When you may say so yourself:
The form and function of assessments in a French cooking show

Peter Golato / Andrea Golato

English Abstract
This conversation analytic study analyzes assessments in the context of a French cooking show. The show's chef and co-host can be seen to assess both food that one or the other of them has prepared, and the carrying out of recipe-related steps or techniques. These assessments take the form of either elicited or spontaneous assessments, the latter being produced either by self or other. While either the chef or the co-host could potentially take credit for the positively-assessed food (many of these assessments could potentially be oriented to as a compliment), neither the chef nor the co-host treat them as compliments. As our analysis shows, assessments indeed have other interactional functions: First, they serve to structure the interaction in that they mark transitions between recipe steps or bring the topic of the talk back to the food item after an aside. Additionally, they have a pedagogical function in that they are produced during and after cooking demonstrations. Finally, they are associated with the sensual experience of either the entire dish or its ingredients. The analysis further reveals that certain turn designs tend to be associated with each function. Moreover, there are distributional differences in the turn design of the assessments and the response patterns employed by the chef and co-host. We propose that these differences reflect how the role of expert or authority is talked into existence.

Keywords: assessment – compliment – cooking show.

German Abstract
Die vorliegende konversationsanalytische Studie analysiert Bewertungen im Kontext einer französischen Kochsendung. Der Koch und die Ko-Gastgeberin bewerten beide Gerichte, die sie zubereitet haben, und diese Bewertungen haben die Form von eingeforderten Bewertungen und spontanen Bewertungen in Form von Eigenbewertungen und Fremdbewertungen. Obwohl der Koch und die Ko-Gastgeberin die positive Bewertung als Anerkennung ihrer eigener Leistung betrachten könnten (viele dieser Bewertungen könnten als Komplimente interpretiert werden), behandelt keiner der beiden sie als Komplimente. Wie unsere Analyse stattdessen zeigt, haben diese Bewertungen andere interaktionelle Funktionen: Erstens dienen sie der Strukturierung des Diskurses, indem die Bewertungen Übergänge zwischen Rezeptschritten markieren oder das Thema der Konversation nach einem Exkurs zurück zum Essen bringen. Zweitens haben sie eine pädagogische Funktion, wenn sie während oder nach Kochdemonstrationen platziert werden. Und drittens drücken sie die sinnliche Erfahrung im Hinblick auf das gesamte Gericht oder seiner Zutaten aus. Die Analyse zeigt weiterhin systematische Unterschiede im Turndesign von Bewertungen je nach deren Funktion. Außerdem gibt es Unterschiede in der Distribution der Antwortmustern von Koch und Ko-Gastgeberin. Das legt nahe, dass diese Unterschiede aufzeigen, wie die Rolle des Experten oder epistemische Autorität sprachlich ins Leben gerufen wird.

Keywords: Bewertung – Kompliment – Kochshow.

1. Introduction

Assessments have received much attention as an action in prior research (see literature review below). While speakers use assessments to negotiate likes or dislikes, they also use them to negotiate epistemic authority as well as action and conversation boundaries. Assessments have slightly different functions in everyday conversation as opposed to talk in institutional settings. One institutional setting in which assessements frequently occur is a cooking show, as hosts and/or guests frequently evaluate the look, smell, and taste of food items and various cooking techniques. Prior research has focused on assessments in cooking shows in German- and English-speaking settings (Matwick/Matwick 2017; Matwick/Matwick 2014, 2019; Weidner 2017a, 2017b, 2022). This prior research has focused particularly on segments of the cooking show where interactants are revealing and sampling the food prepared during the show, where assessments are both expected and ubiquitous. This paper makes a contribution to prior research by a) investigating assessments not only in the final stages of plating the food but also at other stages in the recipe preparation, b) showing what leads up to assessments and which functions they serve, and c) how assessments are designed. Moreover, this paper makes novel contributions by adopting a conversation analytic framework (most prior work has used discourse analytic or sociolinguistic paradigms). Finally, to our knowledge this is the first study to investigate assessments in French cooking shows.

The French cooking show under investigation features a professional chef together with a co-host who is herself an accomplished cook and who assists the chef in the preparation of various recipes. The show is filmed in a studio without a live audience. Throughout the show, both the chef and the co-host can be seen to produce assessments of both the food being prepared and the techniques that they use in preparing it. If a given assessment was elicited by a coparticipant, then it always resulted in an other-assessment, that is, in a coparticipant's assessing a food item or a food preparation technique that the assessment-eliciting coparticipant had been working on. Conversely, if an assessment occurred without elicitation, it could take the form of either a self-assessment, that is, in a coparticipant's assessing a food item or a food preparation technique that the coparticipant themselves had been working on, or an other-assessment, that is, in a coparticipant's assessing a food item or a food preparation technique that the other coparticipant had been working on. The following are examples of these actions:

Example 1 elicited assessment:
[Encornets a la planche_00_07_33]

```
01    R:  donc, là, le principe, c- °c'est de se faire une
          so, now, the principle, i- is to make ourselves a

02        assiette bien mélangée.°=regarde ça
          well-mixed assortment.=look at that

03 => M:  c'est bea[u:. ça ]sent BO:N.
          it's beautiful. it smells good.
                   [       ]
04    R:           [regarde]
                    look
```

Example 2 self-assessment:
[Saltimbocca_de_veau_à_la_purée_de_fèves_07_37]

```
01 => R:  on l'enfonce. regarde la couleur. elle est belle.
          we press on it. look at the color, it's beautiful

02    M:  wouah.
          wow.
```

Example 3 other-assessment:
[04_Baklava_hd720_00_06_08]

```
01    R:  donc là ce que l'on va faire, c'est qu'on va se mettre
          so now what we're going to do, is that we're going to

02        comme ça. tu vas voir c'est très simple.
          set ourselves up like this. you'll see it's very simple

03 => M:  oh il est bien.
          oh it's good.

04    R:  et on va
          and we're going to

05 => M:  [magnifique.
          [wonderful.
          [
06    R:  [couper comme ça.
          [cut like so.
```

In everyday French interaction, if an interactant is assessing a food item that another coparticipant can take credit for making or purchasing, the food assessment is typically treated as a compliment. While on rare occasions the compliment can receive

a thanking response, more typically it receives a deflecting or downgrading compliment response (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987[1]; Wieland 1995). This can be seen in the following excerpt taken from Wieland (1995:807)[2], where Annette downgrades a compliment or positive assessment of the wine she has brought to dinner:

Example 4:
(Wieland 1995:807)

```
Molly:     c'est très bon, hein?
           it's very good, isn't it?

Annette:   oh, c'est un petit bourgogne euh, c'est un petit bour-
           oh, it's a regular burgundy uh, it's a regular bur-

           gogne, c'est pas des grands crus, hein?
           gundy, it's not a grand cru, right?
```

On the other hand, if a French speaker assesses a food item they have prepared themselves, this is treated as self-praise which then gets sanctioned (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987:36; Wieland 1995:806). While neither of these authors provided an example, this sanctioning behavior has been shown in recorded interaction in other languages (Ayaß 2013; A. Golato 2005; Marandin 1986; Pomerantz 1984; Speer 2012; Wieland 1995; Wu 2011). The following English example, taken from Speer (2012:58), depicts Susan teasing Mum after Mum utters a positive assessment in line 3 about the food at the dinner party she had hosted.

Example 5:
[Birthday: Recollected]

```
1     Susan:      How was the dinner party.
2                 (.)
3     Mum:        Ohh Susan it was cooked to perfection!
4 =>  Susan:      ((Laughs)) Even if you do say so yourself!!
```

In examples 1-3 above from our French cooking show, the interactants are behaving differently than what can typically be observed in everyday interaction: specifically, interactants in the French cooking show

1) regularly elicit positive assessments of food items or food preparation techniques that they themselves have been working on (an action which in everyday interaction would be considered fishing for a compliment),

2) regularly engage in self-praise, and

3) regularly fail to downplay positive assessments that they receive.

---

[1] The excerpts in the paper appear to come from movies, literary texts, newspapers, magazines, and interpersonal interactions.

[2] In data samples featuring previously-published work, we have retained the original transcription conventions but have added translations (such as here). In transcripts taken from our own collection, we use the transcription notation developed by Jefferson and described in Atkinson and Heritage (1984:ix-xvi) for talk and in Mondada (2018b) for embodied conduct.

However, when looking at the adjacency pairs in examples 1-3, it is immediately obvious that the assessments are not treated by the coparticipants as sanctionable actions in the form of fishing for a compliment, self-praise, or a compliment which needs to be downgraded. Instead, participants orient to them as "regular/general" assessments.[3] We argue that this is a way in which a cooking show is talked into being, in other words, that these assessments contribute to the institutional or mediatic frame of the cooking show and allow for the display of expertise. The questions which then arise are why it is that these assessments are treated this way, and what their interactional function in this cooking show might be. This is what the current paper sets out to explore. As the analysis will show, assessments in cooking shows serve very specific functions and are placed at very specific interactional moments. Specifically, assessments are used to

a) structure discourse, for example when they are placed at the end of a recipe step or after an aside,

b) support the illustrative goals of cooking shows, e.g., when the chef or the co-host is demonstrating a cooking technique, and

c) express the sensual experiences associated with the food (taste, smell, appearance), typically when it is plated at the end of the show though also in situations which are incidental to the cooking activity (e.g., when a pot lid is lifted and a cloud of steam rises carrying the scent of the food).

