Acknowledging Strong Ties between Utterances in Talk: Connections through *Right* as a Response Token

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1 Introduction

One common use of *Right* in talk is as a response token (RT), and this paper reports on this kind of *Right* in Australian and British English.[1] It is one of a group of minimal responses to immediately preceding talk. RTs say something about the stance of the current listener to that talk. They can occur with other talk in their turns, but when they do, they are also almost always initial in their turn (or one of a group of RTs that together are initial in their turn). They are invariably oriented to the prior turn, and independently of any other talk in their turn, they provide the previous speaker (and other participants in the talk) with information about the way the prior talk is being received by the producer of the RT.

Over the past twenty years or so, it has become apparent that response tokens constitute a group of items that have in common that they are indicative of the stance a current listener is taking to the talk, but also that each is distinctive, but complex, in the types of information it provides (for a summary of common response tokens, see Gardner 2001). *Yeah* and variants (*Yes*, *Yep*, etc.) are typically acknowledging and aligning tokens, with relatively high speakership incipiency, and typically with a falling intonation contour (Jefferson 1993). *Mm hm* and *Uh huh* are typically continuers, handing the floor straight back to the prior speaker, and thus with very low speakership incipiency, and typically with fall-rising intonation contours (Schegloff 1982). *Mm* is typically a weaker acknowledgement token than *Yeah*, with low speakership incipiency, letting pass the opportunity to say something on the topic of the prior turn, and typically with a falling intonation contour (Gardner 1997). *Oh* is a 'change-of-state' token, i.e. most usually marking the prior talk as something the *Oh* speaker did not know before. *Oh* has very high speakership incipiency, and typically has a falling intonation contour (Heritage 1984). *Okay* is a 'change-of-activity' token, inviting participants to move on to some new topic or activity. It has relatively high speakership incipiency, and typically falling intonation contour (Beach 1993). *Alright* is another change-of-activity token with typically more major activity changes than *Okay*, with high speakership incipiency, and typically with falling intonation contour (Turner 1999, cited in Gardner 2001). *Right* is a RT that belongs to this group, but has been little studied, though McCarthy (2003) suggests that *Right* typically marks 'transactional or topical boundaries' (p. 48). Gardner (2001), in a preliminary study, noted some more distinctive uses of *Right*, including acknowledging connections made by another speaker between related ideas, either in immediately prior utterances, or to earlier in

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[1] It appears that the main use of *Right* discussed in this paper does not occur in North American Englishes.

an interaction, such as in re-topicalizing what a participant had said earlier. (See also Stenström 1987).

Response tokens are of interest to linguists for a number of reasons. First, they are amongst the few types of vocalization that give us a clue about the position or stance a person is taking in an interaction as *listener*, or recipient, rather than as *speaker*, or producer. With so much focus in linguistics on language production, RTs provide a rare opportunity to examine the behaviour of the listener. Another major group of tokens that can be understood as 'listener talk' is assessments, (usually) short utterances that evaluate the talk to which they are responding (cf. Goodwin 1986). However, assessments may have considerable topical content in addition to providing information on listener stance. Information on listener stance can of course also be gleaned through the study of non-verbal/non-vocal responses.

A second reason for studying RTs is that they belong to a group of items which are rarely (if ever) incorporated into a clause. As such, they are hard to deal with within a clause- or phrase-based grammar, or even a text-based grammar which focuses on language production. Being outside a clause, it is hard to establish their role in grammar. However, at the level of interaction they are highly structurally constrained with respect to their position: in a grammar of interaction (cf. Schegloff et al. 1996) they are never first pair parts (never initiators in talk[2]), and are usually second pair parts in an adjacency pair, though sometimes in third position, i.e. as a response to a response by another speaker.

Third, as meaningful actions (though mostly with little *semantic* content[3]), RTs provide good evidence for the co-construction of talk. Conversation is the most fundamental and natural home of language. Every speech community around the world has conversation within its repertoire of 'genres', and there may be few other forms of talk that are universal. This is clearly an assumption, but one for which there is more than a little evidence. The evidence we have is that conversation works not just through the construction of clauses, but by pairs of utterances by different speakers (often with more than two utterances or by more than two speakers in the sequence). Together these jointly produced sequences constitute the successful manifestation in talk of meanings and actions. Within such co-constructed sequences, the meanings of RTs have less to do with an inherent semantics than with their sequential position: their meanings derive from what has just been said, from their timing, from their prosodic form, and to some extent from what follows them.

