

# THE SITUATED ORGANISATION OF DIRECTIVES IN FRENCH: IMPERATIVES AND ACTION COORDINATION IN VIDEO GAMES

LORENZA MONDADA

## Abstract

*Directives realised with imperative verbs have been mainly considered as a rude form, offending the face of the recipient and as being generally used less than other, more indirect, forms, which are considered more polite. As a result, studies focusing on directives produced by using imperative verbs are scarce, and their situated use in specific social actions remains understudied. This paper aims to propose an alternative description of directive turns constructed with imperative verbs: within a conversation analytic perspective, it treats them as instructions which are formatted moment by moment by the participants taking account of the context and the activity in which they are uttered.*

## 1. Introduction

Directives realised with imperative verbs have been mainly considered within the tradition of speech acts, in sociolinguistics and in discourse analysis as an impolite form, offending the face of the recipient and as being generally used less than other, more indirect, forms, which are considered more polite. As a result, studies focusing on directives produced by using imperative verbs are scarce, and their situated use in specific social actions remains understudied.

This paper aims to propose an alternative description of directive turns constructed with imperative verbs in French, treating them as instructions which are formatted moment by moment by taking into account the context and the activity in which they are uttered. This analysis shows how imperatives are embedded in a particular ecology of interaction and focuses both on the temporality of the turn and its coordination with the ongoing participants' activities, as well as on the specific social actions realised within specific turn formats. Within the perspective of Conversation Analysis, this paper focuses on imperative forms in French, as they are used in a particular ordinary setting, where participants playing video games are engaged in coordinating their situated actions in a finely tuned way. Although the study focuses on this particular interactional activity, it suggests that the constraints and opportunities characterising the production of directives revealed in this context shed some light on the sequential and praxeological features of directives in general and on the systematicity of practices for action coordination.

Thus, the study contributes to the investigation of the sequential organisation of grammar in interaction (see Ochs et al., 1996; Ford et al., 2002; Hakulinen and Selting, 2005; for French, see Mondada, 2001, 2008; Pekarek-Doehler, 2001, 2011; Chevalier, 2008; De Stefani and Horlacher, 2008) by focusing on the interplay of three fundamental aspects, temporality, multimodality and sociality as deeply embedded in the grammatical organisation of talk. Temporal aspects of the situated mobilisation of grammar and other resources by the participants have been highlighted by interactional linguistics within an emergent conception of grammar (inspired by Hopper, 1987), taking into account the fact that language in talk unfolds in time, moment by moment, in an incremental way (Auer et al., 1999; Goodwin, 2002; Mondada, 2007). Grammatical as well as embodied details of talk and social conduct are arranged in a timely way within the finely tuned coordination of the participants: time is concerned not only with the emergent Gestalts of talk-in-interaction, but also with the multimodal organisation of possible other ongoing actions, which can either correspond to the temporality of talk or possess their own specific temporalities. The arrangement of multimodal resources as they are situatedly mobilised and indexically adjusted within the emergent organisation of social interaction orients to these multiple temporalities (Mondada, *in press a*, *in press b*). Grammar in action shapes and is reflexively shaped by them too. Moreover, the way in which grammatical and embodied resources are contingently assembled within the temporality of action also both indexes and establishes the specific social identities and relations of the participants.

After a presentation of the phenomenon and the empirical data (section 2), I discuss the literature on directives (section 3). I then propose a systematic analysis of the temporal features of the sequence constituted by directives and their responses (sections 4–5). This sequence can be closed by positive or negative assessments (section 6) but can also be expanded by various accounts (section 7) which retrospectively display how participants deal with issues of time, agency, skills and norms in coordinating mobile action. By taking into consideration the situated, temporal, sequential and praxeological features of the practice described, the paper offers a new perspective on directives.

## 2. The phenomenon: directives and real-time coordination of collective action

The topic of this paper did not emanate from any specific interest in French imperative verbs, but from the discovery of a pervasive phenomenon encountered during the study of the practices of young people interacting while playing virtual football together: imperatives are highly frequent and represent a usual resource for action coordination within teams.

Here are

(1)

1 LUC

2 RAP

3

4 LUC

5 RAP

(2)

1 LUC

2 RAP

(3)

1 RAP

2

(4)

1 LUC

2 RAP

3 LUC

(5)

1 RAP

2

3 RAP

Thes  
A numb  
constitu  
series o  
success  
form; re  
manner

1. The  
at th

Here are a few instances of French imperatives found in this context:<sup>1</sup>

- (1)
- 1 LUC    **sors sors sors sors=**  
          go out go out go out go out=
- 2 RAP    **=ben ouai:s,**  
          =well yea:h,
- 3        (1.5)
- 4 LUC    **sors** [faut l'faire sortir            ]  
          go out [you have to get him out    ]
- 5 RAP    [fais pressing fais pressing]  
          [put pressure put pressure    ]
- (2)
- 1 LUC    **ho:p (.) fais sortir le gardien, (.) sors** [l'gardien            ]  
          ho:p (.) get the goalkeeper out, (.) get [the goalkeeper out]
- 2 RAP    [i'sort                                    ] **pas,**  
          [he won't go                        ] out,
- (3)
- 1 RAP    **dépêche toi. dépêche toi, dépêche toi. °dépêche toi°,**  
          hurry up. hurry up, hurry up. °hurry up°,
- 2        °°vite vite °° **prends la clé, sors, sors, sors, sors,**  
          °°quick quick°° steer clear, go out, go out, go out, go out,
- (4)
- 1 LUC    **recupère-la, ne l'laisse pas passer là putain.**  
          get it back, don't let him pass there fuck.
- 2 RAP    [mais attends ]  
          [but wait    ]
- 3 LUC    [surveilles le] **centre.**  
          [watch the    ] centre.
- (5)
- 1 RAP    **joue derrière, joue derrière, joue derrière.**  
          play behind, play behind, play behind.
- 2        (0.2)
- 3 RAP    **faut pas qu'on perde la balle, >faut pas qu'on perde la balle<**  
          we mustn't lose the ball,            >we mustn't lose the ball            <

These excerpts present a series of imperatives in a variety of turn constructions. A number of formal features are observable: imperatives can occur alone and constitute a short turn constructional unit (TCU), but mostly they occur in series; series of imperatives can be composed of the repetition of the same form or of the succession of different forms; imperatives can occur in a positive or in a negative form; repeated forms can be uttered at different paces, in a slower and stretched manner or in a faster manner. Although these excerpts permit a number of formal

1. The data have been transcribed according to Gail Jefferson's conventions that may be found at the end of this volume. An indicative translation is provided line by line.

observations, it appears difficult to interpret these instances and their variations without referring to the actual context of their production, the situated gaming activity, its temporality and the actions implemented in these turns.

The football game on which this paper is based is *Fifa08* for PlayStation (PS3). The data set is a video-recorded session of 1h30, during which two players, Luc and Raph, play four matches, always playing together within the Real Madrid team, against other players connected through the Internet. The game is inspired by actual features, teams and events of the 2008 football tournaments. At the beginning of each match, players choose a team and set up its composition by selecting the footballers they prefer; within the game, they control them with a console, choosing the footballer they are playing with. Each avatar inherits the characteristics of the footballer it represents and has specific skills which are implemented in the computer system (for example, he runs faster, he is good at doing chip kicks, is a good defender, a good spearhead, or a good striker, etc.). Players can play with a single character or with the entire team: in the latter case, which is the mode chosen by Luc and Raph, they successively activate various footballers, and they use the side-on aerial camera by default (see Figure 1), preferring it to the over-the-shoulder view. Players mostly identify with the avatars (referring to them with first- and second-person pronouns) but they may also refer to them by their names or using the third-person pronoun.

The session was video-recorded with two cameras, one on the players and the other one on the game (Figure 1a and 1b).<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1a and 1b.** Multiscope video with two synchronised views, the first on Luc (left) and Raph (right) in front of the TV screen; the second on the football field as it appears on their screen (players controlled by Luc and Raph belong to the same team and are dressed in white).

2. This data set is part of a larger corpus of 10 hours of video-recorded video games, collected within a project on teenagers' talk, funded in 2007 by the ILF/CNRS/DGLF. Thanks to J. Lascar, J. Ait Hamlat and S. Teston for their collaboration during fieldwork and to I. Colón de Carvajal for editing the video data. The analysis also contributes to the SPIM project (funded by ANR) on repetitions.

In the multimodal transcription of the video, I added to the lines devoted to the participants' talk as many extra lines as needed for the timed representation of their actions and the surrounding events, which are synchronised with the talk. This transcription enables a detailed analysis of the sequential relationship between talk and game actions, focusing on the sequential implicativeness between action implemented by the directives and subsequent actions.

