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# Indirect Reports and Pragmatics in the World Languages

# Perspectives in Pragmatics, Philosophy & Psychology

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# Indirect Reports and Pragmatics in the World Languages

 Springer

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# Introduction

By Alessandro Capone  
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It seems to me that the topic of indirect reports is of great importance and has the potential for considerably changing linguistics, by stressing the importance of societal pragmatics and of a dialogic perspective on language. The fact that an indirect report is normally the host of two voices, the reporter and the reported speaker, which normally blend but which it is the task of the hearer/reader to separate, whenever possible, means that indirect reports are the key to a dialogical perspective on language. Minimally, an indirect report is the compression of a mini-dialogue; hence, inquiring into this topic amounts to inquiring into polyphony. The topic of indirect reports is pretty broad. It includes belief reports and ‘de se’ attitude ascriptions as special cases of indirect reports (as pointed out in Capone 2016). Furthermore, one who undertakes to study this topic has to inquire into the issue of language games (as pointed out in Capone 2016), a chapter of Wittgensteinian linguistics and, at the same time, of societal pragmatics. I have also noticed that the connection between direct and indirect reports has to be pursued seriously and not only because there are cases of mixed indirect reports, parts of which are marked by the grammatical device of quotation marks. Even when there are no explicit quotation marks, the issue of blending of direct and indirect discourse arises. I would normally take indirect reports to be mixed reports where the quotation marks are provided implicitly. Anyway, this is an idea which has to be pursued and explored carefully. The very idea of polyphony, which I have embraced in Capone (2016), seems to lead in the direction of merging the issue of direct and indirect reports. In any case, it is good to have some studies that directly explore the connection between direct and indirect reports. Are the differences more important than the similarities? Is opacity semantic in direct reports while it is pragmatic in indirect reports? These are important questions, awaiting solid answers.

It may be promising to see whether the mechanisms of indirect reports can be very different in the world languages. How can the study of individual languages bear on the understanding of the social praxis of indirect reports? This is the crucial question we ask in this book and which our numerous authors, familiar with one or more different languages, have tried to answer. I am aware that what we have found out is only the tip of the iceberg and that further work has to be solicited in this area. We are adamant that working in a collaborative spirit can advance our understanding of indirect reports more and more. It is good to have authors coming from at least two teams: philosophy of language and linguistics. This interdisciplinary character of the research is likely to be fruitful in the long term.

## Reference

Capone, Alessandro. 2016. *The pragmatics of indirect reports. Socio-philosophical considerations.* Heidelberg, Springer.

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**Part I**  
**Philosophical approaches**

# On the social praxis of indirect reporting



Alessandro Capone

*For this essay, a report is X's re-presentation to Y of what Z said. It is often the case that Z is identical with X at some earlier time. Occasionally, Y and X are the same person, but that is of little interest in this essay. X's report is never exactly identical with Z's utterance; even if the same words are captured, the context is different, the voice will be different, the speaker's intentions may be different, the medium may be different. Often X will choose to render the report more coherent by rearranging what was said, and/or more vivid by embellishing the original to attract and/or maintain audience attention. When X's report  $\rho$  is compared with Z's utterance  $v$ , the accuracy of  $\rho$  depends on whether or not Z's message in  $v$  can be reconstructed from it. In other words, the content of  $\rho$  is dependent on the content of  $v$ . An accurate report  $\rho$  re-presents the illocutionary point of the source utterance  $v$ . (Allan 2016, 211–212).*

**Abstract** Indirect reports are segments of speech involving a dialogic dimension (clearly constituting a case of polyphony) and thus studying them offers a chance to linguistics to appropriate again its original status as a theory that deals with linguistic signs and communication. The practice of indirect reporting intersects with a theory of knowledge, as, through the indirect report, knowledge is imparted on the basis of which the Hearer will decide whether to act or not and how s/he should take action. In this chapter, I discuss the issue of opacity and try to defend a pragmatic view of opacity in connection with indirect reports (instead, I think that opacity in direct quotation is mainly a semantic issue). I try to explain opacity pragmatically, although I accept that there are numerous exceptions one has to account for (namely replacements of NPs with the aim of facilitating the establishment of reference). In this paper, I also consider the issue of slurs, in terms

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of opacity of the pragmatic kind and I then accept that we have to consider the societal constraints on the use/mention of slurs (more or less as exceptions to the application of pragmatic opacity).

**Keywords** Societal pragmatics · pragmatic opacity · indirect reports

## 1 Indirect reports and how they affect theoretical linguistics

In this chapter I am going to discuss and expatiate on the social praxis of indirect reporting. That this is an important topic is shown by the fact that for many decades not even a single book has been written on this issue – although some papers, especially within the philosophical tradition, on the spur of Donald Davidson’s genial intuition about ‘saying that’, were disseminated on this topic (the philosopher’s merit was to focus on semantic opacity by claiming that an utterance of e.g. ‘John said that Mary is in Paris’ should be broken into two and analysed as ‘John said that. Mary is in Paris’). Philosophers like Cappelen and Lepore (1997, 2005) have been very intelligent in having the intuition that a theory of indirect reporting is at the basis of the semantics/pragmatics debate; however, within theoretical linguistics, there has been a noticeable silence for several decades on the issue of indirect reporting, possibly because scholars have had the premonitory intuition that a correct (or plausible) view of indirect reporting is likely to have drastic effects on our view of general linguistics (given that it will make the notion of communication appear central for a theory of linguistics). Linguists, notoriously, deal with sentences, with the exception of some brave scholars like Labov and Fenshel (1977), so much so that Goffman (1981) in his book ‘Forms of Talk’ has volunteered some ironic remarks on sentences as ‘orphans’. Linguists deal with sentences by depriving them of their natural contexts (conversations) and even pretend that conversation should not be the natural object of linguistic investigation. Instead, as Volosinov made clear in important considerations on indirect reports, indirect reports (even if they normally reduce to sentences/utterances or to brief textual sequences) cannot be studied without a dialogic conception of language (utterances can be uttered collaboratively by two speakers, in which case an indirect report would at least involve three voices, including the original speaker’s whose point of view is being represented (Goodwin 2007)). They are clearly sites where two (or more) voices merge (the hearer’s task is clearly to know how to separate such voices to make sense of the utterance), they are cases of an utterance which minimally consists of two utterances by different speakers (this is the so called phenomenon of polyphony). Is not this consideration enough to show that dialogue or conversation analysis is involved in analyzing sentences (even minimal units such as ‘John said that Mary is in Paris’)? A view of linguistics which, from the very beginning, makes leverage on a dialogic notion is not palatable, especially to scholars who have throughout their lives antagonized a view of language that takes care of central notions such as communication and dialogue. (But surely it

is palatable to all of us who think that communication must play a central role within linguistics). Dialogicity is an important notion which helps to explain how discourses are structured and how they are constrained by their public dimension (see the case of slurs, for example; in reporting slurs, dialogicity is very important, as the dimension of publicity increases the danger of uttering or reporting a slur and may even contribute to transforming mentioning into using a slur; without dialogicity, this otherwise inexplicable transformation could not be accounted for).

At this point we understand why linguists have tried to resist the notion of indirect reporting and why there was such a long silence on this issue. The theory based on indirect reports is crucially at odds with the kind of linguistics we inherited today from formal schools (with the exception of socio-linguistics and anthropological linguistics). But now that this silence was broken at least once (Capone 2016; Eckardt 2014), it is also time to think of how to reconcile a classical view of linguistics as competence-driven and a view of pragmatics as performance-driven. It should be clear, from the very beginning, that I will assign principles of language use the important role of reconciling competence with performance. Also, I do not want to deny that competence plays an important role in language and, in fact, much of what I have to say about language use is likely to slide into a theory of competence (given what I said in a prior chapter on the tension between semantics and pragmatics). However, although my intentions are conciliatory, I will not give up the idea that indirect reports are probably cases which show (here and there) the necessity of pragmatic intrusion into semantics. Independently of this, the very fact that the main problem for indirect reporting is how to separate voices (the original speaker's and the reporter's) seems to introduce an irreducibly dialogic dimension into the game of indirect reporting, which linguistics of the theoretical type has to take into account and can no longer afford to ignore or trivialize.

## **2 Why do we need indirect reporting?**

Utterances are events, and, as events, it may be important, sometimes, to narrate them. The shift from dialogue (the context where the utterance is situated) to narration involves 'extracting' the event from the textual sequence where it belongs to and placing it, after making some suitable transformations, into a different textual sequence and into a different context (I assume that the (new) context is the set of assumptions which can be brought to fully understand the new sequence). Since the participants in the new textual sequence are different from those in the previous one, we can reasonably assume that an utterance which was, initially, interpretable in the light of a common ground CG1 is now interpretable (or should be made interpretable) in the light of CG2. Given that indirect reporting may involve some kind of narrative shift, it is important that this shift at least preserves or summarizes or be compatible with features that belonged to CG1. I frankly admit that I do not believe that narrators or indirect reporters make an effort to sum up the context of the utterance they intend to narrate, although, in principle, there is nothing that should

prevent them from making the effort of providing a summary of the context (in addition to a summary of the utterance). However, I am persuaded that an indirect reporter must be faithful to the original situation of utterance and must capture or report elements that determine (even if not completely) the interpretation of the original utterance (in ways that capture the original speaker's intentions) or, in any case, s/he must report the utterance in such a way that is compatible (and not incompatible) with the original situation of utterance. (The reporter must, first of all, play the role of interpreter, which means reconstructing speaker's intentions in the light of clues available, in case the language used by the original speaker is the same as that used in the report, or, otherwise, translating the words in case the language used by the original speaker is different from that used in the report; very often, the hearer has to reconstruct the role of the reporter as interpreter/translator on the basis of the clues available in context).

But why should we bother to narrate utterances? Why should we bother to say that someone said P? If we judge that from P, the Hearer (the intended co-participant or addressee) can extract information likely to affect his/her life and to modify his/her conduct in ways that are beneficial for him/her, then we bother to report P. Why should we not just confine ourselves to reporting P? Why do we also bother to report that X said P? The reasons may be multiple. We may want to establish that someone is to be praised or blamed for the utterance. Or, more simply, we may want to support the truth of P by specifying who said P, because X is more authoritative than ourselves. Or, even if we have some negligible doubts about P, in case we are open to the possibility that P is true and beneficial to the addressee, we may want to cite X as an informant, so that the addressee can decide by himself whether X is reliable enough and has to be trusted or not. Indirect reports, in other words, very often work as transmission chains and the hearer is capable at any point of the chain to form his/her own judgment as to whether the chain is reliable or not and she/he has to take action on it.

Now, these considerations may appear rather trivial, but the emphasis on action is important because it explains why opacity is sometimes superseded by transparency (opacity means that we are not allowed to freely replace an NP with a coextensive one without changing the truth-conditions of the utterance, in the context of that-clauses; transparency is a semantic property that allows the replacement of an NP with a coextensive one (e.g. normally the external argument of a verb is in a transparent position))). When we indirectly report utterances, it is important to furnish information and not misinformation and, thus, to use NPs that, in addition to illuminating the speaker's mental life, can switch on a light in the addressee and allow him/her to identify a referent. There is, in the social praxis of indirect reporting, always a tension between the exigencies of theory of mind and the exigencies of theory of action. These have to be reconciled, somehow. The flexibility that pragmatic theory allows – due to explanations that make leverage on principles of usage and that sometimes allow one pragmatic mechanism to have precedence over another – could not be achieved by semantics alone.



### 3 The limits to transformations

In indirect reports, we typically have two utterances, one encapsulated in the other: the original speaker's and the indirect reporter's. Given the lack of quotation marks, it is often difficult to intercept the boundaries between the two utterances, given that the indirect reporter may choose quasi-literally what the original speaker said or, rather, put what the original speaker said into a paraphrase that differs at least for some word from what the original speaker said. The paraphrase is often required by the context of the indirect report. Faced with a question like the following 'Can you briefly tell me what Ann said?', the indirect reporter has no other option but to provide a paraphrase/summary of the original utterance; clearly, he has to make the summary relevant to the interests of the hearer and, thus, anything which goes beyond such interests will be discarded, unless its omission amounts to a modification/alteration of the original speaker's main purpose in saying what he said. There are many ways in which the message's words can be (legitimately) transformed, but one constraint of a general type is one that applies to all paraphrases: regardless of the transformations of individual words or syntax, one should not get the impression that the message has been (drastically, deliberately) altered (to suit the reporter's purpose). In fact, there are reasons for (sometimes) changing the words used in the original message, given that such an utterance has been removed from its original context (assuming that the message was suitable or made suitable to that context and the recipients present there) and has been transferred to a different context characterized by different hearers which may have a differential linguistic competence (to exemplify the point in a ways that brings it home to the reader, suppose that the original message contained some words of Latin, but that the indirect reporter judges that in a different context his own hearers do not possess a linguistic competence to grasp Latin; then, he will judge it appropriate to translate those words into English)<sup>1</sup>. It is not just the problem of translation (from one language to another) which the indirect reporter is confronted with; she often has to adapt NPs to the hearer and use different names in case she thinks that a particular name switches on no (referential) light for the hearer; by replacing an NP with a coextensive one, she will make sure that the addressee will intercept the referent (Devitt 1996; Capone 2010; Wettstein 2016). Transformations, thus, ensure a referential anchorage. (But this happens to the detriment of opacity, which is said to apply to intensional contexts like that-clauses of indirect reports. A theoretical move is needed to reconcile opacity in that-clauses with the practical needs of the reporter)).

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<sup>1</sup>Allan (2016) makes the point that both direct and indirect reporting may contain features of indirectness and uses the translation problem to point it out. You can directly report what someone speaking a different language said in your own language: this involves a level of indirectness. This point is well taken. Sometimes, in fact, as I pointed out in Capone (2016), it is not easy to differentiate direct and indirect reporting.

Does this mean that any transformation will do? In Capone (2010, 2013, 2016) I was opposed to the idea that any transformation would be licit, as very often the concealed purpose of transforming the text is not only to adapt the text to the new situation, but also to (intentionally, deliberately) alter the message somehow (having a specific purpose in mind). All changes that aim at modifying the message, of presenting the message in a new light, are potentially suspicious (In fact, if I replaced what my friend John said with a sequence of slurs, I would certainly deliberately obtain the effect of causing a quarrel between John and my hearer who was slurred (if he was slurred by John)). We should at least accept the constraint that not everything will do and that transformations are only licit if they do not modify the illocutionary point of the message (the speaker's intentions behind the message, as reconstructed through cues and clues present in the original speaker's context (see Dascal 2003)). Furthermore, we should not accept (as licit), transformations that somehow modify the attitude of the original speakers' to the referents (especially human referents) talked about. To put things bluntly, we should avoid injecting racism or any other kind of prejudice into the discourse by using words that have strong racist connotations (e.g. slurs), by attributing them to the original speaker. To preserve the face of the original speaker, we need to somehow recognize that he must have some say on what can be said in reporting what he said. He can express judgements (and reservations) on how the message was paraphrased/translated ("This is not what I said", "But you transformed what I said completely", "I said this but I did not mean that . . ."). The parameter of the original speaker's judgment should be certainly taken into account in judging whether the paraphrase involved in the indirect report was legitimate (or NOT), although I should concede a point made by Wayne Davis' p.c. in criticizing my views (Capone 2016). A biased or racist speaker may somewhat be pleased in being paraphrased or reported in a way that betrays his racism – and thus his judgment on the paraphrase may not be good enough. He may end up approving a paraphrase that grossly distorted the main speaker's point. Thus we need the paraphrase to be approved at least by two agents: the original speaker and an impartial judge, who can compensate distortions brought in by the original speaker's own prejudices. (Anyway, one would do well to distinguish approving from agreeing with. The fact that I agree with a position does not mean that I publically approve that position. In fact, I may never approve a paraphrase of what I said even if it expresses a position I agree with, in case it was not my intention to express that position in public).

But it is not only a question of racism. The original speaker may object to the indirect report for matters pertaining to style as well. She may say: "But this was not my style. I would have never put the point this way". Style sometimes matters, and, to say the least, one should avoid injecting into the paraphrase grammatical mistakes, especially if they were missing in the original speaker's statement (an important University professor would deeply resent being reported, especially by a journalist, through an ungrammatical or even slightly ungrammatical sentence). Sometimes even purging mistakes should be impeded, even if we should at least concede that in the practice of journalism the idea that the speaker's speech should be monitored for mistakes is at the heart of paraphrase (probably because being

faithful to the text and concentrating on mistakes would count as a distraction from the main point that the reporter wants to make in reporting an utterance, not to mention that the authoritativeness of the speaker would decrease and the reporter would not like this to happen at least in some cases). (It is amazing that academic texts are, for the most part, copyedited by anonymous copyeditors who are busy correcting texts and presenting them as if the corrections belonged to the authors. Clearly, following considerations by Goffman on footing, these texts have two authors. It is surprising that authors often do not devote a footnote to thank these collaborative (invisible) authors; in my view these should be considered cases of appropriation. Should one quote or indirectly report such texts, one is surely not quoting or indirectly reporting a single author, but two authors).

Even if I said that indirect reports should be benign and try to remedy stylistic problems (because these would be a distraction from content), sometimes altering the style may be an abominable form of omission. This is true of the famous twitter by Donald Trump, who said that “China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters – rips it out of water and takes it to China in unpresided act”. Trump later tried to correct this mistake, but the international press all reported this spelling mistake, as in this case it reveals gross ignorance (and one would minimally expect the President of USA not to be an ingnoramus).

#### **4 Do the intentions of the original speaker count?**

We have to settle from the very beginning on whether a good practice of indirect reporting should rest on literal meaning or whether one should recognize the reporter’s duty to report (mainly) the speaker’s meaning and not to confine herself to the literal meaning. This is an important dilemma to start with. One has to say from the very beginning that the speaker’s meaning seems to be crucial in indirect reporting (and more than literal meaning). The reason for this is that sometimes, albeit not in general, the speaker’s meaning supersedes the literal meaning, and, thus, merely reporting the speaker’s meaning would amount to giving the impression that one is transforming the message, tipping the scales in favor of an unintended interpretation. In Capone (2016) I discussed these notions in some depth:

Suffice it to say for the time being that I am inclined to accept a view that indirect reports, usually or normally, report an interpreted utterance and thus encapsulate features of the context of utterance, although I would probably have to concede that in the presence of insufficient clues, an indirect report may be taken to minimally report the locutionary content of what was said. However, this is not the default interpretation of an indirect report, and we need abundant clues to discard the default interpretation involving a reference to the (original) speaker’s meaning. Intuitively, one reports an uninterpreted locutionary act only if there are ambiguities and one is not able to settle the ambiguity by coming to a plausible (preferred) interpretation. Proffering an indirect report that is very close to the literal act amounts to a surrender: one is not able to report the speaker’s meaning because there are irreducible ambiguities and one wants to get the hearer involved in settling the ambiguity, requiring an investment in responsibility (Capone 2016, 2).

If the literal interpretation is not intended by the original speaker, then it will merely not do to report the utterance literally. In Capone 2016, I made at least three points clear. The indirect reporter is allowed to report the utterance literally only if there is no discrepancy between the literal and the non-literal interpretation; the indirect reporter has to report the utterance literally, in case there is some interpretative ambiguity she cannot easily resolve and, thus, by reporting the utterance literally, she concedes that there is an interpretative dispute which ought to be passed on to the hearer as such. Otherwise, the indirect reporter has a duty to report the utterance non-literally, being faithful to the speaker's intentions. However, given that a speaker knows that, in principle, a reporter may avail herself of the option of reporting the utterance literally, if the matter is important to her, she should adopt a principle of Prudence and avoid (projecting) non-literal interpretations, given that the hearer can report what she said in a literal way, albeit not legitimately. A speaker who meant something else from what was reported literally (and illegitimately) has the option of defending herself by listing the contextual cues and clues that modified her intended interpretation in the original context and, also, of specifying how the reporter deliberately transformed the meaning of her words.

Linguists/philosophers of language like Cappelen and Lepore (2005) have used indirect reports as a way of testing meaning (whether a contribution is semantic or pragmatic) and they defend the idea that indirect reporting should mainly reveal the semantic point of the utterance. I do not quarrel with this idea, although, in line with what I said before, the crucial question is what happens when the speaker departs from literal meanings in a blatant way. Anyway, my intention is not to contradict Cappelen and Lepore's meta-theoretical point. When we are in a context such as Cappelen and Lepore's, we know what the purpose of the indirect report is – testing a theory of semantics – and we may very well accept that purpose and say that, for that limited purpose, indirect reports reveal what is semantic. However, given that we accepted that in real life one should indirectly report utterances non-literally (especially if they depart from literal meanings), we should be aware that Cappelen and Lepore's test is controversial. We have already said that in some contexts it will do to report an utterance literally (if there is an interpretative ambiguity one is not able to resolve), and thus we may very well concede Cappelen and Lepore's point, but we should at least warn our readers that indirect reports can then be seen both as a test for semantics and as a test for pragmatics and we should know which context we are in to select one option over the other. Even accepting this possible fork is like conceding that indirect reporting, after all, is no test at all (in fact, it is a matter for doubt whether there can be automatic tests that can help us separate semantics from pragmatics, given that at least sometimes they (these two levels) are pretty entangled). We already know from the beginning what the semantics is like and we do not need indirect reporting to show that a certain interpretation is the legitimate semantic one. On the contrary, it makes sense to use indirect reports to test pragmatic meaning, since this involves altering and adding levels to semantic meaning.

## 5 Opacity

It is now time to say something (at some level of depth) about opacity. It is well known that that-clauses are intensional contexts, that is to say contexts in which it is not licit to substitute an NP (but it could also be another element of the sentential structure, such as a verb, for example) with a coextensive one (one which denotes the same object), because the result is (or may be) a drastic change in truth conditions. The favorite objects of study, for opacity, are that-clauses that depend on verbs like 'believe' or verbs like 'say'. Undoubtedly there are some notable differences between 'say' and 'believe', although there are also some similarities as one who says *p* typically (though not invariably) is one who believes *p* and one who believes *p* must show at least an inclination to say *p*, at least in response to the question whether *P* is true or not. Despite the differences (the most obvious of which is that one can say *P* without believing *P*, given that anyone can be a liar), both 'believe' and 'say' end up being intensional, that is to say blocking Leibniz' law in that-clauses dependent on them. The reason why someone who believes *P* need not believe *Q* (even if *P* and *Q* are coextensive) is that she may withdraw assent to *Q* because she does not recognize that a referent of an NP in *Q* is coreferential with an NP in *P*). One may believe that Cicero is a very good speaker without believing (and knowing) that Tullius is a good speaker. Analogously, someone who says *P* need not feel bound to accept that *Q* (and above all need not be inclined to say that *Q*) even if *P* and *Q* are coextensive, in case he does not realize that saying *P* amounts to saying *Q*.

Some may think and say that opacity is mainly a matter of semantics. It is the nature of the verb 'believe' or say' that blocks the application of Leibniz' law. Yet there are a number of exceptions to this rule, because, as we have already seen rather quickly, there may be a tension between a theory of mind (and a theory of saying) and a theory of action. Action may not be possible unless we deliberately change, at least in some cases, the NPs that allow the hearer to have a referential fix on a certain object (Kepa Korta and Perry 2011). If we want the Hearer to take action, at least we should be capable of replacing an NP which the Hearer is not familiar with with an NP which the hearer is (indeed) familiar with. If we show a preference for a theory of action, we have to neglect a preference for a theory of mind. In any case, if there are rules that say that indirect reports (including belief reports) are opaque contexts, these rules are invariably bound to have many exceptions (a notable exception is the fact that in many cases what is said or believed appears to be expressed in the reporter's language, while intuitively it had to be thought of in a different language (given that the original speaker was the speaker of a different language)). Now, while I am not opposed in principle to semantic opacity, being a scholar in pragmatics, I must at least consider the plausibility of having an opacity view of intensional contexts that rests on pragmatic principles, especially in the case of indirect reports – this, intuitively, would allow opacity to be flexible enough, and this would allow all the exceptions we have so far talked about to creep into that-clauses. But this amounts to accepting that it is not easy to define the boundaries

between semantics and pragmatics and that our semantics tolerates a non-negligible dose of pragmatic intrusion. Actually, we have done much more than decreeing a certain amount of pragmatic intrusion into semantics, but we have already accepted the (rather radical idea) that what has so far looked like a semantical rule, in fact, is entirely due to a principle of language use (we have not as yet invoked Gricean maxims to explain pragmatic opacity, but in Capone (2010, 2013, 2016) I have made reference to a paraphrase/style/form rule that seems to be within the scope of pragmatics. And it is this that is responsible for opacity (although we now concede that opacity in the case of indirect reports is something of a pragmatic nature). The flexibility of our pragmatics allows this rule to be defeated whenever considerations pertaining to the theory of action rank higher than considerations pertaining to the theory of mind, that is to say when the vocalization of an indirect report is aimed at favoring a certain action on the part of the Hearer and such an action would never take place unless and until s/he (the Hearer) recognized the referent of an NP or s/he could come to know a certain fact through words of English, the only language known to her, even if the original speaker speaker uttered a proposition in the only language known to her (e.g. Latin or Russian). Flexibility need not amount to cancellability, as there are many aspects of discourse which still have to be studied before being able to say that opacity or the lack of it, in discourse, is defeasible or not. The fact that there are some discourse rules that tell us to behave in a certain way, rather than in another, need not be a clear indication that a phenomenon is cancellable. In fact, in that context the phenomenon need not be cancellable. However, I am aware that the discussion of this is not easy and, furthermore, requires a semanticised notion of discourse rules which we are not used to. However, I am not skeptical about the idea that, in future years, we may be able to come to a better and deeper understanding of these issues (and how they are, for example, related to discourse rules that determine repair work). So, while we shall not proceed in this direction, at least I want to take stock and point out the definitive results of this discussion. The result so far is that, even if it is difficult to accept a semantic rule determining opacity (in indirect reports), we know that opacity is a default characteristic of that-clauses of indirect reports, and this is due to pragmatics (what we can call 'pragmatic opacity'). Pragmatic opacity is flexible enough to accommodate exceptions to opacity, cases in which the report (and the reporter) forgets about the prescriptions of pragmatic opacity but freely replaces an NP with another. Now, despite the substitutions, there may be some pragmatic mechanism that marks an NP that is within an intensional context as being thought of through some form which need not coincide with that NP and which represents the mode of presentation of the original speaker/believer of the referent of that NP. (Thus I partially accept what Richard (2013) says about the contextual nature of belief reports, except for accepting that in the default case the NP present in the utterance has to be taken as representing the mode of presentation of the reference for the original speaker). So far, I have more or less expiated on the fact that pragmatic principles determining opacity may have to be flexible and would have to be superseded in case a theory of action becomes prevalent with respect to a theory of mind. But it may be useful to give an explanation of how a pragmatic theory of

opacity works by reporting a discussion which I presented in Capone (2016). The discussion is presented by making reference to a theory of language games, but only with the purpose of giving a didactic illustration of the pragmatic rationale involved in opacity (it is clear that other speakers may use alternative strategies (see Soames 2015), so I do not wish to claim that this should be the most optimal one).

In the current (pragmatic) theories there is the presupposition (and anyway the tacit acceptance) of the clearly not very appealing idea that the representation of a sentence embedded in a verb of propositional attitude does not refer to the mental representation of the person whose belief is reported but to the mental representation of the speaker who reports this belief. This is a counterintuitive idea as it violates every basic principle of rationality underlying communicative practices. (I do not deny that there are exceptions to be accounted for and that there are contexts in which the main speaker is considered culpable for any impropriety of the indirect report). If we want to describe Mary's belief it is much easier to start with Maria's mental representations, rather than with our mental representations of Maria's representations, unless there is a problem that renders a deviation from such a practice necessary. Let us suppose that we have many cards (this example understandably has a Wittgensteinian flavor). On the external part of the card we do not find the content of the card but only the generic message: 'Representation of Mary's belief' or 'Representation of the representation of Mary's belief' or 'Representation of the representation of the representation of Mary's belief'. Which card will be chosen by a person interested in knowing what Mary believes? It is clear that as soon as meta-representative levels have been added (or multiplied) we depart more and more from the original representation of Mary's belief. The most rational addressee will prefer the card that represents Mary's belief more directly. However, if for some reason this card contains an obscure NP, then the recipient will try to choose a different card and, in order, the card exhibiting a representation of the representation of Mary's belief (the order is determined by rational choice). This is the point of view of the addressee. Now let us move towards the point of view of the person who reports Mary's belief. Which card will be chosen by such a person? It is to be taken for granted that the speaker is aware of the interests of the addressee and knows that he prefers to have direct access to the belief of the person whose belief is reported, rather than to the representation of the representation of such a belief. The choice of the speaker, then, must model (or reflect) the choice (or the preference) of the addressee as determined by his practical interests. This description of the language game (as at this point it is evident that we are dealing with a Wittgensteinian language game where different possible moves are available) reveals the fact that the person who reports the belief (or the belief attribution) uses the same linguistic moves that would be chosen by the addressee (in other words he is able to simulate his/her choices) because he puts himself into his/her shoes and simulates his/her interests. He can also anticipate comprehension difficulties if he knows that the addressee does not recognize a referent through an NP and, therefore, at this point he avoids the card of the direct representation of the belief because he knows that it would not be useful and he thus chooses a different representation,



even if an indirect one. (In general, when we cannot achieve something directly, we go for strategies that allow us to obtain that thing indirectly).

## 6 Direct versus indirect reports

The idea I have formed of indirect reports is very much indebted to the idea I have formed about quotation (see the previous chapter on quotation). I should rather bluntly say that I would have never arrived at this view of indirect reports without undertaking the detour of the analysis of quotation, which led me to a totally and radically pragmatic theory of quotation (following directions and signposts disseminated in Saka 2006, 2011). However, one of the negative consequences of such pragmatic theories (of quotation and of indirect reports) is that it becomes very difficult to distinguish between direct and indirect reports. To my knowledge, there are pragmatic ways of interpreting direct reports as indirect reports and there are pragmatic ways to interpret indirect reports as direct reports or, in any case, as having mixed-quoted segments. Given such views, it is not completely clear how to distinguish one practice from the other, although one move that is left to us is to talk about the default semantics of direct reports and the default semantics of indirect reports. But it is not even necessary to resort to such a move, which, when one thinks deeply of it, has the same problems of thoroughly pragmatic theories of quotation and of indirect reports. Default interpretations can very well be abandoned when/once it is clear that the context offers contextual clues that are incompatible with them and lead to their deletions. In Capone (2016) I tried to make leverage on a syntactic difference between direct and indirect reports, namely the fact (if this is a hard fact) that while in direct reports one can tolerate the presence of discourse markers (if one reports a voice, one can also report (directly) the kind of discourse markers used by that voice), in indirect reports the presence of some discourse markers is not well tolerated – in fact a number of scholars have argued that they should be banished from these discourse positions. The discourse marker which has the strictest selection-restrictions is ‘But’; to my ear, the utterance ‘John said that But Mary is very clever’ is not well-formed (from a discourse and a sentential point of view), and the reason for that (if there is a reason) is that the complementizer is filled twice by ‘that’ and by ‘But’, which, being a connective, plays more or less the semantic role played by ‘that’ in conjoining two sentences. Now some scholars like e.g. Keith Allan (personal communication) have insisted on the fact that if we accept that indirect reports allow mixed-quoted segments, there should be no reason why (semantically and pragmatically speaking) connectives/discourse markers should not appear in such positions. Of course, at this point it is important to find out whether a discourse marker works like a genuine discourse marker or whether it may occasionally have the syntactic function of a connective. If it is a connective (syntactically), regardless of the story on mixed-quoted segments, it cannot appear in complementizer-filled positions (see how the situation somehow improves when the complementizer is absent as in ‘John said But mary didn’t go to



Paris')<sup>2</sup>. Now, why is it that I am insisting on this theoretical position? I am doing so because I think it is important to distinguish, at least from a theoretical point of view, direct from indirect reports. Opacity is a notion that requires, for its postulation, direct reports and it is imported into indirect reports only because pragmatically they can be seen as representing the voice of the original speaker and the original speaker may object to the substitution of certain words (especially in favor of foul language, obscenities, racist words, bad stylistic options, ungrammatical sentences, etc.). Opacity, as was said earlier on, is pragmatically imported into indirect reports (thus, it is pragmatically rather than semantically justified, regardless of Donald Davidson's genial paratactic view. Davidson's view is applicable only if we consider opacity as a pragmatic creature. Davidson was fundamentally right on 'saying that' but not because his semantic analysis can be defended (or is really defensible) but because it can be translated into a pragmatic analysis which can take on all the burden of Davidson's semantic hypothesis).

Now, if, following pragmaticists that are too radical, we accept that there no boundaries between direct and indirect reports, we end up having trouble in justifying opacity, as at this point we would have to say that not even in direct reports it is a semantic notion – something which I doubt very much. The only plausible alternative is to say that, despite the many cases of overlap between direct and indirect reports, there are principled ways to keep them distinct semantically and this helps us establish that opacity has a semantic (rather than a pragmatic) cause. I do not want to say that people cannot have alternative views, but for me it is really hard and not very plausible to claim that opacity is, in all cases, pragmatic through and through. This would have to mean that opacity need not depend on the semantics of the verb 'say', but this is clearly a problem because, at this point, we would have to extend this reasoning to all other intensional verbs, such as 'believe' or 'know' and if the pragmatic story was all we would have to commit ourselves to, then we would have no (semantic) principled way to make a class of intensional verbs. It would be by pure chance that intensional verbs are intensional, that is to say, they create opacity. Then this story is a small step towards arguing that here is universal opacity and that even positions outside extensional verbs can be opaque – a position which I have vigorously and strenuously opposed in Capone (2016) for the mere reason that universal opacity is an untenable hypothesis, based on a proliferation of examples which do not show anything at all (except that there

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<sup>2</sup>There are problems with other discourse markers, such as 'However', 'Oh', 'well' and 'Anyway'. While these may function syntactically as sentence adverbials (and not necessarily as connectives), a problem I see is that insertion after 'that' (as in "Mary said that, however, she would never go to Paris", even assuming that the story about mixed quotation (invoked by Keith Allan (personal communication) works, creates an interpretative ambiguity which cannot be easily resolved in the absence of contextual clues. Who is responsible for the voice, at this point: the reporting speaker or the reported speaker? Pragmatic principles like the ones I used in Capone (2010) would ensure that the voice is attributed to the reported speaker, but, of course, there may be contextual clues in the opposite direction. This may be a reason why people are reluctant to insert discourse markers in that-clauses of indirect reports.

are a number of exceptions). Accepting universal opacity (which would surely be a totally and radically pragmatic view) is like saying that all NP positions in a sentence are potentially opaque. I do not see the interest of such a story, because if all positions are potentially opaque, then why then should we bother to make the opaque/transparent distinction? We would surely even have problems in saying that some positions are transparent.

## 7 Slurs

It is of some theoretical interest to discuss the issue of slurs (words that are used to disparage some racial categories (Allan 2016) due to their perlocutionary effects) within the context of indirect reports, to see at least if my theory of indirect reports makes (or does not make) the right kind of predictions for slurs (as embedded in indirect reports). In other words, I want to study the interconnections between the issue of slurs and the issue of indirect reporting. What my theory certainly predicts is that one cannot (out of the blue) take a non-racist (non-slurring) expression and replace it with a racist expression (or a slur) and embed it in the *that*-clause of an indirect report, attributing it to the person who presumably uttered the original utterance. In other words, we cannot attribute slurs to those who never uttered them, just because they are coextensive with the non-slurring expressions. Opacity is a guarantee that one cannot engage in this practice and that if one did, this would count as an illicit (immoral) action, almost equivalent to a lie. The reason why one cannot make replacements of this kind is that, although one, by doing so, would tell the truth from a factual point of view (If just the referents and the denotations of the predicates were considered), one would distort the truth about the attitudes of the (original) speaker towards the referents. By attributing a slur to the original speaker, we are pretending that she is racist (when possibly she is not or she would not like to be seen as racist). In other words, we are projecting an attitude which either she does not have (towards the referent) or which she would prefer not to be attributed to her (at least in public). (One can very well be racist but pretend that one is not). So far I think there can be no doubt about this and we see that the story of opacity protects original speakers from being attributed slurs.

Now, the real important theoretical question is, instead, what happens if an indirect reports contains a slur (embedded in the *that*-clause). Given that, following Volosinov, an indirect report is an instance of dialogicity and an example of polyphony, and given that we know well that there are different voices and we would like to keep distinct the voice of the original speaker from that of the indirect reporter, how can we set out to do that? How can distinguish voices and which voice shall we attribute to the slur? Should we attribute the slur to the original speaker, to the reporter or to both? According to Anderson and Lepore (2013) both actors are involved in the slurring, even if they think that mainly the responsibility goes to the reporter (Their view is largely dependent on the notion that a slur has a semantic potential for slurring and contrasts, e.g., with Keith Allan's (2016) view,

which considers slurring effects as perlocutionary effects). My theory about indirect reporting, instead, makes the opposite predictions. It is mainly the original speaker who is responsible for the slurring, given that the indirect report is about the original speaker and that if the original speaker had not uttered the slurring expression, the reporter would be under the duty not to report a slur, falsely implicating that the slur was uttered by the original speaker. I think that Anderson and Lepore and myself start from different premises and we should be clear about what is happening and why my predictions are different. According to Anderson and Lepore there is an indictment against uttering slurs, whether in direct locutions or indirect reports. The reason for this is that there is an edict against using slurs. However, in direct quotations we can refer to slurs, even if we are not using them. But there is an indictment against mentioning slurs anyway. Given this edict (societal rule), either using or mentioning slurs should be prohibited. Thus, the reporter, if he used or mentioned a slur, would be guilty too. But the fact that the reporter is guilty of something does not mean that he is mainly responsible for the slur or that the slur belongs to his voice. In uttering the slur (while reporting it) he may be complicit because he did not make a substitution (the use of a weaker expression such as, e.g., the N-word (see Allan 2016 for this euphemism)). He may have said something that is not politically correct, we agree. But he has certainly not projected himself as being principally responsible for the slur, given the possibility that the original speaker was responsible for it and that if the original speaker had never uttered it, it would be snide on the part of the reporter to use a slurring expression in reporting what the original speaker said, creating an interpretative ambiguity. If anything, the speaker has the duty to make the interpretation process as smooth as possible for the hearer and this involves predicting and possibly eliminating (by the use of alternative expressions) interpretative ambiguities. In Capone (2016), I correctly insisted on the idea that it should be possible, at least in theory, to report a slurring expression without being guilty of slurring. This is more or less what happens in a linguistic book, where we mention (in Lyons' 1977 use of 'mention') a slur and we certainly do not want to be seen as using the slur (also see Allan 2016), as being complicit or as being racist in the least (in other words, I insist that there should be a difference, at least in theory, between using and mentioning a slur and that the latter action should be less culpable). It is true that the scholar who writes on slurs has to do some repair work in order to get his story on track (and avoid the accusation of being racist), but this is certainly possible and it is part of our linguistic resources that we can offset the negative potential of a word by explaining why we are using it (or, rather, mentioning it) in a theoretical discussion).

Of course, there are many contexts in which slurs can be used (or mentioned) and in some contexts the implications of the action (of slurring) may be stronger and more negative. In an informal conversation, one may very well report a slurring expression with the intention of accusing the original speaker of saying something which was not correct (societally speaking, given that the slur denoted racism). However, when we talk on the radio or the tv, it may be totally out of the question to use or mention a slurring expression (see Mey's Preface to Capone (2016)). The strange thing, which is of great consequence, but on which we cannot dwell

long, is that given the public dimension of radio or television talk, the mention of a slur becomes ‘ipso facto’ a usage of the slur. Why is it that there is such a strong **transformation** (from mention to usage)? (And here authors like Anderson and Lepore are silent on the issue of this possible and powerful transformation which is itself of great theoretical importance from a linguistico/pragmatic point of view). The reason cannot be semantic but must be pragmatic. The speaker who intends to report (an example of usage of) a slurring expression knows that he is speaking to a wide national audience and that the slurring expression may sound offensive at least to a segment of the population. Furthermore, it may count as a **precedent** to further future uses. Furthermore, he knows that there is an interpretative ambiguity and that it is likely that the audience will interpret his utterance as attributing the slur to the reported speaker. However, given that he talks in public, he should do something to distance himself from the reported voice. If there was an alternative to the slurring expression (e.g. the N-word) and he did not use it, then he would show himself to have little concern for the feelings of those who feel insulted by the use of the N-word. It appears then that there is a convention like the following:

When you talk in public, in making an indirect report distance yourself from the reported speaker’s voice maximally, in case the reported speaker uses words that are offensive at least to a segment of the audience, because the use of mass media multiplies the offensiveness of the slurring expression.

The reason why usage (or mention) of slurs in talks projected through mass media (at the national level) is prohibited is that there are priorities about what should be done and what should be avoided. It is like choosing not to do something which is fundamentally benign because some people may distort the nature of the deed. Creating precedents of usage through quotation (in contexts in which it is not absolutely clear that one is quoting rather than using an expression) before a wide national tv-audience is never good. Even in quoting one may hurt feelings and especially evoke a social problem – and this one may want to avoid in special circumstances in which there is no focus on a problematic issue.

Now, I believe that something of this sort must be operative in language, however it works only for special occasions. Certainly it is not applicable to scholarly books that discuss slurring expressions and their potential offensiveness. There must be ways to talk about slurs which do not amount ‘ipso facto’ to slurring. And this corroborates my view of indirect reports and the implicit practices that attribute the slurring expression to the original speaker rather than to the indirect reporter.

## 8 Conclusion

Indirect reporting is an important practice, one which we cannot do without. It is a practice similar to describing or reporting an event, but in this case the peculiarity of the reporting is that we are confronted with a linguistic event. In the same way in which we can report an extra-linguistic event, we can focus on some details, rather

than all, and we can thus transmit a partial view of what happened. In general, this is enough to allow the Hearer to have a grasp of what happened and to utilize such knowledge for the purpose of action. Reporting is almost never a neutral action, since in reporting we are busy interpreting what happened, in this case a linguistic event. Thus the act of reporting amounts to an act of interpretation/paraphrase of the original event. This is the reason why, in the default case, an indirect report is to be intended as reporting what the speaker intended to say and thus encapsulates all the contextual clues that might be utilized for the purpose of extracting knowledge from the original speech act (conversely, reporting an utterance verbatim may sometimes be a way of obscuring the intended meaning of the speech act).

It may be important to study all the facets of indirect reporting – in particular implicit indirect reporting. There is not much written on this, except for some articles on quotation by Elisabeth Holt and some discussions of such notions in the last chapter of Capone (2016) (Capone utilizes indirect report to shed light on the mystery of substitution failure in some simple sentences (see Saul 2007)). It may also be important to investigate the connection between indirect reports of the implicit kind and presuppositions, something that was done in Macagno and Capone (2016) and Macagno and Capone (2017).

Another important direction in investigating indirect reports is to shed light on the connection between translating and indirectly reporting; one more important direction is to investigate the interpretation of laws as a peculiar case of indirect reporting. Polyphony is an important notion here, given that passing a law amounts to making a collective speech act, in which the voices of many agents have to intersect (and a compromise must be reached). Clearly these are all topics for the future, as in this chapter I have confined myself to what could be reasonably done within a short chapter. Let me reiterate that indirect reports are an important chapter that promises to shed light on the reason d'être of linguistics, that is to say its relationship with a theory of communication. I find it hard to imagine a linguistics which expunges a theory of communication, although linguists of Chomskyan origin have done their best to segregate/insulate linguistics from a societally inspired subject in which the main object should be the investigation of the role of communication in society. We should be busy rectifying the mistake which was perpetuated by generations of scholars of the formal stripe.

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# Semantics and What is Said



Una Stojnic and Ernie Lepore

**Abstract** A once commonplace view is that only a semantic theory that interprets sentences of a language according to what their utterances intuitively say can be correct. The rationale is that only by requiring a tight connection between what a sentence means and what its users intuitively say can we explain why, normally, those linguistically competent with a language upon hearing its sentences uttered can discern what they say. More precisely, this approach ties the semantic content of a sentence to intuitions about “says that” reports. Cappelen and Lepore (1997, 2004) forcefully argued against this approach. But given their criticism, what constraints are there on a correct assignment of semantic content to sentences of a language? Two choices are available regard: either give up the strategy of identifying semantic content by looking at indirect speech reports, *or*, conclude that the intuition about the connection between meaning and intuitions about indirect reports is basically on the right track, but needs to be further constrained. We will explore both strategies and argue that ultimately we should reject the intuitions about indirect reports as tests on semantic theory, and propose a more direct strategy for identifying semantic content.

**Keywords** semantics · indirect reports · conversational record · David Lewis

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>≈

A once commonplace view is that only a semantic theory that interprets sentences *S* of a language *L* according to what its utterances intuitively say can be correct. The rationale is that only by requiring a tight connection between what a sentence means and what its users intuitively say can we explain why, normally, those linguistically competent with a language upon hearing its sentences uttered can discern what they say.<sup>2</sup> This motivates the following constraint on semantic theory:<sup>3</sup>

*Said That (ST)*: A semantic theory *T* for a language *L* should assign *p* as the semantic content of an utterance *u* of a sentence *S* in *L* iff “The speaker said that *p*” is a true indirect report of *u*.<sup>4</sup>

Cappelen and Lepore, 1997, 2004 argued against ST by collecting varied data of successful indirect reports that look to challenge ST. For example, should Prof X utter (1a), then A, in reporting this utterance to the shortest student, can use (1b):

- (1) a. The shortest student should sit in the front row.  
b. Prof X said that you should sit in the front row.

And should Prof X utter (2a) in response to A’s asking, “Did Alice pass your exam?”, A can report this utterance to Alice’s adviser with (2b):

- (2) a. No one failed.  
b. Prof X said that Alice passed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was published as “What’s What’s Said” in *What is Said and What is Not: The Semantics/Pragmatics Interface*, Penco Carlo and Domaneschi Filippo (eds.), CSLI Lecture Notes No 207, CSLI Publications, Stanford, 2014, pp. 17–36. As before, we want to thank David Braun, Gilbert Harman, Christopher Hom, Kirk Ludwig, Adam Sennett, and especially Matthew Stone.

<sup>2</sup>We are *not* using *what’s said* and *what’s uttered* in any technically loaded sense. For instance, we are not using it in the technical sense of Grice (1957), or Kaplan (1989), where these notions are defined as the semantic content, or literal meaning of a sentence. It is however in the spirit of both Grice and Kaplan to request that their notion of *what is said*, as the semantic content, will conform to ST, and this is what much of the subsequent literature endorsed as well. Although Kaplan was sensitive to the issue of whether his technical notion of *what’s said* is suited to play the intuitive notion of what’s said, the worry was precisely motivated by a need for a tight connection between the two. See Kaplan (1989).

<sup>3</sup>Note, ST is only a necessary condition on adequacy, and so, is compatible with further constraints on full adequacy.

<sup>4</sup>We will be using “interpretation” and “content” interchangeably throughout; we hope this doesn’t create any confusions.

<sup>5</sup>Some argue (e.g. Farkas & Brasoveanu, 2007.) that reports like (1b)–(2b) are *generally* infelicitous. All we need to register our point, though, is that there are contexts in which such reports are both licensed and perfectly felicitous. And indeed, there are (as we show below).



Should B want to report A's utterance of (3a) to some movers, knowing that when A spoke only one table was in Room 211, but another with flowers on it has since been added, B might very well use (3b):

- (3) a. The table in the front of Room 211 has to go.  
 b. A said that the table in front of Room 211 *without flowers on it* has to go.

What emerges from these and various other data is that acceptable indirect reports often seem to depend on non-linguistic considerations (e.g. whom you are talking to, what you are trying to accomplish with your report, how have conditions changed since the original utterance, etc.).

To take two further examples, though (4b)–(5b) might sound odd as reports of (4a)–(5a) when offered out of the blue, it is easy to imagine appropriate contexts in which each is felicitous, as in (4b')–(5b'):

- (4) a. A: John and Mary first went to the movies, then they had dinner together and then they went to the party. They had a great time.  
 b. B: A said that John and Mary had a great time at the party.  
 b'. B, when being asked whether the party was any good: A said that John and Mary had a great time at the party.
- (5) a. A: Bill bought a sandwich. It cost \$7.  
 b. B: A said that the sandwich cost \$7.  
 b': B, when asked about the cost of the sandwich:  
 A said that the sandwich cost \$7.

Since felicitous *say-that* reports can depend on shared non-linguistic beliefs about the contexts of utterance and of the report, such reports look suspect as guides to isolating semantic content. Additionally, since distinct utterances of the same sentence often license radically different reports, to insist on ST would require the sort of massive contextualization most of us are willing to tolerate.<sup>6,7</sup> A related

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<sup>6</sup>Of course, in a quest for adequacy, it is slightly uncomfortable to reject ST on these grounds. The obvious rejoinder is: inadequate according to which criterion? We might reply that any theory predicting such massive context-sensitivity would not only be surprising and inelegant. Of course, this is not a decisive argument against contextualization: whether any particular item is context-sensitive or not is a matter of an empirical enquiry. But it is a challenge: a theory that posits such contextualization has to provide a systematic account of how semantic contents vary with context in such unexpected ways.

<sup>7</sup>A distinct criticism of ST (not pursued until §2 below) derives from the fact that certain aspects of interpretation that many theorists are inclined to include under semantics seem not to register on what's said. Consider (6)–(7):

- (6) a. A: Mary stopped smoking.  
 b. #B: A said that Mary used to smoke.
- (7) a. A: John's sister lives in New Jersey.  
 b. #B: A said that John has a sister.

worry is that one and the same utterance can be reported by radically different reports. For instance, one might report Prof X in (2a) equally with (2b) or with “Prof X said that no one failed”. Where do we go from here?

One strategy would be to restrict ST to *literally/strictly speaking say-that* reports; the idea is that we should replace ST with:

*Literally Said That (LST)*: A semantic theory T for a language L should assign p as the semantic content of an utterance u of a sentence S in L iff “The speaker literally/strictly speaking said that p” is a true report of u.

LST proponents concede that some *say-that* reports fail to isolate *semantic* content, but take solace in thinking that the corresponding *literally/strictly speaking say-that* reports do. In cases (1)–(3) above, it is not unreasonable to protest that these reports, though true, are *not* what the speaker literally said. In uttering (1a), Prof X literally said the shortest student should sit in the front row. In uttering (2a), Prof X literally said that no one failed. In uttering (3a), A didn’t *strictly speaking* say the table without the flowers on it in front of Room 211 has to go, but rather that the table in front of Room 211 has to go. So, at least for these cases, the addition of *strictly speaking/literally* salvages the spirit of ST. Unfortunately, as attractive as LST is, it is not an obvious advance over ST.

The main problem with LST is that *literally/strictly speaking say-that* reports exhibit no less flexibility in reporting than the simpler *say-that* ones, and so, LST still winds up predicting more semantic flexibility than many of us are prepared to swallow.

Suppose a speaker utters, “John put on his shoes and left the room.” Consider the report, “The speaker said that John left the room.” Ask yourself whether the speaker literally said that. The intuitive answer, at least intuitive to us, is that she has. However, most theorists would not want to conclude, “John left the room”, uttered in c, has the same semantic content as, “John put on his shoes and left the room.” Rather, one entails the other. Likewise, if a speaker utters, “Anne bought a new red dress” and someone reports this utterance with, “The speaker said that Anne bought a dress”, intuitively this is a correct report of what the speaker literally said. At least it is, unless by asking for a literal report, we are asking for a direct quote of what the speaker said. That we are not should be obvious as soon as we consider utterances of sentences with indexical expressions; namely, if a speaker utters “I am happy”, the report, “The speaker said that I am happy”, though an exact

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(6a)–(7a) presuppose the complement clauses of (6b)–(7b) respectively, and these presuppositions are linguistically triggered, and therefore, many theorists conclude that somehow these presuppositions are a part of the semantics of (6a)–(7a), but, just the same, they are not said by A. Accordingly, (6b)–(7b) would be deemed false. There’s linguistic support for this conclusion; if you want to deny what A said with her utterance in (6a) or (7a), you can do so by protesting, “No, I disagree” or “No, that is false”, but your denials do not deny that Mary used to smoke nor John having a sister. These data suggest that, however presupposition is linguistically encoded in (6a) or (7a), it is not a part of what’s said. If this is right, it would seem to follow that not all the semantic properties of a sentence track or are part of what’s said by its utterances.

quote, is false in all cases in which the speaker and reporter are non-identical (and in the cases where they *are* identical, such reports are still pretty odd).

Furthermore, tightening LST by an appeal to acts of retraction (claiming that a speaker has not literally/strictly speaking said that *p* if, when the report is challenged, the reporter can retract to a weaker position, e.g. “Well, the speaker did not quite say that . . .”) won’t establish much progress. For one, which retraction is available with (4b) and (5b)? If challenged, the reporter would be perfectly entitled to stick to her guns. Or, suppose A utters, “I had dinner and went to the party.” B can perfectly well report, “A said she went to the party”. When challenged, B cannot retract to “Well, A did not quite say that; she only said she had dinner and went to the party.” Most theorists hold that the semantic contents of “A had dinner” and “A had dinner and went to the party” are distinct, and moreover, that the second *strictly speaking* entails the first. But for obvious reasons, it would be difficult to say that a semantic theory *T* is adequate *only if* it assigns *p* to an utterance *u* of *S* iff “*S* said that *q*” is a true report of *u*, where *q* entails *p*.

Of course, stipulating a special meaning of *literally* or *strictly speaking* to figure in LST will not help either; that would obviously get the project backwards. The point of adhering to indirect reports in the first place is to find an *intuitive* adequacy test. If we tailor a particular meaning of *literally says that* to fit a favored semantic theory, how, then, could ensuring the truth of *such* reports have any bearing whatsoever on adequacy of the theory?<sup>8</sup>

At this stage, two choices remain available: either reject ST and LST and look for something altogether different, *or*, conclude they are, though *naïve*, basically on the right track, and so, continue the search for a constraint that will do the trick. In §1, we will explore the second strategy, looking at refinements of ST; in §2, we will consider the first strategy, divorcing semantics from reporting practices entirely.

## 2 Indirect Reports in a State of Ignorance

Denying *any* connection between semantic interpretation and indirect speech seems *prima facie* unsatisfying; why be interested in semantics if it has nothing to do with what is normally communicated by utterances of sentences? And what better way to get at what’s communicated than through what’s said? And what better way to get at what’s said than through felicitous indirect reports? These seem to be working assumptions in most of the literature. But since there are serious reasons to be dissatisfied with both ST and LST, what’s left?

We believe the most promising strategy along these lines is to restrict ST not to what’s *literally/strictly speaking said* but rather to cases of *ignorant indirect reporting*. Our motivation should be obvious: re-consider utterances (1a)–(2a), and assume reports of them by someone proficient in English but ignorant of the

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<sup>8</sup>Note that for the reason it won’t do to tailor a particular (artificial) notion of *literally says that*, it won’t do to tailor a particular notion of *says that* either. We cannot rely on a *theoretical* notion as an intuitive guide for delimiting semantic content.

circumstances surrounding their production; all this reporter knows is that these utterances were produced in some context or other, by some speaker or other:

- (1) a. Prof X: The shortest student should sit in the front row.
- (2) a. Prof X: No one failed.

With (1a), this restriction amounts to assuming the reporter ignorant of who is sitting in the front row, and so, in no position to use (1b).

- (1) b. A, to the shortest student: Prof X said that you should sit in the front row.  
Similar considerations thwart using (2b) to report (2a).

- (2) b. A: Prof X said that Alice passed her exam.

Namely, A does not know that Alice is in Prof X's class.

But even in this state of ignorance, a reporter can *still* use (1c) in reporting (1a); and (2c) in reporting (2a):

- (1) c. Prof X said that the shortest student should sit in the front row.
- (2) c. Prof X said that no one failed.

These intuitive transitions between utterances and their indirect reports suggest a novel restriction on ST; indirect reports in situations of *ignorance of extra-linguistic information* fix semantic content.

We, of course, want to insulate indirect reports from coloring by non-linguistic information about the reporter's circumstances and his audience as well. Here is why. Suppose A uttered (8a):

- (8) a. Vermillion is everyone's favorite color.

A reporter knowing how limited an audience's color vocabulary is might opt to report what the original speaker said, not with a color word, but with a description like "the color of my pen," holding up a vermilion pen. We would not, however, conclude that the complement clause in (8b) semantically interprets A's utterance of (8a).

- (8) b. A said that the color of my pen is everyone's favorite color.

To avoid such pitfalls, we recommend restricting ST to *complete* non-linguistic ignorance, allowing only for the exploitation of information one gains *qua* competent speaker, i.e. *linguistic knowledge*.

*Ignorant Said That (IST)*: A semantic theory T for a language L should assign p as the semantic content of an utterance u of a sentence S in L iff "The speaker said that p" is a true report of u by someone ignorant of all the circumstances surrounding u as well as the circumstances surrounding the report).

The reports in (1c)–(2c) satisfy IST, and so, the idea is, the semantic interpretations of (1a)–(2a) are specified by their complement clauses.

