

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *NEGATION* AND *IMPOLITENESS* IN THE EXCHANGES D'INFORMATION IN FRENCH

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- **ABSTRACT:** In this paper, I seek to analyze linguistic impoliteness in ordinary conversation in French and, more specifically, in the exchange of face-to-face information. Thanks to its functional structure (i.e. question-response), the exchange of information is a privileged type of interaction, in which we can observe the relationship between language and culture. Throughout a study of interactional mechanisms involving the recurring negative sequence (a) *Je ne sais pas moi* (literally : I don't know, me), I interrogate what distinguishes (a) to the sequence (b) *Moi je ne sais pas* (literally : Me, I don't know). Why and in which situations, or at which point in an interaction, does the speaker employ (a) rather than (b) or vice versa? What are the socio-interactive effects? What emerges from these comparisons in relation to the speaker's style? My suggestion is to bring out some response elements throughout a theoretical and methodological combinatory approach inputs from the linguistic polyphony, conversational analysis, the grammar of the emotions and the concept of [im]politeness.
- **KEYWORDS:** French. Language-culture. Verbal interaction. Polyphony. Linguistic impoliteness.

Introduction

In the field of teaching and learning French as Foreign Language (FLE), French cultural aspects are almost invariably linked to French politeness rules. This link between language and culture emerges at the very beginning of French teaching and learning by combining French *savoir-faire* & *savoir-vivre*. As an illustration, it is notorious the importance attached to the distinction between the uses of *tu* (you, informal singular)/ *vous* (you, formal singular) and their network of titles and forms of address. We therefore can see that the concept of politeness occupies a central place in the FLE manuals.

Moreover, the popularity of politeness is only matched by the unpopularity of impoliteness, which is, however, well ingrained in the language, manifesting itself in daily life through many linguistically diverse resources. In sum, impoliteness is not taught but it remains a remarkable linguistic phenomenon that deserves,

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as pointed out by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2010), to be subjected to the rigors of full examination.

Given that, I propose to study linguistic impoliteness in French ordinary conversation, and more specifically in the exchange of information. Thanks to its functioning (i.e. question–answer sequences), this type of interaction gives us a privileged place to observe the reports between language and culture. My premise is that, like the fiction dialogue, the exchange of information is a place “[...] where conversational laws are featured to be shown, seen and heard, and not as in daily life, implied, covert or unconscious” (UBERSFELD, 1996, p.79)¹

In this precise framework, throughout a study of interactional mechanisms, especially involving the recurring negative sequence/answer (a) *Je ne sais pas moi* (I don’t know, me), I probe what distinguishes this construction to the sequence (b) *Moi je ne sais pas* (Me, I don’t know). Why and in which situations, or at which point in an interaction, does the speaker employ (a) rather than (b) or vice versa? What are the socio-interactive effects of these sentences? What emerges from that in relation to the speaker’s profile?

To attempt to answer these questions, I first present the theoretical framework upon which the negative remarks as Dialogic Marker are based (DUCROT, 1972, 1984). Secondly, while taking into consideration the theoretical principles described by the Grammar of Emotions (PLANTIN, 1999, 2013, 2014) I look at key syntactic distinctions between left/right dislocation. Then, I examine these types of emotional constructions in the light of the Principle of Cooperation (GRICE, 1975), which allows us to see the manifestations of impoliteness and its implications in the language-culture relationship (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2005, 2010).

The enunciative heterogeneity of negation²

The conception of language as a dialogic phenomenon is drawn from the “Bakhtin circle”³. Since then, the appropriation of the circle’s ideas by various researchers in different disciplines has been entailing major theoretical

¹ In French : «*le lieu où les lois conversationnelles sont en vedette, exposées pour être montrées, vues et entendues, et non pas comme dans la vie quotidienne, sous-entendues, subreptices ou inconscientes*» (UBERSFELD, 1996, p.79).

