2 conversation circle) is observable in their use of particular interactional practices rather than other. Such orientations thus demonstrate the speakers’ emic perspective on interactional competence and longitudinal development, regardless of how their interactional conduct is treated by coparticipants.

A final point about the notion of learning is in order. So far, I have discussed my findings in terms of *change* in interactional methods and *development* of interactional competence. What *learning* refers to in the SLA literature has been heavily debated (see Atkinson, 2011b; Block, 2003, for overviews). As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, some CA-SLA studies investigate learning as publicly observable behavior (e.g., Kunitz & Skogmyr Marian, 2017; Markee, 2008; Melander, 2012; Sahlström, 2011), whereas others attempt to shed light on the long-term ‘products’ of learning (see Nguyen, 2011; Pekarek Doehler & Fasel Lauzon, 2015). The dissertation is part of the latter research endeavor, by relying on the presumption that longitudinal development in L2 interactional methods reflects the outcome of learning. This focus does not prevent the view of learning as a socially situated and observable process, but merely limits the scope of inquiry to another dimension of the same phenomenon (although see my final reflections about the mutually constitutive nature of language use and learning in Ch. 7.4).

Based on the observed changes in complaint practices presented above, and in light of the just discussed interpretational concerns, I now present seven consequences of the findings for our understanding of the development of L2 IC and for L2 learning. In particular, I focus on the implications of the empirical observations for: (1) the overall composition of conversational activities, (2) turn-taking management, (3) sequence and preference organization, (4) linguistic resources for action formation, (5) multi-semiotic interactional competence, (6) socialization processes in L2 learning, and (7) successful co-construction of social activities.

7.2.1 Stability in the basic composition of conversational activities

The fact that the complaints at both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels comprise the same basic building blocks concurs with convergent observations about the main features of indirect complaining across several languages and cultures (see e.g. Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; Traverso, 2009, and discussion in Ch. 2.2.3, although note that most studies concern Indo-European languages in Western countries). Prior literature and my findings suggest that indirect complaining boils down to a few core components: expressions of negative stance toward a particular complainable, and evidence that accounts for such stance expressions and details the complaint-worthy person or situation (e.g., through complaint stories with DRS or reenactments). The expected response types to complaining are also similar across languages and L2 proficiency levels, observable in participants' orientations to the relevancy of obtaining affiliation or sympathy. Methodologically, this relative stability in the core features of complaining has advantages for the longitudinal comparison, as it helps ensuring that the analysis in fact compares the same activity over time (cf. Wagner et al., 2018).

The observations about the similarities in the basic building blocks of complaining mean that some things, such as participants' understanding of what it means to accomplish particular conversational activities, *remain the same* over time and across proficiency levels as speakers learn an L2. To some extent, L2 speakers can thus rely on their experiences with conversational activities in their L1(s) and in other contexts as they engage in the same activity in the L2. This can be compared with the argument that certain aspects of IC, such as a general mastery of the generic organizational principles of social interaction (Schegloff, 2007), are part of a universal competence (Levinson, 2006) associated with the ability to participate in human interaction (Hall, 2018; Markee, 2019; Pekarek Doehler, 2019b). Instead L2 speakers have to 'recalibrate' certain aspects of this basic competence to refine their ability to effectively participate in L2 interactions (Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015). When it comes to complaining, my findings show that it is the way certain actions are accomplished and the relative frequency of occurrence of these in complaints – as well as the way in which participants coordinate their actions with each other – that change over time.

7.2.2. Turn-taking management: Increased synchronization and co-construction of sequences

The observed change in sequential positioning of complaint initiations as well as the increased co-construction of complaint sequences and joint complaining among more advanced speakers reflect a change in the overall turn-taking organization of the interactions. Similar to what has been observed by Sert (2019) for EFL peer interactions, the conversations in my data transition from what resembles a 'round-robin format' to a turn-taking system that is similar to spontaneous L1 interactions, with faster speaker exchange and increased participation from coparticipants. The fact that upper-intermediate/advanced level participants more frequently ask each other questions and build upon each other's turns leads to more second-position complaints than among participants with lower proficiency. It also increases the level of co-construction of complaints and contributes to the higher proportion of joint complaints at upper-intermediate/advanced level than at elementary level.