Moreover, the assessments have specific turn designs in that they take the form of noticings, gustatory expressions or short adjectival constructions which are phrased in terms of the assessable and not in terms of the person producing the assessment. We will show that while there are different turn designs associated with the specific interactional functions outlined above, this is not the case for the turn format: in other words, elicited assessments, self-assessments, and other-assessments all occur in all three of the interactional moments outlined above. We further argue that the sequential placement, shape, and function of the assessments are in the service of constructing the social identities of the chef as the expert, directing the camera crew, and establishing the genre of a cooking show (i.e., of providing "infotainment" (Weidner 2017b:9)). Before we discuss our data and the interactional environments of assessments and their function, we first provide a review of the considerable body of relevant research. The literature review is structured as follows: We first

---

[3]   The data only contain one assessment which is treated as a typical compliment. However, in this case R is not assessing food that M has prepared, but rather her outfit.

Example 6: [43_Baklava_00_00_21]

```
01    R:   qu'est-ce que tu es belle aujourd'hui, enfin comme tous
           how beautiful you are today, well like every

02         les jours je veux dire. mais dis donc
           day I mean. but oh my

03    M:   merci beaucoup.
           thank you very much.

04    R:   quelle classe. alors, baklava au menu.
           what style. so baklava is on the menu.
```

discuss the speech event under consideration, then the environments in which it occurs, and lastly we focus on prior research on assessments in cooking shows.

2. Literature Review

Much research has been conducted on assessments in talk-in-interaction. Early work (Auer/Uhmann 1982; Pomerantz 1984), which focused on the adjacency pair structure of assessments, showed how a first assessment makes relevant a second assessment in response. As Lindström and Mondada (2009:300) note, Pomerantz focused mainly on how second assessments align with first assessments and not necessarily on how first assessments come about in interaction. In addition, the early work focused primarily on talk. This approach changed with Goodwin and Goodwin's (1992) study on assessments which suggested that prosody and embodiment need to be investigated together with talk, rather than as separate or secondary features. Moreover, they showed that the production of an assessment is a collaborative, interactive, and recipient-designed activity.

In general, for interactants to proffer assessments, they must not only have access to the assessable (Pomerantz 1984) but must also first establish what is to be assessed and focus the other interactants' attention on the assessable (Fasulo/Monzoni 2009; Mondada 2009a). With the production of a second assessment, speakers typically communicate alignment or disalignment with the first assessment (Pomerantz 1984). Proffering a first assessment can serve to indicate greater epistemic access and rights (Heritage 2002). However, Heritage (2002) showed that for English, second assessment speakers can also assert their independent access and greater rights to the assessable, for example by producing an *oh*-prefaced second assessment. In general, the turn design of a second assessment can serve to indicate different levels of speaker agency and affiliation (Auer/Lindström 2021). In addition to evaluating and negotiating epistemic rights, assessments are known to be sequence closing in a variety of settings (Schegloff 2007) and to occur at transition points in classroom interaction (Mehan 1979) and in telephone closings (Antaki 2002), questionnaire interviews (Antaki/Houtkoop-Steenstra/Rapley 2000), caregiving situations (Lindström/Heinemann 2009), driving lessons (Mondada 2009a), and master music classes (Reed 2019).

A positive assessment of an accomplishment, action, skill or possession for which the interlocutor can take credit is typically called a compliment (A. Golato 2005:122; Holmes 1986; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987). Following the pioneering work of Pomerantz (1978), much research has been conducted on compliments and compliment responses in a variety of languages. For French, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1987) noted that compliments can take explicit and implicit forms. This is confirmed by Wieland (1995) who further observes that compliments in French can also be produced "with reservations" (Wieland 1995:803) or in an understated or minimal fashion as in *c'est, au fond c'est pas mal* / 'it's, basically it's not bad' (Wieland 1995: 804). Note too that as with many compliments in English (Holmes 1986), this compliment is also not expressed in terms of the likes or dislikes of the speaker. Golato

(2005:87) observes this for German as well, stating that compliments "are remarkably 'objective' or 'referential' in their design and not 'personal.'"[4]

Compliment responses in French everyday interaction are constructed similarly to compliment responses in English in that they are designed to avoid self-praise (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987; Wieland 1995). The literature on compliments and compliment responses across a variety of languages has also shown that self-praise is typically sanctioned (Ayaß 2013; A. Golato 2005; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987; Marandin 1986; Pomerantz 1984; Speer 2012; Wieland 1995; Wu 2011). When speakers do engage in self-praise, they typically produce it as a reported third-party compliment (Speer 2012) and thereby objectivize the self-praise, or they can modify it (Wu 2011). In contrast, Dayter (2014) has shown that in one particular online microblogging context of a particular community of practice (ballet students), self-praising utterances do occur, yet even those are frequently attenuated. Dayter's (2014) research is thus an indication that in certain contexts including mediatized ones[5], self-praising utterances may serve other interactional purposes.

Food assessments at the dinner table have been described both as compliments in situations in which the host can take credit for the meal, and as general assessments (A. Golato 2005, 2011; Mondada 2009b; Wiggins 2001, 2002). In addition, food assessments at the dinner table can also function as food offers, requests for second helpings, encouragements of topical talk, topical reorientations, and to establish oneself as knowledgeable about the food (A. Golato 2005; Mondada 2009b; Wieland 1995; Wiggins 2001, 2002, 2004). Food evaluations at the dinner table do not occur randomly but instead are placed at specific interactional junctures, namely when food is first offered and tasted (A. Golato 2005; Mondada 2009b), when a topic has come to closure (Mondada 2009b), and "when participants are engaged in 'delicate' topics or conflicting interactions" (Mondada 2009b:558). Such conflicts can revolve around the food evaluation themselves (Wiggins 2004), particularly in interactions between children and their parents (Wiggins 2014).

Interactants are held accountable for having tasted or smelled food prior to evaluating it (Wiggins 2004:32-33). Mondada provides a detailed account of the act of sniffing food (Mondada 2020) and on sensing in interaction (Mondada 2021), while Streeck (1996) provided the first account of the various phases involved in tasting a food item. Both studies also show that the tasting or smelling of an item which typically is viewed as a private event can also be made public. Later work shows in greater detail how the embodied action of tasting an item unfolds sequentially (Mondada 2018a) and how interactants jointly and collaboratively "use multimodal resources to express, manifest and display their sensory access to the world" (Mondada 2018a:745). Other work on both professional and amateur tasting sessions has described how interactants arrive at joint evaluations of items to be tasted (Fele 2016; Giglioli/Fele 2016; Liberman 2013). Wiggins (2021) analyzes how parents use food assessments, often in the form of gustatory *mmm*s, when feeding their infants, thus expressing food pleasure on their behalf. These gustatory *mmms* can be found in four interactional environments: when parents are introducing a food item to their child (announcing function), when food is placed in the child's mouth

---

[4] Speakers of English can of course also produce subjective and objective assessments (Wiggins/ Potter 2003:516) but in English, in contrast to German, the two formats are associated with specific interactional functions.

[5] We would like to thank one of our reviewers for this observation.

(receipting function), when parents enact the child's pleasure of the food (modeling function), and when children are slowing down or are distracted (encouraging function) (Wiggins 2019:6).

There also is a body of research on online food cultures (for an overview, see Feldman/Goodman 2021), cooking instructions (Conein/Laks 1989; Crabtree, Tolmie/Rouncefield 2013; Lilja/Piirainen-Marsh 2022; Mondada 2014; Taleghani-Nikazm/Vlatten 1997; Ursi 2016), food radio call-in shows (Matwick/Matwick 2018), and televised cooking shows in Germany (Weidner 2017a, 2017b, 2022) and in the US (Matwick/Matwick 2017; Matwick/Matwick 2014, 2019). Cooking shows, which enjoy a considerable amount of popularity in a variety of countries, serve to both inform and instruct the audience about recipes and food preparation while also providing entertainment (Weidner 2017a, 2017b). Cooking shows thus belong to the genre of "infotainment" (Weidner 2017b:1).[6]

Since the data under study come from a televised cooking show featuring the same two hosts in each episode, the analysis will take into account any elements of the data which are para-social, i.e., which serve to foster an illusion for the viewer that they have an interpersonal relationship with the show's hosts when in reality there is no actual viewer-host interpersonal relationship (Horton/Wohl 1956). Para-social interaction can take place in different media outlets (e.g., social media, radio, television shows, advertisement, etc.) for a variety of purposes (Horton/Wohl 1956; Liebers/Schramm 2017; Meer/Luginbühl 2022). Analyzing German cooking shows, Weidner (2022) demonstrates that para-social interaction which imitates face-to-face interaction by opening a slot for the audience to react can serve to foster intimacy. Other German cooking shows which do not create slots for the interactant to respond still rely on parasocial interaction to create sociability between hosts and audience members.

