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« Ce n'est pas très beau ce que vous avez dit ! »  
**The activation of resonance in French parliamentary debates**

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**Abstract:**

Speakers who engage in the joint activity of a conversation tend to align their utterances with those of their interlocutors by reusing, reinterpreting, hence playing with co-present linguistic material. One dimension of alignment is the activation of resonance, as recently developed within the model of 'dialogic syntax' (Du Bois, 2001). When speakers establish cross-turn parallelisms in the form of structural mapping relations, they engage with the form of other speakers' utterances and activate resonance. The present paper focuses on resonance activation in one particular discourse genre: dialogic sequences evolving around interruptive comments in French parliamentary debates. In line with recent observations within the cognitive-functional context of dialogic syntax (Du Bois, 2001; Sakita, 2006; Zima et al, submitted) and psycholinguistic research on interactive alignment (Pickering & Garrod, 2004, 2006), we demonstrate that resonance can be activated both through explicit repetition of linguistic form and implicit echoing of semantic-pragmatic meaning. With regard to the specific discourse genre of parliamentary debates, we argue that parallelisms at all levels of linguistic organization are witti(ng)ly exploited to serve dissociative pragmatic purposes whereby socio-political positions and power relations are negotiated.

**Keywords:**

dialogic syntax, resonance, alignment, structural parallelism, parliamentary debates

**Résumé:**

Les locuteurs engagés dans la coordination de l'interaction ont tendance à aligner leurs énoncés en (ré)utilisant ou en réinterprétant ludiquement les matériaux linguistiques introduits par leurs interlocuteurs. Une dimension de l'alignement concerne l'activation de la résonance, concept développé récemment en 'syntaxe dialogique' (Du Bois, 2001). Le concept en question réfère à l'effet évoqué entre tours alternatifs par l'établissement de parallélismes sous forme de relations de projection structurelles dans un setting dialogique. La présente contribution se concentre sur la résonance dans un genre discursif particulier: les séquences dialogiques comprenant des les commentaires interruptifs dans les débats parlementaires français. Conformément aux observations récentes dans le contexte cognitivo-fonctionnel de la syntaxe dialogique (Du Bois, 2001; Sakita, 2006; Zima et al., sous presse) et à la recherche psycholinguistique sur l'alignement interactif (Pickering & Garrod, 2004, 2006), nous démontrons que les relations structurelles entre éléments comparables peuvent s'établir et interagir au niveau de la syntaxe, du lexique, de la morphologie, comme sur le plan de la prosodie. Nous montrons en outre que les effets de résonance ne sont pas limités aux parallélismes formels mais sont potentiellement activés par la répétition implicite de segments aux niveaux sémantique ou pragmatique. En ce qui concerne le genre spécifique du débat parlementaire, nous avançons l'idée que les parallélismes à tous les niveaux d'organisation sont finement exploités en vue d'une série d'objectifs pragmatiques par lesquels sont négociées positions politiques et relations de pouvoir.

**Mots-clés:**

syntaxe dialogique, résonance, alignement, parallélismes structurels, débats parlementaires

## 1. Introduction

1 According to Clark's (1996) joint action hypothesis, language use involves a joint activity, i.e. it requires the cooperation of discourse participants in coordinating their linguistic and non-linguistic acts within broader joint actions. Although this socio-cognitive view on language may seem uncontroversial to usage-based models such as cognitive linguistics (CL), the social dimension of interaction is traditionally relegated to the periphery in cognitive research (Barlow, Kemmer, 2000: ix; Deppermann, 2002; Tummers et al., 2005). Only recently, a number of studies in cognitive-functional linguistics have started to explore both the cognitive structure and the interpersonal dynamics of interactional discourse (Langacker, 2001, 2008; Dirven, 2005; Deppermann, 2007) in response to a growing appeal within CL to extend its scope of investigation towards authentic, multi-agent discourse.

2 One of the key features of interactional discourse that provides a valuable gateway to the cognitive-social underpinnings of joint actions is the establishment of cross-turn structural mapping relations in a conversational setting as described in the model of dialogic syntax (Du Bois, 2001). Whereas traditional sentence-level syntax is concerned with formal-semantic relations within sentences, dialogic syntax focuses on structural mapping relations between a speaker's turn and an immediately co-present one in the conversational context. In going beyond the level of independent sentences, dialogic syntax inquires into a rich but unexplored territory of a new kind of syntax (Du Bois, 2001: 5): syntax as the locus of online meaning construction in multi-agent language use. Inspired by insights from both conversation analysis and cognitive linguistics, the primary concern of dialogic syntax is to unravel the role of cross-turn structural parallelism in the emergence of discourse meaning. Furthermore, specific attention is paid to the pragmatic impact of cross-turn mapping relations.

3 In the present paper, we apply the model of dialogic syntax to a small-scale corpus of interactional sequences that were extracted from parliamentary debates in the French *Assemblée Nationale*. In this specific discourse genre, structural parallelisms at all levels of linguistic organization serve as a means of dialogic anchorage for unauthorized, spontaneous interruptive comments (henceforth ICs). We provide corpus evidence for explicit, i.e. formal segment repetition (section 4.1.), as well as implicit, non-formal parallelism (section 4.2.). From a social-interactional perspective, we illustrate that in the specific discourse genre of parliamentary debates, structural parallelisms are established and exploited to convey dissociative pragmatic meanings and aims.

4 The article is structured as follows. We give a compact overview of Du Bois' model of dialogic syntax (2.1.) and relate it to converging developments in psycholinguistic research on interactive alignment and cognitive priming mechanisms (2.2.). In section 3, we introduce our corpus and provide a quantitative argument for the suitability of interactional parliamentary discourse to study resonance patterns. Section 4 then gradually develops the range of parallelisms in our corpus drawing a continuum from explicit repetition of syntactic, lexical, morphologic or prosodic form to instances of echoing of implicit semantic relations and pragmatic meaning aspects.