The general change in turn-taking organization can be explained by concurrent changes at several levels. On the one hand, the observed changes reflect the speakers' growing practices for coordinating larger courses of actions, for example by offering recipient responses and other contributions for topic development. Research on these issues has highlighted precisely that speakers with low L2 proficiency often have difficulties providing timely and target-like response tokens and sustain a conversational format, but that they, over time, both diversify their repertoire of L2 response tokens, use these in more appropriate ways, and increasingly participate with collaborative turn-completions and other means that help co-constructing conversations (Dings, 2014; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Sert, 2019). They increasingly also contribute to the topical development of conversations (Kim, 2017; König, 2019; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019). Some aspects of the observed change in turn-taking hence pertain to a development in individual speakers' linguistic abilities, such as the learning of particular L2 response tokens (Kunitz & Yeh, 2019; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2019), and an increased ability to anticipate transition-relevant places (Sert, 2019) – or, as I discuss below, an enhanced capacity to verbally express stance (see Ch. 7.2.4).

The transition from a 'round-robin format' to more conventional conversational turn-taking cannot be attributed solely to individual speakers' development of precise interactional practices, however. It rather reflects a concurrent change across several participants, resulting in a higher level of 'joint capacity' for synchronization and co-construction. As observed by Berger and Pekarek Doehler (2018), changes in conversational activities (in their case, storytelling) may also relate to changes in the relationships of the participants or to other types of socialization processes. While in their study the L2-speaking au pair increasingly initiated tellings in first position in her interactions with the host family mother, in my study I observed the opposite pattern, with more complaints initiated in second position over time. These observations seem contradictory, but they need not be. In part, the au pair's changing storytelling practices can be seen as a reflection of decreasing interactional asymmetries between the participants (see also Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2019), manifested in the au pair's growing interactional agency. In my data, a similar decrease in interactional asymmetry is observable over time, but rather result in *more* second-position complaints, as the participants (who are all L2 speakers) increasingly show agency in asking coparticipants questions (cf. Kim, 2017; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019) and upgrading other speakers' negative stance expression in ways that lead to second-position complaints. Such a decrease in interactional asymmetry is not the accomplishment of individual participants, but reflects the participants' joint ability to coordinate and synchronize actions with each other.

7.2.3 Sequence and preference organization: Diversification of methods for initiating larger courses of action and for indexing delicacy

The documented longitudinal changes in complaint initiations reflect a progressive diversification of methods for launching larger courses of actions and for indexing delicacy. My findings show an increased tendency of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers to initiate complaints progressively, in ways that index the contingent, moral and delicate nature of the activity (Drew, 1998; Heinemann & Traverso, 2009; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019). This was manifested in a change in sequence organization, whereby speakers increasingly introduced strong criticism or other overt negative stance expressions only after a longer work-up with subtle hinting at the complainable instead of immediately in the sequence initiation. These observations concur both with research documenting a diversification of practices for initiating longer sequences of actions, such as tasks and storytellings (Hellermann, 2008; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018), and with studies showing L2 speakers' increased practices for dealing with delicate and dispreferred actions like requests and disagreements (Al-Ghatani & Roever, 2012; 2013; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011; Roever & Al-Ghatani, 2015).

In terms of task and storytelling initiations, more advanced speakers have been observed to preface their upcoming talk through pre-sequences that prepare the grounds for the task or telling in various ways, for example by hinting at the nature of the upcoming story (Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018). Similar story prefaces have been documented for complaint stories in L1 talk (Selting, 2012), indicating that this is a common pre-complaint practice among L1 speakers. As for requests and disagreements, more advanced speakers to a higher extent than less advanced speakers preface such actions in ways that push back the dispreferred or delicate element further in the turn or sequence (Al-Ghatani & Roever, 2012; 2013; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2011; Roever & Al-Gahtani, 2015), similar to what has been observed in L1 talk (Pomerantz, 1984). Through these various 'pre-moves', speakers thus have the opportunity to better prepare their coparticipants for what is coming, to mitigate potentially delicate aspects of the incipient talk, and to minutely adapt their initiating actions to the coparticipants' responses, which in turn increases the chances of obtaining affiliative responses. More advanced speakers' tendency to initiate complaints in a stepwise manner that allows them to progressively escalate negative stance displays and to preemptively account for and establish the legitimacy of the complaint similarly works to enhance the possibility of obtaining affiliative or sympathetic displays from coparticipants. This development thus testifies to speakers' growing capacity for context-sensitive and recipient-designed talk (Pekarek Doehler & [Pochon-] Berger, 2015; 2018). In the case of complaints, the ability to adapt complaint initiations to the interactional context and the recipient may be particularly useful for the participants' engagement in such sequences in other settings and participant frameworks, where complaining might be associated more strongly with delicacy or dispreference. As with the development in turn-taking management, the documented change in sequence organization also reflects an increasing capacity to put to use linguistic resources for specific interactional purposes, such as grammatical constructions for projection (see also Skogmyr Marian, forthcoming).