As our analysis will show, features of parasocial interaction in the French cooking show under investigation involve the hosts addressing the camera (and thus the viewer) as if they were co-present, the camera (and thus the viewer) changing its view to zoom in on a food item in response to a host's speech, etc. While these elements were designed to cultivate a sense of both intimacy and familiarity/sociability with the hosts on the part of the viewers, the analysis will also show how they serve to further the instructional aspect of the show.

There is also some prior work on the role of assessments in cooking shows. Weidner (2017b) demonstrates that the format and placement of assessments in German cooking shows are key elements in bringing about their infotainment character. This is the case since, on the one hand, food evaluations allow participants to provide key information about the ingredients of the recipe and the final cooking product. Similar observations are also found for the role of assessments in American cooking shows (Matwick/Matwick 2017:27). Since the TV and studio audience cannot taste the finished products themselves, they have to rely on descriptions and evaluations (Matwick/Matwick 2017:27; Weidner 2017b:9). In American cooking shows, assessments in the form of self-deprecations are used for expressing humor, gender, and as a way of promoting a celebrity chef's cooking and brand (Matwick/Matwick 2019). Moreover, assessments are also used when interactants compliment, criticize, tease, mock each other, and when they joke, thus contributing to the

---

[6]   In addition, corpora consisting of cooking show interactions have been used in the analyses of the function of various linguistic features (P. Golato 2020; Stukenbrock 2010, 2015).

entertainment aspect of the show (Weidner 2017b:9). The German cooking show from which Weidner (2017a, 2017b) drew her data has a specific structure in that multiple cooks are preparing recipes and that each show has a specific segment in which food evaluations are elicited from the cooks about the different dishes that other cooks have prepared. Weidner specifically states that the goal of her study was not to undertake a comprehensive study of all assessments in cooking shows, but was instead to focus on the assessment elicitation phase of the show in order to analyze its role in creating the genre of infotainment (Weidner 2017b:9). Thus, her work did not provide for a sequential account of how assessments emerge in interaction, nor did it investigate other functions of assessments and praise (be it other- or self-praise). This is precisely what the remainder of this article aims to do.

3. Data Description

The data come from approximately five hours of a French cooking show (31 episodes) co-hosted by two interactants, one of whom (Régis) is a professional chef and the other of whom (Marinne) is a skilled amateur cook. Of note is here that both Régis and Marinne are preparing elements of the recipes, and that Marinne is preparing items without instruction on technique, etc. from Régis. In other words, the show is not designed to be an instructional setting for Marinne. Instead, both co-hosts are showing the audience how a given recipe is prepared.

Except for two instances where a recipe calls for a long cooking time and there is a clear cut between segments, the show is filmed in one take and without a live audience. Interaction between the chef and the co-host during the show consists of animated conversation interspersed with the explicit teaching of food preparation and cooking techniques as the co-hosts prepare recipes for the viewing audience. The present study is based on all examples in our corpus of assessment sequences. These were in the form of elicited assessments, self-assessments, and other-assessments. Specifically, we found 28 elicited assessment turns (i.e., assessments which are elicited by a coparticipant who is preparing a food item or illustrating a cooking technique, thereby resulting in an other-assessment), 37 self-assessment turns (i.e., a coparticipant assesses a food item that they themselves have prepared or a cooking technique that they themselves have illustrated), and 43 other-assessment turns (i.e., a coparticipant assesses a food item that the other coparticipant has prepared or a cooking technique that the other coparticipant has illustrated), for a grand total of 108 food assessments in our collection. We excluded an additional two examples in which the camera angle did not allow us to determine what the speakers were assessing. The examples were transcribed following the Jefferson notation system (Atkinson/Heritage 1984; Hepburn/Bolden 2017) for talk and the Mondada notation system (2018b) for embodied interaction.

4. Forms and functions of assessments

Similar to what has been observed for assessments and compliments in French everyday conversation (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1987; Wieland 1995), the assessments in the cooking show are phrased in terms of the assessable (e.g., "this is delicious") and not in terms of the likes and dislikes of the speaker (e.g., "I love this", as is

common in American English). As a matter of fact, our collection only contained two assessments in which the assessment was expressed in terms of the likes of the speaker.[7] Otherwise, assessments consist of gustatory expressions (Wiggins 2002, 2019; Wiggins/Keevallik 2021),

Example 8:
[01_Saltimbocca_de_veau_à_la_purée_de_fèves_04_09]

```
01    R:   alors. une fois qu'on a mis donc (.) les escalopes, .hh
           okay. once you have thus selected (.) the cutlets .hh

02         l'emmental=
           the emmental=

03 => M:   =mm hm=
           =uh hm=
```

or of simple adjectival constructions which are at times combined with noticings as in line 3 below:

Example 9:
[09_10_11_Baklava_00_08_30]

```
01   M:   attends faut que je gou(h)te.
          wait I gotta taste

02        he he [c'est pour savoir si
          he he it's to know if
                [
03 => R:        [oh que c'est beau ça.=
                 oh how beautiful that is

04   M:   =s'il y a assez de- *(.) @assez de sucre.
            if there's enough      enough sugar.
     m                     *scoops up small amount, puts in mouth
                            looking at R with smile, hunched shoulders
     r                             @takes bowl from C->
```

Here is one of these exceptions: Régis is first drawing attention to his action in line 1 and then positively assessing the color of the tomato dish in his frying pan:

Example 7: [23_Chausson a la viande_00_04_16]

```
01    R:   regardez=
           look=

02    M:   =>mhe he<=   ((this is a little chuckle))
           =>mhe he<=

03 => R:   j'adore cette couleur.
           I love this color.

04    M:   oui. moi aussi.
           yes. me too.
```

```
05    R:   ouais. ça va aller.*
            yeah.  it's going to be fine.
      m           ----------------->*

06 => M:   *oh là là. c'est trop bon.
            wow.      it's so good.
```

Alternatively, assessment turns consist of response cries which can either stand by themselves or be combined with other adjectival constructions as in line 6 above. Just like in everyday French conversation (Wieland 1995:803), assessments in the cooking show can also be produced in an understated fashion both in first and second pair part positions (see Example 9, line 5). Noteworthy in this collection is that many of the assessment turns contain a second person singular or second person plural imperative of the verb *regarder* 'look'; these are overwhelmingly uttered by Régis and serve to invite either Marinne or otherwise Marinne and the television audience (via the camera operator) to inspect and assess. As we will note in the analysis of various excerpts below, the camera frequently zooms in on the food or cooking action when a focusing request (Stukenbrock 2010:7; 2015:54-55) *regarde/regardez* has been produced, thus indicating that the camera operator(s) are orienting to utterances from the co-hosts while also (re)focusing the viewer's attention on the food item under preparation.

Food assessments can either be elicited, or be produced spontaneously by either the person preparing the food item (what we call a self-assessment) or the coparticipant (what we call an other-assessment). These three assessment formats can serve any of the following three interactional functions:

a) structuring discourse, for example when the assessment is placed at the end of a recipe step, or after an aside; they thus contribute to structuring the phases of the larger activity.

b) serving to support the pedagogical goal of cooking shows, when the chef or the co-host are demonstrating a cooking technique.

c) expressing the sensual experiences of the food (taste, smell, look), typically when a finished recipe is plated at the end of a show or in situations which are incidental to the cooking activity (e.g., when a pan lid is lifted and a cloud of steam rises carrying the scent of cooking food).

We will discuss each of these functions below. Since space constraints do not allow us to provide an elicited, self-, and other-assessment for each function, we have chosen examples which most clearly illustrate the function of the assessment. As will become clear from the analysis, the assessments in the cooking show focus on both the sensory aspects of the food items and the expert execution of their preparation. There is a certain genre-specificity here, since the interactants thus face a communicative challenge in that they are speaking about sensory characteristics that can only be experienced subjectively and to which their non-present viewership does not have access. The cook and host of the show rely on para-social means to construct a sensory experience for the audience (Meer/Staubach 2020) and foster sociability.

4.1. Structuring discourse

Throughout the cooking show, assessments are used to structure the interaction. Specifically, they are used in two environments: at transition points between different steps in the recipe, and to return the interaction back to cooking after an aside. We will discuss both systematic uses in turn.

The first example in this section shows assessments made at a transition point between two steps in the recipe. Here, the chef and co-host are making baklava. Régis has placed strips of dough into a square cooking pan and has just explained that the strips will be buttered before additional strips are placed crosswise on top of them. Marinne is standing at the ready with a brush and butter pan in her hand.