The rationale behind IST is intuitive enough: reports in circumstances of ignorance abstract away from all those features wedded to context – whether the

context of the utterance or the context of the report of the utterance – and thus, they move closer to capturing what’s common to every utterance of the sentence (-type). And it’s natural to think what’s common is what’s semantically encoded. Since in ignorant reporting, the only knowledge to draw on is linguistic knowledge, it would seem to follow that such reports provide the best intuitive guide to content. IST, thus, re-establishes a connection between semantics and what’s intuitively said.

Unfortunately, IST runs into trouble with *genuine* linguistic context sensitivity. If Harry utters (9a), how would someone ignorant of all of the extra-linguistic facts report him?

(9) a. I am Harry.

It would seem that the best a reporter could do would be (9b):

(9) b. The speaker said that the speaker is Harry.

Or, if someone uttered (10a), it would seem that the best a reporter could do would be (10b):

(10) a. It’s raining now.

(10) b. The speaker said that it is raining at the location of the utterance.

Similarly, the best a reporter could do for an utterance of (11a), when in a state of extra-linguistic ignorance, would be (11b):

(11) a. That’s lovely.

(11) b. The speaker said that the object demonstrated is lovely.

(We leave it to the reader to extend the strategy to “he,” “she,” and other familiar context sensitive expressions.)

According to IST, then, we should conclude, assuming these intuitive indirect reports are accurate, that the full semantic content of (9a) is *that the speaker is Harry*; the full semantic content of (10a) is *that it’s raining at the location of the utterance*; and the full semantic content of (11a) is *that the object demonstrated is lovely*. But there are familiar reasons why many theorists have thought this may not be such a good idea.

According to Kaplan (1989), when Harry utters (9a), he semantically expresses the necessary truth that he is Harry, but the complement clause of (9b) does *not* semantically express a necessary truth. The speaker, Harry, might have remained silent, or he might have been mute. Someone else might have spoken instead. The point is, as Kaplan famously argued, indexicals and demonstratives are *directly referential* and *rigid*, whereas descriptions, e.g. “the speaker,” are not directly referential (though some are rigid). Thus, “I” and “the speaker” do not share the same modal profile. Conclusion: “I”, does *not mean the same as* “the speaker”, and so, IST must be wrong.

Kaplan’s critical point generalizes. If A utters (12a) at time  $t_1$ , then the best anyone can do in reporting A, assuming extra-linguistic ignorance, is (12b):

- (12) a. It's raining now.  
 (12) b. The speaker said that it's raining at the time of the utterance.

But, of course, the time of utterance might have differed from  $t_1$ ; the speaker might have spoken later. Nevertheless, time  $t_1$  could not have differed from itself. So, “the time of utterance” and “now” do not share the same modal profile, and so, cannot share the same meaning. Similarly, if A utters (10a), at location  $l_1$ , then the best an ignorant reporter can do is to report A with (10b). However, while  $l_1$  cannot fail to be itself, the speaker might have chosen to speak somewhere other than at  $l_1$ . And so, “the location of the utterance” and “here” do not share a modal profile. And so on for other recognized indexical expressions.

The point is familiar: the *modal profiles* of “the speaker,” “the time of utterance,” “the object demonstrated,” “the place of utterance” are all distinct from that of “I,” “now,” “that,” and “here” respectively; but, so Kaplan’s argument continues, only expressions with the same modal profiles can share *semantic content*. Nothing, e.g., could satisfy ‘bachelor’ without satisfying its synonym “unmarried man”; and in general, nothing could satisfy “A” without satisfying “B,” if “A” and “B” are synonyms. IST seems to require us to violate this common background assumption.

This problem is *not* superficial, since *if* attributing semantic content to Harry’s utterance of (9a) does require preserving the modal profiles of its words, then the report, “Harry said that Harry is Harry” should be licensed. But for a reporter to get at this content requires access to *non-linguistic* information – namely, that Harry is the speaker. Allowing such access, however, fundamentally violates IST.

It is worth pointing out that Kaplan is not denying that competent English speakers know that the first person pronoun “I” always picks out the speaker. Nor that uses of “now” pick out the time of utterance and “here” the place of utterance;<sup>9</sup> and uses of “that” the demonstrated object. And so, Kaplan is not denying that a linguistic theory should encode (i)–(iv) *somewhere*.<sup>10</sup>

- i. Every use of “I” picks out its user.
- ii. Every use of “now” picks out its time of use.
- iii. Every use of “here” picks out its place of use.
- iv. Every use of “that” picks out what is demonstrated by its user.<sup>11</sup>

However, Kaplan *is* denying that (i)–(iv) should be captured as a matter of *semantic content*. (Kaplan himself distinguishes two levels of “content” – character and content, and thereby, seems to manage to devise a theory that encodes (i)–(iv), while avoiding the modal objections. However, giving the honorific “semantic content” solely to what he calls “content,” and not to what he calls “character” without argument is somewhat arbitrary. This is a topic for the next section.)

<sup>9</sup>Both claims have been challenged, but for reasons irrelevant to our discussion: the fact is that “now” and “here” also have a demonstrative use as well as an indexical use.

<sup>10</sup>Though there might be counterexamples to (i) – (iv), they are not relevant for our discussion here, so we set them aside.

<sup>11</sup>Whatever the relevant notion of the demonstration is. We shall not fuss about that here.

One might wonder whether Kaplan's take-home lesson should be endorsed. One might worry that the argument goes astray, since when a reporter learns someone uttered (9a) without knowing who, there is more than one way to report her speech act. One way is how we have been doing it; using what we might call a *de dicto* report, namely, (9b). As we have seen, this sort of report, according to Kaplan, fails to capture the semantic content of the source speech act, since its complement clause lacks adequate modal properties: the report expresses a general proposition, whereas in Kaplan's and most others' opinion the reported utterance expresses a singular proposition.

However, another way to report the relevant speech act in these circumstances is with (9c):

(9) c. The speaker said *of himself* that he is Harry.

That is, we might use what we may call a *de re* report. In this way, we avoid the objection from differences in modal profiles, since the proposition that makes this report true would be singular (viz. *that x is happy* [where  $x =$  the speaker (and, assuming the source speech act is true,  $x =$  Harry)]. Under this construal, the modal profiles of the source speech act and the proposition that makes the complement of the report true are identical – for any speaker  $x$ ,  $x$ 's utterance of (9a) is true (with respect to a possible world in which  $x$  exists) iff  $x =$  Harry.<sup>12</sup>

This story obviously generalizes to other cases. If a speaker utters (11a) and a reporter overhears this utterance without knowing what the demonstrated object is (or who the speaker is), the reporter can still resort to the “*de re*” report (11c):

(11) c. The speaker said of the demonstrated object that it is lovely.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, if someone overhears a speaker saying (13a) without knowing who the speaker is, or whom the speaker is referring to, we can report this utterance with (13b):

(13) a. She is nice.

(13) b. The speaker said of the demonstrated/salient woman that she is nice.

The point is the same in all these cases; the complement clauses of these reports attribute singular propositions to the speaker, and thereby, the reports share modal profiles with their source speech acts. Thus, this suggestion concludes, on the assumption that Kaplan is right, the objection from differences in modal profiles only shows we were looking at the wrong reports.

In the context of the ambition in this paper, we are less than persuaded by this line of defense of IST. Our worry is that none of these “*de re*” reports actually specifies the semantic contents of the original speech acts. They all involve *quantifying in* –

<sup>12</sup>Thanks to David Braun, Kirk Ludwig and Matthew Stone for this suggestion.

<sup>13</sup>One might be a little uncomfortable with this use of “object” here, since arguably we can use demonstratives to refer to things we wouldn't naturally call objects [e.g. events, etc.]. Perhaps, the more neutral “thing” would be better.

i.e. they are all of the form, “The speaker said of  $x$  that  $x$  is  $F$ ” – where it is not known to the reporter who (or what)  $x$  is. Thus, these reports in effect merely *describe* the content of the original utterance. And so, on their bases, we can merely infer that there is *some* (singular) proposition the speaker expressed, but, crucially, we cannot retrieve what it is. This is *not* sufficient since our aim is to retrieve the semantic content of the source speech act.

In short: even if invoking “*de re*” speech act reports avoids the objection from differences in modal profiles, we have still failed to articulate a satisfactory criterion of adequacy.

Perhaps, one could attempt the following rejoinder. Even though in the aforementioned cases, “*de re*” reports do not *reveal*, but merely describe, semantic content, still this might be sufficient, if these “*de re*” reports nevertheless manage to uniquely capture semantic content. And one might argue that in all the cases (9)–(13) the “*de re*” report in question describes a unique semantic content; that is, the truth of each establishes that there is only one (singular) proposition in each case that uniquely renders the report true.

Nevertheless, even if this were true, we still think it does not vindicate IST. Here is why. Remember, we are trying to find a criterion of adequacy on a semantic theory. (Granting for the sake of argument that it is sufficient that “*de re*” reports merely describe semantic content) here is our current situation: there are two types of *says-that* reports we could look at—*de re* ones and *de dicto* ones. The reason to be suspicious of *de dicto* reports is that in cases of linguistic ignorance, if Kaplan and Kaplaneans are right, looking at those reports would predict the wrong results for (9)–(13). For, so the argument goes, the modal profiles of the source speech acts in (9a)–(13a) do not match the modal profiles of the complement clauses of the reports in (9b)–(13b).

The problem is that the argument from differences in modal profiles already presupposes we somehow have a direct insight into the semantic content of (9a)–(13a). However, these intuitions cannot be intuitions about what is said. Since both *de dicto* and *de re* reports in the relevant cases are true, then, merely by looking at what’s said, we will have no more reason to think one type of report tracks what’s said better than the other. And so, if what’s said is supposed to afford us insight into semantic content, we have no more reason to think *de re* reports track semantic content better than *de dicto* ones. So, in these cases, modal intuitions, rather than what is said, are doing all the work.

This is obvious once we appreciate that in other types of cases, we would say *de dicto* reports capture semantic content rather than *de re* reports, as in (14)–(16):

- (14a) The speaker utters, “The tallest building in the world is in Dubai.”
- (14b) The speaker said that the tallest building in the world is in Dubai.
- (14c) The speaker said of the tallest building in the world that it is in Dubai.



- (15a) The speaker utters, “The top ranked male tennis player in July 2011 is from Serbia.”
- (15b) The speaker said that the top ranked male tennis player in July 2011 is from Serbia.
- (15c) The speaker said of the top ranked male tennis player in July 2011 is from Serbia.
- (16a) The speaker utters, “The fountain of youth is hard to find.”
- (15b) The speaker said that the fountain of youth is hard to find.
- (16c) The speakers said of the fountain of youth that it is hard to find.

In these cases, invoking modal intuitions would suggest that *de dicto* reports more adequately capture semantic content. So, it seems, according to this line of thought, that in some cases *de re* reports better capture semantic content, but in others *de dicto* reports fare better. How do we tell when to rely on one and when on the other? The most natural thought that comes to mind is—by appealing to modal intuitions: ignorant *say-that* reports in tandem with modal intuitions serve as an intuitive guide to semantic content.

However, this suggestion is too quick. Consider the following:

- (20a) The speaker utters, “The smallest prime is everyone’s favorite number.”
- (20b) The speaker said that the smallest prime is everyone’s favorite number.
- (20c) The speaker said of the smallest prime that it is everyone’s favorite number.

Modal intuitions are silent in this case between *de re* and *de dicto* report. And the relevant distinction we want to make—namely, between directly referential and non-directly referential terms comes from within the theory, and so, is of no help when the criterion of adequacy is in question. So, it seems we are back to square one—IST does not get us what we want.

Up to here, we have focused exclusively on intuitions about *say that* reports made in various ways and under various conditions. The problems we have run into repeatedly derive from the fact that intuitions about the felicity of these reports are apparently *not* guided by judgments about semantic content *alone*. They can also be informed by knowledge (or a lack thereof) of the circumstances surrounding both a report and the reported utterance. These reliances are so strong that the more we attempt to restrict their impact (by adding modifiers like “strictly speaking” or “literally”, or by imposing extra-linguistic ignorance), the more difficult it becomes for us to respect a commitment to the spirit of ST.

To the extent that this is right (and it is), we need to identify a better way to separate *semantic* considerations from other sorts of consideration a reporter may add to the mix. *Say that* reports, in any incarnation, are either too restrictive or too permissive to settle semantic adequacy: ignore context entirely, and semantic adequacy becomes elusive; let it in, and it seems to become too liberal. Either way, ST and its kin are *not* able to capture all and only semantic content. Our favorite version, IST, had the advantage of capturing only conventionally (linguistically) encoded information, but as we have seen, it is still less than satisfactory. For these

reasons we are pessimistic about the prospects of using *say that* reports as guides to semantic content. We thus propose to drop this line of inquiry altogether and turn to a different kind of methodology. We believe a solution to the problem of finding a way of abstracting distinctively *all* and *only* semantic content can be located in Lewis' twin ideas of convention (Lewis, 1969) and the conversational record (Lewis, 1979), to which we shall now turn.

### 3 Lewis on Coordination on the Conversational Record

We begin with Lewis' (1979) notion of the conversational record, i.e. an abstract 'scoreboard' that keeps track of the relevant information about the conversation. In particular, the scoreboard keeps track of the standard parameters fixing the meaning of the indexicals, such as who is speaking, at what time, in which world, who is the addressee, and so forth. More importantly, it is also keeping track of the information about how the relevant contextual parameters change as the discourse evolves. It tracks which moves have been made in the conversation, which propositions have been mentioned, which individuals have been made prominent. New utterances naturally force updates and changes to the scoreboard. In this regard, the record is a running database – sometimes items are added; sometimes they are removed. Its topic might change, its presuppositions might be challenged, and its participants might change their minds about items previously recorded.

Placing information on the record does *not* require the speaker or audience to believe or desire, or to have come to believe or desire, or to intend to do anything. Just the same, the record develops, as a result of the conversational moves being made, so that, all things being equal, the contributions a speaker makes are treated as if they were true if possible (at least for the purposes of the conversation). If someone utters, "Mary stopped smoking," then unless another party objects, the presupposition that Mary used to smoke automatically enters the record; as does the at-issue proposition that Mary no longer smokes.

Why is any of this pertinent to the task of identifying an adequacy condition for semantic theory? As we construe Lewis, information is placed on the record because it has been signaled to the audience by the speaker's utterance in virtue of shared linguistic *conventions*.<sup>14</sup> Illustrations will help to clarify these differences.

Suppose Harry utters, "I'm happy." Then minimally it enters the record that the speaker made this utterance. Additionally, interlocutors can track that it was Harry who uttered "I". But now suppose Harry utters, "Trenton is in New Jersey". Hearing this utterance results in adding to the record the proposition *that Trenton is in New Jersey*. The information that enters does so as a result of the participants

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<sup>14</sup>This is intended as the broadest distinction. Subdivisions are possible. Different types of information might get on the record in virtue of an extant linguistic convention, in different ways. We do not pursue the possible subdivisions here.

exploiting shared linguistic conventions. (The exact notion of convention is to be clarified shortly. All that need be noted thus far is that in order to interpret Harry's utterance about Trenton the audience needs to invoke the knowledge they have as competent speakers of their shared language.) If they don't exploit their knowledge of these conventions, this particular information would not wind up on the record.

Lewis (1969) separates the different kinds of situations interlocutors meet in a conversation when deciding which information to enter on the record, where his key explanatory notion is *coordination*, in terms of which he proposes to analyze the notion of convention.

*Coordination* can occur when agents face a coordination problem. These sorts of problems crop up wherever there are situations of inter-dependent decision by at least two agents, where coincidence of interest predominates, and where there are at least two coordination *equilibria*, i.e. at least two ways participating agents can coordinate their actions for their mutual benefit. Agents solve a coordination problem when each acts so as to achieve an equilibrium. They do so *by coordination* when, if confronted by multiple options for matching their behaviors, they exploit their mutual expectations in settling on one equilibrium (where each agent does as well as he can given the actions of others) to the exclusion of all others.

Lewis illustrates this sort of practice with Hume's example of two men, A and B, in a rowboat: to move, they must coordinate their rowing patterns. There are almost a limitless number of speeds at which each can row, but to row effectively, they need to settle on a single speed, which, interestingly, they can achieve without an explicit agreement. They may stumble on to it; or one might mimic the other. But, should A row at a certain speed because A expects B to do so; and should B row at a certain speed because B expects A to do so; and so on, such that each does his part because he expects the other to do his, then they, thereby, reach an equilibrium through coordination.

The practice of updating the conversational record so as to register specific information also poses a coordination problem. After all, there is *no non-arbitrary* connection between an utterance and what a speaker can use it to register on the record (other than that the speaker made the utterance). But if the speaker's strategy is to use a particular utterance to get his audience to register particular information on the record, and if he expects his audience to respect this strategy, and if the audience should happen to respect a corresponding strategy in tracking the information that the speaker is attempting to place on the record, and if the audience expects the speaker to respect this strategy, and so on, then the speaker and audience will end up, *through coordination*, with identical updates of the conversational record.<sup>15</sup>

The way in which agents reliably solve coordination problems is by adhering to a particular scheme implicit in their tendencies or mutual expectations. The key to understanding how coordination functions in solving coordination problems is to appreciate the surprisingly underappreciated role that *conventions* play. A

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<sup>15</sup>Of course, there needs to be mutual recognition as well. See Lewis (1969).

*convention* is a regularity observed by agents, but, of course, not *every* regularity constitutes a convention; eating and breathing are *regularities* we each follow but they are *not conventional*. Someone adheres to a convention just in case his *reason* for acting in accordance with a certain equilibrium solution to a coordination problem is that he expects others will act in accordance with this same solution to the problem, and that they will do so only if they expect him to act in accordance to the same solution, and he further has some reason for expecting them to act in accordance to the same solution (Lewis 1969, p.42). A group of agents are said to share a convention, then, just in case each member does his part in regularity X because she expects everyone else in the group to do their part in X, and each party prefers to do their part in X conditional upon others doing so. Had anyone expected everyone to do his part in another alternative pattern Y, she would have done her part in regularity Y (and not in X).<sup>16</sup>

A convention, in short, is simply a self-perpetuating solution to a recurring coordination problem. A group is reliably good at solving a coordination problem only if its members either share patterns of behavior or background knowledge that enables them to choose one pattern over viable others. Since *interlocutors* are apt at retrieving contributed information from heard utterances, and since each conversation creates a coordination problem for its participants, it follows, by definition, that the participants are exploiting linguistic conventions.<sup>17</sup>

The lesson we take away from Lewis (1969) on convention/coordination combined and Lewis (1979) on the conversational record is how to devise a proposal for semantic adequacy; in particular, one that builds on the idea that for some utterances a speaker intends for the audience to add to their conversational records particular information *as a matter of coordination*. For this to be successfully achieved, the speaker and audience need to draw upon the shared knowledge of linguistic conventions. We propose, then, to say that a semantic theory is adequate just in case it specifies the conventional knowledge that goes into determining this, and only this, information. So construed, the proposal for semantic adequacy becomes *Coordination (CRD)*:

*CRD*: A semantic theory T for a language L should assign as semantic content to an utterance u of a sentence S of L whatever u of S contributes to the conversational record in virtue of coordination.

CRD, unlike ST and its kin, is very permissive; according to it, any aspect of *conventionally* encoded information contributes to semantic content;<sup>18</sup> not only

<sup>16</sup>It's crucial for Lewis' idea that Y exists. That follows from how coordination problems are defined.

<sup>17</sup>Interlocutors without a shared convention can still solve coordination problem, but it would be plain luck or an innate alignment that accounts for their success because there's no reason *except for convention* to choose one regularity over another in facing a coordination problem (i.e., communication is "a consequence of conventional signaling" (Lewis 1969, p. 150)).

<sup>18</sup>Perhaps, this might include expressive content, conventional implicatures, presuppositions and other non-at-issue information. Though we will not argue here that any one, or all, of these

whatever conventionally encoded information goes into determining what a speaker has said with his utterance. We welcome semantic liberalism; IST was appealing precisely because it stripped utterances of all non-linguistic information in the service of attempting to isolate all and only the information recovered in virtue of invoking linguistic convention alone. Lacking an adequate notion of a convention (as well as its commitment to indirection in accessing conventionally encoded information), IST faced problems with context sensitive expressions. As we will show below, CRD succeeds in reconciling these goals – it captures all and only conventionally encoded information, while avoiding the problems faced by IST.<sup>19</sup>

To illustrate what CRD determines, consider first a non-context sensitive (ignoring tense) case, where a speaker wants to inform her audience that Trenton is in New Jersey; first, she needs to identify an utterance she is confident that, in her circumstances, will put the proposition that Trenton is in New Jersey on the conversational record(s). She must choose an utterance that in the context of the conversation at that stage provides the audience with evidence for registering this proposition (and not another) on the record. Convention enters the calculation because the speaker and audience can solve the coordination problem they confront only by coordinating their mutual efforts in tracking contributed information.<sup>20</sup> In this case, what enables them to do so is their shared convention that a speaker utters, “Trenton is in New Jersey” only if she wants to add to the record the proposition that Trenton is in New Jersey; and, likewise, the audience infers, as a matter of convention, that the speaker utters, “Trenton is in New Jersey” only if she is putting this proposition on the record, and thus, they achieve an equilibrium to their coordination problem. (We leave it as an exercise for the reader to go

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aspects are conventional, we leave it open whether some (or all) of them might be. (Though see Stojnić (forthcoming), who argues that a dynamic layer of content should be included, which in turn governs the resolution of context-sensitivity as a matter of language-specific conventions. See also Lepore and Stone (2015) for an argument that a wide set of interpretive patterns traditionally characterized as conversational implicatures are in fact underwritten by conventionalized mechanisms of discourse and information structure. If they are right, these should be included as well.) There also remain interesting questions about how, if these aspects are conventional, this framework can explain, for example, the difference between it entering the record that Harry is in pain after he utters “Ouch!” vs. its entering the record after his uttering “I am in pain.” Or, how can it explain the difference between its entering the record that Mary used to smoke after an utterance of “Mary stopped smoking” vs. an utterance of “Mary used to smoke”; or it entering the record that there’s a contrast between being French and brave, after an utterance of “Dan is brave but French” vs. an utterance of “There’s a contrast between being brave and French.” It might be that there are many ways for the speaker and audience to coordinate (as a matter of convention) on the same proposition, even if these different ways do not encode meaning in the same way. How to explain or even describe this in Lewis’ framework is a topic for another discussion.

<sup>19</sup>Note that we are not trying to settle, in the present paper, how linguistic conventions come about. Nor are we claiming that they cannot change with time. We are only interested in how we can tell when a semantic theory captures the information an adequate semantic theory should capture.

<sup>20</sup>Solutions that occur by mere luck would here obviously be irrelevant, so we set them aside.

back over earlier examples to convince herself that they are captured by CRD.) Of immediate interest to us is that similar considerations extend to cases involving context sensitive expressions.

Suppose Harry opts to convey that he is happy by uttering, “I am happy.” With his utterance, he is confident, in his circumstances, that he will put the proposition that Harry is happy on the record. The linguistic convention he is adhering to is that a speaker X utters, “I am happy” (in this context) only if he wants to add to the record the proposition *that Harry is happy*; and his audience infers, by appealing to the same convention, that Harry utters, “I am happy” (in this context) only if he is putting this proposition on the record, thus achieving an equilibrium to their coordination problem.

This doesn’t mean that the separate proposition that the speaker is happy won’t also enter the record in a similar fashion.<sup>21</sup> It is perfectly compatible with all we have said that there are cases where with a single utterance more than one proposition enters the record in virtue of extant conventions. What goes on the record as a matter of coordination comes down to which information is linguistically determined. CRD essentially constrains a semantic theory, stating that it is adequate *iff* it captures all and only what’s linguistically conventionally encoded. That much is unsurprising. The merit of CRD over ST, LST, IST and their kin is that it offers a direct way of capturing what’s conventionally encoded, by appealing to the notion of coordination and the conversational record. In this way, it avoids the problems previous proposals were stuck with.<sup>22</sup>

An important residual worry is how CRD handles cases where the audience, ignorant of non-linguistic information, overhears an utterance of a sentence containing a context sensitive expression. For the sake of concreteness, suppose the ignorant audience overhears an utterance of “I am happy,” but has no idea who made the utterance. What happens in these circumstances to the conversational record? Our answer is – nothing special. It certainly becomes part of the record that this speech act occurred, i.e., that some speaker uttered this sentence, and if they understand English, it also enters the record that the speaker is happy. However, since it is unbeknownst to the audience that Harry spoke, it will not become part of the record that Harry is happy. This is perfectly in accord with CRD.

This case is problematic for IST, since the overarching hope and promise guiding IST is that when we strip ourselves of all non-linguistic information, we isolate *all* of what is semantically encoded in our indirect reports. However, it is precisely this appeal to ignorance that renders IST unsatisfactory once context sensitivity is considered. CRD faces no such problem. Of course, in ordinary linguistic practice, occasionally we find ourselves, as a matter of fact, ignorant of all, or nearly all, non-

<sup>21</sup>In fact, this is precisely what the proponents of semantic two-dimensionalism would advocate.

<sup>22</sup>We are not claiming anything surprising by claiming that what an adequate semantic theory should capture is all and only what’s conventionally linguistically encoding. Most theorists would agree with this. What is more important in our claim, and what has been missed in the debate so far, is that by appeal to an appropriate notion of a convention (analyzed in terms of coordination) and the conversational record we gain a direct route to the semantic content.

linguistic information. But no one ever said that in every case, for any utterance, a competent speaker can retrieve *all* the semantic content (we certainly never said that). In fact, such claims are blatantly false.

The problem with IST is not simply that in some instances of non-linguistic ignorance it is impossible to retrieve all the semantic content, but rather that by virtue of its essential appeal to non-linguistic ignorance, IST is rendered incapable of explaining why competent speakers *can* and *do coordinate* on certain propositions (e.g., that Harry is happy), while other competent speakers (the ones facing non-linguistic ignorance) cannot. With its self-imposed limitations, IST cannot account for the complete semantic contribution of indexicals and other context-sensitive expressions. No such problem confronts CRD. And, so, it correctly predicts that there shall be cases in which full interpretation is rendered impossible since access to relevant knowledge is blocked.

## 4 Conclusion

We began by considering a string of possible criteria of adequacy on a semantic theory, where each tries to capture the connection between what's linguistically encoded and what's intuitively communicated by focusing on speech act reports. Such attempts are prevalent in the literature. We argued that even the most promising one – *IST* – fails to deliver adequate results.

By appealing to Lewis' twin ideas of the conversational record and convention (through coordination), we saw that we can get around the problems facing *IST*. This, of course, is no accident. Intuitively, an adequate semantic theory should be concerned with underwriting all of the knowledge speakers have in virtue of linguistic competence. And that includes nothing more and nothing less than knowledge of the extant conventions governing linguistic usage. *IST* was on the right track by virtue of dispensing with non-linguistic knowledge, and thereby, attempting to isolate all and only linguistically encoded (i.e. conventional) information. However, by trying to isolate this conventional information *indirectly*, through ignorant speech act reporting, it imposes too severe restrictions on the interplay between conventional knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge – restrictions that would ban the full semantic effects of context-sensitivity altogether.

CDR skirts these problems by isolating conventional content *directly*, through the practice of coordination. Thus, it need not impose any strong and implausible restrictions on the interaction between the conventional and the non-conventional. When Harry utters, "I am happy", his audience can draw on the convention that someone utters this sentence only if the proposition that s/he is happy is added to the record. This is precisely as it should be.

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# Immunity to Error through Misidentification and (Direct and Indirect) Experience Reports



Denis Delfitto, Anne Reboul, and Gaetano Fiorin

**Abstract** In this contribution, we address the issues concerning the semantic value of Wittgenstein’s subject “I”, as in (i) “I have a toothache”, resulting from the use of predicates that involve first-person knowledge of the mental states to which they refer. As is well-known, these contexts give rise to the phenomenon of ‘immunity to error through misidentification’ (IEM): the utterer of (i) cannot be mistaken as to whether he is the person having a toothache. We provide a series of arguments in favor of a principled distinction between a *de facto* IEM, grounded in perceptual and proprioceptive judgments, and a *de iure* IEM, grounded in experience reports whereby the experience wears the experiencer on its sleeve. From this perspective, the no-referent account of subject “I” advocated by Wittgenstein/Anscombe is correct. In fact, we show how this analysis can be made compatible with a Kaplanian account of first-person indexicals, by identifying the speaker in the context of utterance with the person who has access to the reported private experience.

**Keywords** De se · immunity to error through misidentification (IEM) · semantics

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## 1 Introduction: Where the Puzzles Lie

The notion of *immunity to error through misidentification* (henceforth, IEM) is an offspring of the Wittgensteinian distinction between *I* as a *subject* (as in (1)) and *I* as an *object* (as in (2)):

- (1) I have a toothache
- (2) I am wearing red shoes

The distinction is clearly dependent on the predicate: Whereas *having a toothache* is something that, when I predicate it of myself, I have first-personal knowledge of, *wearing red shoes* is something that, when I predicate it of myself, I do not have first-personal knowledge of. Or, to put it another way, in self-ascriptions, some predicates refer to states that are accessible to us in a different way than they would be accessible to someone else, while other predicates are accessible to us in the same way as they would be accessible to others. This distinction between predicates has consequences for the use of the first-person pronoun. Whereas I might be mistaken as to whether I am the person wearing red shoes in (2), I cannot be mistaken as to whether I am the person having a toothache in (1). The question that this supposed asymmetry between (1) and (2) raises is how it should be explained.

Wittgenstein (1958), followed by Anscombe (1975), explained it through the idea that in (1), there is nothing that “I” refers to. Indeed, (1) should be analyzed on a par with utterances such as (3), where no one would think of finding a referent for “it”:

- (3) It is raining

A sentence like (1) should thus be understood as “it is toothaching”. This analysis has, rather understandably, not been popular. Most objections have concentrated on finding examples of IEM where there is undoubtedly a referent for the relevant expression and dismissing the Wittgenstein-Anscombe no-referent account as unable to account for them. For instance, in (4), it seems that the demonstrative “this” enjoys IEM, just as does “I” in (1), but clearly, it is not because it fails to refer:

- (4) This is red

Additionally, there are obvious entailments between (1), as pronounced by Bill, and other judgments such as (5) and (6):

- (5) He has toothache
- (6) Bill has a toothache

These entailments would be utterly mysterious if “I” did not refer in (1). So we are left with the question of why “I” in (1) enjoys IEM, while “I” in (2) does not, if both refer.

Shoemaker (1968: 556), commenting on the Wittgensteinian distinction between “I” as subject and “I” as object, introduced the notion of IEM, which he took to be specific to the first person, as follows:

Utterances such as [(1)] “are immune to error due to a misrecognition of a person, or, as I shall put it, they are immune to error through misidentification relative to the first-person pronouns”.

As Shoemaker’s comments make clear, it would be completely non-sensical, in fact *irrational*, to ask whether it might be someone else that is suffering from toothache. By contrast, the question of whether it might be someone else that is wearing red shoes would be perfectly acceptable and rational about a statement such as (2). More formally, Shoemaker (1968, 557) defines IEM as follows:

To say that a statement ‘*a* is  $\phi$ ’ is subject to error through misidentification relative to the term ‘*a*’ means that the following is possible: the speaker knows some particular thing to be  $\phi$ , but makes the mistake of asserting ‘*a* is  $\phi$ ’ because, and only because, he mistakenly thinks that the thing he knows to be  $\phi$  is what *a* refers to”.

One of the main questions we need to address is whether IEM is specific to first-personal self-ascriptions such as (1), or whether, in slightly different terms, there is something that distinguishes the first-personal variety of IEM from the variety of IEM that is found with other *essential* indexicals (see Perry 1993), as claimed by Prosser (2012), or with all singular terms used on the basis of experience, as claimed by Wright (2012). These two views presuppose that the Wittgensteinian distinction between (1) and (2) is a spurious one. We can in fact regard these views as *deflationary accounts* of IEM for two reasons: They treat the question as a matter of semantics rather than as a matter of the epistemology of the judgments involved; and they deny that there is anything special to the first-personal variety of IEM.

If one intends to claim (as we do) that there is something specific to such first-personal psychological self-ascriptions as (1), there are essentially two ways to go:

- (i) Showing that while first-personal psychological self-ascriptions do not have the monopoly of IEM, the kind of IEM that they enjoy is specific on both epistemological and semantic grounds;
- (ii) Denying that there is IEM outside of first-personal self-ascriptions.

We intend to show that though the second view is too strong to be right, the first is entirely correct. We will also show that disentangling the issues that should lead one – or so we argue – to endorse this view about IEM has a number of non-trivial philosophical consequences:

- (a) It involves distinguishing experience reports from perceptually or cognitively grounded external event reports;
- (b) It involves claiming that the difference between a *de facto* IEM grounded in perception and a *de iure* (or *logical*) IEM grounded in experience is based on the different epistemology and the different semantics of perceptual reports vs. experience reports;
- (c) It involves assigning experience reports an entirely different semantics with respect to perceptual reports;
- (d) It involves explaining how the non-referential uses of the first-person found in the cases of *de iure* IEM (direct experience reports) can be made compatible with a Kaplanian semantics (Kaplan 1989) of “pure” indexicals such as the first-person pronoun.

## 2 The First Issue: Are Perceptual Reports IEM?

It is by now widely held (see for instance Carpintero 2015 and the references cited therein) that perceptually-based external state reports such as (7) are IEM:

(7) That keyboard is black

Here is an example of how this claim is motivated (Carpintero 2015:14):

Consider for illustration a demonstrative case of IEM, “that keyboard is black”. In many cases (in core cases), fully understanding a demonstrative requires grasping from the context more reference-fixing information than just the one associated with the expression character. I have proposed to understand this by assuming that the character contains a determinable, being the demonstrated entity, to be determined in context. In the context assumed for the keyboard example, the further determination is given by perception; the demonstrated entity is the salient, perceptually available black keyboard. On the view outlined above, the asserted content is *x* is black, with the keyboard assigned to the variable, and it is presupposed that *x* is the perceptually salient black keyboard when that is produced—a presupposition pragmatically, contextually triggered. This is why the claim is a case of IEM.

We think that the claim that perceptual judgments such as (7) are IEM is based on a dangerous misconception, which arises by mixing up properties of experiences with properties of perceptual events. By definition, a cognitive act of perception consists in the attribution of a property *F* to an object *o* (Burge 2010, Soames 2015) and an error in the attribution of *F* to *o* can only be excluded on empirical grounds, based on the laws of perceptual psychology (these are the cases of *de facto* IEM that will be discussed below).

To put it shortly, and exemplifying on (7), there are principled reasons to believe that errors through misidentification can easily arise. More particularly, it is quite possible that I am simply mistaken in attributing the perceptual property *F* (*to be black*) to the relevant object *o* (i.e. the particular keyboard I am presently pointing to). Data from the neuropsychology of vision confirm that this certainly is part of a potential typology of errors, since we visually track objects in a way that is independent of the attributes that we assign to them. The claim that “the demonstrated entity is the salient, perceptually available black keyboard” (see quote above) is entirely unsupported. There is no sense according to which the “demonstrated entity” is necessarily given as black in the relevant event of visual perception, that is, there is no sense according to which the property “black” need be an inherent property of the “demonstrated entity”. To the contrary (abstracting away from the difference between “pure demonstratives” and “complex demonstratives”), we normally assign properties to objects *after* we have tracked objects, in a way that is absolutely not committal with respect to the properties that these objects may have. As a consequence, we may be wrong in assigning a certain property *F* to the object we have tracked, within a complex visual scene, independently of *F* and, arguably, of any other property. Thus, it may be the case that *F* is actually instantiated in the relevant visual scene by something different from the object *o* that we have tracked and that corresponds to the “demonstrated entity”. This would obviously turn (7) into a typical error through misidentification.

The following quotes from Pylyshyn (2007:12; 20–21) should sufficiently illustrate the points made above:

There is very good empirical evidence that under many common circumstances we do not re-recognize a token thing as the same identical thing previously encountered by checking its properties, and that indeed we could not in general do it this way because of the intractability of the problem of storing unique descriptions and matching such descriptions to solve the identity problem (or the “correspondence problem,” as it is known in vision science). Moreover, the properties of items often must be ignored, as when we notice only the configurational pattern that holds among tokens and not the properties of individual tokens. [...] This problem of keeping track of individual token things by using a record of their properties is in general intractable when the things can move and change properties. But the problem exists even for a static scene since our eyes are continuously moving, the lighting changes with different points of view, and so on—which means that the problem of unique descriptors applies to every thing in a perceived scene.

The point of this discussion is that the mental representation of a visual scene must contain something more than descriptive or pictorial information in order to allow reidentification of particular individual visual elements. It must provide what natural language provides when it uses names (or labels) that uniquely pick out particular individuals, or when it embraces demonstrative terms like *this* or *that*. Such terms are used to indicate particular individuals. Being able to use such terms assumes that we have a way to individuate and keep track of particular individuals in a scene qua individuals—even when the individuals change their properties, including their locations.

Arguably, on these grounds, given (7) as a perception-based external state report, both *de re* misidentification (based on the identity between two particulars:  $a = b$ ) and *wh*-misidentification (based on inferring that *a particular* has *F* from the fact that *something* has *F*) are actually possible (see Recanati 2012). Suppose for instance that within a dynamic visual scene, at a certain moment *t* the moving object *o* to which I refer through the demonstrative is no longer the object *o'* that I originally identified as endowed with *F*: Then (7) is false due to the fact that I misidentified *o* (which satisfies *F*) with *o'* (which also satisfies *F*). Suppose now instead that within the same dynamic visual scene, the object *o* to which I refer by means of the demonstrative is still the very same object *o* that I had originally tracked, but that this object is no longer endowed with the property *F*: then (7) may be false because though I am correct in believing that there is something that instantiates *F* at the moment I point to the object *o*, I am wrong in inferring from this that it is *o* that instantiates *F*.

If these observations about the working of perceptual psychology, and more particularly vision, are by now relatively uncontroversial and hardly support the view that (7), conceived of as a perceptual report, is IEM, why is there such a widespread consensus to the effect that demonstrations bring about IEM?

We submit that the source of this flawed conclusion lies in the combination of the semantics of the demonstrative with the interpretation of sentences like (7) as experience reports. Suppose in fact that (7) is interpreted roughly as (8), and uttered in a context in which I am fully aware of being the victim of an hallucination:

## (8) It feels like that keyboard is black

In this context, (8) has no additional semantic content besides the report of the phenomenal properties associated with my internal mental state (i.e. the experience I am having). These phenomenal properties are unrelated to the environmental properties of a distal object whose physical properties (like, say, the light refraction properties of its surfaces) brought about the relevant perceptual event and its phenomenal correlates. In those conditions, it is entirely correct – we submit – to hold the view that for (8), interpreted as a faithful linguistic report of my experience, object misidentification is utterly impossible: At the moment  $t$  at which the experience takes place, the object immediately given as a keyboard in my experience is also immediately given as black, and the property of being black is immediately and unreflectively instantiated in the keyboard. It is thus meaningless to wonder whether what is black is possibly something else (distinct from that keyboard). However, it is quite clear that the conditions for IEM effects to arise involve nothing less than mapping a perceptual report (whereby an object is given in the representation independently of the property that is assigned to it) into an experience report (whereby phenomenal properties wear the object on their sleeve, as we will discuss below). This strongly suggests that the reason why (1) inherently involves IEM is that (1) is *inherently* an experience report, as such not susceptible of a perceptual interpretation. *De iure*/logical IEM is thus a property of inherently experiential reports, and enlarging the domain of IEM-effects to perceptual judgments, like (7) above, may be the source of serious confusion.

### 3 The Second Issue: Implicit *de se* and the Issue of Reference

In the literature, there is rather widespread agreement on the thesis that the non-referential effect of the first-person as found in (1) can be imputed to the fact that the sentient subject is not part of the semantic content expressed by the sentence, or, in cognitive terms, is not part of the representation associated with the sentence.

In his “Perspectival Thoughts” (Recanati 2007), Recanati summarizes this view in two different ways, which, it seems, Recanati regards as largely equivalent:

- (I) “Thoughts that are implicitly *de se* involve no reference to the self at the level of content: what makes them *de se* is simply the fact that the content of the thought is evaluated with respect to the thinking subject. The subject serves as ‘circumstance of evaluation’ for the judgment, rather than being a constituent of content” (Recanati 2007: 187–188).
- (II) “Or, to put it in slightly different terms, in such cases the content of the thought is not a complete proposition ascribing a certain property to an object (viz. the subject himself/herself): the content is the property, but to think the thought – or to think it in the relevant mode – is, for the subject, to self-ascribe that property (Loar 1976:358; Lewis 1979; Chisholm 1979; 1981)” (Recanati 2007: 188).

We think that these two formulations correspond in fact to two quite different insights. To appreciate this, it is useful to look in some detail at both definitions. The most obvious way of interpreting (I) is that the first-personal pronoun in (1) is not referential, in the sense that it introduces a parameter of evaluation of (1) in the metalanguage in which the truth-conditions for (1) are formulated. In a nutshell, (1) should then be interpreted as (9) below, whereby (9) is judged as true or false with respect to the sentient subject (the newly introduced parameter of evaluation):

(9) It is toothaching

Empirically, this represents a viable analysis, but the price to pay is giving up, for cases like (1), the standard Kaplanian interpretation of first-personal pronouns, according to which the latter directly refers to the speaker in the context of utterance (so, if (1) is uttered by Bill in  $c$ , the semantic content of (1) will be “Bill has a toothache”). Moreover, one should also explain why (1) is cross-linguistically expressed in the impersonal form in (9) to a much less significant degree than should be expected from (I). Thus, the relevant question is: Are we ready to pay this high price, which amounts anyway to imposing an ambiguous semantics on the first-person pronoun?

Consider now the formulation in (II). This corresponds of course with the other familiar way of expressing the insight that the first-personal subject is not referential. It is Lewis’ influential proposal according to which *de se* thoughts are linguistically expressed as properties that are self-ascribed by subjects. Applied to sentences such as (1), this insight amounts to claiming that the subject in (1) simply conveys the instruction that the property “ $\lambda x. x$  has a toothache” is self-ascribed by the individual who utters the sentence. This also involves giving up the Kaplanian view that first-personal pronouns are referential, though one can easily imagine ways to avoid this consequence (see for instance Wechsler 2010). Yet, even leaving this issue aside, does self-ascription lead to the correct semantics for (1)? The answer obviously depends on the semantics we assign to self-ascription. More particularly, if we interpret self-ascription in the sense that the subject ends up having the self-ascribed property, this cannot be the correct result, since the whole point about the IEM reading of (1) was that the subject is not an object to which we ascribe the relevant attribute. However, if we interpret self-ascription in the sense that the self-ascribing subject is interpreted as having epistemic access to the self-ascribed property, this may yield the correct empirical result, since the entity who has epistemic access to the relevant attribute need not be the object to which we ascribe the attribute, saving the insight that there is in fact no such object.

With this in mind, suppose we re-interpret Recanati’s proposal in (I), according to which the pronoun in (1) introduces the subject with respect to which the content of the thought is interpreted, as the claim that the subject expresses the entity that has epistemic access to the experience and that can thus *exclusively* determine whether (1), as a direct experience report, is true or false. This could be formalized in a Kaplanian semantics as follows. For the proper interpretation of direct experience reports, the Kaplanian context  $c$  should be enriched with an extra parameter, besides the usual ones, that is “the entity that has access to the experience in  $c$ ”. On

rather obvious metaphysical grounds, this entity should be identified with another parameter of  $c$  (the speaker-in- $c$ ). Namely, given the private nature of experiences, the entity who is faithfully reporting an experience is by definition the sole entity that is allowed epistemic access to the experience. For (1), in a context where the speaker-in- $c$  is Bill, this eventually provides the semantic content “Bill has a toothache”. Now, this is not the correct empirical result since, once again, we do not want the subject of (1) to be the object to which the attribute is ascribed.

From the discussion above, we can draw two consequences, one positive and one negative. The positive consequence is that what is really crucial is modeling the relation between the referent of “I” and the property  $F$  in IEM sentences like (1) as a relation of epistemic access: experiences are private objects, and a direct experience report in  $c$  is bound to express the fact that the speaker in  $c$  is the entity that has epistemic access to the experience. The negative consequence is that adding an extra parameter to the fixed parameters of evaluation in  $c$  won’t do. It is certainly correct to fix the referent of “I” in (1) as the entity that has access to the experience; it is also correct to identify this object as the speaker in  $c$ ; what is not correct, however, is discharging accessibility on the ‘character’ of “I”: if the description ‘*is the entity who has access to the experience*’ is simply the way we fix the reference of “I” in (1), with no consequences for the semantic content of (1), the final result will still consist in turning the subject into the object to which the property is ascribed, exactly what we want to avoid for (1).

The question that now arises is thus the following: How can we proceed in order to make the interpretation of IEM-sentences such as (1) compatible with a Kaplanian interpretation of “I” in (1)? What we have established so far is that a IEM-sentence of the form “I am  $F$ ” is roughly interpreted, relatively to a Kaplanian context  $c$  as in (10):

(10) The speaker in  $c$  has epistemic access to the experience expressed by  $F$  in  $c$

How can the interpretation in (10) be derived compositionally? Here are the basic ingredients of a possible answer:

- (i)  $F$ , as an experience predicate expressing a phenomenal property, cannot be meaningfully ascribed to any object  $a$ , unless ascription is interpreted in terms of epistemic accessibility:  $a$  has access to  $F$ ;
- (ii)  $a$  cannot be anything else but the entity that has access to  $F$ ;
- (iii) Faithfully reporting  $F$  in language (or in thought) entails identifying the speaker (or the thinker) in the event of reporting  $F$  as the (sole) entity that has access to  $F$ .

From these three premises, it follows that in (1), conceived of as a faithful experience report, the subject cannot be anything else than the entity that has access to the experience of having a toothache; and this is fine, since “I” refers to the speaker in  $c$  in a Kaplanian setting, hence, given (iii) above, to the entity that has access to the experience.

This means that, when  $F$  is an experience predicate, a sentence of the form “ $a$  is  $F$ ” is necessarily interpreted by ‘coercing’  $F$  into  $F' = “\_ has access to F”$ . The rest



follows from a Kaplanian semantics for essential indexicals, under the metaphysical guarantee that the entity that has access to an experience cannot be different from the speaker (or the thinker) reporting the experience.

It also follows that the sentence  $S' =$  “Bill has a toothache” is semantically undefined as a *direct* experience report, since Bill should be the speaker in the context of utterance of  $S'$  in order to be the entity that has access to the experience, whereas Bill does not qualify as the speaker in  $S'$  under standard circumstances. Clearly,  $S'$  must be an *indirect* experience report.

What is an indirect experience report (see Capone 2016 for a broad interdisciplinary assessment of the notion of ‘indirect reporting’)? Quite plausibly, the indirect report of an experience consists in the report of the physical/behavioral manifestations of an experience, that is, in the report of an event that physically or behaviorally manifests the occurrence of the experience. The agent in this event (whereby the appropriate behavior is manifested) is typically individuated as the entity who has access to the experience. In this case, the experience predicate ‘*having a toothache*’ is coerced into its physical correlate  $G$ . For  $S' =$  “*Bill has a toothache*”, this means that we are actually reporting the fact that Bill “typically behaves as someone who has private access to the experience of having a toothache”.

There is a second possibility. An indirect experience report  $S'$  may also be faithfully uttered in a context  $c$  in which it is inferred from a sentence  $S (=$  “I have a toothache”), as uttered in a context  $c'$  whereby Bill is the speaker in  $c'$ . In this case, the experience predicate “having a toothache” need not be coerced into its physical correlate  $G$ . It can be assigned the same meaning as in direct experience reports, in terms of accessibility to the relevant phenomenal properties. This is so because  $S'$  is a “derived” experience report: it can only be justified by referring to a primitive occurrence of a sentence of the form “I have a toothache”, faithfully uttered in a context where Bill qualifies as the speaker.

Given the framework established above, the IEM interpretation of (1) can be easily proved *per absurdum*. In a nutshell, suppose that the object that has access to the experience  $F$  of having a toothache is someone distinct from the speaker-in- $c$ . (1) would then be true in a situation in which the entity who has access to the experience is not the speaker-in- $c$ . But  $S$  is semantically undefined in such a situation, by definition (QED).

As we will see below in more detail, this framework has the additional advantage of allowing a distinction between ‘metaphysical IEM’ and ‘epistemic IEM’, which provides the key for an appropriate understanding of the divide between *implicit* and *explicit de se*, in Recanati’s sense. This divide is real. Consider a sentence such as (11):

(11) It’s me who has a toothache, not Bill

On rather obvious grounds, (11) is not IEM under a behavioral interpretation of the predicate. Suppose for instance that I utter (11) while viewing some recorded scenes of many years ago, featuring me and Bill, and that I draw the conclusion, based on what I see in these images, that (11) is the case. Now, it is quite possible that not me but someone else (possibly Bill himself) was the person having a toothache.

Arguably, (11) is not IEM even when it is based on an IEM judgment. This is the case in which (11) expresses the contrastive judgment that the person who has access to the relevant experience is me, not Bill, and at the same time the relevant experience is directly reported by the person who has access to the experience (i.e. by me). Here is how we derive the conclusion that (11) is not IEM in these circumstances. In uttering (11), one cannot possibly be wrong about the fact that it is the speaker in *c*, as the entity who has access to the experience, who has a toothache, and not anyone else. In this sense, IEM is metaphysically guaranteed. However, assuming I uttered (11) faithfully, I have also established that the identity *speaker-in-c* = *Bill* does not hold, and I may certainly be wrong about that, i.e. it may well be the case that the person that I have identified as the speaker-in-*c* is not a person different from Bill but is Bill himself (i.e. I am Bill, unbeknownst to me). More generally, though the speaker-in-*c* is by definition the entity who has access to the reported experience, an error is always possible concerning my epistemic access to the identity of the speaker-in-*c*. From this epistemic perspective, (11) has not the status of an IEM sentence. This reasoning is reminiscent of Kripke's treatment of judgments that are *necessary* but not *a priori* (Kripke 1980). The identity *Hesperus* = *Phosphorus* is metaphysically guaranteed (as is the identity *speaker-in-c* = *entity who has access to the experience*), but I may mistakenly identify the object to which I rigidly refer by using the name "Hesperus" as something else than the planet Venus. Similarly, in a context in which the speaker-in-*c* is Bill, I may mistakenly identify the speaker-in-*c* as someone else than Bill. The whole point revolves around the fact that contrastive judgments such as (11) involve the establishment of the identity between the speaker-in-*c* and a specific particular. Here, misidentification is of course possible. Conversely, when a speaker utters pure direct reports of the form of (1) he simply intends (i) that it is toothaching; and (ii) that the speaker is the entity that is accessing the experience whose content is that 'it is toothaching'. Here, nothing requires that the speaker-in-*c* be identified with a specific particular. At this level, misidentification is utterly irrelevant.

#### 4 On the Grammatical Encoding of Indirect Experience Reports

In Japanese, predicates of direct perception are subject to the so-called *person constraint*, that is, they are only admitted with the first person, in declarative sentences, and the second person, in interrogative ones (Kuroda 1973, Tenny 2006). In layman's words, one can utter "I see a canary" to report his/her own visual experience, but cannot utter "John sees a canary" to report John's visual experience. The 'person constraint' can be overcome by *evidentiality markers*. "John sees a canary" becomes an acceptable linguistic utterance if a dedicated evidential marker is added to the sentence. We take evidentiality markers as grammatical markers that indicate something about the speaker's source of information. This definition

can be enlarged so to encompass the speaker's epistemological stance, crucially including, from our perspective, the difference between perceptually-based external event reports and 'private' experience reports. In fact, we think that the explanation for this linguistic phenomenon has deep cognitive roots: Japanese simply fulfils the prediction that direct experience reports cannot be compatible (by definition) with third person experiencers. In our terms, if experiences (see below) "wear the experiencer on their sleeve" – that is, experiences and experiencers cannot be representationally distinguished – a first-person perspective is unavoidable for direct experience reports. In Japanese, the use of a first person pronoun in these sentences is simply the expression of the metaphysically enforced identity between the speaker and the entity who has *direct* access to the experience. On the same grounds, the reason why the appropriate evidential marker makes third-personal sentences acceptable is that it turns *direct* experience reports into *indirect* experience reports, in the sense discussed in the preceding section. More particularly, we have seen that indirect experience reports consist either in the report of the physical/behavioral manifestation of an experience or in the result of an inference from a first-personal sentence. We have proposed that in the first case the experience predicate is coerced into its physical correlate, whereas in the second case the experience predicate is used 'derivatively', that is, it is legitimate only insofar as it is inferred from the occurrence of a first-personal sentence in which the predicate is primitively used as expressing the relevant phenomenal property.

Now, in Japanese there are two morphosyntactic conditions under which the person constraint on subjects of predicates of direct experience is lifted, which involve either clausal or verbal morphology. First, in Tenny's words, "certain kinds of clausal or verbal morphology such as *ni tigainai*, and *no* in *noda*, *node*, and *noni* remove the person restrictions on the subject" (Tenny 2006:249). For instance, Kuroda 1973 (quoted in Tenny 2006: 250) describes the function of *no da* in the following way: "...*no da* somehow serves as a marker to indicate that some "second order" assertion, so to speak, is made with respect to the proposition expressed by the sentence to which *no da* is attached". Clearly, this description is compatible with our description of indirect experience reports as derivative, i.e. inferred, from a first-personal sentence in which the relevant experience predicate is legitimately used as expressing a directly reported phenomenal property. Second, again in Tenny's words: "The *-garu* evidential marker (discussed by Kuroda (1973), Kuno (1973), and Aoki (1986)) is part of the verbal morphological system which adds the sense of '*appearing to be* \_\_\_'. This form appears on the verb stem, followed by the inflectional morphology. Kuno (1973) describes its meaning as: 'to show a sign of, to behave like *-ing*'" (Tenny 2006:84). When this morpheme is appended to the stem of a predicate of direct experience, the person constraint is lifted" (Tenny 2006:251). Clearly, this description is compatible with our description of indirect experience reports as reports of the physical/behavioral manifestation of an experience, in which the experience predicate, which originally expresses the relevant phenomenal property, is coerced into its physical/behavioral correlate. Though this issue would deserve a fully-fledged discussion, these observations strongly suggest that the person constraint in Japanese represents the morphosyntactic manifestation

of the principled dichotomy between direct and indirect experience reports, thus confirming the epistemological priority of first-personal sentences for the expression of phenomenal properties.

## 5 Perception, Proprioception and Experience

Consider now the case of sentences of the sort of (12):

(12) “My legs are crossed”.

Recanati (2012) discusses the case where someone sees in a mirror that her legs are crossed. In this situation, the sentence “I see that my legs are crossed” is IEM with respect to the first occurrence of the first-person pronoun, though not with respect to the second (Recanati 2012:187):

The initial occurrence of ‘I’ corresponds to a first-personal feature of the experience that is not reflected in its content (since the seer is not part of what is seen). The second occurrence of the first person (‘my’) corresponds to an aspect of the content of the experience: the person whose legs are seen in the mirror to be crossed. Now the judgment is immune to error through misidentification with respect to the first occurrence of the first person, which is a use of ‘I’ ‘as subject’; but the same judgment is vulnerable to misidentification errors with respect to the second occurrence of the first person (‘my legs’): for the subject may be wrong in identifying herself as the person whose legs are seen.

In a nutshell, the first occurrence of the first-person pronoun does not require the subject to be represented, whereas the second occurrence of the pronoun clearly involves a representational content (what one sees is someone’s legs, though one may well be mistaken about whose legs they are).

Crucially, however, this is not the whole story. Interestingly, Recanati also contends that (12) is IEM when the subject is identified through proprioception (Recanati 2012:190):

Now a first-person judgment based on proprioceptive evidence and therefore immune to error through misidentification can be explicit precisely because such a contrast is relevant: ‘My legs are crossed (in contrast to my neighbour’s)’. This can be said, not because one sees one’s legs in the mirror, but because one feels one’s legs and knows, on the basis of pure proprioceptive evidence, that they are crossed. Here no error of identification can arise: being proprioceptive, my evidence can only concern myself. Still, I intend to contrast the position of my legs (known in this immune manner) with the position of other people’s legs; and that contrast justifies making the subject explicit. It would be implausible to maintain that the content of such a (contrastive) judgment is ‘selfless’.

At least two issues are at stake here:

- (i) Is proprioception always immune to IEM?
- (ii) Are uses of the first-person pronoun in a proprioceptive mood immune to error also in settings (as when I contrast my legs, perceived as such in the proprioceptive mood, with my neighbor’s legs)?