## 2. Descriptive-theoretical framework

### 2.1. Dialogic syntax and the activation of resonance

5 The most visible effect of dialogic syntax is claimed to occur when discourse participants array their utterances parallel to an immediately co-present utterance of a dialogic partner (Du Bois, 2001). Through the relationship between a conversational turn and a preceding priming utterance, a complex coherent structure arises across two or more discourse units. A prototypical example of cross-turn parallelism is given in [1]. The representation in Fig. 1 highlights the structural mapping relations (the 'diatax') in a so-called 'diagraph' (Du Bois, 2001, 2007).

[1] KEVIN: Is it just like you always wanted?  
KENDRA: Oh, it's just like I always wanted.

(Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, Appease the Monster, Part I)  
 (Sakita, 2006: 481)

**Fig.1. Diagraph for exchange [1]**

KEVIN:	Is	it	just like	you	alway	wanted ?
KENDRA:	Oh,	it	's	just like	I	always wanted.

6 The exchange in [1] is a straightforward example of the reuse of lexical items within a syntactic construction. Crucially however, cross-turn parallelisms can be situated at all levels of linguistic organization. They may thus include morphemes, words, constructions at different levels of schematicity (Sakita, 2006), intonational patterns, and mappings of pragmatic meaning components like e.g. illocutionary forces. They can be formally realized as full or partial segment repetitions, substitutions, paraphrases as well as morpho-syntactic or lexical blends (Sakita, 2006: 469sq.).

7 Dialogic syntax argues that when speakers construe their utterances by reusing their interlocutors' linguistic resources, they engage with the form of other speakers' utterances and activate resonance, which is defined as the activation of intrinsic potential affinity (Du Bois, 2001: 8). In other words, resonance can be generated through the process of activating relationships or exploiting affinities between comparable linguistic elements (Du Bois, 2001: 9). As it is a property of relations between elements in discourse, it cannot be attributed to any element in isolation (ibid). Formal engagement is further argued to favour intersubjective engagement: by recycling linguistic input of dialogic partners, speakers enhance their mutual connectedness and engage in cognitive coordination (Verhagen, 2005, 2007). Speakers that activate resonance achieve intersubjective engagement and make connected meanings regardless of whether these meanings are parallel, opposed or simply orthogonal (Du Bois, 2001: 1). Hence, agreement and like-mindedness are no preconditions to engage with one's interlocutors' linguistic forms and/or meanings. On the contrary, speakers deliberately activate resonance to convey pragmatic differential, i.e. the differentiation of pragmatic meanings and pragmatic stance among socially positioned agents, as produced and modulated through the dialogic differentiation manifested in dialogic syntax (Sakita, 2006: 472). Put differently, speakers do not merely echo each other but play with and exploit the meaning potential of their dialogic partners' utterances in order to achieve pragmatic effects. Resonance activation is thus not limited to the pragmatic function of ensuring mutual understanding and expressing agreement as in [1]. Rather, it has an intrinsic potential to serve dissociative pragmatic purposes as illustrated by the ironic alignment and exploitation of a lexical-syntactic template in the exchange in [2].

[2] MARCI: don't forget to buy yourself a cookie sheet before you go to make cookies  
 KEVIN: and don't forget to take the Tupperware out the oven, before you turn it on.

(Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, Appease the Monster, Part I)  
 (Sakita, 2006: 470)

8 As resonance can be activated independently of whether discourse participants concur or dispute (Du Bois, 2001: 2), its activation is not limited to friendly discourse constellations. On the contrary, resonance plays an important role in adversarial discourse where it is activated for opportunistic purposes. It is the primary objective of this paper to provide empirical evidence for this claim by looking at sequences involving parallelisms in the adversarial discourse type of parliamentary debates.

**2.2. Interactive alignment in discourse psychology**

9 Independently of the context of dialogic syntax, the broad issue of structural parallelism in interactional language use has recently been addressed in psycholinguistic research on alignment (Pickering & Garrod, 2004, 2006). The claim has been made that in a dialogic setting, interlocutors strongly tend to array their utterances parallel to co-present linguistic representations. Alignment at the level of linguistic representations is argued to lead to alignment at the level of the

situation models, with similarly constructed situation models being a precondition for successful communication. This alignment process is claimed to be cognitively effortless, unconscious, and largely automatic (Pickering & Garrod, 2006: 204). The claim of inherent unconsciousness, however, seems hard to reconcile with cases of marked alignment when interlocutors intentionally parallel and exploit parts of their interlocutors' utterances, as for instance in example [2]. We would like to clarify this apparent contradiction and advocate that unconscious priming and opportunistic activation of resonance are not mutually exclusive. It has been demonstrated successfully in experimental contexts that priming mechanisms enhance the (re)use of linguistic input at the level of automatic discourse processing. Speakers, however, may exploit this primitive priming mechanism to produce intended pragmatic meanings and effects (Sakita, 2006: 473, cf. also Tannen, 1987). Thereby, resonance activation may involve a process of interpretational backtracking along lexical, syntactic, prosodic, and other elements (backframing, Du Bois, 2001: 23). In other words, speakers may be primed to use a given construction or word used by their interlocutors in the immediate discourse context, but this does not prevent them from exploiting these linguistic resources for opportunistic purposes.

### 3. Corpus and methodology

10 In the empirical section of this article, we zoom in on resonance as it is exploited by MPs in parliamentary settings. We show that in parliamentary debates, speakers specifically aim at not only paralleling but above all at wittingly twisting words and structures introduced by their interlocutors. In doing so, MPs try to trump and ridicule political opponents while negotiating socio-political power relations. Hence, MPs that activate and exploit resonance pursue the aim of prevailing in the social-interactional game of adversarial political discourse.