Example 10:
[42_Baklava_hd720_00_06_42]

```
01    R:   exactement. %allez. un [petit peu de beurre.
           exactly.     go on. a l[ittle bit of butter.
      r              %moves away from pan
                                  [
02    M:                         [@un petit coup de beurre.
                                   a little dab of butter.
      m                         @moves in with brush and butter pan

03    M:   @de pinceau.
            with a brush.
      m   @brushes butter onto dough -->

04    R:   ensuite, on va remplir- (@.)
           next, we are going to fill-
      m   ---------------->  @dips brush into butter (has one
                                   strip of dough left to butter)

05 => R:   <voi@là> très très bien %madame.
           <there you go> very very nice ma'am
      m       @butters last strip while in a fencing pose
      r                          %grabs pan

06    M:   SI.=
           yes.

07    R:   =%la farce- la farce est prête.
            the filling- the filling is ready.
      r    %turns pan 90 degrees

08    M:   @ah ben attends-@ non.
            well    wait-     no.
      m   @dabs more butter on@

09    R:   a:h  [ah d'accord.
           oh   [oh okay.
                [
10    M:        [ha ha ha ha
```

In line 1, Régis gives Marinne the go-ahead to apply the butter. Since he had explained just prior to this transcript that the dough needs to be buttered, Marinne is able to collaboratively complete the remainder of Régis's utterance with him. In line 3, she adds an increment to her turn while simultaneously applying butter with the brush to the dough strips in the pan. In line 4, Régis starts to list the next step of the recipe. However, Marinne replenishes the butter on her brush and continues buttering the last strips with flair. She is thus not in alignment with him. In line 5, he produces a lengthened and stressed *voilà* to again bring the step to closure, while she continues to butter the dish. It is at this point that Régis provides a positive assessment of Marinne's actions (in line 5) while also grabbing the pan. She receipts the assessment with an emphatic confirmation. This assessment is placed in a series of attempts to close down this step in the recipe (buttering of the existing layer of dough). Note that Régis is immediately attempting to move on to the next step by rotating the pan, ostensibly to add the next layer of dough. Simultaneously, in line 7 he states that the filling which will be placed onto the dough is ready. In line 8, Marinne delays the pan rotating action and filling placement by uttering *ah ben attends* / 'well wait' and adding additional dabs of butter. In line 9, Régis accedes to Marinne's asking him to wait, which comes in overlap with laughter from Marinne in line 10. This example is representative of many other examples in the collection of a positive assessment being placed between two steps or phases in the preparation of a dish. It proposes the completion of one phase and the potential beginning of a next. Here, the assessment is in the form of an other-assessment (i.e., someone other than the person completing an action assesses that action). Other-assessments can occur either in first or third position, with the overwhelming majority occurring in first. In the few examples in which it is in third position (like in the example above), the assessment speaker had directed the coparticipant to carry out the step of the recipe, which the assessment speaker then assessed to close it down. Often, it is Régis as the master chef who signals the end of one step of the recipe by producing the assessment which transitions the interactants to the next step. This is thus a way in which his role as expert manifests itself in the interaction.

The assessment can signal that the assessment speaker will move on to the next step (as in the example above); it can also serve to indicate that the other coparticipant should now move on to the next step. Assessments in these transitions can also be self-assessments (i.e., assessments of (the result of) one's own actions) and can additionally take the form of elicited assessments. In these latter two environments, they furthermore serve to alert the camera operators to an upcoming potential shift in focus.

Just as assessments can be placed between individual steps of a recipe, they can also be placed at the juncture of recipe-related talk and other talk. In other words, they can be used to move talk from an aside back to the cooking action at hand. The following is such an example. Here a positive assessment is elicited – however, in our collection we also find non-elicited self- and other assessments in this position. In this example, the co-hosts are preparing beef carpaccio and Marinne has just provided detailed information on the breed of cattle used in the production of this cut of meat. She described the animal as particularly hardy and able to endure a wide range of temperatures in a wide variety of countries. During her explanation, Régis has been placing thin slices of meat onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Example 11:
[15_Carpacchio de boeuf_00_09_04]

```
01    M:   >donc tu vois il y a vraiment une amplitude très
               so you see   there is really a significant breadth

02         importante entre plus trente< (.) .hh et de moins vingt.
               between plus thirty (.).hh and minus twenty. .hh and

03         .hh °et voilà.°et c'est [tout. ]
               there you go. and that's  all.
                                      [
04    R:                            [c'est ] <par[fait>, c'est beau.
                                      [that's]  per[fect, that's nice.
                                                    [
05    M:                                            [e h he he he he
                                                    [e h he he he he

06    R:   .h alors regarde ça.
               .h so look at that.

07 => M:   non @c'est ça qui est beau.
               no   this is what's beautiful.
          m        @points at meat

08    R:   °ah no:n tout était beau.° allez ça on va mettre
               oh no everything was beautiful. so we'll put that
```

Marinne ends her background information on the source of the beef in lines 1-2 with a summative statement about the resilience of the cattle, followed by two closing expressions (*et voilà* and *et c'est tout)* in line 3. In overlap in line 4, Régis provides two positive, sequence-closing assessments, thereby complimenting Marinne potentially for having relayed and/or remembered the detailed background information. This interpretation is supported by Marinne's laughter at the compliment in line 5. Immediately following these assessments, Régis invites Marinne to look at the meat in line 6. This is an action that serves as a focusing request (Stukenbrock 2010:7; 2015:54-55). Turns such as these are regularly followed by food assessments typically produced by the coparticipant (as in this example) or also by self. And indeed, Marinne assesses the meat in line 7 but her assessment is also constructed as a second to the compliment that Régis had paid her; specifically, it is built as a contrast to his assessment in line 4. She first negates his assessment, points at the meat, and then states that it is not her background information but rather the meat which is beautiful. Note that she uses the same evaluative term as he had. In third position, Régis disagrees, and notes that everything (i.e., her background information and the meat) is good. He then begins to formulate what he will do next with the meat. Note that the elicitation and the assessment itself (lines 6 and 7, respectively) are placed exactly at a point when a side sequence about the quality/ background of the meat had come to an end. By inviting her to look at the meat while also inviting an assessment, Régis is bringing Marinne's attention (and that of the camera, and audience) and the topic of the talk back to the food. Elicitations of assessments, self-, and other-assessments are regularly produced after asides

such as information on the food item, the region it is from, alternative cooking techniques, etc.[8] In the instance above, the camera was panned out showing the co-host, the chef, and the food. In other instances when the camera was focused just on the person providing the aside, the focusing request in combination with the assessment also serves to prompt the camera operator to readjust their focus and zoom in on the food item.

In terms of their turn design, discourse-structuring assessments typically consist of adjectival expressions which may be preceded by a presentative *(voilà)* or focusing expression *(regarde/regardez)*, as can be seen in example 10. Alternatively, these assessments can consist of *c'est / 'that's'+adjective* constructions. Of note is that they feature fewer gustatory markers or specific sensory verbs than assessments in other categories.

4.2. Instructional function of cooking shows

One of the functions of a cooking show is to teach the audience a recipe and, as part of that, to demonstrate particular cooking techniques and provide tips. Again, such demonstrations are regularly followed by assessments – these can be elicited, or can be spontaneously produced by the coparticipant. In addition, they can also be produced by the chef while he is demonstrating the technique. Here, Régis is preparing veal saltimbocca, which consists of very thinly sliced veal which is rolled up with ham and cheese. While he is doing so, Marinne is preparing fava beans at the stove, a couple of steps away from Régis.

Example 12:
[01_Saltimbocca_de_veau_à_la_purée_de_fèves_04_09]

```
01    R:   alors. une fois qu'on a mis donc (.) les escalopes, .hh
           okay. once you have thus selected (.) the cutlets .hh

02         l'emmental=
           the emmental=

03    M:   =mm hm
           =uh hm

04    R:   le jambon, on va (.) tout simplement (%.) rouler
           the ham, we're going to (.) quite simply (.) roll
      r                                         %begins to roll up

05    M:   %@d'accord.
             alright.
      r    %rolls it slowly --------->
      m     @glances briefly at R

06    R:   regarde ça=alors, il est important d'avoir des tranches
           look at that=okay, it is important to have emmental
      r    ------------------------------------------------>
```

```
07        d'emmental (.) <.hh bien (.) fines.> &pour pouvoir
          slices that are (.) .hh quite(.) fine. in order to be
     r    ------------------------------------------------->
     c                                         &camera pans out


08        rouler correctement.%
          able to roll correctly.
     r    ------------------->%

09        (.)

10   R:   &regarde ça.
          look at that.
     c    & camera zooms in for a close-up of the food

11        (.)

12 => R:  très bien. alors en fonction de la largeur on met un
          very good. okay depending on the size you put one

13        ou deux pics.
          or two picks.

14   M:   mm hm
```

In this excerpt, Régis explains how the saltimbocca are assembled. In lines 1-2, he first lists the ingredients, which is receipted in line 3 with a continuer from Marinne who is attending to the beans on the stove. In line 4, Régis provides the instruction to roll up the ingredients. While briefly glancing at Régis, Marinne does an acknowledgement in line 5 after which Régis begins to slowly and systematically roll up the veal around the other ingredients. While he is doing so, he provides an additional tip in lines 6-8 for the success of the dish, namely that the cheese has to be sliced quite thinly. The camera, which to this point has been zoomed in on the rolling action, pans out to provide a broader frontal view of both the chef and the co-host. After a micropause in line 9, Régis produces a focusing request (Stukenbrock 2010:7; 2015:54-55) in the form of an invitation to look at the dish. The grammatical form of the verb is second person singular imperative. Since Régis's gaze remains focused on the food, it is not clear whether this turn is directed at Marinne, the camera operator and by extension the TV audience, or both. Regardless, with the production of the first syllable, the camera zooms back in on the rolled-up saltimbocca. This action has a strong para-interactive potential (Horton/Wohl 1956; Meer/Luginbühl 2022) which is designed to involve the viewers in the situation on location.[9] Given that the camera has zoomed in on the food, Marinne's reaction is not visible. From the micropause in line 11, however, it is clear that she is not verbally reacting to the invitation. In line 12, Régis instead produces an assessment of his own work. This assessment consists of an intensifier and an adjective. The assessment does not receive any uptake, and Régis immediately goes on to provide the next set of instructions, i.e., how to secure the roll, before rolling up a second piece of veal. Here, we have a self-assessment in the form of an adjectival expres-

---

[9]   We would like to thank one of the reviewers for this observation.

sion. The collection of self-assessments in this environment also features other constructions such as *(ça) c'est + adjective*, or *il est + adjective*. When the assessments are done by Marinne (either spontaneously or after an elicitation), they are frequently preceded by change of state tokens (Heritage 1984) thereby communicating a (presumed) change in knowledge. Again, this establishes Marinne as the one who (presumably) learned something and Régis as the expert.