Directives are a central resource for the coordination of the game – coordination being itself a crucial dimension of collective and collaborative games. Despite the huge literature on video games (see, for example, Cassell and Jenkins, 1999; Perron and Wolf, 2003/2009; Carr et al., 2006; Salen, 2008; as well as Minassian and Rufat, 2010, on French data), detailed studies of the players' timed activities are still scarce. Although finely tuned coordination is crucial for collaborative games – and it is recognised as such by game designers interested in supporting effective collaborative forms of interaction between players (see Manninen and Kujanpää, 2005) – detailed studies of the way in which players interact within game-related tasks are still scarce and the few existing studies are mostly ethnographic descriptions not based on detailed transcripts of video-recorded gaming sessions. In an ethnomethodologically-inspired ethnography, Reeves et al., (2007) describe the skilled competences of the players engaged in a multiplayer war game, *Counter-Strike*:

Successful sequences of action [...] involve careful timing, and players must perform them and deploy each sequential action, such as movement, posture (e.g., ducking), orientation, and aiming, artfully and orderly. These orderly sequences must also be engaged with the terrain, such that movements, orientations, aiming and so on are crafted specifically for corners, doors, across open spaces and down corridors. Timing also requires rapid reaction from players in relation to the enemy's move. (2007: 137).

In one of the rare studies to use transcripts of in-screen activities, Bennerstedt (2008) describes the coordination between players engaged in *World of Warcraft*, focusing on two discursive practices specific to the game, achieved through the skilful and adjusted typing of the commands 'sheep moon', which makes humanoid mobs harmless through turning them into sheep, and 'sap circle', which puts a mob to 'sleep', immobilising it for a while. This analysis shows the crucial role of commands and instructions for participants' coordination within the game.

The present study aims to show how the players' instructions are implemented in timed action, moment by moment, reflexively organised by taking into account the dynamic context of the game. It focuses its analysis on imperatives as a resource contributing to establishing a finely tuned coordination between the emergent construction of turns at talk, the moving configurations observable on the screen and the actions undertaken by the players to command the movements of their avatars on the virtual field.

This coordination relies on a multi-layered time; time of the talk, time of the football actions, time of the embodied manipulations of the console. These temporal dynamics do not only concern the moment-by-moment unfolding of actions but also the participants' anticipations, based on their skilled interpretation in real time of projected trajectories of actions, both in talk and in the game. The format of turns at talk containing imperatives orients to these temporal features of mobile coordination – in brief to the temporal order of the game. In this sense, the temporality of talk *and* the temporality of the game together shape the detailed temporal formatting of the imperatives. Moreover, this coordination relies on social relationships, players' identities, gaming competencies and skills, as they are reflexively elaborated and evaluated within the game itself. The way in which imperatives are received, granted, or contested relies on and establishes the legitimacy, authority and relevance of the moves within the game – in short, the social and moral order of the game.

### 3. Literature on directives: the missing context of action

Directives have been largely studied in the linguistic literature within different perspectives, from speech act theory to politeness theory, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and conversation analysis. Roughly, two main foci characterise the literature: a focus on indirectness and a focus on the social relationships indexed by these acts.

On the one hand, indirect forms of directives have been mainly studied (e.g. modal verbs such as English 'could you' / 'would you' / 'would you mind' / 'I wonder if you could pass the salt' or as French 'peux-tu' / 'pourrais-tu' / 'veux-tu me passer le vin'), with respect to more direct ones (such as 'pass me the salt' or 'passe-moi le vin') (see Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2001; Manno, 2002, for French). Within the speech acts tradition, the conditions of interpretation of indirect acts (the inferences to be made for interpreting them, as well as the conditions for considering them as successful, generally formulated in terms of cognitive stances, intentions and abstract capabilities) have been widely discussed since Searle (1975). Within the conversation analytic tradition – largely critical of the latter (Schegloff, 1992, 1999; Streeck, 1980) –, directives initiate a sequence where granting constitutes the preferred response and rejecting the dispreferred one. Participants design them so as to avoid dispreferred responses and this accounts for the use of pre-requests and other pre-sequences (Schegloff, 1980; Davidson, 1984) as well as other request formats, sensitive to different forms of entitlement (Lindström, 2005; Wootton, 2005; Heinemann, 2006; Curl and Drew, 2008).

On the other hand, the social relationships indexed by directives have been privileged. Most of the literature considers that directive formulations are determined by social aspects such as politeness, power, hierarchy and status (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). *Aggravated forms* of directives, such as orders and demands

in the i  
stating  
these a  
(Labov  
studyin  
Goodv  
of imp  
used b  
caretak  
charac  
undert  
constru

Alt  
partici  
and on  
direct  
this re  
forms  
the wo  
profus  
(1989:  
is to “  
more  
(Vine,  
reduc  
consid  
massiv  
conve  
direct  
comm  
are on  
tends  
2009:  
situat  
with t  
Conse  
conter

In  
within  
rapidl  
imme  
timed

in the imperative form, imply that a speaker can legitimately impose on another by stating their requirements boldly. By contrast, the use of *mitigated forms* expresses these acts in downgraded ways and allows a speaker to avoid offending another (Labov and Fanshel, 1977: 63, 84–6). Within conversation analysis-inspired work, studying the game activities of boys and girls in an urban neighbourhood, Goodwin (1990: 147) describes two ways of coordinating collective tasks: the use of imperative forms, stressing individual rights and asserting leadership, mainly used by boys, and the use of mitigated forms, emphasising connectedness and caretaking concerns, mainly used by girls. Goodwin notes that these two forms are characterised by different temporalities: imperatives command actions to be undertaken at the time the imperative is issued, whilst mitigated directives are constructed as suggestions for action in the future.

Although Goodwin pays attention to the tasks at hand dealt with by the participants, one general consequence of the focus of these studies on indirectness and on social and gender relationships has been that the actual contexts of use of direct directives, in the form of imperative verbs, has been relatively neglected. In this respect, studies focusing on collective actions achieved by using directive forms are relatively scarce. Some interesting observations come from studies of the workplace. Pearson notes that “‘controlling” speech acts or directives, occur profusely in ordinary situations where people are set on accomplishing tasks’ (1989: 289). In a recent study, Vine finds that ‘interactions where the main purpose is to “assign tasks” yield, unsurprisingly, a large number of directives and provide more speech acts of this type per minute than interactions with other purposes’ (Vine, 2009: 1397). In a similar vein, Jones (1992) shows that directives cannot be reduced to indexing social or gender relations, but have to be studied with consideration of the specific contexts of action in which they are used. They are massively used in situations which require a high level of involvement in the conversation and where another threat to conversation outweighs the threat of the directive. In these specific cases, directives can even express solidarity and common interests. This seems especially to be the case of ‘NOW directives’ which are oriented to an immediate task: ‘The immediate nature of a NOW directive tends to mean that it is permissible to overlook considerations of politeness’ (Vine, 2009: 1401). However, these studies do not offer an account of the timely and situated sequential production of these directives. More generally, no study deals with the details of the multimodal actions going on as a directive is proffered. Consequently, the fine coordination between the directive and its praxeological context of use have not yet been described.

In this paper, I focus on the use of directives achieved with French imperatives within an activity where coordination has to be accomplished here and now, in a rapidly changing context, where the conditions for, and consequences, of the immediate action are constantly being updated. My analysis first focuses on the timed and sequential organisation of these actions and then treats the social



relationships as they are built through the design of specific forms of agency within turn formats. The analysis reveals systematic distributions of imperative forms within different contexts of action as well as participants' local interpretation of imperatives as implementing legitimate or contested actions. In this sense, I show that imperatives are not intrinsically 'rude' or 'impolite' but are locally mobilised and scrutinised by participants for their possible moral and social implications.

#### 4. Directive sequences in a dynamic context

In my videogame corpus, one way in which coordination is achieved by the players is through sequences of directives/responses. Even if other techniques are available and even if they can be tacitly achieved without saying a word, directives are one of the most frequent practices. Hence, collective virtual games are a perspicuous setting for a systematic study of imperatives as resources for implementing directives.

Directives and related actions complying with them constitute a 'sequence' in the strongest sense, where the first action sets up the 'conditional relevance' for the second action. The fact that the second is conditionally relevant ensures that if the second is produced, it is seen as being 'responsive' to the first, and if it is not produced it is seen as 'noticeably, officially, consequentially, absent' (Schegloff, 2007: 20). Furthermore, these directives are an occurrence of the pair 'instruction' / 'instructed action': as shown by Garfinkel (2002: ch. 6), rather than unilaterally determining instructed action. Instructions acquire a sense through the following of instructions. More particularly, instructions are always incomplete, and 'following' them supposes a competent interpretation which retrospectively and reflexively configures their meaning (Mondada, in press a).

In the following excerpts, I show the way in which directive and complying actions constitute the first and the second part of an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007). I emphasise their tight organisation, taking into consideration the specific temporality of the mobile situation in which they are uttered. In order to make available for analysis the finely tuned coordination of the players, relying in a detailed manner on the unfolding of their actions, excerpts have been transcribed by synchronising the relevant game moves with the ongoing talk. Game actions performed by the participants as well as by other agents have been integrated in an extra line: their beginning and end are bracketed and referred to precise points within talk, thanks to a series of landmarks (actions performed by Luc are signalled by the symbol \*, actions performed by Raph by the symbol +).<sup>3</sup>

In the following fragment, Raph has possession of the ball and is running towards the goal.