Concerning point (i), De Vignemont (2012) discusses cases in which proprioception apparently fails. The especially relevant case (ignoring the “false negatives” reported in cases of *somatoparephrenia*) are the “false positives” reported in the classical *Rubber Hand Illusion* (RHI) cases, where an experimenter strokes a rubber hand presented in front of the subject, while the subject’s own hand stays hidden behind a screen. In such cases, the subject reports that it feels like the rubber hand is his own hand. De Vignemont argues that the source of this mistake lies in the perceptual conditions, whereby visual information is invariantly combined with tactile experience. Since visual perception is committed to exteroceptive information, it is this “contamination” of the proprioceptive mood that arguably explains RHI. A tougher case is somatic RHI, whereby vision is left out (subjects are blindfolded) and participants report the feeling that they are touching their own hand, whereas they are actually stroking the rubber hand. However, De Vignemont argues that tactile perception is also dual in nature (De Vignemont 2012:233):

It carries both exteroceptive information about the external world (e.g. the ball touching my hand) and interoceptive information about the body (e.g. the pressure on my flesh) . . . Let us imagine that my left hand is anaesthetised, whereas my right hand is normal. While I am in the dark, my right hand feels a hand. Whose hand is that? I may be mistaken and judge that it is my own left anaesthetised hand, although it is someone else’s hand. Nothing in my exteroceptive tactile perception guarantees that I am not mistaken about whose hand I am touching. On the contrary, I cannot be wrong about whose hand is feeling the anaesthetised hand. Hence, only interoceptive tactile information guarantees bodily IEM.

What should we conclude from these observations? Well, one should also consider that while visual perception may be held responsible for the absence of IEM in the classical cases of RHI, visual perception is itself IEM under certain perceptual conditions (De Vignemont 2012:241):

One may be able to see one’s nose, if one closes one eye for instance. I cannot doubt that this is my own nose when I see my nose from this specific angle. Consequently, the visual experience that represents the nose with this visuo-spatial perspective guarantees judgments about one’s nose that are immune to error through misidentification.

This is thus what really matters: as expected on empirical grounds, there are conditions in which perception is infallible, in the sense that it necessarily yields, in Burge’s (2010) words, a perceptual state that specifies *particulars* as being in the correct environmental conditions (Burge 2010:383):

In vision science, the idea is that when specific environmental conditions are realized and light from these conditions reaches relevant receptors in standard ways where these ways are specifiable mainly by laws of optics and where certain specifiable proprioceptive conditions are met, the formation laws will, barring various kinds of interference, yield a perceptual state that specifies particulars as being in those environmental conditions.

In normal circumstances, perception is not immune to error (Burge 2010:386–7):

The kinds of perceptual states that are formed depend causally, in individual cases, on the type of registration of proximal stimulation, not on the actual distal objects of perception. [. . .] The account of veridical perception and perceptual illusion (including perceptual referential illusion) includes, not only the account of the formation of perceptual states from registrations of proximal stimulation, but an account of the further relations between distal

causes and proximal causes. [...] Seeing is a psychological state that, in each instance, depends for being a seeing on entities and causal relations beyond the psychology of the individual. [...] In cases of referential failure in perception (and indeed other sorts of illusion), the proximal stimulation and proximal-stimulation registration are not causally connected in appropriate ways to environmental particulars.

It follows that if one enforces empirical perceptual conditions in virtue of which “the proximal stimulation and proximal-stimulation registration cannot fail from being causally connected in appropriate ways to environmental particulars”, perception will be immune to error. What we should realize, however, is that this kind of *de facto* IEM has nothing to do with the Wittgenstein/Anscombe *logical* kind of IEM. Simplifying a bit, we can say that *de facto* IEM is rooted in the empirical possibility that perceptual conditions be optimal, in the sense that they cannot fail to represent some specific distal environmental objects of perception as correctly endowed with certain properties. In certain environmental conditions, I cannot fail to correctly perceive a nose as *my own nose*. If De Vignemont is right, proprioception, at least when entirely devoid of exteroceptive elements, is actually immune to error, in the sense clarified above.

Still, this is *de facto* IEM, not *logical* IEM. If the formation laws of perceptual psychology, which yield perceptual states where particulars are specified as being in certain environmental conditions, were different from what they are, a possibility of error would plausibly arise in the environmental conditions in which error is now factually excluded. *Logical IEM* is entirely another matter: it resides in the irrelevance of formation laws as the basis of correct perceptual representations, since the relevant judgment is not grounded in perception at all. The object that is IEM is simply not represented as part of a perceptual state, but it is given as inherent to the experience.

The answer we provided to question (i) above is thus that Recanati is correct in claiming that proprioception is IEM, but he is *not* correct in underestimating the deep difference between *de facto* IEM (like the judgments grounded in proprioception) and *logical* IEM.

In fact, the finding that proprioception gives rise to *de facto* IEM has not the consequences that Recanati claims it has with respect to the claim that explicit *de se* may be IEM. Explicit *de se* involves, by definition, the representation of the subject as part of the content. Consider first the case where one contrasts the judgment “my legs are crossed” (based on proprioception) with the judgment that his neighbor’s legs are not crossed. Though it is certainly true that one cannot be mistaken about the legs’ ownership in these conditions, it is also evident that this simply amounts to *perceptual* infallibility, not to *logical* infallibility.

In fact, consider now another case that Recanati discusses in some detail, the contrast between (13) and (14):

- (13) It’s raining                      (implicit *de se*)
- (14) It’s raining here/now      (explicit *de se*)

According to Recanati (2012:192):

A subject who, on the basis of perception, forms the thought ‘It is raining’ is automatically entitled to judge ‘It is raining here’, without any extra evidence being required on his or her part (The subject only needs to have the conceptual resources required to entertain a thought explicitly about his or her current location).

This statement is wrong on two independent grounds. First, a perceptual judgment like (13) is never IEM (not even *de facto*, since it obviously contains exteroceptive elements in it). It is certainly equivalent to sentences like (14), which are also, clearly, not IEM. Suppose I see some drops of water on my raincoat while I’m walking in the open air, and that I form the perceptual judgment “It’s raining now”, whereas in fact it rained until some minutes ago (when I was fully merged in my thoughts and I did not notice) and has stopped raining now. The source of Recanati’s claim – we submit – is the confusion between (13) as a perceptual report and (13) as a direct experience report. In the latter reading, the sentence has roughly the meaning of (15):

(15) It feels like it’s raining

According to the experiential reading, the speaker (as the entity who accesses the reported experience) need not conceptualize the space he is in when he utters the sentence. Suppose I am in Lyon, unbeknownst to me, when I utter (15). Still, (15) is true if, by uttering (15), I faithfully reported the relevant experience. If I am now asked “Are you in Lyon or in Paris?”, I wouldn’t probably be able to answer, since I actually do not know where I am. Similarly, a contrastive judgment of the sort “It’s raining *here*, not in *Paris*” would completely exceed my epistemic capacities, since I still have to conceptualize the place I am in, though I’m faithfully reporting the experience I’m having. These considerations show that one of these two conditions necessarily holds:

- (i) (13) is a perceptual judgment and as such it is equivalent to (14); but both judgments are not IEM;
- (ii) (13) is a direct experience report, roughly equivalent to (15); as such it is IEM but it *not* equivalent to (14).

It follows that the cases where “no extra evidence” is required for shifting from one judgment to the other are perceptual reports that are not IEM, whereas the cases involving IEM are those where shifting from one judgment to the other is far from innocent or automatic, since it in fact requires entirely different epistemic grounds.

Consider now the case of contrastive judgments involving the first-person pronoun, as in (16):

(16) *I* have a toothache, not *Bill*

As emphasized above, though I have an a priori knowledge of the fact that the entity who has access to the experience is the speaker in the context of utterance, I may be wrong in concluding that the identity *the speaker-in-c = Bill* does not hold (if I am an amnesiac of the classical sort, for instance). In other words, (16) is not

a case of IEM, at least *epistemically*: Given (16), it may certainly be the case that someone has a toothache, and that the person having a toothache is different from the person that I identified as having a toothache.

We conclude that Recanati is mistaken in thinking that *logical* IEM extends to the cases where the subject of an experience is representationally expressed (that is, it is part of the semantic content), though he is entirely correct in proposing that perceptual judgments can be *de facto* IEM. The point is that perceptual judgments cannot lead to logical IEM, under no conditions. More particularly, all cases where the subject is made part of the expressed semantic content (like the contrastive judgments discussed by Recanati) are not cases of IEM.

## 6 On the Sources of Lack of Reference

Recanati (2012) further contends that there is no contrast between experiential judgments of the sort of (17) and reflective judgments of the sort of (18):

(17) I am standing

(18) I was born in Paris

If (17) were simply athetic judgment devoid of a subject (and not a categorical judgment), one would not understand the validity of the inferential schema in (19), where *F* stands for the predicate ‘to be standing’ and *G* stands for the predicate ‘born in Paris’ (Recanati 2012: 191):

(19) a is F

a is G

$\exists x (x \text{ is } F \ \& \ x \text{ is } G)$

The whole point seems to be about the possibility that (17) become categorical (in the sense that it explicitly concerns an object that is part of the representation that constitutes the semantic content of (17)) without losing its IEM characterization (Recanati 2012:191):

The content of the judgment may be more complex and may explicitly represent the subject of experience, without the judgment’s losing its immunity. Or so I will argue.

Recanati is fully aware of the fact that the shift from (17) as a pure experiential report to (17) as involving the categorical reference to a “self” cannot be entirely innocent, of course. What he deems is needed is *Reflection* (Recanati 2012: 193):

The only difference between the implicit *de se* thought and its explicit counterpart is that the latter proceeds through Reflection and requires, on the part of the thinker, the conceptual ability to self-refer, i.e. the possession of a concept of “self”.

The idea is apparently very simple: The Experiencer that is introduced by experience reports of the sort of (17) comes, through Reflection, to represent itself as a subject in the world (Recanati 2012: 195):



Through Reflection the subject can make his own involvement explicit and represent himself as the bearer of the property: "I am standing".

This passage fromthetic to categorical can be explicitly represented as follows (Recanati 2012: 195):

- (A) Standing (primary judgment, implicitly *de se*)
- (B) I am standing (from A', by Reflection)
- (C) I am François Recanati (additional premise)
- (D) F. Recanati is standing (from B' and C', through substitution of identicals)

Now, whereas we think that this certainly constitutes a correct characterization of the relevant epistemic process, the point really under discussion is whether this inferential chain supports the view that *Reflection* is as innocent as Recanati would like it to be. The crucial step is the shift from (B) to (C), the step in which the Experiencer of the experience represents itself as an object. What does this step involve exactly? To see this in some detail, consider the following three sentences:

- (20) I am standing
- (21) I am hungry
- (22) I am hungry, not Anne

According to the analysis offered in the preceding section, someone who utters (20) and (21) as direct experience reports is expressing a semantic content according to which:

- (i) "it feels like standing" and "it feels like being hungry"; and
- (ii) the speaker of (20) and (21) in the two contexts of utterance is identified with the entity that has access to the relevant experience.

In order to be able to semantically express (ii), the utterer of (20) and (21) need only know:

- (a) what the character of "I" is; and
- (b) the semantic rule according to which the speaker-in-*c* is the entity that accesses the experience (let's call it the '*bearer of the experience*').

Crucially (see section 3), there is no need for the utterer of (20) and (21) to know who the speaker-in-*c* (hence the bearer of the experience) actually is. So, suppose that the speaker of (20) in *c* is Bill and that the speaker of (21) in *c'* is also Bill. When Bill utters (20) and (21), whereas it is part of the semantic content expressed by (20) and (21) that the bearer of the two reported experiences is the very same object (Bill), there is no need for Bill to know that the speaker/bearer of the experience is Bill. More generally, there is no need for Bill to know that the speaker/bearer of the experience is subsumed under a certain concept (that she is a human being, for instance).

Consider now (22) instead. In order for Bill to be able to deny the identity between the speaker/bearer of the experience and Anne, Bill must have been able, by definition, to conceive of the possibility that Anne, and not Bill, was the bearer of the experience, that is, Bill must have been able to “conceptualize” the referent of the description “speaker-in-*c*” as an entity of the same sort as Anne.

At this stage, two points have to be made, both essential to assess the rightness of Recanati’s contention concerning the *epistemic innocence* of the inferential chain above.

First of all, coming to conceptualize the referent of “speaker in *c*”/“bearer of the reported experience” as an entity of a certain kind is neither an innocent process epistemically nor a process we know much about presently. For instance, suppose that Bill utters (20) and (21) in quick succession. What is felt is plausibly a sense of continuity between the two experiences, probably linked to the sense of agency and ownership that is part and parcel of an experience (Gallagher 2000). Is some degree of continuity in this wired-in sense of agency and ownership (yielding a ‘minimal self’, in Gallagher’s sense) sufficient to produce a notion of “self” as an independent object, whose “objective” properties enable us to compare it with other objects in the world, and finally enable us to produce contrastive judgments like (22)? And how many “continuous” experiences of this kind are minimally required to make this shift from the concept of “minimal self” to the concept of a “self” as an object in the world possible?

These are difficult questions and, even more interestingly, these are, at least in principle, *empirical* questions. So, though we may agree with Recanati (2012: 192) to the effect that,

Reflection is a transition which involves making explicit (in the content of the judgment) something that was not part of the content but was nevertheless implicitly contributed through the mode of the grounding experience

we cannot agree on the “epistemic innocence” of this whole process on the part of the speaker.

Moreover, and this is quite relevant for a precise assessment of the relation between implicit and explicit *de se*, IEM is *not* preserved in the passage from (B) to (C) above. At the moment one (be it the hearer or the speaker) establishes that the speaker-in-*c* (or, equivalently, the bearer of the reported experience) is a specific object *a* (say, Bill), or another object distinct from *a* (say, Anne), there is no immunity to error. Or, to put it more formally, at the moment the semantic value of the function ‘\_ is the speaker in *c*’ (i.e. the *character* of “I”) is effectively calculated, this calculus cannot of course be immune to error. On the side of the speaker, the calculation is based on some complex perceptual/cognitive processes at the interface between perception/cognition and experience, and there is of course no more guarantee that this process is immune to error than there is to the effect that our perceptual/cognitive processes are immune to error, quite generally.

From an epistemological perspective, Recanati’s claim that the IEM property rooted in implicit *de se* is simply inherited by explicit *de se* is, thus, wrong, both empirically and conceptually. Empirically, when it comes to assessing the

truth-value of the identity *speaker-in-c = a*, mistakes are possible, as generally expected. What is epistemically guaranteed is the identity *speaker-in-c = bearer-of-the-experience*, and that's all. Thinking that the process which establishes *a* as the referent of the description 'speaker-in-c' is IEM, based on the observation that the speaker-in-c is already implicitly given as *a* in the relevant experience, constitutes a serious mistake: It exaggerates the *epistemic* consequences of the *semantic* fact that the entity *a* is "implicitly" given as the bearer of the experience already at the very moment the sentence is uttered. In a sense, it is like claiming that the identity "Hesperus = Phosphorus" is epistemically trivial, given that the identity is metaphysically established already at the moment at which the sentence is uttered.

Conceptually, Recanati's mistake consists in the thought that all there is to IEM, in (1), is the metaphysical guarantee for the identity between the utterer of a direct experience report and the entity that bears the experience. Since the entity that bears the experience is immediately/unreflectively given at the moment the experience manifests itself, and since this entity is necessarily given as *a* at that very moment, nothing else is required – *or so the thought goes* – than an elementary act of reflection in order to explicitly reveal the identity of *a*.

This thought is seriously flawed. It wrongly presupposes that phenomenal properties are simply predicated of the bearer of the experience, interpreted as the entity *a* that has access to the experience. Actually, IEM is not the process by means of which the bearer of the experience is epistemically identified as the entity *a*, IEM is rather the process by means of which no question of identity arises, on logical grounds, for *the Experiencer of the reported experience*, since this Experiencer is part of the meaning of the phenomenal property describing the experience. This Experiencer is in fact related to the notion of "minimal self", in Gallagher's (2000) sense, a notion that helps define the meaning of every experience predicate, while this Experiencer is *never* part of the representational/semantic content of the sentence as something distinct from the content proper to the phenomenal predicate. In other words, the Experiencer that is unreflectively given in the experience – the minimal self – has to be kept carefully apart from *the bearer of the experience*, which is identified as the speaker in *c*, as a joint effect of the semantics of the first-person combined with the semantics of experience reports.

How should we then conceive of the semantics associated with experience predicates that express phenomenal properties? Though we think it is not appropriate for us to address this issue in full detail here, we would like to hint at a possible line of analysis that seems very promising to us. In the ontology associated with standard model-theoretic semantics, objects are uniquely instantiated. Properties are not. When I say that *this object* is red and that *that object* is red, I speak in fact of the very same property. However, a property becomes unique whenever it is uniquely instantiated in some object or another, giving rise to what is commonly referred to as a *trope* (the beauty of Bill, the redness of this apple, etc.). What one might propose is that phenomenal properties are by definition uniquely instantiated: They wear the object with which they combine on their sleeve, so to speak. From this perspective, the reason why an experience cannot be referentially distinguished from the Experiencer is that phenomenal properties are in a sense *inherent tropes*, that is, properties that come up as *uniquely instantiated* in virtue of their *inherent constitution*.

Be it as it may, what should be firmly established is that whatever is part of the representational/semantic content is not subject to logical IEM. In fact, what is subject to logical IEM is the Experiencer that comes along with phenomenal properties, and the reason for that is that this Experiencer is not part of the representational/semantic content as something distinct from the representational/semantic content of the phenomenal predicate.

## 7 Conclusions

We conclude that Wittgenstein was right in claiming that the *experiencer* in an experience report of the sort of “I am in pain” does not refer. It is not correct, however, to identify this experiencer with the referent of the first-person pronoun. The first-person pronoun in “I am in pain” refers to the entity that has epistemic access to the experience. In order to do so, it exploits the usual Kaplanian semantics for essential indexicals, enriched with the metaphysically enforced identity *speaker-in-c = bearer-of-the-experience*. Establishing the reference of the first-person pronoun in “I am in pain” as, say, Bill, is a process subject to error through misidentification. The whole point reduces to the fact that the bearer of the experience, as referred to by the first-personal pronoun, is crucially *not* the experiencer of the experience, if we define this experiencer as the sense of minimal agency and ownership that is proper to phenomenal properties when they manifest themselves. There is no issue of *independent* reference for this experiencer, since there is no phenomenal property that does not incorporate, as part of its meaning, this experiencer.

In this way, we can establish that Wittgenstein’s point about the lack of reference in (1) was correct. It should not be interpreted, however, as the lack of reference of the first-person pronoun, but as a lack of reference *inherent to the semantics of phenomenal predicates*. A conclusion that clearly squares with the observations made above on the irreducible difference between direct experience reports and perceptually/cognitively based external event reports. Once this irreducible difference is taken into serious consideration, much of the present philosophical confusions around the nature of IEM and the distinction between *de facto* and *de iure*/logical IEM can be effectively avoided.

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# Representing Representations: The Priority of the De Re



Kenneth A. Taylor

**Abstract** We glide easily from thought and talk about worldly objects to thought and talk about the contents of our beliefs about such worldly objects all the time. Smith ask Jones about the whereabouts of their pet cat and on the basis of Jones's assertion that the cat is on the mat, Smith comes to believe that the cat is on the mat. Black in turn may ascribe to Smith the belief that the cat is on the mat. Such transitions from thought and talk about worldly objects to thought and talk about states of mind are so familiar to us as to seem second nature. But there is a long-standing philosophical tradition, originating with Frege, but endorsed by philosophers with otherwise varying philosophical outlooks, which makes the very possibility of such transitions puzzling. That tradition assumes that in making at least certain attitude ascriptions – so-called *de dicto* or “notionally sensitive” ascriptions – speakers refer to, describe, quantify over, or somehow pragmatically implicate the notions, representations, or modes of presentations that plausibly figure as constituents of our mental contents – either to the exclusion of the worldly objects themselves or in addition to those objects. Such attitude ascriptions are widely taken to be the primary or unmarked case of an attitude ascription. But it is seldom acknowledged that twin facts that (a) on this approach worldly objects will relate to the representational items that supposedly serve as ingredients of thought content in a one-many fashion and (b) there is no automatic way “back-up” from worldly objects to modes of presentation thereof together generate a mystery about how possibly we are able execute transitions from thought and talk about worldly objects to thought and talk about representational states of mind. It is argued in this essay that the way around this mystery is to see that *de re*, rather than *de dicto* ascriptions are the unmarked form of attitude ascription and that our representations of mental contents are parasitic on our representations of worldly objects. That is, we talk about the contents of our states of mind not by adverting, in the first instance, to talk about peculiarly mental or representational entities like notions or modes of

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presentations, but primarily by talking about worldly entities themselves. That is, to attribute to another the belief that the cat is on the mat, one need not refer to modes of presentations, or their ilk, of said cat or said mat, but only to the relevant cat and the relevant mat.

**Keywords** Indirect reports · semantics/pragmatics debate · attitude ascriptions

## 1 From World to Mind and Back Again

Jones is wondering where the cat has gotten to this time. Her roommate Smith utters:

(1) The cat is on the mat

Taking Smith at her word, Jones quickly comes to believe two things. She comes to believe something about the cat – that it is on the mat. She also comes to believe something about Smith — that she believes that the cat is on the mat. Now suppose that Black is curious not about the whereabouts of the cat, but about Smith’s beliefs about the whereabouts of the cat. Thinking that Jones can tell, she asks Jones about Smith’s beliefs. In response, Jones utters (2):

(2) Smith believes that the cat is on the mat.

(1) as uttered by Smith and (2) as uttered by Jones clearly differ in subject matter. (1) is about the cat and its whereabouts. It is true just in case the cat is on the mat. The truth or falsity of (2), by contrast, in no way depends on the whereabouts of the cat. Its truth or falsity depends entirely on Smith’s state of mind – on whether she *takes* the cat to be on the mat. She may do so wrongly or rightly. But whether she does so rightly or wrongly is entirely irrelevant to the truth value of (2). Despite this difference in subject matter, there is an intimate connection between (1) as uttered by Smith and (2) as uttered by Jones. (2), as uttered by Jones, is a way of *reporting* the belief *expressed* by Smith in uttering (1). We execute such transitions from talk about worldly objects and their properties to talk about mental states and their contents all the time. We glide so easily from the one to the other that the transition mostly escapes our notice. And it works both ways. We learn much about the world from reports of what others say and believe. Upon being told by Jones that Smith believes that the cat is on the mat, Black may herself come to believe, and perhaps even to know, something not just about the states of mind of Smith or Jones but also something about the world.

Though transitions between thought and talk about worldly objects to thought and talk about states of mind are so familiar to us as to seem second nature, there is a long-standing philosophical tradition, endorsed by philosophers with widely varying philosophical outlooks, which makes the very possibility of such transitions if not exactly mysterious, then at least a bit puzzling. The tradition originates with Frege (1977). It says that in making at least certain attitude ascriptions – what are often called *de dicto* or “notionally sensitive” ascriptions – speakers

refer to, describe, quantify over, or somehow pragmatically implicate the notions, representations, or modes of presentations that plausibly figure as constituents of our mental contents – either to the exclusion of worldly objects themselves or in addition to worldly objects<sup>1</sup>. That is, it is facts about modes of presentation, broadly construed, and agents' relations to them that are relevant to the truth or falsity of belief ascriptions. In ascribing the belief that the cat is on the mat to Smith, this tradition would have it, Jones relates Smith not to the cat and the mat, at least not directly, but to certain modes of presentations, notions or representations of the cat and the mat. And that, according to the tradition, is what explains why the subject matter of (2) differs from the subject matter of (1). Nor does the tradition take notionally ascriptions to be nnnnsecondary or derivate cases. Such ascriptions are held by this tradition to be the primary, central or unmarked case of attitude ascriptions.

What has seldom been explicitly remarked upon is that this traditional wisdom about attitude ascriptions leads to a puzzle. Begin by noting that in our ordinary thought and talk about the world, we typically make no reference to the concepts, ideas, or representations out of which mental contents are presumably constituted. I do not mean to deny that we deploy various representational entities in thinking and talking about the world. But in our ordinary discourse about worldly entities, like cats and mats, we refer to and predicate properties of those worldly entities themselves. We do not refer to or predicate properties of whatever representational items we deploy in thinking and talking about those worldly entities. And it is precisely such ordinary reference to objects that usually supports our further claims about what speakers believe. But on any broadly Fregean theory, worldly objects will relate to representational items that supposedly serve as ingredients of thought content in a one-many fashion. For every worldly object that may serve as a referent, there will be many distinct notions, ideas, modes of presentation or their ilk that may function in our thought and/or talk to pick out that worldly item. And on broadly Fregean views, there is typically no (automatic) path “back up” from worldly objects to modes of presentations and their ilk. But this is precisely why the Fregean approach to attitude ascriptions generates a puzzle.

Revisit Smith's utterance of (1). In uttering (1), Smith refers to some contextually salient cat and some contextually salient mat. In keeping with Fregean orthodoxy, we may suppose, if only for the sake of argument, that Smith can do so only via some mode of presentation like entity or other. Her belief is about the cat only because the cat satisfies or answers to the mode of presentation via which Smith cognizes the cat. It is this mode of presentation which is or determines the “de dicto” content of her belief. But now consider what is necessary for the purposes of achieving mutual understanding of Smith's utterance on the part of Smith and Jones. Clearly, Smith

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<sup>1</sup>Frege did not himself distinguish between the de re and the de dicto – neither at the level of ascriptions nor at the level of beliefs themselves. Nonetheless, it is easy to find the roots of such a distinction in Frege. It was Quine (1956) who first brought that distinction to philosophical prominence.



and Jones need to achieve mutual recognition of the intended reference. If it were not already mutually manifest exactly which cat or which mat was at issue, Jones might seek clarification. Smith might offer clarification with the response, “why, the black cat,” or “the mat in the corner of the living room.” But now ask whether Jones also needs to recognize which of the many possible mode of presentation of the cat Smith cognizes and refers to the relevant cat under. The answer would seem to be that she need not. If it is already mutually manifest which cat is at issue, it is hard to imagine a scenario in which any further question about which of the many possible modes of presentation of the cat Smith actually cognizes and refers to the relevant cat under would be conversationally relevant. Once Jones recognizes which cat and which mat are at issue in Smith’s assertions, then whatever she knows or doesn’t know about how Smith is thinking of the cat, she already knows everything she needs to know to be warranted in uttering (2) in conversation with Black as a way of ascribing to Smith the belief that Smith expresses in uttering (1). Moreover, in uttering (2) to ascribe a belief to Smith in conversation with Black, in the absence of Smith, there is no reason to presume that Jones must thereby be intending to inform Black of the mode of presentation via which the relevant cat or the relevant mat was originally presented to Smith. Indeed, given the absence of a path “back up” from worldly objects to modes, it is not at all clear how she could possibly carry out such a communicative intention if she had one.

More generally, if the truth of our thought and talk about mental content really was by default semantically sensitive to facts about modes of presentation and their ilk, it is fair to wonder how possibly speakers would manage to easily and effortlessly transition from thought and talk about worldly objects to such presumably notionally loaded thought and talk about mental contents. It is not at all obvious how we could ever be sure that we had managed to refer to the right mode of presentation or even the right kind of mode of presentation in ascribing a belief to another. Precisely this is the underappreciated puzzle to which the Fregean tradition gives rise.

It is important to distinguish what I call the Fregean Thesis about attitude ascriptions from what I call the Fregean Mechanism for making good on the Fregean Thesis. The Fregean Thesis is the thesis that in specifying mental contents via propositional attitude statements, we somehow manage to either refer to, wholly or partially describe, quantify over, or somehow pragmatically implicate putative facts about the representations or modes of presentation that presumably figure as constituents of our attitude contents. The Fregean mechanism, by contrast, is a claim about precisely how the Fregean thesis is implemented. Frege himself sought to implement the Fregean Thesis in a quite specific way. He famously held that in the context of attitude ascriptions, embedded terms and predicates undergo a shift in both sense and reference, thereby coming to denote what the customarily express – that is, a mode of presentation. There are many philosophers who accept the Fregean thesis, while rejecting the Fregean mechanism. Indeed, philosophers of language have offered a rather dizzying array of pragmatic and semantic alternatives to the

Fregean mechanism for implementing the Fregean Thesis.<sup>2</sup> My target in the first part of this essay is the Fregean thesis itself. I do not deny that the subject matter of an attitude ascriptions like (2) differs from the subject matter of a worldly statement like (1). What I deny is the claim that the shift from thought and talk about worldly objects to thought and talk about states of mind requires the intervention of some peculiar semantic or pragmatic mechanism or other by means of which we are somehow enabled to refer to, describe, quantify over, treat as unarticulated constituents or somehow pragmatically enrich to such representational entities as Fregean modes of presentation, ideas, notions, individual concepts or anything else of the sort. The Fregean Thesis is not just false in detail. It is misguided in spirit. It embodies both a mistaken conception of the nature of thought content and a mistaken conception of our talk about the contents of thought. In the first few sections of this essay, I will address our talk about thought content, as exhibited in ascriptions of propositional attitudes. I turn in the final section to thought content itself.

We talk about the contents of our states of mind not by adverting to talk about peculiarly mental or representational entities like notions or modes of presentations, but primarily by talking about worldly entities themselves. To attribute to another the belief that the cat is on the mat, one refers not to representations or modes of presentations of said cat or said mat, but to the relevant cat and the relevant mat. This is not an entirely novel thought. Davidson (1968) long ago insisted that if we could but regain our pre-Fregean semantic innocence, it would strike us as frankly incredible that embedded expressions refer to anything other than or additional to what they refer to when not embedded. And many subsequent philosophers have staked a claim to having recovered our pre-Fregean semantic innocence. For the most part, however, they have done so while hewing to the Fregean Thesis and rejecting only the Fregean mechanism for implementing the Fregean Thesis. Here I advocate a sharper break with the Fregean tradition. I reject not just the Fregean mechanism, but the Fregean Thesis itself.

I do not pretend that the arguments that follow constitute a complete and decisive refutation of either the Fregean Thesis or the many alternative non-Fregean semantic and pragmatic mechanisms for implementing the Fregean thesis. At a minimum, they do suffice to show that the Fregean thesis is less well grounded

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<sup>2</sup>Philosophers who reject the Fregean mechanism, while accepting the Fregean Thesis tend to endorse Davidson's (1968) view that embedded terms have an innocent semantic, while also taking at face value Frege's observation that substitution of co-referring terms within attitude contexts fails to preserve truth value. Since the Fregean Thesis and the Fregean Mechanism may seem to be a match made in heaven, much philosophical creativity has been expended on decoupling the Fregean Thesis and the Fregean Mechanism. The list of those who have sought to decouple the two is long. Some especially prominent examples are Recanati (1993, 2010), Crimmins (1992, 1995, 1998), Crimmins and Perry, 1989. Richard (1990), Schiffer (1977, 1995, 2003). Others, like Soames (1985, 1989) or Salmon (1986, 1989, 1995) refuse to take Frege's observation at face value and instead take substitution failures as something of an illusion. On my view, both approaches are mistaken, though in different ways, and approaches of the former sort – which take failures of substitution at face value – are more wrong than approaches of the latter sort – which take such apparent failures to be illusory.

in the actual behavior of embedded expressions than many have supposed. Once we see that much, the way is opened to simply and fully reclaim, without hesitation or regret, our pre-Fregean semantic innocence. And with our semantic innocence fully reclaimed we will be free to take a fresh look not only at the actual character of our talk about the representational contents of our minds, but also at the nature of those contents. We will see, I claim, not only that *de re* ascriptions have a kind of priority over *de dicto* ascriptions, but also that *de re* thought itself is far less problematic than the Fregean tradition supposes.

## 2 Commitments Ascribed vs Commitments Undertaken

My claim is not that attitude ascriptions are *never* notionally sensitive or that we never manage to somehow pragmatically implicate or semantically refer to the representational entities out of which our mental contents are plausibly built. The claim is rather that our ability to make notionally sensitive ascriptions is parasitic on our ability to talk about worldly objects. Partly for that reason, notionally sensitive ascriptions typically require special stage setting and/or the deployment of special purpose linguistic constructions. Notionally sensitive ascriptions are, in fact, the marked rather than the unmarked case of attitude ascriptions. Garden variety attitude ascriptions, of the sort that tend to occur in everyday discourse, have more in common with so-called *de re* ascriptions than they do with so-called *de dicto* ascriptions.<sup>3</sup>

Begin by considering a bit more closely Jones's utterance of (2), while in conversation with Black about Smith's beliefs.<sup>4</sup> Notice first, that in reporting Smith's belief about the whereabouts of the relevant cat, Jones need not herself express any view of her own about the cat's whereabouts. In attributing a belief to Smith, Jones is attributing what I call a predicative commitment to Smith. In attributing a predicative commitment to Smith with respect to the cat, Jones represents Smith

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<sup>3</sup>I will not argue the point here, I have argued elsewhere that the *de re/de dicto* distinction is itself deeply problematic and unprincipled. There is, I think, no single and coherent way to neatly divide ascriptions into those that are *de re* and those that are *de dicto*, at least not in a fully principled way. So that distinction is perhaps best consigned to the dustbin of philosophical history. See Taylor (2002). See also Crimmins (1992, 1995), Richard (1990), Bach (1997a), Bach (1997b), Recanati (2000, 2010) for discussion of some of the difficulties of making out a single, coherent and principled version of the *de re/de dicto* distinction.

<sup>4</sup>Throughout I will be concerned with beliefs about particular objects – whether those beliefs are expressed in sentences using names, descriptions, or demonstratives. I am not discussing here the ascription of fully general beliefs, which raise interesting issues of their own. Moreover at least in the first part of this essay, I take no stand on whether beliefs about particular objects involve relations to so-called singular propositions. My argument in section 2 is meant only to contest the claim that in ascribing beliefs about particulars we put the ascriber's notions/modes of presentations/ways of cognizing those particulars at semantic issue via the mechanism of embedding.

as predicating a certain property of the cat. But she does not thereby state or imply that she herself shares the predicative commitment she ascribes to Smith. To appreciate the difference between predicative commitments *undertaken* and predicative commitments *ascribed*, consider (3) below.<sup>5</sup> In (3), Jones *ascribes* a certain predicative commitment to Smith, but *expresses or undertakes* a predicative commitment of her own that is distinct from the one she ascribes to Smith:

(3) Smith believes that the cat is on the mat, but it is really under the table.

The fact that Jones can *ascribe* a predicate commitment to Smith with respect to the cat without thereby *expressing* a predicative commitment of her own is a result of the dialectical function of the predicative part of a belief ascription. I conjecture that the dialectical function of embedded predications is precisely to make explicit and manifest the predicative commitments that are being ascribed to the ascribtee of the belief ascription.

Just as there is a difference between predicative commitments ascribed and predicative commitments undertaken in making an attitude ascription, so there is a difference between referential and existential commitments ascribed or undertaken in making such ascriptions. Undertaking a referential commitment, is a matter of undertaking to refer to a certain object and to making it manifest that the relevant object is being referred to. Undertaking an existential commitment is a matter of manifestly committing oneself to the existence of various objects. Just as we can distinguish between predicative commitments undertaken and predicative commitments ascribed, so we can distinguish between referential and existential commitments undertaken and referential and existential commitments ascribed.

It may initially be supposed that in ascribing a belief to another, the ascriber may ascribe certain existential and referential commitments without herself undertaking those ascribed commitments. Indeed, something like this thought is behind the belief that de dicto attitude ascriptions are the unmarked case. But it turns out

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<sup>5</sup>Philosophical orthodoxy tends to construe propositional attitude ascriptions as relational. They either relate a believer to a proposition, as in so-called de dicto ascriptions, or, they relate a believer to an object and something further – such as property or, perhaps, a propositional function. As such philosophical orthodoxy tends to focus primarily on worries about the logical form and compositional semantics of attitude ascriptions. My focus in this essay is not primarily on question of logical form or semantic content – though my views do have consequences for such matters. I am more concerned with what might be called the pragmatics of attitude ascriptions. I want to know what we are doing, when we are making an attitude ascription. In particular, I want to know what sort of *communicative act* are we are typically performing in making an attitude ascription. Because of the excessive focus of the philosophical tradition on matters of logical form and semantic content, we have largely lost sight of the communicative dynamics in which the ascription of propositional attitudes tends to be caught up. An important outlier here is Brandom (1994). Though I do not endorse the sort of inferentialists semantics Brandom defends, I think he is right to give pride of place to pragmatics. And this, I think, leads him to a view of the priority of the de re very similar in spirit to the view defended in this essay. It is worth noting that some linguists have taken notice of the what I am called the default ascriber-centeredness of certain sorts of expressions. See, for example, Potts (2005) Harris and Potts (2009) on the ascribtee centeredness on embedded assertives and embedded expressives.

that referential and existential commitments are rather the converse of predicative commitments. Although it is possible for an ascriber to attribute a referential or existential commitment via the use of an embedded clauses without herself undertaking the ascribed commitments, this is easier said than done. Indeed, in the default or unmarked case, the ascriber typically doesn't distance herself from ascribed existential or referential commitments. That is, she doesn't simply ascribe such commitments, she also undertakes commitments of her own. In fact, the referential and existential commitments undertaken by the ascriber need not necessarily be or be represented as fully shared by the ascriber. In many case, they will be shared, but they need not be shared as a matter of linguistic necessity. What I mean by this will be made clearer in due course.

Part of the reason that an ascriber typically needs to undertake existential or referential commitments of her own in making attitude ascriptions is so that she can single out relevant objects in a way that is mutually manifest to herself and her interlocutors. There are many different cats in the universe. In conversation with Black, about Smiths beliefs, Jones may intend to ascribe to Smith a belief about the whereabouts of just one of those cats. She thereby takes on the communicative burden in her conversation with Black of making it mutually manifest to Black which cat is at issue in her ascription of a belief to Smith. In the context of a such a conversation, it matters less how Smith may have originally thought of the cat, that is, via which mode of presentation she did so. It matters more whether Black can be brought to recognize which cat is at issue. And I shall argue below that is because of such communicative demands that garden variety attitude ascriptions, in typical conversational settings, generally have more of a *de re* than a *de dicto* feel.

To make this case, I begin with an intuition pump. I focus, in the first instance, not on referential and existential commitments, but on evaluative commitments, as expressed in the use of slurring referring terms and other forms of derogatory language. The evaluative commitments expressed in the use of embedded slurring referring terms are by now widely acknowledged to be non-displaceable.<sup>6</sup> Because of their non-displaceability, slurring referring terms are widely taken to be special cases, with special semantic and/or pragmatic features. But I shall argue that something like non-displaceability, at least for expressions occupying argument positions within embedded clauses, is the rule rather than the exception.<sup>7</sup> What

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<sup>6</sup>The philosophical and linguistic literature on slurs is relatively new but growing rapidly. For some early discussions of non-displaceability, see Kaplan (1999), Potts, (2007), Hom (2008), Hornsby, (2001), Richard (2008), and Taylor (2002). Another class of expressions that have widely been seen to be ascriber rather than ascriber centered within attitude ascriptions are appositives. See, for example, Potts (2005), Bach (1999), Asher (2000)

<sup>7</sup>It may be tempting to think of non-displaceability as a matter of scope, especially when we come to the non-displaceability of existential commitments as expressed by embedded definite descriptions. But I doubt this is correct, either for evaluative expressions or for definite descriptions. What is at issue is whether the relevant constructions are what I call ascriber centered or ascriber centered. Ascriber centeredness is not obviously a result of wide syntactic scope. And ascriber centeredness is not obviously a matter of narrow syntactic scope. Nor would it be right to say

goes for evaluative commitments associated with the use of slurring and derogatory referring expressions occupying embedded argument position goes for the referential and existential commitments of non-derogatory expressions occupying argument position as well. It is just that the non-displaceability of the referential and existential commitments is sometimes masked by the fact that such commitments may sometimes be defeasibly taken to be part of the shared common ground in a way that evaluative commitments typically cannot be. But I will have a great deal more to say about the analogies and disanalogies between evaluative commitments, on the one hand, and referential and existential commitments, on the other in due course.

We begin by exploring the non-displaceability of evaluative commitments. Suppose Smith is both a virulent racist and something of a baseball fan. Her racist tendencies lead her both to seriously underestimate the abilities of people of African descent and to use a certain infamous derogatory term that begins with the letter *n* when referring to such people. In a conversation with Jones about the dearth of baseball players of African descent currently playing in Major League Baseball, Smith utters the following:

(4) Niggers make poor baseball players

Presume that Jones does not share Smith's derogatory attitude toward people of African descent and assiduously avoids using derogatory terms for such people in her own thought and talk. Despite that fact, Jones may sometimes have occasion, in conversation with others, to report on Smith's beliefs. Because of the non-displaceability of derogation and her own anti-racist proclivities, Jones likely would not report the belief expressed by Smith in uttering (4) by an utterance of (5) below:

(5) Smith believes that niggers make poor baseball players.

Despite the syntactic embedding of the slurring referring expression here, non-displaceability would imply that the derogatory force of the slur fully attaches to Jones rather than to Smith. In fact, even though we know from background context that Smith herself is a racist, (5) as uttered by Jones does not purport to ascribe a derogatory attitude toward people of African descent to Smith – though it does attribute a problematic and false belief to Smith. The use of even a syntactically embedded slurring referring expression expresses only the ascriber's derogatory attitude and does not even so much as entail, suggest or implicate that the ascribee so much as shares that attitude.

Consider a slightly different scenario. Jones disagrees with Smith about the baseball abilities of people of African descent. She makes her disagreement known by uttering (6) below:

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that it always when definite descriptions are used referentially that they are ascriber centered in an attitude ascription.

(6) People of African descent don't necessarily make poor baseball players.

In uttering (6), Jones clearly takes issue with Smith's belief about the baseball abilities of people of African descent. But notice that she does not directly challenge Smith's own derogatory attitude in uttering (6). She does, however, refuse Smith's term for people of African descent by openly and manifestly using a neutral counterpart, rather than a slur. Jones thereby distance herself from Smith's derogation. In so doing, she thereby undercuts any purely linguistic basis for thinking that she herself might just share Smith's derogatory attitude. But despite the fact that Jones has fully distanced herself from Smith's derogation by refusing her terms, (7) below, as uttered by Smith, would still seem to correctly and felicitously report the belief expressed by Jones in her utterance of (6):

(7) Jones believes that niggers don't necessarily make poor baseball players.

In reporting Jones neutral belief in such expressively loaded terms, Smith clearly commits further derogation. From Jones's point of view such further derogation is an entirely gratuitous addition to Smith's report of her beliefs. It is as if Smith opts to spontaneously increase, on her own accord, what might be called the expressive score or register of the conversation.<sup>8</sup> But one needs to exercise caution here. Thanks to non-displaceability, the derogation expressed in (7) is all Smith's own. It is not part of the shared common ground of the conversation. As such, the derogation is in no way ascribable to Jones nor to any other party to the conversation. The essential point to notice, though, is that despite its gratuitous and perhaps morally problematic offensiveness, (7) is not a linguistically problematic way of reporting the belief expressed by Jones in uttering (6). From a linguistic perspective, (7) does two distinct things. It successfully reports what Jones believes and successfully communicates Smith's derogatory attitude. Moreover, it does so in a way which allows us to distinguish what commitments are being ascribed to Jones from what commitment is being undertaken by Smith. We shall eventually see that distinguishing commitments undertaken from commitments ascribed, no matter their variety, is work that any felicitous attitude ascription must do.

Consider a slightly different scenario. Suppose that Jones wants not only to convey the content of Smith's belief but also to convey that Smith has the sort of derogatory attitude toward people of African descent typically expressed by using a racial slur. But suppose that she also wants to do so without herself derogating people of African descent. She might try to do so by making what I have elsewhere called a truncated *de re* report – as in, (8) below:

(8) Smith believes of people of African descent that they make poor baseball players.

But if the goal is to ascribe an explicitly derogatory attitude to Smith, (8) does not do the intended trick. Though (8) ascribes to Smith a belief that only a racist would

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<sup>8</sup>For the notion of an expressive register see Potts (2007). See also Kaplan (1999), especially his discussion of truth plus preserving inferences.

be likely to hold, it is, nonetheless, silent about Smith's derogation. To appreciate this silence, consider a slightly different scenario. Let Smith and Jones reverse roles. Suppose that it is Jones, the ascriber, rather than Smith, the ascribee, who has the derogatory attitude. But suppose that despite her derogatory attitudes, Jones does not believe of people of African descent that they make poor baseball players – though Smith does, despite not sharing Jones' derogatory attitude. In that case, an utterance of (8) would clearly not express Jones's derogatory attitude toward people of African descent – an attitude not shared by Smith. But it would correctly ascribe to Smith a certain predicative commitment – a commitment not shared by Jones. The point is that even in ascribing to another a belief that we suspect that only racists might hold, we are not thereby either directly attributing or expressing the sort of derogation that is typically expressed in the use of an explicit slur. We can express racist beliefs without the use of a slur. A slur adds an additional expressive commitment even to racist beliefs.

Can an ascriber have it both ways? That is, is there an ascription that allows Jones to both explicitly attribute derogation to Smith, while not herself derogating? There is – as I have argued at length elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> She can best pull off that hat trick by deploying what I have called a fulsomely de re ascription as in (9) or (10):<sup>10</sup>

- (9) Smith believes of people of African descent, to whom she often refers via the infamous N-word, that they make poor baseball players.
- (10) Smith believes of people of African descent, of whom he thinks under the title 'Nigger,' that they make poor baseball players.

In (9) and (10) Jones expands the truncated de re belief report (8) into a fulsomely de re belief report. She does so by adding some additional modifying clauses. These optional clauses are adjuncts rather than arguments. Even when the truncated de re report is expanded into a fulsomely de re report, it still only indirectly characterizes Smith's way of thinking about people of African descent. In the expanded report, the offending word is not itself used. But the resort to this circumlocution gives us a place to hang either a description or mention of the problematic word in a way which enables us to more fully characterize Smith's state of mind, without

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<sup>9</sup>See Taylor (2002). There are quasi-quotational uses of embedded slurs that do seem displaceable. Consider the following example from Potts (2007).

- (a) My father screamed that he would never allow me to marry that bastard Webster.

But it is striking that when the main verb is less quotational in character, the effect either wholly disappears or is considerably weakened.

- (b) My father will never permit me to marry that bastard Webster.  
 (c) My father insists that I am not to marry that bastard Webster

For stronger apparent counter-examples to non-displaceability see Harris and Potts (2009). But note that by their own admission such examples require a great deal of pragmatic stage setting.

<sup>10</sup>See Taylor (2002), (2003), (2007).



ourselves having to undertake the relevant commitments. In the current case, Jones thus avoids derogating people of African descent herself, while still managing to put Smith's derogation at issue.

With the behavior of embedded slurring expressions in mind, let us switch gears and consider existential commitments either expressed or undertaken in the use of embedded definite descriptions. We begin by noting up front that there is an important difference between the expressive commitments undertaken in the use of an embedded derogatory term and the existential commitments undertaken in the use of an embedded definite description. In contrast to embedded slurring terms, embedded descriptions seem at least *prima facie* capable of playing a double role – both the role of expressing the ascriber's existential commitment and the role of attributing an existential commitment to the ascribee. Indeed, the potential double role of embedded definite descriptions is one of the main sources of the supposed distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* ascriptions. If I say, for example, that so and so believes that the current president of the United States is in over his head, such an utterance may be taken to indicate either that I myself am committed to the existence of one and only one person who is currently president of the US or that it is the ascribee who is so committed or perhaps even that we both are so committed.

The supposed double role of embedded descriptions is standardly traced to one of two different ambiguities from which descriptions are widely thought to be subject. The first is the notion of a scope ambiguity. When a description takes narrow scope in an embedded construction, it is widely claimed, we get what I am calling ascribee centered existential commitments. It is only when a description takes wide scope that we get ascriber centered existential commitments. A second ambiguity is the referential/attribution ambiguity. Now Kripke (1977, 1971) has convincingly argued that the *de re/de dicto* distinction cannot be reduced to the referential/attribute distinction. But there is nonetheless perhaps something to the thought that when an embedded description is used referentially rather than attributively by an ascriber, it might plausibly be thought to express the ascriber's rather than the ascribee's commitments. But I want to suggest that the very idea that embedded descriptions serve double duty – either because of scope ambiguities or because of the referential/attribution ambiguity – is more problematic than is widely assumed. The claim is not that embedded descriptions suffer from neither of these sorts of ambiguities. The claim is just that embedded descriptions are more centered on the ascriber than is widely assumed. The way to see this, I will argue, is to look at what happens in cases where the existential commitments of the ascriber (and her interlocutors) and those of the ascribee diverge. Will the embedded description express a commitment undertaken by the ascriber or ascribe a commitment to the ascribee? If definite descriptions behave like slurring referring expressions we should expect the former. If not, we should expect the latter.

Consider the following scenario. Smith, Jones, and Black are working a party as bartenders. They are instructed by the hosts not to serve anyone who has had too much to drink. Jones spots a very inebriated man standing in the corner downing one martini after another. A bit confused, she mistakenly takes the drinker to be a

woman drinking gimlets rather than a man drinking martinis. With evident intent of alerting Smith to the drinker's state, Jones utters:

(11) The woman in the corner drinking gimlets has had too much to drink.

Smith recognizes which party goer Jones has in mind. But until she is about to share Jones's intelligence report with her co-worker, Black, it does not dawn on Smith that the inebriated party goer is in fact a man rather than a woman and is drinking martinis rather than gimlets.

Smith is in something of a communicative pickle. Suppose that it is common ground between Smith and Black that there is no inebriated woman drinking gimlets and common ground that there is an inebriated man drinking martinis. Perhaps they know, for example, that not a single gimlet has been ordered during the entire evening. Perhaps they have seen the man in the corner drinking martinis, but are unsure of exactly how many. In addition, suppose that Smith knows, but Black does not, the nature of Jones mistake. Smith is aware, but Black is not, that Jones has misrepresented the inebriated party goer via the false description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets.' Though false, this mistaken description may be reasonably thought to partially characterize Jones's existential commitments. Now it is true that Jones may be said to in some sense "refer" to the martini drinking man rather than to any gimlet drinking woman. This is the so-called referential use of a definite description. But the fact that Jones may be thought to use the description 'the gimlet drinking woman' referentially to refer to a martini drinking man does not obviate the fact that in using the definite description 'the gimlet drinking woman' she undertakes a commitment to the existence of a woman drinking gimlet, despite referring to no such woman, and does not undertake a commitment to the existence of a martini drinking man, despite referring to such a man.

So how is Smith to report the belief expressed by Jones in uttering (11)? She cannot, it seems, felicitously use the embedded description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets' in conversation with Black to ascribe the existential commitment undertaken by Jones in uttering (11). Consider (12):

(12) Jones believes that the woman in the corner drinking gimlets has had too much to drink.

as uttered by Smith to Black. Absent further stage setting or clarification, Smith would naturally be taken by Black not merely to be ascribing to Jones a commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman in the corner, but also thereby to be expressing her own commitment to the existence of such a woman. In the current context, an utterance of (12) would likely send poor Black off on a futile search for a gimlet drinking woman to cut off from the bar. An utterance of (12) by Smith would convey not only that Jones believes there to be such a woman, but that Smith herself believes it and is attempting to get Black to believe it as well. So (12) simply will not do as a way of reporting what Jones believes in uttering (11).

The source of the infelicity of (12) is, I think, obvious. The existential commitment that would be expressed by an utterance of (12) in the imagined context

conflicts with what is common ground between Smith and Black – that there is no gimlet drinking woman in the corner at all. But if the linguistic function of an embedded definite description were simply to ascribe existential commitments to the ascriber, whether or not those shared commitments were endorsed by the ascriber and her interlocutors, such facts about the common ground between Smith and Black should not matter at all. But the ascriber's own commitments clearly do matter. Hence, we must conclude that the linguistic and conversational function of an embedded description is not, or is at least not solely, to ascribe existential commitments to the ascriber in a way that is entirely independent of the commitments of the ascriber or her interlocutors.

This does not yet show that embedded ascriptions do not primarily function in something of a dual role to ascribe commitments that ascriber and ascriber may happen to share. But vary the case ever so slightly and the fact that embedded descriptions are heavily ascriber centered is even clearer. Suppose that the inebriated party goer that Jones has in mind and to whom she intends to refer via the description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets' is, in fact, a woman drinking gimlets. And suppose that although it is mutually manifest to Smith and Black who Jones has in mind, they, nonetheless, both mistakenly take Jones to be mistaken. Though Smith and Black mutually recognize that Jones takes the inebriated party-goer in the corner to be a gimlet-drinking woman, they take the inebriated party-goer to be a martini drinking man. Jones is right and they are wrong. Not only are they wrong, but they are blissfully unaware of their error. Now suppose again that Jones utters (11) – this time truly – intending to alert Smith to the drunken reveler. How should Smith report Jones's belief to Black? Certainly, from our more informed perspective, it seems evident that Smith would speak truly if she were to report Jones's belief to Black via an utterance of (12). That certainly is how we, who are in the know, would report Jones's belief. But (12) would again be infelicitous. The problem once again is that an utterance of (12) by Smith would express an existential commitment that she manifestly does not have and that, moreover, Black takes her not to have. Indeed, the more felicitous way for Smith to report to Black what Jones believes in the imagined setting would seem to be the by our lights false (13) rather than the by our lights true (12):

- (13) Jones believes that the man in the corner drinking martinis has had too much to drink.

Again, it appears that by Smith's use of the embedded description 'the man in the corner drinking martinis' in the utterance of (13), she does not ascribe an existential commitment to Jones, but expresses her own commitment to the existence of a martini drinking man. Jones is not committed to the existence of such a man. And this is manifest to both Smith and Black. It is common ground between Smith and Black that Jones mistakenly takes the relevant person not to be a martini drinking man but a gimlet drinking woman. We can even stipulate that it is part of the common ground between them that Jones takes there to be no martini drinking man in the room at all.

Of course, ascription is never all or primarily about the commitments of the ascriber. In an utterance of (13) Smith would be ascribing a predicative commitment to Jones to the effect that a certain person – the person whom Smith and Black mistakenly take to be a martini drinking man – has had too much to drink. But this just goes to show that there is an important difference in dialectical function between the elements of an ascription that do the work of singling out an object or range of objects from the point of view of the ascriber and her interlocutors and the elements that do the work of specifying the ascriber's predicative commitments with respect to those objects, once they have been singled out. While the former are typically centered on the point of view of the ascriber and her dialectical partners, the latter is always centered on the ascriber. The fact that existential commitments are centered on the ascriber, rather than the ascriber is perhaps typically masked by cases in which ascriber and ascriber share existential commitments. Focusing on cases in which the existential commitments of the ascriber and ascriber diverge helps us to remove the mask. By parity of reasoning, even where there is agreement rather than disagreement between ascriber and ascriber, it is typically not the ascriber's existential commitments that are expressed by the use of an embedded definite description but the ascriber's.

Let us add one final wrinkle to our original scenario. Suppose that Smith, Black, and Jones one and all mistakenly take the martini drinking man to be a gimlet drinking woman. And suppose that Smith utters (12) as a way of reporting Jones's belief to Black in that context. Even here, it seems clear that Smith would thereby be expressing her own commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman and would not thereby succeed in ascribing such a commitment to Jones. Rather, (12) would leave it open whether Jones has the relevant existential commitment. That is, if the fact of Jones's commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman were not already part of the common ground in the imagined context, the mere utterance of (12) by Smith in that setting would not ipso facto increment the common ground to include such a commitment on Jones's part. What Smith would ascribe to Jones by an utterance of (12) in this context, however, is a predicative commitment to the effect that a certain person – a person present to Smith and Black in one way, but possibly present to Jones in quite a different way – has had too much to drink. The crucial point is that she would not thereby purport to specify how Jones thinks of the relevant person. By using the embedded description, Smith represents only herself to Black as cognizing the relevant object under the description 'the woman in the corner drinking gimlets.' She thereby offers up that description to Black as a perhaps negotiable vehicle for Black and Smith to achieve mutual recognition of the object that Jones's belief is putatively about. But she does not thereby use the embedded description to either represent, indirectly specify or refer to Jones's notion of the relevant person.

To help drive home the importance of the difference between the ascriber centeredness of predicative commitments and the ascriber centeredness of existential and referential commitments, let us revisit derogation briefly. Consider the following as potentially uttered by Smith to Black:

- (14) Jones believes that Wanda is *a bitch*.
- (15) Jones believes that Wanda is *no bitch*.
- (16) Jones believes that *that bitch Wanda* is her friend.
- (17) Jones believes that the boss should fire *that bitch Wanda*.

In (14), Smith ascribes to Jones a certain predicative commitment with respect to Wanda. In (15), she denies that same predicative commitment. In neither (14) nor (15) does Smith herself derogate Wanda. Indeed, in contrast to evaluative expressions in embedded argument places, embedded evaluative predicates seem to be all about evaluative commitments ascribed rather than evaluative commitments undertaken. I grant that a minority of informants do report that even when a derogatory expression like ‘bitch’ occurs in embedded predicative position rather than in embedded argument position, it tends to convey at least a weak but generalized sense of derogation on the part of the ascriber. But whatever weak and generalized sense of derogation the use of ‘bitch’ in embedded predicate position may convey, its use by Smith in (14) and (15) clearly represents no direct derogation of Wanda herself on Smith’s part. Contrast (14) and (15), with (16) and (17), however. In (16) and (17), the use of ‘bitch’ as part of the complex demonstrative ‘that bitch Wanda’ does express an attitude of derogation on Smith’s part. And notice that it does not matter whether the complex demonstrative occurs in subject or object position. What matters is that it occurs in argument position. That is, embedded arguments seem to be ascriber centered, while embedded predicates seem to be ascribee centered.