The simplicity of RTs in terms of phonology, morphology and grammar, in the sense that they are one or two syllables, and usually occur in their own intonation unit, and outside a clause, actually makes them prime candidates for studying intonational and other prosodic features.

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[2] Response tokens can occur in a turn which contains a first-pair-part of an adjacency pair, but when they do, they are initial in the turn, and responsive to the previous turn, and are followed by a first-pair-part that is doing a new and different action.

[3] By 'little semantic content' I mean that response tokens are hard to 'define' in the sense of lexical entries in dictionaries. They do, though, have clear 'interactional' meaning, and this is what distinguishes them. *Right* may appear to have clear semantic content (or contents), but as a response token, it is much harder to pin down a clear semantic content.

They can demonstrably be shown to vary in their function – in the specific work they are doing – according to the type of intonation contour or prosody they carry. Their complexity is revealed through these features, together with their sequential placement (what they follow, what follows them) and their timing (in relation to overlapping talk, preceding or following silence).

2 Data

The main data set for this study is a forty-seven minute hospital interview in Australia between a dietician and a 'client' (patient) with high blood triglyceride levels. The purpose of such interviews is usually primarily twofold (cf. Tapsell, 1997), namely to gather information about the dietary habits of the patient, and to provide information and advice that is intended to encourage the patients to change their eating patterns, for example through reducing their fat, sugar and alcohol intake. The main interview used for this study was fully transcribed, and was the first meeting between the client and dietician, so there had been no previous opportunity for them to establish common ground. The dietician also spent some time in the interview ascertaining the client's knowledge about cholesterol and triglycerides. The interview follows a particular course: after greetings and confirming reasons for the consultation, there is a long information gathering phase, in which the dietician elicits from the patient his quotidian dietary habits. This is followed by a phase during which she explains some basic medical facts relating to his condition, particularly about cholesterol and triglycerides, and also about healthy diets and major food groups. This in turn is followed by a lengthy advice giving phase, in which she makes recommendations about how he might change his diet. Finally they make arrangements for a future appointment.

In addition to these primary data, many hours of supplementary conversational data (transcripts, audio and video recordings) have been examined. About 140 instances of *Right* as a RT were analysed in the dietician data, as well as approximately a further 200 from Australian, British and American conversational data.

3 Two Initial Types of *Right* as Response Tokens

Right is one of the most polysemous words in English, with five major headings in the OED (two as noun, adjective, verb and adverb), and 53 sub-headings. The use of *Right* as a RT (or more accurately as a *range* of RTs) is not amongst the definitions, despite being very common in talk.

In the data used for this study, three major types of *Right* as a RT have been identified. Only the third type will be a major focus of this report.[4]

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[4] The reason for focusing on the third type is that the first two types, as epistemic confirmation token and as change-of-activity token, are relatively simple and straightforward in the case of the former, and already quite thoroughly described in the latter. The third group, the 'connection-making' group, has been least described.

The first appears to be a truncated version of *That's right*, that is, as epistemic confirmation. This is the use that North Americans are most familiar with, and the first example is from an American dinner conversation.

3.1 *Right* as 'That's right': an epistemic confirmation token

(1) R–9–US–Chinese

```
 1  Don:      They've gotta b- Instead of that tiny li'l, scrappy
 2            desk in the cornuh? ˙hh they've gotta hu:ge ca:rved
 3            wooden. (0.1) desk in the cornuh.
 4            (0.4)
 5  Bet:      'N China[ C i t y  ?]=
 6  Don:             [Really sum-]=
 7  Don: ->   =In China City. Right.
 8  Bet:      hhm.=
 9  Ann:      ='S like a ba:r.
10            (1.5)
```

Don is describing the interior of a building, when Betty comes in to check its location with *In China City?* in line 5. Don confirms that she is correct, with a repetition of the check question, followed by a falling *Right*, which is a truncated version of *That's right*. This may appear to be a bit like an acknowledgement of a re-iteration, which is discussed below, but a speaker cannot acknowledge his or her own reiteration, so it can be claimed that this *Right* is being used in a sense close to one of its dictionary meanings, namely 'correct', or *That's right*.

