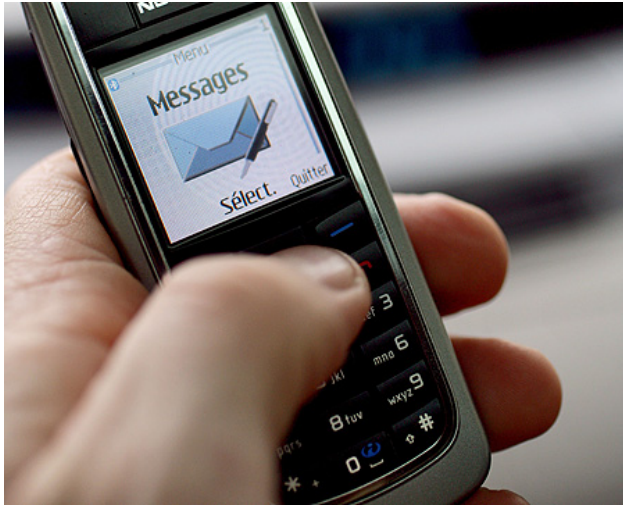




# Discourse markers in right periphery (Inter)subjectivity in text messages

Deniz Uygur

[deniz.uygur@uclouvain.be](mailto:deniz.uygur@uclouvain.be)

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# Hypothesis

We should find discourse markers in all forms of language based in communication, including communication with writing constraints.

# 1. Discourse markers

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## 1.1. Terminology: variety of terms

discourse marker

discourse connective

pragmatic connective

discourse particle

discourse operator

pragmatic marker

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## 1.1. Terminology: variety of terms

**discourse marker**

*particle* is a syntactic term

*particle* concerns German modal particle

*particle* denotes a monosyllabic word

*discourse marker* is the least exclusive term

*marker* indicates an action

discourse particle

pragmatic marker

# 1. Discourse markers

## 1.2. Definition

No agreed definition

“In English, discourse marker refers to a range of form function mappings, rather than to a closed set of forms.” (Lewis 2006: 44)

Set of characteristics (Schourup, 1999)

- Connectivity
- Optionality
- Non-truth-conditionality
- Weak clause association
- Initiality
- Orality
- Multi-categoriality

# 1. Discourse markers

## 1.3. Position

DMs functions are varying with their position

(Bolly & Degand, 2009; Degand & Fagard, 2011)

A speaker 'exploits' the syntactic possibilities of a multifunctional word  
"in order to differentiate between its functions" (Evers-Vermeul, 2005)

Three positions: initial (left periphery), medial and final (right periphery)

Focus on the right periphery

- strategic place
- DMs are rare in right periphery (Fraser, 1999)
- DMs in right periphery have an interpersonal function (Brinton, 1999)

## 2. Subjectivity and intersubjectivity

“While subjective expressions are available for virtually any linguistic purpose, intersubjective ones are largely limited to certain turn-taking contexts”  
(Traugott, 2007)

### Subjective function

“to express a response or a reaction to the preceding discourse or attitude towards the following discourse” (Brinton, 1996)

### Interpersonal function

“to effect cooperation, sharing, or intimacy between speaker and hearer, including confirming shared assumptions, checking or expressing understanding, requesting confirmation, expressing deference, or saving face” (Brinton, 1996)

## 2. Subjectivity and intersubjectivity

### Intersubjectivity

“the explicit expression of the SP[eaker]/W[riter]’s attention to the ‘self’ of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and in a more social sense (paying attention to their ‘face’ or ‘image needs’ associated with social stance and identity)” (Traugott 2003)



# 3. Text messages corpus

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## Computer mediated communication

“transcribed” oral discourse (Hård af Segerstad, 2005)  
vs. spontaneous communication

26,588 French messages gathered in Belgium

25,894 by French native speakers

# 4. Methodology

Aim: to select the most interesting DMs for my analysis in SMS Corpus

1° data base with 1,000 messages chosen at random

2° list of 20 DMs occurring at the end of the message

Top 5

- |    |       |                     |
|----|-------|---------------------|
| 1. | quoi  | ‘what’ / ‘isn’t it’ |
| 2. | alors | ‘then’              |
| 3. | donc  | ‘so’                |
| 4. | sinon | ‘otherwise’         |
| 5. | voilà | ‘that’s it’         |

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|    |       |             |       |
|----|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. | quoi  | 'what'      | 1,544 |
| 2. | alors | 'then'      | 1,289 |
| 3. | donc  | 'so'        | 832   |
| 4. | sinon | 'otherwise' | 562   |
| 5. | voilà | 'that's it' | 463   |