Let us return briefly to our bartenders and the martini drinking man. Suppose, as above, that Smith intends to report Jones’s belief about the martini drinking man in the corner to Black. Suppose that Smith intends via her report to arm Black for interaction with Jones by making it explicit just how Jones thinks of the martini drinking man. It is commonly thought that it is via so-called *de dicto* ascriptions that we arm each other for interaction with the ascribee. *De dicto* ascriptions are taken to be sensitive to the inner mental life of the ascriber, rather than simply to her outer worldly commitments. After all, such ascriptions are supposed to be in the business of somehow characterizing the modes of presentation, notions or ideas via which the ascriber cognizes the world. But here we are supposing that Jones mistakenly takes a martini drinking man to be a gimlet drinking woman. Smith is aware that Jones is confused. But Black is not aware of Jones’s confusion. If Smith were to report Jones belief by an utterance of (13), she would correctly and successfully ascribe to Jones a commitment to the effect that a certain person has had too much to drink. But since her utterance would convey no information about Jones’s confused notions of the relevant person, it might reasonably be concluded that she would thereby fail to fully arm Black for interacting with Jones, precisely because we have done nothing to specify her own inner perspective by our ascription.

There is something to this thought. To fully arm Black for interaction with Jones, Smith needs a way both to ascribe the commitment just mentioned and to convey information about Jones’s confused notions, and she needs to do so without thereby

committing herself to Jones's confusions. She can do no better, I suggest, than to go fulsomely *de re* in the sense of Taylor (2002). She might, for example, utter something like the following:

- (18) Jones believes of the martini drinking man in the corner, whom she mistakes for a gimlet drinking woman, that he has had too much to drink.

In uttering (18), Smith does several things. She undertakes, and manifestly so, a commitment of her own to the existence of a martini drinking man. She also ascribes to Jones a commitment to the existence of a gimlet drinking woman. And she does so without herself thereby undertaking any such commitment. Finally, she ascribes to Jones, also without herself undertaking, a predicative commitment to the effect that a certain person has had too much to drink. In so doing, Smith not only informs Black of Jones's commitments, but she does so in a manner that arms Black for interaction with Jones. For she explicitly conveys information about Jones's representations and misrepresentations of the relevant objects.

Turn briefly to proper names. Both Frege's original case for the Fregean Mechanism and also his implicit case for the priority of the *de dicto* over the *de re* in the ascription of attitudes, turned heavily on the apparent failure of coreferring names to be intersubstitutable in the context of attitude ascriptions. Failures of substitution raise delicate issues that I will not attempt to address fully here.<sup>11</sup> But I do want to show that the behavior of names within attitude ascriptions is rather more nuanced than Fregeans acknowledge. The point I wish to make here is that even in the case of names, we observe something rather like what we have already observed with other expressions that occupy embedded argument position – that embedded names are typically ascriber centered rather than ascribee centered. To see this, we examine what I call reverse Frege cases.<sup>12</sup> In reverse cases, because of the referential confusion of the ascribee, the referential commitments of the ascribee and those of the ascriber diverge. We shall see that in these cases the behavior of

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<sup>11</sup>But see Taylor (2014a), Taylor (2003), Taylor (2002). For something like the *ur*-argument that the Fregean diagnosis of substitution failures goes wrong from the very start, see the landmark Kripke (1979).

<sup>12</sup>These examples were first considered in Taylor (2002) and expanded upon in Taylor (2007). I now call them reverse Frege cases. In straight Frege cases, a believer starts out believing that what is in fact the same thing again is two different things. She may later come to correctly believe that the "two" are in fact one. Famously, Frege wonders how such discoveries are possible, given that a statement to the effect that a thing is identical with itself would seem to be trivially true. In reverse Frege cases, things go the other way around. The believer starts out believing, this time correctly, that what are in fact two distinct things are two distinct things. But upon further investigation, she comes to mistakenly believe of the two distinct things that they are one. Reverse Frege cases bear a certain resemblance to Kripke's (1979) 'London'-'Londres' case and his 'Paderewski'-Paderewski' cases. My aim in examining reverse Frege is not quite the same as Kripke's though. I use such cases to draw a wedge between what I am calling the referential commitments of the ascriber and those of the ascribee.

embedded names precisely mirrors the behavior of embedded definite descriptions and embedded evaluative referring expressions.

Jones is a hapless astronomer. She proudly fancies herself the first to realize that Mars and Venus are one and the same planet. Before her spurious “discovery” Jones is as linguistically competent as the rest of us. Like the rest of us, pre-discovery she would use ‘Venus’ to refer to Venus and ‘Mars’ to refer to Mars. Her spurious “discovery” no doubt rationally commits her to some serious reconfiguration of her notions of Mars and Venus. But it is not obvious that such reconfigurations would ipso facto cause her no longer to be numbered among the linguistically competent. Indeed, after her spurious discovery, Jones would appear to be no worse off – linguistically and cognitively speaking – than someone who believes that Hesperus is distinct from Phosphorus. Just as a rational and competent cognizer can take one thing to be two, so such a cognizer can take two distinct things to be one. But if Jones, who suffers from a reverse Frege case, is no worse off than one who subjects to a straight Frege case, then when she makes such bizarre post-discovery statements as:

(19) Mars is just Venus again.

she is certainly speaking falsely, but she is nonetheless speaking, and presumably intends to be speaking, English. And unless one is willing to say that knowing that Mars is distinct from Venus is required for full competence in English, she is apparently doing so competently.

Suppose that Brown recognizes the nature of Jones’s confusion. And suppose that she wants to inform Black of something about Jones’s beliefs in a situation in which it is common ground between Black and Brown that Mars and Venus are distinct. Perhaps Jones has uttered the following:

(20) I see that Venus is visible tonight.

And perhaps she has done so with evident intent of referring to the currently visible Venus rather than to the not yet visible Mars. It seems intuitively right to say that Jones has expressed a belief to the effect that Venus is currently visible. It is, after all, Venus that she sees. Moreover, on this occasion she correctly uses the name ‘Venus’ to refer to the very object that she sees. The problem is that because Jones also takes that very object to be Mars, it also seems right to say – or at least not wrong to say – that Jones believes that Mars is visible in the evening too. Jones would, after all, accept both the sentence ‘Venus is visible tonight’ and the sentence ‘Mars is visible tonight’.

Perhaps we can represent what Jones believes by (21):

(21) Jones believes that Venus is visible, and that Mars is visible.

But (21) is entirely silent about the character of Jones’s confused notions of Mars and Venus. (21) does not capture the fact that by Jones’s notional lights Mars and Venus are one and the same planet. Just imagine that Brown does, but Black does not know that Jones takes Mars to be identical to Venus. An utterance of (21) would put Black in no position to infer that Jones takes Mars and Venus to be identical.

Here again, Brown might resort to something like the elaborate circumlocution of a fulsomely de re ascription to fully depict the true character of Jones's confused notions of Mars and Venus, without having to own the relevant confusion as her own, as in:

- (22) Jones believes of Venus, which she takes to be identical with Mars, that it is visible tonight.
- (23) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be identical with Venus, that it is visible tonight.

One can easily imagine discourse situations in which one might prefer one of (22) or (23) over (21) as a way of reporting Jones's belief, with the choice between them being driven largely by pragmatic considerations relating to what is foreground or background in the relevant discourse situation.

Consider a slightly different scenario. In this scenario, Jones is even more clueless about the planets – Mars in particular. Sometimes when she sees it, she takes it to be Venus. Other times, she takes it to be Jupiter. Now suppose that on appropriate occasions she utters (24) and then (25), each with the evident intent of referring to Mars:

- (24) My how lovely Venus looks this evening.
- (25) My look how lovely Jupiter looks this evening.

How should we report the belief expressed by Jones? Our procedures so far may suggest (26) and (27) below:

- (26) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be Venus, that it looks lovely this evening.
- (27) Jones believes of Mars, which she takes to be Jupiter, that it looks lovely this evening.

These do get at something about the truth about Jones's state of mind. But since Jones sometimes takes Mars to be Venus and sometimes takes it to be Jupiter, one may want to know more. One may want to know whether, as it were, in this very episode of believing, Jones is taking Mars to be Venus or taking it to be Jupiter. This we can capture by expanding our ascriptions as follows:

- (28) Jones believes of Mars, which in this very episode of believing, she takes to be Venus, that it looks lovely this evening.
- (29) Jones believes of Mars, which in this very episode of believing, she takes to be Jupiter, that it looks lovely this evening.

Let us take brief stock of where we are in the overall argument. I began by drawing attention to the seamlessness of everyday transitions from thought and talk about worldly objects and their properties to thought and talk about beliefs about such objects. I took it to be a mark against broadly Fregean views of



ascriptions of attitudes about particulars that they make a *prima facie* mystery of that seamlessness. They do so by giving semantic pride of place to notions, ideas, mental representations, modes of presentation or the like in our talk about such beliefs. Especially when this view is married to the belief that there is no automatic way back up from reference to mode of presentation – since referents will relate to modes in a one-many fashion on any version of a Fregean approach – a question is opened about how we manage to know the modes under which a believer cognizes the relevant objects. But I have not argued that Fregeans have absolutely no resources for dispelling the *prima facie* mystery generated by their approach. In fact, it was partly by way of acknowledging that many have attempted to resolve the *prima facie* mystery within a broadly Fregean framework that I distinguished between the Fregean Thesis and the Fregean Mechanism for implementing the Fregean thesis in the first place. Indeed, it is the *prima facie* mystery that leads philosophers like Crimmins (1992), Schiffer (1977), Richard (1990) or Recanati (2010) to reject the Fregean Mechanism, while accepting the Fregean Thesis. Perhaps even Frege himself could be said to be alive to this worry. Perhaps that is why he argued that a determinate sense must be encoded in the meaning of each term, since otherwise it could be argued that his reference shifting mechanism would yield no determinate reference for embedded terms to denote.

I have not argued that every conceivable mechanism for implementing the Fregean thesis is bound to fail. What I have done is to take a fresh look at attitude ascriptions. The problem, I claim, lies not with this or that mechanism for implementing the Fregean Thesis, but with the Fregean Thesis itself. Once we take embedded expressions at face value, we not only regain or pre-Fregean semantic innocence, we obviate any motivation to go searching for some non-Fregean mechanism by which to implement the Fregean Thesis. The Fregean approach is motivated by misleading intuitions, mostly generated by considering attitude ascriptions in communicative isolation. It is as if such ascriptions are uttered by no one and are addressed to no one. But it is a mistake to divorce attitude statements from the communicative contexts that gives them point. I have taken some pains to rectify that mistake here.<sup>13</sup> When we regard utterances of propositional attitude statements as communicative acts, uttered against a shared background, with certain communicative intentions, it becomes abundantly clear that semantic and communicative functions of expressions that occupy embedded

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<sup>13</sup>One could carry this line of reasoning further and argue that the real way to study attitude ascriptions is to study linguistic corpora. Harris and Potts (2009) draw just such a conclusion. They say, “We think that the investigative strategy of reporting basic intuitions about individual cases has run its course in this area. More and different evidence is needed. To this end, we present two human-subjects experiments and some novel corpus work.” Even though I am a philosopher, rather than a linguist, and have not attempted to carry out either a human subject experiment or corpus work, I don’t entirely disagree with that thought. The bottom line is that it is high time that philosophers of language stop examining the same hackneyed examples and stop considering attitude ascriptions in isolation from the discourse situations within which they are at home.

argument places are not at all what Fregeans have imagined.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the Fregeans, the function of such expressions is neither in whole nor in part to semantically or pragmatically invoke the ascriber's ways of cognizing the worldly objects about which she has beliefs. There is no reason whatsoever to believe that expressions either semantically refer to, quantify over, describe or somehow pragmatically invoke the Fregean modes of presentations, or their cleaned up contemporary ilk, by which the ascriber putatively cognizes the worldly objects about which they have beliefs.

Embedded expressions, at least those that occupy embedded argument places, are not ascriber centered, at least not in the unmarked case. In the unmarked case, it is the ascriber and not the ascribee who derogates, and is represented as derogating, by the use of a derogatory referring term such as 'that damned Kaplan.' But something similar holds for non-derogatory complex demonstrative 'that UCLA philosopher Kaplan'. Similarly, it is the ascriber and not the ascribee who, in the unmarked case, undertakes and is represented as undertaking an existential commitment in using an embedded definite description such as 'the man in the doorway'. Finally, it is the ascriber rather than the ascribee who undertakes, and is represented as undertaking, a referential commitment in the use of an embedded name or complex demonstrative in embedded argument position. Even when Smith misuses 'Mars' to refer to Venus, the ascriber cannot make 'Mars' stand for Venus or have the sense of 'Mars, aka, Venus' by embedding that term in a that clause that purports to specify the notional contents of Smith's beliefs

Now the non-displaceability of embedded slurring and derogatory referring expressions has widely been taken to be a peculiar feature of derogatory expressions, and thus to be the exception rather than the rule for embedded expressions. But I have been arguing that such behavior is the rule rather than the exception. Just as an embedded use of the derogatory complex demonstrative 'that damned Kaplan' would express only Jones's and not Smith's derogatory attitude toward Kaplan in (30) as uttered by Jones in addressing Black, so an embedded use of the non-derogatory complex demonstrative 'that famous UCLA philosopher Kaplan' would represent Jones's and not Smith's knowledge of Kaplan's place of employment in (31) as uttered by Jones in addressing Black:

(30) Smith believes that *that damned Kaplan* just got tenure.

(31) Smith believes that *that UCLA philosopher Kaplan* just got tenure.

To appreciate that the complex demonstrative in (31) does not represent how the ascribee Smith but how the ascriber Jones and her interlocutor Black are thinking of Kaplan, imagine Jones producing (31) with the intention of making clear to Black which of two possible Kaplans – one a UCLA philosopher, the other a Stanford historian – Smith believes to have gotten tenure.

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<sup>14</sup>Hawthorne and Manley (2012) are two philosophers who seem to an extent to share this outlook. Their argument against what they call the spy argument against liberalism about singular thought makes fairly heavy appeal at various points to the conversational dynamics of belief ascriptions.

Nor are complex demonstratives – whether derogatory or not – special in this regard. Suppose that Smith is hallucinating and mistakenly believes that there is a (unique) man in a (unique) doorway staring at her. In a situation in which it is mutually manifest to Jones and to Black that there is no such man, Jones could not felicitously use the description ‘The man in the doorway staring at her’ as it occurs in (32) to report Smith’s belief to Black, at least not without some further stage setting:

(32) Smith believes that the man in the door staring at her is about to jump her.

That’s because the description would misrepresent Jones’s existential commitments rather than correctly representing Smith’s. Notice too that this is not simply a matter of scope. Even if read in a narrow scope way, an utterance of (32) would be infelicitous.

I do not deny that it is possible shift the focus of an ascription from the ascriber and her interlocutors to the ascribee.<sup>15</sup> We can always resort to the elaborate circumlocution of a fulsomely *de re* ascription, for example, especially when there is a mismatch between the commitments of the ascriber and those of the ascribee. Sometimes such circumlocution will not be necessary if context alone can do the trick. Though I have not dwelled on indefinites in this essay, it is worth noting in passing that in certain contexts, going indefinite helps to directly shift the focus to the ascribee. For example, instead of uttering the problematic (32) to capture the content of Smith’s hallucinatory belief, Jones might resort to the unproblematic (33):

(33) Smith believes that there is a man in a doorway staring at her and that he is about to jump her.

Here it is important that the apparently referring expression ‘he’ does not occupy a discourse initial position. Rather it is anaphoric on an embedded indefinite. And though the indefinite itself is also not discourse initial, it seems to introduce what I have elsewhere called a notional frame. (Taylor 2002) And ‘he’ seems to be able, as it were, to reach into that notional frame and pick up not an actual reference, but a notional reference.<sup>16</sup>

I have focused mainly on the ascriber centeredness of singular definite expressions occupying embedded argument places. But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that things are otherwise with embedded predicates. Embedded predications are always centered on the ascribee rather than the ascriber. Nor can they be shifted away from ascribee to ascriber in any conversational context, by any semantic or pragmatic mechanism. It might even be thought that this fact reflects

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<sup>15</sup>See Harris and Potts (2009) for examples relating to appositives and expressives in particular. They convincingly argue that shifting perspectives from ascriber to ascribee requires much pragmatic stage setting. See also Hom (2008) though Hom’s cases seem more equivocal.

<sup>16</sup>Geach (1967) is the locus classicus. See also Guerts (1998), Chierchia (1995) and Hawthorne and Manley (2012)

the grain of truth in the Fregean Thesis. It is precisely the ascriber centeredness of embedded predications that is responsible for the difference in subject matter between statements like (1) above and statements like (2) above. This difference in subject matter follows from the fact that the semantic and communicative function of an embedded predication is to represent the predicative commitments of the ascriber. In using an embedded predicate, the ascriber ascribes such a commitment, but does not herself express or undertake any predicative commitment of her own. In this, and this alone, I conjecture lies the difference between statements about worldly object and their properties and statements about our beliefs about such objects and their properties. But this gives us no reason to posit reference shifts *a la Frege*, unarticulated constituents *a la Crimmins and Perry*, Russellian annotated matrices and *la Richard*, free-enrichment *a la Recanati*, or any other peculiar semantic or pragmatic mechanism to explain the putatively peculiar behavior of embedded expressions.

### 3 From De Re Ascriptions to De Re Attitudes

So far, we have focused on ascriptions of beliefs, rather than on beliefs themselves. That is not entirely accidental. Some philosophers see the distinction between the *de re* and the *de dicto* as distinction at the level of belief. But that distinction is best understood, I think, as a distinction at the level of ascriptions. On my own view a *de re* ascription and a corresponding *de dicto* ascription of a belief are often just distinct ways of partially characterizing the same total doxastic state of the ascriber.<sup>17</sup> That is, the same total doxastic state of a cognizer may be partially characterizable by both a *de re* ascription and a *de dicto* ascription. This means that *de re* and *de dicto* ascriptions do not necessarily correspond to different kinds of beliefs with two different kinds of objects. It just that a given doxastic state is sometimes best characterized in a *de dicto* manner and sometimes best characterize in a *de re* manner, where best is measured solely by our explanatory, evaluative, or communicative purposes. Indeed, in Taylor (2002) I show that even where a *de dicto* characterization of a believer's total doxastic state is apt, such characterizations typically only partially characterize a doxastic reality that can be more fully and informatively characterized via a fulsomely *de re* ascription. But I will not stop to rehearse those arguments here.

Even if I am right, though, it does not follow that we can entirely escape worries about the probity of *de re* beliefs. Even granting that the *de re/de dicto* distinction is a distinction best applied to ascriptions rather than to beliefs, standard philosophical

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<sup>17</sup>Bach (2010) makes a similar point. As he puts it, "The form of a belief report does not determine the type of belief being reported." (45) For a contrasting perspective, which takes the *de re/ de dicto* distinction to be a distinction at the level of attitudes rather than just at the level of ascriptions, see Burge (1977)

worries about the coherence of the notion of a de re belief can be restated as worries about which, if any, aspects of a total doxastic state would suffice to render a de re or de dicto ascription true. There is, of course, a long tradition of doubting the coherence of the notion of a de re belief. Though Quine (1956) was perhaps the first to explicitly argue that coherent sense cannot be made of the idea of a de re belief, he is not alone in his skepticism. Kaplan (2013) has claimed, for example, that “there is no natural, primitive and pure” notion of de re belief. Examples of such skepticism about the conceptual probity of the de re could easily be multiplied. The supposed problem with de re belief stems from what might be called the representational one-sidedness of belief. All believing would seem to be mediated by representations. The representations involved in our beliefs are one-sided in the sense that a thinker can have two representations of the same object, without realizing they are of the same object. It was partly to account for this one-sidedness, that Frege introduced the distinction between sense and reference. It is important that Frege took one-sidedness to be a feature of the very contents of our thoughts. That is why he argued that thought content was built out of senses rather than the references that sense determines. De re belief has seemed to many to be the paradigm of beliefs that that would not exhibit one-sidedness, were they to exist. Witness Kaplan’s claim that there can be de re belief only if we are able to make “perfectly good sense of the claim that George IV has a belief about Sir Walter Scott independently of the way in which he is represented to George.” This is precisely a way of saying that if there were such things as de re beliefs, they would not exhibit one-sidedness.

It was because he could not make sense of the idea of belief that was not one-sided that Quine threw up his hands and gave up on de re belief. To his credit, Kaplan (1969) did not follow Quine in throwing up his hands. Rather, he attempted a sort of rescue operation of de re belief, modelled on certain Russellian insights. De re belief could be rescued from the abyss of incoherence, he claimed, by subjecting it to certain very stringent epistemic standards. One can have a de re belief about an object, he suggested, if one can manage to get oneself in very close cognitive contact with it. One has to achieve a certain degree of cognitive *rapport* with that object and thereby have the capacity to wield a very special sort of name for that object. According to Kaplan, one is *en rapport* with an object, roughly, if one has the sort of cognitive commerce with the object that renders (one’s use of) a name *of* that object *vivid*, where vividness has roughly to do with the fulsomeness (and accuracy?) of the descriptive contents one associates with the relevant name and *ofness* has to do with the object playing the right sort of role in the genesis of an agent’s use of the relevant name. The idea seemed to be that if one is to have a bona fide de re belief about an object one had to be able to cognize it as the same again, relatively independently of the way in which the object is presented. This notion of rapport naturally brings Russell’s notion of acquaintance to mind. Russell, recall, argued that one could directly refer to only those objects with which one is directly acquainted. Though Kaplan’s notion of rapport isn’t supposed to be quite so epistemically demanding as acquaintance, it is clearly intended to be a non-trivial form of cognitive contact.

Few contemporary philosophers share Quine's utter despair about the intelligibility of the de re. What was once called the "new" theory of reference, to which many contemporary philosophers of language are by now to some degree committed, would seem to require acceptance of the intelligibility of de re cognitions of object. Perhaps most proponents of that approach are convinced that some version or other of Kaplan's attempted rescue of the de re, perhaps with epistemic standards watered down a bit to involve something short of acquaintance or rapport, will do the trick.<sup>18</sup> But Kaplan himself, who is, after all, one of the founding fathers of the once new theory of reference, seems still to this day to worry that his old rescue operation remains incomplete. Indeed, he seems to come close to an almost Quinean despair about the de re. Deference to the wisdom and worries of our forefathers is often a wise course. But in this case, I suspect that the philosophical tradition has vastly overestimated the problems of the de re.<sup>19</sup> The supposed problem to which Russellian acquaintance, Kaplanian rapport and similarly stringent epistemic standards are all supposed to provide a solution isn't, on my view, a problem at all. Having a de re belief about an object is less a matter of the tightness of our cognitive grip on that object, than a matter of deploying a certain form of inner representation that is anchored to a really existing object. Or so I shall argue in what follows.

I start by clarifying the question to which the story I sketch is meant to provide a partial answer. A good theory of de re belief should answer the question of how objects as such become what I call de re thinkable. The problem of de re thinkability is the problem of explaining how our beliefs achieve a certain answerability to how things are by the objects themselves. When an object is de re thinkable, how things are by our beliefs in the way of truth or falsity depends "directly," as we might say, on how things are by that object and its properties. By saying that the truth or falsity of a de re belief about an object depends "directly" on how things are by that object, I mean to point to the fact that our notions and conceptions of the objects are, in one sense, irrelevant to the truth conditional contents of such beliefs. In episodes of de re believing, we undertake singular predicative commitments, commitments to the effect that a certain object has certain property (or that a tuple of objects stands in a certain relation). So, for example, in believing that Donald Trump is Putin's favorite puppet, one undertakes a singular predicative commitment to the effect that a certain object, viz., Donald Trump, has a certain property, viz., the property of being most favored of Putin's puppets. And whether that belief is true or false depends entirely on how things are by Trump, in and of himself, and not at all on how one thinks about Trump. Whether one cognizes Trump as the greatest or worst American president ever is entirely irrelevant to determining whether one's belief that Trump is Putin's favorite puppet is true.

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<sup>18</sup>See, for example, Recanati (2010) for a defense of a weakened epistemic standard on de re belief.

<sup>19</sup>I am not alone in the estimation that acquaintance theorist of de re belief have overestimated the epistemic hurdles in the way of de re belief. Though some sort of acquaintance condition is perhaps still the dominant view of what it takes to have a de re cognition, a growing minority of philosophers seem to imagine the possibility of de re belief without acquaintance. See Brandom (1994), Jeshion (2002), Jeshion (2010), Bach (2010), Hawthorne and Manley (2012), Taylor (2010), Crane (2013).

To view a belief state as an undertaking of a commitment is to view belief states in quasi-normative terms. It is because beliefs states involve undertakings of commitments that such states and the cognizing-agents whose states they are, are liable to normative assessments of various sorts – as, for example, true or false, rational or irrational. To be sure, if naturalism is true, as I think it is, then there must also be a descriptive psychological story to tell about how beliefs states are partly constituted by a characteristic causal play of inner representations. Moreover, the psychological story about belief as involving a causal play of inner representations and the quasi-normative story of beliefs as undertakings of commitments must ultimately be made to mesh. Nothing but confusion and error results, however, if we move too prematurely from the quasi-normative story about commitments undertaken to the causal cum psychological story about the play of inner representations. Premature transitions in this domain are liable to lead us to the despairing but mistaken conclusion that *de re* belief is a secondary, more problematic, less natural form of believing than *de dicto* or notional or fully general belief.

Understanding beliefs as undertakings of commitments has consequences for our understanding of the communicative function of belief ascriptions. Belief ascriptions are, after all, assertions of a certain kind. And qua assertions, belief ascriptions have a communicative function, just as all assertions do. When we look at belief ascriptions as assertions, we see that their communicative function is not to mark inner pushes and pulls at least not solely and probably not even primarily. This is not to say that belief ascriptions never contribute to commonsense psychological explanations. They clearly do. Jones notices that Smith seems to be searching for something in the back yard. Black wonders why Smith is engaged in that behavior. Jones responds, “Smith is looking for the cat and believes that the cat is in the back yard.” That is commonsense psychological at its best. But we often perform attitude assertions not in service of commonsense psychological explanation, but in service of, say, increasing our knowledge. Black is not sure where the cat is, she thinks Jones may know. She asks Jones. Jones herself has no direct knowledge of the cat’s whereabouts, but she knows what Smith thinks. She responds, “Smith says that the cat is in the backyard somewhere.” Black has thereby gained new knowledge of the potential whereabouts of the cat. We sometimes make assertions about what another believes not because we wish to gain or transmit knowledge, but because we want to raise doubts, outright refute them, or in some other way challenge their doxastic authority. “Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the prosecutor says, “the defense would have you believe that the defendant could not possibly have committed this crime, but the prosecution will show that the defendant’s protestations of innocence are not to be believed.” The point is just that attitude ascriptions play many different roles in our communicative lives. What binds all the roles together is that in making an assertion about what another believes, the fundamental thing that we are doing is ascribing a commitment to the ascriber. And we are doing so without necessarily endorsing or undertaking that commitment ourselves. Indeed, we sometimes take pains to distance ourselves from the ascribed commitments. That is precisely what the circumlocution of fulsomely *de re* ascriptions enable us to do.

That the primary communicative function of belief ascriptions is to ascribe commitment, rather to track inner causes and effects, tends to be obscured by the fact that sameness and difference of commitments undertaken does not map neatly onto sameness and differences of inner causal push and pull. And I suspect that failure to fully appreciate the significance of the difference between ascribing commitments and tracking inner pushes and pulls is one source of the tempting but mistaken conclusion that de re belief is a secondary, more problematic, less natural notion of belief. This is so for at least three reasons. First, one who undertakes a commitment may fail to live up to the rational consequences of that undertaking. One may be rationally committed to adopting a certain further belief given one's other beliefs and yet fail to adopt the relevant belief. The failure to undertake what one is rationally committed to believing may be thought to involve less than perfect rationality. But imperfect rationality is an ever-present psychological reality for creatures like ourselves. And less than perfect rationality means that there will be no straight-forward mapping from either sameness and difference of commitments undertaken into the causal to and fro of inner representations or the other way round. A second, even more fundamental reason why sameness and difference of commitment undertaken does not map neatly onto the causal to and fro or our representations rests on a fact deeply rooted in the one-sidedness of all mental representations. Because of the one-sidedness of all mental representations, even a fully rational cognizer may undertake metaphysically conflicting or incompatible commitments. Without loss of rationality, Smith may simultaneously believe that Hesperus is rising, while also believing that Phosphorus is not rising. If believing is a matter of staking out a commitment about an object *as such*, then Smith will have undertaken simultaneous commitments to one and the same object both having and (possibly) lacking one and the same property. Since there is no metaphysically possible world in which one and the same object can both have and lack the same property, there is no metaphysically possible world in which Smith's commitments can be simultaneously made good. The fact that there is no such world would seem to reflect an incoherence of a deep, but hard to avoid kind on Smith's part.

Starting with Frege himself, there have always been those who take the very possibility that a rational cognizer can simultaneously both believe that Hesperus is rising and either disbelieve that Phosphorus is rising or suspend judgment about the truth of that proposition as sufficient reason to distinguish the potential thought content *that Hesperus is rising* from the potential thought content *that Phosphorus is rising*. In making such a distinction, even while perhaps conceding that the rising of Hesperus just is, and is as a matter of metaphysical necessity, the rising of Phosphorus again, such thinkers tacitly endorse a distinction between what we might call worldly, metaphysical, referential or wide content, on the one hand, and what we might call rational, epistemic, notional, or narrow content, on the other. To a first approximation, the worldly or referential content of a belief is a matter of what predicative commitments are undertaken with respect to which actual existents in the world. Rational or notional content, on the other hand, is a matter only of how things are by the cognizing subject's own inner lights. Rational or notional



content does, but metaphysical or referential content need not satisfy the following difference principle:

If a rational cognizer simultaneously believes thought content C and either disbelieves or suspends judgment about C' or believes not C', then C and C' are distinct thought contents.

Now many thinkers, especially those who have been deeply influenced by Frege, take something akin to rational or notional content to be prior to or more fundamental than metaphysical or referential content. And it is this that has led many to believe in the priority of the *de dicto* over the *de re*, whether we are talking at the level of ascriptions or talking at the level of belief itself. Rational or notional contents are embraced as intrinsic and causally relevant. Metaphysical contents are dismissed as extrinsic and epiphenomenal. Rational belief contents have been thought to stand between the believer, on the one side, and the objects that the believer somehow indirectly cognizes via them, on the other. On this picture, it is as if the believer manages to have *de re* beliefs about the objects only by having *de dicto* beliefs not intrinsically and directly bound up with the objects. It is as if rational contents are not directly constituted out of the objects, but at best out of the cognizing subject's means of apprehending the objects.<sup>20</sup> It is just such conviction that motivates Kaplan's worry there may be no primitive, natural, or pure notion of *de re* belief.

This Frege-inspired approach to belief content is both venerable and ancient. But it seems to me to have gotten its priorities mostly wrong. Referential or worldly content is not in any sense posterior to rational content. Indeed, there are good reasons for doubting the very existence of an inner realm of intrinsic rational contents that somehow intervene between the cognizer and the objects with respect to which she undertakes predicative commitments. Certainly, nothing in our ordinary practices of ascribing beliefs suggests that we should see beliefs that way. Indeed, our cognitive hold on the inner world of notions, ideas, mental representations, modes of presentation and the like seems to me to be derivative of and dependent upon our ability to think and talk about the outer world of mind-independent objects. We

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<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Fodor (1987) and Fodor (1991). For an early and now classic defense of narrow content see White (1982). For a treatment of narrow content as "notional" content see Dennett (1982). For a series of daunting early attacks on the coherence of narrow content see Tyler Burge (1979, 1982a, 1982b, 1986). Fodor, once the greatest advocate of the priority of narrow content officially renounces the need for narrow content in his (1993). My own arguments against narrow content are contained in essays XI and XII of Taylor (2003). It should not be thought that narrow content is a dead letter. For one thing, Aydede (1997) makes a convincing case that there may be less to Fodor's official "abandonment" of narrow content than meets the eye. Moreover, narrow content still has a number of able and ardent defenders. For a defense of a rather limited version of narrow content see Recanati (1993, 1994). For two more wholehearted recent defenses of the primacy of narrow content see Rey (1998) and Chalmers (2002). I take Frege himself to be the ultimate inspiration for the notion of narrow content, since it was he who most clearly located sense, and with it thought content, entirely on the side of the cognizing subject. There are, to be sure, early and forceful anticipations of this idea in the likes of Descartes, for example. Unlike Frege, however, Descartes really had no clue how to get mind and world back together again, once the world was stripped of any role of determining the contents of our thoughts.

cognize and represent inner mental contents by cognizing our thoughts in relation to the external world. The mind opens its inner representations to view by opening itself up to a largely shared, largely mind-independent external world on which we collectively triangulate, to use Davidson's (1982) apt phrase. That is why we do not represent our thoughts and their contents by deploying, as Frege wrongly imagined, a set of special purposes linguistic devices, specially reserved for talking about inner thought constituents. We talk about thought and its contents simply by redeploying devices that are already available to us in describing and referring to the external world. Simply by possessing the power to say or to think, for example, that the cat is on the mat, we are a long way toward having the power to talk or think about the contents of a mind, to describe a mind as *believing that* or *fearing that* the cat is on the mat.

I do not mean to deny, as a behaviorist might, the distinction between the inner world of thought and the outer world to which thought and language are answerable. I claim only that our ability to cognize thought and its content is in some sense parasitic upon our ability to cognize the world – in particular, to cognize ourselves and our inner representations in relation to an outer world. It is precisely the priority of our cognitive hold on the outer world – and ourselves as standing in diverse cognitive relations to that world – over our cognitive hold on the inner mental representations that is reflected in the relative priority *de re* ascriptions of mental contents over *de dicto* ascriptions of mental contents. We talk about the fine grained contents of the mind, not by talking directly about the inner denizens of mental life – notions, ideas, representations, concepts, modes of presentations, or what have you – but by talking about configurations of worldly objects, properties, and events in relation to our own diverse cognitive relations toward such configurations. That is why attitude ascriptions are designed to help us distinguish between commitments undertaken by the ascriber and commitments attributed to the ascribee. Such ascriptions help us to locate ascriber and ascribee, as well as the interlocutors of the ascriber, both relative to one another and relative to a shared world.

This should not be an unsettling or disturbing outcome. Nor does it give us any reason to doubt the coherence of either *de re* beliefs or *de re* belief ascriptions. The point is just that the contents of our beliefs are not pristine and unsullied by the world, inwardly safe from even the threat of deep incoherence, as Frege and his many philosophical descendants tend to believe. Belief content is a joint product of mind and world, with neither that which lies on the side of the subject nor that which lies on the side of the objects enjoying any peculiar priority over the other. Now arguing in detail for this view of belief would take more space than I have. I do, though, want to make it clear what I am and am not claiming. To deny that there is an inner realm of pure *de dicto* content, a realm that is intrinsically rational and therefore inwardly secured from even the threat of incoherence, and to deny that any such pure *de dicto* realm is somehow prior to a realm of metaphysical or referential content, that is, in a sense, sullied by our one-sided engagements with the world, is not to deny that there is a significant story to tell about the inner psychology of believing. Nor is it to deny that that story is best told in

the idiom of inner representations.<sup>21</sup> Again, the view gestured at here is meant to give off not a single whiff of behaviorism. Though *de re* believing is the undertaking of predicative commitments with respect to the objects themselves, the undertaking of such commitments is itself ultimately constituted by the deployment of inner representations of a certain sort in thought episodes. And like all mental representations in a finite rational mind, even those representations deployments of which constitutes *de re* cognitions of objects are, in a sense, one-sided. But to say that they are one-sided is not to say that such representations enjoy purer, intrinsic, and therefore more epistemically secure rational contents that stand between the cognizer and the objects of her *de re* cognitions.

The one-sidedness of the representations deployments of which constitute *de re* cognitions is not a one-sidedness at the level of thought content, as Frege and others mistakenly believed. It is a merely syntactic one-sidedness. As such, it is a one-sidedness at the level of form. Let me elaborate. First, I take episodes of *de re* believing to be partially constituted by the inner deployment of name-like, indexical-like, or demonstrative-like mental representations in inner syntactic construction with predicate and verb-like inner representations. When I say that an inner mental representation is “name-like” I mean that it has, in the realm of thinking, syntactic and semantic roles similar in kind to the semantic and syntactic roles that are definitive of the public language category NAME.<sup>22</sup> I have argued at length elsewhere that to be a name is to be an expression type N such that any two tokens of N are guaranteed to be co-referential. This is a linguistically universal fact that partially defines the linguistic category NAME. Co-typical name tokens are *explicitly co-referential*. Explicit co-reference must be sharply distinguished from *coincidental co-reference*. Two name tokens that are not co-typical can refer to the same object, and thus be co-referential, without being explicitly co-referential. For example, tokens of ‘Hesperus’ and tokens of ‘Phosphorus’ co-refer but are not explicitly co-referential. The fact that tokens of ‘Hesperus’ one and all refer to Venus is entirely independent of the fact that tokens of ‘Phosphorus’ one and all refer to Venus. Indeed, it is a correlative truth about names, a truth also partly definitive of the lexical-syntactic character of names, that when *m* and *n* are distinct names, they are *referentially independent*. Referential independence means, roughly, that no name is subject to the interpretive/referential control of any other name in the sense that no structural or lexical relation between distinct names *m* and *n* can

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<sup>21</sup>Concluding that there is no inner representational story to tell about the psychology of thought on the basis of the non-existence of narrow content is certainly a fallacy of some sort. I wish I had a name for it. One prominent philosopher who seems to me to flirt with such a fallacy is Baker (1987, 1985). Another, more ambiguous case is Millikan (1993, 2000).

<sup>22</sup>I do not mean to suggest that *all* natural language expressions types have language of thought correlates. For example, Richard Heck (2002) has argued persuasively that the second-person pronoun has no language of thought correlate, since, roughly, our thoughts are never addressed to another. Addressing another, that is, is essentially a communicative act. So it is unsurprising that public languages, which are instruments of communication does, but the language of thought, which is not such an instrument does not, contain a second person pronoun.

*guarantee* that if *m* refers to *o* then *n* refers to *o* as well. To say that any distinct names are always referentially independent, is not to say that distinct names must fail to co-refer. In fact, we can directly show that two names are co-referential by the use of true identity statements. But referential independence does mean that when two distinct names *m* and *n* do co-refer, their co-reference is what might be called a coincidence of usage. That is why I call such co-reference coincidental co-reference.

There *must* be a class of mental representations that function as devices of explicit co-reference in the de facto private language of thought. Without such devices, it would always be an open question for the individual cognizer whether, in thinking now of a particular *o* and now of a particular *o'*, she has thought of two distinct objects or has thought of the same object twice. Though it may sometimes, perhaps even often, be an open question for a cognizer whether two of her thought episodes share a (putative) subject matter, it is surely not always an open question. I can think of Kiyoshi today and think of Kiyoshi again tomorrow with a kind of inner assurance that I at least purport to think of the same person twice. The ability to think token distinct thoughts that bear such relations of same-purport to each other is a condition of the very possibility of the de re thinkability of objects. If no two thoughts purported to be about the same object, then in thinking any new thought, it would be inwardly as if one were always thinking about an object never previously cognized. The cognizing subject would have at best a fleeting cognitive hold on the objects. She could not *remember* today what she *believed* yesterday. She could not anticipate in thought future encounters with a currently perceptually salient object, as least not *as* encounters with that very object again. Indeed, it is arguable that a mind in which no two thoughts same-purport altogether lacks any cognitive hold on *objects*. My claim is that our ability to deploy in thought various devices of explicit co-reference, devices such that to think *with* them again is to *purport to think of* the same object again, is a central source of our capacity for same-purporting thought. Name-like mental representations are but one such device. There are no doubt others – including an internal correlate of linguistic anaphora and dedicated representations of the self, such that to think with them again is ipso facto to purport to think of oneself again.<sup>23</sup>

Mere purport of thinking of the same again must be distinguished from success at thinking of the same again. Same-purporting thoughts need not be about *any* object at all. For example, Santa Claus-thoughts one and all same-purport with one another, but they are about no object.<sup>24</sup> Nor is same-purport the same as mere coreference. Two inner names may refer to the same object, and thereby both condition the de re

<sup>23</sup>See Taylor (2017) for a theory to this effect.

<sup>24</sup>See Taylor (2014b) for more on fiction and empty names. In complete fairness, I should say Kant can plausibly be credited with some recognition of this fact. Witness in this connection his distinction between merely *thinking* an object and *cognizing* an object. In full blown cognition of an object, there must be both a given intuitive element and a formal conceptual element. In bare thought, devoid of intuitive content, we have, he claims, merely “empty concepts of objects, through which we cannot even judge whether the latter are possible or not – mere forms of thought without objective validity.” Here Kant anticipate the possibility of same-purport in the absence of

thinkability of one and the same object again even if those names do not share inner referential purport. This is what happens when one thinks of Venus now via an inner ‘Hesperus’ and now via an inner ‘Phosphorous.’

Success requires that inner representations be bound down to outer objects. But nothing lying merely on the side of the cognizing subject can guarantee success on its own. For nothing solely belonging to subjectivity can guarantee that the subject’s name-like representations are bound coherently down to outer objects. And this means that nothing merely on the side of the subject suffices to guarantee that its cognitions are de re cognitions. Nor can anything lying merely on the side of the subject guarantee that two singular representations that are bound to the same object again will be treated by the mind as devices for thinking of the same again. But this implies that nothing lying merely on the side of the subject can vouchsafe for the external coherence of such de re cognitions as the mind happens to enjoy.

All that can be guaranteed on the side of the subject alone is that the subject’s inner representations be the objectual or referentially fit. The mind cannot guarantee that those representations be objective or referentially successful. To a first approximation, a representation is *objectual* or referentially fit if it is (syntactically) fit for the job of standing for an object. To a first approximation, expressions that are fit for the job of standing for an object, are those that can well-formedly flank the identity sign, that can well-formedly occupy the argument places of verbs, and that can well-formedly serve as links of various sorts in anaphoric chains of various sorts. Names, demonstratives, indexicals, variables, and pronouns are the paradigmatic examples. Think of such representations as being antecedently poised to refer, prior to our encounters with the world. My claim is that this inwardly determined property of referential *fitness* by which inner representations are rendered antecedently poised to refer must be sharply distinguished from referential *success*. A representation can be referentially fit without *actually* standing for an object, without, that is, being referentially successful. Representations that are referentially fit, but not referentially successful, are *objectual* without being *objective*. Successful de re thinking happens when we deploy not merely objectual but fully objective representations in thought episodes. And again, the objectivity of our representations, and thus the de re thinkability of objects, is not the business of the mind alone. That is why there is no purer, safer realm of pure de dicto thought contents, that is prior to and distinct from de re thought content. And that is why it should not be surprising or mysterious that de re ascriptions have a kind of priority over so-called de dicto ascriptions.

This is not to say that de re cognitions are cognitively unproblematic. The very fact that the mind alone cannot guarantee that its objectual or referentially fit representations are coherently bound down to outer objects – a fact which gives us yet another reason for distinguishing the inner purport of co-reference from actual co-reference – is the source of one great difficulty for our de re cognitions. Consider the fact that a cognizer may cognitively encounter a particular object while

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reference to any object at all. Same purport in the absence of reference amounts to what I have called objectuality without objectivity, referential fitness without referential success.

mistaking it for another. I may, for example, cognitively encounter Joelle but mistake her for her twin sister Marie. In such a context, I may deploy an inner token of 'Marie' in thinking about the woman I encounter. In that case, my thought will same-purport with many earlier thoughts about Marie. But there is also an intuitively clear sense in which my thought can be said to be about Joelle – even if it is and purports to be about Marie as well. Though there is a sense in which my thought is about Joelle, it clearly does not same-purport with my earlier thoughts about Joelle. I am in a divided mental state. I am confusedly thinking, via a tokening of an inner 'Marie,' with respect to that very person now in front of me, who happens to be Joelle, that she is a promising young tennis player. I am, in effect, thinking *of* Joelle *as* Marie, thinking of Joelle with Marie-purport. If my confused thought has at least as much claim to be about Joelle as it does to be about Marie, it follows that it is not necessarily and unambiguously the case that inwardly same-purporting thoughts succeed in being purely and simply about one and the same external object.

The correlative facts that an internal assurance of same-purport does not yet constitute an external guarantee of co-reference and that actual co-reference does not guarantee same-purport is a direct reflection of the syntactic one-sidedness of the representations which mediate our de re attitudes. It is a reflection, that is, of the fact that the inner form and role of name-like and other singular representations is insufficient to guarantee that when two such representations are bound down to the same outer object, they will ipso facto be syntactically and dynamically linked in our inner mental lives. Just because representations which are bound down to the same object again are not guaranteed to inwardly same-purport and are therefore not guaranteed to be syntactically and dynamically linked in our inner mental lives, there is the ever-present danger that even a rational mind may sometimes fall into external incoherence. Precisely the fact of this ever-present danger seems to lead Kaplan to despair over the purity and naturalness of de re belief. Indeed, it is precisely against such a possibility that his stringent epistemic standards are meant to safeguard de re belief. But I close by arguing in admittedly brief compass that Kaplan's despair is misplaced. It should not lead us to follow him in holding the possibility of de re cognition to such extra-ordinarily high epistemic standards. Even a confused or incoherent thought about an object may still be a thought about that very object.

I begin by acknowledging the crucial fact that otherwise referentially fit singular representations may lose their grip on the objects. Consider Joelle again. Imagine that, entirely unbeknownst to me, she is one of a quintuplet. Each time I encounter one of her sisters, I token 'Joelle.' Now suppose that I mistakenly agglomerate all of the information I have about any of the sisters into one huge 'Joelle' file. I think to myself, "My that Joelle gets around." I deploy my inner 'Joelle' in a name-like and fully objectual or referentially fit fashion. Each time I deploy 'Joelle' in a thought episode, I thereby think with an inward purport of sameness again. That is, I thereby think as of the same object again. But of what object do I thereby purport to think as of the same again? Are my thoughts about Joelle? About one or the other of her sisters? Is it really determinate whether I am thinking of Joelle or one of her four sisters? Perhaps I think of now one sister as Joelle, now another as Joelle, and now

yet another as Joelle. Perhaps I think of a mereological sum of Joelle and her sisters. Perhaps there is simply no fact of the matter about who, if anyone, I am thinking of. Perhaps, I do not succeed in having a *de re* cognition at all.

A good theory of the ultimate source and nature of *de re* cognitions should ultimately answer such questions or at least say why, in the nature of the things, there can be no determinate answers to them. Moreover, any good theory of *de re* cognitions will have to accommodate the fact that nothing lying merely on the side of the cognizing subject can guarantee that when a thinker is presented with the same again, she will *ipso facto* recognize that she is presented with the same again. Correlatively, such a theory will have to accommodate the fact that nothing lying merely on the side of the subject guarantees that when a thinker inwardly purports to think of the same again, she necessarily and unambiguously succeeds in thinking of the same again. It is a consequence of these correlative facts, which I take to be a direct consequence of syntactic one-sidedness, that there is an ever present possibility that entirely referentially fit or objectual representations, that are antecedently well-poised to refer, may, in the end, be so incoherently and confusedly ordered in relation to outer objects that their inner deployment in thought episodes gives rise to no fully determinate *de re* cognitions. But even if we grant that enough external confusion and incoherence can cause inwardly fit representations to lose their hold on the objects and even if we grant the ever present epistemic possibility that we have fallen into such confusion and incoherence, it simply does not follow from that alone that our representations are *actually* so incoherently and confusedly ordered as to make *de re* cognitions impossible. But if the mere standing possibility of confusion and/or incoherence in relation to outer objects in our *de re* cognitions does not suffice to undermine the standing of those cognitions as *de re* cognitions, then there is no reason to conclude that the mere one-sidedness in any way threatens the purity and naturalness of *de re* belief. It would be surprising if it were otherwise. Thinking about an object is one thing. Thinking about that object coherently and unconfusedly is an entirely different matter.

Clearly, no form of incoherence is a good thing. It is, however, the unfortunate epistemic predicament of finite cognizers like ourselves that even when we are as inwardly rational as we can be, we face the ever present possibility that we have fallen into incoherence. Though some imagine that by retreating inward, to some safer realm, in which the rational powers of the mind over its inner representations is unhindered by the influence of the outer world, we can guarantee ourselves a kind of inner coherence. Such inward coherence, the further thought goes, will, at the very least, enable us to maintain clean hands in our cognitive encounters with the world. When we fail, for example, to recognize that the rising of Hesperus just is the rising of Phosphorus or that Tully just is Cicero again, the blame will lie with the world, or with the mind in relation to the world, but not with the mind itself. But the illusion that we can make such a clean cut between the rationally pristine inner contents of the mind and such contents as are sullied by our encounters with the world is but a comforting illusion. To retreat from the world in this way is not to withdraw into a realm of pure, unsullied inner mental content, it is to retreat from mental content itself. But I will not argue that point further here. I will just say that I can find no

reason to believe that either the mere possibility or even the actuality of a moderate degree of incoherence is sufficient to undermine the standing of de re cognitions as de re cognitions. Indeed, in the communicative device of the fulsomely de re, we have a way of reporting such confused and incoherent states of mind in a way which inoculates the reporter from having to share in or endorse the reported confusion and incoherence. But we do so not by retreating to an inner, safer, purer realm of purely de dicto content. Rather, we do so by triangulating on a shared world and our diverse relations to it.

In closing, I concede that on the view of de re belief and de re ascriptions of belief that I have only partially sketched in this essay, it will turn out that whatever suffices for the mere de re thinkability of an object will not suffice for the kind of tight cognitive grip that the likes of Russell or Kaplan apparently take to be criteriological of de re thinkability. But it was all along a mistake to set such high epistemic standards for the mere de re thinkability of the objects. It may help to distinguish mere de re thinkability from what we might call, following Robert Brandom (1994), epistemically strong de re thinkability. For the former, it suffices that our thoughts be determinately bound-down to the objects, that our thoughts be answerable to how things are by the objects in a way that is independent of how those objects are presented to us. For the latter, it is necessary that we achieve, in addition, a tight cognitive grip on the objects. Epistemically strong de re attitudes are very powerful things to have, they enable one not merely to think the objects but to recognize the objects that one thinks when they are presented again, but under a different guise. Still, it seems to me crucial that we keep this useful and important distinction always in mind. When we fail to attend to the distinction between mere de re thinkability and epistemically strong de re thinkability we are liable to the tempting, but mistaken inference from the one-sidedness of all mental representations to the conclusion that de re belief is somehow more problematic than some other more secure and purer notion of belief.

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# Intuitions and the Semantics of Indirect Discourse



Jonathan Berg

**Abstract** Suppose Jill utters the sentence

(i) Everybody is wearing a hat,

thereby meaning only that everybody *she sees* is wearing a hat. Did she thus *say* that everybody *she sees* is wearing a hat? That is, would the indirect discourse report

(ii) Jill said that everybody she sees is wearing a hat

be true? Given that Jill obviously meant to be talking only about everybody she sees, and not everybody in the whole universe, conventional wisdom has it that those who would take (ii) as true clearly have intuition on their side; whereas the view that (ii) would be false, and that

(iii) Jill said that everybody in the whole universe is wearing a hat

would be true, is no less conventionally viewed as highly counterintuitive. I will argue that the conventional wisdom is wrong—upon closer and more careful examination, our intuitions actually favor (iii) over (ii). To show this I will question not only the intuitive plausibility of particular indirect discourse reports, but also the intuitive plausibility of certain consequences of taking reports such as (ii) as true.

**Keywords** indirect discourse · intuitions · ellipsis · what is said · contextualism · minimalism

## 1 The Issue

Suppose Jill utters the sentence

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(1) Everybody is wearing a hat,

thereby meaning only that everybody *she sees* is wearing a hat. What exactly did she say? According to the *Expansion View*, what she said is the restricted generalization explicitly expressed by the expanded sentence

(2) Everybody she sees is wearing a hat.

On this view, the indirect discourse report

(3) Jill said that everybody she sees is wearing a hat

is true. On the other hand, according to the *Explicit View*, what she said is just the unrestricted generalization explicitly expressed by the sentence she uttered, (1). So on the Explicit View, (3) is false, and

(4) Jill said that everybody is wearing a hat

—where the embedded sentence expresses an unrestricted generalization—is true.

The debate between Expansionists and Explicitists concerns not only implicit domain restriction, but all cases of the following sort of ellipsis:

1. *U* utters *S*.
2. By uttering *S*, *U* clearly means that *P*.
3. *S* does not mean that *P*.
4. There is a non-trivial expansion *S'* of *S*, such that *S'* means that *P*.

A few caveats: (a) I am using the word ‘ellipsis’ in a broad sense, so as to include cases where the elided material is not necessarily recoverable in a principled way. (b) *S* is typically a sentence but could be a subsentential sentence fragment. (c) The locutions about what a sentence means should be taken as *strictly speaking*, referring to what a sentence means *exactly*, *literally*, and *explicitly*. ‘*S* means that *P*’ could also be put as ‘*S* expresses the proposition that *P*’ or ‘the content of *S* is that *P*’. For sentences having indexicals, meaning will be relative to an assignment of referents to those indexicals. Lest there linger any feeling of begging the question, clauses 3 and 4 may be taken pre-theoretically.<sup>1</sup> Some examples of the sort of ellipsis in question:

What was uttered	What was meant
Sam weighs 200 pounds.	Sam weighs about 200 pounds.
Laura lives in London.	Laura lives in the London metropolitan area.
I’ll meet you at 4:00.	I’ll meet you at 4:00 p.m. BST on Friday.
The chair is broken.	The chair you are about to sit on is broken.
Daisy saw a unicorn.	It seemed to Daisy as if she saw a unicorn.
It’s raining.	It’s raining in Paris.
Jill is bigger.	Jill is bigger than her brother.
Traffic jam.	I am late because of a traffic jam.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986, p. 182) and Robyn Carston (2002, p. 116) on “explicature” and Kent Bach (1994) on “implicature.”

Given that Jill obviously meant to be talking only about everybody *she sees*, and not *everybody in the whole universe*, conventional wisdom has it that advocates of the Expansion View clearly have intuition on their side; the Explicit View, on which what she said is the wildly false unrestricted generalization about absolutely *everybody*, is no less conventionally viewed as highly counterintuitive.<sup>2</sup> I will argue, however, that the conventional wisdom is wrong—upon closer and more careful examination, intuition actually favors the Explicit View over the Expansion View. To show this I will question not only the intuitive plausibility of particular indirect discourse reports, but also the intuitive plausibility of some of the consequences and theoretical underpinnings of the Expansion View.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Second Thoughts About What’s Intuitive—Said v. Meant

The intuitivity of the Expansion View begins to wane when we take into account the distinction between what’s *said* and what’s *meant*. Against the Expansionist assessment of (3) as true, one might respond as follows:

Sure, when Jill said the words, “Everybody is wearing a hat,” she clearly meant only that everybody *she sees* is wearing a hat —there’s no question here about what she *meant*. The question is whether what she *meant* is what she actually *said*. When she uttered the words, “Everybody is wearing a hat,” was all she actually *said* just that everybody *she sees* is wearing a hat? (Did she say anything at all about seeing?)

Or to take another example:

Sure, when I said the words, “Sam weighs 200 pounds,” I clearly meant only that he weighs *about* 200 pounds —there’s no question here about what I *meant*. The question is whether what I *meant* is what I actually *said*. When I uttered the words, “Sam weighs 200 pounds,” was what I actually *said* the *qualified* claim that he weighs *about* 200 pounds? (Did I say anything at all about anything being only approximate?)

However inclined we might be at first to accept reports such as (3) or

(5) I said that Sam weighs about 200 pounds,

when push comes to shove and we are explicitly confronted with the difference between what’s said and what’s meant, the inclination to see the qualified propositions here as actually said, rather than merely meant—that is, to take (3) and (5) as strictly speaking true—seems much diminished.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Jason Stanley and Zoltán Gendler Szabó (2000, p. 90): “The obvious disadvantage [of pragmatic approaches to unarticulated domain restrictions] is that one has to abandon ordinary intuitions concerning the truth or [r] falsity of most sentences containing quantifiers”; Robyn Carston (2002, p. 184): “. . . the implicature analysis rides roughshod across strong intuitions . . .”

<sup>3</sup>This paper elaborates on themes from my *Direct Belief* (2012, Ch. 2, Sec. 8, “Semantic intuitions”) and “Is Semantics Still Possible?”(2002).

### 3 Intuitions and the Expansion View—Confusion

The intuitivity of the Expansion view is further compromised by a certain kind of confusion. Suppose my friend says to me one Wednesday morning,

(6) I'll meet you at 4:00,

thereby meaning that she'll meet me at 4:00 p.m. BST on the coming Friday. Suppose further that it wasn't clear to me that she was talking about the coming Friday; suppose I thought she might have been talking about later that very day, Wednesday. I was thus confused, not knowing whether she meant Friday or Wednesday. This much, I take it, is not controversial.

But now consider this question: why was I confused? One natural, intuitive answer would be that I was confused because all she said was that she'd meet me at 4:00, but *she didn't say which day*—she didn't say that she'd meet me at 4:00 *on Friday*. But this directly contradicts the Expansion view, according to which she said what she meant, namely, that she'll meet me at 4:00 p.m. BST on the coming Friday. How then can the Expansion theorist account for my confusion, if not by saying that my friend didn't say which day?