An important point here is that Don has epistemic priority over this information – he is the one describing the place, so he is in a position to say whether Betty's candidate location is the correct one or not.

3.2 *Right* as 'Alright': a change-of-activity token

A second use of *Right* is also as a truncated version of another token, namely of *Alright*. As was noted above, one major use of *Alright* has affinities to *Okay*, and is used to propose moving the talk on to a new topic or a new activity (cf. Beach 1993; Turner 1999, cited in Gardner 2001). The following example from British data exemplifies this use.

(2) R5–UK–FIELD–U/88–1–5

```
 1  Gor:      ↓Ahhha:
 2            (0.3)
 3  Gor:      .k.nhhhhhh hu-Okay .h Well um
 4            (0.7)
 5  Gor:      .lk I sh'l see you (0.3) uh:
 6            (0.4)
 7  Dan:      Y[eh
 8  Gor:       [in. .t.kl ↓Well whenever.
 9            (0.2)
10  Gor:      hO[kay?
11  Dan: ->     [Right
12            (1.0)
```

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13 Dan:      ( [      ]       )
14 Gor:        [Bye:?]
15            (0.2)
16 Dan:      Bye[:
17 Gor:         [.kl ↓Bye.
18           - - - - - - end call - - - - - -
```

The environment in which this *Right*, in line 11, occurs is close to the end of the conversation. *Okay* and *Alright* are typically used here to propose a readiness to finish the conversation, and they come in pairs, as pre-closing tokens, before the closing *Good-byes* (cf. Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). They function to provide the other speaker(s) with the opportunity *not* to finish the conversation, where going straight into the valedictions would constitute a unilateral, rather than a jointly negotiated ending of the conversation. The *Right* in fragment 2 is being used in such an *Alright* or *Okay* environment, to open up the closing sequences.

3.3 *Right* as acknowledging strong 'connections' between two prior utterances

In Australian (and British) uses, *Right* as a RT can be used as in the two examples shown so far, that is, as epistemic confirmation tokens and as pre-closing or change-of-activity tokens. However, in these communities of use, it is most commonly and most typically used in the complex of ways described below. These uses are the main focus of this paper. In the instances described, it is usually clear that the *Right* speaker does not have epistemic priority over the facts in question, nor are such *Right*s found in closing environments. All of the *Right*s I report on from here are ones which acknowledge a particularly salient connection between the immediately prior talk to which they are responding, and some other earlier talk – often the penultimate unit of talk, but occasionally some talk from much earlier in the interaction.

One way in which such connections are made is with the acknowledgement of a reiteration of some earlier talk (a citation). A second way is the acknowledgement of a confirmation of a previous turn which proposes some candidate answer or proposition. A third way is the acknowledgement of a close logical relationship between two units of talk, such as one of contrast, elaboration or cause and effect. What all of these have in common is that the *Right* claims an understanding that some particularly strong connection has been made between two units of talk, and thus maintains intersubjective understanding of the trajectory of the talk.[5]

3.3.1 *Right* as acknowledging a reiteration

In the first of this group of 'connecting' *Right*s, the connection being acknowledged is between an immediately prior unit of talk, and some earlier talk to which it is indexical through a citation form. In fragment (3a), from the dietetic consultation, the dietician is explaining to the client the effects of cholesterol and triglycerides on the human body. In lines 6/8, she says that

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[55] The prosodic shape of *Right*, as with all RTs, is significant, in that it can add a layer of function to the token, such as giving it the force of a continuer or assessment. However, the analysis presented in this paper is not significantly affected by prosodic variation. As with other RTs, there is a basic core to the interactional meaning of the token which remains stable. In the case of *Right*, this is that a connection between two units of talk is being acknowledged, and this is most typically done with falling intonation.

the client's cholesterol levels are at the time of the interview 'actually reasonable, it's good'. This is presented as a citation, with 'as I said' (line 5).

(3a) C6.29a.22'27"
```
    1  D:       [·hh]hh so thet we c'n s:top having es much- (0.2)
    2           saturaded fat going ↑into our bo:dies¿ ·hhh an'
    3           thereby not preducing that <ehxcess chole:hs'tro::l.>
    4  Cl:      Righ';=
    5  D:   -> =·hh b't et the momen' es uh sa:id, n'y'
    6       -> ch'lest'rol's acsh'l[ly  rea]senable. (.)
    7  Cl:                         [Mm; hm,]
    8  D:   -> et's [goo:d. ] ·hhh so (↑tha's the ↓side)=
    9  Cl: ->       [Ri:gh',]
   10  D:       =u-cheles:tro:l¿ ·hhh ↑with the ↓tri↑glyceri:des,=
   11           't's another type ev fah:t; (.) [in ahr ] body:.
```

The client's response to this reiterated 'expert' assessment of his cholesterol levels is a *Right* in line 9.[6] Regularly, *Right*s are placed after such citation turns, and they acknowledge the turn as being indexical to another, earlier turn. In this case, that turn was about three minutes earlier, as seen in fragment (3b), where the dietician had already assessed his cholesterol levels as being *actually pretty good*, a similar wording to *actually reasonable, it's good*, in (3a).

(3b) C6.29b.19'30"
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    1  D: ->  ↑Cert'nly with ↓rega:rd tuh the chelesterol level,
    2          (.) uhm:; five point fi:ve or under;= is the curren'
    3       -> recommenda:tion;= so['t five] point one:;= that's=
    4  Cl:                        [Mm, hm,]
    5  D:   -> =acsh'lly; (.) pr'dy go::od¿
```