In this example, we have thus seen how instructions and a demonstration of a cooking step are followed by a positive assessment, which signals that the action has been carried out as intended and has come to completion. In the case above, it is a self-assessment, produced after the focusing request <u>regarde ça</u> which can otherwise also serve to elicit an assessment from a coparticipant, but which was not forthcoming and not treated as absent in this particular interaction.

An additional observation is that this excerpt illustrates how, when giving and illustrating instructions on how the saltimbocca ingredients should be prepared so that they can be correctly rolled up (lines 6-12), Régis directs his instructions not at Marinne, but rather at viewers of the video. More specifically, lines 10-12 can be understood as a three-part adjacency pair consisting of a request (*regarde ça* / "look at that"), the camera's/viewer's compliance with the request by zooming in, and an assessment (*très bien* / "very good"). This and other similar adjacency pairs in the data may serve to further draw the viewer in by emulating elements of a face-to-face interaction with the hosts as if the viewer were co-present, e.g., the hosts address the camera as if it were the viewer, and the camera responds to the hosts in ways that the viewer might presumably respond if they were co-present (e.g., when asked to, by looking more closely at a food item being prepared). There is thus a parasocial interactive dimension to this and other similar excerpts in the data in which the actions of both the hosts and the camera work together to foster the illusion that the viewer is interacting with the hosts (e.g., Horton & Wohl 1956; see also Weidner 2017)

As noted in the literature review, assessments have also been shown to occur in other instructional environments where they serve to close instructional sequences while also providing feedback to the interactants. In the cooking show, these assessments are not only always positive, but they also simultaneously provide the audience with a sensual experience of the food. They thus serve as one vehicle through which the infotainment character of cooking shows (Weidner 2017b) is talked into being.

4.3. Sensual experience of food

In the course of preparing a recipe or when plating a finished dish, there may be instances where the hosts positively comment on the odors, tastes, and appearances associated with specific ingredients or components of the dish as they are being prepared, or with the overall dish/food as it is being plated. We will show an example of each below. As in the other categories, the sequences associated with these comments can include elicitations or either self- or other-assessments.

4.3.1. Sensual experience of ingredients

In this category, the assessment is produced in an environment where one of the interactants smells, notices, or tastes the food. An additional characteristic of such assessments in this particular cooking show is that they occur not through the deliberate efforts of the hosts to smell, notice, or taste the food, but instead occur incidentally during the cooking process.

In this excerpt, Régis and Marinne are preparing a casserole which includes guinea fowl and potatoes. They are standing in front of a cooktop upon which there are two pans, one of which is covered and contains steamed potatoes together with white wine, herbs, and spices, and the other of which is uncovered and which contains cooked guinea fowl that Régis is deglazing. The covered pan with the steamed potatoes is closer to Marinne while the uncovered pan is closer to Régis. As the excerpt begins, Marinne has her right hand on the lid of the pan of potatoes, while Régis has just finished turning over several pieces of the guinea fowl. While Marinne and Régis are both in frame at the beginning of the excerpt, the camera zooms in on the potatoes once they are uncovered before panning out again as Régis is describing them.

Example 13:
[Cocotte de pintade et pommes de terre_00_07_53]

```
01    R:   et là c'est bon. on change de cou*vercle, il vient i[ci
                and now we're good. we're changing lids, the lid
      m    >>Rt hand grasping lid handle---*lifts lid off one pan->
      c    >>M and R full frame------------------------------------>
                                                                   [
02 => M:                                                        #[hmmm
                                                          #steam rises


03    R:   le couvercle, comme ça tu vois, hop↑,* @un couvercle
                comes here, like that, see, boom, one lid
      m    and sets lid on other pan ---------->*
      c    ----------------------------@close-up on potatoes->>

04         pour deux hh h [c'est bien.
                for two    hh h  it's good.
                              [
05    M:                      [très bien hh hh hh
                                very good hh hh hh
```

In line 1, Régis announces that the pan lid should be changed. As Marinne lifts the lid from her pan, a cloud of steam rises from the uncovered potatoes. In line 2, after Marinne lifts the lid off her pan, she utters an appreciatory *hmmm*, i.e., a gustatory expression (Wiggins 2002, 2019; Wiggins/Keevallik 2021), as steam from the potatoes rises past her face. As a matter of fact, many examples in this category feature gustatory expressions, at times also combined with noticings. As Wiggins's research has shown, these gustatory expressions are enactments of enjoyment and pleasure. These are particularly effective in this environment where the television audience does not have direct access to the food and cannot experience it subjectively. Gustatory expressions thus serve a para-social function in that they allow the

television audience to vicariously experience what the hosts are experiencing (for a similar situation in influencers' video posts, see Meer/Staubach 2020).

In line 3, Régis specifies that the lid from Marinne's pan should go on his pan, which Marinne accomplishes after which the camera then focuses in on the newly-uncovered potatoes. In line 4, Régis laughs at their use of one lid for two pans and then utters a positive assessment of Marinne's having changed lids. In line 5 and in overlap with Régis's positive assessment, Marinne utters an independent assessment of her having exchanged lids which she follows with laughter.

Marinne's assessment of the smell of the cooking potatoes in line 2 is like others in our data which were uttered in response to sight, smell, and taste events. The following example provides a slightly different strategy of how the hosts draw the viewers in and let them partake in the sensory experience of the food. Here, Marinne and Régis are preparing an herb butter. Just prior to the start of this example, Régis had added a handful of herbs to a bowl full of softened butter and begun mixing them in. The bowl is directly in front of Régis, while Marinne is standing to Régis's left. There is a plate of chopped herbs in front of Marinne from which she is preparing to take additional herbs to be added into the butter.

Example 14:
[Oeufs cocotte_00_07_19]

```
01    M:   les (.) un peu d'estra*gon.
           the (.)   a little tarragon
                                *grasps tarragon bunch ---->
02    R:   ça y est.=
           all good.

03    M:   =°aus#si°
             also
      r       #picks up bowl, starts moving it to his face --->

04         (.)

05    M:   #t'en as ↑mis ↑↑déjà?  #*°>↓ah, j'ai pas vu<.
            you already put some in? ah, I didn't see.
                                    *drops tarragon bunch
      r   #is smelling dish      #moves dish to m's nose

06 =>      mmh, [ça sent bon
           mmh, [that smells good
                [
07    R:        [mm, ça fleure
                [mm, it's fragrant

08    R:   alors euh
           so uhm

09    M:   c'est bon mmh
           it's good mmh
```

```
10    R:   oui, juste [avant qu'on parle des ingrédients
           yes, just before we talk about the ingredients
                       [
11    M:                [ouais
                        [yeah
```

In line 1, Marinne names one of the herbs on the plate while grasping a bunch of it and seemingly preparing to add it to Régis's bowl of softened butter. In line 2 and in latched position with the end of Marinne's turn in line 3 and as he picks up the bowl, Régis notes that he has already added some of this herb to the butter. After a micropause in line 4, Régis in line 5 lifts the bowl to his face and smells its contents as Marinne puts down the bunch of herbs that she had been holding and offers an account for her prior action. At the end of Marinne's turn, Régis puts the bowl under her nose. In line 6, Marinne produces a gustatory marker *mmh* followed by an assessment *ça sent bon* / "that smells good". In overlap with her assessment, Régis produces an assessment of his own. As Régis attempts to close down the sequence in line 8, Marinne in line 9 produces a second assessment *c'est bon* / "it's good" followed by a second gustatory marker *mmm*. In lines 10-11, Régis moves to close the sequence and begin transitioning to the end of the show in which Marinne reads the ingredients of the dish they prepared. Here again, we have gustatory markers which embody pleasure, but we also see assessments which make explicit reference to the sensory experience, that is, to the aroma of the dish. In combination with close-up shots from the camera, both elements serve to bring the sensory experience closer to the viewers.