(6) (PS4.24)

((while R is approaching the penalty area with the ball, competing with an opponent, L also runs into the penalty area))



- 1 RAP >c\*a#sse-toi#, t'es hors\* jeu <\*
- >bugger off, you're off-side<
- luc \*crosses penalty area's line \*changes trajectory\*
- fig #fig.2 #fig.3
- 2 \* (0.5) \* # (1.4)
- fig #fig.4
- luc \*runs out of the area \*

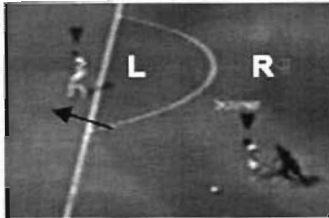


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Footballers currently controlled by players are signalled by small triangles above their heads: here, L is controlling the footballer whose trajectory is indicated by an arrow and R is controlling the footballer possessing the ball.

Even before Luc crosses the line of the penalty area (Figure 2), Raph utters the directive, displaying through its timely placement that he is projecting Luc's imminent position off-side and the potential problems this can generate. The pronouns used display the identification of the players with their avatars, which is very systematic as far as instructed actions are concerned. Raph's directive is uttered with a quick pace, synchronised with Luc's fast movement. It works as a command, which is granted by Luc before turn completion, by inverting the trajectory of his player (Figure 3). In this way, the problem caused by Luc's position is resolved exactly as Raph and the opponent cross the line (Figure 4).

3. Multimodal details have been transcribed according to the following conventions (see Mondada, [http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/projets/corinte/bandeau\\_droit/convention\\_icor.htm](http://icar.univ-lyon2.fr/projets/corinte/bandeau_droit/convention_icor.htm)):

- \* \* delimit descriptions of one speaker's actions.
- + + delimit descriptions of another speaker's actions.
- \*---> action described continues across subsequent lines.
- \*--->> action described continues until and after the end of the excerpt.
- >\* action described continues until the same symbol is reached.
- >>-- action described begins before the beginning of the excerpt.
- .... preparation for an action.
- ,,,,, retraction of an action.
- luc participant doing the action is identified in small characters.
- eve when he is not the current speaker or when the gesture is done during a pause.
- % % description of an event on the football field.
- % % delimitation of the beginning/end of the event.
- fig figure; screen shot.
- # indicates the exact moment at which the screen shot has been recorded.

Raph's turn is composed of two TCUs, the first constituted by the imperative, the second by an account. By formulating in so many words Luc's location in technical terms, Raph makes explicit not only the negative consequences of his location but also a basic rule of the game. In this sense, he lets transpire a critique of Luc's move – also encapsulated in the lexical choice of the verb 'se casser' / 'to bugger off' and its pejorative connotations (if compared with a more neutral movement verb, like 's'éloigner' / 'to move away').

In the following fragment, Raph has the ball and is followed by an opponent, while Luc's perpendicular trajectory comes closer and closer to them (Figure 5):

(7) (PS8.46)

- 1 (0.2) #  
     *fig*                      *#fig.5*  
 2 RAP >casse-toi de de#vant, \* casse-toi de# devant. <  
       >bugger off from the front, bugger off from the front.<  
     *luc* >>runs towards R-----\*crosses his trajectory and runs away-->>  
     *fig*                      *#fig.6*                      *#fig. 7*  
 3 (0.5)



Figure 5



Figure 6

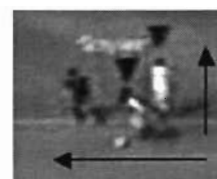


Figure 7

Raph's turn is formatted with a repetition of the verb and an accelerated pace, which orient towards the fast movement and the projectable trajectories of both players, anticipating the risk of a possible collision. The directive imposes an alternative action, orienting to the urgent and problematic need to abandon the current move: Luc complies with the directive by transforming his trajectory in such a way that it no longer converges on the ball and towards Raph (Figure 7).

Both directives in excerpts 6 and 7 display a local analysis of the players' trajectories and the projection of their possible problematic achievement. In this sense, directives are based on a situated anticipatory analysis of the various mobile actions under way and on the prefiguration of an imminent adverse configuration which could hinder their game. This analysis reveals how the trajectories of players running in various directions are being skilfully observed, interpreted in the context of the game, anticipated, and thus supported or avoided. Directives not only adjust towards the temporality of the changing game, but also project possible trajectories and possible outcomes, which can be positive or negative for

7. For a detailed overview of how institutional talk is adapted from ordinary conversation, see Drew and Heritage (1992) and Heritage (2005).

the score. Trajectories are seen as successful or risky, as adequate or inadequate: in this sense, projections not only concern the timely order of the game but also the moral order of the game. By addressing an inadequate, risky or even wrong move, directives convey other actions than coordination of action, such as critiques, complaints and blame.

The orientation towards a possible negative outcome is particularly vivid in the use of negative imperatives and in the transformation of positive imperatives into negative ones, as in the following fragment:

(8) (PS58.44) (see above excerpt 5)

```

1      * (0.3)
    luc  *starts the game at the end of the first-half
          and runs into the adversary's half of the field -->
2  RAP  joue derrière joue derrière joue derrière.
          play behind play behind play behind.
    luc                                     -->*changes his trajectory-->
3      (0.2)
4  RAP  faut pas qu'on perde %la balle/ %>faut pas qu'on perde la balle<%
          we mustn't lose the ball,                >we mustn't lose the ball    <
    opp                                     %approaches% accelerates-----%
5      % (0.7)
    opp  %takes the ball-->>

```

As Luc starts the game and runs towards the goal of the adversary, Raph first utters a series of commands formatted by three repeated positive imperatives, adjusting to Luc's continuous trajectory. Finally Luc complies with the command and changes his trajectory, continuing to possess the ball. Raph produces a new instruction, using the negative form of the verb 'falloir'/'to have to'. This negative form orients to the danger represented by an opponent running towards Luc (line 4) and taking the ball (line 5): here, the prefigured negative output is realised. The distribution of the positive and negative forms strongly prospectively orients to the positive or negative projected outputs of the action. Negative outcomes also occasion retrospective evaluations, negative assessments, complaints and blame.

As shown by the previous excerpts, in the corpus most directives are tacitly granted by the next move in the game, which can be either promptly achieved or delayed. However, some are verbally rejected. Negative responses can be formatted either in a preferred or in a dispreferred way.

(9) (PS3.55)

```

1  RAP *   [dégage-la,] dégage-la dégage-la dégage-la=
        [clear it, ] clear it, clear it, clear it=
        luc *receives the ball-->
2  LUC =non, non, pas *b'soin, (.) on construit
        =no, no, not necessary, (.) we construct
        luc *passes to R-->>

```

(10) (PS2.44)

- 1 LUC voilà, \*fais. (0.4) une deux, une\*+ deux, une deux, pars dans le fond.  
 here it is, do. (0.4) one-two, one-two, one-two, go towards the bottom.  
*\*passes to R-----\**  
*rap +runs away with the ball-->>*
- 2 (0.4)
- 3 RAP euh: non mais j'ai pas suivi. (.) faut m' le dire avant.  
 ehm: no but I haven't followed. (.) you must tell me earlier.

In excerpt 9, Luc is in charge of restarting the game with the goalkeeper of their team. Raph produces a repeated directive, imposing a type of move (a long shot). Luc counters it, proposing an alternative strategy, consisting in building collaborative passes: its negative response is formatted in a preferred way, latched with the previous turn and constituted by two 'non'/'no' and an explicit rejection of Raph's imposition as 'not necessary' (line 2).

In excerpt 10, Luc enjoins Raph to realise a particular configuration, a one-two (line 1), but Raph does not comply with him, running away instead of passing the ball back. In this case, Raph's rejection is delayed (line 2) and begins with a stretched hesitation ('euh:'/'ehm:'). It is followed by an account which admits his failure, although placing the responsibility on Luc, as not having planned the move early enough. In this case, the rejection is formatted in a dispreferred way and is followed by an account and a complaint, raising the issue of who is responsible and who is to blame for the failure. Thus, imperative directives are treated by inspecting their temporal fittedness within the game and by evaluating their local adequacy with respect to ongoing and alternative moves.

Thus, the sequential organisation of instructions shows a double orientation of the participants, towards the timing of the moves within the game and towards social and moral issues of legitimacy, blame and responsibility. In the following sections, I successively tackle these aspects.

### 5. Time issues: the emergent and dynamic production of imperatives

Participants format directive turns by orienting to the temporal features of the ongoing action in various ways, as shown by prosody, syntactic design and possible explicit comments. In excerpts 6 and 7, the turn is uttered at a faster pace, prosodically displaying the imminent and urgent circumstances in which the directive is produced. The form of the imperatives, made up of short clauses, without any clitic, often without any argument, is particularly suited to this fast temporality of action. Moreover, in excerpts 6, 8 and 9, directives are repeated, following the emergent trajectory of action.