11 To tackle the question of the structural range and social-interactional impact of resonance patterns in adversarial language use, we composed a multimodal corpus consisting of audio and video material and transcriptions for 205 interactional sequences. Our data-set comprises 326 interruptive comments extracted from twelve French parliamentary debates held in the *Assemblée Nationale* between 21 October 2005 and 22 January 2008.

12 In its simplest form (cf. ex. [3]), an interactional sequence consists of two conversational moves: in the first turn, the first speaker S1 - usually the plenary speaker - introduces or discusses a given topic. The interruptive comment then interrupts this turn, i.e. a second speaker S2 heckles S1 and comments in some way on the utterance being made, mostly to state some form of disapproval. Further conversational moves may include reactions by S1 and/or other MPs from the plenum so that the sequences can vary significantly in length and complexity.

[3] French National Assembly, Paris, June 21st, 2006

M. le ministre de la culture et de la communication (S1): Ce texte affirme un principe nouveau, l'interopérabilité, qui fait de la France un pays pionnier en Europe, entraînant dans son sillage...

'Minister of Culture and Communication (S1): This text confirms the new principle of interoperability, which makes France a pioneer country in Europe that others follow in its wake...

Mr. Patrick Bloche (S2): In its shipwreck!'

13 In the stenographic protocols of the twelve debates of our corpus, 1480 unauthorized, spontaneous interruptions are recorded. 235, or 15,88% of these comments are resonating co-present linguistic input. 55 ICs serve as priming utterances, i.e. trigger resonating reactions either by the plenary speaker or MPs from the floor. Accordingly, the average relative frequency of priming and resonating ICs taken together in our corpus amounts to 18,78% (cf. Fig. 2.; no double counts of ICs (interruptive comments) that are both priming and resonating).

**Fig.2. Frequency table for resonating and priming ICs**

Debate	Length in minutes	ICs per protocol	ICs as primers	Resonating ICs	Relative frequency resonating ICs	Rel.frequency Resonating + priming ICs
11.10.2005/France	250	155	1	21	13,55%	14,19%
25.01.2006/France	350	198	3	18	9,09%	10,10%
29.03.2006/France	285	81	2	14	17,28%	18,52%
30.05.2006/France	250	136	7	17	12,5%	17,65%
21.06.2006/France	275	95	2	8	8,42%	8,42%
27.06.2006/France	340	126	3	23	18,25%	19,84%
28.06.2006/France	215	75	4	7	9,34%	14,67%
30.06.2006/France	280	298	6	50	16,78%	18,46%
06.02.2007/France	285	99	8	12	12,12%	18,18%
28.11.2007/France	345	186	9	22	11,83%	15,59%
16.01.2008/France	85	48	1	7	14,58%	14,58%
22.01.2008/France	370	169	9	36	21,30%	26,04%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3045</b>	<b>1480</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>15,88%</b>	<b>18,78%</b>

14 However, in order to avoid misinterpretation of the quantitative data, we want to point out that the frequencies are solely based on the stenographic protocols (*comptes rendus intégraux*) that are published on the website of the French National Assembly, (<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr>). Stenographic protocols are a useful resource to study parliamentary discourse, but they should not be taken as verbatim transcriptions (Slembrouck, 1992; Cabasino, 2001; Brambilla, 2007). Rather for the protocols to be readable, spoken language is gradually transformed into a written report. These editorial interventions above all concern the plenary speaker's discourse. As far as ICs are concerned, stenographers commit themselves to a verbatim quotation. With respect to the quantitative distribution of ICs, a simple comparison with audio or video recordings however reveals that when debates get passionate with many MPs interrupting simultaneously, stenographers do not catch every single comment. This problem cannot be remedied by means of audiovisual data since ICs are mostly inaudible on them. This entails that the absolute number of interruptive comments in the protocols is subject to some unknown margin of deviation. More substantially, this statistical uncertainty might equally affect the relative frequencies of priming and resonating ICs (cf. Zima et al, submitted, for more details on methodological issues concerning the study of parliamentary discourse). The frequency table in Fig. 2 is thus not presenting final results but is merely intended as an indication of the quantitative significance of resonance patterns in this particular discourse genre.

15 With respect to the qualitative analysis of interactional sequences in the following section, we have taken into account the peculiarities of parliamentary reports by checking and if necessary correcting the plenary speaker's utterance transcription by means of video material. The same was done for interruptive comments as far as they were audible on the audiovisual recordings to ensure that the methodological concerns do not affect the qualitative analysis.

#### 4. Typological analysis: resonance activation in French parliamentary debates

16 In dialogic syntax, parallelisms are treated as an inherent feature of all levels of linguistic organization (Sakita, 2006: 473). Lexical, morphological, syntactic as well as prosodic resonance patterns can interact simultaneously so that various levels of linguistic organization become interconnected. With respect to formal fixedness, priming templates can be extended, truncated as well as merged together in blends. This section of the paper discusses a number of examples ranging from explicit (cf. 4.1.), i.e. full or partial repetition of formal templates to the activation of resonance through implicit, non-formal parallelism (cf. 4.2.). In 4.2.3., we also include an example of the special case of co-constructions that cuts across all the other levels and types of parallelism.

**4.1. Explicit segment repetition**

17 We start our overview by focussing on explicit segment repetition. We discuss dialogic sequences that involve resonance activation at the level of syntax and the lexicon (4.1.1.) as well as at the level of morphology and prosody (4.1.2.).

**4.1.1. The syntactic and the lexical level**

18 Repetitions of lexical items within syntactic templates clearly stand out as the most visible case of formal parallelism. The following exchange from our corpus (ex. [4]) provides a straightforward case of a lexical-syntactic template that is paralleled by an interrupting speaker with only little formal modification.