The assessments in this category occur either because of deliberate actions taken by the hosts to evaluate or otherwise experience the food they are preparing (example 14), or because of chance encounters with incidental by-products (e.g., steam resulting from the cooking process, as in example 13) of food preparation or plating. In the latter situations, assessments are similar to response cries (Goffman 1978) in that they are spontaneously produced during the unfolding interaction. These assessments can take the form of gustatory expressions as was the case with Marinne's assessment in line 2. They also take the form of positive adjectives and can refer to one of the senses, and can be uttered with greater amplitude and with large pitch excursions. Functionally, these incidental assessments have a para-interactive potential as they may serve as a way for the co-hosts to convey to viewers their sensual impressions in real time, and thereby allow viewers to vicariously experience them along with the co-hosts.

4.3.2. Sensual experience as part of the final plating of the dish

At the end of each episode of this cooking show, the co-host and cook assemble all ingredients onto a plate. It is then very common for there to be several rounds of positive assessments of various recipe components and of the overall dish. This will be shown in the next excerpt. Here, Marinne and Régis are plating *encornets à la plancha*, a dish consisting of grilled squid, pancetta, ham, and assorted sautéed vegetables. At the excerpt's outset, Régis is standing at a kitchen island where he is decoratively arranging pieces of squid together with pieces of ham, pancetta, and sautéed vegetables on two dinner plates on the island in front of him. Marinne is standing to his right, holding a bowl from which she is spooning a deglaze over the

food that Régis is arranging on the plates. Except where indicated in the transcript, the eye gaze of both Marinne and Régis is on the dinner plates during the times when they are in frame.

Example 15:
[10_Encornets a la planche_00_10_30]

```
01     R:   donc là: euh on a récupéré un petit peu .hh *&@de
            so now uh we've collected a little bit .hh
       c    >>camera close-up on plate-----------------*pans out-->
       m                                             &holding bowl-->
       r                                             @plating food-->


02          déglaçage =hein? on >a déglacé tout à &l'heure avec
            of deglaze =right? we deglazed a bit earlier with some
       m    -------------------&and spoons deglaze on plated food->


03          du vinaigre< @.hh de xérès, un↑ (.) petit peu *&@d'eau,
             sherry .hh    vinegar, a (.) little bit of water
       c                                      *close-up on plate-->
       m    ------------------------------------------->&
       r              @eye gaze R on Marinne----------@


04          *(.)
       c    *close up, deglaze drips from food onto plate--------->


05 =>  R:   oauh [°(    )°
            wow   (    )
                 [
06 =>  M:        [rien que ces *belles gouttes, c'est [beau::
                 just these beautiful drops it's beautiful
       c    ------------------>*                      [
                                                      [
07     R:                                             [j'ad- he he
                                                       I lo- he he


08     R:   *j'adore moi l'encre de seiche.
             I love cuttlefish ink.
       c    *close-up, plate in foreground, plank in background---->


09     R:   [je trouve que ça parfume, ça
            I think that it flavors, it
            [
10 =>  M:   [oua:u
             wow
       c    ----------------------------->
11     R:   donne des cou@leurs magnifiques*&. .hh donc là on va
            gives magnificent colors. so now we're going to put
            -----------> @placing food from plank onto plate----->
       c                                   *pans out------------->
       m                                   &spoons deglaze on food
```

```
12       mettre tout,tu vois c'est l'assiette euh .h l'a@*ssiette
         everything, see it's the plate uh .h the surf
   r     ------------------------------------->@
   c                                           *close-up on plate->>

13       terre et mer, voilà.
         and turf plate, there you go.
```

In line 1, Régis begins describing the final step of the recipe, which involves garnishing the plated food with a deglaze, by explaining that they had collected some of the deglaze that they had previously made. During his reminder, the camera's focus shifts from a close-up shot of the two dinner plates in front of Régis, to a wide shot in which both Marinne and Régis are in full frame. Here we see that Marinne is holding a bowl of deglaze while Régis is plating food.

In lines 2-3, we see that Régis's eye gaze is on Marinne as he is listing the ingredients of the deglaze, while Marinne's eye gaze is on the dinner plate in front of her as she is spooning drops of deglaze from her bowl onto it. During this time, the camera's focus shifts from the previous wide shot to a close-up shot of the dinner plate on which Marinne is spooning the deglaze. In line 4, while the camera is still doing the close-up of the dinner plate, we can see a droplet of the deglaze dripping off the food and onto the plate. In line 5, and seemingly in response to the dripping deglaze, Régis produces an other-assessment in the form of *oauh* / 'wow' followed by unintelligible speech. In overlap with the unintelligible speech, in line 6 Marinne produces what appears to be a second (and possibly upgraded) assessment in the form of *rien que ces belles gouttes, c'est beau* / 'just these beautiful drops, it's beautiful'.

In lines 7-9, Régis explains why he likes cooking with cuttlefish ink, while in line 10 and in overlap with Régis, Marinne produces a second apparent self-assessment in the form of *ouau* / 'wow'. In lines 11-13, Régis ends the sequence by adding the remaining items to the dinner plate and naming it *l'assiette terre et mer* / 'the surf and turf plate'. Marinne's apparent self-assessments and Régis's other-assessment are similar to others in our collection which occur following the plating of a recipe and/or an incidental sight, smell, or taste associated with a recipe's preparation in that they take the form of expressions of admiration or appreciation, e.g., exclamatives and/or other expressions containing positive adjectives, are produced with strong pitch changes indicating excitement or appreciation, often make reference to the senses, tend to be objectively formed (i.e., *c'est beau* / 'it's beautiful' rather than *je trouve ça beau* / 'I think it's beautiful'), and tend not to follow *regarde* / 'look'. In terms of their function, these assessments appear to be designed to highlight the sensual experiences associated with the preparation and plating of a given recipe in order to provide an experiential summative assessment of it for the television viewers.

What is notable in this cooking show is that the hosts typically do not *taste* or *eat* the food at the end. Nor do they regularly taste the food as they are preparing the meal. In fact, tasting the food is also at times treated as not necessary. For instance, there is an example in which Marinne suggests tasting the food to check if there is enough sugar, and in which Régis replies with confidence, stating "it's going to be fine". In the very few instances where the food is tasted (typically Marinne is the one doing this), the taster acts sheepishly as evidenced by body kinesics (see

example 9). Given that the audience cannot regularly observe the co-host and chef tasting the food (and thus live vicariously through them and see their pleasure in consuming it), the audience has to rely even more on descriptions and assessments of the food, its appearance, and its smell in order to make inferences about its overall quality.

4.4. Functions of assessments in relation to their turn design and their production formats (elicited, self-, or other-assessment)

In the preceding section, we described the functions that assessments have in this particular French cooking show and the turn designs which are typically associated with these functions. We also noted that in each of these environments, assessments can be either elicited, produced by a speaker about food preparation-related actions that the other is performing, or about the food preparation-related actions that they themselves are performing. In the following, we describe some patterns which can be observed in terms of the function of the assessment, the production format (i.e., elicited, self- or other-assessment), and which of the interactants is uttering the assessment. These patterns, which are depicted in Table 1, are explained below.

Table 1: Function of assessments in relation to production format and speaker

	Elicited assessment	Other-Assessment	Self-Assessment	Total number
Structuring discourse a) end of step	7 (R: 2, M: 5)	12 (R: 8, M: 4)	10 (R: 7, M: 3)	29 (R: 17, M: 12)
b) after an aside	5 (R: 0, M: 5)	7 (R: 3, M: 4)	2 (R: 2, M: 0)	14 (R: 5, M: 9)
Demonstrating technique	5 (R: 2, M: 3)	10 (R: 4, M: 6)	10 (R: 9, M: 1)	25 (R: 15, M: 10)
Sensual experience a) plating of dish	7 (R: 0, M: 7)	4 (R: 0, M: 4)	6 (R: 6, M: 0)	17 (R: 6, M: 11)
b) incidental to cooking	4 (R: 0, M: 4)	10 (R: 4, M: 6)	9 (R: 5, M: 4)	23 (R: 9, M: 14)
Total number	28 (R: 4, M: 24)	43 (R: 19, M: 24)	37 (R: 29, M: 8)	108 (R:52, M: 56)

There are several observations which can be made from the distribution of assessments across categories. For instance, we can see that both interactants regularly produce other-assessments across interactional environments. However, this is not the case with regard to the other two formats. First, with respect to elicited assessments, it is Régis who is eliciting the overwhelming number of these assessments since in 24 out of 28 cases, Marinne is producing an assessment in response to an

elicitation from him. In addition, the instances in the collection reveal that there is a difference in terms of how Régis's elicitations are produced in comparison to Marinne's: To elicit an assessment, Régis consistently uses focusing requests (Stukenbrock 2010:7; 2015:54-55) in the form of imperatives (*regarde/regardez*), presentatives (*voilà*) and *tu vois*, or puts the dish in question in Marinne's view or under her nose. In contrast, Marinne's elicitations include true questions regarding the quality of what she has prepared (e.g., she is asking if she cut the meat properly, or if the butter is creamed enough), or she otherwise asks Régis to tell her if a step in the recipe is complete. In other words, Régis seems to be presenting items for admiration, whereas Marinne is asking for true evaluations of her work. We argue that this is one way in which the role of expert/chef is manifested in these interactions. Other distributional differences also indicate that assessments serve to establish Régis as the expert. Note that he produces more of the assessments that serve to transition between steps – and as the chef he ought to know when a step is complete and one can move on to the next step. In addition, it is Marinne who produces more assessments with regard to the sensual experience of the food, casting her as the one who is admiring both the work and Régis as the expert.