7.2.4 Linguistic resources for action: Diversification and routinization of interactional uses of linguistic resources

The findings of all three sub-studies and particularly those pertaining to negative assessments and DRS/reenactments (Ch. 5) illustrate the interplay between longitudinal change in methods for complaining and a change in speakers' interactional uses of linguistic resources in the L2. Such change is bi-directional, as it involves both an overall *diversification* in interactional uses of certain linguistic resources, and a routinization and *streamlining* in the use of certain resources. While this combined development has important consequences for the participants' participation in complaint activities, it suggests more general patterns of development in speakers' capacity for action-formation and interaction-organization in the L2.

The analysis of negative assessments and stance expressions reveals a longitudinal diversification in the use of linguistic resources as vehicles for socially situated actions. This diversification includes for example the use of a larger variety of lexical items (assessment adjectives and adverbs), syntactic formats (left- and right-dislocations, pseudo-clefts), and idiomatic expressions deployed for expressing negative stance. In the context of complaining, this longitudinal development allows more advanced speakers to better adjust their assessments to the interactional context. They can vary their high-grade first assessments and fine-tune their second assessments to align with and upgrade first assessments in ways that enhance the chances of obtaining affiliative responses and/or contribute to joint complaining. The findings concur with and add to prior studies showing that the development of L2 IC in part involves a diversification in the use of linguistic resources for accomplishing precise social actions (Hauser, 2013; Hellermann, 2008; Nguyen, 2019; Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018; Sert, 2019; Skogmyr Marian et al., 2017). While the progressive emergence and diversification of linguistic resources have been key concerns of much SLA research (see e.g. Doughty & Long, 2003; Long, 1997; VanPatten & Williams, 2015), a crucial distinction between such research and the findings about L2 speakers' developing grammars-for-interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2018) must be made: From the praxeological perspective of CA-SLA, it is not the diversification of linguistic resources *per se* that is at stake, but speakers' capacity to put to use such resources to accomplish recognizable and context-sensitive social actions (Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018).

In addition, the analysis of the use of DRS and reenactments in complaint activities contributes to our understanding of L2 learning as also involving a routinization, and likely 'streamlining', in the socially situated use of interactional resources: With time, some resources become more readily available for use in particular action contexts (routinization), to the point that they become the 'go-to solution' at the expense of other resources, which decrease in use (streamlining). The fact that all upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers use DRS and reenactments regularly while these resources are rare among elementary level speakers suggests that DRS and reenactments become more routinely available resources for complaining with time. Moreover, the observed difference in the initiations of DRS/reenactments across proficiency levels points to a progressive routinization and streamlining of enquoting devices used to introduce reported episodes. The use of linguistically less diverse (and more target-like) quotatives by upper-intermediate/advanced-level speakers co-occurs with more recognizable

initiations that were less disruptive for the progressivity of talk (e.g., fewer broken turn starts, fewer problems with the establishment of person references). This observation suggests that L2 speakers, over time, learn how to mobilize particular linguistic resources for producing recognizable and locally efficacious initiations of DRS/reenactments (rather than merely diversifying their repertoire of enquoting devices). It also adds to the limited research showing progressive routinization and streamlining in the use of linguistic constructions for precise actional and interaction-organizational purposes (Pekarek Doehler & Balaman, forthcoming; Skogmyr Marian, 2020). In some cases, speakers thus select precise interactional resources that prove efficient for particular purposes and stick to these, just like L1 speakers may routinize linguistic formats for precise purposes, such as for opening or closing conversations (Hofvendahl, 2006). L2 development hence does not only involve increasingly more diverse or complex language use, but also the selection of certain resources and a routinization in the use of these in precise interactional contexts (see more in-depth discussion along these lines by Pekarek Doehler & Balaman, forthcoming).