When participants' primary orientation is the emergent temporality of the instructed action (i.e., the temporality of the game), repeated imperatives are the most used form. Such cases are analysed in this section, showing how repetitions deal with the time of the instructed action. When participants' primary orientation is the attribution of rights and responsibilities, the production of blame and

complaints, directives are characterised by other formats, where different constructions are used and initial forms are transformed rather than repeated. These cases will be analysed below in section 7.

In the following fragment, the imperative is uttered three times:

(11) (PS58.44)

((beginning of second half))

- 1       \*(0.3)  
       luc \*starts play running with the ball along the halfway line-->  
 2   RAP >joue derrière, joue derrière, joue derri\*ère.<  
       >play behind, play behind, play behind.       <  
       luc                                       -->\*changes trajectory-->  
 3       (0.2)

Raph's turn is constructed by three imperatives produced at a fast pace. The instruction adjusts to Luc's ongoing running trajectory, along the halfway line, and imposes another direction to his movement. Luc complies with the directive on the last syllable of the last repeated fragment. Reflexively, the latter is produced with a terminal intonation, orienting to the completion of the sequence.

Similarly, in the next excerpt, the verb is repeated until the action is granted:

(12) (PS14.55)

((arrangement in front of the goal; L is part of the wall, R is near the goalkeeper))

- 1       #(2.5)%                                       (0.5)%\*  
       eve       %opponent shoots the free kick%  
       luc                                       \*stops the ball-->  
 2   LUC c'est bon   [j` passe           ]  
       that's fine   [I'm making a pass]  
 3   RAP           [>dégage-la, dégage]-la, dégage-la,< >>dégage-la<< déga-  
       >clear it, clear it, clear it,   < >>clear it<< clea-  
 4       dégage-la:\*::.  
       clear it:::  
       luc       -->\*clears with a long shot-->  
 5       (0.8)

After the opponent has shot a free kick, Luc is able to stop the ball. He announces the next action he is about to do (line 2), but, in overlap, Raph utters a directive specifying an alternative kind of shot to be done (lines 3–4). In this case, Raph produces four occurrences of the verb, followed by a self-suspended one. Whilst the verbal construction is repeated, its delivery and prosody change, adjusting to the timing of the ongoing action: this first series is produced at a rather quick pace, the last occurrence is slowed down and stretched, as Luc finally complies with the instruction. Thus, the format of the directive turn is adjusted temporally both to the dynamic game environment and to the delayed response of the recipient. The absence of a response is addressed by a new repetition of the

directive. The end of the series displays sequence completion, as shown by a terminal intonation, when Luc has finally complied with the directive.

In sum, the timing of the action is embodied in the turn format using as many repetitions of the verbal construction as the time it takes to comply with the directive. Moreover, the prosodic variations of these repetitions display the online adjustments to the mobile temporality of the field configurations. Repetitions and their prosodic variations (such as faster delivery) display the urgent, online and on-time necessity of the instructed move. As soon as the instructed action is achieved, the turn and the sequence are completed. Generally, the instruction imposes a change in the ongoing trajectory of action, suggesting an alternative course of action, and even an alternative football move or strategy. These alternatives can raise issues of strategic choices, skills and legitimacy among the participants: directives not only implement instructions but also let transpire criticisms, blame and complaints concerning an inappropriate course of action.

The time of the action is not only embodied in turn format; it can also be topicalised by the participants. In the following excerpt, it is formulated as part of the instruction, during a training session, where Luc tries to shoot a goal and Raph watches him (Figure 8a, 8b):

(13) (PS36.00) (training sequence) (see above extract 3)

- 1 (0.3)  
*luc* >>is running towards the goalkeeper-->>  
 2 **RAP** dépêche toi. dépêche toi dépêche toi. #°dépêche toi°,  
 hurry up. hurry up, hurry up. °hurry up°,  
*fig* #fig.8a + 8b  
 3 °°vite vite°° prends la clé sors sors sors sors, #  
 °°quick quick°° steer clear, go out, go out, go out, go out,  
*fig* fig.9 #



Figure 8a



Figure 8b



Figure 9

Raph's directive uses first a verb, 'dépêche toi'/'hurry up' (line 2), repeated four times, in which the necessity to act is lexicalised; it is followed by the double repetition of a temporal adverb, '°°vite°°'/'°quick°°'. These indications go along with the player's run towards the goal (Figure 8b); they do not impose any change of trajectory. After these temporal indications, Raph's directive describes in general terms the action to be done in approaching the goal. Raph uses an idiomatic French expression, 'prendre la clé des champs' (meaning 'to escape') in

a shortened form, further transformed in an even shorter verb ('sors'/'go out') in order to adjust to the timing of the ongoing action (Figure 9).

Another occurrence showing the importance of the temporal orientation of the players is presented below:

(14) (PS5.56)

- 1       \* (1.2) #  
       *fig*       #*fig.10*  
       *luc*   *\*is running with the ball, R is ahead of him -->*  
 2   R*AP*   *allez passe,*  
           *come on pass (it),*  
 3   (0.4)  
 4   R*AP*   *pas deux heu#res,*  
           *not in two hours,*  
       *fig*       #*fig.11*  
 5   (3.0) \* (0.3) #  
       *fig*       #*fig.12*  
       *luc*       *-->\*passes to R-->>*

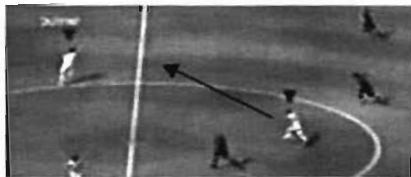


Figure 10

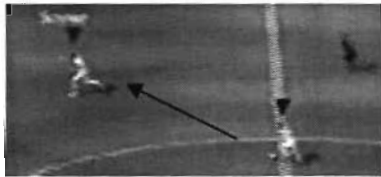


Figure 11



Figure 12

In line 2, the instruction is formatted first with 'allez'/'come on', which focuses on the need to act, without specifying the kind of action to be done, then with 'passe'/'pass (the ball)'. The absence of responsive action (line 3) is treated by a topicalisation of time (line 4), explicitly manifesting Raph's impatience. Finally, the delayed complying action is achieved after a new gap, as Luc passes to Raph (line 5). Here two temporal orientations are conflicting: Raph, who first positions himself in order to meet Luc's trajectory (Figure 10) and then runs ahead of him (Figure 11), urges him to pass, whereas Luc is keeping the ball as long as he can, i.e., as long as his path is free (Figures 10 and 11) and he is not attacked by any



opponent. He passes only when an opponent threatens him (Figure 12). These two temporalities clearly show that there are various ways to comply with a directive, not only in a more prompt or a delayed way, but also with an action adjusted to the circumstances: responses are the product of the local interpretation of instructions as well as of the game situation. In this conflicting situation, the focus on the delayed action by Raph's formulation of time transforms Luc's ongoing action in an inappropriate move by a bad player who does not do the right action at the right time or by a player who acts individually without cooperating and passing the ball. Instruction here evolves into a complaint and a critique.

Time reference is highly flexible in such a mobile context. Its interpretation is always an indexical matter (see Mondada, *in press a*, for other instances of directives, in the context of surgery, specifying or not time conditions):

(15) (PS10.45)

```

luc >>is running with the ball and has an empty space in front of him-->
1 RAP ga#rde-la, garde-la jusqu'au dernier moment.#
    keep it, keep it until the last moment.
    fig #fig.13 #fig.14
2 (1.#4)*%
    luc ->*
    fig #fig.15
    eve %an opponent comes in front and intercepts the ball-->
3 RAP AH mais [non: mec: ]
    OH but [no: mate: ]
4 LUC [ah putain mais j' l'ai] passée, j'
    [oh fuck but I passed it, I
5 l'ai passée [j'l'ai passé bien] plus tôt, il a mis du temps,
    passed it [I passed well ] earlier, it took time,
6 RAP [ben: ouai:s ]
    [well: yea:h ]
7 (0.4)
8 RAP MAIS TU le sais, que ça a mis du tem-.
    BUT YOU know (it), that it took tim-.

```



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

As Luc is running for a long while, alone, in an open field, without opponents (Figure 13), Raph produces a directive which refers to the 'last moment' at which he has to pass (line 1). Contrary to the previous fragment, here, there is no urgency to comply the action. The instruction prepares the move, but points to the indexical interpretation of when the 'last moment' is, depending on the changing configuration of the field. The appreciation of the 'last moment' is left to Luc. Luc continues to run with the ball until an opponent runs in front of him (already visible in Figure 14, then coming closer in Figure 15). Luc is intercepted and loses the ball (line 2).

This failure is treated in the subsequent sequence by the change-of-state token and the initiation of a negative complaining turn by Raph (line 3), overlapped by a change-of-state token and a justification by Luc (line 4). Here, time is explicitly discussed not only with reference to the timely response of the player, but also to the particular reactivity of 'it', i.e., the computer system (line 5). Luc's justification rejects responsibility for the failure and attributes it to the system. Raph's rebuttal (line 8) refuses this shift of responsibility and supposes that the delays of the system have to be integrated by a skilled player in the temporal management of his moves (see below, section 7, for more analyses about the agentivity attributed to the system).