[4] Assemblée Nationale, 30.06.2006

M. Patrick Bloche: Il n'est donc pas étonnant qu'une telle démarche aboutisse finalement à un texte bancal, anachronique, inintelligible, inadapté aux évolutions technologiques, un texte trois fois perdant: perdant pour nos concitoyens, perdant pour nos entrepreneurs, chercheurs et inventeurs, perdant pour nos auteurs et nos artistes.

Mme Claude Greff: Et perdant pour vous

'M. Bloche, MP: It is therefore not surprising that such a *modus operandi* eventually leads to a text that is limping, anachronistic, unintelligible, and maladjusted to the technological evolutions, i.e. a text that is three times damaging: damaging to our fellow citizens, damaging to our entrepreneurs, scientists and innovators, damaging to our authors and our artists.

Mrs. Greff, MP: And damaging to you!'

**Fig.3. Diagram for exchange [4]**

S1 :	perdant	pour	nos	concitoyens	
	perdant	pour	nos	entrepreneurs	
				chercheurs	et
				inventeurs	
	perdant	pour	nos	auteurs	et
				nos	artistes.
S2 :	Et	perdant		pour vous !	

19 As the diagram in Fig.3 reveals, the element *perdant pour* in combination with a noun profiling an animate group serves as lexical-syntactic template to both the plenary and the interrupting speaker. First, the template is reiterated twice by the plenary speaker himself to achieve a rhetorical emphasizing effect in the form of a tricolon. Whereas the first part of the construction is lexically filled (*perdant pour*), the slot of the object of the adjectival phrase is open and filled by the plenary speaker with different nouns that share a common semantic profile (human[s]). In doing so, he stresses that the text of the law proposal may have negative consequences for many different groups of people (citizens, entrepreneurs, scientist, innovators etc.).

20 What was planned by S1 as a clever rhetorical move opens up the possibility for the interrupting speaker to ridicule the rhetorical ambitions and undermine the political opponent's argumentation. The interruptive comments *Et perdant pour vous!* thereby resonates with the preceding turn by repeating the lexically filled parts of the template (*perdant pour*) while exploiting the underspecification of the noun slot. Accordingly, although the diatax as illustrated in Fig. 3 appears to be straightforward and clear-cut, the exchange should not be discarded as a simple one-to-one repetitive feature mapping. It illustrates, rather, that the activation of resonance crucially involves pragmatic, interpersonal implications. In this first example, a pragmatic teasing

potential is witti(ng)ly employed to trump the political opponent (Veale et al., 2006; Brône, 2007, 2008).

21 This teasing effect is equally intended by speakers who repeat lexical items while exploiting and playing with their vast meaning potential. Although structurally very similar to example [4], an exchange as in [5] is a more complex case involving a semantic shift that typically also triggers a shift of the conveyed implicature.

[5] Assemblée Nationale, 11.10.2005

M. Jean-Louis Borloo, ministre de l'emploi, de la cohésion sociale et du logement: L'UNEDIC a confirmé au conseil d'administration la semaine dernière son accord pour le dossier unique, l'informatique unique, le guichet unique ...

M. Maxime Gremetz: La pensée unique !

M. Jean-Pierre Brard: M. Borloo est unique, lui aussi !

'M. Borloo, minister of labour, social cohesion and housing: Last week at the administration council, UNEDIC has confirmed its approval of one single dossier, one single computer network, a single counter,...

Mr. Gremetz, MP: Single thought!

M. Brard, MP: Mr. Borloo is unique, too!'

**Fig. 4. Diagram for exchange [5]**

S1 :		pour	le	Dossier	unique,
			l'	Informatique	unique,
			le	Guichet	unique
S2 :			la	Pensée	unique !
S3 :	M. Borloo	est		unique,	lui aussi !

22 The diagram for this interactional sequence (Fig. 4) shows that S1, the plenary speaker (Mr. Borloo), sets up a template consisting of the preposition *pour*, a definite article, a noun belonging to the lexical domain of administration and the adjective *unique* [pour + art(def)+ N(ADMINISTRATION) + unique]. Within the plenary speaker's turn, this template is repeated in a reduced, elliptical form twice, in order to achieve the same rhetorical effect of a tricolon as in example [4]. By repeating the lexical-syntactic pattern, S1 makes his point that administration is made more slender by the consolidation of different services in an umbrella organization. The adjective *unique* is thereby used by the plenary speaker in its conventionalized reading "single, uniform". In the interruptive comment *La pensée unique!*, the noun *pensée* however triggers a fundamentally different reading of the adjective *unique*. It activates the conventionalized connotation of left-wing criticism of political conformism. The positive implicature of making things easier by being less diverse as conveyed by the plenary speaker is thus negated in the IC where lack of diversity is seen as a clearly negative property.

23 The sequence of resonating patterns is closed off by a second IC that deconstructs the template and puts *unique* in another lexical-syntactic environment: similar to exchange [4] (*perdant pour vous*) - the plenary speaker is made an object of the predication as he is verbally encoded as the subject of the noun phrase<sup>1</sup>. Thereby, another reading of the adjective *unique* as "extraordinary" is activated. Out of context, referring to somebody as *unique* is ambiguous between a positive and a negative implicature (outstanding vs. weird). However, since Mr. Borloo is not a political ally of Mr. Gremetz and the comment is meant as an ironic tease, the comment is likely to activate a speaker-intended negative implicature.

<sup>1</sup> To put it in Cognitive Grammar terms, an element of the ground (i.e. a speech participant) is made an object of the conceptualization: the speech situation is objectified (Langacker 1987: 128fsq.; Verhagen 2007: 58-77).



24 Examples such as these illustrate that that the meaning potential of contextualized utterances may serve interlocutors as a resource to be exploited to achieve interpersonal aims. As Brône (2007, 2008) has argued, in line with Veale et al. (2006), conversational repartees that hinge on the exploitation of a semantic potential of ambiguity involve a cognitive process of hyperunderstanding, i.e. speakers uncover potential weak spots (semantic traps) in a previous speaker's utterance and intentionally turn them against their producer while pursuing the social-interactive aim of trumping the discursive opponent in order to demonstrate intellectual superiority.