SMS Corpus  
top 3

# 4. Methodology

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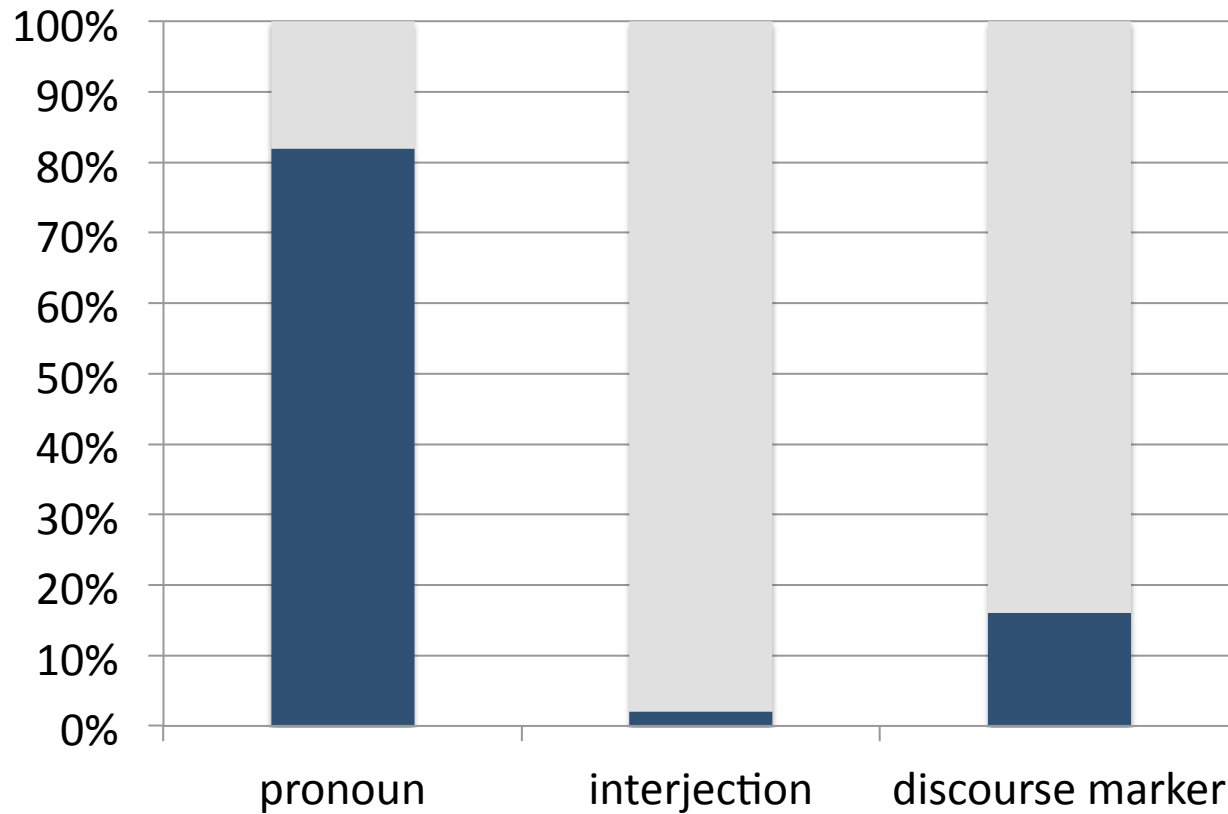
3° sample with 50 messages chosen at random  
for *quoi*, *alors* and *donc*

4° analysis of

- the nature of the item  
(relevance of DMs characteristics)
- the position of DMs

5° checking of the pragmatic values  
of DMs in right periphery

## 5.1. Results: *Quoi*



# 5.1. Results: *Quoi*

## Weak clause association

*Tu fai **k** d beau?*  
pronoun

‘What are you doing?’

*Je te dis **quoi** demain*  
pronoun

‘I will let you know tomorrow’

***Quoi** tu fais quoi demain!?*  
?

‘*Quoi* [?!] what will you do tomorrow!?’

*Mai grouille **koi** moi jtatta!*  
?

‘But hurry up *quoi* I am waiting for you’

## 5.1. Results: *Quoi*

### Punctuation marker (Vincent, 1993)

Subjective function: reinforcing the preceding topic

*F1 c com tu vx **kwa***      ‘so as you want *quoi*’

*tranquil **quoi**!*      ‘easy *quoi*’

Intersubjective function: sharing presupposition  
or knowledge

could be replaced by *tu sais ce que je veux dire*  
‘you know what I mean’