This expanded sequence shows the complex temporalities of the action being superimposed here: the emergent time of the directive turn, the appropriate time of the skilled control of the footballers' movements, the autonomous computational time of the machine and of the internet connection. These temporalities are mobilised and evoked not only for the management of the coordination of the action, but also for the management of the morality of the game.

As demonstrated in the previous analyses, time is crucial for the sequential organisation of instruction sequences. As far as the first pair part is concerned, directives are oriented to time in a dual manner: on the one hand, they are *positioned in a timely manner*, orienting to the temporality of the current action and of the mobile context. More particularly, the actual location of the speakers, their position relative to possible passes and other strategic configurations, the direction in which they are moving, the closest opponents and their movements, are taken into consideration. On the other hand, directives are *designed in a timely manner*, their own emergent format being reflexively adapted to the evolving circumstances, thanks to repeated verbs, fast or slower, compact or stretched format production.

The second pair part also displays a dual temporal orientation. On the one hand, the temporality of the response is reflexively elaborated within the moving context: even when the sense of when it is 'now' is prosodically or lexically conveyed, this has to be interpreted in a locally situated way, relative to the changing context in which the player is evolving. So, the response is positioned in a timely way too. The local interpretation of the directives by the recipient is reflexively configured by the local moving context.

Moreover, the meaning of the directive itself, i.e., the relevant action to be done in all its details – such as a ground pass, a push pass, a pass into space, a short pass, or a high pass – is never formulated in so many words, but is highly indexical. Instructions are essentially incomplete (Garfinkel, 1967: 29), since they cannot provide a detailed account of the embodied practical actions required to realise them (Suchman, 1987). This indeterminacy builds the efficiency of the directives, which crucially relies on their situated interpretation by the participants. The way in which the directive is implemented in the responsive action – the instructed action – relies on the skilled interpretation of the recipient, his competent grasping of the mobile situation in terms of game strategies. It relies also on the skilled ability of the co-participant to manipulate the game console and commands (see Sudnow, 1983; Reeves et al., 2007). The very fact that the players are moving in a rapidly changing context, where other participants are also moving, makes even more salient the ad-hoc local endogenous work of treating the indexical features of directives and instructions (Garfinkel, 1967). The situated sense of any particular directive is irredeemably tied to the particular activities and context in, and through, which the particular action it describes is produced.

In the next sections, I address more particularly the social and moral consequences of the organisation of instructions.

## 6. Closing assessments

The adjacency pair 'directive'/'response' or 'instruction'/'instructed action' is often completed with a third turn in the form of a closing assessment. Assessments are typically produced in this terminal sequential position (Pomerantz, 1984; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1987; Mondada, 2009). They explicitly signal the outcome of the sequence and make its completion explicitly accountable. Within the game, they are positioned at the end of a 'move' or a 'configuration'. Just after completion of the game move, they are located in a sequential position where evaluations, attributions of responsibility, authorship and blame retrospectively treat the move as good or bad.

Closing assessments can be either positive or negative, with different prospective and retrospective effects within the talk and within the game, orienting to the outcome of the previous action as right or wrong, as a success or a failure. With assessments, positive outcomes are celebrated and complimented, negative outcomes are criticised and blame is assigned.

TH  
follow  
In the  
ball:

(16) (P  
ra  
1 LU

ra  
2 LU

Luc's  
'allez  
orient  
instru  
other  
to be  
a serie  
align  
assess

In  
a posi  
second

(17) (PS  
1 RAP

luc  
2  
3 RAP  
4  
luc

(18) (PS  
1  
luc  
2 RAP

luc  
3  
4 RAP

The fragments analysed below present a few instances of positive assessments, followed by examples of negative ones.

In the next fragment, Raph is attacking an opponent who is in possession of the ball:

(16) (PS11.55)

rap >>runs towards the opponent, who has the ball-->

1 LUC >allez, allez, allez, <ALLEZ, vas-y, CON\*tre,  
>go, go, go, <GO, go there, COUNTER,

[illegible]

2 LUC ° ( ) ° belle belle belle.  
° ( ) ° nice nice nice.

Luc's instruction follows the unfolding of the action on the field, first using 'allez'/'go' (see above excerpt 14) which aligns with the ongoing action and orients only to its urgent character. Then, it changes into two more precise instructions, one in the form of a deictic verb of movement ('vas-y'/'go') and the other in the form of a technical term ('CONtre,'/'COUNter'), indicating the move to be done. As Raph succeeds in taking the ball from the opponent, Luc produces a series of repeated positive assessments: similarly to repeated directives, they align with the ongoing action and produce a sustained and continuous supportive assessment.

In the following excerpts, a directive is complied with and this is followed by a positive assessment, 'bien'. In the first excerpt, the imperative is positive, in the second, it is negative – orienting to different possible outcomes:

(17) (PS10.04)

```
1 RAP écart*e,      (.) ro*bben.
```

move away, (.) robben.

luc        \*receives        \*and passes the ball to Robben-->

2 (0.2)

3 RAP bien.

good.

$$(3.0) * (0.3)$$

luc -->\*

(18) (PS13.02)

$$1 \quad * (1.8) \quad * (0.2)$$

```
luc *recovers the ball*runs towards an opponent -->
```

2 RAP °décon\*ne pas, °

°don't mess around,°

luc -->\*avoids an opponent and shoots far away ahead-->>

3 (0.6)

4 RAP °bien.°

° good. °



- 2           (0.4) + %(0.2)  
               -->+  
           eve           %the gatekeeper takes the ball->  
 3 LUC oh:%, **dommage**.  
           oh:., too bad.  
           eve   ->%

In both cases, an action is undertaken, complying with the directive, but it does not succeed. The third turn is constituted by a 'response cry' (Goffman, 1978; in computer games, see Aarsand and Aronsson, 2009), which can be realised by a change-of-state token and by other emotional displays (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006) and a negative assessment closing the sequence. Often, these response cries are uttered as the negative outcome is projectable, although not yet realised: they respond to a risky situation and to the anticipation of a failure. The form of the response cry is adjusted to this temporal projection, accompanying it (often it is stretched) (for another analysis of these choral response cries, see Colón de Carvajal, 2010). Whereas the response cry is uttered during the emergent trajectory, the assessment is produced when the outcome is achieved. A systematic and temporally ordered distribution between these two resources is thus observable. Here, the assessment realised by 'dommage' / 'too bad' orients to the fact that it is a shame that the move has failed, but in a way that does not do blame, tacitly recognising the attempted move. In other cases, the assessment (e.g. when co-occurring with swear words) orients towards the blamable aspect of the negative outcome (Pomerantz, 1978): it lets transpire attributions of responsibilities which can even be more explicit in some contexts.

### 7. Extended sequences: accounts and blame

Assessments do not always close the directive sequence: when the action fails and the result is negatively assessed, the sequence is further expanded by a series of accounts. The instructing/instructed sequence and its accounting expansion are embedded in different temporalities. Whereas the instruction sequence, as analysed in the previous sections, is simultaneously produced in a coordinated and timely way within the ongoing game action, its expansion is produced *post-hoc*, no longer relying on the dynamic unfolding of the game – which can either continue or be suspended. Thus, we can distinguish between two temporalities of the gaming interaction, characterising *in-game turns* vs. *out-of-the-game turns*. The former are embedded in the rapidly evolving pace of the mobile action on the screen, the latter are detached from it and correspond to moments where the game is paused. Between the instructed sequence and the post-sequence, the participants' focus shifts from an *in-game interaction* to an *out-of-game commentary*. The latter occurs as a retrospective exchange about a past action (see Mondada, in press b, for further analyses of these shifts and of the organisation of these two types of temporality).

### 7.1. Post-sequence elaborations

After a negative assessment, various kinds of accounts can be given, elaborating on the conditions of a failed move. These expansions achieve blaming, complaining, and accusing the recipient.

In the following action, Luc is running with the ball on the left side of the penalty area (circled in Figure 16); Raph is running towards the goal (see the arrow in Figure 16) and positions himself in order to receive Luc's pass:

(21) (PS6.05)

1           \*(3#.0)  
          \*L is running towards the goal on the right side of the big box-->  
fig       #fig.16



Figure 16

2 RAP   allez, centre bien:,  
          go on, centre (it) well,  
3       (2.0)\*  
      luc   -->\*centres-->  
4 LUC   elle est-#(.) elle est pour toi. h,  
          it is-   (.) it is for you.h,  
      fig       #fig.17  
5 RAP   [(        )]  
6 LUC   [°.hoh pu°]tain,\* (.) [un poil trop longue ]  
          [°.hoh fu°]ck, (.) [a bit too long        ]  
7 RAP                               [centre                    ] j` t'ai dit. centre BIEN.  
                                      [centre                    ] I told you. centre WELL.  
      luc                           -->\*# ((ball falls well ahead of R))  
      fig                           #fig.18



Figure 17  
trajectory of the ball



Figure 18  
end position of the ball

As Luc approaches the bottom of the football field, along the penalty area, Raph produces a directive (line 2) composed of an imperative verb ('centre') modified by an adverb ('bien'). Luc centres and explicitly directs the ball to Raph (line 4), who is running towards its trajectory (Figure 17). While the ball is still in



the air, the projected outcome of the move is treated by Luc with a response cry and a negative assessment (line 6) and also by Raph who repeats the imperative, first in overlap, then by inserting it within reported speech ('j't'ai dit'), reinforcing it, and emphasising the adverb ('BIEN'/'WELL', line 7). Repeated in this position, the imperative is no longer a directive, but a retrospective quote of the previous instruction, highlighting the positive modality of the prescribed action, in contrast with the negative output of the action itself – emphasising the fact that the instruction has not been followed. Whilst Luc recognises the negative outcome of the move (by the swear word 'putain'/'fuck') but minimises it ('un poil trop longue'/'a bit too long' line 6), Raph's contrastive emphasis insists on its blameworthy character.