Jason Stanley (2007) distinguishes between the “phonological” sentence, which is “articulated” (explicitly pronounced), and an associated “grammatical sentence,” which includes unarticulated expressions, and which expresses the proposition that is said (by the speaker by articulating the phonological sentence and thereby “uttering” the grammatical sentence). From this point of view, the Expansion theorist can account for my confusion by saying that in pronouncing the words of (6), my friend did indeed *say* which day she'd meet me—she just didn't *articulate* it. But this does not seem to be nearly as intuitive as saying that I was confused simply because she didn't say which day. Moreover, given my confusion, the Expansion theorist seems committed to the strange consequence that I don't know what my friend said—despite my knowledge of English in general and my understanding in particular of each of the expressions she used.

Expansion theorists might object that I am arguing against a straw man, for they don't go so far as to claim that what a speaker said is simply *whatever* she meant; rather, they limit what's said to what is *clearly* meant. Stanley (2007, p. 183) puts it in terms of what is *intuitively* believed to be expressed:

I want to argue in favour of the view that all the constituents of the propositions hearers would intuitively believe to be expressed by utterances are the result of assigning values to the elements of the sentence uttered, and combining them in accord with its structure.

But in light of the fact that hearers' intuitions about what is expressed may vary, this presumably nuanced version of the Expansion view has the bizarre consequence that what's said, varying across hearers, is in the ear of the beholder.

## 4 Intuitions and the Expansion View—Samesaying and Choosing

The same example can be used to illustrate other ways in which the Expansion View is counterintuitive. Since what my friend meant in uttering

(6) I'll meet you at 4:00,

was that she'll meet me at 4:00 p.m. BST on the coming Friday, she might just as well have uttered the expanded sentence,

(7) I'll meet you at 4:00 p.m. BST this Friday.

This leads to the question of whether she would have been saying just the same thing regardless of which of these two sentences she uttered. According to the Expansion View, what she says in uttering (6) is the same as what she says in uttering (7). But intuitively these sentences do not say the same thing; (7) seems to say more than (6).<sup>4</sup>

Other questions this example raises concern how we as speakers choose between sentence pairs such as (6) and (7). Why do we so often use the shorter sentence of the pair instead of the expanded one? Why do we sometimes use an expanded sentence instead of a shorter one?

On the Explicit View a natural answer to the first question might be that we often don't bother saying what we take to be obvious or at least sufficiently understood, since there is no need to. So, for example, my friend might have chosen to utter (6) rather than (7) because she thought it was clear to me that she meant she'll meet me at 4:00 p.m. BST on the coming Friday, and so she didn't bother saying anything more than that she'll meet me at 4:00—she didn't say which half of the day, which time zone, or which day. But this natural, intuitive answer is not available to proponents of the Expansion View, since they insist that in uttering (6) my friend *did* say that she'll meet me at 4:00 p.m. BST on the coming Friday.

And why do we sometimes use an expanded sentence instead of a shorter one? Why would someone utter (7) instead of (6)? Here a natural answer would be that a speaker might utter (7) instead of (6) because what's said in an utterance of (6) (as opposed to what's said in an utterance of (7)) might not be enough for a listener to understand what was meant—hearing my friend utter (6), I might not understand which half of the day, which time zone, or which day she meant. But the Expansion theorist, insisting that what's said in uttering (6) is no less than what's said in uttering (7), cannot endorse this natural, intuitive explanation. The best the Expansionist could say here is that the reason one might utter (7) instead of (6) is that the words articulated in (6) might not be enough for a listener to understand what was said.

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<sup>4</sup>I allow myself to slide here into talk of what a sentence says, on the grounds that such talk is intuitively acceptable and it is intuitivity that is at issue. Those who balk at such talk may suppose that a sentence *S* says that *p* iff by uttering *S* one says that *p*.

## 5 “Intuitive” Truth-Conditions and What’s Said

Despite the counterintuitive results that the Expansion View yields for many indirect discourse reports, the view is often coupled with an explicit affirmation of the role of intuition in semantic theory. For instance, according to Stanley (Stanley and Szabo (2000), rpt. in Stanley (2007, p. 90); endorsed by King and Stanley (2005), rpt. in Stanley (2007, p. 160)),

[A]ccounting for our ordinary judgements about the truth-conditions of various sentences is the central aim of semantics. . . . these judgements are the data of semantic theorizing . . .

In a similar spirit Recanati (1993, p. 248) asserts the *Availability Principle*:

In deciding whether a pragmatically determined aspect of utterance meaning is part of what is said, that is, in making a decision concerning what is said, we should always try to preserve our pre-theoretic intuitions on the matter.

These and similar views may be taken as versions of the following view:

### *Intuitive Semantics*

The truth-conditions yielded by a semantic theory should match our ordinary judgments; what’s said is what intuitively seems to be said.

Intuitive Semantics suffers from at least two strongly counterintuitive results. First of all, if semantic theory is to yield results that match our ordinary judgments about what’s said, then given the diversity of those judgments, there can be no coherent semantic theory. The lack of consistency in “our ordinary judgments” about what’s said is undeniable—even reflective native English speakers as competent as Russell and Strawson diverge on their judgments of the truth-conditions of sentences such as ‘The king of France is wise’.<sup>5</sup>

Intuitive Semantics has the further counterintuitive result that semantics is not primarily concerned with truth-conditions, but merely with our ordinary judgements about them. Accounting for our ordinary judgements about the truth-conditions of various sentences is the job of an overall theory of communication, of which semantics is only one part. Semantic theories, about what words mean, must be coordinated with pragmatic theories, about how words, given their meanings, are used.

## 6 Just Terminology?

It may be tempting to think that the disagreement between Expansionists and Explicitists is only a matter of terminology, especially in light of how Expansionists

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<sup>5</sup>Stanley (2007, p. 226) himself provides a surprisingly candid example of inconsistent intuitive semantic judgments: “[I]t is not the case that the intuitive truth-conditions of (15) [‘Bill served a ham sandwich, and John did too.’] are what Recanati says they are.”



sometimes express themselves. Consider for instance these remarks of Stanley's (2007, p. 46, emphasis mine) (reportedly recanted, Stainton (1995), p. 147):

One example given by Stainton (1995, 293) is an utterance of "nice dress", perhaps to a woman one passes by in the street. In this case, it is fairly clear that an assertion has been made, whose content is a singular proposition about the object in question, to the effect that it is a nice dress. However, it is intuitively plausible to suppose, in this case, that the speaker simply intended her utterance to be *shorthand* for "that is a nice dress".

If an utterance of 'nice dress' in the circumstances described is to be construed as a kind of *shorthand* for an utterance of 'That is a nice dress', then there seems to be some sense in which the content of the former does not include all of the content of the latter. This sort of content can be seen as lining up with what on the Explicit View is taken as "semantic content" or "what's said."<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, the sort of content that includes what an expression might be taken as "shorthand" for—the sort of content that is the same for an utterance of 'nice dress' and an utterance of 'That is a nice dress'—lines up with what is taken as "what's said" on the Expansion View.

Another example of remarks of Stanley's (2007, p. 81, sentence numbers adjusted, emphasis mine) that seem to suggest that the issue is merely terminological:

Lisa utters (8):

(8) Every bottle is empty.

... Had Lisa *been more explicit*, she could have conveyed the same proposition by uttering [articulating?] (9) instead:

(9) Every bottle I just bought is empty.

Stanley thus recognizes (explicitly) some difference in explicitness between Lisa's utterance of (8) and her utterance of (9). Indeed, he goes on to formulate the debate in terms of the question of how to construe this very distinction. But whether we explain the difference in explicitness between (8) and (9) by saying that what's said in an utterance of (9) is more than what's said in an utterance of (8), or by saying that what's "explicitly conveyed" in an utterance of (9) is more than what's explicitly conveyed in an utterance of (8)—either way, we distinguish between a narrower content of Lisa's utterance of (8), in accord with the Explicit View, and a richer content of it, in accord with the Expansion View.

Robyn Carston (2002, p. 26, emphasis mine) has also written in a way that suggests that the dispute is terminological:

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<sup>6</sup>Arguably, what's said might be limited to semantic contents that are complete propositions. For ease of exposition I will ignore this, but what I say could be suitably reformulated.

- (16) a. Mending this fault will take time.  
 b. The north island is some distance from the south island.  
 c. Something has happened.  
 ...

Given reference fixing, each of (16a)–(16c) *expresses* a trivial obvious truth: any activity takes place over a period of time; there is some distance or other between any two islands; at any moment in time something or other has happened. The point is, of course, that these dull truisms are never what a speaker has intended to express; there is hardly any context in which they will be relevant. So some pragmatic process of enriching or adding conceptual material is necessary in order to arrive at what the speaker intended to express . . .

If each of (16a)–(16c) *expresses* a trivial obvious truth, then “what is expressed” in this way of speaking corresponds to “what is said” on the Explicit View. Although Carston doesn’t call it “what’s said,” she apparently concedes that there is such a kind of content.

Thus, advocates of the Expansion View such as Stanley and Carston apparently allow that there is *some* kind of content in

(2) Everybody she sees is wearing a hat  
 that is lacking in

(1) Everybody is wearing a hat.

That being the case, it may seem arbitrary whether such content is called “what is said,” as opposed to being called “what is expressed” or “what is explicitly conveyed.” We might say that indirect discourse reports such as

(3) Jill said that everybody she sees is wearing a hat

are lexically ambiguous due to two senses of the word ‘said’, one that renders (3) true, in accordance with the Expansion View, and one that renders (3) false, in accordance with the Explicit View.

However intuitively plausible it may be to suppose that there are two such kinds of content, the suggestion that these two kinds of content correspond to two senses of the word ‘said’ runs afoul of common intuitions about ambiguity. For one thing, we expect lexically ambiguous words to have disambiguating expressions. The ambiguous word ‘board’, for example, is disambiguated by the words ‘plank’ and ‘committee’. But there seem to be no such disambiguating expressions for the word ‘said’, neither in English nor even in other languages (as far as I know). Moreover, if I were learning some strange new language, I would be surprised to find disambiguating expressions for the purported ambiguity of ‘said’. Thus, the

claim that indirect discourse reports are lexically ambiguous does not conform to common intuitions about ambiguity.<sup>7</sup>

## 7 Recap

I have argued that the Explicit View is not nearly as counterintuitive as commonly supposed. I began by showing how the most damning data for the counterintuitivity of the Explicit View—intuitive judgments of the truth or falsity of simple indirect discourse reports involving a certain kind of ellipsis—seem to lose their force when revisited with a healthy appreciation of the distinction between saying and meaning. I went on to show how it is the Expansion View that leads to counterintuitive results with regard to the explanation of a certain kind of confusion, the assessment of samesaying among indirect discourse reports, and the explanation of how speakers choose to formulate their indirect discourse reports. I then showed how the Expansion View may be motivated by a certain view of semantics which appeals to intuitivity in the wrong way. I concluded by considering how the argument might be settled by appeal to ambiguity, but then I explained how this would require counterintuitive claims about ambiguity.

I certainly have not offered an argument in favor of the Explicit View—that is a project of which this is only a small part. But I hope I have at least succeeded in allaying some doubts about the intuitive viability of the Explicit View.

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<sup>7</sup>In *Direct Belief* (2012, pp. 12–17) I offer a fuller argument along similar lines against taking belief ascriptions as lexically ambiguous.

# Irony as Indirectness Cross-Linguistically: On the Scope of Generic Mechanisms



Herbert L. Colston

**Abstract** Scholars addressing verbal irony from linguistic, psychological and philosophical perspectives have developed a set of mechanisms presumed to underlie verbal irony comprehension and usage, and possibly situational irony as well (Colston, 2017). Similar and overlapping features of these mechanisms have also been distilled by overarching accounts attempting to explain verbal irony's operation in interlocutors (Colston & Athanasiadou, 2017). Whether based on necessary conditions, families of contributor components, functional principles or embodied underpinnings, these narrower and umbrella accounts have been presented as if encompassing verbal irony in its presumed generic pseudo-universal form (Gibbs & Colston, 2007; Colston 2000b; Campbell & Katz 2012).

A related line of work has begun to identify particularized mechanisms in different languages that afford verbal irony performance and comprehension in interesting ways perhaps unique to those languages. Among these are the BEI Construction in Chinese, the system of Honorifics in Japanese, and Verum Focus-Inducing Fronting in Spanish (Yao, Song & Singh, 2013; Okamoto, 2002, Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti, 2014).

It is unclear, however, how these two literatures align. Can work identifying how verbal irony functions more generically account for emerging mechanisms housed within specific languages? Moreover, relatively little work has documented and deconstructed how wide varieties of different languages might achieve verbal irony, relative to the number of languages currently in usage globally.

This paper outlines both the accounts of verbal irony comprehension/usage proposed as applicable to ironic language per se, as well as the particularized mechanisms from individual languages. An assessment of how the individualized language mechanisms align with the broader accounts is provided, and suggestions for future work to further evaluate this alignment are discussed.

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**Keywords** irony · verbal irony · indirectness · cross-linguistic · comprehension · bei construction · fronting · honorific

Please consider the following brief dialog from the ironically titled, 1990 American popular film, *Goodfellas*, about a group of family and friends who work for the mafia around New York City from the 1950s through 1980s. The scene depicts three adult mobsters who drive to one of their mother's homes in the middle of the night to borrow a shovel to bury a man they've murdered (or more precisely, are about to murder). The mother, portrayed by the film's Director Martin Scorsese's actual mother, Catherine Scorsese, insists they sit down for a midnight meal before leaving<sup>1</sup>. While they're eating, Henry, the main character of the film, is very quiet as he contemplates the surrealism of their sitting and having a warm, home-cooked Italian supper and friendly chit-chat with a pleasant Italian mother figure, while a man they've brutally beaten and plan to kill and bury is tied up and bloodied, packed in the trunk of their car right outside the house. The Mother character, "Ma", notices Henry's reverie and asks him about it (Tommy is her son, Jimmy is the third mobster):

- Ma: "How's your friend, Henry there?"  
 Ma: "Henry, whatsamatter, you don't talk too much."  
 Jimmy: "Why don't you talk a little bit, keep him quiet for me"  
*(referring to Tommy, Ma's son, who is jittery and talkative—Jimmy fears Tommy's mother will intuit what is going on from Tommy's jabbering)*  
 Ma: "You don't eat much, you don't talk much."  
 Henry: "Uh, I'm just listenin."  
 Tommy: "Whatsamatter, something wrong with you?"  
 Henry: "No"  
 Ma: "You remind me of when we were kids, compadres used to visit one another, and there was this man, he would never talk, he would just sit there all night, not say a word. So they says to him, 'What's the matter compadre, don't you talk, don't you say anything?'  
 He says, 'What am I gonna say, that my wife two-times me?'  
 So she [*the wife*] says to him, 'Shut up, **you're always talking.**'"  
*[laughter all around]*  
 But in Italian, sounds much nicer, you know."  
 De Fina, Pustin, Winkler & Scorsese (1990).

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<sup>1</sup>The Mother character is not aware of the planned murder.

People who don't understand Italian can readily glean some of the figurativeness and humor from this comment. Part of the appreciation might stem from an irony at the core of the narrated situation (e.g., a man who doesn't talk much is told effectively to stop talking, because the little bit he does happen to say at one time, is packed with so much loaded meaning that the responder doesn't want people to hear what little the man does have to say). Another source of humor could be the hyperbolic quality of the mother's quoted comment, "You're *always* talking" [emphasis added]. As a somewhat regional colloquialism, the comment uses hyperbole to suggest a target person talks so often that much of their commentary ventures into the speculative and fantastical, such that the person's particular comment offered now is likely not reliable. Another source of humor could be the double-entendre, ironic and oxymoronic qualities of the story, where the embedded target comment has two applicable meanings—the figurative/fixed/hyperbolic one suggesting the speaker talks excessively and pointlessly and thus isn't to be believed, and the more nonfigurative one whose meaning (the man talks a lot) directly contradicts reality (the man does not talk much).

These sources of figurativeness and humor may appear a bit thin, however, to a given hearer unfamiliar with the American English colloquialism, "You're always talking". If the Italian translation of the colloquialism is even more poignant, as suggested by the "Ma" character, the figurativeness/humor appreciated by a non-Italian speaker could be even more strained relative to that of an Italian comprehender.

The point here is that even so basic an example as this particular utterance, which happens to be packed with figurative mechanisms (i.e., irony, hyperbole, double-entendre, oxymoron), can seem strained or weak when used in one language, but can be much more powerful when used in another. Put most simply, it can occasionally be notoriously difficult to translate irony, among other figurative forms, across languages (Ghazala, 2007; Ruiz Moneva, 2001). Some of the basic semantic content may be conveyed, but much of the nuance may be lost when switching to a different linguistic system.

A wide variety of reasons hold for this transfer or translation difficulty—the original language may have idiomatic or colloquial phrases configured particularly to capture some bits of meaning that just aren't paralleled in another language. The culture(s) where the original language is spoken might have practices or shared knowledge which support the particular bits of meaning, which also aren't present in other language cultures. The original language itself might have structures or patterns that readily afford a bit of figurative meaning which isn't as easily wrought through other languages with different typologies.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, one doesn't need to look to typological differences between languages to see such translation difficulties, the discourse type or medium of language itself (e.g., spoken versus written) can also pose translation or transfer difficulties (Kapogianni, 2014; Mazara, 2013; Tobin, 2016; Tsur, 2015).

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<sup>2</sup>These different factors may also interact.

The following paper is about all of these potential differences between languages, discourses and their host cultures, and their concomitant impacts on figurative, particularly ironic, meaning across those languages/discourses/cultures. The focus will be on the linguistic typological sources of such differences, given some recent suggestions about the presumed universality of irony comprehension processes as well as the nature of those processes. Some limited reports of typological differences which might run counter to these universality suggestions, as well as the relative dearth of work on other possible typological differences and their potential impact on ironic (or other figurative) comprehension processes provide an additional motivation.

### **Presumed Generic Mechanisms for Irony Comprehension, Mostly Established on English**

A number of presumed-universal accounts of verbal irony comprehension have been proposed from philosophical, linguistic and psychological sources. A great deal of other work has noted the presence of irony, in both its described situational form as well as verbal irony, in a wide variety of world literatures and discourse forms, in many different languages. But the core processing or comprehension accounts are based almost exclusively on English. If empirical evaluations of these accounts have occurred in languages other than English, they've not particularly challenged the tenets of the English-based accounts. They've rather noted how the tenets appear to hold across multiple languages (See Giora 2011, for some examples).

These accounts will first be discussed in moderate detail, to afford a later consideration of how different language typologies might align or misalign with these accounts and how they claim irony is understood in its verbal form. The accounts are not offered as an exhaustive list, nor are they presented in any particular order excepting a rough correspondence to their sequence of initial appearance. Following the precedent of other reviews of accounts of verbal irony (Colston, 2017, Gibbs & Colston, 2007) a non-scholarly folk accounts based on opposition is discussed first, given the prevalence of this view among lay thinkers about irony.

**A Lay Account—Opposition** – That a speaker using verbal irony is just saying the opposite of what she or he means is a widely held folk account of verbal irony comprehension. This core notion of opposition is also found in more formal explanations of verbal irony (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Levin, 1982; Haverkate, 1990). The basic idea in an opposition account is a hearer realizes a speaker's intention to express the opposite of what they're saying, usually through cues to ironic intent like ironic markers or intonation delivered by the speaker. Hearers, in noting the ironic markers, behave accordingly and comprehend the speaker as intending to communicate the opposite of what they say.

Accounts based on opposition present several problems though. One is the non-declarative form of many instances of verbal irony which makes opposition derivation extremely difficult (Kaufer, 1981). For instance, a speaker could ironically pose a rhetorical question, such as,

1 How could I be so lucky?

upon receipt of some very bad news. Non-declaratives challenge opposition accounts because it is very difficult to determine the opposite meaning of a question (e.g., is the opposite of what is being requested actually being requested, is the opposite of a question, whatever that is, being posed, etc.) especially when that question isn't even being earnestly asked.

Even with declarative ironic statements, though, defining the opposite of what is stated is very difficult. The difficulty resides both in the ambiguity of specifying that opposite meaning, but also in the initial non-figurative meaning for which an opposite meaning is supposed to be taken (Brown, 1980; Gibbs & O'Brien, 1991). For instance, in the extremely simple ironic case of a speaker saying:

“Nice moves.”

after an addressee performs some wild, unbecoming, physical gyrations or contortions to avoid slipping on an icy sidewalk, it is unclear what the central, and its opposite, meanings would be (e.g., Nice non-moves? Unfriendly moves? Not-nice moves? Poor moves? Unsuccessful moves? Nice move (singular)?, Aesthetically unattractive moves? Etc.).

**Standard Pragmatic Model** – Due in part to of these problems, attempts to explain verbal irony comprehension have typically focused on processes not involving opposition. One such account involves an extension of the Standard Pragmatic Model (SPM), but applied to verbal irony comprehension (Grice, 1975; 1989, Searle 1969; 1979). This multi-stage approach claims hearers first complete the usual morpho-syntactic/lexical/semantic analysis of ironic remarks to arrive at a holistic, “non-ironic” interpretation corresponding to the non-figurative meanings of the words/phrases employed devoid of context. Upon subsequent comparison of this interpretation with the context now being incorporated, the inappropriateness of this original meaning can become apparent, forcing the speaker to re-interpret the remark to arrive at the intended figurative, ironic meaning.

As with opposition, multiple problems with this account of irony comprehension are also apparent, in part motivating several models to-be reviewed next. Most prominent of these problems is the failure of empirical studies to consistently show lengthier times for comprehension for ironic as opposed to non-ironic remarks, as the SPM predicts (Gibbs, 1986). The SPM also misaligns with “search-for-meaning” and “cognitive economy” claims concerning language comprehension in general (Gibbs, 1994)—why would ironic comprehension necessarily involve a garden path? The SPM was also considered too narrow to explain instances of irony that can arise from Gricean maxims other than quality—which seems the most apt maxim when irony has its frequent oppositional quality (Kaufer, 1981; Colston, 2000b; Attardo, 2000). The SPM also doesn't readily explain the typical types of attitudes about referent topics commonly expressed with verbal irony (Attardo, 2000)—how can reinterpretation or inferences based on relevance or manner for instance, convey ironic derision?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Interpreters *could* infer derision, provided contextual cues signal it. But other accounts can explain derision in cases of weak or absent contextual support.



**Direct Access of Ironic Meaning** – Most explanations of verbal irony comprehension posit that unusual or special processes are required to successfully comprehend irony. Whether reinterpretation, opposition computation or other processes are invoked, most accounts argue irony comprehension is exceptional in some way relative to non-ironic or non-figurative comprehension. Direct Access views, though, claim verbal irony comprehension operates like other kinds of processing—intended meaning is derived directly without resort to special processes not already found in non-figurative language comprehension (Gibbs, 1986). Direct Access does allow for verbal irony to *possibly* involve rich mechanisms (e.g., layers of meaning, allusion to society norms or expressions in the interlocutors' common ground, mimicry, etc.), which could indeed lead to garden-path routs of interpretation. But these mechanisms are also available in non-figurative comprehension. There is also no need for a multi-stage claim involving comprehension—verbal irony's meaning can be directly computed from the utterance and its surrounding context (Gibbs, 1986).

**Mention/Echo/Reminder** – Other accounts of verbal irony comprehension have also avoided the multi-stage claims of the SPM. The family of echoic accounts for example, use the philosophical use/mention distinction in their explanation of verbal irony. These accounts claim verbal irony utterances involve explicit *mentions* of past explicit statements, general beliefs, attitudes, social norms, etc., spoken or written by some past or hypothetical speaker, rather than *usage* of such expressions to convey one's direct beliefs, etc. The past statements etc., are also mentioned usually in the midst of contextual information belying their falsehood. Ironic speakers can accordingly detach themselves from the mentioned statements and accomplish verbal irony in so doing (Sperber & Wilson, 1981; Wilson & Sperber, 1992; Wilson, 2006).

Initial criticism of this echoic approach, originally based on *mention*, pointed out how some instances of verbal irony do not entail direct quotation. They instead refer simply to a belief or idea which could be in someone's thoughts. A revision to the account accordingly allowed mentions of attributed beliefs (Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Additional revisions then allowed for ironic *reminding*—simply alerting an audience of a social norm or other broadly-held belief without resorting to explicit mentions of objectively-made commentary (Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989). So this family of accounts allow ironic speakers to *bring to bear* beliefs, claims, specific comments, attributed thoughts, etc., that, when presented in current situations that belie those beliefs, etc., allow the ironic character of the commentary to become apparent.

**Pretense** – The Pretense account essentially paralleled the family of echoic accounts in its early development, but it used a very different kind of mechanism to explain verbal irony comprehension. According to pretense, an ironic speaker is essentially acting out how someone else would speak and behave, often with a subtly-to-intensely belittling portrayal. The goal of pretense is to allow the audience to see through the act and note how the character being portrayed is in error with respect to their predictions, beliefs, ideas, etc., about the referent situation. Pretense thus puts the attitude of the actual speaker up front in the mechanism—the speaker's

portrayal is unbecoming, to convey and perhaps produce a derogatory attitude toward the portrayed person or character, and/or their beliefs (Clark & Gerrig, 1984; Currie, 2006). Pretense also allows the actual speaker to distance herself from the person portrayed via the speaker making transparent the fact that they're acting and mocking. Pretense also inherently utilizes the prevalent human characteristic of mimicry in its functioning.

**Allusional Pretense** – This account combined in some ways characteristics of the traditional SPM and the more contemporary Mention/Echo/Reminder and Pretense accounts (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg & Brown, 1995). Allusional Pretense preserves the SPM in its reliance on parts of Speech Act Theory, considered by some a precursor of the SPM, involving the nature of felicitous speech acts. The process of “allusion” also expanded ways in which social norms or expectations/preferences, etc., might be brought to bear in a hearer’s mind—aligning Allusional Pretense in a way with the family of echoic accounts. That an ironic speaker is also committing infelicitous speech acts also aligns the account with Pretense.

According to Allusional Pretense, two factors must be in place for an instance of successful verbal ironic comprehension to occur. One factor concerns the ironic utterance’s violation of sincerity conditions for well-formed speech acts. The second factor involves expectation violation in the context surrounding a usage of verbal irony. These claims concerning, 1) verbal irony *necessarily* depending upon felicity conditions for well-formed speech acts (i.e., “pragmatic insincerity”) and 2) expectation violation *necessarily* being present in the context, were subjected to empirical evaluation (Colston, 2000b). The results partly confirmed the conditions, but called for some revisions involving expansion in how expectation violation can be present (e.g., violations can be *inferred*), and the breadth of the “pragmatic insincerity” (e.g., it can be brought about through *contrast*, see next account).

**Contrast** – The Contrast account originated in work addressing the usage question concerning verbal irony—why do speakers *use* verbal irony given potential misinterpretation (and other justifications). That work had singled out contrast, as in the ubiquitous *contrast effect* found in Psychology, as the explanation for magnitude-of-negativity judgments in verbal irony comprehension. Hearers (readers) frequently consider stereotypically sarcastic comments (positive commentary about negative situations) as more negative when compared with directly negative comments made about those same target situations (Colston & O’Brien, 2000a; 2000b; Colston, 2002). The increased negativity was argued to stem from a contrast effect—negative situations (e.g., bad news) are *judged as worse* when seen in a context of positive commentary (e.g., “what wonderful news”), relative to direct negative comments (e.g., “what awful news”).

When applied to comprehension, the Contrast account allowed verbal irony to occur on a violation of *any* Gricean maxim so long as the desired, preferred or expected states of affairs were rendered in *contrast* to the actual situation at hand (Colston, 2000b). This revision was deemed necessary to precisely distinguish ironic from non-ironic commentary. Allusional Pretense put the distinction on violations of felicity conditions for well-formed speech acts—or, pragmatically

insincerity, and of expectation violation. Contrast pinned irony on violations of *any* Gricean maxim—including Manner, along with expectation violation. This adjustment subsumed cases of speakers being pragmatically *sincere*, but still violating a Gricean maxim, and then being interpreted ironically, for instance when a speaker earnestly says,

“I love when things go as planned”.

when events go awry. This speaker is pragmatically sincere—she follows felicity conditions for well-formed speech acts (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg & Brown, 1995; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1979). She speaks truthfully, she is being informative, her attitude is earnest and her level of politeness is appropriate. But she speaks *as if* her comment matches events actually present, rather than other events which would have been preferred (violation of Relevance). Other instances of verbal irony stemming from the other Gricean Maxims were also demonstrated.

Contrast’s calling for violated expectations to be positioned as if in contrast to reality is common in most terminology used to grapple with verbal irony explanations (e.g. bi-coherent, contraindicated, contrary, opposite, etc.). One cannot *just* violate a maxim (e.g., relevance, manner), in the presence of expectation violations and achieve verbal irony. Reality and expectations rather must be presented *in contrast* with each other (Colston, 2000b).

The Contrast Account accomplished three things with these revisions. First, verbal irony is allowed to arise from violations of any Gricean maxim. But in addition, utterances that present contrasts between expectations and reality can also support verbal irony comprehension, without necessarily having to resort to Gricean maxims. Contrast can thus subsume Mention/Echo/Reminder, Allusion and Pretense as *mechanisms through which* things like preferences/desires/expectations can be contrasted against reality. Finally, and most importantly, Contrast demonstrates how overreliance on the sequentiality of the speech stream, endemic of verbal irony accounts presented thus far, is problematic. Less temporal mechanisms may also afford ironic meaning. The Contrast mechanism is less vulnerable to sequentiality issues because it bases irony comprehension on perceptual contrast, which involves *simultaneous* (or sequential) processing of targets within contrasting context(s). Contrast effects similar to those observed in irony comprehension are present in a variety of domains in sensory/perceptual judgments of magnitudes through social/cognitive judgments about situations and people. These effects do not require sequential, encapsulated processing of individual components (e.g., the shade of color of a shirt, the darkness of the background, etc.). Instead they arise as a gestalt percept optimizing among all of the considered components.

**Relevant Inappropriateness** – This account makes similar claims to those of Contrast regarding violations of any Gricean Maxim and verbal irony. Relevant Inappropriateness also combines expectation violation and flouted Gricean Maxims into one mechanism. The account retained, though, the multiple stage claim regarding processing and it proposed a new notion concerning limiting the extent of a Gricean Maxim violation.

Relevant inappropriateness is similar to Allusional Pretense and Contrast in arguing verbal irony must have a broader base than just a violation of the Quality maxim, acknowledging this alteration affords explanations of verbal irony left unexplained by SPM. Rather than rely on Gricean Maxim violation, though, this account utilizes “inappropriateness” as the crux of verbal irony, defined as follows:

An utterance *u* is contextually appropriate if all presuppositions of *u* are identical to or compatible with all the presuppositions of the context *C* in which *u* is uttered (c.f. the notion of “common ground;” Clark, 1996), except for any feature explicitly thematized and denied in *u* (Attardo, 2000, p. 818).

This notion of inappropriateness also absorbs violation-of-expectations as part of the presuppositions of the context. Relevant Inappropriateness thus combines the two primary notions of most accounts of verbal irony (something like a Gricean maxim violation and something like a violation of contextual expectations) into one mechanism.

Relevant inappropriateness also argues for a “principle of least disruption” (Attardo, 2000) that limits the expanse of inappropriateness—a hearer presumes a speaker who violates the Cooperative Principle through uttering a verbal irony, does so to the least possible extent. The speaker’s intended meaning is assumed to still refer to the context at hand, keeping it meaningful to hearers. Otherwise hearers would disengage entirely from the conversation. Relevant Inappropriateness’s preservation of the multistage aspect of SPM is also argued as needed to explain comprehension of novel ironic utterances. For more colloquialized instances verbal irony, a more single stage process is argued to occur.

**Graded Salience** – This account’s foci is the lexical processes involved in irony comprehension. Graded Salience (Giora, 1997; 2002; 2007) allows for multiple influences on polysemous word senses to make some meanings more and less salient. Conventionality, frequency, familiarity, and prototypicality of word senses influence whether those senses are coded (i.e., made salient) in the lexicon. For example, if a sense of a word is experienced frequently as ironic (e.g., *terrible*, or a related meaning, for the ironically used word “nice”), then the ironic meaning can get salient and will often be derived initially when used in a construction (e.g., “nice going”, about a mishap).

Graded Salience also works with the idea of indirect negation, or that a non-salient meaning intended by a speaker (e.g., a speaker intending *terrible* through the usage of “perfect”) will not result in full suppression of that word’s salient meaning (e.g., something on the order of *precisely as good as can be*). Rather, that salient meaning hangs around somewhat to allow computation against the less salient intended meaning (e.g., *terrible*).

**Constraint Satisfaction** – This account attempts to give credence to all the different component influences on meaning in instances of ironic language comprehension. It argues that these different meaning contributors vary across each and every instance of verbal irony comprehension. Interlocutors may also be in particular states that might make them unevenly attend to different sets of meaning influences. But ironic (and indeed all) comprehension instances have in common the process of a comprehender finding the optimal fit of a realized interpreted meaning against all those varying constraints.

The constraints in irony comprehension involve many things like the situation at hand, the particular interlocutors involved, the social and other relationships among the interlocutors, the actual utterance used and its tendency toward being used ironically, the preceding conversation, the expected upcoming conversation, other expectations concerning the comprehension arena, the suite of audience members, reflections of other relatively fixed bits of meaning (e.g., social norms, contextual expressions, private keys, etc.), interlocutor common ground and many others. There may also be idiosyncratic constraints imposed on particular instances of ironic comprehension that don't always appear during irony comprehension (e.g. an ironic utterance is made in a context where verbal irony rarely takes place [i.e., in certain situations or cultures, or among certain social groups]).

The Constraint Satisfaction model thus makes essentially no strong claims about necessary or highly prevalent characteristics underlying all instances of verbal irony comprehension. What constraints matter in a given situation of irony comprehension might in a sense be predictable if that situation fits patterns seen in ordinary irony comprehension. But no situation is fully predictable, and novel combinations of constraints in irony comprehension situations are frequent. If any common denominator exists in irony comprehension situations it is that a comprehender will normally attempt to find an optimal-fitting comprehended meaning that aligns with the constraints at hand. Or the comprehender will work with the constraints they're attuned to in a given situation, but not other constraints. What constraints are being alluded to in different situations is also something that can vary widely, according to a wide array of influences. But essentially the search-for-meaning in ironic and other language usage situations will be corralled according to the constraints active in those situations—attempting for an optimal fit among the constraints.

**Embodied Simulation** – This account is one of the newest to be presented, and it functions very differently than other accounts reviewed thus far, but it may nonetheless align with characteristics of some of those other accounts. The explanation arises from a major new way of conceptualizing language processing in general—simulation of motor and sensory neural activity that would occur if a comprehender were actually engaging, through movement or sensation, with what the comprehended language entails. For example, if a person encounters, “The woman scratches her head” (as either heard speech or read text), the person's brain will exhibit neural activity extremely similar to either their *actually* scratching their own head, or their *actually* seeing another person scratch her head. The main difference between the neural activity during language processing versus actual sensorimotor neural activity is people's muscles and peripheral sensation organs are effectively disengaged in language processing (hence the phrasing, “embodied *simulation*”). On this general view, language processing has usurped or recycled preexisting neural sensory and motor programs to enable meaning-making in language comprehension (Bergen, 2012).

Applying embodied simulations to verbal irony, simulation would likely be similar to comprehension of counterfactual or negated language constructions. For example, for a person to successfully comprehend the counterfactual, “If she had scratched her head”, or negated, “She did not scratch her head” simulations

of genuine performed or viewed head-scratching have been observed to precede simulations of the absence of head scratching. Whatever is stated as not existing is nonetheless simulated initially. Ironic constructions, for example saying, “Yeah right, she scratched her head”, in response to a speaker claiming a woman had scratched her head yet had obviously not done so, would seem to proceed similarly. A simulation of sensorimotor HEAD SCRATCHING would be part of the processing space, preceding or coinciding with simulation of NO HEAD SCRATCHING (Bergen, 2012).

Among the accounts reviewed here, parallel claims of bits of principles and mechanisms can already be observed. For instance, a consideration of multiple representations together, in the processing of irony, seems to underlie several accounts. Note how the multiple overlapping simulations in the Embodied Simulation account could be seen as aligning with the Graded Salience account’s claim that salient meanings retain activation during non-salient meaning activations. The Contrast account (multiple meaning states being considered in a gestalt perceptual/conceptual process), seems similarly aligned with the Direct Access account (the suite of meanings activated during any instance of comprehension are all considered along with the context under a cognitively economical all-present, search-for-meaning), as well as the Constraint Satisfaction account (achieve the optimal weighing of all influencing sources of meaning to arrive at most-likely-intended meanings), along this same characteristic.

If we attempt to then distill this collective-consideration-of-multiple-representations characteristic and other overlapping features of the accounts, we’re left with a handful of principles that seem to be endemic of verbal irony. We also have a variety of ways in which those principles are realized through different mechanisms in the accounts. To afford the upcoming discussion of how ironic mechanisms observed in specific languages might fit these principles and mechanisms, they’ll be roughly listed here:<sup>4</sup>

- Simultaneous consideration of multiple representations,<sup>5</sup>
- At least one of those multiple representations generally reflects desires, preferences, expectations, social norms or other standard or generally accepted states of affairs, typically conjured, alluded to, displayed, directly stated or otherwise made salient by an ironic presenter (e.g., speaker, writer, etc.),
- Another of the multiple representations is of the actual ensuing state of affairs in the background or surrounding context of an ironic presentation,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Again, not necessarily an exhaustive listing, but rather an attempt to capture the general principles at play in verbal irony.

<sup>5</sup>Not simultaneous in the sense of instantaneousness, but rather allowing for some moderate sequentiality in onset and duration, but typically containing some overlap in their activation duration.

<sup>6</sup>One exception to this principle is when a reversal of sorts takes place when speakers restate an erroneous comment or proposal which stands against the normal or expected encountered situation (Colston, 2000a).

- The conjured and backdrop representations are depicted as if in oppositional, contradictory, or contrasted relation with one another,
- The presentation of such contrasted representations can convey an attitude on the part of the ironic presenter, which is often but not always derisive to a degree—toward the; ensuing state of affairs, the deviation from expected states of affairs, a real or hypothetical person somehow espousing the deviant, encountered states of affairs, and,
- A number of meaningful ramifications from ironic comprehension, termed pragmatic effects, are contained within, directly emerge from or cascade via, that ironic presentation.

We are now in a position to apply these specific accounts and/or broader principles of verbal irony to a consideration of irony mechanisms identified in specific languages other than English. This will enable us to evaluate the validity of the presumed universality of the irony accounts developed thus far, again based predominantly in English.

**Language-Specific Accounts of Verbal Irony** – Three different language-specific accounts of verbal irony-inducing mechanisms will be discussed, the Honorific system in Japanese, the *Bei* Passive Marker in Chinese, and the Verum Focus-Inducing Fronting (VFF) in Spanish. These three are not an exhaustive list. They've been selected rather because they both arguably widen the range of mechanisms usable for achieving irony beyond those covered by accounts based on English. Yet, they additionally demonstrate some corroboration of heretofore established irony inducing processes. They also bring some new lessons to consider when contemplating the breadth of verbal irony triggers in human languages.

**The *bei* Passive Marker** – Yao, Song and Singh (2013) present a description of the *bei* construction in Chinese<sup>7</sup> as a syntactic and semantic means of achieving irony. *Bei* is used typically to mark passivity for animate subjects in Chinese. For instance, “Zhangsan *bei* piping le”, marks the passivity of the subject Zhangsan (e.g., Zhangsan was criticized). Inanimate subject constructions typically omit the *bei* marker, as in “shu mai le” (e.g. the book was purchased), (Yao, Song & Singh, 2013, p. 197). This is an orderly system because animate things can act *or* can be acted upon, but inanimate things can only be acted upon. The marking for the animate entity thus makes sense in order to know the animate thing is being acted upon instead of acting, or vice versa in the unmarked animate version. The predominant semantic sense of *bei*-marked passives is also that of the animate subjects being acted upon *adversely* (Li, 2004; Yao et al., 2013). The key piece of this pertaining to irony is that the more a *bei* construction deviates from these syntactic or semantic patterns, the more likely its host utterance will be taken as ironic:

If the *bei*-construction deviates from the . . . prototypical *bei*-passives either syntactically or semantically, that is, syntactically the sentence structure is not in conformity with the

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<sup>7</sup>The authors do not designate between Mandarin or Cantonese.



two typical sentence patterns or the verb preceded by *bei* is not the type of verbs required by ergativization; semantically the construction expresses the idea that the subject or a concerned party is not negatively affected by or even benefits from the predicate, we can detect the linguistic cue's indicating the incompatibility between the novel use of *bei*-passives and their normal collocations in ordinary communication. In this case, along with incompatibility of factual information and co-text, we are more likely to identify the *bei*-construction as irony. (p. 198)

As Yao, Song & Singh demonstrate, it is very difficult to show exactly how this mechanism works with English examples, since passivity is done differently in English and is not singled out typically to convey irony. Perhaps the closest demonstration for the syntactical deviations would be something like the following:

The painting went and got itself stolen from the art museum.<sup>8</sup>

or

I was volunteered to serve on this committee.

Since a painting is inanimate and cannot act upon the world, it normally (in Chinese) would make sense to talk about the painting without drawing any special attention to its passivity—it can after all, only be acted upon (the painting was stolen). Thus, to use a more *seemingly* marked construction of passivity (again, English doesn't really mark passivity like this), when that marked construction would normally only be used on animate things (again, in Chinese), results in a potential ironization of the statement. Or, put differently, the presence of the marked construction when the concerned entity is inanimate, given how that marked construction is normally reserved for animate things, makes the construction a bit unnatural, and thus affords it an ironic interpretation.

In the English example, the irony has the form of a statement that, via its syntax, attempts to put blame on the painting for carrying out its own theft. That syntax, normally being used only on animate things thus seems more apt for a person, such as a thief, who could actively steal things. The take-away ironic interpretation also seems to revert to that more appropriate blame assignment—it is the *thief* who actually deserves the blame for the painting's theft, not the painting.<sup>9</sup>

For the second example, the irony stems from the misuse of the verb. *Volunteer* as a verb in English typically appears in an active construction (e.g., She volunteered

<sup>8</sup>It is arguable whether the construction, X got itself Y'ed, is really passive. It seems instead an odd mixture of passive and active (e.g., X did something resulting in something getting done to it). But the construction seems to apply to an animate thing better than an inanimate thing—the animate thing at least being able to initiate the “something” events, despite its use in the example with something inanimate. In this way the construction resembles the pattern of passivity marking in Chinese. The construction in English also seems ironizable similarly to how a marked-passive-on-inanimate construction would be in Chinese. It thus hopefully services well as a reasonable English demonstration of sorts, of this ironization process found in Chinese.

<sup>9</sup>It is unclear, though, if this pattern in the English ironic interpretation would exactly match that of a parallel construction in Chinese. The form of the ironic interpretation springing from the unnatural syntax in Chinese could be somewhat different.



for duty). But in the example the verb instead is couched in a passive construction (e.g., She *was* volunteered...). This is not the exact kind of violation found in the Chinese passive ironization process—the *bei* construction instead requires a transitive verb (Yao et al., 2013). But the example approximates the process in a way that is likely familiar to English speakers.

For the semantic deviation, again no exact parallel seems to exist, but an approximation example could be:

Global warming has gotten itself resolved, claims the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Here we have an inanimate subject in a passive construction with the surrogate but analogous passivity-marking from the earlier example about the painting. This again would be inappropriate in Chinese where inanimate subjects receive no passivity marking. We also have a verb that carries, “a sense of being favorable” (Yao et al., 2013, p. 200), along with factual incompatibility in the co-text.

An English interpretation of this example as ironic may have some impetus from the passive marking. But that influence may not be as strong as in an equivalent Chinese statement due to the imperfect parallel in this passivity marking system between the two languages. In the English ironic interpretation more of the irony would probably stem from the semantic incongruity depicted.

Yet, the example above doesn't seem particularly ironic. To better approximate the Chinese usage, something else in the background would help. Yao et al. (2013) also discuss some particularized aspects of Chinese culture that contribute to this system of *bei* ironization in Chinese. Among these are a tendency for indirectness in communication, a quiet but stewing dissatisfaction with distortion from government authorities and state-run media sources, and an appreciation of the subtle enhancement of criticism leverageable by verbal irony in such an environment. That a particular syntactic domain which deals exclusively with *who does what to who* in noun phrases gets used in this culture and language to achieve irony, may thus come as no surprise. Such a domain makes it relatively easy to convey disdain, 1) toward authority figures calling the shots (agents) under the guise of presumed freedom of choice by the populace (patients), (e.g., my being volunteered to do something), 2) for blame being cast on recipients of some negative action (patients) rather than the entities actually causing or doing that action (agents), (e.g., an object getting itself destroyed), and 3) for perception (by patients) of negativity coming from presumed good and powerful authority systems (agents). All one need do as an English speaker is replace “U.S.” with the surname of a particularly disliked U.S. president in the example above to capture some of this irony-affording zeitgeist.

**The Honorific System in Japanese** – Japanese, along with some other Asian languages, has a much more elaborate and extensive honorific system than English (Kamei, Koono & Chino, 1996; Makino & Tsutsui, 1986; Minami, 1977). This affords Japanese a powerful and subtle means of conveying ironic meaning in person-addressing and referencing. For example, Japanese has multiple different terms that can express varying levels of politeness to addressees. Several such terms

can also be combined in constructions. In general, the more honorific terms present in an address, the more polite the utterance is. (adapted from Okamoto, 2002, p. 120):

1. Uta ga joozu da ne.
2. Uta ga joozu desu ne.
3. Uta ga o-joozu de irasshaimasu ne.

Each of these utterances means essentially the same thing, “you are good at singing”, but they vary in politeness. The first address contains no honorifics. Honorifics in the second and third example are underlined. According to Okamoto (2002, p. 120):

In example 2, an honorific *desu* (a polite form of *da*, meaning “be”) is used. In example 3, there are three honorifics. *O* (in *o-joozu*) is a prefix of exalted form. In *irasshai-masu* an exalted form, *irasshai*, and a polite form, *masu*, are combined, meaning “be”.

Japanese can thus subtly alter fine levels of expressed politeness. It also affords a wide range of politeness from none at all to very high exalted levels.

Since honorifics directly express varying degrees of esteem, politeness and respect to or about addressees, they’re perfectly suited to convey irony. Irony uses such polarity as one of its primary tools. All honorifics need do is mismatch the actual appropriate and expected level of politeness, in a particular way, and they can readily be taken as verbal irony. High politeness used on an addressee of lower social status can easily be interpreted as ironic. Low politeness used toward higher status people though, would most likely be taken as rude. Honorifics will of course interact with other variables concerning the interlocutors, their relationship, and the conversational setting, to affect the perceived level of politeness (Okamoto, 2002). But the general pattern of ironic mismatch (e.g., high politeness for a low-status person) seems to afford control over the level of expressed irony provided other factors are appropriate and held equivalent across varied levels of honorifics.

**Verum Focus-Inducing Fronting in Spanish** – Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2014) present an extensive analysis of several syntactic methods for achieving irony in Spanish, with the focus being on a form of constituent fronting labeled Verum Focus-Inducing Fronting. According to this process, a constituent that is fronted in a construction can trigger an ironic interpretation provided the constituent contrasts with the context. For instance, irony can arise if the constituent refers to an expected positive quality about a situation but the background context exhibits the situation as negative. Or, somewhat more rarely, the fronted constituent refers to the actual negative situation at hand, putting it in contrast with more positive expectations. The latter can occur for instance, if a speaker restates another speaker’s inaccurate remark about some situation (Colston, 2000a).

According to Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti (2014), this fronting process assists with irony because it enhances the contrast between the constituent and the background context, which is less vivid in cases where the constituent is not fronted. Fronting is thus not considered an explicit marker for irony. Nor does it encode irony

in some way. It merely works via enhancement of a contrast that might already be present without fronting.

**Language-Specific and Previously-Established Accounts of Irony: How Well do they Jibe?** – What is the nature of the alignment between the theoretical accounts of irony reviewed earlier, derived mostly from English, and the language-specific verbal irony accounts discussed immediately above? Or put more broadly, have the theoretical accounts captured universal aspects of verbal irony? Okamoto (2007) in his call for just such an assessment of the degree of universality in proposed underpinnings of verbal irony, argues it would be best carried out empirically:

We cannot a priori expect the various characteristics of irony-related phenomena to be universal. To what extent the categorization for Japanese *hiniku* proposed here can be applied to irony-related concepts in other languages must be checked empirically. (Okamoto, 2007, p. 1165).

The categorization proposed here is assumed to be applicable, at least to some extent, not only to Japanese *hiniku*, but also universally to verbal irony in general. For the confirmation of this, examples of English “irony” need to be scrutinized in this respect. Naturally enough, this scrutinizing should be extended to some other languages too. Doing this, it will be possible to assess the degree of universality of communicative insincerity and evaluate the theory of irony presented in this paper. It will be very important to assess how far the proposed framework is universal, and in which respects there are differences due to cultures or languages. (Okamoto, 2007, p. 1167).

I concur with these arguments, adding only that the empirical evaluation needs to be thorough and should be undertaken using a wide variety of techniques and measures. It should first document irony-inducing methods in as many and as broad a sample of languages as possible, to first establish a sense of the range over which accounts must apply. These different methods should also be evaluated on their relative degree of prevalence *across different languages*, and their correspondence to currently presumed universal mechanisms for achieving verbal irony.<sup>10</sup> An empirical study of cross-linguistic verbal irony should also use corpus-based evaluations of the prevalences, contexts, co-occurrences and other related measures of the methods’ valid presences in the world, both *in their parent language* and as close analogs *in other languages*.<sup>11</sup> Assessments of the pragmatic effects leveraged by the different methods, and how that leveraging is specifically accomplished, should also be undertaken (see Colston, 2015). Finally, experimental research could be used to test the validity of the underlying comprehension and pragmatic effect-accomplishing mechanisms, and whether they also align with systems again already established predominantly in English, as well as with baser cognitive, social and other processes.

In the meantime, we can first assess the three language-specific systems discussed here—since some lessons may be forthcoming to guide subsequent research.

<sup>10</sup>Only the latter of these will be demonstrated briefly here, and only for three languages—so the cross-language prevalence part is not really possible in the present analysis.

<sup>11</sup>Such an evaluation would effectively give us a full topography of how verbal irony is done by people.

Regarding the system of honorifics in Japanese, it first appears the system makes use of the typical form of contrast found in standard English-based accounts of verbal irony. An ironic use of a Japanese honorific typically addresses a person of relatively low social status (e.g., a child) through terms of address suited instead to people of relatively high status (e.g., an important adult). Consider the crude English parallels of addressing a small demanding child with, “Yes, your majesty”, or “Absolutely, your royal highness”. On this level, the Japanese honorific system seems fully encompassed by standing ironic accounts.

But the particular discourse arena in which honorifics appear, typically direct, often face-to-face interpersonal interactions, can lend their irony a special quality. In addressee situations, the derisive attitude often conveyed by verbal irony can be very powerful. Many studies on verbal irony have discussed the effect of proximity of a victim on the degree of derisiveness expressed, as well as the suite of pragmatic effects that might ensue. In general, the more proximal the victim, the stronger the effects. In the case of irony via honorifics, it is hard to put the victim much closer. Of course honorifics can be said back-channel or off-record or as a referential term. But their potential usage in a face-to-face situations with multiple overhearers can be exceptionally strong and can accordingly carry a very specialized set of pragmatic effects (e.g., very strong insult, face-challenges, social engineering, etc.), (Colston, 2015).

Concerning the fronting mechanism delineated in Spanish, external support can be found for the claim that the fronting process places emphasis on moved constituents. Several well-established and long-standing cognitive psychological principles corroborate this. People generally have better memory for and enhanced cognitive processing on anything encountered initially in some sequence of presented/perceived items. Termed the *primacy of first mention* in psycholinguistic work or *primacy effects* in memory research, an emphasis-advantage definitely holds for something placed first in a sequence, relative to later placement, all else held equal.<sup>12</sup>

So if the fronted constituent of an utterance contains a segment that *violates* the more preferred, desired, expected, etc., outcome, and that preferred outcome is in the background context, then the contrast between those entities can be enhanced. Or, if the fronted piece *focuses* on the preferred outcome and the violating piece resides in the background, again the contrast could be enhanced, relative to using no fronting. Since one of the established principles of irony is that conjured/expected, etc., situations are presented in contrast with expectation-violating reality, fronting nicely meshes with known mechanisms. The fronting must, though, systematically present the opposing parts in contrast. Fronting on other constituents would arguably have lesser effect.

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<sup>12</sup>Some other cognitive or memory emphasis effects can compete with primacy (e.g., recency, distinctiveness, etc.). But those aside, being in a primary position aids enhancement relative to being positioned later.

Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2014), espouse the echoic member of the range of irony accounts in their treatment of fronting—the successfully demonstrated fronting ability to enhance contrast between an *earlier made comment, a prediction, or an attributed thought*, against reality. But one could arguably apply this fronting process to enhanced ironic contrasts in pretense or other irony mechanisms as well. For instance, imagine the following scenario:

Two teenage sisters are stranded in an empty parking lot, having locked the keys in their car after staying past closing at a mall in a nearby town. They've phoned their father several times without getting through. They don't have a car service and don't know who else to call. They're both particularly angry because their dad is clueless about technology—he probably used the wrong charger again and let his phone battery go dead. The younger sister tries calling him one more time but still gets no answer. Then it starts to rain. The older sister looks to the sky and channels a Barney-the-Dinosaur-like, happy-go-lucky voice (indicated in italics)<sup>13</sup>:

*“Think happy things, it's always very important to remember.”*

Although the speaker in this example could be quoting someone (e.g., Barney), or could be conjuring the general social norm/desire for happiness. But that she uses a *generic* happy voice and makes great effort to *hyperbolize* the cheery tone, she would seem to be mimicking and mocking an invented and portrayed character via pretense, rather than merely echoing a person or attributed thought. Of course on some level it may be synonymous to *pretend to be a fictional character* even if portraying the character belittlingly, and to *allude to an attributed thought*. But as argued in the review of the pretense account, something significant is gained by pretense's focus on portrayal—the emphasis it gives to a speaker expressing their attitude. But either way, the fronting process applied to the example above seems to readily convey a sense of irony given the clear contrast between the happy advice voice and the bummer situation. So it seems fronting in Spanish supports established theoretical accounts, and perhaps beyond just the echoic ones.

However, the idea implicit in an analysis that focuses on only one particular language (e.g., Spanish)—that the mechanism is unique or particular to that language, may need further evaluation. A very cursory look at possibilities for similar fronting in English seems to reveal a parallel ability to that found in Spanish—emphasis via fronting, that enhances an ironic contrast.<sup>14</sup> For example, imagine a situation where a married couple has been invited to attend a party held by friends, to watch a major sporting event (e.g., a basketball game). The man is an avid sports fan, but his wife is bored by sports. When the man mentions to his wife that he's accepted the invitation for them both, she replies using one of the following:

<sup>13</sup>Barney the Dinosaur was a character infamous for being sweet and innocent from a 1990s-2000s American children's television program.

<sup>14</sup>This is one reason for the assessment of the prevalence of techniques across different languages, advocated earlier.

“Such a *very* thoughtful present you’ve given me, accepting this invitation.”

“Accepting this invitation is such a *very* thoughtful present you’ve given me.”

If intonational and other accompanying cues are kept reasonably comparable across the two versions of the wife’s reply, the former one may be seen to carry a slightly greater degree of irony because it fronts the preference that has been violated by the man’s actions. Of course this speculation would need to be empirically verified in different languages.

Finally for the *bei* construction in Chinese, here we see a system that, although not deviating wildly from established verbal irony patterns (e.g., cast a proper expected thing [blame going in the correct place], against the deviant oppositional thing [blaming the victim]), it seems to operate much more subtly. Firstly, more of the irony in *bei* construction situations seems to rely on the general cultural background discussed earlier. A general, if not often overtly expressed, dissatisfaction with authoritative institutions, and other related aspects of the cultural milieu described by Yao et al. (2013), seems to clear away some of the ambiguity in *bei* construction usage for taking an ironic interpretation. Secondly and most interestingly, irony being leveraged via the fairly unusual method of passivity-marking is very clever. Given this general zeitgeist of feeling put-upon described by Yao et al. (2013), the job that activity/passivity marking typically performs—assigning cause-effect roles, seems a natural place to achieve a very subtle form of irony—ironize a blame-the-victim tendency, but do so in a typically quiet syntactical structure. This system thus seems to successfully achieve a very strong, yet subtle and stealthy irony.<sup>15</sup>

**Conclusion** – This brief review of the three language-specific irony systems has both corroborated current accounts of irony derived from English, but also validates the need to assess how irony works in many other languages. All three systems make use at core of the contrast between expected, preferred, desired events and oppositional deviances from those events. This usage also takes the form of purporting to espouse or advocate those deviational outcomes as a means of indirectly indicating what should have occurred instead.