² The English translation of the French vocabulary referring to Ducrot’s works comes from his Slovenian Lectures, which are available on: <<http://old.btk.pt.e.hu/tanszekek/francia/mater/ducrot.pdf>>. Access in: 31 aug. 2015.

³ The “Bakhtin circle” refers to a group of friends who, in 1920-30, used to meet and work together. In addition to Bakhtin, there were Matvej Isaevich Kagan (1889-1937); Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev (1891-1938); Lev Vasil’evich Pumpjanskij (1891-1940); Ivan Ivanovich Sollertinskij (1902-1944); Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov (1895-1936). The controversial question of the texts’ authorship was treated by JP Bronckart and Bota (2011) in Bakhtine démasqué: *Histoire d’un menteur, d’une escroquerie et d’un délire collectif*.

differences around the notion of polyphony⁴. These fluctuations are due to both the incompleteness of the work undertaken by the circle⁵ and the reformulations and changes undergone by Bakhtin's work when translated from Russian into other languages⁶.

The fact is that Bakhtin's (1974, 1978) thoughts are no longer limited to the literary domain. Indeed, "polyphony [also] conquered Linguistics and for the last twenty years it has become the central concept in several studies of languages" (LA POLYPHONIE..., 2009, p.3)⁷. Despite, or thanks to, the proliferation of these approaches in linguistics—not quite compatible or totally incompatible—it is now possible to make the Bakhtinian principle operational within the theoretical and methodological proposals of, at least, three major schools of thoughts. Namely, the Geneva model of discourse analysis (ROULET; FILLETTAZ; GROBET, 2001)⁸, the Praxematic (BRES et al., 2005; BRES; NOWAKOWSKA, 2006)⁹ and the Scandinavian theory of linguistic polyphony (FØLTUM, 2001; NØLKE, 2001)¹⁰. The latter, the ScaPoLine, has been expanding the theoretical model proposed by Ducrot (1972, 1984)¹¹, or the model that led to the creation of a properly linguistic polyphonic theory. In addition, the Ducrot's theory has been adopted as a basis to combine studies in domains such as Argumentative, Text Linguistics, and Conversation Analysis. These combinations enhance listening and bring out voices other than the speaker's in a given speech. As a result, the participants are able to improve their reports in a verbal exchange.

⁴ In what follows, the goal is to bring up the theoretical framework on the enunciative heterogeneity of negation. For this, in addition to the cited references in the text, I consulted "La polyphonie linguistique" (2009); The thesis of Øyvind Gjerstad (2011); and the thesis of Malin Roitman (2006).

⁵ «*Chez Bakhtine, la polyphonie relève de toute une série de notions développées au travers de la globalité de son œuvre ; il s'agit d'une longue entreprise non terminée dont le début et l'apogée souvent sont attribués à la première version de la Poétique de Dostoïevski, datant de 1929. Depuis la publication des derniers Carnets [Dans Estetika slovesnogo tvortchestva (Esthétique de la création verbale), Moscou 1979, Gallimard, Paris 1984 (...)] de Bakhtine ainsi que du grand essai du début des années 20, «L'auteur et le héros», probablement interrompu en 1922 [Texte d'archives (1920-1930), non repris par l'auteur et resté inachevé (...)], on peut cependant constater que le début de l'entreprise se situe, sinon avant, au moins à l'époque de la rédaction de ledit essai.*» (HOLM, 2003, p. 95).

⁶ Consult Regine (1987) and Seriot (2005).

⁷ In French: «la polyphonie a [aussi] conquis la linguistique et depuis les vingt dernières années elle est devenue la notion centrale s'imposant dans plusieurs études linguistiques» (LA POLYPHONIE..., 2009).

⁸ For an overview of this model, consult Laurent Filiettaz and Eddy Roulet (2002).

⁹ For a discussion on enunciative and dialogic approaches of the language, and on the existence of convergences between both approaches see Rosier (2006), Bres and Nowakowska (2007), Bres and Rosier (2007), Dendale and Coltier (2006).

¹⁰ For a definition and discussion, consult H. Nølke (2001).