## 7.2. Post-hoc rule formulations

The post-sequence account is a position where rule formulations can be produced in an occasioned way. In this position, rules are elaborated *after* the action has been completed: they show that 'instructions have a projected outcome' and that this 'is crucial to the process of following them and accounting for "what happened"' (Amerine and Bilmes, 1988: 325). In this sense, instructions work as 'prospective accounts': if successful, instructions are turned into an accountable course of action, which can be described in the terms of the followed rule. If unsuccessful, they can be blamed as not complying with the terms of the rule. As shown by the next excerpts, the rule is elaborated after the negative outcome of the action in a way that retrospectively makes them an accountable blameworthy failure to follow the rule. The rule does not pre-exist the action, but is elaborated after it, making reflexively intelligible the blamed conduct as an instance of not following it properly.

(22) (PS5.28)

- >>L and R are running towards the ball-->
- 1 RAP [n'y vas] PA:S, j'y suis.  
[don't ] GO:, I am on it.
- 2 (0.2)
- 3 RAP on n'y va pas à \*deux \*  
both of us can't go  
luc -->\*stops\*
- 4 (1.1)
- 5 LUC [hm:, ]
- 6 RAP [hors jeu] hors j+eu. (.) +mais j'te dis+ on va pas à #deux,+  
[off-side] off-side. (.) but I tell you both of us can't go,  
+,,,,,,,,+turns to L--+points to him--+  
fig fig.19a + fig.19b#
- 7 (1.0)%  
eve %stoppage of the game-->
- 8 RAP d'accord?  
okay?
- 9 (0.4)

- 10 RAP quand euh y a une phase comme ça d'action de jeu, (0.5)  
 when ehm there is a phase like this of game action, (0.5)
- 11 moi, to- soit toi soit moi. (0.3)\*celui qui est devant,  
 I, yo- either you or me. (0.3) the one who is ahead,  
 eve -->%  
 luc \*does the throw-in-->>
- 12 (.) i` va dessus, (0.3) l'autre i` couvre.  
 (.) he attacks, (0.3) the other covers.



Figure 19a



Figure 19b

The sequence begins with a directive in the form of a negative imperative focused on the second person, followed by a descriptive utterance focused on the first. They contrast Luc's prescribed action with Raph's actual action. Even before Luc complies with the instruction, Raph utters an instruction in the form of a negative statement, which modifies the initial directives into a declarative prefiguring the formulation of the rule (line 3). As soon as Raph notices the off-side, which causes the stoppage of the game, he turns to Luc and repeats the instruction (line 6), self-quoting it and waving his index finger, pointing to him in a gesture of reprobation (Figure 19a). The suspension of the game is the occasion to elaborate on the last action and to orient strongly towards the addressee.

The absence of Luc's response is observable, both at line 7, then at line 9, after a response is explicitly sought by Raph (line 8). At that moment, Luc is busy with a cigarette and an ashtray on the floor (Figure 19a) and does not look at Raph. Raph exploits the suspension of the game for an explicit formulation of the rule (lines 10–11) which is produced in an emergent way, with self-repairs – which, interestingly, concern the agentivity of the players (see below). He goes on even when Luc is re-engaging in the game.

The rule formulation takes a bipartite format: first, it describes the condition in which the rule applies (with a temporal clause: 'quand...'/ 'when...'), second, it indicates the relevant action to be realised by the players in that context. The rule assigns a complementary task to both players, and retrospectively accounts for the negative instruction ('on n'y va pas à deux'/ 'both of us can't go' lines 3, 6). This complementarity as well as the negative instruction explicitly blame Luc's action, describing it as doing the same move as Raph (attacking the opponent and trying to retrieve the ball), and thus as missing the necessary coordination between players fighting within the same team.

A similar formulation is observable here:

(23) (PS1.51)

- 1       \* (1.0)  
       *luc*   *\*runs backwards towards an opponent who has the ball-->*  
 2   RAP   *laisse-le* LA: *laisse-le, laisse-le. \*n'y vas pas\*. n'y vas pas.*  
       *leave it:       leave him, leave him.       don't go. don't go*  
       *luc*                                       *-->\*stops-----\**  
 3       (0.3)  
 4   RAP   *laisse-le venir, (.) là i`fait tourne:r, il attend qu'on vienne nous.*  
       *let him come, (.) there he tur:ns with the ball, he waits for us to come.*  
 5       (0.3)  
 6   RAP   *on va fatiguer nos joueurs pour rien.*  
       *we will tire our players out for nothing.*  
       *((6 lines omitted; after a fight, the ball goes off, game is stopped))*  
 13 RAP   *quand i`fait tourner, on s'en fout on laisse tourner.*  
       *when he turns (with the ball), we don't care, we let (him) turn*

As Luc begins to run backwards in the opponents' half of the field, Raph utters multiple directives, first in the form of a series of repeated positive imperatives, then of negative ones (line 2). The transformation of positive into negative directives highlights the blameworthy character of Luc's action. As Luc stops and the action continues on the opponent's side, Raph repeats one of the previous directives in an expanded format ('laisse-le venir'/'let him come', line 4). This is followed by a description of what the opponent is doing, imputing strategic intentions to him (line 4) and explicating their negative consequences for them (line 6). The previous instructions are here accounted for by an online commentary of the other's game.

A bit later, a stoppage of the game is exploited as an occasion for formulating a more general rule, which recycles elements of the previous description, transforming them into a normative account. Again, the rule takes the form of a temporal clause ('quand...'/ 'when...'), stating the conditions of its application, followed by the formulation of the relevant action to adopt (line 13). Retrospectively, the rule both grounds and accounts for the initial directive.

Here, ongoing descriptive and normative work is made explicit along with the production of the instruction, elaborating on the circumstances of its utterance and eventually providing for its legitimacy in the form of a rule. The rule retrospectively transforms the recipient's change of conduct as an accountable case of following the rule.

In accordance with Garfinkel's (1967) and Suchman's (1987) discussions about following a rule, convergent with Wittgenstein's reflections (1953), these excerpts show that the orderliness of the game is not produced through a step-by-step adherence to prescriptive rules of conduct provided by the directives, but rather through the performance of contingently devised practical arrangements of instructed actions whose orderly and accountable results exhibit a compliance

with formal instructions and are eventually described, post-hoc, by the invocation of rules presented as grounding the directives.

### 7.3. Accounts and the negotiation of agency

Evaluations, repeated directives and the normative elaboration of the game conditions show the importance of moral expectations, attributions of responsibility for failing actions as well as attributions of authorship for successful ones. These aspects are visible in the organisation of the directives – revealed by who initiates them and who complies with them, manifesting a particular distribution of rights and obligations – and thus the social side of the directives. Moreover, they can also be topicalised in post-sequence accounts.

In the following fragment, the ball has been taken by the opponents, B1 and B2; both Luc and Raph attempt to recover it:

(24) (PS37.45) (see above excerpt 4)

- 1       % (0.5)  
       eve %R has lost the ball, stolen by B1 who passes to B2-->  
 2 LUC *récupère-la, ne l'laisse pas passer là, putain.*  
       recover it, don't let him pass there, fuck.  
       eve -->%B2 runs towards the penalty area-->  
 3 RAP [*mais attends,* ]  
       [but wait,       ]  
 4 LUC [*surveilles le* ] *cen%+tre.*  
       [watch the       ] centre.  
       rap                       +recovers the ball-->>  
       eve                       -->%  
 5 RAP *c'[est toi ] qu' aurais dû la sortir hein,*  
       it'[s you] who should have put it out, isn't it,  
 6 LUC [*belle*       ]  
       [beautiful]

Luc's directives take various forms: after a first affirmative one ('*récupère-la*'/'recover it' line 2) which refers to the ball, a negative one ('*ne l'laisse pas passer*'/'don't let it pass' line 2) refers to the action that Raph is precisely allowing to happen; a third imperative follows (line 4). These forms clearly attribute the responsibility of the lost ball to Raph, and the transformation of the first positive into a second negative imperative accentuates the consequent blame.