7.2.5 Language and the body for action: Change in multimodal practices

When adopting a social and praxeological perspective on L2 learning – which focuses on L2 speakers’ ability to accomplish social actions rather than on their linguistic knowledge – the inherently multisemiotic nature of social interaction cannot be ignored. What members treat as competent conduct can be accomplished through different semiotic means; we are hence dealing with a *multimodal interactional competence*. My analyses demonstrated the multisemiotic nature of face-to-face complaining. In addition to verbal resources, participants draw on prosody, non-lexical vocalizations, gestures, facial expressions, and shifts in gaze and posture to display negative stance, show affective involvement, and contrast their own reasonableness with the complaint-worthy conduct of third parties, similar to what L1 speakers do (Baldauf-Quilliatre, 2016; Bangerter et al., 2011; Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015; Drew 1998; Drew & Holt, 1988; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Günthner, 1997; 2000; Hoey, 2014; Holt, 1996; 2000; 2007; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009; Selting, 2010a; 2012; Sidnell, 2006; Wiggins, 2013). Moreover, my analyses shed light on some differences in the use of embodied resources between elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers. These observations offer a small contribution to our understanding of the changes in embodied practices involved in the development of L2 IC, and they highlight the benefits of adopting a multimodal perspective in research on these issues.

The sub-study on negative assessments and embodied stance expressions (Ch. 5.1) revealed that the use of standalone non-lexical vocalizations and accompanying embodied conduct to accomplish precise negative assessments decreases over time. That is, it is not the use of embodied displays of stance *per se* that decreases, but the use of such resources on their own, in particular action contexts – such as to show affiliation with a coparticipant after the expression of a complaint-worthy problem – that diminishes over time. Moreover, the longitudinal analysis of one participant’s practices for introducing DRS showed similar but considerably less salient hand gestures being used to disambiguate person references over time. This observation concurs with findings by Eskildsen and Wagner (2015; 2018), who have documented decreased gesture scope over time as speakers routinize locally efficacious patterns

of language use. Functionalist and psycholinguistic research has shown that speakers gesture more in their L2 than in their L1 (Gullberg, 1998; 2011), suggesting a general negative correlation between gesture use and higher linguistic proficiency. While this might very well be the case, my findings rather suggest that it is the situated use of embodied resources to accomplish precise social actions that may change. More longitudinal research on L2 speakers' situated uses of embodied conduct would help shedding light on the multimodal changes involved in the development of L2 IC.

7.2.6 Socialization processes in L2 learning: Shared experiences as resource for increased context-sensitive and recipient-designed conduct

As discussed in Chapter 6, EMCA research on the development of L2 IC has only recently started to address how development of interactional methods relates to larger socialization processes. The moral and delicate nature of complaining makes this activity a promising candidate for investigating the interface between L2 development and issues such as changing social relationships and how participants draw on cumulative shared knowledge to accomplish social actions. While merely exploratory in nature, the two longitudinal case studies in Chapter 6 together illustrate some ways in which the development of complaint practices relate to participants' social relationships and their knowledge about each other as established in prior interactional experiences. They also highlight the interpersonal dimensions of complaining and show how complaints both reflect and reshape personal relationships (see also Ch. 7.3).

Both case studies demonstrated how shared interactional histories can favor the accomplishment of context-sensitive and recipient-designed actions in the L2. Longitudinal research on L1 interactions has shown that people routinely draw on past experiences to shape future actions (Deppermann, 2018; González-Martínez & Giglio, 2020; Norrthon, 2019; in press). In the case of Suresh, repeated topicalizations of weather conditions and the longitudinal monitoring of stance-taking toward the outdoor temperature resulted in the establishment of an interactional routine for conversation openings in interactions between Suresh and the coparticipant Aurelia. This routine in turn allowed Suresh to take increased responsibility for managing the progressivity of talk (Kim, 2017; Nguyen, 2011) and adjust his stance-taking in ways that provided for exchanges of affiliation. The establishment of interactional routines and the mutual adaptation of interactional conduct to recipients in such routines have been observed in longitudinal analyses of L2 telephone openings (Brouwer & Wagner, 2004) and in news-telling sequences (Greer, 2019), showing how interactionally competent conduct is progressively established and co-constructed by the participants. Other studies have demonstrated how the repeated engagement in similar interactional exchanges may lead to increased participation for L2 speakers (Eskildsen, in press/2021; Greer, 2018; Waring, 2013; Watanabe, 2016). This seemed to be the case for both Suresh and for Malia's coparticipants, as, over time, Malia's coparticipants took initiative in talking into relevance Malia's personal problems and participated actively in the construction of Malia's complaints by offering accounts and more substantial displays of affiliation and sympathy than earlier on. Importantly, these contributions were designed specifically for their recipients: Suresh changed his stance-taking to reflect Aurelia's expressed stance from one interactional encounter to another, and Malia's coparticipants asked questions and offered accounts that were based specifically on