# 5.1. Results: *Quoi*

## Connectivity?

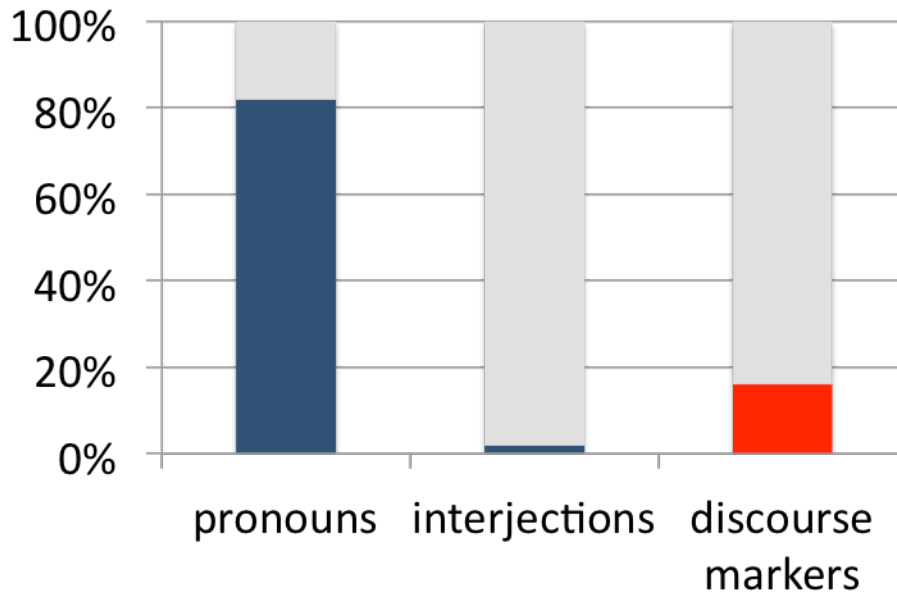
DMs “signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1” (Fraser, 1999)

- Connectivity with the co-text
- Connectivity with the context

*Mai grouille **koi** moi jtatta!*      ‘But hurry up *quoi* I am waiting for you’



## 5.1. Results: *Quoi*



8 *quoi* as DM

- 5 complex DMs *et quoi*
- 3 simple DMs

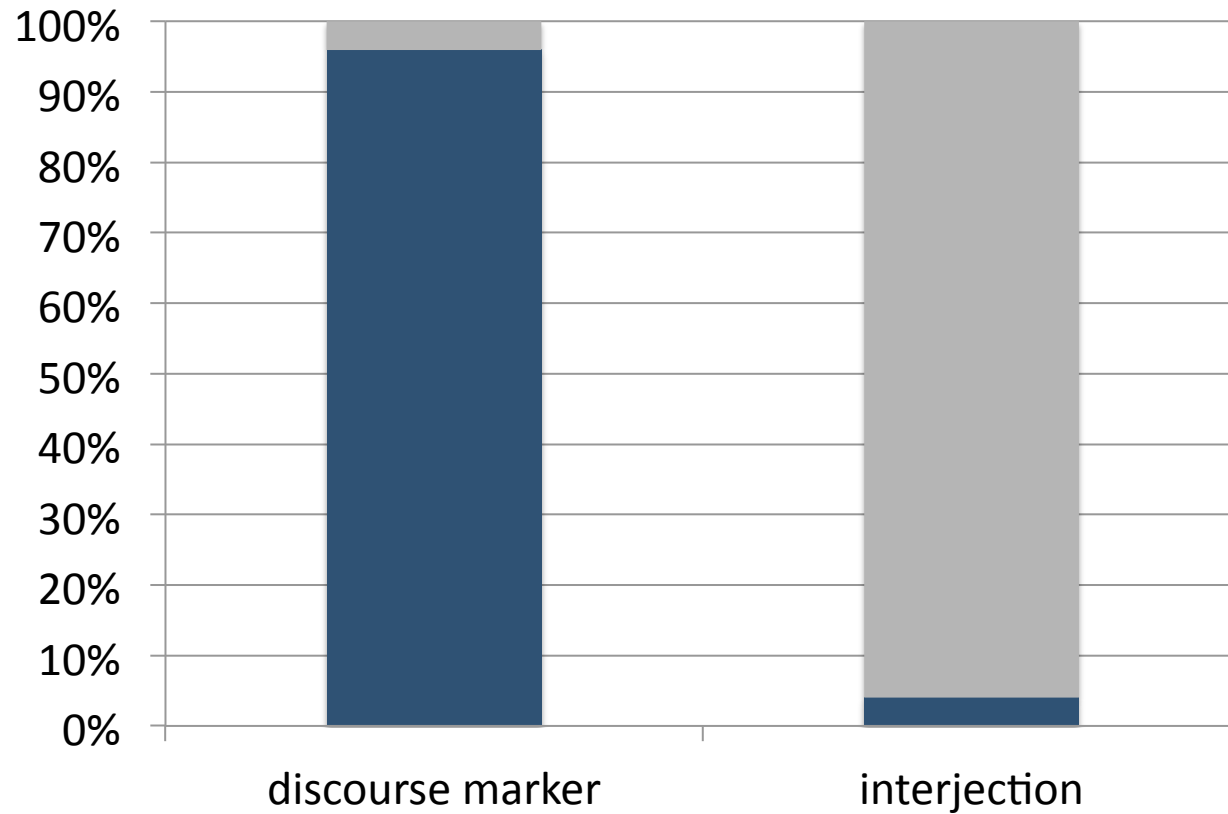
- All 5 complex DMs in left periphery
- All 3 simple DMs in right periphery