¹¹ While the ScaPoLine is also interested in literary polyphony, like Bakhtin, Ducrot is more inspired by the work of Bally, in which, polyphony is perceived not through texts but through small structures. Moreover, it is also true that Ducrot is inspired by the literary theory of Genette and his distinctions between narrator, author, speaker and locutor.

Also, Ducrot integrates the *pragmatic semantic* (*la pragmatique sémantique*) into an enunciative conception of the language. In this context, which is, basically, that of the Speech Acts¹², there are “sentence” (*phrase*) (theoretical, meaningful object, invention of the grammar) and “utterance” (*énoncé*) (empirical phenomenon whose meaning is constructed upon the instructions of the meaning convey by the utterance act).

His hypothesis is that every utterance constitutes a semantic image of the utterance itself. As well, he says that *semantics* is not limited to carry a truth claim. To account for the enunciative duality, Ducrot refers to pragmatics as “what the word, according to the statement itself, is supposed to do,” and offers to see two [pragmatic] levels: a primitive, or virtual level, properly semantic: a real level, a fact of social interaction, unpredictable if analyzed only from semantic instructions. For example, if the sentence “*Il fait beau/the weather is nice*” (DUCROT, 1984, p.181) gives instructions to find the location the speaker refers to while admitting that the weather is nice at the time of the utterance, the statement “*Il fait beau/the weather is nice*” may then cause secondary pragmatic effects. Therefore, the meaning (of a sentence) is composed of a literal meaning plus a derived meaning. From there, Ducrot distinguishes two acts, those of “stating” and “presupposing”.

The fact that his theory has allowed him to identify and describe linguistic mechanisms that are likely to show different voices unfold, also led Ducrot to call into question the idea of “the unity of the speaking subject” (DUCROT, 1984, p.171). Thus, in terms of the negation as polyphonic marker, Ducrot’s hypothesis is that any negative statement refers to a positive statement, attributed to an enunciator from which the speaker distances himself (DUCROT, 1984).

In sum, according to Ducrot’s theoretical model of linguistic polyphony, the truth-conditional and the reference are nothing but possible side-effects whereas the meaning is fundamentally argumentative (ANSCOMBRE; DUCROT, 1983).

These positions are then the starting point of my [re]search of linguistics’ traces of impoliteness in the exchange of information in French. Taking into account the principle of utterance’s heterogeneity of negative statements, we assume that the sequence *Je ne sais pas* (I don’t know) refers to the positive statement *Je sais* (I know).

My assumption is that when the negative statement occurs within a right dislocated construction involving pronominal repetition, that is to say *Je ne sais pas moi* (I don’t know, me), the speaker distances himself from the enunciator who says *Je sais moi* (I know, me). In this case, the statement *Je ne sais pas moi*

¹² Indeed, the key notion of Ducrot’s work is the performance in language, this refers to the theories of speech acts developed by JL Austin in 1962, and then by J. Searle. Briefly, these theories propose that an individual speaks to another in the idea of doing something (transform representations of things and / or goals) rather than saying something.

(I don't know, me) refers to something other than the contrast (positive-negative); it tells us something about the discursive positioning of the speaker: his/her contentment¹³, or annoyance¹⁴.

In the development and expansion of this postulate—since Ducrot seeks not to explain actual interpretations but to identify a primitive pragmatic, separate from side pragmatic effects (DUCROT, 1984) – my analysis combines Ducrot's approach with:

- i. theoretical contributions of Praxematic and principles of the Grammar of Emotions, which I incorporate into an analysis of dislocated structures;
- ii. interactionist approaches, in order to clarify the framework/scene in which these structures are carried out;
- iii. studies on linguistic [Im]politeness, while attempting to validate my premises on the socio-discursive effects and implications produced by these structures.