But each language-specific system discussed also teaches us something new and important. For the fronting system in Spanish, we’ve seen a new way to strengthen the display of an ironic contrast—move one member of the contrasting constituents to a frontal position to give it greater prominence. That prominence serves to highlight the contrast between the two constituents, strengthening either the intensity of the irony taken from the utterance or perhaps something related (e.g., the ease with which the irony can be detected—future research could bear this out). This system also teaches us the important lesson of looking for prevalences of ironic systems *across* languages since a similar kind of fronting seems also possible in English and, by extension, likely other languages with flexible word-order as well.

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<sup>15</sup>Of course, this assessment must be taken with caution coming from a non-native speaker.

The honorific system in Japanese highlights the key importance of the discourse genre in which an ironic mechanism resides. Having a complex and subtle irony system in person-addresses or references gives the system particularly strong power to convey a wide array of pragmatic effects, and to maximize the extent of some of those effects (e.g., social engineering—putting a person down, when speaking with them face-to face, under the witness of others) (Colston, 2015).

The *bei* construction in Chinese may be the most illuminating of the three language-specific systems. It demonstrates how some relatively mundane tasks of morpho-syntax (e.g., assigning active/passive roles to subjects) can get usurped for irony-expression purposes. If a form of ironic or near-ironic contradiction that exists in the external world (e.g., people blaming victims, instead of perpetrators, for negative acts against those victims—something unfortunately not-uncommon in human culture), aligns with one of the jobs of syntax (e.g., active/passive subject role assignment), then that system can be used to convey the environmental contradiction ironically. Interestingly in the Chinese *bei* construction, that conveyance appears a bit tricky to pull off, so it relies on a general background cultural zeitgeist—dissatisfaction with big authorities that commit the contradiction with some regularity, to support the ironic interpretation. This affords the additional characteristic of subtlety to the irony, which might serve speakers/writers well if they desire the ironic expression to be stealthy.

This review thus validates the need for much further research into the irony mechanisms at use in human languages, both in terms of linguistic documentation as well as psycholinguistic underlying functioning. So far we can see that the irony accounts based on English seem to have captured the primary, if not the only, crux of expressed irony—the presentation of an ironic contrast including mock advocacy of the deviant half of that contrast. But in looking at only three languages we've seen much diversity in the nuances of ironic presentation. Assessment of ironic systems in hundreds or more different languages, as well as in different cultures, genres and other domains, could reveal some remarkable surprises (Suzuki, 2002; Madarneh, 2016; Tsur, 2015; Tobin, 2016; Kapogianni, 2014; Mazara, 2013; Filippova, 2014; Maher, 2012).

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# “When a speaker is reported as having said so”



Sanford C. Goldberg

**Abstract** What do speech reports tell us about the act being reported? When such a question is pursued in connection with reports of the form ‘S said that p,’ answers typically focus on the semantic content of the speech act. Indeed, there is a familiar line of research that aims to exploit our understanding of (the truth and falsity of) speech reports, in order to reach conclusions about the semantic content of sentences or expressions (see e.g. Evans, 1982; Kaplan 1989a, 1989b; Soames 1989; Heck 1995; though see Cappelen and Lepore 1997 for objections to this approach). In this chapter I want to focus attention on another matter: the *illocutionary force* of the act being reported. In particular, I want to argue that there is a use of speech reports of a related form (and involving the same verb ‘to say’), reflection on which can help us discern aspects of the force of the act being reported. The use I have in mind is what I call the *buck-passing use* of speech reports, as when one speaker, challenged to defend a claim or belief of hers, does so by reporting another speaker as having said so. The thesis of this paper is that the legitimacy of this practice depends on two key pragmatic features of the reported speech. This result can be seen as establishing a non-trivial *desideratum* for theories of the illocutionary force of the type(s) of act in question.

**Keywords** saying · indirect speech reports · testimony · buck-passing

What do speech reports tell us about the act being reported? When such a question is pursued in connection with reports of the form ‘S said that p,’ answers typically focus on the semantic content of the speech act. Indeed, there is a familiar line of

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research that aims to exploit our understanding of (the truth and falsity of) speech reports, in order to reach conclusions about the semantic content of sentences or expressions (see e.g. Evans 1982; Kaplan 1989a, 1989b; Soames 1989; Heck 1995; though see Cappelen and Lepore 1997 for objections to this approach). In this chapter I want to focus attention on another matter: the *illocutionary force* of the act being reported. In particular, I want to argue that there is a use of speech reports of a related form (and involving the same verb ‘to say’), reflection on which can help us discern aspects of the force of the act being reported. The use I have in mind is what I call the *buck-passing use* of speech reports, as when one speaker, challenged to defend a claim or belief of hers, does so by reporting another speaker as having said so. The thesis of this paper is that the legitimacy of this practice depends on two key pragmatic features of the reported speech. This result can be seen as establishing a non-trivial *desideratum* for theories of the illocutionary force of the type(s) of act in question.

## 1 Buck-passing Speech Reports

Consider those beliefs you form by taking another speaker’s word for it. If challenged to defend or justify a belief of this sort, you might respond by claiming that the speaker in question “said so.”<sup>1</sup> For reasons to be spelled out below, when a speech report of the form “S said so” is used in this way, I will call it a *buck-passing* speech report.<sup>2</sup> We might then distinguish implicit-content buck-passing speech reports (“S said so”) from explicit-content reports (“S said that p”).

One who makes a report of this kind aims to do at least two things.

First, she aims to respond to the challenge to her own belief or claim, by presenting S’s having said so as a response to that challenge. In this sense, many epistemologists have thought that content-explicit reports of the form “S said that p” can express a *reason* to believe that p; the question for them is whether such a reason stands on its own (in the absence of reasons for doubt), or whether it requires further epistemic backing (in the form of additional reasons to think that S’s saying that p makes it likely that p). In effect, this is the central debate in the epistemology of testimony. But we need not enter this debate here. The present point is simply that when one makes a buck-passing speech report, one is aiming to present the speaker’s having said so as a response to the challenge to defend one’s own belief or claim.

But there is a second thing that one who makes a report of this kind aims to do: she aims to be offering a true (and justified) claim about the speaker’s speech act. Indeed, it would seem that the reporter’s success in attaining the first aim

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<sup>1</sup>You might also report her as having “told you so”. What I have to say below about the relevant class of reports using “said” will go for those reports using “told” as well.

<sup>2</sup>I introduced this notion in Goldberg (2006).

depends on her success in attaining the second aim: if the report is false or otherwise unjustified, it seems that the report cannot serve to respond to challenge to defend the reporter’s own belief. Not, at any rate, if the report itself is to capture something that rationalizes the reporter’s own belief (e.g. by serving as a reason which justifies that belief).<sup>3</sup>

This brings me to the question I would like to address here: how can another person’s speech act be such, that true justified reports of that act can constitute a reason in support of one’s own belief that p? In approaching matters from this perspective, I am using a certain subclass of speech reports to shed light on pragmatic aspects – in particular, the illocutionary force – of the speech acts themselves. Though this strategy itself may be somewhat prosaic, the results we can get from following it are not.

## 2 Entitled Reports and Epistemically Authorizing Speech Acts

We do well to start by pursuing an answer to a different but related question: when is a reporter *entitled* to make a buck-passing speech report?

This question of entitlement is relevant to the truth conditions of buck-passing reports. I will be arguing that, when true, buck-passing speech reports place certain burdens on the speaker whose speech is being reported. This is not merely an incidental feature of such reports; it is part of their very point. Since this feature will be common knowledge among pragmatically competent speakers, it is plausible to suppose that a reporter who makes a buck-passing speech report *aims* to burden the speaker in this way. Now we are not simply free to burden others whenever we wish; if our attempts are to succeed in placing the relevant burdens on them, we must be entitled to do so. So insofar as I am correct to think both that true buck-passing speech reports do succeed in placing the burden on the speaker whose speech was reported, and that such success requires the reporter to have been entitled to place this burden on the speaker, a speech report of this sort is true only if the reporter was so entitled. Hence my question – when is a reporter entitled to make a buck-passing speech report? – is a way of illuminating the truth conditions of the relevant class of speech reports.

Of course, to answer this question we need to know what burden a reporter R aims to impose on a speaker S when R reports S as having said so (in a buck-passing speech report). The answer should be more or less obvious. When R, challenged

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<sup>3</sup>Whether false propositions can justify is a vexed matter, one into which I will not enter here. For my purposes it suffices to note that if one’s report “S said so” is false, this damages – though perhaps does not undermine – the epistemic support that this proposition can provide to one’s belief that p. (Even if it is true, R’s belief that p, supported by the false proposition that S said so, would not, in normal circumstances, constitute knowledge.)

to defend his belief that *p*, reports *S* as having said so, *R* aims to burden *S* by placing on her the responsibility for being able to provide the epistemic goodies that warrant *R*'s own belief that *p*. (This is precisely why I call this use of speech reports the 'buck-passing' use.) The following dialogue about the winner of a horse race illustrates this type of use (**in bold**):

Nguyen:       Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today.  
 Okello:       How do you know that?  
 Nguyen:       [pointing at Muhtaroglu] **She said so.**  
 Okello:       [addressing Muhtaroglu] OK, well how do *you* know that?  
 Muhtaroglu:  I was there, I saw the race.

Here, Nguyen's buck-passing speech report identifies Muhtaroglu as responsible for providing the warrant for Nguyen's belief in the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. This, of course, is a burden. Presumably, if Nguyen is entitled to burden Muhtaroglu in this way, something entitles Nguyen to do so. What so entitles him?

Here is what I regard as a highly intuitive answer. First, if Nguyen is so entitled, this is because *Muhtaroglu herself* authorized Nguyen to burden her in this way; and second, if Muhtaroglu did authorize Nguyen to burden her in this way, this is in virtue of her having performed the very speech act which Nguyen is currently reporting.

My claim, that Muhtaroglu herself authorized Nguyen to burden her in this way in virtue of her having performed the very speech act which Nguyen is currently reporting, is not merely highly intuitive; it can be supported by an argument. To begin, Nguyen purports to impose the burden in question on Muhtaroglu by way of Nguyen's report of one of Muhtaroglu's speech acts. This suggests that it is in virtue of features of that speech act that Nguyen is entitled to impose this burden. My claim that *Muhtaroglu herself must be seen as having "authorized" this through having performed the speech act that she did* is thus the simplest account of the data. It explains both why Nguyen is entitled to impose the burden on Muhtaroglu and why it is proper for Nguyen to impose that burden by way of a (buck-passing) speech report. In sum, the picture is this: we are to think of Muhtaroglu as having performed a speech act which (perhaps among other things) authorized Nguyen to hold her (Muhtaroglu) responsible in the relevant way. Nguyen's entitlement to burden Muhtaroglu in the way described above, then, reflects Muhtaroglu's having authorized her to do so.

From the foregoing we can discern a condition whose obtaining is necessary (though not yet sufficient) for the truth of a buck-passing speech report. Such a speech report is true only if the target speaker performed a speech act in which (perhaps among other things) she authorized the reporter to burden her with the responsibility of being able to offer relevant warrant for the reporter's belief in

the proposition in question.<sup>4</sup> This, I submit, motivates two claims about the truth conditions of buck-passing speech reports – one pertaining to the force of the speech act reported, the other pertaining to the content of the speech act reported:

#### FORCE

If a buck-passing speech report of the form ‘S said so’ is to be true of S’s speech act *A*, then *A* must have force-related features that underwrite this point about authorization.

#### CONTENT

If a buck-passing speech report of the form ‘S said so’ (offered in defense of S’s belief that *p*) is to be true of S’s speech act *A*, then *A* must be such that the authorization in question extends to cover the proposition that *p*.

Bringing all of this to bear on the case above, Nguyen’s reporting Muhtaroglu as having said so, where this report is offered in defense of Nguyen’s belief that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today, requires that the performance of the speech act being reported must have authorized Nguyen to hold Muhtaroglu responsible for the warrant for the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. I take it that this places a condition not only on the force, but also on the content of Muhtaroglu’s speech act: it must be related in some relevant way to the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. Some might argue that the relevant relation must be one of identity;<sup>5</sup> others will argue that it can be looser than identity.<sup>6</sup> But there must be some relevant relation, if Nguyen’s buck-passing speech report is to be true.<sup>7</sup>

Let us designate any speech act which can be reported by a true buck-passing use of ‘S said so’ as an *epistemically authorizing* speech act. Since it is patent that there are some true buck-passing uses of speech reports of the form ‘S said so,’ there must be some speech-act tokens that are epistemically authorizing. At the same time, it is an open question whether all epistemically authorizing tokens come from a single speech-act *type*. It is quite possible that our answer is negative: not just (say) token assertions, but also tokens of other speech act types as well. (For example, some appear to think that promises are epistemically authorizing.<sup>8</sup>) In addition, it may be

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<sup>4</sup>Not yet sufficient: if S asserts to R, “I hereby authorize you to hold me responsible for having warrant for the truth of the claim that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today,” then S would thereby have performed a speech act in which she authorized R to hold her responsible, but in many (and perhaps most) circumstances S’s act would not be correctly reportable with “S said so” or “S said that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today.”

<sup>5</sup>See e.g. Heck (1995), where this much is assumed; and see also Goldberg (2008) for an argument I tried to give to this effect. (I now regard this argument as unsuccessful.)

<sup>6</sup>See Burge (1993: 482-3, fn 20) for reasons that call into question the insistence on content-identity.

<sup>7</sup>Saul (2012) has many interesting discussions of the ethical dimensions of speech reports, taking up issues of the content relations between the report and the act reported.

<sup>8</sup>See e.g. Scanlon (1990) and Holton (1994).

that for any type of speech act whose tokens can be epistemically authorizing, it is only some tokens of that type that are epistemically authorizing. For example, even if the speech-act type *assertion* is apt for being epistemically authorizing,<sup>9</sup> it might be argued that some *but not all* token assertions are aptly so described. (Consider in this light the claim that only those assertions that amount to ‘tellings’ are apt for the distinctly testimonial transmission of knowledge.<sup>10</sup>) These strike me as central questions in speech act theory that we ought to pursue as we think about the act of testifying/giving testimony.<sup>11</sup>

### 3 A Desideratum on Theories of Assertoric Force

Without descending into these details, I now want to use the foregoing results to argue that we have on our hands a *desideratum* for an account of any speech act type whose tokens are standardly *epistemically authorizing*. For the sake of concreteness, I will be speaking about the speech act type *assertion*. In doing so, I am assuming that there are token assertions that are epistemically authorizing (without any elaborate stage-setting being required)<sup>12</sup> – though I do not assume that all token assertions are epistemically authorizing. However, I speak of assertions in this connection for the sake of illustration only; if there are other types of speech acts at least some whose tokens are epistemically authorizing (without any elaborate stage-setting being required), what I am about to say for assertion goes for those act-types too.

When a speech act type is such that some of its tokens are epistemically authorizing (without any elaborate stage-setting being required), I will describe the type itself as *having Epistemic Authorization potential (EA-potential for short)*. So long as some (though perhaps not all) tokens of the speech act type *assertion* are epistemically authorizing, an adequate account of the speech act of assertion must explain assertion’s EA-potential.

I submit that we have some grounds for preferring an explanation that is in terms of the illocutionary force of assertions – assertoric force. This claim can be defended

<sup>9</sup>See e.g. Brandom (1983), Goldberg (2015), and Fricker (2016).

<sup>10</sup>This has been argued in Hinchman (2006) and Moran (2006).

<sup>11</sup>Among others, Fricker (2012) has begun to think about these matters.

<sup>12</sup>For each type of speech act we can imagine all sorts of circumstances in which, with prior set-up, a token of that type is epistemically authorizing. Suppose you and I need to conceal what we know from others in the room, and so I tell you privately that if in public I query whether Jones has come to the party, this is to be taken by you as you would normally take my asserting that Smith is the one who committed the crime. Under these circumstances, my interrogative speech act is epistemically authorizing. But this is a special case, one requiring prior set-up. What the parenthetical comment is doing is attempting to single out those types of speech acts which are such that *by the very nature of this type* some of the tokens are epistemically authorizing – this is a standard, ordinary, or typical use of tokens of the type.



as an inference to the best explanation. It is unremarkable that assertion as a speech-act type has EA-potential. It should also be unremarkable that this is a *standard* use of assertions: nospecial stage-setting is required in order for token assertions to be epistemically authorizing. In this respect, assertions differ from other speech acts such as commanding, interrogating, requesting, and so forth. When a speech-act type has EA-potential as part of standard practice, we would expect that the explanation of this fact will be in terms of the nature of the type of act itself. And this is just to say that the explanation will be in terms of the illocutionary force of acts of this type. Given that this holds for assertion as a speech act type, we would then expect an adequate account of assertion to explain assertion’s EA-potential in terms of assertoric (illocutionary) force. This, I submit, can be regarded as a *desideratum* on accounts of assertion.

Precisely what is involved in satisfying this *desideratum*? What do we want to have explained in this connection? I submit that there are two distinct things that need to be explained here: one is practical, the other epistemic.

The practical thing to be explained can be approached by noting the following: when true, a buck-passing use of ‘S said so,’ made in response to a query about R’s belief that p, succeeds in placing the burden on S to have something that warrants R’s belief in the proposition that p. Insofar as we are assuming that S authorized R to ‘pass the buck’ in this way, and that S did so through making an (epistemically authorizing) assertion, we must explain how the making of an assertion authorizes this sort of buck-passing in the first place. How does the performance of a certain speech act – an assertion – entitle or permit those who observe the performance to hold the speaker responsible in this way? I regard this as a practical matter, since in effect the claim is that the performance of a certain speech act entitles the audience to take a certain practical attitude towards the speaker – that of expecting her to (be able to offer, and so to) have the relevant warrant. The expectation here is not predictive, but normative. It is the sort of expectation a parent has when he expects his child to be home by midnight – this is something he might properly expect even if he has some doubts that the child will do so. Violation of a normative expectation is grounds, not for revising the expectation itself (as it is with predictive expectations), but for regarding the violator as normatively deficient in this way. In sum, the practical thing to be explained is this: how does the performance of a speech act such as assertion entitle the audience to acquire the relevant normative expectation of the speaker?

The epistemic thing to be explained can be approached by reflection on the “good” case, where the speaker *fulfils* the normative expectation just described – which is to say, wherein she is responsible in the relevant way. These are cases in which (i) R, challenged to defend his belief that p, does so by reporting S as having said so; (ii) the resulting buck-passing use of ‘S said so’ is true; and (iii) S does in fact have warrant for R’s belief in the proposition that p. In such cases, it seems that if R was entitled to accept S’s say-so, then R has adequate grounds for his belief that p. The question here is how S’s performance of an act of assertion, in conjunction with R’s entitlement to accept that assertion, provides adequate epistemic grounds for R’s belief that p. And it is here that we return to the question with which I ended

section 2: how can another's speech act be such, that true reports of that act can constitute a reason believe the proposition ascribed to the speech act in the report?

In sum. From the facts (one) that assertion is a type of speech act that has EA-potential, and (two) that at least some assertion-tokens are epistemically authorizing as a matter of standard practice, we can motivate a *desideratum* on an account of assertion: we'd like to be able to explain assertion's EA-potential in terms of the illocutionary force associated with assertion. To satisfy this *desideratum*, we must explain something practical – how does making an assertion entitle others to normatively expect one to have relevant warrant? – and something epistemic – how can it be that, at least in the good case, being entitled to accept an assertion provides adequate epistemic grounds for one's resulting belief? And we'd like to explain both by appeal to the nature of the illocutionary force of assertions. In what follows, in section 4, I will argue that this *desideratum* has teeth (not all accounts of assertion satisfy it); in section 5 I will present an account that does satisfy it; and in section 6 I will come full circle, applying the account in question to buck-passing uses of 'S said so,' in the attempt to see how such a use (conceived as an assertion itself) can both capture a reason for belief and succeed in 'passing the buck'.

## 4 Applying our Results

Here is where we stand. Reflecting on buck-passing uses of 'S said so' gives us reason to think that there must be epistemically authorizing speech acts, and thus speech act types that have EA-potential. For any type that has EA-potential, where it is common practice for token acts of that type to be epistemically authorizing, we would like to be able to explain the EA-potential of the speech act in terms of the illocutionary force that characterizes the speech-act type. Satisfying this *desideratum* requires explaining something practical (how the performance of a speech act entitles the audience to hold the speaker responsible in a certain way) and something epistemic (how in the good case the performance of a speech act, together with the audience's entitlement to accept the speaker's speech contribution, provides adequate epistemic ground for the audience's belief). Taking the speech act type *assertion* as an instance of a type that has EA-potential, my claim is that there are accounts of assertion that do not satisfy this *desideratum*. At best, such accounts are incomplete as they stand, and need to be supplemented if they are to explain what is in need of explanation.

Consider for example the proposal (based on Stalnaker, 1978) that we can characterize the speech act of assertion in terms of its "essential effect," where this is a matter of "chang[ing] the presuppositions of the participants in the conversation by adding the content of what is asserted to what is presupposed," where "[t]his effect is avoided only if the assertion is rejected." (Stalnaker, 1978/1999: 86) Suppose you think that, assertion is the unique speech-act type with this as its essential effect. By itself, however, such a view would not appear to be able to explain how, as a matter of common practice, some token assertions are epistemically authorizing. In

particular, if assertion is understood as (something akin to) a proposal to update the common ground in a particular way,<sup>13</sup> it is unclear how performing such an act could ever authorize one’s audience to hold one *epistemically* responsible. After all, as a mere act of proposing that others update the common ground in a certain way, one’s act may have been made on practical grounds. So unless one is entitled to expect that a particular assertion was made on epistemic grounds, it would seem that one isn’t entitled to hold the asserter *epistemically* responsible for what she asserted. And since the Stalnaker-inspired account doesn’t offer anything else as “essential” to assertion, it would appear to be incomplete as it stands.

The foregoing argument for the incompleteness of the Stalnaker-inspired account is from the perspective of the speaker – the one who performs the act of asserting. But what is essentially the same point can also be made from the perspective of the audience who observes the act. As Stalnaker himself remarks, updates to the common ground do not require distinctly epistemic reasons for their warrant. For example, one might simply decide to go along with the speaker for the purpose of the conversation. Here it is noteworthy that Stalnaker regards an audience’s ‘acceptance’ of an assertion as an act that need not persist beyond the context of the conversation itself, and so in no way indicates the audience’s belief in what was asserted. But then if the act of asserting is understood as the act of proposing to update the common ground in a particular way, it can achieve its effect so long as the audience has some (undefeated) reason – whether practical or epistemic – to go along with the proposal. And insofar as the audience can thus be ‘justified’ in ‘accepting’ the assertion on practical grounds, the audience doesn’t need epistemic grounds for doing so. And this makes it unclear how such an act can ever authorize the audience to hold the speaker *epistemically* responsible.

Now I suspect that this point will be readily conceded by Stalnaker and his followers. They will reply that not all token assertions are epistemically authorizing; and they will insist that they can account for those token assertions that *are* epistemically authorizing. On this score, perhaps they can claim that only those assertions through which the speaker manifestly aims to *assure* or *inform* others of something are epistemically authorizing. If this is so, then it is not the illocutionary force of *assertion itself* – construed as the force of a proposal to update the common ground – that explains the fact that some token assertions are epistemically authorizing. It is rather the special intentions that a speaker might have when she makes an assertion – an intention to inform or assure another – that explains this.<sup>14</sup> Thus, while such a proposal fails to satisfy the *desideratum* (since it doesn’t explain assertion’s EA-potential in terms of the illocutionary force it ascribes to assertion), nevertheless (its proponents might still argue) it can explain what needs to be explained.

I leave it for discussions in the theory of assertion to assess the merits of this candidate explanation. My claim here is only that, on the assumption that

<sup>13</sup>For this construal, see Stalnaker (2014: 51).

<sup>14</sup>Again, this appears to be the view of Hinchman (2006) and Moran (2006).

some token assertions are epistemically authorizing, the Stalnaker-based account of assertion will need to be supplemented to explain this fact. At a minimum, this means that it will be more complicated in this connection than is any rival account whose explanation is in terms of the illocutionary force of assertion.

It is noteworthy that the Stalnaker-inspired account of assertion is not the only account that fails to satisfy this *desideratum*, and so is not the only account that is incomplete in this way.

Consider an account that holds that assertion is the speech act in which one gives others a reason to think that one is expressing one's belief.<sup>15</sup> It is unclear how the act in which one does this can serve to authorize others to hold one epistemically responsible for the truth of the propositional content of the act. At a minimum, such a view would appear to require supplementation. Perhaps it could be argued that (i) belief itself answers to an epistemic standard, that (ii) as such the act in which one purports to express a belief is indirectly answerable to that standard, and that (iii) as a result one who performs such an act authorizes others to hold one to that standard. (See Bach 2008 for a discussion.)

Alternatively, consider an account that holds that assertion is to be characterized as the default illocutionary type ascribed to utterances of sentences in the indicative mood.<sup>16</sup> It is unclear how the act in which one utters a sentence in the indicative mood, by itself, can serve to authorize others to hold one epistemically responsible. Once again, such a view would appear to require supplementation. Perhaps the supplementation here comes in the form of things that can be assumed in a given context in which one performs an act of this kind; perhaps some contexts make it clear that the best explanation for an utterance of an indicative sentence is that the speaker is purporting to be in a position to settle a question, and perhaps this is sufficient to establish that in such a context one who performs such an act authorizes others to hold one to an epistemically demanding standard. (See Pagin 2011 for a discussion.)

The point I am making here is not that any of these accounts of assertion are objectionable; it is rather that, taking into account only those features they ascribe to the act of assertion, they do not explain how token assertions can be epistemically authorizing, and that as such they inherit an explanatory burden. This does not mean that these accounts are unacceptable. Rather, it means that their account of the EA-potential of assertions will be less simple than any rival account whose explanation appeals to assertoric force itself.

## 5 Satisfying the Desideratum: Norm-based Accounts

If, having been challenged to defend my belief (or claim) that *p*, I report you as having said so, then I identify you as responsible for having the relevant warrant.

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<sup>15</sup>A complicated version of this view is defended in Bach (2008).

<sup>16</sup>Related views have been defended in Jary (2010) and Pagin (2011).

If my report is true, you do bear the relevant responsibility. But I cannot just impose this burden on you; your speech act itself must have done something to authorize me to do so. This places a constraint on an account of any speech act that is epistemically authorizing in this way: it must explain how the performance of the speech act serves to authorize the audience to hold the speaker epistemically responsible in this way. If tokens of the speech act type do so as a matter of common practice, we would like to explain this in terms of the illocutionary force associated with the type. If we assume that token assertions are of this type, we might hope to explain assertion’s EA-potential in terms of the nature of assertoric force. In the previous section I argued that several extant accounts fail to do so. In this section I present an account that does.

In recent work on assertion, there is a popular view according to which assertion can be individuated by appeal to the rule that governs tokens of this type of speech act. There is some debate about the content of the rule. Most assume that the rule in question requires the speaker to bear the right sort of relation to the proposition asserted.<sup>17</sup> Of these rule-based accounts, I am interested in those which hold that the relevant relation is an epistemic one. These Rule-based accounts of assertion require Relevant Epistemic Authority (R-REA), according to which

R-REA Assertion is the unique speech-act type  $\varphi$  governed by the following rule:  
 Don’t perform a token act of  $\varphi$ -ing with the content that p unless you are epistemically authoritative regarding the truth of [p].

For my purposes, it matters not whether epistemic authority involves knowledge, warrant, justification, or adequate reasons; so long as it is epistemic, the account is a version of R-REA.

Suppose that an account of this sort is correct. Then insofar as the rule governing assertion itself is common knowledge – an assumption that has been defended elsewhere<sup>18</sup> – we can explain the EA-potential of assertion in terms of assertoric (illocutionary) force.

To begin, we can use the R-REA account of assertion to characterize assertoric force itself. To make an assertion is to perform an act which is such that it is common knowledge that the act is governed by a rule requiring relevant epistemic authority. To perform an act which is such that it is common knowledge that the act is governed by a rule is to authorize others to regard one as conforming to the rule. (This is a general fact about rule-governed activity.<sup>19</sup>) So to assert something is to authorize others to regard one as conforming to the rule requiring relevant epistemic authority. We might paraphrase this by saying that in asserting, one conveys that one has followed the rule. In light of this, we might explicate assertoric (illocutionary) force in terms of the conveyed authority itself: to assert that p is a matter of presenting

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<sup>17</sup>Not all do; some think that the rule requires only that the proposition asserted be true.

<sup>18</sup>See Goldberg (2015: Chapters 2 and 3).

<sup>19</sup>See Ross (1986).

[p] as true under conditions in which one has conveyed that one has the relevant epistemic authority on the matter.

It is in terms of this assertoric (illocutionary) force that we can account for assertion's EA-potential. To assert something is to authorize others to hold one responsible for actually having the epistemic authority one has conveyed having. This is a special case of a more general principle, according to which when one authorizes another to regard one as following a rule, one authorizes them to hold one responsible for having done so. Assertion's EA-potential is thus explained in terms of assertoric force.

Accounts of this R-REA sort are not the only accounts of assertion that can explain assertion's EA-potential in terms of assertoric (illocutionary) force. Another well-known account of assertion, developed by Brandom (1983), characterizes assertion precisely in terms of what the performance of such an act entitles an audience to believe (namely, the proposition asserted) and what it authorizes the audience to do (namely, hold the speaker epistemically responsible). It is but a short step from here to accounting for assertion's EA-potential.

If I prefer the R-REA accounts over Brandom's alternative, it is because the features that Brandom treats as definitive of assertion can be explained by – indeed, can be seen as deriving from – the rule that R-REA postulates. It would thus seem that R-REA can explain something that Brandom's account posits as basic. In any case, in what follows I will use an R-REA account as we return to the question with which I began this article: how can it be that reporting another person as having said so, in defense of one's belief that p, captures a reason to believe that p? To address this we need only treat buck-passing speech reports themselves as assertions, and then apply the R-REA account to them.

## 6 Explaining Buck-passing and Authorization

Let us return to the conversation fragment used to illustrate the buck-passing use of speech reports. Here it was (with the buck-passing use highlighted in **bold**):

Nguyen:           Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today.  
 Okello:           How do you know that?  
 Nguyen:           [pointing at Muhtaroglu] **She said so.**  
 Okello:           [addressing Muhtaroglu] OK, well how do *you* know that?  
 Muhtaroglu:     I was there, I saw the race.

Our question is: how can Nguyen's (**bolded**) report constitute a reason for him to believe that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today? I submit that we can answer this by considering this report as an assertion, and by applying the sort of account just described to it.

Let us assume – as seems plausible – that the speech act Nguyen performed by way of uttering 'She said so' while pointing at Muhtaroglu is an assertion. Then

given R-REA, Nguyen performed an act which was proper – which conformed to the rule governing acts of that kind – only if Nguyen had the relevant epistemic authority vis-à-vis the proposition in question. Which proposition is that? On the plausible assumption that ‘so’ is anaphoric here, the relevant proposition is that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. On this supposition, Nguyen performed an act which was proper only if he had the relevant epistemic authority vis-à-vis the proposition that Muhtaroglu said that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today.

We now have all of the materials we need to explain both how a buck-passing use of a speech report can constitute a reason to believe, and how it can succeed in ‘passing the buck’ to the speaker. I will take these up in order.

I begin with the explanation for how a buck-passing use of a speech report can constitute a reason to believe. To begin, Nguyen’s assertion of ‘She said so’ – which was tantamount to his buck-passing speech report – is either proper or improper *qua* assertion. (This is to say that either it conforms to the rule R-REA postulates, or it doesn’t.) If it is improper, then it doesn’t amount to a reason to believe, and so we do not need to explain how it amounts to such a reason. But suppose that it is proper. In that case, it satisfied the rule governing assertion – and so Nguyen is relevantly epistemically authoritative regarding Muhtaroglu’s having said that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. Keeping in mind that this was a buck-passing speech report, in reporting Muhtaroglu as having *said* that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today, Nguyen is characterizing Muhtaroglu as having conveyed that she is relevantly epistemically authoritative regarding the truth of the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. In short, Nguyen was epistemically authoritative regarding Muhtaroglu’s having conveyed that she (Muhtaroglu) was epistemically authoritative vis-a-vis the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today. In effect, this is a case of Nguyen’s having evidence that Muhtaroglu has evidence that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today – and it is reasonable for Nguyen to regard this evidence of evidence as itself evidence.<sup>20</sup> Summarizing: true buck-passing speech reports can be regarded as a reason to believe, since what they report is something that itself is tantamount to evidence of evidence.

We can also explain how a buck-passing use of a speech report can succeed in ‘passing the buck’ to the speaker. Nguyen’s assertion of ‘She said so’ is either true or false. If it is false, then while it purports to ‘pass the buck,’ it fails to do so – precisely as we would have expected. So suppose that it is true. In that case, we reach the verdicts (i) that Muhtaroglu conveyed that she had the relevant epistemic authority vis-à-vis the proposition that Ralphie the Schneck won the third race at Pimlico today, and (ii) that Muhtaroglu authorized others to hold her responsible for having such authority. Now Nguyen’s speech report ‘She said so’ was offered in response to a query regarding his grounds for believing that Ralphie the Schneck

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<sup>20</sup>Epistemologists will recognize this principle from Feldman (2006). To be sure, the principle, as stated, requires some modification. But the relevant subtleties are irrelevant to my discussion here.

won the third race at Pimlico today. If this speech contribution is to be relevant to the query on the table, it must be that Nguyen is doing something that he expects his audience to recognize will provide a response to that query. And in light of (i) and (ii), it seems clear why this is: Nguyen expects Okello to recognize that he (Nguyen) is characterizing Muhtaroglu as responsible for having the relevant warrant. Consequently, the hypothesis that Nguyen's speech report 'passes the buck' is needed to preserve the hypothesis that Nguyen's conversational contribution was relevant. So given R-REA, standard Gricean machinery suffices to explain the mechanisms of 'buck-passing.'

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to show how, by reflecting on true buck-passing speech reports of the form 'So-and-so said so,' we can discern features of the illocutionary force of the speech act being reported. In doing so we can also account for how such reports constitute reasons to believe, and how they succeed in 'passing the buck' to the source speaker as well. It would thus seem that we can learn a good deal of the pragmatic (and in particular the illocutionary) features of a speech act when the speaker is reported as having said so.

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# Topics are (implicit) indirect reports



Edoardo Lombardi Vallauri

**Abstract** The aim of the paper is to propose that Topics are a particular kind of indirect reports (IRs), and to describe some essential features which characterize them as such. It is organized as follows. Section 1: Topics are linguistic material devoid of illocutionary force, providing semantic starting points for the understanding of the Focus. Typically, this information is already active in the participants' working memory, due to *previous introduction*. Section 2: this qualifies Topics as a specific kind of IRs, namely *implicit* IRs, because they do not need to contain any predicate of saying. Differently from belief reports, Topics are implicit reports whose nature is induced by addressees following a pragmatic, not a semantic/logical path. Section 3: Topics are IRs *de re*, not *de dicto*. Section 4: Topics as such leave the nature and position of the source quite vague, though obviously specifiable by the context. Section 5: Topics can either cancel or express the illocution of the original utterance. Section 6: Topics are really IRs, not just processed reports. Section 7: the implicitness of Topics as IRs has some special consequences concerning the reliability of the presented source and the separation between the different contents to be attributed to the source and to the reporter. This has effects on the possible use of Topics for manipulative effects.

**Keywords** Topics · implicit indirect reports · linguistic persuasion · manipulative discourse

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## 1 Topics are typically used to resume already introduced information

Topics are those parts of utterances carrying information presented as introductory and devoid of illocutionary force, the latter being rather entrusted to the Focus (Lambrecht 1994, Cresti 2000, Lombardi Vallauri 2009).<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, Topics are typically spared by illocution changes (Lombardi Vallauri 1996). If we change the illocution of (1) and (2), we realize that what becomes negated or interrogated in the resulting sentences is always the focal, not the topical clause:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) [to forget Janine]<sub>T</sub> [your friend drinks]<sub>F</sub>  
 (<sub>neg1</sub>) *It is not true, that to forget Janine your friend drinks*  
*(to forget Janine, he meets Susan)*  
 (<sub>int1</sub>) *Is it true, that to forget Janine your friend drinks?*  
*(or, to forget Janine, he meets Susan?)*

- (2) [your friend drinks]<sub>T</sub> [to forget Janine]<sub>F</sub>  
 (<sub>neg2</sub>) *It is not true, that your friend drinks to forget Janine*  
*(he drinks for another reason)*  
 (<sub>int2</sub>) *Is it true, that your friend drinks to forget Janine?*  
*(or does he drink for another reason?)*

This is because, when the illocution of an utterance is changed, the change obviously affects what *actually has* an illocution; in other words, the part of the utterance which carries its illocution. In utterances whose Information Structure is Topic-Focus, the Focus carries the illocution, this being clearly signaled by its intonation contour, which is different according to the different possible illocutionary forces utterances can have (Cresti 2000). The Topic, on the contrary, only provides information which is conveyed in order to semantically locate the Focus, and is not endowed with illocutionary force. This is signaled by the characteristic Topic contour, which does not depend on the illocution of the utterance as a whole.

<sup>1</sup>In the suite, we will refer to relevant contributions on the matter by using the terms *Topic* and *Focus*, although different traditions adopt different terminological couples: typically, *Theme - Rheme* for the studies stemming from the Second Prague School (cf. Daneš 1974, Firbas 1966, 1987), and *Topic - Comment* for many other authors, including the very important works by E. Cresti and her group (cf. Cresti 1992, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>At least if the test is applied to a prosodical version of such utterances which makes the first clause the Topic and not part of a broad Focus. As can be noticed, the proposed test is also (more) often considered a test for presuppositions. For a complete explanation of why the same test spares both presuppositions and topics, namely for their sharing the property of being *not-asserted* chunks of information, cf. Lombardi Vallauri (2009).

For example, if produced under a prosodic contour that causes Topic-Focus information structure (not a Broad Focus including the whole utterance), sentence (1) asserts that your friend drinks, while the aim of forgetting Janine is only referred to as the semantic context to which this applies. As a consequence, when the utterance is transformed into a negation or a question, his drinking is negated or questioned, while the Topic remains unaffected, just providing the semantic context also in these new illocutionary acts. Conversely, in (2) the asserted part is the reason why your friend drinks, while his drinking is a Topic, only referred to as a starting point for the understanding of that explanation. As a consequence, only the explanation for the drinking is negated or questioned in the modified illocutions, and the drinking itself remains unaffected, still providing the semantic context for the understanding of the whole utterance.

All this means that *the illocutionary aim of utterances is entrusted to their Focus*. Topics, when they are present, only provide a semantic starting point for its understanding. Not by chance, Topics are not mandatory, and many utterances are only made of a Focus unit.<sup>3</sup> In (3), the first answer (3a) is made both of a Topic and a Focus. As can be seen, if the original prosodic features are preserved, the second answer without the Topic is perfectly natural, while the third, only made of a Topic, is not:

- (3) A - Where are you going?  
 B (3a) - [I am going...]T [to the cinema]F  
 B (3b) - [to the cinema]F  
 B (3c) - ??[I am going...]T

Now, what are the reasons why some information is presented as the aim of the utterance, and some is not? Why does an utterance need to express some information, while being able to do without some other? Typically, because some information is not yet possessed by the addressee, while some other is already known to him. It would make no sense to produce utterances to tell addressees what they know already. The aim of an utterance will be to convey *what the addressee does not know yet*; if something already known to him is conveyed, this is *not to inform him again* of what he already knows, but just to help him “locate” *semantically* and thus understand the part he doesn’t know. This becomes evident in discourse contexts, where what has been just said can return in subsequent utterances, but only as a Topic, not as (part of) the Focus. In (4), which is a retweet<sup>4</sup> by Silvio Berlusconi about some preceding statements by Mario Monti, the word *cialtrone* (buffoon) is a Topic, whose function is to signal that the word has been used first by Monti, and Berlusconi is just *reporting* Monti’s utterance. (We represent the information structure of the relevant clause immediately below.)

<sup>3</sup>This is unanimously maintained by all scholars, and coherently stems from the very definition of the Focus as the linguistic material that realizes the illocutionary aim of the utterance, and of the Topic as providing accessory information (cf. Cresti 2000, Lombardi Vallauri 2009).

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Brocca & Garassino (2015:145).

(4) **Silvio Berlusconi**, 15 Feb: **RT @renatobrunetta**:

#Monti straparla, cialtrone sarà lui  
 [cialtrone]<sub>T</sub> [sarà lui]<sub>F</sub>

*Monti talks nonsense, buffoon is himself*

The information structure of Berlusconi's tweet would be inappropriate if Monti had not uttered that word. In such a case, the idea of "cialtrone" should have been introduced to readers as new, i.e. in Focus:

(4a) Monti è [un cialtrone]<sub>F</sub>

*Monti is a buffoon*

Actually, introducing it as a Topic allows Berlusconi to present that statement to his addressees as something he *reports* from Monti.

In (5), where capitals signal focal prosody, once the idea of the supermarket has been introduced, it can return as a Topic, i.e. as some already introduced information semantically locating the assertion about tulipan bulbs, as in (5a) and (5c); but it cannot be encoded within the focus (like in 5b and 5d), as if the aim of the utterance were to introduce such information to the addressee for the first time. Conversely, the idea of the tulipan bulbs, since it has not been mentioned yet, can be encoded as a Focus but not as a Topic:

## (5)

A - where are you going?

B - to the supermarket

A (5a) - [at the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(5b) - ??[they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>T</sub> [at the supermarket]<sub>F</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(5c) - [they have TULIPAN BULBS]<sub>F</sub>, [at the supermarket]<sub>T</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(5d) - ??[at the SUPERMARKET]<sub>F</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>T</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

The opposite applies if the notion previously introduced is the tulipan bulbs:

## (6)

A - where are you going?

B - to seek some tulipan bulbs

A (6a) - ??[at the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(6b) - [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>T</sub> [at the supermarket]<sub>F</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(6c) - ??[they have TULIPAN BULBS]<sub>F</sub>, [at the supermarket]<sub>T</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

(6d) - [at the SUPERMARKET]<sub>F</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>T</sub>.

Would you take some for me?

## 2 Presenting some information as already introduced is a kind of indirect report

In sum, Topics typically present their content as *already included in the participants' attention*, i.e. *active* in their working memories (WM) (Chafe 1987, 1992). Now, the reason why some content is active in WM at utterance time is – typically – its prior mention. As a consequence, in many cases presenting some content as a Topic means hinting at some previous introduction on the part of some of the participants:

(7) [As for Robert's pay increase]<sub>T</sub>, [we will consider it thoroughly]<sub>F</sub>

In (7), things are presented as if someone has very recently talked about a possible increase of Robert's salary. In other words, the speaker *reports* about someone (possibly but not necessarily himself or the addressee) having mentioned that. This is a particular case of indirect report (IR), namely (i) one about some utterance which the addressee already knows about,<sup>5</sup> and (ii) *an implicit one*: no direct mention is made of who and with which words has introduced the considered content, but still the introduction of that content is attributed to some preceding utterance, which is implicitly reported in that way. So, we suggest that Topics are a kind of implicit indirect reports, namely one different from belief reports (Capone 2016: 330–332). In belief reports, addressees performing free enrichment arrive at the conclusion that certain content is to be understood as reported on semantic/logical grounds: if I say that *John believes Mary went to the cinema*, my addressee(s) will deduce that I was told by John (or by someone else) about John's belief because (at least in the typical case) it is impossible for anyone to know someone else's beliefs if they are not made explicit. On the contrary, in the case of Topics, the path followed by addressees is pragmatic in nature: they induce that some content is to be understood as reported from previous introduction because it is presented as not belonging to the informative, illocution-bearing part of the utterance.

The regularity by which Topics hint at some previous introduction of their content is shown (in some languages) by the working of biaffirmative conditionals, which are made by a topical conditional followed by a focal apodosis, like in (8):

(8) [Se Atene piange]<sub>T</sub>, [Sparta non ride]<sub>F</sub>  
*If Athens weeps, Sparta doesn't laugh*  
 “while Athens is weeping, Sparta is not rejoicing”

This kind of structure is a conditional only at the surface: as a matter of fact, there is no hypothetical meaning, and the content of the topical clause is taken for granted, i.e. reported as something already introduced in the context of discourse, shared by the participants and *bona fide* true. The meaning is: ‘I agree that Athens

<sup>5</sup>We will develop this issue specifically in Section 7.

is unhappy, but I wish to stress that Sparta is unhappy too'. The same reportive meaning would be impossible if the conditional is not in Topic: if in Focus, it keeps its literal, conditional meaning ('Sparta is not laughing, provided that Athens is weeping):

- (9) [Sparta non ride]<sub>T</sub>      se [Atene piange]<sub>F</sub>  
*Sparta doesn't laugh if Athens cries*

In other words, biaffirmative conditionals confirm the strong tendency of Topics to be interpreted as reports, to the point that topical status can neutralize conditional semantics, and convert it into reference, reportive in nature, to some state of affairs which the speaker considers already accepted by the addressees because it has been introduced in some way by the preceding context.

We will now try to build on these essential assumptions,<sup>6</sup> trying to better inquire to what extent and in which ways Topics may be said to belong to the category of IRs.

A first observation, rather formal in nature, is that Topics share with other IRs the feature of deictic pronominal shift, which shows that they translate the indexical field, as other IRs do.

- |      |   |                         |
|------|---|-------------------------|
| (10) | Sue said: <i>I</i> am tired                                       | (direct report)         |
| (11) | Sue said <i>she</i> was tired                                     | (explicit IR)           |
| (12) | That <i>she</i> was tired, motivated Sue not to go to the cinema. | (Topic,<br>implicit IR) |

More features of Topics as IRs will be dealt with separately in the following sections.

### 3 *De dicto or de re?*

It can be observed that the kind of report effected by Topics is more likely to be *de re* than *de dicto*: in (7), the content presented as already active (Robert's possible pay increase) is not intended as having been introduced in the participants' minds with exactly the same words (such as, "we must talk about Robert's pay increase". That is to say that its previous activation may also have happened by uttering that "Robert asks 85.000 €", or that "the vice President should be paid no less than

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<sup>6</sup>Much has still to be done in order to make clear that what linguists usually refer to as Information Structure (including Topic-Focus articulation, but also the organization of presupposed and asserted information) should be considered as a part of the phenomenon of Evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004), i.e. as one of the many devices by which language can modulate the attribution of given contents to sources different from the speaker. For a first attempt at this task, cf. Viviana Masia's doctoral dissertation, *Sociobiological Bases of Information Structure*, recently discussed under my guidance at Roma Tre university; and particularly Chapter 2: "Socio-biological perspectives: For a unified account of Evidentiality and Information Structure".

60% of the President”, or that “my husband is the less payed worker in our firm”, etc. In other words, the participants’ attention is assumed to be already focused, at utterance time, on the *content* (the *res*) of the topical clause in (7), not necessarily its *dictum*.

In the terms of Morency, Oswald & De Saussure (2008), the utterer of a Topic does not *commit himself* to the idea that his wording conforms to the *dictum*, but just to the *res* to which the utterer of the reported utterance committed himself.

This is true in general: since they do not refer to a previous act of speech explicitly, Topics do not present themselves as reporting its precise words. Rather, they just present their content as something the addressees already know about, which can raise the implicature that the speaker attributes such previous knowledge to some previous act(s) of mention on someone’s part. All details about that mention (who performed it, how this was done, etc.) remain by necessity unsaid.<sup>7</sup> As a consequence, the content is the most that Topics can report of that putative act.<sup>8</sup> Thus, to use Allan’s (2016:574) words, we can say that Topics are reports whose *degree of indirectness* is maximal.

#### 4 The source remains underspecified

Adopting what Levinson (1988:166) calls the “traditional” scheme of the actual roles in a communication situation, the speaker and the addressee are represented in a standard way in (7), i.e. they are present in the communication situation, while the source is to be identified in a more complex way:

- (i) either as the speaker himself, but conceived as the utterer of previous messages;  
or
- (ii) as the addressee, once again conceived as the utterer of previous messages; or
- (iii) as someone else, which may be either some precise person or include vague reference to general, collectively shared attention towards the given content at utterance time.

The choice between (i), (ii) and (iii) is made by the addressee relying on the ongoing context.

The reason for this is quite evident: Topics only implicitly allude to an act of previous mention. They do not *tell* that there has been previous mention of certain content, rather they present that content *with the informational status which is more appropriate* for something that has already been introduced. Explicitly talking about a previous mention would be redundant, since the very reason for encoding that

<sup>7</sup>This corresponds to the fact that the addressee typically already knows about the reported utterance. We will explore the consequences of this fact in Section 6.

<sup>8</sup>As we will see, this may admit some exceptions, mainly regarding the kind of illocution of the reported utterance(s).



content as a Topic is that the addressee already knows about its introduction. As a consequence, Topics do not *tell* about any source of a previous mention. Such things remain implicit, though they may be recoverable from the discourse context. For example, if the speaker himself has just introduced the information he then recalls by means of a Topic, he will be identified as the source:

(13)

- A - Where are you going?  
 B - To the supermarket. [At the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>. I will buy some for Debbie.

If the speaker recalls something that has been introduced by the addressee, the latter will be identified as the source:

(14)

- A - Where are you going?  
 B - To the supermarket  
 A - [At the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>. Would you buy some for me?

The notion recalled by way of the Topic may also have been introduced by some evident third source:

(15)

- A (passing by on a bicycle, to B and C) - Hi guys! I am going to the supermarket!  
 B (to C) - Why are you so thoughtful?  
 C - [At the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>. I must go there and buy some.

Or, when previous knowledge is due to some experience (shared among the participants) of the content encoded by the Topic, the source may be identified as actual experience itself, not linguistic but nonetheless having introduced some information (the presence of the supermarket) into their attention:

(16)

- (A and B are walking, and both see the supermarket)  
 A - [At the supermarket]<sub>T</sub> [they have tulipan bulbs]<sub>F</sub>. I may buy some.

The source of the previous knowledge which licenses the use of a Topic may also be a mix of someone's utterance and non-linguistic reality, namely some notion which is elicited by analogy within the frame of a previous utterance. The following example is the translation (and slight adaptation) of a conversation which actually took place between me and Alessandro Capone:

(17)

- A - Have you read Xxxx's essay?  
 B - Yes... [that presuppositions are the same as implicatures]<sub>T</sub> [doesn't convince me]<sub>F</sub>

The questionable content of the essay is presented as a Topic in the second utterance, because there is good reason to assume that it has been activated by the first utterance; in other words, because it has just been (though indirectly) “mentioned”. In fact, without this prior mention, the second utterance would be at least very awkward:

(18)

A – Hi, it’s been a long time! I hope you are doing well!

B – Hi... [that presuppositions are the same as implicatures]<sub>T</sub> [doesn’t convince me]<sub>F</sub>

To summarize, as we have seen, the implicitness of Topics as IRs typically allows for the source of the reported content to remain underspecified within the report, its identity being recovered from contextual information.

## 5 Is non-declarative illocution preserved?

A further question whose answer would help us understand the relation between explicit IRs and Topics as implicit IRs, is whether Topics must (or can) preserve the illocution of the reported content, when this is not declarative. Gutiérrez-Rexach (2016:560) observe the following:

“Let *Op* be a speech-act operator, then if *Op(p)* holds for a given *p*, neither *Report(op(p))* nor *Op(Report(p))* are possible.

What this means is that an indirect report of a non-declarative faces an additional hurdle. Not only the “same-saying relation” has to be preserved, but also information about the particular speech act instantiated by the reported utterance.”

Thus, while the question in (19) does not contain a predicate overtly constituting a Question operator, its IR (20) must contain it (namely, the verb *asked*):

(19) Who ate the banana?

(20) John *asked* who ate the banana.

The IR (22) of the directive act in (21) must contain an overt Directive operator such as *demanded*:

(21) Bring me the book!

(22) He *demanded* that I bring him the book.

Obviously, it can be observed that IRs of declarative acts are not that different, since they usually contain a verb of saying (or the like) which is normally not explicitly included in the original utterance:

(23) I ate the banana.

(24) John *said* that he ate the banana.

Now, differently from explicit IRs, Topics can leave the information about the kind of illocutionary act they report unexpressed. In (25) we receive information about someone (possibly, but not necessarily, Ted) having mentioned Sue's birthday, but no information about the illocution associated to that mention:

(25) As for Sue's birthday, Ted probably wants to buy her a gift

In other words, a Topic *recalls us that a speech act has taken place concerning certain content*, but can leave all other information about that speech act unexpressed: not only information about the source (as we have seen in Section 4), but also information about the kind of illocution. This is obviously related to the fact that the addressee was exposed to the original utterance no less than the reporter, so he does not need to be informed again.

Still, this is not mandatory. Topics *can also behave the same way as explicit IRs*, encoding the illocution of the reported act by means of a dedicated predicate (in italics):

Ted: - Which day is Sue's birthday?

(26a) [As for his *asking* about Sue's birthday]<sub>T</sub>, it may mean that Ted wants to buy her a gift

(26b) [If Ted *wonders* about Sue's birthday]<sub>T</sub>, it is because he wants to buy her a gift.

(26c) It is because he wants to buy her a gift, [that Ted *inquires* about Sue's birthday]<sub>T</sub>.

Interestingly, due to the fact that they can be constituted by virtually *any* kind of syntactic unit, Topics can report the interrogativity of a speech act even without a specific predicate, if they are made of an indirect interrogative. The utterance in (27) reports someone's having wondered when Sue's birthday will fall, though not containing an overt predicate of asking. This function is obviously carried out by the interrogative adverb:

(27) [Which day is Sue's birthday]<sub>T</sub>, I don't know.

Similarly, in (28), the Topic includes the information that someone has asked, or anyway raised the issue, whether Jane will leave or not:

(28) [Whether Jane will leave today]<sub>T</sub>, is none of their business.

In sum, as concerns reference to the illocution of the reported utterance, Topics provide speakers with a very versatile means of IR, which can be used both for revealing that illocution through dedicated linguistic material, or to leave it unexpressed.

## 6 Processed or indirect reports?

We may wonder whether Topics should more precisely be ascribed to *processed reports*, than to IRs. As Kertész - Rákosi (2016: 435) put it, if Katie is known to be a top model, in the following examples (a) is the *original utterance*, (b) is the *indirect report*, while the complement of the report, i.e. the statement in (c), is the *processed report*:

(29)

- (a) Professor Gardner: I didn't meet any top models at the airport
- (b) Reporter: Professor Gardner said he didn't meet Katie at the airport
- (c) Professor Gardner didn't meet Katie at the airport

This means that the difference between IRs and processed reports is not one of resemblance to the original utterance: neither (b) nor (c) express the whole content of the original utterance, rather just a content which is associated to the original utterance by way of inference. The difference between processed reports and IRs is that the former just express knowledge which is the result of having processed and understood the original utterance, the latter *explicitly hint at the existence of an original utterance*, i.e. they inform the addressee that there has been an utterance, uttered by some source.

Now, Topics are implicit reports, and this means that in their case the hinting to some utterance from some source is implicit, *but not absent*. As we have said, presenting some content as already and recently introduced is among their definitory features. This can be seen in (30) or (31), where the relevant content is presented as already active in the discourse context, that is to say, recently introduced by someone (though it remains unsaid, typically because the addressee already knows, whether this be prof. Gardner or someone else):

- (30) [That Professor Gardner didn't meet Katie at the airport]<sub>T</sub> astonished me.
- (31) [Professor Gardner's not meeting Katie at the airport]<sub>T</sub> was a pity.

In sum, Topics are indirect reports of utterances, not just cognitive results of the processing of utterances.

## 7 Effects of implicitness, and their manipulative exploitation

Implicitness has some specific effects on the working of reports, which we will try to sketch in this section.

### 7.1 *Reliability of the source, a general unspecified source, and manipulative effects*

Capone (2010:383) points out that IRs are affected by the issue of *reliability*, in this way:

The way an indirect speech report can bear on a certain decision to be made by the hearer is that it proposes what another person said (asserted) as a source of knowledge. If the original speaker qualifies as a reliable informer, then what he said can be counted on for the formation of appropriate beliefs ( . . . ).

Now, since in Topics the source is implicit, its reliability is not directly assessable from the utterance containing the Topic. But, in the typical case, the addressee knows the identity of the source, because the reporter is presenting the content of some utterance to which the addressee was just exposed in the discourse situation. Still, this may not always be the case. In some situations, as we will see right away, speakers can use Topics to “report” contents that haven’t actually been introduced to their addressees. Thus, addressees are requested to *accommodate* that content, i.e. to accept to consider it as already active at utterance time although it actually isn’t. In this case, the identity of the source, remaining implicit and unexpressed, may also remain at least in part unknown to the addressee. And, as a consequence, the reliability of the source as well.

What the consequence of this may be for the forming of the addressee(s) beliefs, depends in the first place on the general effect that linguistic implicits have in the forming of beliefs. Much has been written about this (cf. for instance Ducrot 1972, Givón 1982, Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986, Rigotti 1988, Lombardi Vallauri 1993, 1995, 2009, 2016, Sbisà 1999, 2007, De Saussure 2013, to all of which I refer), showing that implicit information can be used to bypass the critical judgment on certain content on the part of addressees, by reducing their attention. In particular, Topics, by presenting some information as already shared, can induce addressees to believe it as true even if they have no positive elements to do so. Questionable or doubtful content, if proposed as an opinion of the speaker, is likely to be critically evaluated, and possibly rejected. But the same content, when it is conveyed as if coming from some different source, and possibly a collective, authoritative one, or if it is presented as as an opinion already shared by the participants or even by everyone, may be more likely to be accepted. We feel less need to carefully check something which is presented as already agreed upon by many, possibly including ourselves.<sup>9</sup>

Empirical demonstration of this assumption includes experiments such as those carried out by Bredart & Modolo (1988) by manipulating the so-called Moses Illusion Test (Erickson & Mattson 1981). They changed the syntactic structure of sentences like the following, so as to have a certain constituent (in the example we report, *Moses*) once in Focus and once in Topic position:

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Lombardi Vallauri (2016) for extensive explanation of this state of affairs, including pragmatic and biological arguments.