their knowledge about Malia's situation. These findings thus show some precise ways in which shared interactional histories help (L2) speakers accomplish context-sensitive and recipient-designed talk, which is a key feature of IC (Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018). More broadly, the findings support a holistic view of L2 IC development as a process that is inextricably intertwined with socialization processes.

7.2.7 Increased 'success' in the co-construction of social activities

An important overall finding of my research is that L2 speakers at both elementary and upper-intermediate/advanced levels can accomplish 'successful' complaints, that is, complaints that lead to affiliative or sympathetic responses from coparticipants. The higher level of 'success' in the complaints of upper-intermediate/advanced level speakers is nevertheless manifested in that they more frequently than the complaints of elementary level speakers lead to overt exchanges of affiliation, sympathy, and joint complaining. This finding testifies to the more advanced speakers' higher level of L2 IC. The increased success of complaints over time hinges on both the complainants' ability to design complaints in recognizable and locally fitted ways and on the coparticipants' capacity to produce co-operative responses.

On the one hand, the longitudinal analyses show a development over time pertaining to action formation and recipient design, for example in more advanced speakers' ability to introduce complaints progressively in ways that allow them to preemptively accomplish extensive accounting work that conveys the legitimacy of the upcoming complaint and the speakers' credibility as complainants before launching strong criticism. The higher level of progressivity in the complaint sequences of more advanced speakers, for instance with less repair in the introduction of DRS, may also contribute to enhanced recognizability of these speakers' complaints. Prior studies on the development of L2 IC have observed an increased capacity over time to accomplish various social actions and activities in recognizable, effective, and fitted ways, such as storytellings (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2018; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018), task openings (Hellermann, 2008), and self-selection in classroom interaction (Cekaite, 2007; Watanabe, 2016). My findings thus support the observation that the development of L2 IC involves an increased ability to accomplish locally efficacious actions in context-sensitive and recipient-designed ways.

On the other hand, the observed increase in the success of complaint sequences over time can be attributed to the coparticipants' increased ability to offer relevant and timely contributions to the sequences. Coparticipants' responses to complaint initiations and subsequent complaint-components are crucial for the accomplishment of a successful complaint. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5, more advanced speakers' increased capacity to verbally express affiliation in ways that actively contribute to the sequential development – such as through second assessments – leads to higher level of co-construction of the sequences and to more joint complaints. The findings about practices for contributing to complaints develop Boxer's (1993a; 1993c) observation about L2 speakers' difficulties with effectively contributing to complaint sequences. While Boxer did not incorporate any longitudinal perspective, my analysis has shown ways in which L2 speakers increase their capacity for contributing to complaints. The finding about growing 'success' in complaining over time also highlights the fundamentally co-constructed and socially distributed nature of IC (Greer, 2019; Kasper &

Wagner, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019), showing that the success of a conversational activity is highly dependent on what the participants can do together. It is not enough for one participant (such as the complainant) to develop high proficiency in the L2 – the coparticipants have to be able to respond in ways that recognizably align and affiliate with the speaker. We can thus speak of a *concurrent* development in participants' interactional practices, which over time results in an increased ability to successfully co-construct social activities.