## 5.1. Results: *Quoi*

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- Weak clause association
- Restricted to right periphery
- Subjective and intersubjective functions

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*



## 5.2. Results: *Alors*

### Connectivity

*Aujourd'hui c'est le grand jour! **Alors** tu trembles déjà?*



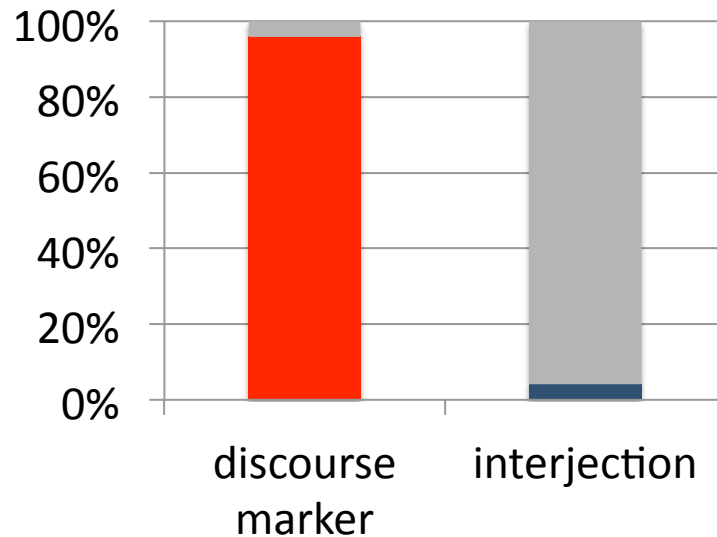
‘Today is the big day! *Alors* are you already shivering?’

*Lol **alors la**... mince, jpeu pa vnir!*

‘Lol so then... damned, I can’t come!’