25 Finally, the interactional sequence in [6] provides an example of a structurally more flexible lexical-syntactic parallelism that is skilfully deconstructed and enriched with the pragmatic aim to trump the interlocutor and to prevail in the social-interactive context.

[6] Assemblée Nationale, 30.06.2006

Mme Claude Greff: Ce n'est pas très beau, ce que vous avez dit, monsieur Bayrou !

Mme Martine Billard: L'important, ce n'est pas que ce soit beau, mais que ce soit juste!

'Mrs. Greff: What you just said, is not very pretty, Mister Bayrou!

Mrs. Billard: The important thing is not that it is pretty, but that it is true!'

**Fig. 5. Diagram for exchange [6]**

S1 :	Ce n'est pas très beau ce que vous avez dit
S2 :	L'imp ce n'est pas que
	ortant,
	ce soit beau mais que
	ce soit juste.

26 As this example illustrates, interactional sequences of adversarial parliamentary discourse take the shape of verbal duels between discursive rivals. The priming utterance playfully attacks the political opponent by invoking that what he says is not very "pretty" in the sense of "nice". The interruptive comment then counters the attack while echoing the lexical-syntactic input of the primer, however putting an alternative subordinate completive clause introduced by *que* in the place of the relative clause and contrasting the adjective *beau* (pretty) and *juste* (true). The IC thus checks the verbal attack while turning it against its producer. Speaker 2 exposes the argumentative weakness of S1 and reproaches him for lacking the political guts to tell the truth.

#### 4.1.2. The morphological and prosodic level

27 In addition to parallelisms on the syntactic and/or lexical level, resonance can equally and simultaneously affect morphology as well as prosodic patterns (Couper-Kuhlen, 1996; Curl et al., 2004). In example [7], for instance, both ICs echo the syntactic, lexical and morphological structure of the adjectival phrase *très disciplinés* while replacing the adjective in the slot of the template by *éclairés* (enlightened) and *résignés* (resigned), respectively. At the level of prosody, this formal parallelism strengthens the prosodic coherence in terms of the reiterated rhythmic structure.

[7] Assemblée Nationale, 30.06.2006

M. Christian Paul: Monsieur le ministre, nous prenons acte de l'avancée, qui vous a valu des applaudissements de la part de parlementaires décidément très disciplinés.

M. Guy Geoffroy: Très éclairés !

M. Didier Mathus: Très résignés !

‘Mr. Paul, MP: Mister State Secretary, we take notice of the progress that was honoured with applause by parliamentarians who are obviously very disciplined.

M. Geoffroy, MP: Very enlightened!

M. Malthus, MP: Very resigned!’

**Fig. 6. Diagraph for exchange [7]**

S1 :	très	disciplinés
S2 :	Très	éclairés !
S3 :	Très	résignés !

28 Finally, in exchange [8] (cf. ex. [3]) the prepositional phrase *dans son sillage* is - similar to [7] - paralleled in the interruptive comment at various levels of formal linguistic representation simultaneously: at the level of syntax, the lexicon, morphology as well as prosody.

[8] Assemblée Nationale, 30.06.2006

M. le ministre de la culture et de la communication: Ce texte affirme un principe nouveau, l’interopérabilité, qui fait de la France un pays pionnier en Europe, entraînant dans son sillage...

M. Patrick Bloche: Dans son naufrage !

**Fig. 7. Diagraph for exchange [8]**

S1 :	dans	son	sillage
S2 :	Dans	son	naufrage !

29 At the lexical-morphological level, the interrupting speaker blows the whistle on the plenary speaker by replacing *sillage* (wake) as object of the prepositional phrase by *naufrage* (shipwreck), yielding an ironic semantic opposition. This morphological resonance of the suffix *-age* entails prosodic resonance in terms of a rhyme that is achieved.<sup>2</sup>

30 In addition to these formal parallelisms, the exchange in [8] also hinges on semantic resonance at the level of the metaphorical fixed expressions *entraînant dans son sillage/naufrage* and the creative alignment within the domain of nautics (wake as contrasted to shipwreck). These types of non-formal parallelism are central to the following second part of this overview of resonance patterns.

#### 4.2. Implicit segment resonance

31 In this section, we zoom in on implicit parallelisms at the level of semantics (4.2.1), and pragmatics (4.2.2) as well as the special case of co-constructions (4.2.3). We show that speakers evoke resonance by echoing and exploiting subtle affinities at the level of semantic relations and pragmatic meaning. We further illustrate that implicit parallelisms are also deliberately and skilfully exploited to serve adversarial pragmatic purposes. This section starts by giving examples for resonance activation at the level of single lexical items (polysemous words, 4.2.1.1). We will then illustrate that the observations we make at the level of words equally apply to larger structural units like idioms (4.2.1.2.). Furthermore, in 4.2.1.3., we shortly elaborate on what may be called domain resonance, i.e. the creative activation of mapping relations within lexical domains. Crucially, however, many of the exchanges that we deal with in this section on non-formal parallelism equally involve formal resonating elements. We point to this formal parallelism in the description of the dialogic sequences at hand for the sake of argumentative coherence, but the focus lies on the activation of non-formal affinities between turns.

<sup>2</sup> Note that in examples [7] and [8], prosody is concerned with metre and rime rather than intonation.

#### 4.2.1. The lexical-semantic level

32 At the lexical-semantic level, discourse participants can activate resonance by echoing meanings rather than the form of lexical elements introduced into the discourse by their dialogic partners or even by establishing parallelisms within domains and metaphorical themes.