Emotional syntax and dialogisation

According to Plantin, “[...] in terms of syntax organization (or disorganization), we attribute to emotion the reorganizations of the basic form of a statement, that is to say emphasis, *break* constructions, inversions” (UNIVERSITÉ LYON, 2014)¹⁵. In regards to dislocated sentences, it is a syntactic-semantic phenomenon well attested and categorized, which has resulted in numerous studies (BLASCO-DUBELCCO, 1997, 1999; APOTHÉLOZ; COMBETTES; NEVEU, 2009; BRES; NOWAKOWSKA, 2006; OLIVEIRA, 2013). Observed from both spoken and written languages, dislocation allows syntax a great liberty of pace, affects various grammatical categories in their multiple functions, and produces many effects of meaning.

The concept most often invoked to describe the semantics of these structures is undoubtedly that of *theme* and its variants (topic, thematic subject, or even psychological subject). Apothéloz (1997) and Riegel, Pellat and Rioul (1996) see the dislocation as a tool allowing for the assignment of one element. Where the subject is detached, the effect produced is that of a “strong emphasis,” the subject is “highlighted.” In French, among the elements participating in this process of

¹³ The expression of *contentment* includes a number of nuances such as pride, joy, happiness, eagerness, enthusiasm, well-being, good humour, ease, enjoyment, pleasure, gladness, jubilation, delight, complacency and so on (ATILF, 2014).

¹⁴ Note that the expression of *annoyance* includes nuances such as: “impatience, irritation, restlessness, excitement, agitation, nervousness, frustration, tension” (ATILF, 2014).

¹⁵ In French: «[...] au niveau de l'organisation (ou de la désorganisation) syntaxique, on attribue à l'émotion les réorganisations de la forme considérée comme basique de l'énoncé: emphase, ruptures de construction, inversions.»

marked insistence, personal pronouns are used according to verbal subject, whose alternated handling of disjunctive/conjunctive forms¹⁶ in a given sequence is never meaningless. That said, I suggest below the hypothesis thhat these sequences constitute a commonplace of emotions manifestations, which are relatively fixed in their forms and benefit from a certain degree of plausibility (PLANTIN, 1999).

To proceed with the analysis of the emotions conveyed by dislocation in order to see their social interactive implications in the exchange of information, the starting point is (1):

(1) – Vous savez où se trouve... ?¹⁷ (Do you know where is...)

1a – Je sais./I know.

1b – Je ne sais pas./I don't know.

1c – Moi je sais./ Me, I know.

1d – Je sais moi./ I know, me.

1e – Moi je ne sais pas./Me, I don't know.

1f – Je ne sais pas moi./I don't know, me.

The first finding is that (1) admits answers as diverse as 1a-b-c-d-e-f. In terms of 1a and 1b, Grice's Cooperative Principle in the exchange of information is respected (GRICE, 1975). In other words, the information given (by 1a and 1b) is enough but not excessive according to the "maxims of quantity"; these answers are taken as true and made wisely in accordance with the "maxims of quality"; relevance is obvious according to the "maxim of relation"; the language is clear and concise in accordance with the "maxims of manner." We can then speak of "maximum efficiency of information exchange." This is however not the case with dislocated structures 1c-1f, which can each be characterized as being responsive to a different interpretation of (1) and echoing some interpretative subjectivity from the speaker.

In an attempt to understand the meaning of 1c-1f statements, I distinguish—with Bakhtin (1974, 1978) – external dialogism (that is, dialogue) and inner *dialogisation* of the speech. The latter is particularly interesting for the fact that its manifestations are situated at a micro-textual level (BRES, 2005), that is to say, at sentence-statement level, whose approach takes into account the discursive formation of discourse, situated at a macro-textual level. This is basically a global-to-local shift, where the discursive materiality of dialogism manifests itself (BRES, 2005). As we shall see, the discursive formation of discourse reflects both a *recovery of* (dialogism constitutive) and a *response to* (interdiscursive and interlocutive dialogism) other speech (BRES, 2005).

¹⁶ In French : conjointes/disjointes, fortes/faibles, atones/toniques.

¹⁷ Or : is/are there...? - y a-t-il...? etc.