7.2.8 Summary of implications for understanding the development of L2 IC

The abovementioned implications for our understanding of the development of L2 IC can be summarized as follows:

1. The lack of change over time in certain aspects of L2 interaction, such as the basic building blocks of conversational activities, reflects the ubiquitous nature of such activities and shows the participants' shared understanding of their core features.
2. With time, L2 speakers develop their ability to build upon and synchronize their actions with others, leading to locally more efficacious management of conversational turn-taking and increased co-construction of social activities.
3. The development of L2 IC involves an increased capacity to manage larger courses of action and delicate talk in ways that enhance chances of obtaining aligning and affiliative responses.
4. With time, L2 speakers diversify their linguistic repertoires and their interactional uses of linguistic resources. At the same time, they specialize certain resources for precise action purposes.
5. The development of L2 IC involves a longitudinal decrease in the situated use of certain types of embodied conduct for the accomplishment of precise social actions, while in other action contexts the use of embodied conduct remains stable.
6. The development of L2 practices is intricately intertwined with larger socialization processes, as manifested in participants' reliance on shared interactional histories to accomplish context-sensitive and recipient-designed talk.
7. The increased 'success' in the accomplishment of social activities over time cannot be reduced to individual speakers' L2 development; it crucially relies on what participants can do together in interaction.

In short, the longitudinal analysis of L2 complaint practices has shed light on numerous facets of the development of L2 IC, including changes in turn-taking and recipient responses, in the management of sequence and preference organization, and in the use of linguistic resources and embodied conduct for precise interactional purposes. It has explored some dimensions of the interrelation between L2 development and socialization processes, and it has illustrated the fundamentally co-constructed nature of IC. The development of L2 IC thus involves both the emergence of certain practices and resources, the qualitative change in some interactional methods, and a quantitative redistribution in the use of particular practices and resources. Together, the findings about complaining in L2 French contribute to a better understanding of

the longitudinal trajectories involved in the development of L2 IC, and by extension, of L2 learning. They also open up avenues for future studies in this field (see Ch. 7.4).

7.3 Understanding complaining-in-interaction

By shedding light on aspects of complaint activities that have received only limited attention in the L1 literature, the findings have implications for our understanding of complaining-in-interaction generally. These implications concern: (1) the overall organization of complaint activities, (2) complaint initiations, (3) practices for engaging in joint complaining, (4) multimodal packages for negative assessments, and (5) the interpersonal purposes of indirect complaining.

As discussed in Chapter 2.2.3, research on the overall structural composition of complaints is scarce. Prior studies have typically focused on different components of complaining without addressing the overall structure of the activity. Traverso's (2009) study on ordinary conversation in L1 French is one exception; Ruusuvuori et al.'s (2019) investigation of performance appraisal interviews in Danish and Finnish is another. My findings concur largely with the findings of Traverso (2009), although I am hesitant to divide complaint sequences in static 'phases' as she does. The fact that the overall organization of L2 complaints is similar to L1 complaints supports the idea of a similar understanding of indirect complaining across several languages and cultures. Complaining boils down to a series of basic interactional tasks, or action components, that are driven by the complainant's pursuit of affiliative or sympathetic responses. Regardless of the interactional setting and the (type of) participants involved, complainants need to justify and provide sufficient 'evidence' for the complaint, and this is recurrently done through similar actions.

How participants move into complaining is another under-researched topic. My finding that speakers sometimes initiate complaints straightforwardly, without orientation to delicacy (cf. Günthner, 1997; 2000; Selting, 2012), and sometimes through careful, stepwise escalation of negative stance displays (Ruusuvuori et al., 2019), adds to the idea that competent complainants have the capacity to adjust their complaint initiations to local contingencies. In some cases, straightforward initiations are oriented to as locally appropriate; in other cases, progressive work-ups with elaborate pre-complaint work are deemed necessary. In addition, the findings about frequent self-praise and similar subject-side practices that work to build the credibility of the complainant already in the initiation of the complaint confirm and extend what has been discussed mostly parenthetically elsewhere (Edwards, 2005; Ruusuvuori et al., 2019; see also Skogmyr Marian, forthcoming).

Moreover, the analyses of joint complaining shed light on some of the specific practices people use to accomplish the precise *jointness* of such complaints. Prior research has indicated that joint complaining involves an escalation of negative stance displays and affectivity (Rääbis et al., 2019; Drew & Walker, 2009). My findings demonstrate the importance of participants' ability to produce aligning, and specifically upgrading, second assessments for such escalation to take place. The kind of non-verbal, embodied assessments frequently used by elementary level speakers seem to be less effective for engaging in joint complaining. This is likely because the 'weaker' status of non-verbal assessments than verbal ones (Couper-Kuhlen, 2012; Kupetz,

2014) make them more difficult to further build upon in subsequent turns. Another aspect of competent complaint conduct thus involves the ability to upgrade negative first assessments.