##### 4.2.1.1. Semantic relations at the word level

33 The most straightforward cases of semantic resonance are provided by speakers who playfully exploit the meaning potential (Allwood, 2003; Croft, Cruse, 2004: 100 et seq.) of single lexical items by activating readings that are in semantic opposition to the meaning conveyed in the priming utterance. Crucially, in contrast to explicit parallelisms that involve semantic shifts (cf. ex. [5]), the implicit echoing of semantic affinities does not revolve around formal repetition of the lexical item. This is the case in [9], where the priming element *sera simple* is retrieved via an ellipsis and implicitly echoed while the polysemy of *simple* is exploited: S1 uses *simple* in its literal sense (easy, not difficult) whereas in the IC, a more metaphorical reading (simple-minded) is suggested.

[9] Assemblée Nationale, 22.02.2008

M. François Hollande: Ma question sera simple...

M. Yves Nicolin: À l'instar de son auteur!

'Mr. Hollande, MP: My question will be simple...

Mr. Nicolin, MP: Just like its author!'

34 In addition to polysemy, other semantic relations can equally be subject to adversarial exploitation. In [10], the reference to fruits in the plenary address serves as a hyperonym for the creative resonance in the IC, which ironically activates the hyponym *pommes* (apples) within the phraseological environment "*Vous nous prenez pour des pommes!*" (conventionalized meaning: "trying to pull one's leg").

[10] Assemblée Nationale, 29.03.2006

M. Dominique Bussereau, ministre de l'agriculture et de la pêche: C'est vrai que la filière arboricole est en crise. Peut-être d'ailleurs parce que nos concitoyens consomment trop peu de fruits et légumes, en particulier des fruits...

M. Maxime Gremetz: Vous nous prenez pour des pommes !

'Mr. Bussereau, minister of agriculture and fishery: It is true that the fruit-growing industry is in a crisis. Maybe because our fellow citizens do not eat enough fruit and vegetables, fruit in particular...

M. Gremetz, MP: Literal translation: You take us for apples! [meaning: you are trying to pull my leg!]

##### 4.2.1.2. Idioms

35 Apart from the exploitation of semantic relations at the word level, speakers who engage in different kinds of playful interaction equally demonstrate hyperunderstanding (cf. supra) in the creative reinterpretation of larger linguistic units like idioms (cf. Feyaerts, 2006; Langlotz, 2006; Veale et al., 2006; Brône, 2007, 2008). In example [11], the idiomatic expression *montrer patte blanche* with the two conventionalized phraseological meanings of "fulfilling the qualifications" and "being able to identify oneself" is analyzed in its component parts and reassembled into a novel, locally meaningful and opportunistic composite structure by the second interrupting speaker.

[11] Assemblée Nationale, 27.06.2006

M. Jacques Bascou: Je souhaite répondre amicalement à mon collègue Philippe Feneuil, qui nous reproche de politiser le débat. J'aimerais lui faire remarquer qu'avant 2002, lorsqu'il y avait des problèmes dans la viticulture, l'ensemble des élus étaient reçus sans distinction à Matignon et au ministère. Depuis, ce n'est plus le cas...

M. André Chassaigne: Eh oui ! Il faut montrer patte blanche!

Mme Arlette Franco: Ça ne doit pas être facile quand elle est rouge !

'Mr. Bascou, MP: I would like to amicably respond to my colleague Philippe Feneuil who accuses us of politicising the debate. I would like to remind him that before the year 2002, when there were problems in the viticulture sector, all MPs were received without exception at Matignon or the ministry. Since then, this is no longer the case.

M. Chassaigne, MP: Oh yes! Literal translation: one has to show his white paw!

Mme Arlette Franco: This may not be easy if it is red!'

36 As Mme Franco becomes an interruptive speaker, she activates a literal reading for the primer *patte blanche* (white paw). This literal meaning of the two components of the phraseological unit is then implicitly paralleled, that is to say, it is not repeated in form but echoed in meaning (opposed to the colour red (*rouge*) in the ironic comment). This literal meaning, however, only serves as the bridge between the two utterances, as *rouge* metonymically (and metaphorically) refers to left-wing politicians. Since both Mr. Bascou, a member of the socialist party, as well as Mr. Chassaigne – who belongs to the communist party – are left-wing politicians, Franco's comment is meant as a tease referring to both preceding speakers. In this comment, both politicians are brought onstage, yet without explicitly being mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

37 Common to all these exchanges involving the exploitation of polysemy either at the word level or beyond is what Herbert Clark (1996) refers to as a process of discursive layering. According to the model developed by Clark, layering is an omnipresent feature of playful, interactional language use. Layering involves a joint constructional process whereby discourse worlds are built up on and relative to the surface level of the actual utterance, like theatre stages built one on top of the other (Clark, 1996: 16). Accordingly, in examples [9] – [11], where meaning potentials and semantic relations between lexical items are playfully exploited, interlocutors activate readings in addition to the speaker-intended one. Crucially, the meaning as conveyed in the priming utterance is first decoded by the interrupting speaker in line with the semantic intentions of the producer of the primer, so that layering differs from instances of mere misunderstanding (see Brône, 2007, 2008 for a more detailed argumentation). The meaning activated by the primer serves as the basic discourse layer. Additional meanings that resonate with this initial meaning grow out of and are dependent on the first layer but are themselves situated at a second discourse layer. As an illustration, in [9], *simple* meaning "easy, not difficult" constitutes the primary layer activated by both Mr. Hollande and Mr. Nicolin. On top of this first layer, the interrupting speaker Nicolin activates an additional reading as "simple-minded", situated at a second playful-ironic discourse layer. Layering is claimed to be an inherent feature of staged communicative acts (Clark, 1996), like e.g. irony, sarcasm, rhetorical questions, under- and overstatement and is therefore quintessential to adversarial parliamentary debates

#### 4.2.1.3. From idiom to domain resonance

38 Returning to the resonance potential of idioms, the exchange in [12] provides a slightly more complex case of idiom resonance where lexical items and relations within lexical domains are

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<sup>3</sup> This process of subjectification (Langacker 1987; Verhagen 2005, 2007) is seen in Cognitive Grammar as the counterpart construal operation to objectification (cf. example [6]).

mapped onto each other within a syntactic template, resulting in an adjacency pair of two conventionalized idioms with diametrically opposed meanings.