interjection

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*

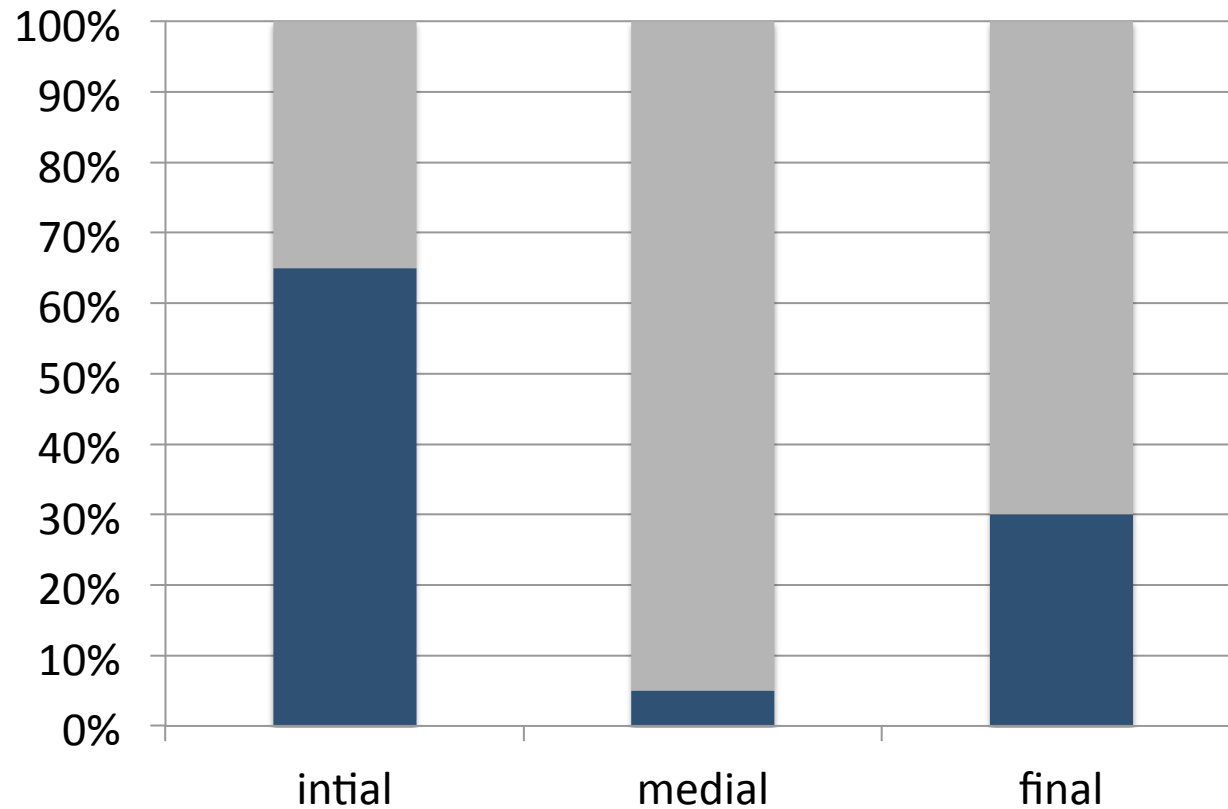


96% *alors* as DM

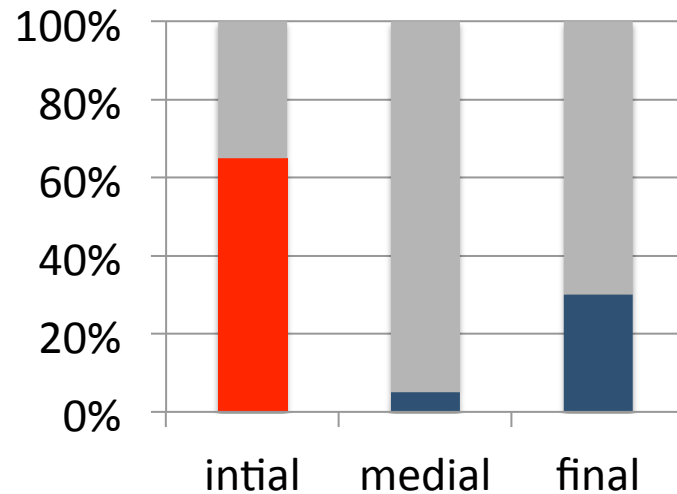
- 2.25% of complex DMs  
*mais alors* and *alors voilà*
- 93.75% of simple DMs

- The whole set of complex DMs in left periphery
- The simple DMs are very mobile

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*



## 5.2. Results: *Alors*



### Initial position

27 simple DMs

- 9 causal uses

*Les exam approchen **alors** l'ambiance est pas super*

*'The evaluations are coming *alors* the atmosphere is not great'*

- 18 metadiscursive uses (Degand & Fagard, 2011)

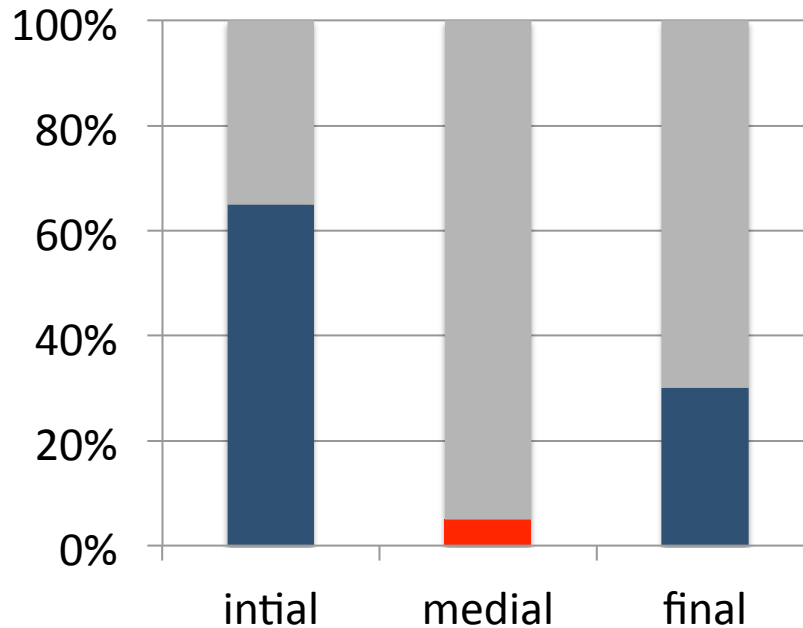
***Alor** ca va ma Ptit? 'Alors are you fine sweetie?'*