The connection in this case is demonstrably between an utterance from earlier in the conversation and a reiteration of that utterance in the turn immediately prior to the *Right,* as a re-activation of that earlier iteration for some current purpose. In (3a) this is as an 'upshot' turn at the end of the long sequence explaining cholesterol (cf. Heritage & Watson, 1980). The relationship here is between two sayings of (more or less) the same thing, but contingent upon the local activity in the talk.

One point of difference to a 'That's right' type of *Right* is that this *Right* does not claim epistemic priority. Unlike in extract (1), where it is Don, the producer of the *Right*, who had primary knowledge of the location (China City), in (3) it is not the *Right* producer, but the dietician who has the epistemic priority, as she is citing her own words. In other words, the patient is not claiming primary knowledge of the correctness of the dietician's citation, but a recognition of the connection between the earlier saying and the immediately prior one.

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[6] The *Right* in line 4 is not discussed here.

3.3.2 *Right* as acknowledging confirmation

The next type of *Right* is one which responds to a turn that is confirming the correctness of an earlier turn. Typically this runs off with the first speaker, A, producing a turn, such as a question, or making a statement. Built into this saying is a candidate answer or confirmable proposition. The next speaker, B, confirms (or disconfirms) the candidate answer or proposition. Speaker A in the third turn acknowledges the confirmation with a *Right*. In fragment (4), the client builds into his question in line 8 the confirmable proposition that his triglyceride levels are 'extremely high'.

```
(4) CR–1–R.68/69.Diet/29.7.96/1:2'39"
    1  Cl:      ·hhh Now I- (.) u-I:- (.) bilieve th't thee (0.2)
    2            chelesterol's supposed tuh be;= sordev f:ive point f:ive;=
    3            or bilo:w;= is (.) [o k a: y. ]
    4  D:                          [That's  ri]:ght¿
    5  D:       [That's go:[:od ¿]
    6  Cl:      [· h h h h [b't- ] (0.2) thee: three point f:our;= on
    7            thee: um triglycerides;= now I don' know; (.) where
    8      1->  that stan:'z;= iz that- (.) extre:mely hi:gh?
    9  D:   2->  Okay, [^That's u [˘bit hi:gher [th'n w'd] lo:ik¿
   10  Cl:          [·h h h h  [e:::::::::hm [·h h h h]
   11  Cl: 3->  [Righ';]
   12  D:       [·hhhhh] = 'll talk u-bou' that with you in m^omen';=
   13  D:       =if you don't ^mi:nd; ^ 'v [got s'm] (.) (thing:s) th't=
   14  Cl:                                [Mm   hm,]
   15  D:       =uh g'n talk t'you abo:ut¿ (en' try 'n c'n) modify
   16            that- (.) when I've found o[ut what y're] (.)=
   17  Cl:                                 [Ehn    huhn,]
   18  D:       =having to e:a:t¿
```

The client asks about his triglyceride levels in such a way that a candidate answer, that they might be *extremely high*, is built into the question (arrow number 1). This is followed by an answer from the dietician that confirms his candidate answer, more or less, though in downgraded in form, as *that's a bit higher than we'd like* (arrow number 2). Client responds to this with a *Right* (arrow number 3), which is a third position acknowledgement of the confirming answer. The two turns - or, more accurately, turn constructional units - that this *Right* is linking are the proposition in the question and the (downgraded) confirming answer, so that it can be taken as reconfirming the (basic) correctness of what he had proposed in his question.