After Raph has recovered the ball (line 4), this outcome is used by him to reject the responsibility for the failure and to attribute it to his fellow player (line 5), whereas the same sequential position is used by Luc to evaluate Raph's move positively (line 6).

Participants orient toward the use of a particular form of imperative, being sensitive to negative imperatives, to verbs referring to blameworthy or wrong actions (for example, '*lâche-la*'/'drop it' is very different from '*passe-la*'/'pass it', the former alluding to an illegitimate or even unreasonable possession). Thus,

lexic  
resp  
but a  
treat  
way,  
norm  
the  
reco  
A  
matt  
parti  
skills  
the p

(25) (C  
1  
2 RE  
3 LU  
4  
5 RA  
6 LU  
7  
8 RA  
9

Ra  
occas  
more  
a del  
produ  
(*'ça'*,  
strong  
explic  
(*'c'es*  
situat  
possib  
and re  
8), att

lexical and syntactic choices are consequential for the attributions of blame and responsibilities. A directive can be used for coordinating the action here and there, but also for reacting to a present situation produced by previous actions which are treated as morally loaded, implying blame, accusations and complaints. In this way, directives contribute not only to the distribution of tasks, but also to a normative order, where the moral right to initiate a course of action and to dictate the trajectory of another's actions is claimed, and where some actions are recognised as faulty, blameworthy, and giving cause for complaint.

Agency, authority and responsibility are often controversial and negotiated matters, as shown in the last excerpt, revealing the constant online analysis participants produce of the ongoing game, imputing and recognising expertise and skills, incompetence and failure, and thus elaborating on the situated identity of the players:

(25) (PS26.51)

- 1       % (0.7)  
       eve   %an opponent has intercepted R's ball and runs away with it-->>
- 2   RAP   vas y,=  
       go,=
- 3   LUC   =en occurrence là,  
       =in that case there,
- 4       (0.6)
- 5   RAP   ça contre hein,  
       they counter don't they,
- 6   LUC   c'est pas moi qui fait les merdes hein.  
       it's not me who does the shit is it.
- 7       (0.7)
- 8   RAP   °euh:: c'est pas moi non plus alors hein,°  
       °ehm:: it's not me either then is it,
- 9       parc'que tu en as fait autant que moi,  
       because you have done it as much as I,

Raph has just lost the ball and urges Luc to recover it (line 2). This directive occasions the initiation of a new turn by Luc, which is left uncompleted and projects more to come (line 3). The turn completion is collaboratively achieved by Raph after a delay (line 5) but Luc adds an alternative formulation (line 6). The former produces a description of the situation which is expressed in an impersonal way ('ça', literally 'it'), referring to the opponent's action. The latter produces an even stronger negative description ('fait des merdes'/'does the shit', line 6), which makes explicit reference to a person within a cleft construction negating his responsibility ('c'est pas moi qui'/'it's not me who') in the context of an emerging adverse situation for their team. Raph recycles the same construction, orienting to its possible contrastive value ('c'est pas moi qui' leaving implicit 'c'est toi'/'it's you') and rejecting the responsibility too ('c'est pas moi non plus'/'it's not me either' line 8), attributing as much of the unsuccessful play to Luc as to himself (line 9).

Here, the initiation of the directive is oriented to within the distribution of responsibility, blame and obligations occasioned by the last move and rebutted in a way that addresses its legitimacy. The disagreement shifts from the local attribution of responsibility (line 6) to a more general evaluation of the players' performances (line 9) – showing the way in which shifts from the engagement here and now in the game to more general commentaries out of the game can be exploited in the service of disclaimers as well as claims of responsibility, competence and legitimacy – ultimately contributing to the situated construction of the identity of the players.

### 8. Conclusions

In the football videogame session analysed in this paper, direct directives in the form of imperative verbs are the practice most frequently used by the participants to instruct others to act. Analysis of the timely position and design of these directives shows that they are produced and interpreted in a finely tuned indexical way, orienting towards the details of the mobile action and the mobile context in which they are uttered. Such an analysis reveals the elements of a praxeological grammar of the imperative verb as a resource mobilised in specific interactional and sequential environments. It accounts for the production of imperatives within the organisation of directive sequences, which is reflexively adjusted, moment by moment, to the unfolding temporality of an ongoing action, of its projectable trajectory as well as of its changing ecology. In this sense, it points to the importance of mobile contexts for the situated use of particular linguistic forms within sequential organisation (see Relieu, 1999; De Stefani and Mondada, 2007). It also points to the importance of the timing of actions that are not primarily defined by talk (see Mondada, in press a, about a similar grammar of an idiosyncratic form, 'coag').

The paper reveals a double feature of directives: on the one hand, their *prospective* production is tied to the temporal dynamics of the ongoing action and cannot be separated from its detailed trajectory; on the other hand, their *retrospective* elaboration shows that they are oriented to distributing and attributing agency, responsibility and authorship of past actions and their practical outcomes. In this sense, directives achieve action coordination as well as blaming and complaining.

Directives have been studied in the literature by emphasising their role in the establishment and expression of asymmetric and hierarchic relationships; their analysis in the context of frequent use for action coordination reveals the way in which they are formatted in an orderly manner and recognised by the participants, but also the way in which they become the object of controversial attributions of moral and normative rights and obligations – which contribute to elaborating specific social relationships.

This use of directives shows the situated orientation towards 'normative mobile orders' where, in the lived course of instructed actions, participants claim

and  
are  
for  
esta  
imp  
thes  
clar  
rud  
proc  
part

Ack  
Mar  
of th

Refe

Aars  
I  
Ame  
Auer  
S  
Benn  
C  
Cope  
Carr,  
P  
Casse  
G  
Chev  
R  
Colón  
da  
co  
Curl,  
R  
David  
w  
Struct  
De St  
PH  
De S  
de  
13

and disclaim, attribute and refuse the responsibility for game configurations that are morally assessed as blameworthy and complainable, as dangerous and risky for the collective interests of the team. In this context, directives contribute to the establishment of social relationships that can locally highlight asymmetries, impositions, authority and the right to evaluate and dictate the other's conduct: these relationships are not directly indexed by the directives themselves, as claimed by much of the literature associating directives and power, hierarchy and rudeness, but are implemented by the way in which directives are locally produced, particularly formatted, finely responded to and assessed by the participants in specific contextual configurations.

### Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Fabienne Chevalier for her insightful comments on earlier drafts of the paper.

### References

- Aarsand, P.A. and Aronsson, K. (2009) 'Response Cries and Other Gaming Moves: Building Intersubjectivity in Gaming', *Journal of Pragmatics* 41: 1557-1575.
- Amerine, R., and Bilmes, J. (1988) 'Following Instructions', *Human Studies* 11: 327-339.
- Auer, P., Couper-Kuhlen, E. and Müller, F. (1999) *Language in Time. The Rhythm and Tempo of Spoken Interaction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bennerstedt, U. (2008) 'Sheeping, Sapping and Avatars-in-action: An In-screen Perspective on Online Gameplay', In S. Mosberg Iversen (ed.) *Proceedings of the [Player] Conference*. Copenhagen: IT University of Copenhagen, pp. 28-52.
- Carr, D. Duckingham, D. Burn, A. and Schott, G. (2006) *Computer Games. Text, Narrative and Play*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cassell, J. and Jenkins, J. (eds.) (1999) *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Chevalier, F.H.G. (2008) 'Unfinished Turns in French Conversation: How Context Matters', *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 41(1):1-30.
- Colón de Carvajal, I. (2010) 'Les énoncés choraux: une forme de segments répétés émergeant dans les interactions de jeux vidéo', In H.T. Minassian and S. Rufat (eds.) *Les jeux vidéo comme objet de recherche*. Paris: L>P.
- Curl, T.S. and Drew, P. (2008) 'Contingency and Action: A Comparison of Two Forms of Requesting', *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 41(2):129-153.
- Davidson, J. (1984) 'Subsequent Versions of Invitations, Offers, Requests, and Proposals Dealing with Potential or Actual Rejection', In J.M. Atkinson and J. Heritage (eds.) *Structures of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 102-128.
- De Stefani, E. and Horlacher, A.-S. (2008) 'Topical and Sequential Backlinking in a French Radio Phone-In Program. Turn Shapes and Sequential Placements', *Pragmatics* 18(3): 381-406.
- De Stefani, E. and Mondada, L. (2007) 'L'Organizzazione Multimodale e Interazionale dell'Orientamento Spaziale in Movimento', *Bulletin Suisse de Linguistique Appliquée* 85: 131-159.