In the interaction (*recovery of/reply to*), we perceive the “split” mode of saying [*le mode dédoublé du dire*]. This accounts for a kind of internal dialogue, not exactly a dialogue with others but linked to them. This is what Bakhtin envisaged as a form of dialogism “between the speaking subject and his own word” (AUTHIER-REVUZ, 2003, p.87). Suffice to say that all of those statements (1) are affected by the *dialogisation*. Observing the discursive materiality of the *dialogisation* allows us to capture something about the movements of emotion in the organisation of speech.

In short, the affirmative/negative assertions 1a (Je sais/I know), 1b (Je ne sais pas/I don't know) have a neutral objective value: it comes to say *Yes* or *No*, while the 1c-1f structures convey each additional information. With respect to 1f, my above-mentioned assumption is that when the speaker states *Je ne sais pas moi* (I don't know, me) he also says his annoyance, departing from the principle of politeness and breaking the contract of cooperation, which may result in strained relations between the exchangers of information. Following that, before the development of this assumption, I approach some facts and concepts around linguistic [im]politeness.

Linguistic [im]politeness and culture

From the period of classical rhetoric to the dialogues of the Italian Renaissance (WAUTHION; SIMON, 2000), politeness crossed the romantic nineteenth century as a social component of speech, ritual, norm, and valued social competence. Nowadays, in the context of the interactional approach, understood in a dialogic perspective, linguistic politeness acquired a status of “relevant scientific object” and became “a component of honor in discourse analysis” (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2005).

As each period of history has its standards of politeness, and having these standards their specificities in each community, the concept of politeness is a privileged field of investigation when it comes to establishing relationships between language(s) and culture(s). For the purposes of discussion, I emphasize some basics of this concept as follows.

Thanks to the emerging field of Conversation Analysis in the 1970s, researches on politeness have expanded the literary context to that of verbal interaction (GRICE, 1975; LAKOFF, 1973; GOFFMAN, 1973, 1974; BROWN; LEVINSON, 1978).

In the late 1980s, while developing her pioneering research, Lakoff (1989) observed the fundamental fact of a theory and description of politeness focusing on the form and function of acts of language in daily conversation. From there, Lakoff has expanded her field of investigation in politeness by looking at other

types of speech than ordinary conversation. Her findings show, among other things, that if, for example, disagreement and conflict are inherent to a debate as systematic and natural elements, such elements are seen as menacing behavior in ordinary conversation.

However, the study of verbal interactions “[...] cannot ignore what is perceived as polite/impolite socially. This is for the analyst to focus on the discursive strategies that are used by the interaction participants in the light of social codes prevailing at the time these exchanges take place.”¹⁸ (JOBERT, 2010, p.8).

To such variable factors (type of interaction, profile of participants, time in history, codes and social places) should be added, with Grice, the constant factor. The cooperative principle is developed into a set of “maxims of conversation” that every speaker is deemed to comply with. This scheme illustrates the point:

(1) – Vous savez où se trouve... ?/Do you know where is... ?

1a – Je sais./I know.

1b – Je ne sais pas./I don't know.

Through (1) it was found that the meaning of the sentences (1a and 1b) speaks directly to this compliance. In this way, the answers (1a or 1b) to question (1) are satisfactory (under ordinary circumstances). I also pointed out that these rules are intended to “maximize the effectiveness of the exchange of information” and that therefore, they prioritize the informative function of discourse. In this context, the speaker is guided by the language [and behavioral] choices dictated by the principle of politeness. This is not limited, in principle, to the repertoire of formulas but must extend to “[...] all aspects of the speech which are subject by rules, and whose function is to preserve the harmonious nature of the interpersonal relationship” (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1996, p.50).