There is some affinity here to the *Right* as *that's right*, in that what is being negotiated here is an epistemic matter – whether some proposition is correct or not. However, the speaker with expertise and epistemic priority here is not the person who posited the confirmable utterance – as Don was in the China City example – but the recipient of that confirmable, in this case the dietician. The *Right* producer is thus not in a position to confirm the correctness of the proposition. Instead he is acknowledging that confirmation with his *Right*.

3.3.3 *Right* as acknowledging logical relationships

The last group of *Right*s acknowledging connections between two prior utterances is that in which they acknowledge logical relationships, such as contrast, elaboration, or cause and effect. In the larger database used for the project reported here, at least nine types of logical relationship acknowledged by *Right* have been found, but the three reported here were the most common ones.

3.3.3.1 *Right* as acknowledging contrast

In the first example here, fragment (5), the *Right* in line 15, is a response to the dietician advising the client on 'good' types of milk for his diet, whereby she is making a contrast between something bad – animal fat in milk – and something good – canola oil as a replacement of animal fats.

```
(5) R.95/96.Diet/29.7.96/1:30'28"
    1  D:     yih know; 'n'there's Farmer's Best;= wh'ch es got thuh
    2         cano:la oil 'n et,= rather th'n thee- enim'l fa:ht;
    3  Cl:    Ri[:gh';]
    4  D:       [·hhhh] which would be- (.) 'n- (say) the bedder one:.
    5  D:     fo[:r ^you¿]
    6  Cl:       [Mm   hm,]
    7  D:     ·kh  u-[kay¿]
    8  Cl:           [w-I:] migh' t[ry that one instead;]
    9  D:                          [s' that's anothuh op]tion;
   10  Cl:    Mm:;
   11         (0.5)
   12  D:     's jess they taken thih animal fat out;= en' put cano:la
   13         oi[:l in inst]ea:d,
   14  Cl: -> [Oh  I see;]
   15  Cl: -> Righ'.
   16         (.)
   17  D:     ^°kahy?°^
```

In line 14, in response to the dietician's explanation that the manufacturers of 'Farmer's Best' milk have 'taken the animal fat out and put canola oil in instead', the client's newsmarking *Oh I see* is claiming the information as something new to him – there has been a change in the state of his knowledge (cf. Heritage 1984). In other words, he is disclaiming prior knowledge about the fat-removing procedure used with this milk. This newsmarker is followed up with a *Right*, which, were it to mean *That's right* would contradict his claim of the newness of the information claimed by *Oh I see*. In other words, *Oh I see* claims specifically *lack* of prior knowledge, making epistemic priority a *non sequitur*, so that this *Right* cannot be claiming that the dietician is 'correct'.

An alternative explanation for this *Right* is that it is recognizing that the dietician's explanation of the benefit of a certain type of food for his condition – *Farmer's Best* milk – is *contrasting* something that had already been established as bad earlier in the consultation, namely the removed animal fats, and something good, the added canola oil. It is the recognition of this juxtaposition of contrasted good and bad that Cl is claiming with his *Right*. (The other

occurrence of *Right* in this extract, in line 3, is also responding to a similar contrast, namely between having canola oil or animal fat in the milk.)