- (32) It was [TWO ANIMALS of each kind]<sub>F</sub> that [Moses took on the Ark]<sub>T</sub>  
 (33) It was [MOSES]<sub>F</sub> who [took two animals of each kind on the Ark]<sub>T</sub>

Not by chance, the experimental subjects always noticed the distortion (that *Moses* was wrong for *Noah*) when *Moses* was in the sentence Focus (as in 33), while they tended to miss it when it was conveyed as Topic, in the complement clause of the cleft construction (as in 32). This is because the information in Topic is perceived as the reporting of some already shared opinion, consequently needing less attentive screening as compared to some newly introduced opinion of the speaker.

The following examples, from two Italian political speeches, show the exploitation of this possibility by two professionals of persuasive communication, respectively Matteo Renzi and Paola Taverna. In both cases, the part of the utterance which is presented as a (preposed or postposed) Topic encodes information which the speaker prefers not to present as introduced by him/herself, but rather by the circumstances: as something whose activation in the ongoing discourse is not due to his/her responsibility, and which he/she is somewhat obliged to report because it is already at issue:

- (34) Dall’altro lato, [un’idea di Europa che in questi anni non ha funzionato]<sub>T</sub>, ha fallito  
*On the other side, [an idea of Europe which hasn’t worked in these years]<sub>T</sub>, has failed.*
- (35) Insomma un delinquente abituale, recidivo e dedito al crimine, anche organizzato, [visti i suoi sodali]<sub>T</sub>.  
*In sum, a habitual offender, recidivist and devoted to crime, even organized, [seen his friends]<sub>T</sub>.*

In (34), the “fact” that a certain idea of Europe hasn’t worked is in Topic, i.e. presented as reported information. This produces the impression that this is not just Mr. Renzi’s fabrication, rather a state of affairs proposed by the actual circumstances and consequently already active in the hearers’ consciousness. The same holds for the idea of “who his friends are” in (35): their connection to organized crime is presented as already present in the hearers’ WMs, i.e. put forward by the general situation, not by some malicious insinuation on Mrs. Taverna’s part. In both cases, the role of the speaker is that of a reporter, not the source of the relevant content. This is likely to trigger less critical processing, and more probable acceptance.

Returning to our main issue, this state of affairs means that *impliciting the source may result in the same persuasive effect as quoting a very reliable source*, and even better. This function of Topics is exploited also in advertising, where questionable contents are often encoded as Topics, although they are not active in the addressees’ WMs. For example, the following advertisement diffused in the early nineties by the Italian government presented itself as a series of instructions (“A Guide to Europe”) for Italian firms that wanted to make the most of the new opportunities offered by the European economic regulation:

**Per entrare in Europa, scegli la chiave giusta.**



Le piccole e medie imprese dell'industria, dei servizi e dell'artigianato hanno una nuova chiave per entrare in Europa: "La Guida all'Europa".

☞ "La Guida all'Europa" È il manuale pratico e di facile consultazione che fornisce informazioni su tutte le nuove opportunità economiche offerte dalla CEE alle piccole e medie imprese. "La Guida all'Europa" rappresenta uno strumento indispensabile per favorire il loro inserimento nel Mercato Unico Europeo.

La nuova chiave si aggiunge alle altre già fornite dal Dipartimento per il Coordinamento delle Politiche Comunitarie.

☞ "Europa '93" È l'opuscolo che presenta una visione generale delle problematiche europee.

☞ "Eurospartelli" Sono i centri di informazione gestiti dalle Camere di Commercio, dalle organizzazioni sindacali e di categoria, dalle sedi IASM nel Mezzogiorno a cui rivolgersi per avere ogni notizia.

☞ "Videotel" È il servizio della SIP che, alla pagina 8268, fornisce informazioni utili sull'Europa.

Per ricevere gratuitamente l'opuscolo "Europa '93" o "La Guida all'Europa" basta compilare e spedire il tagliando allegato.

**Se vuoi parlare di Europa, parlane con noi.**

PRESIDENZA DEL CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI  
Dipartimento per il Coordinamento delle Politiche Comunitarie  
Ufficio Stampa - Via del Tritone, 142 - 00187 ROMA

Desidero ricevere, gratuitamente, l'opuscolo:  
EUROPA '93  oppure LA GUIDA ALL'EUROPA

Nome e Cognome \_\_\_\_\_  
Abitato \_\_\_\_\_  
Indirizzo \_\_\_\_\_

- (36) [Per entrare in Europa]<sub>T</sub>, [scegli la chiave giusta]<sub>F</sub>  
*To enter Europe, choose the right key.*

In advertisements, everything written small is irrelevant as compared to the headline. Here, as a matter of fact, all the instructions listed at the right of the page are just a *pretext* that allows to formulate the headline, which presents *as the reporting of something already shared* (by means of a topical purpose clause) the idea that “entering Europe” is desirable. Preposed, topical purpose clauses always suggest that the aim they encode is already felt as such in the situation (Thompson 1985). This accounts for the oddity (in normal situations) of such sentences as “You know, to irreparably stain your shirt, you’d better use blueberry icecream than beer”. Here, the headline suggests that we are in a context-of-discourse in which something has already been put forward about the “desire to enter Europe”. Given the situation, readers are invited to accommodate the implicit report, and accept that such an idea was already active in their minds because it was widely shared. Now, presenting the desire to enter Europe as generally shared is precisely what this Europeanist

advertisement wants to do. And giving no specific source is even better than giving a very reliable one. To say it with Kertés and Rákosi (2016:456),

indirect reports may be *effective tools of problem solving* if the reporter knows that a statement is relevant for the decision but the original speaker's authority is greater than his/her own authority with respect to this statement, or he/she cannot judge the plausibility of the statement at issue, or thinks that it is implausible or false and wants to shift the responsibility for its acceptance to the original speaker.

What we are adding to this is that Topics, in that they are *implicit* IRs, obtain high levels of persuasion by implicitly hinting at a particular kind of authoritative source, namely a source so general as not to be specifiable.

This pattern is especially effective in public communication (such as advertising and political propaganda). Much has been written on the perceived "authority" of mass media. In our opinion, their authority is a particular manifestation of the fallacy which logicians and theorists of argumentation call the *argumentum ad populum* (Godden 2007, Hahn – Oaksford 2007, Doury 2012, Herman 2014): "since the majority agree, it must be true".

It can be observed that such an effect becomes even stronger when it comes to the implicit side of communication, namely one in which the argument is not made explicitly, but implicitly. The reason is the following. In dialogic situations, where he is alone with the speaker, the addressee knows that the possible challenging of an implicit assumption entirely rests upon him. For example, if in his opinion the mentioned idea of Europe hasn't failed, the hearer of (34) may challenge the content which is presented as widely shared, expose it and dissociate himself from any assumption on his supposed sharing the speaker's beliefs (von Fintel 2004, Pearson 2010): *But wait a minute: that idea of Europe has given great results!* Moreover, and very importantly, if the assumption is false, no one else than the hearer himself can expose it. In public communication, on the contrary, it is evident to each addressee that a target of very many people is reached. For implicits such as topics (or presuppositions), the presence of a vast audience means that the relevant content is presented as *already shared and agreed upon by very many people*. And nobody stands up to challenge it. Nobody says: "Wait a minute, we are not interested in entering Europe at all!" (cf. 36). This sort of *confirming silence* on the part of a vast audience, possibly up to millions of people, is not without effect. As we have seen, topics persuasively exploit the fact that there is little need to double check the truth of something one already knows about: obviously, there is even less reason to double check something *everybody already knows about*. This results in a sort of *compelling silence*, because each single person who is reached by the message feels "too little" to critically challenge a content which is apparently shared and agreed upon by so many people.



## 7.2 (Not) separating what is attributable to the source from what is added by the reporter

Capone (2010:388) summarizes this issue as follows:

The practice of indirect reports involves being able to separate out what is attributable to the original sayers and what is attributable to the current speaker, even if both appear in a that-clause. So a useful principle is the following:

Do not take everything that appears in the that-clause of an indirect report as belonging to the voice of the original speaker whose speech act is being reported.

A complementary principle is the following:

Separate the elements of the that-clause that contribute to the voice of the original speaker from those that embody the voice of the reporter; do this by exploiting the contextual clues that are available for this purpose.

Now, crucially, the implicitness of Topics as IRs goes along with making it virtually impossible to separate explicitly what is to be attributed to whom's voice. This holds for the reporting of assertive speech acts, but also for speech acts of other kinds, which means that Topics probably do not instantiate the "standards of evaluation" proposed by Wieland (2013: 410):

reporting is an act that has standards of evaluation. (...) I have used the broad term 'felicity' to describe a successful report. Context may vary with respect to the required strength of fidelity between the original utterance and the report of this utterance. In some, but not all, cases it is appropriate to assess whether the report is *true*. In some, but not all, cases it is appropriate for there to be *identity* between the original utterance and the report. In other cases, the two utterances, whether in content, form or something else entirely paralinguistic, need to resemble each other in some other way altogether.

Topics largely neutralize these differences, specifying very little about the identity between the original utterance and the way it is reported. We have already shown this in Section 3 and, partly, in Section 6; but we can show this again by commenting on the following example by Potts (2005:18):

Edna is at her friend Chuck's house. Chuck tells her that he thinks all his red vases are ugly. He approves only of his blue ones. He tells Edna that she can take one of his red vases. Edna thinks the red vases are lovely, selects one and returns home to tell her housemate:  
'Chuck said I could have one of his lovely vases!'

Kertés and Rákosi (2016:463) wonder whether this is compatible or not with Capone's Paraphrasis Principle:

"Should Y hear what X said he (Y) had said, he would not take issue with it, as to content, but would approve of it as a *fair paraphrasis* of his original utterance." (Capone 2012: 599; emphasis as in the original)

In other words, if the situation is as described by Potts, by uttering what we repeat here below as (37) Edna righteously defines the red vases as "lovely" according to her own judgment, or should she instead define them as "ugly" because at that point of her utterance she is reporting Chuck's statement and opinion?

(37) Chuck said I could have one of his lovely vases!

The answer to this question is made difficult precisely by the fact that an IR such as Edna's is bound to remain ambiguous as to what must be attributed to the source and what to the reporter. Now, what happens with Topics? Let us reformulate Pott's example with Edna's final report as a Topic:

Edna is at her friend Chuck's house.

Chuck: 'I think all my red vases are ugly. The blue ones are fine. You can take one of the red ones.'

Edna thinks the red vases are lovely, selects one and returns home to tell her housemate:

(38) I was at Chuck's home, remember? [As for his lovely vases]<sub>T</sub>, I took one!

The Topic hints at some previous introduction of the vases in the hearer's WM: Edna's addressee already knows about them. If Chuck had called them lovely in a previous conversation with Edna and her housemate, by uttering (38) Edna would implicitly attribute this opinion to Chuck. But in the proposed context this is not the case, because Edna's housemate doesn't know anything about Chuck's opinions. As a result, the Topic must hint at some previous introduction by somebody else. If this somebody is Edna herself, the opinion that the vases are lovely can be attributed only to her; but let us imagine she is reporting *Susan's* statement that Chuck's vases are lovely:

Edna is at her friend Chuck's house.

Chuck: 'I think all my red vases are ugly. The blue ones are fine. You can take one of the red ones.'

Edna selects a red vase and returns home.

At home, Susan (in the presence of Edna and her housemate) says: Chuck has some lovely red vases.

Then Edna tells her housemate:

(39) I was at Chuck's home, remember? [As for his lovely vases]<sub>T</sub>, I took one!

In this case, what is reported is obviously Susan's recently expressed opinion. The equivalent happens if it was Edna's housemate herself who called Chuck's vases lovely.

But the use of a reporting Topic is also justified if someone has mentioned the vases without calling them lovely:

Susan (in the presence of Edna and her housemate) says: Chuck has some red vases.

Then Edna tells her housemate:

(40) I was at Chuck's home, remember? [As for his lovely vases]<sub>T</sub>, I took one!

In this case, since the source (Susan) mentioned the vases but not their being lovely, the addressee (Edna's housemate) will attribute the opinion of their being lovely to the reporter (Edna).

The ambiguity about who thinks that the vases are lovely, observable in the explicit IR (37), seems not to arise with Topics when they report utterances that happened in the presence of the addressees (as in 39 and 40), because in this case the context provides disambiguating information. *The addressee will attribute to the reporter what was not uttered by the source.*

But, as we have seen, Topics can also report statements that were not uttered in the presence of the same addressees as the report. In this case, they are bound to work pretty much like explicit indirect reports of utterances performed in the presence of the reporter but not of his subsequent addressee, i.e. they should remain ambiguous as to what must be attributed to the source and what to the reporter. This is actually the case, as illustrated for example by (41) and (42):

- (41) I have read many newspapers while I was waiting for the barber to cut my hair: [that the worse government of this century is going to fall before the weekend]<sub>T</sub>, seems very unlikely to me.
- (42) I have read John's article while I was waiting for the barber to cut my hair: [that the worse government of this century is going to fall before the weekend]<sub>T</sub>, seems very unlikely to me.

Interestingly, the main predication (the prevision that the government will fall) will be attributed to the source (the newspapers or John's article), but the evaluation contained in the chosen complex descriptor (*the worse government of this century*) may be ascribed either to the source or to the reporter's opinion.

The reason is that the reportive nature of Topics requires that at least some content is attributed to a source: it would make no sense to produce a report if there is nothing to report. The final utterances in (41) and (42) would be inappropriate if the newspapers or John's article were not the source of at least *some* information. But once some information is attributed to the source, thus justifying the report, it becomes doubtful whether the rest should be ascribed to the source or to the reporter. Though we cannot do it here, it would be very interesting to better inquire the factors (probably both semantic and syntactic in nature) that influence which information is more likely (or certain) to be attributed to the source, and which one may also be attributed to the reporter.

As a matter of fact, explicit IRs work the same way, for the same reasons. In (43) and (44) the negative evaluation on the government contained in the complex subject NP could in principle be ascribed either to the source or to the reporter:

- (43) I have read many newspapers while I was waiting for the barber to cut my hair. They say that the worse government of this century is going to fall before the weekend.
- (44) I have read John's article while I was waiting for the barber to cut my hair. He says that the worse government of this century is going to fall before the weekend.

Still, in my opinion the inclusion of the evaluative element under the scope of an explicit predicate of saying makes it more probable, as compared to Topics, (though not certain) that the source and not the reporter will be taken as responsible for the whole content.

In any case, both explicit IRs and Topics are structures which, to a certain extent, remain ambiguous about who is responsible for what.

In particular, Topics are reports that make it very easy to shift the responsibility of something which is just the opinion of the reporter to the source. Even if the source has talked in the presence of the same addressees. For example, if Mary says:

(45) I am tired of waiting for the perfect man

immediately after, one could report her statement like this:

(46) [Mary's being tired of waiting for the perfect man]<sub>T</sub> is something I respect  
but also like this:

(47) [Mary's lack of patience for important things]<sub>T</sub> will seriously damage her  
or like this:

(48) [Mary's well-known concreteness towards life]<sub>T</sub> is her real strength  
and so on and so forth. The same would be more difficult with explicit reports:

(49) ?Mary has said that she lacks patience for important things

(50) ?Mary has said that she is extremely concrete towards life

*Reformulations* such as these are by far easier with Topics, precisely because they are *implicit* IRs.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence they allow – to a certain extent – speakers to convey personal opinions as if they are just reported from someone else's utterance; i.e. to conceal, at least in part, that the content has been changed according to some preference of the reporter. Unattentive addressees may be in part convinced that the report they receive is a fair repetition of the original utterance. With obvious manipulative effects.

## 8 Conclusions

We have proposed that Topics are a particular kind of IRs, because they are linguistic material devoid of illocutionary force, providing semantic starting points for the understanding of the utterance Focus. Typically, this linguistic treatment is devoted to information which is already active in the participants' WMs, due to *previous introduction*. In other words, Topics present the information they encode as recently introduced. This qualifies them as a specific kind of IRs, namely *implicit* IRs, because they do not need to contain any predicate of saying. They are different from other implicit IRs, such as belief reports, because in their case the path from what is expressed and the implicit content is rather pragmatic than semantic in nature.

<sup>10</sup>Reformulations of the exact wording used by the source may be regarded as falling into the general case of "modes of presentation" in the sense of Schiffer (1995, 2000). For a treatment of implicit modes of representation in belief reports, see Capone (2016: chap. 9).

As for the way they reflect the original introduction, Topics are IRs *de re*, not *de dicto*, reporting the content of a previous utterance but not necessarily its original words.

As for reference to the source, Topics leave the nature and position of the source underspecified, typically relying for its identification on the context which, in the typical case, includes the recent uttering of the original speech act in the presence of the same participants to which the report is addressed.

As for the expression of the original illocution of the reported utterance, although they are implicit IRs, Topics can either cancel it or express it. In particular, the possibility to express it is enhanced by the extreme syntactic versatility of Topics, which can be made of virtually any kind of linguistic unit.

Although they do not necessarily include explicit reference to a speech act, Topics are really IRs, not just processed reports. This is due to the fact that reference to previous introduction of their content is implicit, but not absent.

As for the reliability of the source, Topics can use their implicitness to leave the identity of the source underspecified, which can result in a source conceived as quite general, possibly identified by addressees as a widely shared agreement. This ends up endowing the source with a very high reliability, possibly even higher than that of a single very authoritative source. This possibility is exploited, with manipulative effects, in persuasive communication. And these effect become even stronger when Topics are used in public contexts, where the supposed general agreement is confirmed by general acquiescence.

A second manipulative effect of the implicitness of Topics (i.e. of their lacking an overt predicate of saying) is that, as compared to explicit IRs, they facilitate the reformulation of the original utterance, which can result in presenting the reporter's opinions as if they are a fair reproduction of what had been introduced by the source, in a way that can mislead less attentive addressees.

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**Part II**  
**Linguistic applications**



# Direct and indirect speech revisited: Semantic universals and semantic diversity



Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka

**Abstract** We present new interpretations of “direct” and “indirect” speech, framed entirely using simple and cross-translatable words and phrases (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014), i.e. framed in language which can be transparent both to linguists and to the speakers whose ways of speaking we are trying to understand. In relation to “direct speech”, we present linguistic generalisations about two forms of quoted speech, which, we claim, are very likely to be found in all languages of the world. We next examine the semantics of logophoric constructions in West African languages. We look in some detail at Goemai, which has been claimed by Dixon (2006) to have “no direct speech”. Based on Birgit Hellwig’s (2006, 2011) work, we argue that logophoric constructions in Goemai are forms of direct speech on any reasonable, semantically-based definition. We conclude that direct speech is a language universal. The final part of the paper is about “indirect speech”, focusing on the English ‘say that’ construction. An overall theme of our paper is that specialised and hybrid forms of reported speech, including logophoric speech, reflect cultural concerns and practices.

**Keywords** Direct speech · Indirect speech · NSM · Semantic universals · Logophoric constructions · Grammar and culture

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## 1 Introduction: how can we best speak about other people's speech

In a famous passage of his 1930 book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (published in exile under the pseudonym of “Vološinov”), Mikhail Bakhtin wrote:

We believe that one such highly productive, ‘pivotal’ phenomenon is that of so-called *reported speech*, i.e., the syntactic patterns (direct discourse, indirect discourse, quasi-direct discourse), the modifications of those patterns and the variants of those modifications, which we find in a language for the reporting of other persons’ utterances and for incorporating those utterances, as the utterances of others, into a bound, monologic context. The extraordinary methodological interest inherent in these phenomena has gone totally unappreciated to the present day. No one was able to discern in this issue of syntax, in what superficial examination held to be a secondary matter, problems of enormous general linguistic and theoretical significance. . . . It is precisely when emplaced in sociologically oriented scientific concern with language that the whole significance, the whole hermeneutic power of this phenomenon is disclosed. (Vološinov 1973, 112)

In recent years, many linguists have quoted this passage and commented (as does, for example, William McGregor (1994, 64) in a paper entitled ‘The grammar of reported speech and thought in Gooniyandi’) that “the enormous theoretical significance of the phenomenon still remains largely unappreciated”. And, like McGregor, many linguists now feel inspired to investigate grammatical mechanisms “of representing other utterances within a given utterance” in languages of the world. We wholeheartedly applaud this trend. At the same time, we would like to reflect further on Bakhtin’s main point: what does this ‘enormous significance’ of the phenomena in question consist in? It seems clear to us that for Bakhtin himself the grammatical mechanisms involved were not the main point: to be sure, they needed to be understood, but only as a means to an end; and the end had to do not with grammar as such, but with meaning. As he saw it, the relations between people’s utterances were important because they reflected ways in which people wanted to relate to other people: ultimately, it was not just about forms and grammatical structures but about meaning and culture.

In his paper ‘On “saying that”’, philosopher Donald Davidson (1968) adopted that human and interpersonal perspective of Bakhtin’s, by proposing that the “reporter” who says about someone else: *He said that X* acts as a “same-sayer” of that other person. For example, “when I say: Galileo said that the earth moves, I represent Galileo and myself as samesayers” (1968, 104).

In a paper entitled ‘The semantics of direct and indirect discourse’, one of the present authors (Wierzbicka 1974) essentially agreed with Davidson on this point. In the present paper, we no longer agree with Davidson (for reasons to be explained shortly), but we still want to be in dialogue with him, and with Bakhtin, by asking questions about the *meaning* of different types of reported speech, and not only about the forms. Different ways of reporting other people’s speech are linked with different cultural concerns and attitudes. At the same time, what different languages share in their ways of reporting speech reflects shared human concerns and needs. In our view, the path to understanding both – diverse cultural concerns and attitudes, and shared human concerns and needs – leads through careful, rigorous, and

methodologically informed analysis of meanings. The NSM approach to semantic analysis, on which the present paper is based (Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002, 2014, and other works), offers, we believe, a methodological framework within which such an analysis can be productively pursued.

We do not mean to suggest that meaning is never discussed in linguistic publications on reported speech. Rather, we note that usually the discussion moves between technicalities of grammar and abstract “meta” speculations about speakers’ perspectives, without any attention being paid to the insiders’ meanings – that is, the meanings that the speakers themselves could conceive and understand through their own words. For example, Spronck (2015: no page number) writes:

Constructions expressing complex perspective are crucial for a comprehensive account of reported speech. The explicit modal meaning in multiple perspective framing constructions as in Ungarinyin expresses an evaluation of the reported message in the current speech event (. . .). Therefore, for a complete understanding of reported speech both the modal meaning of a multiple perspective construction, representing the perspective of the current speaker at the speech moment and the evidential meaning, representing the way in which the current speaker represents, ‘refracts’, the intersubjective relation with the reported speaker, yield important linguistic clues.

Passages like this can be difficult to understand, and the reference to another linguist who “succinctly summarises this view” seems to us even more opaque: “. . . whereas the modal meaning of [reported speech] constructions evaluates the content of the message and thereby hedges on the basis of subjectivity [. . .], the evidential meaning marks the access of the reporting speaker to the reported material” (Buchstaller 2011, 63–64, quoted in Spronck 2015).

We suggest that instead of trying to explain the phenomena of reported speech in terms of “refracting”, “subjectivity”, “modal meaning” or “evidential meaning”, it will be more illuminating to think about them in terms of simple and cross-translatable words and phrases based on the semantic prime SAY, such as: ‘someone said something to someone else’, ‘this someone wants other people to know what this someone said’, and so on. This is the kind of language of discussion that we propose to use in the present study: a language which can be transparent both to linguists and to the speakers whose ways of speaking we are trying to understand.

This is also a major difference between the present paper and Wierzbicka’s (1974) paper ‘The semantics of direct and indirect discourse’. While the words used in the explications of that earlier paper were, for the most part, relatively simple, the syntax of those explications was unnecessarily complex, and even confusing. The reason was that while a certain amount was known at that time about universal human concepts (and cross-translatable words) hardly anything was known about universal (and cross-translatable) grammar. Since then, the situation has changed (largely due to cross-linguistic investigations conducted, by many scholars, in the NSM framework). The interpretations of “direct” and “indirect” speech developed in the present paper are not only new in substance, but also consistent with what is now known about cross-translatable words and cross-translatable grammar. As a result, the language of analysis employed here is a great deal simpler and more transparent.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. Section 2 provides discussion and clarification of the concept of “direct speech”. This is necessary not only for completeness but also because the notion of an “indirect” report stands in opposition to that of direct speech, and although it is sometimes assumed that the latter is transparent in its meaning, this turns out not to be the case. We propose two semantic generalisations about forms of direct speech that seem to be universally available in the world’s languages. A novel aspect is that our generalisations are themselves phrased in simple, cross-translatable terms, without recourse to any technical terms of linguistics. Section 3 considers the phenomenon of logophoric pronouns in West African languages. These are conventionally seen as examples of non-canonical indirect speech, but we argue that from a semantic point of view, they are actually special varieties of direct speech, possibly (or even probably) motivated by culturally distinct West African speech practices. Section 4 first considers the semantics of several “quotative” markers in non-English languages, before proposing semantic paraphrases for canonical “indirect speech”(the ‘he/she said that ...’ pattern) in English and European languages. Concluding remarks form section 5.

## 2 The semantics of “direct speech”

### 2.1 *Starting with some familiar examples*

We will start our investigation into reported speech with some familiar examples – familiar to speakers of many languages around the world. At the beginning of the Bible, in the book of Genesis, we read:

And God said: Let there be light; and there was light. (Gen 1: 3)

We have two speakers here, the narrator, who says “God said”, and God, who says: “Let there be light”. This sentence has been translated into thousands of languages, in a way which mirrors its exact structure. For example, in the Bible (*Tjukurpa Palya* (n.d.), henceforth TP) in the Australian language Pitjantjatjara, we can read:

*Munu palulanguru Godalu wangkangu, “kaḷaḷari!”; ka kaḷaḷaringulta.*

and DEF.from God.ERG speak.PAST light.INCHO.IMP CONTR light.INCH.PAST.

THEN

The word *Godalu* [God.ERG ative] is a borrowing from English, but the report on what God said, and how God said it, means the same in both languages. The readers understand that God wasn’t speaking in either English or Pitjantjatjara, but they also understand that at some moment God spoke and said something that in English can be rendered as “let there be light”.

The same basic pattern of speech continues in the second book of the Bible, Exodus, in the famous exchange between God and Moses: “God said, Moses, Moses. And he said, here I am” (Ex. 3: 4). In Pitjantjatjara, this is rendered as follows:

*Ka Godalu . . . watjanu, Mose! Mose! ka paluru watjanu, Nyaapa?*

and God.ERG say.PAST Moses Moses CONTR DEF say.PAST what

*Kulininanta.*

listen.PRES.1SGNOM.2SGACC

‘And God said, Moses! Moses! And he said. What? I’m listening to you.

Instead of the verb *wangkangu* ‘spoke’, another verb *watjanu* ‘said’ is used here, but in both cases, the words which follow are intended to portray what God said and how.

As far as we have been able to ascertain, this pattern of speech is universal: in every language one can say a phrase like ‘he/she said: . . .’ accompanied by some words, in order to convey what someone else had said before and how they said it. There is no assumption that the words of the original speaker are reproduced in exactly the form in which they were uttered, but it is assumed that, essentially, what was said by the first speaker is conveyed by the second, both in terms of what was said and how.

For example, when in the King James Bible (KJB), in response to God’s call: “Moses, Moses!” Moses replies: “Here I am”, in essence, both the “what” and the “how” of Moses’ responses have been preserved. Without using any technical terminology, and relying only on shared human concepts, we can describe this human phenomenon as follows. This is a preliminary formulation, to be elaborated shortly.

#### A PRELIMINARY GENERALISATION ABOUT “DIRECT SPEECH”

it can be like this:

someone says something like someone else said before,

because this someone wants some other people to know what this someone else said

if these other people hear it, they can know because of this what this someone else said

at the same time, they can know how this someone else said it

This stops short of saying that the second speaker repeats the first speaker’s utterance with the same words. Nonetheless, it is assumed that whoever hears the reported utterance will know not only what the first speaker said but also, how they said it.

The final line of the script above says that listeners ‘can know how’ the original speaker said it. What, then, does this “how” consist in? In the pattern illustrated by the biblical example, what is preserved is what many linguists call the first speaker’s “perspective”. What this means (as we would put it) is that if the original speaker said (in whatever language) ‘I’, the second speaker repeats this ‘I’ (in whatever language), without replacing it with words like ‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘this someone’. To

illustrate with further examples from the exchange between God and Moses, in verse 6 of the same chapter we read (the word *ngayuluna* consists of free pronoun *ngayulu* ‘I’ with clitic pronoun *-na* added):

He said: “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (KJB)

*Ka Godalu watjanu, “Ngayuluna God nyuntumpa mamaku munu Abrahamaku, Isaacaku, Jacobaku kulu”*. (TP)

If we want to describe the sentence pattern illustrated in these exchanges from a cross-linguistic point of view, this preservation of the original speaker’s ‘I’ can give us a reliable test. The question: “Is the ‘perspective’ of the original utterance preserved or not?” could be answered differently by different linguists. By contrast, the question: “Is the ‘I’ in the original utterance preserved or is it rather replaced by something else, e.g. ‘he’ or ‘she’?” is likely to be answered in the same way, because the ‘I’ gives us a touchstone here. In particular, if someone wants to argue – as we do – that the pattern illustrated in these biblical examples is a human universal, the reference to the preservation of the original speaker’s ‘I’ gives us an intersubjective test more reliable than most definitions which can be found in linguistic literature.

## **2.2 A first generalisation about “direct speech”, phrased in cross-translatable words**

Let’s now take a closer look at how some linguists have described “direct speech”. In his book *Direct and Indirect Discourse*, Florian Coulmas (1986, 2) writes:

The fundamental difference between the two lies in the speaker perspective or point of view of the reporter. In direct speech the reporter lends his voice to the original speaker and says (or writes) what he said, thus adopting his point of view, as it were. . . . In indirect speech, on the other hand, the reporter comes to the fore. He relates a speech event as he would relate any other event: from his own point of view.

As noted by Ebert (1986, 156), however, “The idea that languages make a clear distinction between direct and indirect speech is for the most part a grammatical fiction”. Nicholas Evans (2013, 66), who quotes Ebert, substantiates this observation with rich data from all continents. What he does find useful, nonetheless, is the notion of “canonical direct speech”, which he characterises with reference to three considerations (below). It can be seen that C1 and C2 are basically about the “what” and the “how”, while C3 is about preserving “all deictically sensitive expressions”. Evans makes clear in his discussion that he intends this canonical characterisation to represent an “ideal” type which may be approximated to a greater or lesser degree by particular languages.

*Canonical direct speech* (Evans 2013, 68)

C1. Canonical direct speech reproduces the original speaker's words, or at least words that are presented as if they were original speech.

C2. Canonical direct speech includes all linguistic particularities of the original (e.g. language or dialect choice).

C3. Canonical direct speech presents all deictically sensitive expressions from the perspective of the original speaker.

This is all helpful and to the point, but from our point of view, still not sufficiently clear and specific. Ultimately, all hypotheses about human universals, even those offered as “canonical” types rather than as true generalisations, are best formulated in terms which are universal (or near-universal), as well as non-technical.

In our view, the intuition behind the claims that all languages “have direct discourse” is that all languages have words like ‘say’ and ‘speak’, and that these words can be used in sentences like ‘he/she said’, accompanied by some other words and retaining the original speaker’s ‘I’, prototypically with the intention of allowing the addressee to know both what the original speaker said and how they said it.

At least some linguists define “direct speech” in, essentially, this way (though not exactly in these terms). For example, in a typologically oriented study, Mailbert and Vanhove (2015) write: “Beja is the sole langue (sic) of our sample in which reported discourse is always direct, i.e. without a deictic shift to the perspective of the narrator: the speech is reported as told by the character”. This is illustrated with the example glossed as follows: ‘The man (says): Gosh, I have not taken any (warm) clothes!’ As we see it, the absence of the “deictic shift” here consists, above all, in the retention of the ‘I’ used by the first speaker. (This has some other consequences in the structure of the sentence, but the key factor – we would say – is the presence of that original ‘I’.)

In ‘Generalisation 1’ below, we elaborate our preliminary generalisation from the previous section to incorporate the additional aspects discussed in this section. We are prepared to propose that “direct speech”, characterised in this fashion, is a human universal. As far as we know, this generalisation is framed in fully cross-translatable words and grammar; i.e. although it is intended for linguists, and for others interested in universals of communication, it does not employ any linguistic jargon, such as ‘deictically sensitive expressions’, or other English-specific words, such as ‘reporter’ or ‘narrator’.

#### GENERALISATION 1 ABOUT “DIRECT SPEECH”

In all parts of the earth something like this often happens:

a. Someone says something to someone else.

After some time, this someone else wants some other people to know what this someone said.

At the same time this someone else wants these other people to know how this someone said it.

b. Because of this, this someone else says two things at the same time:

- one of them is “this someone said”
- the other one is the same thing as this someone said

When this someone else says it, he/she wants to say it in the same way, with the same words.

c. If one of these words was “I”, this someone else says it with the word “I”.

If this someone said it with words like “now”, “here”, “this”, this other someone says it with the same words.

We would like to draw attention to several aspects of the phrasing of ‘Generalisation 1’. First, the wording in the opening line assumes that prototypically (‘often’) it is the original addressee who repeats the original speaker’s utterance, but this doesn’t preclude other possibilities.

Second, in section (b) some new linguistic details are added: specifically, the idea that the reporting speaker approaches the task by saying two things at the same time, i.e. roughly, by producing an utterance which can be seen to consist of two parts, one of them using a speech verb (‘this someone said’) and other part being ‘the same thing as this someone said’. Note that this formulation does not require that the two sub-utterances occur in any specific order, or even that they are necessarily fully separate from one another. In Japanese, for example, which has SOV word-order, a typical example of direct speech conforming to Generalisation 1 would be as follows (Yuko Kinoshita pc). The quoted speech appears in the usual position of the syntactic object, marked by a particle *to*, and the verb for ‘said’ (*itta*) comes at the end of the sentence.

*Kanojo wa “ima ikimasu” to itta.*  
 she TOP “come in” QUOT said  
 ‘She said “come in”.’

Third, in the final line of section (b) we say that the reporting speaker ‘wants to say it in the same way, with the same words’ (as the original speaker), not that he or she does say it in the same way, with the same words. This is because, as widely noted by linguists and other commentators, the manner and the words of a reporting speaker do not necessarily have to be the same as those of the original speaker, and the reporting speaker’s addressees do not necessarily assume or expect that they will be. However, it does seem reasonable to say that the reporter’s intention appears to be to use the same manner and the same words (hence our ‘wants to’).

Finally, in section (c) there is some elaboration upon what is required in relation to intending to say it ‘in the same way, with the same words’. Firstly: ‘If one of these words was “I”, this someone else says it with the word “I”’. This component insists on preservation of the ‘I’ of the original speaker. As for the idea that “other deictically sensitive expressions”, as Evans (2013) put it, are also preserved, the final line conveys this by stating that if words like ‘now’, ‘here’, and ‘this’ were used by the original speaker, the reporting speaker uses these words too. (The specific phrasing “words like ‘now’, ‘here’, ‘this’”) allows for other deictic expressions aside from the key exemplars provided.)



This is not the end of the story of “direct speech”, for we now want to propose a second similar-yet-different generalisation, which also appears to have a strong claim to universality.

### 2.3 *A second generalisation about “direct speech”, phrased in cross-translatable words*

A second widely attested pattern across the world’s languages can be illustrated with another exchange between God and Moses. Thus, when Moses asks God about God’s name, so that he could repeat it to the “children of Israel” if they ask, God gives his mysterious answer “I AM THAT I AM” and instructs Moses how to speak to the people of Israel:

And God said unto Moses: I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. (Ex 3: 14)

The key phrase here (from our point of view) is ‘thus shalt thou say . . .’, or as one would put it in Modern English, ‘you shall speak like this’. In Tjukurpa Palya, the equivalent expression reads:

*Alatji tjanala wangka . . .*  
 like.this 3PL.LOC speak.IMP  
 ‘Speak to them like this . . .’

What we highlighting here is that throughout the Bible (and its translations into different languages of the world), other people’s speech is “reported” either in the ‘he/she said’ frame discussed in the previous section, or else in a second frame: ‘he/she spoke like this’ or ‘he/she said like this’. Is there a difference in meaning, then, between ‘he/she said: - - -’ vs. ‘he/she said like this: - -’?

It seems to us that there is, because in many utterances ‘like this’ could not be added to ‘said’. For example, when we hear that “God said, Moses Moses” (Ex. 3: 14), this could hardly be paraphrased as “God said like this: Moses, Moses” – not only in English (where the combination ‘say’ plus ‘like this’ is usually avoided), but also in languages like Russian, where *skazat* (‘say’) and *tak* (‘like this’) can combine readily in other contexts:

*Bog skazal: Moisej, Moisej!* ‘God said: Moses, Moses!’

*\*Bog tak skazal: Moisej, Moisej! !* ‘God said like this: Moses, Moses!’

The basic reason why the two frames are not always interchangeable appears to be related to the length of the quoted utterance. If this utterance is very short, the phrase ‘like this’ usually seems out of place, whereas if it is long, ‘like this’ tends to be more acceptable. The matter is not straightforward, however, and requires further investigation. We will only note two points here: first, some languages favour the use of ‘like this’ more than others, and second, some speech acts also favour it more than others.

For example, in Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus contrasts his own teaching with that of Moses, the King James Bible says, in both cases, "it hath been said," (Mt 5: 31; cf. 5: 21), which is followed by a quote, whereas Tjukurpa Palya uses, in both cases, a form of the verb *watjani* 'say' and the demonstrative adverb *alatji* ('like this'):

... *panya watjantja alatji* ... (Mt 5: 31)

*Ka alatji watjanu* ... (Mt 5: 21)

On the other hand, in verses 38 and 43, Tjukurpa Palya doesn't include *alatji* ('like this') and in some contexts, the King James Bible does include, overtly, the form 'like this', especially in instructions on what to say and how. For example, in Luke's Gospel (19: 29–31) we read:

... he sent two of the disciples, saying: 'Go into the village over against you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone *asks* you, "Why are you untying it? just say this: 'The Lord needs it.'"

This is how the Revised Standard Version tells the story; but the King James Bible says 'thus' (= 'like this'), not 'this', and the Tjukurpa Palya says *alatji* ('like this').

Notwithstanding these variations, we are prepared to posit a second hypothetical generalisation about "direct speech", based on the key expression 'say/speak like this'. As with its predecessor, Generalisation 2 is phrased in terms which are, as far as we know, entirely cross-translatable.

#### GENERALISATION 2 ABOUT "DIRECT SPEECH"

In all parts of the earth, often something like this happens:

- a. Someone says some things to someone else.  
     After some time, this someone else wants some other people to know what this someone said  
     At the same time this someone else wants these other people to know how this someone said it.
- b. Because of this, this someone else says two things, one after the other:
  - one is "this someone said/spoke like this ..."
  - the other one is the same thing as this someone said

When this someone else says it, he/she wants to say it in the same way, with the same words.

- c. If one of these words was "I", this someone else says it with the word "I".  
     If this someone said it with words like "now", "here", "this", this other someone says it with the same words.

Comparing the two scripts, it can be seen that the differences reside in sections (a) and (b). First, the opening line of section (a) above has the original speaker saying 'some things', rather than simply 'something'. This suggests a longer and more varied utterance. Second, there are several differences in the linguistic structuring

described in section (b). In Generalisation 2, it is not stated that the reporting speaker says two things at the same time, but rather that he or she ‘says two things, one after the other’. The subsequent lines make it plain that the first is ‘this someone said/spoke like this’, followed by the speaker’s rendition of ‘the same thing as this someone said’.

In positing this difference, we are moved by the fact that when the original speaker’s utterance is longer and more varied (‘some things’) it is likely to be less readily integratable into a single sentence. It will be easier for the reporting speaker to get started first by saying ‘this someone said/spoke like this’. In English, this consideration hardly counts for much, but in Japanese, it can be seen in the fact that the ‘say like this’ locution, favoured for longer quotations, generally appears to come first as a complete phrase (Yuko Kinoshita pc).

*Kanojo wa kanoyooni itta “ ..... ” (to)*  
 she TOP like. this said QUOT  
 She said like this “ ..... ”

As a final comment on Generalisation 2, note that although the component ‘when this someone else says it, he/she wants to say it in the same way, with the same words’ is the same as in the Generalisation 1 script, one naturally expects that its interpretation in the ‘speak/say like this’ script is going to be less stringent, given that the original utterance is lengthier.

## 2.4 Coda: Is the verb SAY universal?

The claim of the universality of “direct speech” hinges of course on the universal availability of a word meaning SAY. The presence of such a word in all languages has sometimes been denied, and claims have been made that in this or that language the concept of SAY is indistinguishable from the concept of THINK. We believe such claims are unfounded, and we attribute them to a failure to recognise the polysemy of the verbs in question. Our arguments (see, e.g., Wierzbicka (1994b)) cannot be repeated in full here, but we will note one fact: in a sentence glossable as ‘I say to you’ or ‘he said to her’, the verb cannot mean ‘think’. In other words, the SAY/THINKpolysemy can always be resolved by noting that the meaning SAY has a valency option ‘to say to someone’, which the meaning THINK does not have. In practice, many linguists seem to recognise as much, even though they may continue to assert the lack of any SAY vs. THINK distinction in a given language.

For example, Stef Spronck (2015, no page number) in his article ‘Refracting views: how to construct complex perspective in reported speech and thought in Ungarinyin’ writes: “Note that since Ungarinyin does not distinguish reported speech from reported thought, the represented belief may be either a thought or an expression”. As we see it, Ungarinyin does have the resources to distinguish

reported speech from reported thought, although the speakers often don't bother to make this distinction explicit. For example, in his sentence (11c) glossed as 'they said to each other', Spronck does not seem to have any doubt that the intended meaning was SAY rather than THINK. Similarly, in his sentence (16), glossed as 'They [birds] think it is good food when they see those stones [but they are not]', Spronck appears to have no doubt that the intended meaning is THINK, not SAY.

It is also interesting to note that in McGregor's work on another Australian language, Gooniyandi, to which Spronck refers, the polysemy of a verb meaning SAY, or THINK, or DO is recognised explicitly. McGregor (1990, 498) states that the particle *thaddi*, glossed as 'mistakenly believed', can apply only to 'thinking' (or, as McGregor puts it, to "beliefs about propositions"). This also seems to be the case with other Australian languages: particles or constructions glossed by linguists as "mistaken belief" disambiguate the reference to SAY or THINK in favour of THINK.

Before moving on, we would like to say something briefly about another variety of "direct speech" which is not a form of reported speech but rather, something that could perhaps be called "performative speech". What we mean is the form of speech which is epitomised by the expression 'I say to you'.

We want to posit that in all languages people can say 'I say to you' followed by some other words. This is easy to test through the translations of the New Testament, because this phrase is particularly prominent in Jesus's speech. For example, in Matthew's Gospel (Mt 16:18), where Jesus says to Peter (KJB): "and I say also unto thee, thou art Peter (and upon this rock I will build my church)"; in the Greek version, we read: *kalo de soi lego*, in the Latin Vulgate, *et ego dico tibi*, and in the Tjukurpa Palya, *kana nyuntula kulu watjani*. This is surely not "reported" speech, but in ordinary usage it would certainly be seen as "direct".

As discussed by one of the present authors (Wierzbicka 2006), in modern English the locution 'I say to you' has largely disappeared, or has been replaced by more complex phrases such as *I'm telling you*, *I put it to you*, *I would suggest to you*, *I would advise you*, *I must warn you*, and so on. But even in modern English translations of the Gospels, the phrase 'I say to you' still features prominently and is certainly understandable.

### 3 An apparent counterexample: logophoric constructions

#### 3.1 Introducing logophoric constructions

Whether or not "direct speech" is a human universal depends of course on the exact definition of this notion. A definition like that of Coulmas (1986) ("In direct speech the reported lends his voice to the original speaker . . .") is poetic but not precise enough for anyone to know how to apply it in all cases. A definition like

that proposed by Evans (2013) is more detailed, but since it is proposed merely as “canonical” (i.e. as an ideal type), it may not be helpful in particular cases. In this section, we apply our own semantic characterisations to an apparently puzzling phenomenon found in West Africa, namely, logophoric constructions.

Our main test case is provided by Birgit Hellwig’s description of the West Chadic language Goemai spoken in Nigeria. Commenting on Hellwig’s description, RMW Dixon (2006) states: “Goemai, from the Chadic family, is unusual in that there is no direct speech.” He continues as follows: “If one wants to quote what someone said then it must be done through reported (or indirect) speech, which is a complementation strategy. A set of logophoric pronouns facilitates this. As stated in section 3.4 of Chapter 9 [by Birgit Hellwig], the reported speech copies precisely what was said (including any errors).”

Before we look at the data from Goemai, however, we will introduce the topic of logophoric pronouns and their relevance to the universality of “direct speech” with a general comment and with some preliminary examples from another West African language, Ewe, and again we refer to Evans (2013). He writes (p88.):

Traditional dichotomies, (...) as we have seen, contrast direct and indirect speech as representing the viewpoint of the original speaker (in direct speech) or of the reporter (in indirect speech). However, there is a third possibility which needs to be made explicit, that of ‘biperspectival speech’, in which constructions simultaneously represent two distinct viewpoints.

Evans illustrates this “biperspectival speech” with the phenomenon of ‘logophoric’ pronouns widespread in West Africa. He provides Ewe examples (30) and (31), and comments on them as below

- (30) *Kofi be e dzo*  
 Kofi say 3SG leave  
 Kofi<sub>x</sub> said (s)he<sub>y</sub> left. [Orig. utterance: *e dzo* ‘(s)he left’]
- (31) *Kofi be yè-dzo*  
 Kofi say LOG-leave  
 Kofi<sub>x</sub> said he<sub>x</sub>-left. [Orig. utterance: *nye dzo* ‘I left’]

“The logophoric pronoun *yè-* in this example is best analysed as representing reference to a person who was the speaker in the reported speech event, but is third person in the primary speech event. To use it correctly thus involves the simultaneous calculation of person values for both the reported and primary speech events – a clear example of biperspectival speech on the person dimension” (Evans 2013, 90)

Our main question here would be: what does sentence (31) really mean, from the Ewe speakers’ point of view? (Obviously, they don’t think in terms of *x-s* and *y-s*.)

Our hypothesis is that, essentially, the logophoric pronoun in (31) means ‘I’. More precisely, we can suggest two different versions of this hypothesis, as shown in our two alternative glosses for sentence (31):

- (a) Kofi said: I left.  
 (b) Kofi said: I (he said) left.

The difference between the (a) and (b) paraphrases here turns on the following question: Is the logophoric pronoun *yè* simply an exponent of the concept ‘I’ which has to be chosen in this particular context, or can it be paraphrased in terms of ‘I’ and something else – most likely, ‘I’ and ‘he said’? If Evans (2013) is right about this being a case of “biperspectival speech on the person dimension”, then presumably version (b) is more accurate than (a).

Whichever of the two hypotheses is chosen, the key point is, as we see it, that there is no “deictic shift” in sentence (31). According to our definition of direct speech, this is still direct speech, because the original speaker’s ‘I’ is preserved in the report, albeit it might be augmented by a “parenthetical” comment couched with a word like ‘he’ or ‘he/she’. Admittedly, the word for ‘I’ used in sentence (31) is not the same word as that used in the original utterance (*nye dzo* ‘I left’). But in English, too, the concept ‘I’ has two different exponents, *I* and *me*, used in different contexts, and this fact alone does not show that ‘me’ and ‘I’ are two different concepts. Thus, what we want to suggest for Ewe is that the logophoric speaker pronoun *yè* is either another word for ‘I’ (in Ewe, *nye*) or possibly that it is a word for ‘I’ semantically augmented by a mini-clause meaning ‘he/she said’.

After this brief introduction to logophoricity and to Evans’ idea of “biperspectival speech”, we can return to the question of direct speech in Goemai.

### 3.2 “Direct speech” in Goemai

As mentioned, Dixon (2006) states that “there is no direct speech in Goemai”, and, in the same breath, that in Goemai “the reported speech copies precisely what was said (including any errors)”. But if the reported speech copies precisely what was said (including any errors), why is it not direct speech? It would appear that on Evans’ (2013) definition it would be direct speech, because for the most part it reproduces the original speaker’s words.

From the present point of view, however, the more pertinent question is this: does Goemai fit our proposed definition of “direct speech” (either Generalisation 1 or Generalisation 2)? To seek the answer to this question, we need to turn to Birgit Hellwig’s (2006) chapter and indeed, to her full grammar of Goemai (Hellwig 2011).

In a section of her article entitled ‘Reported speech’, Hellwig (2006) writes:

The morpheme *yi* ~ *yin* ‘SAY’ is used to introduce reported speech (as in (18a) and (18b). Throughout the reported speech, speakers have to indicate coreference with speaker, addressee, or neither, making use of a system of logophoric and non-logophoric pronouns illustrated in Table 4.

The relevant part of table 4 referred to in this quote looks like this:

	speaker logophoric	addressee logophoric
sgm	<i>ji</i>	<i>gwa</i>
sgf	<i>doe</i>	<i>pa</i>
pl	<i>du</i>	<i>nwa</i>

From our point of view, the crucial question arising from this table is this: what do the logophoric pronouns listed here mean? In answer to this question, we offer, first of all, the following hypothesis (in line with what we have already suggested for Ewe): The singular “speaker logophoric” pronouns *ji* and *doe* mean, essentially, ‘I’, and the plural “speaker logophoric” *du* means, essentially, ‘we’. The singular “addressee logophoric” pronouns *gwa* and *pa* mean, essentially, ‘you’ (“thou”), and the plural “addressee logophoric” *nwa* means, essentially, ‘you’ (“you all”). We will now test this hypothesis against Hellwig’s key examples (18a) and (18b) (as glossed by Hellwig).

- (18) (a) *k'wal yin gwa<sub>A</sub> goe tu ji<sub>O</sub>*  
 talk SAY sgm.log.ad OBLIG kill(SG) sgm. log. sp  
 ‘(He<sub>1</sub>) said that he<sub>2</sub> should kill him<sub>1</sub>.’
- (b) *yin does yââl m-mat goe*  
 SAY sgf.log.sp rise(SG) NOMZ-sgf.log. sp.POSS COMMIT  
*sh'aat doe*  
 wing sgf.log.sp.POSS  
 ‘(She<sub>1</sub> said) that she<sub>1</sub> rises on her<sub>1</sub> own with her<sub>1</sub> wings.’

The glosses with which sentences (18a) and (18b) are provided appear to suggest that the ‘I’ of the original speaker has disappeared and has been replaced by words meaning ‘he’ and ‘she’. If these glosses were faithful to the Goemai meanings, we would have to agree that these sentences do not constitute “direct speech” (according to our definitions) and if this reporting strategy is indeed the only mechanism for quoting speech, one would indeed be forced to conclude, with Dixon, that Goemai has no direct speech, and consequently that direct speech is not a human universal.

We do not agree with either of these conclusions, however. Consider Hellwig’s carefully phrased statement in full, together with her additional examples (19a), (19b), and (19c):

The strategy above is the only available mechanism for quoting speech, i.e. whenever quoting speech, Goemai speakers need to select the appropriate logophoric and non-logophoric pronouns. Aside from this change in pronouns, the reported speech remains identical to the original: errors are quoted (e.g. in (19a), the childish form *oelem* is used in place of the correct form *oerem* ‘beans’), time reference is from the point of view of the original speaker (19b), and interjections are frequently attested (19c).

- (19) (a) *ji<sub>A</sub>*                                      *t'al*                                      *oelemo*  
 sgm.log.sp                                      pluck(SG)                                      beans  
 '(He<sub>1</sub> said that) he<sub>1</sub> plucked the beans.'
- (b) *dyen*                      *k'wal*                      *yin*                      *d'in*                                      *jis*                                      *wul*  
 PAST.YEST                      talk                      SAY                      PAST.CLOSE                      sgm.log.sp                      arrive  
*m-b'itlung*  
 LOC-morning  
 '(He<sub>1</sub>) said yesterday that he<sub>1</sub> arrived earlier today (i.e. he arrived  
 yesterday from the perspective of the current speaker).'
- (c) *yin*                      *to /*                                      *hai*                                      *pa<sub>A</sub>*                                      *goe*                                      *dap*  
 say                      okay                                      hey                                      sgf.log.ad                                      OBLIG                                      slap  
*yin*                      *to /*                                      *hai*                                      *gwa<sub>A</sub>*                                      *goe*                                      *k'wak*.  
 SAY                      okay                                      hey                                      sgm.log.ad                                      OBLIG                                      hit  
 '(He<sub>1</sub> said) that, okay, hey, she<sub>2</sub> should slap (him).'  
 (She<sub>1</sub> said) that, okay, hey, he<sub>2</sub> should hit (her).'

Hellwig's statement and the additional examples make it clear that the form of reported speech discussed here is meant to preserve not only the "what" of the original utterance, but also the "how". (This is in marked contrast to another form of reported speech available in Goemai, where the original utterance is reported in a syntactically distinct type of complement clause. As Hellwig (2006: 219) puts it: "in that case, the complement clause reports the fact that was uttered – it does not constitute a faithful representation of the actual utterance").

But if in the first, logophoric, strategy, the report preserves both "the what" and "the how", and constitutes a "faithful representation of the actual utterance", how can it really involve a shift in pronouns, from 'I' (and 'you') to 'he' and 'she'?

On our interpretation of the facts described by Hellwig, no such shift from 'I' and 'you' to 'he' and 'she' occurs (in sentences of the relevant type), as illustrated in our glosses (below) for the sentences (18a), (18b), (19a), (19b), and (19c):

- 18a. He said, you should kill me.  
 18b. She said, I rise on my own wings.  
 19a. He said, I plucked the beans.  
 19b. He said yesterday, I arrived earlier today.  
 19c. He (she) said, okay, hey, you should kill me.

As we have seen, Hellwig provides different glosses for the quotes in these sentences, framed in terms of 'he' and 'she' (reinforced with numerical indices), rather than in terms of 'you' and 'I', as we have done. For example, for (18a) she provides the following gloss, phrased partly in English and partly in Formalese, using so-called referential indices: '(he<sub>1</sub>) said that he<sub>2</sub> should kill him<sub>1</sub>'. This is a linguistic formula which indicates (to linguists) that the second word glossed as 'he' refers to the speaker, and the first to someone else. But what does the sentence mean to ordinary speakers and to ordinary hearers, who don't think in terms of



“referential indices”? In other words, how can this sentence be glossed in ordinary language, rather than in a mixture of English and Formalese?

Having tried various combinations of words such as ‘the same person’, ‘another person’, ‘someone else’, we have come to the conclusion that, given all the information provided by Hellwig, the only plausible gloss in ordinary English is one framed in terms of ‘you’ and ‘I’, as we have suggested: ‘He said: you should kill me’. We hypothesise that this is precisely what the sentence means to Goemai speakers too. Yes, the words used in this sentence for ‘I’ and ‘you’ are not the same as the words for ‘I’ and ‘you’ in other contexts: they are special exponents for ‘you’ and ‘I’ to be used in “reported speech”. Nonetheless, these words do not mean ‘the same person’ and ‘someone else’ (let alone ‘someone other than the speaker’ and ‘someone the same as the speaker’), but rather ‘I’ and ‘you’ – or possibly, ‘I’ and ‘you’ somewhat augmented, as we will discuss now.

We have proposed before that the “speaker logophoric” pronouns *ji* and *doe*, which Hellwig describes as “sgm” (singular masculine) and “sgf” (singular feminine), both mean, essentially, ‘I’. Now we want to nuance this proposal by suggesting that *ji* means, in full, ‘I (he said)’ and *doe*, ‘I (she said)’. Similarly, we have proposed that both *gwa* and *pa* mean, essentially, ‘you’. Now we want to nuance this proposal by suggesting that *gwa* means in fact ‘you (someone said to him)’, and *pa*, ‘you (someone said to her)’. Continuing in the same vein, we propose that *du* means ‘we (they said)’, and *nwa* ‘you all (someone said to them)’. So here are our adjusted natural-language glosses for Hellwig’s sentences 18a, b, and 19a, b, and c:

- 18a. He said, you (he said to him) should kill me (he said).
- 18b. She said, I (she said) rise myself (she said), on my own (she said) wings.
- 19a. He said, I (he said) plucked the beans.
- 19b. He said yesterday, I (he said) arrived this morning.
- 19c. He said, okay, hey, you (he said to her) should slap (me).