Turning to self-assessments, we can see that they regularly contain focusing requests (*regarde/regardez*) and naming the food item prior to assessing it in instances when Régis and Marinne had been simultaneously preparing different ingredients. These focusing request serve to establish a common focus and access to the assessable (Pomerantz 1984). We can further note that Régis is producing the overwhelming number of these (29 out of 37). This is the case across virtually all functions of the assessments, with the exception of assessments which are incidental to the cooking process. Again, this makes visible his role as the chef and as the one in charge of the success of the dish. We believe that the distribution of these self-assessments is indicative of how Régis's role as chef and authority on matters related to cooking is talked into being by the coparticipants. This is further supported by the distribution of second assessments: While Régis's self-assessments frequently get a second assessment response from Marinne (the only times when it does not is when Marinne does not have direct access to the assessable), none of Marinne's do from Régis, despite the fact that in all instances Régis has access to the assessable. It has been noted in the literature that first assessments are associated with higher epistemic authority (Heritage/Raymond 2005). Here then, we can see that Marinne regularly aligns with Régis's positioning as the authority, while she never makes any claims of authority herself. In short, these assessments are used to talk expertise into being.

5. Discussion

In this article, we have analyzed the form and function of assessments in one particular French cooking show. We noted that positive assessments are regularly provided for items or actions that one of the participants can take credit for. However, unlike in everyday conversation where these would be treated as compliments, this is not the case in this show: as the analysis showed, other-assessments do not receive any of the typical compliment responses identified by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1987) and Wieland (1995). Similarly, an elicited assessment is not treated by the coparticipant as an act of fishing for a compliment, and a self-assessment is not

sanctioned as it would likely be in everyday conversation. This is a clear indication that these assessments serve functions other than to primarily praise the coparticipant. The first of these functions is to structure discourse, specifically to either indicate a transition between cooking steps or bring an aside to a close and transition back to the cooking. That assessments can function to transition between steps or phases of an action has also been shown in other contexts, as outlined in the literature review. As we have shown, discourse-structuring assessments have specific turn designs in French consisting of adjectival expressions and *c'est* + adjective constructions, and containing fewer gustatory expressions and noticings.

The second function of assessments is pedagogical in nature. In this particular cooking show, the ingredients of the recipe are visually displayed and orally listed near the end of the show. However, there are no written instructions on how to prepare the recipes. Thus, the audience has to watch the show in order to gain this information. Assessments serve to highlight not only the quality of the food at various steps, but also various techniques which are illustrated throughout the show. Specifically, when the assessment is produced during an illustration, they point to a particularly important part of that illustration. As noted above, in French, many of these assessments (particularly when done by other) contain change of state tokens thereby communicating a (presumed) change in knowledge. When an assessment is done after the demonstration, it post-frames the prior as instruction.[10] In other words, assessments serve a para-social function to draw the viewer in and create intimacy, familiarity and sociability between the hosts and the audience. These assessments then also help the hosts overcome the communicative challenge of having to construct a sensory experience for their audience that it is otherwise not in a position to subjectively experience.

The third function of assessments in our data ties in with the sensual experience of the food. That is, assessments are provided in situations which are incidental to the cooking, that is, when the interactants are noticing the work of the other, and/or either smell, notice, or (on rare occasions) taste the food. Another such environment in which assessments are regularly produced is when a dish is plated. By positively assessing food items at the plating phase or when the interactants have a sensual experience of the food, they are articulating this experience for the television audience who does not have direct access to the assessable. In this regard, the camera angle is of particular importance, and we regularly see the interactants covertly checking the location and focus of the camera operator(s). Since camera operators are not directly verbally addressed in this show, the assessments and the linguistic elements which precede them (e.g., *regarde/z, voilà,* etc.), serve as a way to guide and direct camera operators to zoom in on food items, pan out to the coparticipant, etc. Assessments in this category typically take the form of gustatory expressions often combined with noticings. They thus enact the speaker's pleasure and sensory experience in a para-interactive way to draw in the viewer.

Moreover, we noted that the distribution of assessments across speakers in the different sequential environments contributes to establishing Régis's role as the master chef, as he is the one who is predominantly inviting Marinne to positively assess the food and who is producing the majority of self-assessments. We also noted that his self-assessments are regularly produced as statements whereas hers are produced as questions for confirmation.

---

[10] We would like to thank a reviewer for this observation.

Lastly, we also discussed how assessments take the form of gustatory expressions, noticings, and short adjectival expressions. In general, the overwhelming majority of the assessments are expressed in terms of the assessable, and not in terms of the individual who is evaluating the food. This means that on the surface, it is the food item which is foregrounded, and not the individuals themselves. However, these structures simultaneously serve to talk the hosts' expertise into being in that the hosts' opinions are communicated as facts (cf.Kotthoff 1993) and not as personal likes and dislikes. In the genre of a cooking show, with its overall infotainment character, it is essential that the information be provided by individuals who construct themselves as experts.[11] For similar observations on how social media hosts create credibility, see Meer & Staubach (2020).

6. References

Antaki, Charles (2002): "Lovely": Turn-initial high-grade assessments in telephone closings. In: Discourse Studies 4(1), 5-23.

Antaki, Charles / Houtkoop-Steenstra, Hanneke / Rapley, Mark (2000): "Brilliant. Next question . . .": High-grade assessment sequences in the completion of interactional units. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 33, 235-262.

Atkinson, J. Maxwell / Heritage, John (Eds.) (1984): Structures of social action. Studies in conversation analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Auer, Peter / Lindström, Jan (2021): On agency and affiliation in second assessments: German and Swedish opinion verbs in talk-in-interaction. In: Lindström, Jan / Laury, Ritva / Peräkylä, Anssi / Sorjonen, Marja-Leena (Eds.), In Intersubjectivity in Action: Studies in language and social interaction. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 81-107.

Auer, Peter / Uhmann, Susanne (1982): Aspekte der konversationellen Organisation von Bewertungen [Aspects of the conversational organization of assessments]. In: Deutsche Sprache 10, 1-32.

Ayaß, Ruth (2013): Versachlicht oder veraltet: Positive Moralisierungen in alltäglichen und institutionellen Kontexten. In: Bergmann, Jörg/ Luckmann, Thomas (Eds.), Kommunikative Konstruktion von Moral. Band 2: Von der Moral zu den Moralen. Mannheim: Verlag für Gesprächsforschung, 289-327.

Conein, Bernard / Laks, Bernard (1989): A quoi servent les recettes? Savoir et savoir faire dans la cuisine domestque. In: Langage et travail, 24-42.

Crabtree, Andy / Tolmie, Peter / Rouncefield, Mark (2013): Cooking for pleasure. In: Tolmie, Peter/ Rouncefield, Mark (Eds.), Ethnomethodology at Play. Farnham, Surey, U.K.: Ashgate, 21-51.

Dayter, Daria (2014): Self-praise in microblogging. In: Journal of Pragmatics 61, 91-102.

Fasulo, Alessandra / Monzoni, Chiara (2009): Assessing mutable objects: A multimodal analysis. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 42(4), 362-276.

Feldman, Zeena / Goodman, Michael K (2021): Digital food culture, power and everyday life. In: European Journal of Cultural Studies 24(6), 1227-1242. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494211055501

---

[11] We would like to thank one of the reviewers for this observation.

Fele, Giolo (2016): Il paradosso del gusto. In: Società Mutamento Politica 7(14), 151-174.

Giglioli, Pier Paolo / Fele, Giolo (2016): Il sapere del sommelier. Verso un'etnografia della degustazione. In: Etnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa 1, 53-72.

Goffman, Erving (1978): Response cries. In: Language 54, 787-815.

Golato, Andrea (2005): Compliments and compliment responses: Grammatical structure and sequential organization. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Golato, Andrea (2011): Appreciatory sounds and expressions of embodied pleasure used as compliments. In: Aijmer, Karin/ Anderson, Gisle (Eds.), Pragmatics of Society. Berlin: Mouton-de Gruyter, 359-390.

Golato, Peter (2020): Recruitments in French: Declarative statements and accompanying actions which result in offers of assistance. In: Taleghani-Nikazm, Carmen / Betz, Emma / Golato, Peter (Eds.), Mobilizing Others: Grammar and Lexis within Larger Activities. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 83-114.

Goodwin, Charles / Goodwin, Marjorie Harness (1992): Assessments and the construction of context. In: Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 147-190.

Hepburn, Alexa / Bolden, Galina (2017): Transcribing social research. London, England: Sage.