However, in this type of interaction, as in others, the relational issue (or «interpersonal relationship») includes an identity issue. This issue guides the participants, according to their needs or the needs of the situation, in negotiations and in the planning of *places* in the interactive space. Nevertheless, in case of conflict, – real or perceived – participants can adopt an inconsistent linguistic behavior while deviating from the principles of cooperation and of politeness, going to a deterioration of relations. My analysis of the negative statement *Je ne sais pas moi* (I don't know, me) illustrates this type of deviation and its social implications. To support my assumptions, I rely on the fact that (Brown and Levinson) any competent adult member of society has an image of

¹⁸ In French: *Il s'agit, pour l'analyste, "de s'intéresser aux stratégies discursives qui sont utilisées par les différents participants à une interaction à la lumière des codes sociaux en vigueur au moment où ces échanges ont lieu."* (JOBERT, 2010, p.8).

himself that he tries to argue in his interactions. This image, the face, includes two complementary aspects:

- the negative side, connected to the private domain, with feelings of independence and freedom of action;
- the positive face, covering the narcissistic need to be recognized and valorized socially.

To develop these assumptions, let's consider:

- 1c – *Moi je sais./Me, I know.*
- 1d – *Je sais moi. I know, me.*
- 1e – *Moi je ne sais pas. Me, I don't know.*
- 1f – *Je ne sais pas moi. I don't know, me*

With regard to 1c and 1e, beyond their role of *recovery of/response to*, these statements often have an expressive contrast value. Indeed, as stressed by Lambrecht (1994, p.183).

The left dislocation construction is often used to mark a shift in attention from one to another of two or more already active topic referent. This explains the frequent occurrence of PRONOMINAL NPs in detached position (*Me, I'm hungry, Moi, j'ai faim*). Such detached lexical or pronominal NPs often have a "contrastive" function, in which case they may be referred to as CONTRASTIVE topic NPs [...].

That said, by stating in (1c & 1e), the speaker establishes a contrast with the utterer of (1a-b). Similarly, 1c and 1e are "echoing responses" because they comprise the idea that (1c) "the others do not know" or "the others think that I do not know while *Moi, je sais./Me, I know*"; (1e) "the others think that I know but *Moi je ne sais pas (Me, I don't know)*".

On the other hand, right dislocations such as (1d) *Je sais moi/I know, me*, and (1f) *Je ne sais pas moi (I don't know, me)* – are also able to assume a contrastive function vis-à-vis (1a-c). In sum, through (1d & 1f) the speaker says something other than "yes"/"no": in fact, while establishing a contrast he/she shows his contentment (1d), its annoyance (1f). From the perspective of the dialogic approach, these movements of emotions may be motivated by the following voices:

- My answer was negative (*Je ne sais pas /I do not know* followed or not by *Moi, je ne sais pas/Me, I do not know*) but my interlocutor insists (e.g. – Are you sure ?) and then I say, *Je ne sais pas moi (What do I know?)*;

– This is the umpteenth time that I am asked the same question and then I say *Je ne sais pas moi/I do not know me*;

– I am asked the question for the first time – I may know the answer – but I say *Je ne sais pas, moi./I do not know, me*.

In these three cases, the speaker (1f) shows his wish to be left alone, while informing his positioning (*opposition to*) in the interaction. He takes his distances, as in the four following situations:

Situation I. At the reception desk of a tourism office.

- Bonjour. Vous savez où on peut trouver un bureau de tabac dans le quartier ?/
Good morning. Do you know where can I find a Tabaco shop in the neighborhood?
- Je ne sais pas. I don't know.
- Et un bar-tabac? /How about a Tabaco-bar?
- *Je ne sais pas moi* ici on ne renseigne pas les gens sur ce genre de choses./I do not know, me. Here, we do not inform people about these kind of things.

Situation II. At the counter of bus company. The passenger points to a bus to the receptionist.

- Est-ce que ce bus s'arrête en ville, près du casino? /does this bus stop in town, close to the casino?
- Je ne sais pas. Je ne connais pas les trajets des bus. / I don't know. I don't know the buses routes.
- Vous savez tout de même s'il fait des arrêts en ville ?/ You may anyway know if this bus stops in town ?
- *Je ne sais pas moi* c'est au chauffeur qu'il faut demander ou alors (la réceptionniste pointe vers un panneau d'affichage) regardez là, tout est là./I don't know, me, you must ask the driver or (the receptionist points to a billboard) look there, everything is there.