The contrast is not always between 'good' and 'bad'. Various kinds of contrast occur, as in fragment (6), where the 'contrast' is part of advice on types of biscuits that he could eat, and specifically between two alternatives for 'plainer biscuits', in lines 9/11.

```
(6) JD9-78:37'07"
   1    D:      ↑U:hm; (.) then↑ et night ti:me (.) -agai:n;= y'got yer:
   2            (0.4) yuh biscuits or yuhr fruit ca:ke¿ ↓Yuh bedduh t'
   3            p'haps look'ud uh; ·hhh a lower faht °bihscuiht,°=
   4            ↑rather than yer- (.) creamy- (0.2) f[illed type]=
   5    Cl:                                         [M m : : ; ]=
   6    D:      =[biscuits.]=or [choc'l]ate bi:scuit[s¿ ·h]hhh
   7    Cl:     =[M m  h m,]    [Yehs:.]            [Yes:.]
   8    D:      =>↑even a plai:nuh= biscuit;= y'know l'k uh<
   9            morning coffee bis:cuit o:r;= [low calori]e- (.)=
  10    Cl:                                  [M m: h m:,]
  11    D:      =biscuit. [·hhhhh ] <as a cha:nge,= tuh ↑tho:se;>
  12    Cl: ->            [Ri:gh';]
  13            (0.5)
  14    ?:      (°Mm.°)
  15            (0.4)
  16    D:      >or yuh might< F:eel like uh piece uh ↑TOA:st;=
```

In this sequence, the dietician is giving the client advice on night time biscuits and fruit cake he can eat without compromising his healthy intake of foods, with examples of 'good' types of biscuits, 'a lower fat biscuit', and the bad alternatives, 'your creamy filled type biscuits or chocolate biscuits'[7]. Next, she the mentions another type of acceptable biscuit, the 'plainer biscuit', which she exemplifies with two alternatives, the 'morning coffee biscuit or low calorie biscuit'. Presenting 'alternatives' is a rhetorical device related to 'contrast', and it is this which gets the *Right* as an acknowledgement of two logically related units.

3.3.3.2 *Right* as acknowledging an extension/elaboration

In the next example, the dietician offers an information sheet to the patient on low fat foods, and she then goes on to elaborate on what the sheet is about: a specification of the contents of the information sheet.

```
(7) JD20-98:43'58"
   1    D:      ·hhhhh  ↑Whad I'll ↓give yuh's just a couplev um: (.)
   2            sheets tuh take ho:me¿= °↑(   ↓      t'show yuh wi:fe)¿°
   3    Cl:     Mm [hm,
```

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[7] This contrast gets no *Right*, for reasons that cannot be examined here in detail. Suffice it to say, the *Mm*, *Mm hm* and *Yes's* are alternative RTs available to the client which are probably acknowledging the content rather than the contrast. The dietician is unpacking 'biscuits'. It had been made clear to the client by now, from previous mentions of 'biscuits', that they are 'bad' foods. She had said earlier that he 'could perhaps look at some different types of biscuits', mentioning some low calorie ones. What is new in this sequence is the specific mentioning of four types of 'acceptable' biscuits. A more detailed exposition of this would require a separate paper.

```
 4   D:          [·hhhh °u:hm; got this one he:re um ·hhhh (.)
 5              tsk (.) it's a low fat food gu:ide? ·hhhh ↑Whad ↓it go:es
 6              through;= is jess talking about-; (.) f:- the differen'
 7              food groups. ·h[hhhhhhh] u:hm- (.) ↑What ↓was::=
 8   Cl: ->                    [°Righ'°;]
 9   D:          =tradition'lly;= a hi:gh fat cho:ice:¿ ↓°u:hm;° (1.0)
10              suh- (.) just fuh example;= 'd be thih biscui:ts¿ (.)
11              u:hm; ·hhh ↓an' what's a bedder choice tuh have; (.)
```

The dietician starts to explain one of the information sheets she is giving him. For the first one she says, 'Got this one here, it's a low fat food guide' (an identification), and then she specifies and elaborates on what it is about: 'What it goes through is just talking about the different food groups' (specifying content). So again we have a relationship presented between two units of talk: an identification (or naming) of an object, and a specification or elaboration of the content of that object. It is very unlikely that the client's *Right* is one of epistemic confirmation. The dietician is presenting him with a fact sheet and explaining its contents, and the client nowhere treats this as information he already knows, indeed the series of RTs that follows on from this sequence suggests there is no disalignment between client and dietician, which would very likely have shown through at least some disfluency in the talk, if not outright claims of prior knowledge.