*"fonction d'attaque du discours" (Bouacha, 1981)*

***Alors** je suppose que tu ne veu toujours pas mexpliqué*

*'Alors I suppose that you don't want to explain things to me yet'*

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*



### Medial position

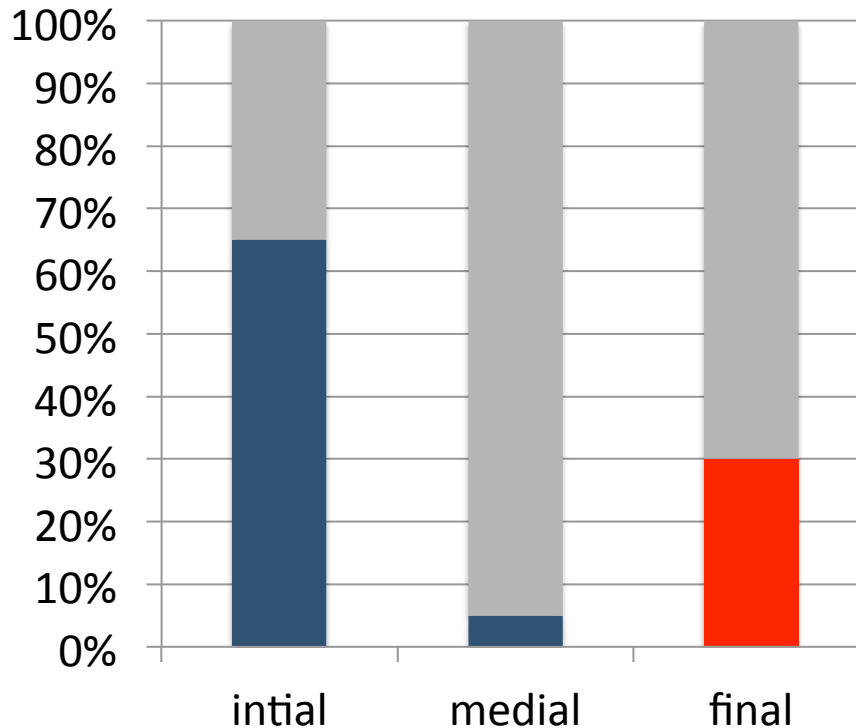
One use: conditional use

*ou alors* 'or else' (Degand & Fagard, 2011)

*En fait, ce sont des daims qui viennent surtout en hiver qd il fait très froid kom today, **ou alors** au printe*

'Actually, these are deer that come mostly in winter when it's very cold as today *ou alors* in spring'

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*



### Final position

#### 14 simple DMs

- 10 conditional uses

DM *alors* could be replaced by *dans ce cas* 'in that case'

*OK c pas grave puce.*

*Repose-toi bien **alors**!*

'OK it's not important sweetie.

Try and get some rest *alors*'?

- 4 to request a confirmation

(Hansen, 1997)

*à dim **alors**!*

'see you Sunday *alors*!'

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*

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### *Alors* as a DM in right periphery

Subjective function: conditionality to the preceding discourse

Intersubjective function: requesting a confirmation

## 5.2. Results: *Alors*

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- Connectivity
- Great mobility
- Subjective and intersubjective functions in right periphery

## 5.3. Results: *Donc*

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All discourse markers in Sms Corpus

*Donc* is traditionally said to be a conjunction but it is not (Ferrari & Rossari, 1994)

*Donc* is an adverb with semantic subordination function (Bolly & Degand, 2009)

## 5.3. Results: *Donc*

- Direct consequence use (48%)

*g su mchanger **dc** si tu veux  
jpeux trejoindr*

'I've managed to change my clothes  
*donc* if you want I can meet up with you'

- Inferential use (32%)

*Y a juste un prob c ke mn per  
est en cong **dc** jss pa sur de  
savoir ls prendre*

'there is only one problem that is my father  
is off work *donc* I'm not sure if I can take them'

- Metadiscursive use (10%)

*jv dormir **donc** jte souhaite2pasé1tré  
bel nui avec plein dexelen reve*

'I'm going to sleep *donc* I wish you  
a very good night and sweet dreams'

## 5.3. Results: *Donc*

- Connective use(6%)

*A kel heure ca termine demain le nature et découverte?  
Et **donc** j arriverai vers 13h00*