Although much of the research on L1 complaining is based on telephone calls, several studies have highlighted the multimodal nature of face-to-face complaining (see Ch. 2.2.4). My observation that complainants recurrently produce high-grade negative assessments as multimodal packages has nevertheless not been documented elsewhere in the EMCA literature (but see Bressemer & Müller, 2017, for a Construction Grammar study of a language-gesture pattern for negative assessments). The analyses show that speakers routinely coordinate an assemblage of verbal and embodied resources, such as negatively loaded assessment terms, marked prosody, frowns and other facial expressions conventionally associated with the display of frustration or indignation, as well as conduct used for reinforcement generally (e.g., hand gestures), to accomplish high-grade expressions of negative affective stance. This finding contributes to the growing literature that investigates speakers' use of multimodal packages for precise action purposes (Goodwin, 2007; 2013; Hayashi, 2005; Kärkkäinen & Thompson, 2018; Lilja & Piirainen-Marsh, 2019; Lindström et al., 2019; Mondada, 2014; Pekarek Doehler, 2019a) by documenting such packages in a new action context.

The longitudinal case studies presented in Chapter 6 showcase how participants' micro-level calibration of morality in interaction (Stivers et al., 2011) interrelates with their management of social relationships. The case study with Suresh shows that complaints about trivial matters, such as the weather, can serve important small-talk purposes in conversation openings. Prior research has discussed the weather as a neutral and 'safe' topic for small talk (Laver, 1975; Svennevig, 1999) and a topic that works as a transition into other talk (Sacks, 1992), and my analysis generally supports this observation. At the same time, as shown in Suresh's contradictory stance expression about the cold from one interaction to another, such small talk is an important avenue for doing relational work – as has been argued about complaining generally (Boxer, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; Günthner, 1997; Hanna, 1981). The analysis of Malia's complaints underlined the social-relational dimensions of complaining to an even higher extent. As seen in the topical development over time and in the participants' exchanges of affiliation and sympathy, complaint practices are not just affected by the nature of the participants' relationship, as discussed in prior CA research (see Ch. 2.2.2). It also provides a platform for participants to show their willingness to engage in co-member conduct (Hanna, 1981) – as, for example, foreign students with similar problems and difficulties – and to build interactional 'coalitions' (Laforest, 2009) to show that they are on the same side concerning particular issues. This explains the many complaints about the French language, university courses, and Swiss society in my data, since these are topics that the participants have in common and lend themselves to co-membership talk. Participants use indirect complaining to display belongingness and commiserate; in other words: to work on their social relationships. While CA studies typically refrain from discussing the potential social-relational 'benefits' of complaining – likely to avoid the risk of offering etic judgments – my findings provide emic evidence for participants' own orientations to the interpersonal purposes of complaint activities.

7.4 Outlooks

The dissertation has delimited its scope of inquiry to particular dimensions of L2 complaining, to a certain type of participants and interactional setting, and to precise points in the developmental trajectory of L2 complaint practices. Research topics and methodological optimizations for future studies on L2 complaining emerge logically from these delimitations, and I will therefore not discuss such specific research inquiries in detail. In this final section, I instead consider a few larger theoretical and applied outlooks that emerge based on the findings of the dissertation.

The present work has portrayed human social interaction as inherently multimodal, whose mastery involves a *multimodal interactional competence*. Throughout the analyses, we have seen how speakers treat linguistic structure, prosody, non-lexical vocalizations, facial expressions, hand gestures, gaze, and body posture as relevant resources for establishing joint understanding and for organizing discourse in face-to-face interaction. Assemblies of such resources – such as a sigh and a lowering of one’s head in the hand – work as recognizable, and sometimes routinized, multimodal packages for action. The observations about a possible change over time in L2 speakers’ embodied conduct highlight the crucial need for more research on the multimodal dimensions of the development of L2 IC (see Markee, 2019). While many existing CA studies take embodied conduct into account in their analyses, few studies have systematically addressed longitudinal changes in L2 speakers’ situated embodied practices (but see Eskildsen & Wagner, 2015; 2018). We still know very little about what happens with L2 speakers’ use of their bodies as they increase their linguistic resources and their cumulative experiences with L2 interactions. More attention to multimodal practices for both action formation and for interaction-organizational purposes is therefore needed in order to develop a holistic understanding of L2 development and learning.