3.3.3.3 *Right* as acknowledging an cause-effect relationship

The third group of logical relationships that are responded to with a *Right* is one acknowledging a cause-effect relationship. In this example, the dietician is advising the client to be cautious with his physical exercise regime.

```
(8) JD29–97:43'41"
 1   D:       'n THAT way °yuh got someone th't w'll go with you
 2            too[:; ·hhh] regul'y;° ·hhh u:hm  if > yur goin' tuh do=
 3   Cl:         [Ri:gh',]
 4   D:       = tha:t¿= I mean yuh migh' wanna = stard< off: (.) y'know
 5            gradu'lly¿= an' just build it u[:p]; (.)  (y'know)=
 6   Cl:                                      [Ye]hs.
 7   D:       = so th't yuh not overdo(h)ing it;= tuh start with;= an'
 8            gedding ti:red ev it;= tuh s[ta:rt wi]th; ·hhhh uhm b'd=
 9   Cl: ->                               [Ri:gh', ]
10   D:       = other wise yuh go:lf an:; (.) y'know yer weights're
11            good¿ (.)  surfboard riding¿ ·hhhh 're all good
12            options,
```

The dietician begins by saying that if the client is going to exercise, he should start off gradually, build up, and not overdo it. This becomes the cause for a cautioning, which is that if he did overdo the exercise to start with, that would have the effect of his getting tired of it. The *Right* claims a recognition of this cause-effect relationship. Note that in this sequence the dietician is talking about a plan for exercise for him, presented in temporal sequence: first, to start off gradually, then build up. She provides a reason for starting gradually, namely that he will then not be overdoing it, which would cause him to become tired of the regime. This cause-effect relationship is what gets the acknowledging *Right*.

The last three examples show three types of juxtaposed relations that are receipted with a *Right* response, and which are an acknowledgement of the close logical connectedness between the two elements of the pairs (contrast between two acts, extension/ elaboration/specification of an act with a second act, and cause and effect). Further types of logical relationships that are regularly responded to with *Right* in the data examined for this study are:

- an informing followed by a *qualification* of or *constraint* on that informing
- an informing with a *condition* (cf. qualification)
- an informing and *consequences* (cf. cause and effect)
- a recommendation and a *purpose* (cf. cause and effect)
- an informing and a *reason*

4 Conclusion

Right is a complex response token, with three major distinctive uses: as an epistemic confirmation token, a reduced form of *That's right;* as a change-of-activity token, which is a reduced form of *Alright*. The third group is one that appears to occur commonly in Australian and British talk, but not in North American. In this group, the *Right* acknowledges a particularly close dependency between two utterances. There are three sub-types of this: ones where the dependency is one of citation: the connection between an earlier iteration and an immediately prior reiteration is acknowledged; the connection between an utterance with a candidate answer or confirmable proposition in the first utterance is then indeed confirmed in the next utterance, and a *Right* in the third position acknowledges the confirmation; the connection between an utterance (or part of an utterance) and an immediately following logically connected utterance (or part of an utterance), such as a contrast, an elaboration, an effect (or a number of other types of logical relationship) is acknowledged.

Transcription Conventions

The transcription system used is Jeffersonian, with some modifications. In particular, the notations are compiled from Atkinson & Heritage (1984), Jefferson (1984), Schegloff (1990; ND), Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974), and Gardner (2001).

```
[    ]   Overlapping talk is enclosed in square brackets.
=        Latched utterances are linked by equal signs.
(0.0)    Silences are measured in seconds.
         Terminal intonation contour is indicated by punctuation
         marks:
.        A full-stop indicates a falling terminal contour.
;        A semi-colon is indicates a slight fall.
_        An underline mark indicates level pitch.
,        A comma indicates a slight rise.
¿        The 'Spanish' question mark indicates a medium rise.
?        A question mark indicates a strong rise.
Word     Strong stress is indicated by underlining.
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Word    Weaker stress is indicated by broken underlining.
Wo:rd   Drawl, or lengthening, is marked through colons.
↑Word   Marked upward shift in pitch is indicated by up arrows.
↓Word   Marked downward shift is indicated by down arrows.
WORD    Loud talk is indicated by upper case.
°Word°  Quiet talk is indicated by degree signs.
Word–   An abrupt cutoff is represented by a single dash.
hhh     Audible aspirations are represented by h's.
·hhh    Audible inhalations by a raised dot before h's.
>word<  Faster talk is enclosed by inward pointing carets.
(    )  Round brackets indicate inadequate hearing (by
        transcriber).
(word)  Words in brackets indicate uncertain hearing.
->      Transcription highlighting.
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