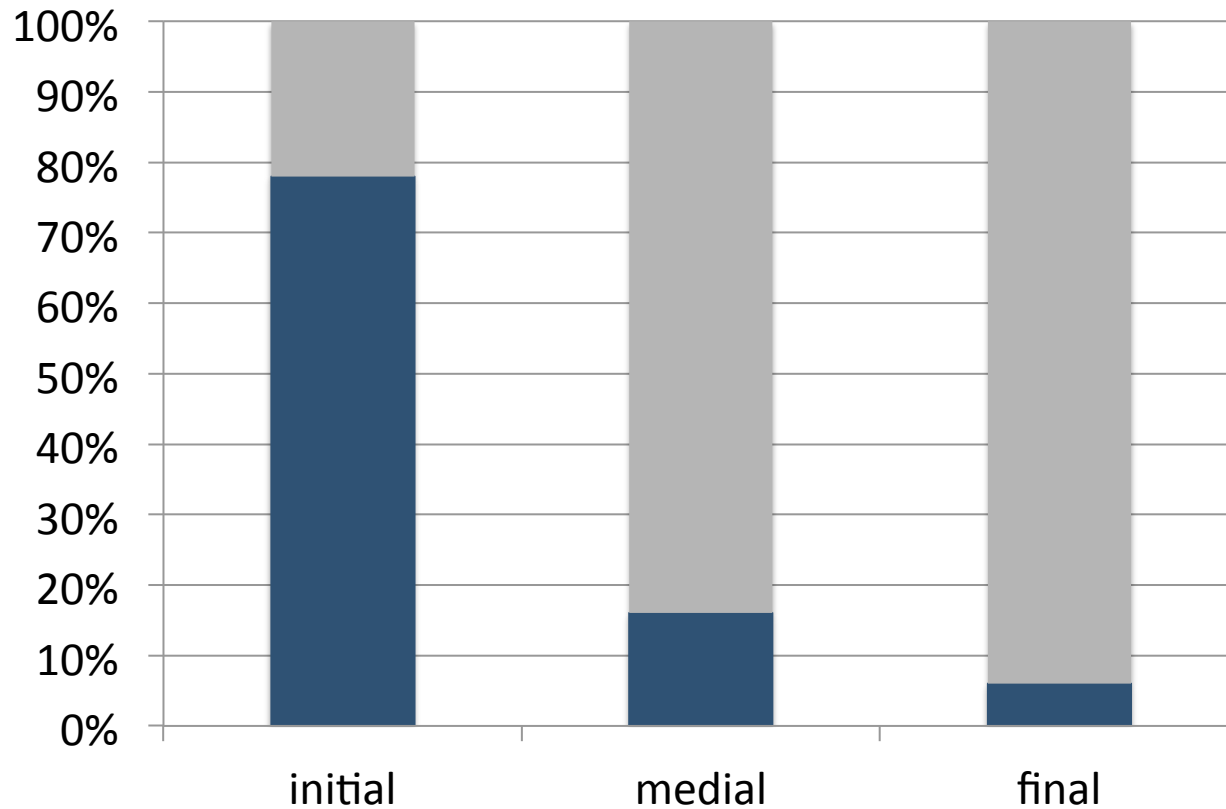
‘What time does the *nature et découverte* end up tomorrow?  
And *donc* I will come around 1 am’

- Complex DMs (4%)

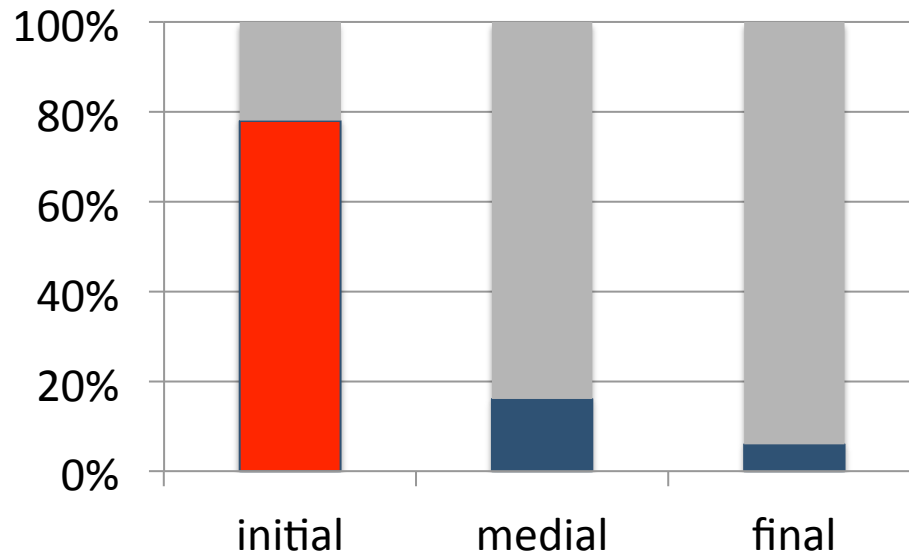
*Bon anniversaire! 22 ans!**Dis donc**, tu vas finir par me rattraper*