[12] Assemblée Nationale, 25.01.2006

M. le Premier ministre: En outre, François Hollande, parce que nous, nous avons les deux pieds sur terre...

M. Albert Facon: Mais vous avez la tête dans les nuages !

‘Mr Prime Minister: Apart from that, François Hollande, because our feet are firmly on the ground...

Mr. Facon, MP: But you have your head in the clouds!’

**Fig. 8. Diagraph for exchange [12]**

S1 :	nous	avons	les	deux pieds	sur	terre
S2 :	vous	avez	la	tête	dans les	nuages!

39 As the diagraph (Fig. 8) reveals, the IC strongly parallels the structure of the priming utterance but fills the lexical slots of the noun phrase with two lexical items that are in semantic opposition to the priming elements, i.e. *tête* replacing *pieds* and *nuages* contrasting with *terre*. Priming and resonating nouns thereby mark two end points of a spatial scale within the lexical domains parts of the body and elements of nature. The creativity and success of the riposte in terms of undermining the political opponent’s point is due to the fact that S2 succeeds in coming up with an idiom that strongly parallels the syntax and lexical material of the priming idiom while conveying orthogonal meanings, i.e. being realistic versus being too busy with one’s own ideas to still take notice of what is going on in the real world.

40 Resonance within lexical domains can of course also occur independently from the context of phraseological units (cf. Zima et al., 2008, Zima et al, submitted) as in [13], where in the lexical domain PIECES OF MUSIC the metaphorical interpretation of *requiem* is paralleled by the equally ironic and metaphorical *chant de cygne* (swan song).

[13] Assemblée Nationale, 30.06.2006

M. Christian Paul: C’est un requiem !

Mme la présidente: J’ai reçu de M. Jean-Marc Ayrault et des membres du groupe socialiste une exception d’irrecevabilité,...

Mme Claude Greff: Encore ! Ils ne savent faire que ça !

M. Guy Geoffroy: C’est le chant du cygne !

‘Mr. Paul, MP: This is a requiem!

Mrs. President: I have received a waiver of inadmissibility from Mr. Jean-Marc Ayrault and members of the socialist group.

Mrs. Greff, MP: Again! That’s the only thing they know how to do!

Mr. Geoffroy: This is a swan song!’

#### 4.2.2. The pragmatic level

41 In addition to resonance at the lexical-semantic and the constructional level, one might also argue that there is pragmatic resonance involved in exchange [13]. As both the ICs by MP Paul and MP Geoffroy are constantives expressing disagreement (cf. Bach & Harnish, 1979), they are resonating at an illocutionary level. This, we suggest, might also apply to example [14] where Mr.

Roy does not only parallel the structure of the priming IC, uttered by a group of socialist MPs, but resonates with its illocutionary intent.

[14] Assemblée Nationale, 21.06.2006

M. Christian Estrosi, ministre délégué à l'aménagement du territoire. Je peux vous rassurer, monsieur Bartolone: le ministre de l'intérieur, Nicolas Sarkozy,...

Plusieurs députés du groupe socialiste: Où est-il ?

M. Christian Estrosi:... a donné toutes les instructions et pris toutes les mesures nécessaires pour que les passeports biométriques soient désormais délivrés sur l'ensemble du territoire national, ...

M. Albert Facon: Encore heureux !

M. Patrick Roy: Ça fait quatre ans qu'il est là ! Qu'a-t-il fait?

Mr.Estrosi, minister for city and regional planning: I can assure you, Mr. Bartolone: the minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy,...

A couple of deputies from the socialist group: Where is he?

Mr. Estrosi, MP : The minister for city and regional planning: gave instructions and took all necessary actions so that the biometric passports will be issued everywhere in the national territory.

Facon, MP: Thank God!

Roy, MP: He has been in office for four years now! What has he done?'

42 The remark *Où est-il?* (Where is he?) is not a serious information request but rather counts as a rhetorical question. Indeed, questioning the whereabouts of certain MPs that are not present in the plenum is a recurring pattern in adversarial parliamentary debates. Such ICs are inserted regularly into the debate with the intent to vex the plenary speaker by interrupting the fluency of his discourse and his line of argument. These interpersonal intentions equally drive Roy's interruptive comment *Qu'a-t-il fait?* (What did he do?), which seems to parallel the illocution of the priming comment (rhetorical question) within the same structural pattern (interrogative word in first position, subject inversion, pronoun *il* [(INT + v- (t) -il [part]?)]).

43 However, it has rightly been pointed out<sup>4</sup> that since question patterns are very frequent, highly entrenched routines, the co-occurrence in [14] might not be an instance of deliberate echoing (only). Although we do think that the parallelism in the illocutionary force of the two ICs is not purely coincidental (two rhetorical questions pursuing the same pragmatic intentions), we agree that frequency effects, priming mechanisms (cf. 2.2) as well as what Du Bois labelled *content confound* (2001: 25-28), i.e. the fact that speakers are restricted in their word choice by the lexical resources of the language at hand, do blur the picture. Admittedly, there are instances of explicit or implicit repetition where drawing the line between deliberate resonance activation is complicated by the interplay of these other phenomena. This in fact particularly holds for parallel sequences that involve highly frequent structural patterns as in [14].

44 As our corpus does not contain further examples that might go as cases of pragmatic resonance, we include a corpus-external example, taken from a Dutch election campaign in 1976 (Feyaerts, 2008: 186; our translation). It exemplifies that indeed speakers may echo pragmatic meaning aspects like illocutions independent of formal properties.