Situation III. At the reception desk at a train station.

- Bonjour. Il vous reste encore des places dans le train de nuit ?/ Hi, are there still available seats on the night train ?
- Je ne sais pas. Le système [informatique] est en panne./I don't know. The [computer] system is down.
- Bon alors vous pensez qu'on peut y monter et puis voir ça avec le contrôleur ?/ Ok, then, do you think we can go in and then see it with the ticket inspector ?
- *Je ne sais pas moi*. Ne me faites pas dire ce que je n'ai pas dit. Si vous prenez le train sans votre billet c'est à vos risques et périls./I do not know, me. Don't make me say what I didn't. If you take the train without your ticket is at your own risk.

Situation IV. At the reception desk of the City Hall.

- Bonjour. Vous savez si Madame Untel de l'état civil est là ? Je suis venu chercher mon livret de famille./ Good morning. Do you if Mrs so-and-so is here? I came to collect my family record book.
- Je ne sais pas. Je ne l'ai pas encore vu ce matin. I do not know. I have not seen her this morning.
- Vous pensez que sera là bientôt ? Je dois repartir au bureau./Do you think that will be there soon? I have to go back to the office.
- *Je ne sais pas moi* je ne suis pas sa secrétaire./ I do not know, me, I am not her secretary.

Some final considerations

The aim of this work was to demonstrate traces of linguistic impoliteness in the exchange of information in French in order to see its interactive social implications and thus contribute to studies on the relationship between language-culture. To do this, I proposed to analyze a highly frequent negative French sequence, namely the right dislocation *Je ne sais pas moi*./I don't know, me. Throughout a combinatory approach of this sequence, I have arrived at the following conclusions:

- (i) in a given interaction (fig. 1), right dislocations (1d & 1f: *Je... moi*... me) as well as left dislocations (1c & 1e: *Moi, je/me, I*) establish a contrast – real or potential – and constitute a *recovery of/responses* to 1a & 1b, which are canonical sequences of the assertive statement positive/negative.
- (ii) right dislocations however differ from left dislocations: these, thematize the subject and validate a position of contrast (*Moi je.../ Me, I*), while right dislocations say something other than a *opposition to*. Indeed, these voices tell us the discursive positioning of the speaker: his contentment, his annoyance.
- (iii) by stating *Je ne sais pas moi* I don't know, me the speaker/informant shows his annoyance, his negative face (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1978), an image that refers to the private realm, feelings of independence and freedom of action. This is a linguistic trace of his desire to be left alone, which is incompatible in the context of the exchange of information, a place that reflects our everyday social behavior and where everyone has, more here than elsewhere, to comply with the principle of cooperation.

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- **RÉSUMÉ** : Dans cette contribution, nous nous proposons d'aborder la question de l'impolitesse linguistique en français dans le cadre de la conversation ordinaire et plus précisément dans l'échange d'informations. De par son caractère éminemment fonctionnel, l'échange d'informations constitue un lieu privilégié d'observation des rapports entre langue et culture. A travers une étude de mécanismes interactionnels (i.e. question-réponse), notamment de la séquence/réponse négative récurrente *je ne sais pas moi*, nous nous demanderons ce qui distingue cette construction-là de celle-ci *je ne sais pas* ; pourquoi et dans quelles situations, ou à quel moment de l'interaction, le locuteur emploie celle-là plutôt que celle-ci ou vice-versa ? Quels sont les effets socio interactifs produits ? Qu'en ressort-il au niveau du profil du locuteur ? Les éléments de réponse que nous apporterons à ces questions s'appuient sur une approche théorique et méthodologique combinatoire des apports de la polyphonie linguistique, l'analyse conversationnelle, la grammaire des émotions et le concept d'impolitesse.
- **MOTS-CLÉS** : Français. Langue-culture. Interaction verbale. Polyphonie. Impolitesse linguistique.

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