Heritage, John (1984): A change-of-state token and aspects of its sequential placement. In: Atkinson, J. Maxwell/ Heritage, John (Eds.), Structures of Social Action. Studies in Conversation Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 299-345.

Heritage, John (2002): *Oh*-prefaced responses to assessments: A method of modifying agreement/disagreement. In: Ford, Cecilia E./ Fox, Barbara A./ Thompson, Sandra A. (Eds.), The Language of Turn and Sequence. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 196-224.

Heritage, John / Raymond, Geoffrey (2005): The terms of agreement: Indexicing epistemic authority and subordination in talk-in-interaction. In: Social Psychology Quarterly 68(1), 15-38.

Holmes, Janet (1986): Compliments and compliment responses in New Zealand English. In: Anthropological Linguistics 28(4), 485-508.

Horton, Donald / Wohl, Richard (1956): Mass communication and para-social interaction. In: Psychiatry 19(3), 215-229. doi:10.108/00332747.1956/11023049

Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Catherine (1987): La desciption des échanges en analyse conversationnelle: l'exemple du compliment. In: DRLAV, Revue de linguistique, 36-37, 1-53.

Kotthoff, Helga (1993): Kommunikative Stile, Asymmetrie und »Doing Gender«. In: Feministische Studien 11(2), 79-95.

Liberman, Ken (2013): The phenomenology of coffee tasting. In: Liberman, Ken (Ed.), More Studies in Ethnomethodology. New York: SUNY Press. 215-266.

Liebers, Nicole / Schramm, Holger (2017): 60 Jahre Forschung zu parasozialen Interaktionen und Beziehungen. Steckbriefe von 250 Studien. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Lilja, Niina / Piirainen-Marsh, Arja (2022): Recipient design by gestures: How depictive gestures embody actions in cooking instructions. In: Social Interaction: Video-Based Studies of Human Sociality 5(1). doi:https://doi.org/10.7146/si.v5i2.130874

Lindström, Anna / Heinemann, Trine (2009): Good enough: Low-grade assessments in caregiving situations. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 42(4), 309-328.

Lindström, Anna / Mondada, Lorenza (2009): Assessments in social interaction: Introduction to the special issue. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 32(4), 299-308.

Marandin, Jean-Marie (1986): Des mots et des actions: compliment, complimenter et l'action de complimenter", Lexique. In: Conein, Bernard (Ed.), Lexique. Lille, France: Presses Universitaires de Lille. Vol. 5, 65-99.

Matwick, Kelsi / Matwick, Keri (2017): Cooking at home: A multimodal narrative analysis of the Food Network. In: Discourse, Context & Media 17, 20-29. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.03.003

Matwick, Kelsi / Matwick, Keri (2018): Politeness and pseudo-intimacy in a food radio call-in program. In: Discourse, Context & Media 21, 46-53. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.11.006

Matwick, Keri / Matwick, Kelsi (2014): Storytelling and synthetic personalization in television cooking shows. In: Journal of Pragmatics 71, 151-159. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.08.005

Matwick, Keri / Matwick, Kelsi (2019): Humor and peforming gender on TV cooking shows. In: Humor 32(1), 125-146.

Meer, Dorothee / Luginbühl, Martin (Eds.) (2022): Parainteraktion in den Medien: Linguistische Studien zu Formen medialer Pseudo-Interaktion. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Meer, Dorothee / Staubach, Katharina (2020): Social media influencer's advertising targeted at teenagers: The multimodal constitution of credibility. In: Thurlow, Crispin/ Dürscheid, Christa/ Diémoz, Federica (Eds.), Visualizing Digital Discourse. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 246-269.

Mehan, Hugh (1979): Learning Lessons: Social Organization in the Classroom. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press.

Mondada, Lorenza (2009a): The embodied and negotiated production of assessments in instructed actions. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 42(4), 329-261.

Mondada, Lorenza (2009b): The methical organization of talking and eating: Assessments in dinner conversations. In: Food Quality and Preference 20(8), 558-571.

Mondada, Lorenza (2014): Cooking instructions and the shaping of things in the kitchen. In: Nevile, Maurice / Haddington, Pentti / Heinemann, Trine / Rauniomaa, Mirka (Eds.), Interacting with Objects: Language, Materiality, and Social Activity. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 199-226.

Mondada, Lorenza (2018a): The multimodal interactional organization of tasting: Practices of tasting cheese in gourmet shops. In: Discourse Studies, 20 (6), 743-769.

Mondada, Lorenza (2018b): Multiple temporalities of language and body in interaction: Challenges for transcribing multimodality. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 51(1), 85-106.

Mondada, Lorenza (2020): Audible sniffs: On smelling in interaction. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 53(1), 140-163.

Mondada, Lorenza (2021): Sensing in social interaction: The taste for cheese in gourmet shops. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pomerantz, Anita (1978): Compliment responses. Notes on the co-operation of multiple constraints. In: Schenkein, Jim (Ed.), Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction. New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press, 79-112.

Pomerantz, Anita (1984): Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn shapes. In: Atkinson, J. Maxwell / Heritage, John (Eds.), Structures of Social Action. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 225-246.

Reed, Darren (2019): Assessments in Transition: Coordinating Participation Framework Transitions in Institutional Settings. In: Reber, Elisabeth / Gerhardt, Cornelia (Eds.), Embodied Activities in Face-to-face and Mediated Settings. Palgrave Macmillan, 299-326.

Schegloff, Emanuel A (2007): Sequence organization in interaction. A primer in conversation analysis (Vol. 1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Speer, Susan A. (2012): The interactional organization of self-praise: epistemics, preference organization, and implications for identity research. In: Social Psychology Quarterly 75(1), 52-79.

Streeck, Jürgen (1996): How to do things with things: Objets trouvés and symbolization. In: Human Studies 19, 365-284.

Stukenbrock, Anja (2010): Überlegungen zu einem multimodalen Verständnis der gesprochenen Sprache am Beispiel deiktischer Verwendungsweisen des Ausdrucks *so*. In: InLiSt no 47, 1-23.

Stukenbrock, Anja (2015): Deixik in der face-to-face Interaktion. Berlin, München, Boston: de Gruyter.

Taleghani-Nikazm, Carmen / Vlatten, Andrea (1997): Instruction-receipt in face-to-face interaction. In: Issues in Applied Linguistics. Special Issue: Proceedings from the Third UCLA Conference on Language, Interaction, and Culture: Embodiment in Discourse 8(2), 119-131.

Ursi, Biagio (2016): "Et c'est qui le chef ?" Négociations et manifestations du désaccord pendant la préparation de repas. In: Cahiers de praxématique 67.

Weidner, Beate (2017a): Kommunikative Herstellung von Infotainment. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Weidner, Beate (2017b): Zwischen Information und Unterhaltung: Multimodale Verfahren des Bewertens im Koch-TV [Between information and entertainment: Multimodal practices of assessments in televised cooking shows). In: Gesprächsforschung - Online-Zeitschrift zur verbalen Interaktion 18, 1-33 (www.gespraechsforschung-ozs.de).

Weidner, Beate (2022): Zur Inszenierung einer geteilten Interaktionssituation im Fernsehen: Soziale Parainteraktion und die Herstellung von Geselligkeit in Kochshows. In: Luginbühl, Martin / Meer, Dorothee (Eds.), Parainteraktion in

den Medien: Linguistische Studien zu Formen medialer Pseudo-Interaktion. Bern: Peter Lang. 55-88.

Wieland, Molly (1995): Complimenting behavior in French/American cross-cultural dinner conversations. In: The French Review 68(5), 796-812.

Wiggins, Sally (2001): Construction and action in food evaluation. In: Journal of Language and Social Psychology 20(4), 445-463.

Wiggins, Sally (2002): Talking with your mouth full: Gustatory *mmms* and the embodiment of pleasure. In: Research on Language and Social Interaction 35(3), 311-336.

Wiggins, Sally (2004): Talking about taste: Using a discursive psychological approach to examine challenges to food evaluations. In: Appetite 43, 29-38.

Wiggins, Sally (2014): Adult and child use of love, like, don't like, and hate, during family mealtimes. Subjective Category assessment as food preference talk. In: Appetite 80, 7-15.

Wiggins, Sally (2019): Moments of pleasure: A preliminary classification of gustatory mmms and the enactment of enjoyment during infant mealtimes. In: Frontiers in Psychology 10, 1404. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01404

Wiggins, Sally / Keevallik, Leelo (2021): Enacting gustatory pleasure on behalf of another. In: Symbolic Interaction 44(1), 87-111.

Wiggins, Sally / Potter, Jonathan (2003): Attitudes and evaluative practices: Category vs. Item and subjective vs. objective constructions in everyday food assessments. In: British Journal of Social Psychology 42 (4), 513-531.

Wu, Ruey-Jiuan Regina (2011): A conversation analysis of self-praising in everyday Mandarin interaction. In: Journal of Pragmatics 43, 3152-3176.

Dr. Peter Golato / Prof. Andrea Golato
Department of World Languages and Literatures
Texas State University
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666
USA

pgolato@txstate.edu
agolato@txstate.edu