[15] During a speech given by Mr. Hans Wiegel from the Dutch Liberal Party VVD, a member of the communist party KEN commented on Wiegel's speech by shouting out

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<sup>4</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer of a previous version of this article for directing our attention to other possible explanations for the co-occurrence of the interrogative patterns in exchange [14].

loud: “Asshole!” (Klootzak!) to which Wiegel replied: “Nice of you to introduce yourself! My name is Hans Wiegel.” (Fijn dat u zich even voorstelt! Mijn naam is Hans Wiegel.)

45 In his clever reply, Mr. Wiegel assigns the interrupting comment, which was meant as an offense, the non-speaker intended alternative illocution of an introduction. By introducing himself, Wiegel resonates with the adversarial comment while skilfully exploiting its pragmatic meaning potential.

46 These three examples demonstrate that in addition to feature mapping at the surface level of linguistic organization (syntax, lexicon, morphology), resonance can equally well be generated by cross-turn echoing of pragmatic meaning ingredients like illocutionary forces (cf. Sakita, 2006) and/or the exploitation of various inferences.

### 4.2.3. Co-constructions

47 To conclude this overview of resonance patterns in interactional sequences in French parliamentary debates, we include an example of what we consider to be a special case of resonance activation: (adversarial) co-constructions like the sarcastic tease in [16].

[16] Assemblée Nationale, 06.02.2008

M. Jean-Michel Fourgous: Il y a quelques semaines, le Président de la République a annoncé qu’il allait vendre 3% du capital d’EDF pour financer...

M. Jean Glavany: Sa Rolex.

M. Jean-Michel Fourgous: ...la rénovation des campus universitaires,...

‘Mr. Fourgous, MP: A couple of weeks ago, the President announced that he would sell 3% of the capital of the EDF to finance

Mr. Glavany: his Rolex.

M. Fourgous: the renovation of the university campuses.’

48 In what sense are co-constructions similar to or different from all those instances of explicit and implicit cross-turn parallelisms that have been discussed so far? As pointed out in Du Bois (2001: 6), under the co-construction model, what might otherwise be taken as two sentence fragments produced by two different speakers is instead recognized as adding up to a single collaboratively produced sentence. Hence, similar to explicit repetition of lexical, syntactic or morphological structure, in a co-constructed sentence, the utterance of a co-present speaker functions as implicit head phrase for an interrupting speaker. At a given point of an utterance, most likely a transition relevance place, i.e. at the end or beginning of a turn constructional unit (cf. Selting, 1998; Rath, 2000), another speaker joins in to complete the fragmentary utterance. Accordingly, co-constructing ICs do not parallel co-present, i.e. formally realized or inferred discourse elements, but resonate with anticipated structural input. Co-constructing speakers thus model the way their dialogue partners might intend to finish their sentences and therefore construe their utterance parts either in accordance with or in opposition to these discourse expectations.

49 To sum up the qualitative survey of instances of resonance activation in our corpus of dialogic sequences in French parliamentary debates, we suggest that all those levels of structural parallelism that were discussed in the preceding sections, can be arranged on a continuum from explicit parallelism involving overt formal repetition at the level of the lexicon, syntax, morphology and prosody to more implicit parallelism at the level of semantic relations and lexical domains and finally pragmatic resonance patterns on the opposite pole of the continuum. Co-constructions, then, do not constitute a distinctive type on the continuum but crosscuts them as they may involve all postulated levels. Common to all those instances or types of parallelism is an inherent potential to serve a wide array of dissociative pragmatic purposes and interpersonal aims that can be opportunistically exploited in adversarial discourse constellations, like e.g. parliamentary debates.

## 5. Conclusions and outlook

50 As argued most forcefully in the model of dialogic syntax, language users systematically align their utterances with the linguistic input offered by previous speakers in the interactive context. By establishing structural relationships between their own conversational turn and an immediately co-present one, interlocutors activate resonance that contributes to the coherence and management of unfolding discourse. On the basis of a corpus study of adversarial parliamentary debates, we presented an overview of the different levels of linguistic organization at which resonance effects are evoked. These include explicit and implicit echoing of prior utterances at the morphological, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic level, as well as the co-construction of utterances across speakers and turns.

51 Crucially, the idea of language use as a joint activity involving the activation of affinity between speakers does not necessarily imply cooperation at all levels of interaction. Although alignment and resonance presuppose cooperative processes at the level of what Clark (1996) labels metacommunicative acts (i.e. the level of discourse management), they obviously do not imply agreement between speakers. The specific case of interruptive comments in French plenary addresses illustrates how speakers may opportunistically apply and exploit linguistic input offered by political opponents, with the purpose of trumping them. Speakers disparage their adversaries by simultaneously echoing their utterances and turning this input against them. The activity of establishing resonance in this case serves the non-cooperative (adversarial) purpose of undermining the opponents' social, intellectual or political status.

52 The interactive-alignment model of dialogue, developed by Pickering & Garrod (2004, 2006) emphasizes that the main mechanism of alignment is largely automatic and unconscious. This, however, does not prevent speakers from consciously utilizing processes of resonance activation to serve the pragmatic purposes mentioned above. In the cases of conscious alignment discussed in the present paper, the use of resonating morphology, words, syntactic structures and prosody marks the departure from a strictly telic (i.e. goal-minded) mode of communication to a more paratelic (i.e. playful) mode (Apter, 1989, 1997). Whereas in the telic mode, pleasure derives primarily from achieving a central objective, in the paratelic mode, pleasure is associated with the satisfaction of a skilled performance, creativity and make-belief. The ubiquity of skilful, creative and ironic resonance in parliamentary debates calls for analytical models that take into account both the joint activity of achieving successful communication, and the more opportunistic actions of rhetorical play. In the present paper, we have argued that the model of dialogic syntax, which draws on cognitive and functional linguistics, conversation analysis and discourse linguistics, provides a promising starting point for the development of such a multifaceted analytical model.

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