The study has also offered theoretical insights that can be used for applied purposes in the field of language education. So far, few attempts have been made to use empirical research on the development of L2 IC to develop pedagogical policy and practice. Salaberry and Kunitz’ (2019b) edited volume, which addresses both the teaching and testing of IC in a variety of languages, constitutes an important effort to bridge theory and practice in this field; the forthcoming volume by Kunitz et al. (in press/2021) on classroom practices is equally promising in this regard (see also Barraja-Rohan, 1997; 2011; Betz & Huth, 2014; Huth & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Wong & Waring, 2010, for the use of CA findings generally to teach L2 interaction, and Rydell, 2018; Sandlund et al., 2016, on CA research for language testing purposes). Some of the findings of the dissertation lend themselves particularly well to pedagogical applications. For example, the observations about jointly constructed stance-taking activities highlight the need for pedagogical attention to interactional uses of first and second assessments in the L2. This is not the place to discuss detailed pedagogical implications or to offer precise teaching or testing recommendations, however. More substantial efforts, both fundamental and applied, are needed for the development of empirically grounded and ecologically valid L2 pedagogy. Only a solid theoretical base about the micro-level workings of interactional competence and its development over time, and concerted efforts across a chain of experts (see Pekarek Doehler, 2019b; in press/2021b), will help bridge the existing gap

between theory and practice. The cumulative results of such work will offer grounds for a more coherent, sociologically grounded epistemology of L2 learning and teaching (Pekarek Doehler, in press/2021a; in press/2021b; Wagner, 2019).

My exploratory analyses of the intersection between the development of L2 practices for complaining and the longitudinal establishment of shared knowledge and evolving relationships have illustrated how interactional competence is shaped by and reflects our *interactional biographies*: what we have experienced alone and with others in life so far. I have not specifically addressed the process of language learning as a social activity in the dissertation. But the longitudinal analyses in Chapter 6, and particularly the case study with Suresh, have shown that speakers recurrently orient to and rely on prior experiences to shape future actions. In this regard, the study sheds light on some ways in which language learning and use are mutually constitutive (Pekarek Doehler, 2010). Interactional competence emerges from the repeated participation in real-life social encounters. People remember prior talk and actions, and they redo these with some adjustment to present contingencies. The dissertation demonstrates that it is possible to contribute to this line of inquiry while adhering to the methodological and epistemological principles of EMCA, without relying on any exogenous learning theory. While some similar research efforts are underway (e.g., Jones, in prep.), additional EMCA research on how shared interactional histories and evolving social relationships affect interactional practices of both L1 and L2 speakers will contribute to a more holistic understanding of interactional competence and its development over time.

On a very broad level, we can relate the findings about the development of L2 complaint practices to the general, lifelong learning and adaptation processes that are ubiquitous features of human social life (Atkinson, 2019; Goodwin, 2018; Tomasello, 2019). Given today's geographical and social mobility, people are constantly faced with new linguistic and cultural environments and an ultra-diversity that require them to reshape their prior selves. Second language learning constitutes only one of the many adaptation processes in which we engage in our daily lives, and 'learning how to fit in' (Atkinson, 2019) can thus be seen as a general skill rather than one that is specific to L2 speakers. This was particularly obvious in the analysis of Malia's workplace complaints in Chapter 6.3, which highlighted the intertwined nature of linguistic and social adaptation processes. In a sociological study of stress management among American graduate students around the middle of the last century, Mechanic (1962) concludes: "perhaps the most important question we can ask about human behavior is how man continues to persist and maintain 'health' and 'balance' in the complex circumstances of modern life" (p. 221). One challenge for many people today is surely how to adapt to a new linguistic and cultural environment. Based on my data, I would suggest that finding people with similar life situations and discussing problems – and even complain about them – is one of the ways in which we do such adaptation work. Future research might shed further light on how language learning intersects with other types of human adaptation processes.

Whoever you are reading these words, thank you for joining me on this journey. I hope that this dissertation has offered you some new and interesting insights about L2 learning, and, to some degree, about basic human sociality. If it has not – *tant pis!* At least you should know how to express your concerns (yes, complain) about it to others.

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