Happy birthday! 22 years old! *Dis donc*, you will catch me up at the end

## 5.3. Results: *Donc*



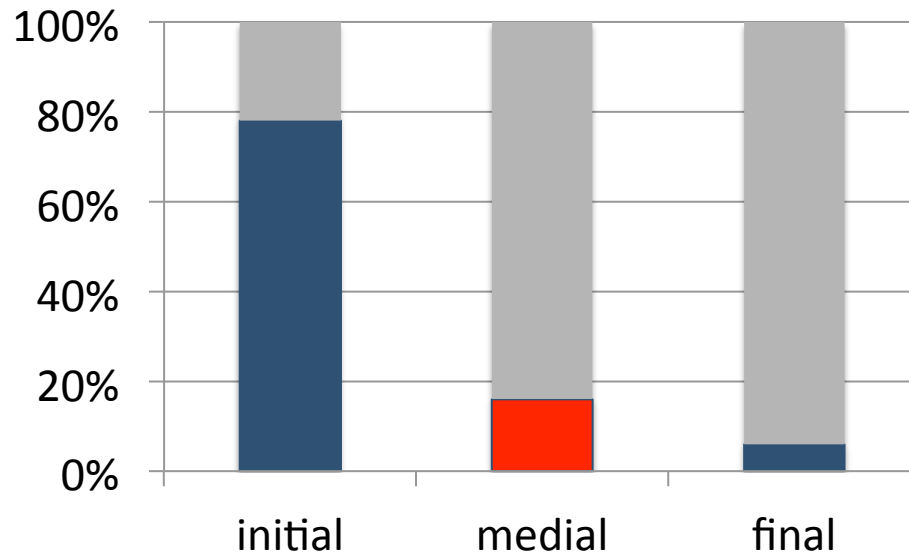
## 5.3. Results: *Donc*



### Initial position

- All three complex DMs
- Very different uses of simple DMs

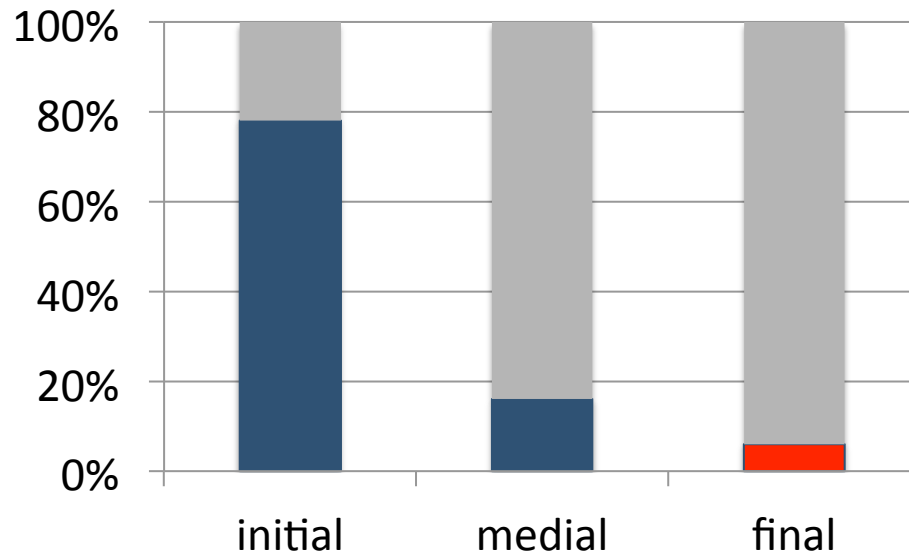
## 5.3. Results: *Donc*



### Medial position

- 8 simple DMS:  
very different uses of simple DMs

## 5.3. Results: *Donc*



### Final position

- One use : conclusive

*Plus de soucis donc!*

*'No more trouble donc!'*

*esaye d'avoir une iD . . .*

*Réfléchi bi1 donc:-D*

*'try to have an idea... think well donc :D'*

## 6. Conclusion and discussion

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*Quoi* as a simple DM is a punctuation marker with

- subjective function: reinforcing the preceding topic
- Intersubjective function: sharing presupposition and knowledge

*Alors* as a DM in the right periphery

- subjective function: expressing a condition to the preceding topic
- Intersubjective function: requesting confirmation

# 6. Conclusion and discussion

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- Weak clause association useful to distinguish pronominal use from discourse marker for *quoi*
- Connectivity helpful to distinguish DMs from interjections
- Multicategoriality:
  - *quoi* is pronominal
  - *alors* and *donc* are adverbials
- Initiality:
  - *alors* is very mobile
  - *donc* is less mobile
  - *quoi* is restricted to the right periphery

# 6. Conclusion and discussion

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## Question for further research

- Is there a specialization of certain DMs to a type of communication?  
(cf. the case of rare occurrence of *donc* in right periphery in text messages corpus)



Thank you for your attention!😊

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