Anticipative interlocutive dialogism: Sequential patterns and linguistic markers in French

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Abstract

The notion of dialogism can be defined as the orientation of discourse towards other instances of discourse. The Russian semiotician, Mikhail Bakhtin, in his research on this topic, focused on a specific dialogic relationship – the anticipated response of the recipient. In other words, as a speaker progresses through his/her own speech, he/she imagines the discursive reactions of his/her recipient. He/she interacts dialogically with these reactions in order firstly to reply in advance to questions and objections the recipient might formulate and secondly to rectify any fallacious conclusions that he/she might draw.

The purpose of the present article is to analyze this dialogic relationship, which we call anticipative interlocutive dialogism, specifically in order to describe the linguistic markers through which it is realized. We shall distinguish three linguistic forms of anticipative interlocutive dialogism according to the way the ''anticipated reply'' ascribed to the recipient is treated: *prolepsis*, *integration*, *ellipsis*.
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1. Introduction

The notion of dialogism can be defined as the orientation of discourse towards other instances of discourse. This notion takes root in the works of Russian semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) and his circle[1]: Valentin Voloshinov (1895–1936) and Pavel Medvedev (1892–1938). The writings of the Bakhtin Circle – among which Bakhtin's 1970 [1963] *Problèmes de la poétique de Dostoïevski*, *Rabelais and His World* (1965), *The Aesthetics of Verbal Art* (1979), *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986); Medvedev's *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928); and Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) – deal with literary theory, sociolinguistics and the philosophy of language (see *the Bakhtin Centre*, University of Sheffield). In these research fields have flourished many concepts coined by the Bakhtin Circle – such as *carnivalesque*, *chronotope*, *dialogism*, *heteroglossia* and *polyphony*.

From the common viewpoint of the Bakhtin Circle, linguistic production is essentially *dialogic* because it is formed in the process of social interaction; the dynamics of speech rely on the interaction of different values which are expressed through borrowings or echoes from the speech of others.

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[1] Although the issue has been thoroughly discussed (Sériot, 2007; Bronckart and Bota, 2011; Zenkine, 2012; Velmezova, 2011), it remains unclear to what extent Voloshinov and Medvedev must be credited with early works published under the name of Bakhtin (and vice versa). This is the reason why we shall attribute some of these works to the Bakhtin Circle, without any further specification.

The notion of dialogism has received wide attention from contemporary linguists. For instance, *dialogism* and *polyphony*[2] have been used by French linguists to describe the interplay of *voices* (Authier-Revuz, 1982) or of *viewpoints* (Ducrot, 1984) within the talk and consciousness of a single speaker (see also, in English, Schwenter, 2000; Traugott, 2009). Goodwin (2007) discussed the models for reported speech and the speaker developed by Voloshinov (1929), in order to "disentangle the different voices within a single strip of talk" (p. 37). Goodwin's further aim was to "expand such analysis to incorporate genuine multi-party interaction within the organization of the utterance, and to explore, as an alternative to quotation, sequential practices for assimilating another's talk into a current utterance" (Goodwin, 2007:37).

In his research, Mikhail Bakhtin focuses on a specific dialogic relationship – the speaker's anticipation of his/her recipient's response. In other words, as a speaker progresses through his/her own speech, he/she imagines the discursive reactions of his/her recipient (1986:97). He/she interacts dialogically with these reactions in order firstly to reply in advance to questions and objections the recipient might formulate and secondly to rectify any fallacious conclusions that he/she might draw.

The purpose of the present article is to analyze the linguistic mechanisms of this anticipation of the recipient's response, corresponding to a particular type of dialogic relationship, which we call **anticipative interlocutive dialogism**. Our main goal is to describe the discourse structures and the linguistic markers through which anticipative interlocutive dialogism is realized. To the best of our knowledge, this dialogic relationship has not yet been the object of any systematic study.

In the first section of this paper we explain our theoretical framework and methodology, following three consecutive steps: definition of the three components of "anticipative interlocutive dialogism" (Section 2.1), presentation of our methodology and data (Section 2.2), introduction of a sequential pattern (Section 2.3).

Sections 3–5 are subsequently devoted to a detailed analysis of three linguistic forms of anticipative interlocutive dialogism: i.e. *prolepsis* (Section 3), *integration* (Section 4) and *ellipsis* (Section 5). In the final section, we will synthetise and discuss our main results (Section 6), before attempting to link anticipative interlocutive dialogism to other types of dialogism and discuss its specificity (conclusion).

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

2.1. On anticipative interlocutive dialogism

In order to characterize anticipative interlocutive dialogism, we will first explain what we mean when we use the words: *dialogism*, *interlocutive* (dialogism) and *anticipative* (interlocutive dialogism).

2.1.1. Dialogism
The Bakhtin Circle research has revealed that discourse consists of "dialogue" in the double form of:

– **external** dialogue, marked by alternating speech turns of different speakers. This is the **dialogal** dimension that conversational analysis describes in its complexity (management of speech turns, transitional, phatic places, regulators, etc.);
– **internal** dialogue or **dialogic** dimension: when one single speaker, within his/her speech turn, or more widely speaking within his/her discourse, interacts with one or several other discourses.

It is this second dimension that is included in the notion of dialogism. Unlike the dialogal dimension which only affects dialogal genres (for instance conversation), this dialogic dimension relates to dialogal genres as well as monologal genres (for example press article, novel, philosophical essay, etc.).

Bakhtin does not suggest any precise linguistic definition of dialogism. Relying on evidence from Russian texts (Nowakowska, 2005), we can say that it consists of the **orientation** of any discourse (regardless of its format: speech turn of conversation, press article, political discourse, scientific article, etc.) towards other instances of discourse, from a triple viewpoint:

 (i) towards other instances of discourse made previously on the same subject;
(ii) towards the reply the speaker is asking for and which he/she is anticipating;
(iii) towards the discourse itself inasmuch as the speaker is his/her first recipient in the self-receiving process.

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[2] The distinction between dialogism and polyphony is discussed in Bres (2005) and Nowakowska (2005).