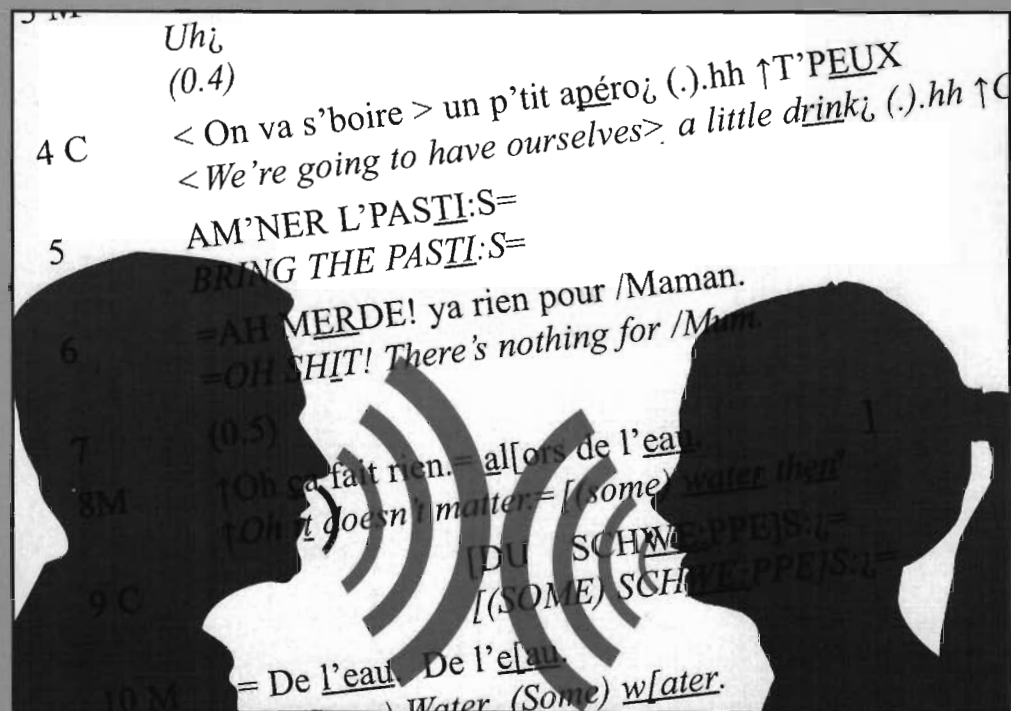


- Ervin-Tripp, S. (1976) 'Is Sybil There? The Structure of Some American English Directives', *Language in Society* 5: 25-66.
- Ford, C.E., Fox, B.A. and Thompson, S.A. (eds.) (2002) *The Language of Turn and Sequence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Garfinkel, H. (2002) *Ethnomethodology's Program*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Goffman, E. (1978) 'Response Cries', *Language* 54: 787-815.
- Goodwin, C. (2002) 'Time in Action', *Current Anthropology* 43: 19-35.
- Goodwin, C. and Goodwin, M.H. (1987) 'Concurrent Operations on Talk: Notes on the Interactive Organization of Assessments', *Pragmatics* 1(1): 1-55.
- Goodwin, M.H. (1990) *He-Said-She-Said: Talk as Social Organization among Black Children*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hakulinen, A. and Selting, M. (eds.) (2005) *Syntax and Lexis in Conversation. Studies on the Use of Linguistic Resources in Talk-in-Interaction*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Heinemann, T. (2006) "'Will you or can't you?': Displaying Entitlement in Interrogative Requests", *Journal of Pragmatics* 38:1081-1104.
- Hopper, P. (1987) 'Emergent Grammar', *Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* 13:139-157.
- Jones, K. (1992) 'A Question of Context: Directive Use at a Morris Team Meeting', *Language in Society* 21:427-445.
- Kerbrat-Orecchioni, C. (2001) *Les Actes de Langage dans le Discours. Théories et Fonctionnements*. Paris: Nathan.
- Labov, W. and Fanshel, D. (1977) *Therapeutic Discourse: Psychotherapy as Conversation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Lindström, A. (2005) 'Language as Social Action. A Study of How Senior Citizens Request Assistance with Practical Tasks in the Swedish Home Help Service', In A. Hakulinen and M. Selting (eds.) *Syntax and Lexis in Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp.209-230.
- Manninen, T. and Kujanpää, T. (2005) 'The Hunt for Collaborative War Gaming – CASE: Battlefield 1942', *Game Studies* 5 (1). Available online at: [http://www.gamestudies.org/0501/manninen\\_kujanpaa/](http://www.gamestudies.org/0501/manninen_kujanpaa/) (accessed 15 July 2010).
- Manno, G. (2002) 'La politesse et l'indirection: un essai de synthèse', *Langage et société* 100(2):5-47.
- Mehan, H. (1979) *Learning Lessons. Social Organization in the Classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Minassian, H.T. and Rufat, S. (eds.) (2010) *Les jeux vidéo comme objet de recherche*. Paris: L>P.
- Mondada, L. (2001) 'Pour une linguistique interactionnelle', *Marges Linguistiques*, 1:142-162. Available online at: <http://www.revue-texto.net/Archives/Archives.htm>.
- Mondada, L. (2007) 'Multimodal Resources for Turn-Taking: Pointing and the Emergence of Possible Next Speakers', *Discourse Studies* 9(2):195-226.
- Mondada, L. (2008) 'L'Interprétation online par les co-participants de la structuration du tour in fieri en TCUs: évidences multimodales', *TRANEL* 48:7-38.
- Mondada, L. (2009) 'The Embodied and Negotiated Production of Assessments in Instructed Actions', *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 42(4): 329-361.
- Mondada, L. (in press a) 'The Organization of Concurrent Courses of Action in Surgical Demonstrations', In C. Goodwin, C. LeBaron and J. Streeck (eds.) *Embodied Interaction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Mondada, L. (in press b) 'Coordinating Action and Talk-in-interaction in and out of Video Games', In R. Ayass and C. Gerhardt (eds.) *The Appropriation of Media in Everyday Life. What People Do with Media*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ochs, E., Schegloff, E.A. and Thompson, S. (eds.) (1996) *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ogden, R. (2006) 'Phonetics and Social Action in Agreements and Disagreements', *Journal of Pragmatics* 38(10): 1752-1775.
- Pearson, B. (1989) "'Role-ing out control" at Church Business Meetings: Directing and Disagreeing', *Language Sciences* 11:289-304.
- Pekarek Doehler, S. (2001) 'Dislocation à gauche et organisation interactionnelle', *Marges Linguistiques* 2: 177-194. Available online at: <http://www.revuetexto.net/Archives/Archives.html>.
- Pekarek Doehler, S. (2011) 'Emergent Grammar for all Practical Purposes: The Online Formatting of Dislocated Constructions in French Conversation', In P. Auer and S. Pfänder (eds.) *Constructions: Emerging and Emergent*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 46-88.
- Perron, B. and Wolf, M.J.P. (eds.) (2003/2009) *The Video Game Theory Reader*, 2 vols. London: Routledge.
- Pomerantz, A. (1978) 'Attributions of Responsibility: Blamings', *Sociology* 12:115-121.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984) 'Agreeing and Disagreeing with Assessments: Some Features of Preferred/Dispreferred Turn Shapes', In J. M. Atkinson and J. Heritage (Eds.) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 57-101.
- Reeves, S., Laurier, E. and Brown, B. (2007) 'The Skilful Work of Play in *Counter-Strike*', In F. Beau (ed.) *Culture d'Univers*. Limoges: Fyp éditions, pp. 130-140. Retrieved August 2009 from [http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/elaurier/texts/reeves\\_cs.pdf](http://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/homes/elaurier/texts/reeves_cs.pdf).
- Relieu, M. (1999) 'Parler en marchant. Pour une écologie dynamique des échanges de paroles', *Langage et Société* 89: 37-68.
- Salen, K. (ed.) (2008) *The Ecology of Games. Connecting Youth, Games and Learning*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Schegloff, E.A. (1980) 'Preliminaries to Preliminaries: "Can I ask you a question?"', *Sociological Inquiry* 50:104-152.
- Schegloff, E.A. (1992) 'To Searle on Conversation: A Note in Return', In H. Parret and J. Verschueren (eds.) *(On) Searle On Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 113-128.
- Schegloff, E.A. (1999) 'Discourse, Pragmatics, Conversation Analysis', *Discourse Studies* 1(4):405-435.
- Schegloff, E.A. (2007) *Sequence Organization in Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J.R. (1975) 'Indirect Speech Acts', In P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (eds.) *Syntax and Semantics: Vol. 3. Speech Acts*. New York: Academic, pp. 261-286.
- Streeck, J. (1980) 'Speech Acts in Interaction: A Critique of Searle', *Discourse Processes* 3:133-154.
- Suchman, L. (1987) *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human Machine Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sudnow, D. (1983) *Pilgrim in the Microworld*. New York: Warner Books.
- Vine, B. (2009) 'Directives at Work: Exploring the Contextual Complexity of Workplace Directives', *Journal of Pragmatics* 41:1395-1405.

- Wilkinson, S., and Kitzinger, C. (2006) 'Surprise as an Interactional Achievement: Reaction Tokens in Conversation', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 69(2):150-182.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953) *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wootton, A. (2005) 'Interactional and Sequential Features Informing Request Format Selection in Children's Speech', In A. Hakulinen and M. Selting (eds.) *Syntax and Lexis in Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 185-207.

# Nottingham French Studies



## French Language and Social Interaction: Studies in Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics

Edited by Fabienne H.G. Chevalier

Volume 50

Number 2

Summer 2011