

Direct reported speech and reenactments in French multimodal interaction

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This paper looks into the relationship between direct reported speech and reenactments in French conversations, following the work of Sidnell (2006). Reporting talk is a common feature of naturally occurring spoken interaction whereby interactants often animate and re-voice (Goffman, 1981) themselves or someone else, or even a generic speaker engaged in a prior or fictive talk. Such instances may be achieved at specific recurrent moments in the interaction (Holt & Clift, 2006), and are shaped by specific lexico-syntactic and prosodic constructions (Hanote, 2019; Li, 1986). In addition, direct reported speech can be conveyed by gestures and facial expressions (Li, 1986) which can further be considered as a form of demonstration (Clark & Gerrig, 1990) and reenactment (Sidnell, 2006). As Clark & Gerrig (1990) pointed out, reporting talk is not only concerned with the retelling of an event, but also a display or a depiction, which involves demonstrating things (noises, gestures, facial expressions). More recently, Sidnell (2006) highlighted the multimodal dimension of such demonstrations, and focused on the production of reenactments. Reenactments are said to provide “virtual representations of the relevant events” (Sidnell, 2006: 406) providing opportunities for interactants to convey perspective shifts and visual-spatial representations of a given event, within the same turn-at-talk.

In this talk, we focus on three specific interactional sequences taken from the *DisReg Corpus* (Kosmala, 2020) which includes videotaped recordings of French university students engaged in various conversations. These sequences include retellings and reenactments of amusing anecdotes and stories, which are often associated with reported speech (see Holt, 2000). Specific attention is paid to the design and placement of reported speech and its coordination with prosody, gaze, and gesture, leading to multimodal reenactments. In particular, we show how interactants manage to display shifts in participation through gaze direction and body orientation (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004) by reenacting multiple character perspectives framed within specific visual spaces. We also discuss the role of the French discourse marker *genre* as a new quotative (Vigneron-Bosbach, 2016, 2020) and the extent to which it can introduce visible demonstrations rather than talk alone, whereas canonical quotative verbs cannot. We assume that a change in gaze direction or body orientation can further materialize the boundary between reporting and reported speech which could be considered as a kind of *multimodal* discontinuity, as it has already been described for prosody (Dehé & Wichmann, 2010; Hanote, 2015).

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