### 3.3 *Further discussion: the semantics and cultural motivations of logophoric speech*

The idea that logophoric reporting of speech is peppered with little “tag messages” like ‘he said’, ‘she said’, ‘he said to him’, and so on (in addition to simple ‘I’ and ‘you’), may seem strange and implausible to speakers of European languages, but in West African languages, it may be entirely plausible, given the cultural importance of “triadic communication”. In his mind-opening paper ‘Grammar and cultural practices: the grammaticalization of triadic communication in West African languages’, Felix Ameka (2004) writes:

The use of intermediaries in West Africa to channel information between an addressor and an addressee in communicative interaction is well documented in the ethnographic literature and is evident to the most casual observer. Similarly, logophoricity – the use of distinct

pronouns or verbal markers to signal or report the speech, thoughts, wants, desires etc. of an individual other than the speaker – has been described for many West African languages. In addition, epistemological particles with functions similar to the logophoric markers exist in some of the languages (...) I argue that logophoric marking and other forms of responsibility attribution devices found in West African languages are an embodiment in the grammars of the cultural preoccupation with third party communication in the area.

Ameka is aware that there are logophoric languages, including Goemai and other Chadic languages, in which triadic communication is restricted to formal or ritual situations, or even lacking altogether. But he comments: “given such a cultural disposition of the communities, it is plausible to see how logophoric marking systems can either be innovated language internally or developed through metatypy or grammatical construction borrowing”.

In a highly informative overview ‘Personal deixis and reported discourse: Towards a typology of person alignment’, Tatiana Nikitina (2012a) makes another suggestion. Noting that although the “special encoding of reported interlocutors” is attested in other parts of the world, West Africa is unusual in its high concentration of logophoric languages, Nikitina asks whether it could be motivated by shared cultural practices. Her suggestion is: “its popularity could be related to the highly interactive practice of narrative performance widespread throughout West and Central Africa” (Nikitina 2012a: 259). In this type of traditional story-telling, the distinction between the performer/narrator and the characters is often blurred. A single narrator “typically ‘inhabits’ the roles of characters that in the Western theatre are assigned to different actors, i.e. associated with different 1<sup>st</sup> person referents ... [this] may contribute ... to the development of specialized means for distinguishing reported speakers from the narrator in those parts of the narrative where the distinction needs to be drawn”.

Nikitina’s and Ameka’s suggestions are of course not incompatible with one another: both may be contributory to the development of grammatical means for encoding of the information ‘he said’, ‘she said’ in combination with ‘I’, in order to avoid confusion as to who is saying something, and to whom. [Note <sup>1</sup>] Dimmendaal (2001) provides another potential motivation, pointing out that logophoric devices provide speakers with a way to engage in “evidential hedging”.

We adduce two final Goemai examples to make the case for our analysis. The first comes from Hellwig’s text (87). She glosses the logophoric speaker and addressee pronouns as ‘he<sub>1</sub>’ and ‘he<sub>2</sub>’, respectively, as in (a) below. Our gloss of the same text, as in (b) below, takes a first-person perspective and is of course free of numerical indices, which cannot be part of the indigenous meaning.

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<sup>1</sup>It could be objected that our analysis of *ji* as ‘I (he said)’ and *doe*, as ‘I (she said)’ depends on a lexical distinction between ‘he’ and ‘she’, which Goemai doesn’t have. Among non-logophoric pronouns there is a gender distinction only in 2SG, not in 3SG. This matter requires further investigation. One possibility is that it is the reported speaker’s status as a man or as a woman which is being indexed, rather than gender per se. If so, paraphrases such as ‘I (this someone, a man, said)’ and ‘I (this someone, a woman, said)’ would be appropriate.

- (a) ‘(He<sub>1</sub>) said, . . . He<sub>1</sub> doesn’t have a thing to over his<sub>1</sub> body with it, nothing. He<sub>1</sub> doesn’t have anything. Because of this, he<sub>1</sub> wants to die. He<sub>2</sub> should kill him<sub>1</sub>.’
- (b) ‘He said. . . I (he said) don’t have a thing to cover my body with it, nothing; I (he said) don’t have anything; because of this, I (he said) want to die. You (he said to him) should kill me.’

Comparing two glosses, it seems apparent that the significance of the addressee logophoric in the final sentence has been lost in Hellwig’s third-person glosses. Even if the identity of ‘he<sub>1</sub>’ as speaker can be inferred from the matching indices, the notation ‘he<sub>2</sub>’ does not convey that this is the reported speaker’s addressee, i.e. his ‘you’.

As a final vindication of our analysis of Goemai, we note Hellwig’s example (87b), where a man is talking to himself using the logophoric speaker pronoun:

- (87) (b) *Yàm-nùùn*                      *Gòelóng*                      *yóól/*                      *wúl.*  
 son(SG): GEN-mother              <NAME>                      rise(SG)                      arrive  
 <*Jì=muààn*                      *jì=ná*                      *k’én*  
 SGM.LOG.SP.S=go(SG)              SGM.LOG.SP.S=see              maternal.relative(SG)  
*jì.*><sub>SPEECH</sub>  
 SGM.LOG.SP.POSS  
 ‘The brother of Goelong rose (and) arrived. (He<sub>1</sub> said to himself) he<sub>1</sub> goes (and) sees his<sub>1</sub> sister’s child.’

According to Hellwig’s gloss, the man, in his own thoughts, refers to himself as ‘he’ (or, more precisely, as ‘he<sub>1</sub>’). This seems to us entirely implausible. Here is our own proposed gloss: ‘The brother of Goelong rose (and) arrived. He said to himself: I will go (and) see my sister’s child.’

The analysis proposed here is of course hypothetical. As far as we know, however, this is the only analysis on offer which stays within the limits of natural language (no Formalese), and which (we presume) could be expressed in an African language, including Ewe and in Goemai, as well as in English. We conclude that the use of logophoric pronouns is a special strategy which also constitutes “direct speech”, in the sense that the original speaker’s perspective is preserved in the report. That being the case, direct speech (as we have defined it) appears to be indeed a human universal. [Note <sup>2</sup>] In any case, the apparent counterexample of logophoric speech in Goemai in indeed more apparent than real.

<sup>2</sup>Is it strictly true that there is no reported speech in Goemai which preserves the original speaker’s ‘I’ (and ‘you’) in a plain, non-logophoric form? For example, when God says to Moses in the Bible: “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:14), is it not possible for the words ‘I’ and ‘you’ to be given in their plain, non-logophoric form? We turned with this question to Birgit Hellwig, and received the following reply (p.c. 18/07/2017): “I just checked. There’s only a translation of the Gospel of Mark, but it seems that equivalent passages are always rendered as direct speech with 1sg, e.g. in Mark 12:26, *Hen ta Naan mmuk Abaraham. Naan mmuk Aizik, nda Naan mmuk Jekop.* [1SGEMPH God of Abraham. God of Isaac and God of

The fundamental point is that any definition of “direct speech” hinges on matters of meaning, rather than form. On our analysis, the speaker-logophoric in Goemai does mean ‘I’ (no matter how this ‘I’ is marked and whether or not it is semantically augmented by some phrase like ‘he/she said’). Universal semantic primes – in this case, SAY and I – allow us to capture cross-linguistic generalisations that may be lost if form is not consistently distinguished from meaning and if meaning is not determined on the basis of explicit and generally applicable criteria.

## 4 The semantics of “indirect speech”

What, then, is “indirect speech”? Definitions abound, of course, but in practice different linguists appear to use this term in different senses, and consequently, it is often not clear whether they agree with one another, or what exactly they agree or disagree about. In this section, we will not propose any universal, or even canonical, definition of indirect speech. We will, however, provide a semantic analysis of the familiar *say that* . . . construction in English and other European languages. One consistent theme in our discussion is the importance of paraphrase as a tool and a touchstone. To begin with, we will illustrate not with the *say that* . . . construction, but with a discussion of some “quotative” particles, which are regarded by some as a variety of indirect speech.

### 4.1 Initial discussion: “quotative” particles

To start with an example from the Australian language Yankunytjatjara, McGregor (1994) adduces a sentence [his 36] with a “quotative particle” from Goddard’s (1985) grammar of Yankunytjatjara and comments: “There is no obvious reason why such phenomena should be treated as anything but indirect reports in which the frame is a single morpheme rather than a full clause.” The sentence in question (with Goddard’s original glosses) reads:

- (36) *kaa kunyu tali-nguru ngara-la nyaku-la nyangu*  
 CONTR QUOT sandhill-from stand-SERIAL see-SERIAL saw  
 ‘According to the story, they had been watching from the sandhills and finally saw something.’ (Goddard 1985: 391)

According to McGregor’s grammatical criteria, this may indeed be a case of an “indirect report”. Our question, however, is not about the grammar of reported

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Jacob.]” If so, Goemai does have a mode of “direct speech” in which the original speaker’s ‘I’ is preserved in form as well as in meaning, albeit that it may be limited in use. The matter requires further investigation.

speech, but the semantics of it – that is, the meaning of the sentence as seen from the speakers’ perspective. The term “quotative particle” is of course only a linguist’s place-holder. The real question is: what does *kunyu* mean; that is, what does it mean to the insiders? More specifically, how can its meaning be paraphrased in cross-translatable words, with equivalents in Yankunytjatjara itself?

Attempting to answer this question, we will first adduce a fuller comment from Goddard’s (1985) Grammar, and three further examples (Goddard’s original numbers):

*kunyu* QUOTative is a strictly second-position free particle which attributes a statement or position to someone other than the speaker. It is frequently found in Dreaming stories (for instance Text 11), in other contexts where for various reasons the speaker wishes not to be held personally responsible for a statement as in (9-64) and (10-24), to relay orders or suggestions as in (9-65) and (10-2), and to report children’s ‘pretend’ games as in (9-66).

9-64 *kaa kunyu Pitjantjatjara kutjikiti, nyiri*  
 CONTR QUOT Pitjantjatjara(NOM) well off(NOM) paper(NOM)  
*pulka-ri-ngu*  
 big-INCHO-PAST  
 ‘And it can be said that Pitjantjatjara is well off. Its literacy materials (paper) have got big.’

9-65 *paka-la kunyu!*  
 get up-IMP QUOT  
 ‘Someone says get up!’

9-66 *nyanytju kunyu*  
 horse(NOM) QUOT  
 ‘It’s a horse according to him’ (said of a boy playing ‘horsies’ with a dog).

Perhaps the most plausible paraphrase which could fit all these examples would be: ‘someone says this, not me’. The details could be discussed further, but what matters to us most in this context is the principle: the authentic indigenous meaning of a sentence can be best portrayed by means of a cross-translatable paraphrase, substitutable in context.

We would note that this point that this approach to “quotative” and “evidential” particles was developed in more detail in Wierzbicka’s (1994a) paper ‘Semantics and epistemology: The meaning of “evidentials” in a cross-linguistic perspective’, and later in her 1996 book *Semantics: Primes and Universals*. We would like to take this opportunity to revise one aspect of those earlier analyses. For the Quotative marker *-do* in Quechua and Hearsay marker *-ke* in Wintu, respectively, the following explicatory formulas were previously proposed:

Quechua *-do* (Quotative)

I say this because someone else said this

I don’t say: I know it

Wintu *-ke* (Hearsay)

someone says this

I don't say: I know it

It now appears to us that the references to 'knowing' ('I don't say: I know it') in these formulae may have come from the pressure of linguistic terms like "evidential" and "epistemic" and also, from the influence of genuinely experiential markers, referring to what the speaker does know on the basis of personal experience, e.g. 'I know it because I saw it'. For markers based on the speech of others, a disclaimer in the form 'someone says it, not me' (rather than 'I don't say: I know it') may be more justifiable.

From a methodological point of view, the principle is as follows: in order to pin down the indigenous meaning we need to try various paraphrases which are couched in cross-translatable words and are substitutable in context.

## 4.2 *The semantics of the 'say that' construction*

The New Testament is a very useful text for studying reported speech cross-linguistically because having been translated fully or partially into thousands of languages, it gives an excellent database of comparable material.

The first striking fact is that whatever Jesus is reported as saying in the Gospels is rendered almost exclusively in "direct speech". For example, looking at Mark's Gospel, which has been translated most widely, in chapter after chapter we find passages like the following ones in chapter 1: "And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mk 1: 17); "And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." (Mk 1: 38); "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will: be thou clean." (Mk 1: 41).

The question which we need to ask now is this: how does the transformation of an original 'say: - - -' sentence into a 'say that' one change the meaning of that original sentence? We can consider this question in relation to another biblical example. In Matthew's Gospel (Mt 16: 14, KJB), Jesus asks his disciples: "Whom do men say that I Son of Man am?" The disciples reply: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist . . .". Having considered various possible alternatives (to be discussed shortly), we have come to the conclusion that the most plausible rendition of the meaning of this sentence is this:

*Semantic explication for a sample 'say that . . . ' sentence*

Some say that thou art John the Baptist =

Some people say this about you: you are John the Baptist.

Presumably, the original sentence being uttered by some people meant something like 'He is John the Baptist'. The English report phrased in terms of *say that* extracts from that original sentence two semantic elements: the topic ('you') and what is said about it: '(you) are John the Baptist'. The wording of the original sentence, and the

manner of speech are not at issue in this report, and only these two elements are kept: “what was said” and “about what it was said”. In proposing this interpretation of ‘*say that ...*’ sentences, we are following Bakhtin’s insight crystallised in the statement: “Analysis is the heart and soul of indirect discourse” (Vološinov 1973[1930], 129). The “analysis” here consists of extracting these two elements from the original utterance and disregarding anything to do with the “how”.

Bakhtin explains his idea more fully in the following passage, in which he tries to formulate “the linguistic essence of indirect discourse”:

That essence consists in the analytical transmission of someone’s speech. An analysis simultaneous with and inseparable from transmission constitutes the obligatory hallmark of all reifications of indirect discourse whatever. (. . .)

The analytical tendency of indirect discourse is manifested by the fact that all the emotive-affective features of speech, in so far as they are expressed not in the content but in the form of a message, do not pass intact into indirect discourse. They are translated from form into content, and only in that shape do they enter into the construction of indirect discourse, or are shifted to the main clause as a commentary modifying the *verbum dicendi*. (1970[1930], 128)

One obvious different between the “direct” (*said*: - - -) and the “indirect” (*said that ...*) modes of reporting is the much wider range of the former, because *say that* cannot be used with questions, commands, or exclamations. For example, when Jesus says in Mark’s chapter 1: “Let us go into the other towns that I may preach there also”, this cannot be reported as “He said that let us go into the other towns”. It appears that somebody’s utterance can be reported in the *said that ...* frame only if this person ‘says something about something’: i.e. the frame itself appears to promise an analysis into ‘what is said’ and ‘what it is said about’.

Before discussing further the specifics of this analysis, we will test it against four other New Testament examples of *say that ...* reports (in the versions in the Good News Bible (GNB)).

- “The scripture says that the Messiah will be a descendent of King David and will be born in Bethlehem, the town where David lived.” (J 7:41, GNB; this follows a discussion about the Messiah.)

*Proposed analysis:*

The scripture says this about the Messiah: he will be a descendent of King David and will be born in Bethlehem, the town where David lived.

- “He says that we will look for him but will not find him, and that we cannot go where he will be.” (J 7:36, GNB)

*Proposed analysis:*

He says this about us: we will look for him but will not find him, we cannot go where he will be.

- Jesus replied, “you are right when you say [that] you haven’t got a husband.” (J 4: 17, GNB).

*Proposed analysis:*

Jesus replied, “you are right when you say this [about it]: you haven’t got a husband”. (Cf. J 8:53 NRSV)

- You say that whoever obeys your teaching will never die. (J 8:57, GNB; in the original, direct speech)

*Proposed analysis:*

You say this about your teaching: whoever obeys it (your teaching) will never die.

It seems to us that as tested against these multiple examples, our proposed analysis works quite well. But perhaps there are other, alternative, analyses which would work even better? Trying to answer this question, we will now consider four alternative analyses, starting with Davidson's (1968). As the example against which to test them we will use the initial one, "Some say that you are John the Baptist". Presumably, the closest paraphrase that Davidson would suggest (if he were to suggest a paraphrase in the spirit of the present discussion) would have to look like one or other of the following possibilities:

- (a) Some people say something about you; if we want to say the same now, we can say this: you are John the Baptist.
- (a') Some people say something about you; we can say the same now if we say this: you are John the Baptist.

It seems to us that as putative paraphrases, neither of these really works. The paraphrase proposed by us, without the detour about 'saying the same', is shorter, simpler and more intelligible: 'some people say this about you: you are John the Baptist'. The key phrase 'say this' is needed in Davidson's putative paraphrase, too, and the addition of 'we(Apostles) saying the same' strikes us (the authors of the present paper) as implausible in context, as well as unnecessary.

More seriously, it could be proposed that the phrase 'say this' in our analysis should be replaced with 'say something like this', as in (b) below, or else that it should be augmented as either 'say this, not in these words', as in (c) below, or 'say this, not in this way', as in (d) below.

- (b) Some people say something like this about you: you are John the Baptist.
- (c) Some people say this about you, not in these words: you are John the Baptist.
- (d) Some people say this about you, not in this way: you are John the Baptist.

The apparent advantage of these alternative paraphrases would be that they all openly signal a change in the "how" of the original utterance. On closer inspection, however, this seems to be a dubious advantage. For example, when the disciples say to Jesus: "Some (people) say that you are John the Baptist", they clearly don't mean that people 'say something like this': what they want to communicate to Jesus is that some people identify him as John the Baptist, not that 'they say something like this (about him)'. Furthermore, the form of the original utterance doesn't have to be changed for that utterance to be reported in the *say that* frame. For example, in John's Gospel (4:23) Jesus says to the Samaritan woman: 'God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' This could be easily put into the *say that* frame without any change in the wording, as follows: 'Jesus said that God is spirit and that those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth'.



We conclude therefore that our initial proposed analysis for the *say that* ... construction, i.e. ‘someone says this about X: - - -’, is superior to the alternatives.

If we now compare our two accounts, the direct speech one (as in John’s Gospel) and the indirect speech one (as in our reporting version), the comparison would look like this:

“Direct speech”

Jesus said: God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

*Our proposed analysis:* the same as above.

“Indirect speech”

Jesus said that God is spirit and that those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

*Our proposed analysis:*

Jesus said this about God: God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

The difference between the direct and indirect versions lies in that fact that in the indirect version, the content has been analysed into a topic and what is said about it (i.e., in the expressions *said this*: ... and *said about* ...), with no implication that the reporter tried to preserve the “how”.

Not all languages have “indirect speech”, in the sense of a sentence structure with same meaning as the *say that* ... construction. In many languages people don’t analyse other people’s utterances into a topic and what is said about the topic, don’t abstract from the “how” of the original utterance, and don’t replace the original speaker’s ‘I’ with something other than ‘I’ (cf. e.g. Healy 1964; Malibert and Vanhove 2015). On the other hand, as shown by Evans (2013), Nikitina (2012a, 2012b) and others, there is a great variety of different non-direct constructions available in the world’s languages. It is only “direct speech” (as defined here) which can be said to be a human universal.

## 5 Concluding remarks

To conclude, we return briefly to Bakhtin’s comments on the “pivotal” character of reported speech, and to the broad Bakhtinian themes of dialogism, heteroglossia and polyphony. As Bakhtin saw it, the human environment is constituted largely by other people’s speech, and by other people’s voices. Yes, we live in certain places, among people and things (including rocks, trees, buildings, etc.), but we also live, to a very large extent, among other people’s utterances: they are the stuff of our daily life, our dreams, memories, thoughts, and stories, the fabric of our mental, emotional and social lives. The languages of the world have developed various ways of dealing with this material, and these ways are largely culture-dependent: they depend on literacy, technology, education, literature, and all types of cultural transmission. They also depend on the conceptual equipment of our minds.

As authors of this paper, we assume that linguistic, and especially cross-linguistic, investigations can throw a great deal of light on both the variable and the invariable aspects of people's attention to, and interest in, the speech of others; and we submit that, here as elsewhere, a semantic approach, anchored in shared human concepts and the shared core of grammar, needs to be part of these investigations. To sum up, in a telegraphic style, the main hypotheses presented in this paper, we will mention three points.

First, all languages appear to have resources for quoting other people's speech. What we mean by this is that all languages have a word (a verb) encoding, in one of its meanings, the indefinable concept SAY, with a valency option which allows this word to introduce a quotation: 'he/she said: - - -'; and this basic frame can be extended to include an addressee: 'he/she said to someone: - - -'. Second, all languages appear to have resources for approximating other people's speech, that is, they allow the verb meaning SAY (or SPEAK) to combine with a phrase (or a word) meaning 'like this', i.e. in the frame 'he/she said/spoke like this . . .'. Third, all languages appear to allow the verb meaning SAY to be used in the frame 'I say to you', followed by some other words (what we have provisionally termed "performative speech"), perhaps for the purpose of drawing someone's special attention to what the speaker is saying.

Beyond these commonalities (and a few others, which can't be discussed here), there is a great deal of cross-linguistic diversity, often emblematic of cultural diversity. Investigating that diversity from a semantic point of view remains a challenge.

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# Reporting Conditionals with Modals



Magdalena Sztencel and Sarah E. Duffy

**Abstract** Conditionals and modals work in tandem in some instances of practical reasoning, or decision making. Consider the following example (from Kratzer 2012):

- a. I want to become a mayor.
- b. (*q*) I will become a mayor *only if* (*p*) I go to the pub.
- c. Therefore, I *should* go to the pub.

Given what the cogniser wants (a) and the relevant circumstances (b), the conclusion that the cogniser goes to the pub comes out as necessary. Hence, the presence of the necessity modal *should* in (c). Indeed, given the context of (a), the necessity modal in (c) is simply a reflection of the necessity of *p* for *q*, which is overtly represented by the use of the ‘only if *p, q*’ construction. This chapter looks into whether indirect reports of conditionals – in particular, indirect reports which involve the use of a modal verb – are sensitive to the necessity of *p* for *q* in cases where necessity is *not* overtly represented in a conditional, as in ‘if *p, q*’ formulations.

We report on two online experiments into the relation between (i) perceived necessity or sufficiency of the truth of a conditional antecedent for the truth of the consequent, and (ii) the formulation of an indirect report of a conditional with necessity or possibility modals (*have to, should, could*). In Experiment 1, the ‘necessity/sufficiency of *p* for *q*’ variable was manipulated by contextually altering the number of alternative antecedents (e.g. Cummins et al. 1991; Thompson 1994; Politzer 2003). It was found that modals used in indirect reports of ‘if *p, q*’ conditionals co-vary with the number of alternative antecedents in predictable ways. This suggests that modals used in indirect reports of ‘if *p, q*’ conditionals may be

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a diagnostic for biconditional versus material interpretations of conditionals. The aim of Experiment 2 was to find out whether the results of Experiment 1 could be replicated in contexts which lower/eliminate the believability of the conditionals. It was found that manipulating the believability variable has no reliable effect on the results.

**Keywords** Conditionals · biconditional interpretation · material interpretation · modals · indirect reports · alternative antecedents · relevant circumstances · believability of conditionals

## 1 Introduction

An indirect speech report is an event  $e'$  which transmits knowledge about some prior event  $e$  (e.g. Capone 2013, 2016). In particular, in an indirect report a reporting speaker  $S'$  uses an utterance  $U'$  to report on the utterance  $U$  made by the original, or reported, speaker  $S$ . The choice of  $U'$  by  $S'$  is sensitive to the (cognitive) context of  $U$  and  $U'$  and, all things being equal, results in a belief attribution by the hearer of the indirect report ( $H'$ ) to  $S$  (e.g. Wilson 2000; Capone 2016; Cummins 2016).

For  $S'$  to succeed in transmitting knowledge about  $e$  to  $H'$ , the relation between  $U$  and  $U'$  in indirect reports needs to be that of pragmatic same-saying; that is,  $U$  and  $U'$  need not be the same in terms of linguistic form, but they need to (sufficiently, for the purposes of the current exchange) match in terms of contextually-accessible level of speaker meaning (e.g. Cresswell 2000; Capone 2013, 2016; Wieland 2016).

In this chapter, we look at whether modalised indirect reports of 'if  $p$ ,  $q$ ' conditionals are sensitive to the contextually-accessible necessity versus sufficiency of  $p$  for  $q$ . If pragmatic same-saying is at stake in the formulation of  $U'$ , then we should observe a correlation between, on the one hand, (i) perceived necessity or sufficiency of the truth of a conditional antecedent for the truth of the consequent, and, on the other, (ii) the formulation of an indirect report of a conditional with necessity or possibility modals (*have to*, *should*, *could*). We also look at whether there is a correlation between (i) and (ii) in contexts in which it is assumed that  $S'$  is not sure about or does not believe in the truth of  $U$ . The results of this experiment will shed light on whether a communicatively successful indirect report – i.e. one in which knowledge about  $e$  is transmitted to  $H'$  – is necessarily tantamount to a belief attribution by  $H'$  to  $S$ .

## 2 Conditionals and modals

It is well known that conditionals and modals are related (e.g. Clancy et al. 1997; Beller 2008; Kolodny & MacFarlane 2010; Schulz 2010; Kratzer 2012; Over et al. 2013; Krzyżanowska et al. 2013). This relationship is most obvious in the so-

called explicitly modalised conditionals, where a modal expression is (typically) present in the consequent clause of the conditional. Kratzer (2012: 28) argues that the antecedent clauses of modalised conditionals often serve to restrict such modal expressions. Consider the following:

- 1) If a wolf entered the house, he must have eaten grandma, since she was bedridden. He might have eaten the girl with the red cap, too. In fact, that's rather likely. The poor little thing wouldn't have been able to defend herself.

The first sentence in example (1) shows that the *if*-clause can restrict the modal expression overtly represented in the consequent of the same conditional sentence (here: *must*). The successive sentences in this example show that the *if*-clause can also restrict modal expressions in subsequent discourse (here: *might*, *rather likely*, and *would*).

However, *if*-clauses can also restrict a modal which is not overtly represented in the consequent, as illustrated by the following example (from Zvolenszky 2002, cited in Kratzer 2012: 106):

- 2) If Britney Spears drinks Coke in public, she must drink Coke in public.

The most natural interpretation of (2) is one in which, if Britney Spears drinks Coke in public, then it must be the case that she must/is obliged to drink Coke in public. This interpretation involves both epistemic (must be the case that) and deontic (must/is obliged to) modalities. This indicates that example (2) is doubly modalised even though only one of the modals is overtly represented in the sentence.

The relation between conditionality and modality is also evidenced by some instances of practical reasoning, or decision making. Kratzer (2012: 62) considers the following example:

- 3)
  - a. I want to become a mayor.
  - b. I will become a mayor only if I go to the pub.
  - c. Therefore, I should go to the pub.

Kratzer argues that there are two types of hidden assumptions which underlie this line of reasoning: (i) a *modal base*, which is 'a function  $f$  that maps a world  $w$  to the set of propositions that correspond to the relevant circumstances in  $w$ '; and (ii) an *ordering source*, which 'maps a possible world  $w$  to the set of propositions that correspond to what I want in  $w$ '. In example (3), the relevant circumstances are such that *I will become a mayor only if I go to the pub* and what I want is *to become a mayor*. With respect to this particular modal base and ordering source, the proposition that *I go to the pub* is necessary. On the assumption that *should* is a necessity modal (Kratzer 2012: 62), the modal base and ordering source analysis dictates the formulation of the conclusion in (3) with *should*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>If necessity is at stake here, a formulation with *must* or *have to* would be equally acceptable.

The relation between the type of modality (necessity or possibility) which arises from the modal base and ordering source, on the one hand, and the modal expression used in the formulation of the conclusion, on the other, brings us to the subject matter of the current chapter. In Kratzer's example, this relation is obvious: the relevant circumstances are such that the truth of  $p$  (*I go to the pub*) is necessary for the truth of  $q$  (*I will become a mayor*) and, indeed, this necessity is overtly represented by the use of *only if* in (3b).<sup>2</sup> Hence, the choice of a necessity modal, like *should*.

However, necessity need not be overt in the formulation of the antecedent, yet it will influence the choice of the formulation of the conclusion in practical reasoning. For example, let us imagine that a researcher wants to falsify his colleague's hypothesis and speculates that, if ( $p$ ) he runs a search on a mega corpus of data, then ( $q$ ) it is likely that his colleague's hypothesis will be falsified. The researcher has always found the corpus method reliable and he assumes that, given that the corpus contains hundreds of millions of language use samples, it very likely contains some counter-examples to his colleague's hypothesis. Given this assumption, the researcher then decides that he *should* run a search on a mega corpus of data. But notice that if there are other sufficient guarantors of the truth of  $q$  in the example above, like using the methods of introspection or experimentation, then the researcher would decide that he *could*, rather than *should*, run a search on a mega corpus of data.<sup>3</sup> If, however, the researcher happens to believe that experimentation is not a suitable method to test this particular hypothesis and if introspection has failed him in the past, he can even decide that he *has to* run a search on a mega corpus of data. So the choice of a modal in the formulation of the conclusion depends on a relevant slice of cognitive context.

### 3 Indirect reports of conditionals

Let us now transform some of the above instances of practical reasoning into instances of indirect reports of conditionals.

Imagine a scenario in which Anna wants to become a mayor. She asks her politically involved friend, Mary, what to do to become a mayor.

Mary says to Anna:

- 4) You will become a mayor only if you go to the pub.

<sup>2</sup>We assume that, if a linguistic form overtly represents a concept, that concept is an attractor for that particular linguistic form, in the dynamic sense of Barsalou 2005 or Sztencel 2014 and Sztencel 2018 (see also Barsalou et al. 2010; Lebois et al. 2014).

<sup>3</sup>The choice between *could* or *should* here is independent of the modal expression (*likely*) which is restricted by the *if*-clause in that, regardless of whether the researcher feels he *should* or *could* run the search, he still believes it is likely that the hypothesis will be falsified if he does run the search. However, the choice of *could p* or *should p* as opposed to e.g. *will not p* is dependent on the presence of *likely* in the consequent.

Anna wants to tell her husband, John, what Mary has said. Which of the following sentences would Anna be most likely to use?

- a) Mary said that I *could* go to the pub if I want to become a mayor.
- b) Mary said that I *should* go to the pub if I want to become a mayor.
- c) Mary said that I *have to* go to the pub if I want to become a mayor.

Given the *only if* formulation (i.e. overtly represented necessity), and the representation of the ordering source in the antecedents of the reporting conditionals, (b) and (c) seem to be the only possible choices. But what is the difference between them, if any?

Let us leave conditionals for a moment and consider the following two injunctions:

- 5) You *have to* do X.
- 6) You *should* do X.

It is plausible to assume that the speakers of (5) and (6) both believe that it is necessary for the hearer to do X; that according to some set of circumstances in the world, there is no other alternative but to do X. In other words, it is plausible to assume that in the case of *have to* in (5) and *should* in (6) we are dealing with root necessity (see e.g. Depraetere & Reed 2006).

But there is a difference between the two modal expressions. In its root use, *have to do X* tends to indicate an obligation to *do X* or the existence of compelling reasons to *do X*. Crucially, when *have to do X* is used with the force of an injunction, there is an expectation that the hearer will *do X* (Palmer 2001). In contrast, when root *should* is used with the force of an injunction, there is no expectation that the hearer will *do X* (Coates 1983; Palmer 2001). Due to the lack of such expectation, the types of injunctions that can be made with *should* are said to communicate weak obligation (as compared with *have to do X* or *must do X*) or strong suggestion/advice (as compared with *could do X*). What this means is that the use of *should* allows one to communicate the necessity of doing X without placing/appearing to place an obligation on the hearer to do X; the use of *should*, thus, allows the speaker to mitigate a threat to the hearer's negative face-want (as in Brown & Levinson 1987).<sup>4,5</sup>

Coming back to our scenario in (4), the use of *only if* by Mary licenses Anna to use either of the two necessity modals – *should* or *have to* – in her report. Arguably,

<sup>4</sup>See Geis & Lycan (1993) on conditional formulations and politeness strategies.

<sup>5</sup>Notice that the use of 'weak' in 'weak obligation' is not the same as use of 'weak' in 'weak necessity' as in e.g. von Stechow & Iatridou (2008). Von Stechow & Iatridou (2008) define strong necessity modals (e.g. *must*) as those which require the prejacent (i.e. the proposition X in *must X*) to be true in all of the favoured worlds (worlds in the modal base which are most highly ranked by the ordering source), while weak necessity modals (e.g. *ought to*) require the prejacent (X in *ought to X*) to be true in all of the very best (by some additional measure) among the favoured worlds. Given the facework strategy which dictates the use of *should* over *have to*, it transpires that *should* can be used to communicate weak obligation to do X in the presence of strong necessity to do X – example (6) is a case in point. This is not inconsistent with von Stechow & Iatridou (2008), who remain 'officially agnostic' about *should* (p.117).



if Anna chose the *should* formulation of the report, this wouldn't be because she wanted to mitigate the threat to her own negative face-want (but it is, in principle, a possible reason). More plausibly, the choice of *should* by Anna would be indicative of Anna's ascription of politeness intentions to Mary: Anna chooses *should* because she assumes that Mary would intend to mitigate the threat to Anna's negative face.

And what about the *could* formulation? According to Depraetere & Reed (2006), *could* can be used to communicate root possibility, one which arises due to some set of circumstances in the world, a.k.a. enabling and disabling conditions (see also Kratzer 2012). This means that *could* can be used to make suggestions (Palmer 2001), but not strong suggestions as was the case with *should*. Given the necessity of *p* in example (4), which is overtly represented by the use of *only if*, the formulation with a possibility modal like *could* is inadequate.

Let us now go back to our research methods scenarios invoked above and imagine that researcher A wonders what method is most likely to falsify his colleague's hypothesis. He asks his friend, researcher B, for advice. B tells A that experimentation is not a suitable method in this case and that introspection has failed B on many occasions in the past. B then says:

- 7) If you run a search on a mega corpus of data, you will likely falsify the hypothesis.

A wants to tell C what B has said. Which of the following sentences would A be most likely to use?

- a) B said that I *could* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.
- b) B said that I *should* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.
- c) B said that I *have to* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.

Example (7) differs from (4) in that the necessity of *p* for *q* is not overtly represented; the conditional formulation is 'if *p*, *q*', not 'only if *p*, *q*'. Nevertheless, it is evident from the context that the corpus method is the only suitable method according to researcher B. In the light of the contextually provided domain restriction (necessity of the corpus method), formulation (a) is impossible. As was the case with example (4), formulation (b) is given preference to (c) given the facework considerations.

Compare the above scenario with one in which researcher E wonders what method is most likely to falsify his colleague's hypothesis. He asks his friend, researcher F, for advice. F tells E that there are a few methods which are equally likely to falsify the hypothesis, such as introspection, a mega-corpus study or experimentation. F then says:

- 8) If you run a search on a mega corpus of data, you will likely falsify the hypothesis.

E wants to tell G what F has said. Which of the following sentences would E be most likely to use?

- a) F said that I *could* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.
- b) F said that I *should* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.
- c) F said that I *have to* run a search on a mega corpus of data, if I want to falsify the hypothesis.

Given the contextually provided domain restriction (two other alternatives), (a) is the most likely candidate. Formulation (b) seems likely on the assumption that E equates F's conditional with F's eventual choice of the corpus method as the preferred option and unlikely if E makes no such equation. This indicates that the use of *should X* is also consistent with the lack of necessity of X, or lack of strong necessity if you will (see footnote 5). Notice that from F's eventual choice of the corpus method as the preferred option, it does not follow that F thinks that the use of corpus is necessary. F may have advised E to use corpus because F thinks – though is not sure – that E might be a bit more likely to get funding for a corpus-based research or that E is more familiar with this method than with the others and therefore it will be easier for E to do the research. One or both of these two additional considerations, the funding or the ease of research consideration, may contribute an additional, yet tentative (notice F's lack of certainty), constraint and thus result in the preference of *should* over *could*. Another option, given F's lack of certainty, would be to see the effect of the additional constraint as allowing the grading of alternatives into better and worse (Kratzer's discussion of *kann* is relevant here, see 2012: 60) – the choice of *should p* would indicate that *p* is a better alternative out of a set of others, but *p* is not necessary. Formulation (c) seems impossible given the provided domain restriction which calls upon other alternatives.

What this section has illustrated is that the formulation of the indirect report of a conditional can be a diagnostic for 'the relevant circumstances in *w*' in that it depends on the assumptions about 'the relevant circumstances in *w*'. In particular, the formulation of the indirect report depends on whether the truth of *p* is assumed to be necessary or not necessary for the truth of *q* – regardless of whether necessity is or is not overtly represented in the *if*-clause. We have argued that *should* and *have to* formulations can be used when the truth of *p* is assumed to be necessary for the truth of *q*, and we have suggested that *should* is likely to be preferred due to the facework considerations. We have also argued that *could* can be used when the truth of *p* is assumed not to be necessary for the truth of *q*. *Should* is also a possible candidate for multiple-alternatives contexts, but only when an additional constraint is considered. Nevertheless, we predict that *should* will not be a preferred option here due to its association with (strong) necessity.

#### 4 Relevant circumstances in $w = \text{alternative antecedents}$

Consider the following examples (taken from Cummins et al. 1991):

- 9) a. If the match was struck, then it lit.  
 b. The match was struck.  
 c. Therefore it lit.
- 10) a. If Joe cut his finger, then it bled.  
 b. Joe cut his finger.  
 c. Therefore it bled.

Cummins et al. (1991) and Cummins (1995) demonstrate that the acceptance rate of the conclusion (c) in the inferences above depends on the domain referred to by a causal conditional: people are more likely to accept the conclusion of (10) than (9). This acceptance rate depends on the number of disabling conditions, i.e. events which could prevent the effect represented in the consequent from occurring; the match won't light if it is damp, if treated in some other way that would prevent it from lighting or if insufficient pressure is applied to it and Joe's finger won't bleed if the cut is superficial. The number of disabling conditions is in inverse proportion to the acceptability of the conclusion: the more disabling conditions, the less certainty in the sufficiency of the truth of (b) for the truth of (c).

Now, we must be careful here not to assume that Cummins et al.'s results tell us about the rates of acceptability of the conclusion in the Modus Ponens inference (i.e.  $((p \supset q) \ \& \ p) \supset q$ ). If a person accepts/assumes the truth of the major premise (10a)/ $(p \supset q)$  and accepts/assumes the truth of (10b)/ $p$ , then the truth of (10c)/ $q$  is guaranteed. This is because the (assumption of the) truth of the major premise guarantees the assumption of the sufficiency of the truth of the antecedent for the truth of the consequent. What the existence of disabling conditions seems to be doing here then is reduce the believability of – i.e. the acceptability of the truth of – the major premise (given the disabling conditions, the cogniser accepts that the finger may bleed, but not that it will bleed) and consequently the acceptability of the conclusion (c) from premise (b) (for short, acceptability of  $(b) \rightarrow (c)$ ). But it does not affect the acceptability of the conclusion in the Modus Ponens argument, which requires the assumption of the truth of the major premise.<sup>6</sup> The more disabling conditions there are, the less believable the major premise is.

Politzer (2003, 2004) uses the notion of complementary necessary conditions (CNCs) to refer to two kinds of implicit *ceteris paribus* assumptions on which the satisfaction of  $q$  depends. The first kind is called a *disabler* and it corresponds to Cummins' notion of a disabling condition (a disabler cannot be the case for  $q$  to

<sup>6</sup>Cummins (1995) studies causal, rather than logical, necessity and sufficiency and finds the effect of reversal of the causal relation on the believability of the major premise (even though she talks of the effect on the rates of acceptance of the logical arguments such as Modus Ponens or Modus Tollens).

be the case). The second kind is an *enabler*. An enabler must be the case for  $q$  to be the case; in (9) an example of an enabler would be that sufficient pressure is applied during the striking of the match and in (10) that Joe's finger is not prosthetic. According to Politzer (2003), the rate of endorsement of Modus Ponens (and Modus Tollens) decreases in three situations: (i) when the satisfaction of a CNC is denied (i.e. when a disabler is present or an enabler absent); (ii) when a doubt on the satisfaction of a CNC is suggested; and (iii) when it is stated or known that the CNC is not fully satisfied. However, as discussed above, it is more plausible to assume that a denial of or doubt in the satisfaction of a CNC – what will be referred to as a *dubious CNC state* – results in a decreased believability of the major premise (Modus Ponens simply does not go through in dubious CNC states as the truth of the major premise is not accepted/assumed).

Whereas dubious CNC states seem to cast doubt on the believability of the major premise, alternative causes, i.e. causes other than the one represented in the antecedent which are capable of making  $q$  true, seem to cast doubt on the necessity of  $p$  for  $q$ .<sup>7</sup> Consider the following examples:

- 11)
  - a. If the brake was depressed, then the car slowed down.
  - b. The break was depressed.
  - c. The car slowed down.
  
- 12)
  - a. If Larry grasped the glass with his bare fingertips, then his fingertips were on it.
  - b. Larry grasped the glass with his bare fingertips.
  - c. His fingertips were on it.

According to Cummins, there are many alternative causes for the conclusion (c) in (11), like going uphill or engine trouble. However, the conclusion (c) in (12) admits of few alternative causes. This difference in the number of alternative causes results in the variation in the acceptability of the inference from the observed effect (c) to the cause represented in the antecedent (b) (i.e. (c)  $\rightarrow$  (b)). Thus, it appears that the more alternative causes there are, the less certainty there is about the necessity of the truth of  $p$  for the truth of  $q$ .

Thompson (1994), who investigates both causal and non-causal conditionals, argues that the acceptability of Modus Ponens and Modus Tollens inferences also depends on the availability of alternative consequents. Consider the following example:

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<sup>7</sup>In the examples (9)–(12), the direction of causal sufficiency and necessity corresponds to the sufficiency/necessity of  $p$  for  $q$ . If, however, the antecedents and consequents of (9)–(12) were reversed, causal sufficiency/necessity (but not inferential sufficiency/necessity) would correspond to the sufficiency/necessity of  $q$  for  $p$  (see Cummins 1995). We use  $p$  and  $q$  to refer to the antecedents and consequents of the conditionals under discussion, irrespective of the direction of causal sufficiency/necessity (though they happen to correspond).

- 13) a. If a person smokes, then he/she will get lung cancer.  
 b. A person smokes.  
 c. He/she will get lung cancer.

As above, if A rejects that (13c) follows from (13b), A cannot have assumed the truth of the major premise, the assumption of which would guarantee the sufficiency of (13b) for (13c). So what A rejects is not a conclusion in the Modus Ponens argument. As was the case with the number of disabling conditions, it transpires that what the number of alternative consequents does is affect the believability of the major premise. Crucial here is the difference between the proposition that *If a person smokes, then he/she will get lung cancer*, which is the major premise here, and the proposition that *If a person smokes, then he/she may get lung cancer*, which licences the rejection of (b)  $\rightarrow$  (c) but is not our major premise. The alternative consequent to the one in (13a) is that the person will not get lung cancer. The existence of this alternative consequent lowers the believability of the major premise.

In light of the overview above, a believable conditional, i.e. one whose major premise is believable, is one for which the CNCs are satisfied and for which there are no alternative consequents. This is in line with Politzer's (2004) analysis whereby the credibility of a conditional is in inverse proportion to the number of CNCs whose satisfaction is questionable. If a conditional is believable, then the existence of no (reasonable, salient, etc.) alternative antecedents should result in the perceived necessity of  $p$  for  $q$ , i.e. in the biconditional ( $p \equiv q$ ) interpretation of conditionals. On the other hand, the existence of alternative antecedents should maintain the presumption of the sufficiency of  $p$  for  $q$  and result in the material ( $p \supset q$ ) interpretation of conditionals (see also Thompson 1994, 1995, 2000; von Fintel 2001).

We propose to treat the *alternative antecedents* variable as 'the relevant circumstances in  $w$ ' which determine the perception of sufficiency versus necessity of  $p$  for  $q$ . If, as we put forward at the end of section 3, indirect reports of conditionals are a diagnostic for 'the relevant circumstances in  $w$ ', then the formulation choices of indirect reports should be sensitive to the number of alternative antecedents. In section 3, we predicted that the existence of alternative antecedents should favour the formulation of the indirect report with *could* (the scenario in which experimentation and introspection were as good methods of testing a given hypothesis as a corpus study was), whereas no alternative antecedents (the scenario in which neither experimentation nor introspection were alternatives to a corpus study) should favour a formulation of the indirect report with *should* over *have to* (on the assumption of the facework considerations). We have devised an online experiment to test this hypothesis.

## 5 Experiment 1

The aim of the experiment was to find out whether modalised formulations of indirect reports of conditionals reflect the number of alternative antecedents. To do this, we devised a series of scenarios, similar to those in section 3, where the number of alternative antecedents was contextually manipulated. We have followed Politzer (2004: 105) in assuming that the conditional comes with an implicit guarantee of normality. In light of section 3, the guarantee of normality has two clauses. First, unless the satisfaction of relevant CNCs is denied/doubted or it is suggested/known/stated that the satisfaction of relevant CNCs is or should be denied/doubted, the credibility, or believability, of a conditional is high. Second, unless the absence of alternative consequents is denied/doubted or it is suggested/known/stated that the absence of alternative consequents is or should be denied/doubted, the credibility, or believability, of a conditional is high.

The conditionals chosen for Experiment 1 were believable in the above sense in that the lack of satisfaction of relevant CNCs or the presence of alternative consequents was not suggested/stated in the co-text. Other contextual features which increase believability of the chosen conditionals are discussed later on in this section.

### 5.1 Method

#### 5.1.1 Participants

139 native English speakers participated in this study (35 in Scenario 1A; 35 in Scenario 2A; 33 in Scenario 3A; 36 in Scenario 4A). 104 participants were female, 32 were male, and 3 were non-binary. There was an age range of 18 to 74 years and a mean age of 30 years. Participants were recruited online via social media postings. No participant had studied linguistics or philosophy beyond MA level.

#### 5.1.2 Materials and procedure

The participants were working under one of two experimental conditions: Condition I, where there were several alternative antecedents mentioned in the co-text, and Condition II, where there were no alternative antecedents mentioned in the co-text. For each condition two scenarios were created, one involving conditional advice and the other a conditional inducement. The study comprised of four surveys (corresponding to the four scenarios), which were created using Google Forms. The social media postings advertising the study contained hyperlinks to each survey. Participants were instructed to take part in just one of the surveys.

On the opening page, participants were informed that the study formed part of a larger investigation into the reporting of other people's speech. Following informed

consent, participants proceeded onto the second page, where they were presented with one test question:

**Condition I: several alternative antecedents**

**Scenario 1A:** Paul wants to buy his friend, Mary, a birthday present. He decides to consult Mary's sister, Joanne. Joanne tells Paul about the many hobbies that Mary has, such as good literature, classical music, horse-riding, and hiking. She then says to John:

If you buy Mary a good book, she'll be happy.

Paul wants to tell Frank, his roommate, what Joanne said. Which of the following sentences would Paul be *most likely* to use? You can tick more than one if you feel it's appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) Joanne said that I could buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.
- b) Joanne said that I should buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.
- c) Joanne said that I have to buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.

**Scenario 2A:** Tom is at his Grandma's and he's looking for a way to earn £5. Grandma tells Tom that there are many things he could do to earn £5, such as vacuuming, doing the laundry, doing the dishes, mowing the lawn or doing the shopping. She then says to Tom:

If you mow the lawn, I'll give you £5.

Tom wants to tell his mum what Grandma said. Which of the following sentences would Tom be most likely to use? You can select more than one if you think it's appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choices.

- a) Grandma said that I could mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.
- b) Grandma said that I should mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.
- c) Grandma said that I have to mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.

**Condition II: no alternative antecedents**

**Scenario 3A:** Little Bill is irritated. He's kept a pot of water near the fire for an hour, thinking that the water would boil. But it didn't. His mum says:

If you heat the water up to 100°C – which is 212°F –, it'll boil.

Little Bill wants to tell his friend what his mum said. Which of the following sentences would Bill be most likely to use? You can select more than one if you think it's appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) Mum said that I could heat the water up to 100°C/212°F if I want it to boil.
- b) Mum said that I should heat the water up to 100°C/212°F if I want it to boil.
- c) Mum said that I have to heat the water up to 100°C/212°F if I want it to boil.

**Scenario 4A:** A teenage girl wants to go out. Her father, annoyed with the constant mess in the girl's room, says:

If you clean your room, I'll let you go out.

The teenager is on the phone with her friend. She wants to tell her friend what her father said. Which of the following sentences would the teenager be most likely to use? You can select more than one if you think it's appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) My father said that I could clean my room if I want to go out.
- b) My father said that I should clean my room if I want to go out.
- c) My father said that I have to clean my room if I want to go out

Immediately below, participants provided their answer to the test question and any other comments which they might have (marked as optional).

On the final page, participants provided demographic information: age, gender, native language(s), and country of residence. They then indicated whether or not they had studied linguistics and/or philosophy at university level and, if so, their highest level of study. All participants confirmed that they had taken part in just one of the surveys.

### 5.1.3 Predictions

In all scenarios, participants were presented with a *could*, *should*, or *have to* in the consequent and an overtly represented ordering source in the antecedent. The reporting verb *say* was used in all options as it is neutral with respect to the illocutionary point (Capone 2016).

Both scenarios in Condition I foregrounded many alternative antecedents. As such, we predict a high preference for the *could* formulation in both of these scenarios.

As for Condition II, in Scenario 3A, it is part of general knowledge that there are no alternative antecedents. On the assumption that the informants focus on the illocutionary act of the conditional (advice), we predict a high preference for the *should* formulation (in line with the facework strategies discussed in section 3). However, a combination of two factors – directness licensed by the dynamics of power relations between parents and children (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1990) and the general truth interpretation of this conditional – make available the *have to* formulation. In Scenario 4A, the father's annoyance with his teenage daughter contextually suggests that there are no other alternatives either. Due to the father's annoyance, the assumption of an intention to mitigate the addressee's negative face-want (the sensitivity to which would be evidenced by the choice of the *should* formulation) is likely to be suspended. Hence, the *have to* formulation is likely to be favoured.

The conditionals used in this experiment were assumed to be generally believable for various contextually salient reasons. The first reason has to do with the default assumption of advice being given in good faith and an inducement being sincere in the absence of any indication to the contrary (cf. Gricean assumption that the speaker has spoken truly unless there is an indication to the contrary and Searle's



sincerity conditions). In Scenario 1A, this assumption was strengthened by the fact that Joanne is Mary's sister and thus her advice is reliable and, in Scenario 2A, by choosing a grandmother, a stereotypically positive figure, as the speaker of the inducement. In Scenario 3A, the believability was strengthened by the fact that the boiling point of water is part of general knowledge, whereas, in Scenario 4A, the father's annoyance at the constant mess in his daughter's room further indicated that  $p$  was necessary for  $q$ .

## 5.2 Results and discussion

### Condition I: material interpretation (Scenarios 1A and 2A)

- (i) Preferred response: In line with our predictions, a chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – among participants responding to Scenario 1A ( $\chi^2(2,35) = 22.69$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ), as well as participants responding to Scenario 2A ( $\chi^2(2,35) = 43.26$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ) (see Table 1). Specifically, as predicted, for both scenarios, participants demonstrated a preference for the *could* formulation, which we attribute to the presence of several alternative antecedents and thus the lack of necessity of  $p$  for  $q$ .
- (ii) Multiple responses: As mentioned, participants were given the option of selecting more than one response if they thought it was appropriate. When doing so, they were asked to indicate their first/second/third choices.

For Scenario 1A, the findings revealed that, in four instances where *could* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice (and *have to* was also selected as the third choice in two of these instances). Moreover, in two instances where *should* was indicated at the preferred choice, *could* was selected as the second choice. Taken together, for Scenario 1A, there were six instances out of a possible 35 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

For Scenario 2A, the findings revealed that, in three instances where *could* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice (and *have to* was also selected as the third choice in one of these instances). Thus, for Scenario 2A, there were three instances out of a possible 35 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

Taken together, the results indicate a significant preference for the *could* formulation, which was predicted as a favoured choice for sufficiency contexts. However,

**Table 1** Experiment 1:  
Preferred responses to  
Condition I, Scenarios 1A  
and 2A

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Scenario 1A	65.7%	34.3%	0.0%
Scenario 2A	85.7%	5.7%	8.6%

**Table 2** Experiment 1:  
Preferred responses to  
Condition II, Scenarios 3A  
and 4A

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Scenario 3A	0.0%	51.5%	48.5%
Scenario 4A	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%

the responses to Scenario 1A were more ambivalent than the responses to Scenario 2A. We attribute the *should* formulation choices in Scenario 1A to the participants' interpretation of the conditional as Joanne's eventual choice of getting Mary a book (*p*) as the preferred way (the better option) for John to make Mary happy (*q*); such an interpretation would presuppose an assumption, on part of the participants, that there is some additional constraint which is not mentioned in the context (but see section 7).

### Condition II: biconditional interpretation (Scenarios 3A and 4A)

- (i) Preferred response: In line with our predictions, a chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – among participants responding to Scenario 3A ( $\chi^2(2,33) = 16.55$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), as well as participants responding to Scenario 4A ( $\chi^2(2,36) = 50.67$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ) (see Table 2). Specifically, as predicted, for Scenario 3A, participants demonstrated a preference for the *should* formulation and, for Scenario 4A, participants demonstrated a preference for the *have to* formulation.
- (ii) Multiple responses: As mentioned, participants were given the option of selecting more than one response if they thought it was appropriate. When doing so, they were asked to indicate their first/second/third choices.

For Scenario 3A, the findings revealed that, in eight instances where *should* was indicated as the preferred choice, *have to* was selected as the second choice. Moreover, in four instances where *have to* was indicated at the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice (and *could* was also selected as the third choice in one of these instances). Taken together, for Scenario 3A, there were 12 instances out of a possible 33 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

For Scenario 4A, the findings revealed that, in three instances where *have to* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice (and *could* was also selected as the third choice in one of these instances). Thus, for Scenario 2A, there were three instances out of a possible 36 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

Taken together, the results indicate a strong preference for the necessity modals, as predicted for necessity contexts. The higher preference for the *have to* formulation in Scenario 4A is attributed to the father's annoyance, which is likely to result in the assumption that the negative face saving strategies have been suspended.

**Table 3** Experiment 1:  
Conditions I and II, compared  
responses

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Condition I (Scenarios 1A and 2A)	75.7%	20.0%	4.3%
Condition II (Scenarios 3A and 4A)	0.0%	30.4%	69.6%

### Conditions I and II: Compared responses

A Fisher's Exact test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – between participants in Conditions I and II ( $p < 0.0001$ ), with the *could* formulation being preferred among participants in Condition I, the material interpretation (75.7%), and the *have to* formulation being preferred among participants in Condition II, the biconditional interpretation (69.6%) (see Table 3).

The results of Experiment 1 corroborate our hypothesis that modals used in indirect reports of 'if  $p$ ,  $q$ ' conditionals co-vary with the number of alternative antecedents in predictable ways. This indicates that root modals used in indirect reports of 'if  $p$ ,  $q$ ' conditionals may be a diagnostic for biconditional versus material interpretations of conditional advice and inducement. With respect to our initial predictions, the number of *have to* formulations in necessity contexts is slightly higher than we expected (we expected more *should* formulations) and may be due to the fact that our scenarios involved asymmetric parent-child contexts.

## 6 Experiment 2

The aim of Experiment 2 was to find out whether the results of Experiment 1 could be replicated in contexts which lower/eliminate the believability of the conditionals by invoking dubious CNC states. A positive answer would increase the reliability of the results from Experiment 1. A further set of questions that we were interested in was whether (i) the propositional attitude of belief of S' in the truth of U (or, more specifically, in the truth of the thought communicated by U) affects the choice of U' and whether (ii) the propositional attitude of belief of S in the truth of their own U – as assumed by S' – affects the choice of U'. We hypothesised that (i) and (ii) will have no effect on U'. If corroborated, the hypothesis would suggest that, when the reporting verb *say* is used by S', there should be no theoretical expectation that a successful indirect report will result in a belief attribution by H' to S.

## 6.1 Method

### 6.1.1 Participants

160 native English speakers participated in this study (42 in Scenario 1B; 34 in Scenario 2B; 44 in Scenario 3B; 40 in Scenario 4B). 82 participants were female, 71 were male, 2 were non-binary, and 5 were non-specified. There was an age range of 18 to 67 years and a mean age of 32 years. Participants were recruited online via social media postings. No participant had studied linguistics or philosophy beyond MA level.

### 6.1.2 Materials and procedure

The study was comprised of four surveys (Scenario 1B, Scenario 2B, Scenario 3B, and Scenario 4B), which were created using Google Forms. The social media postings advertising the study contained hyperlinks to each survey. Participants were instructed to take part in just one of the surveys.

On the opening page, participants were informed that the study formed part of a larger investigation into the reporting of other people's speech. Following informed consent, participants proceeded onto the second page, whereby they were presented with one test question:

#### **Condition I: several alternative antecedents**

**Scenario 1B:** Paul wants to buy his friend, Mary, a birthday present. He knows that Mary doesn't like it when people buy her books, but that's about the only relevant thing he knows. He decides to consult Mary's sister, Joanne. Joanne tells Paul about the many hobbies that Mary has, such as good literature, classical music, horse-riding and hiking. She then says to John:

If you buy Mary a good book, she'll be happy.

Surprised at Joanne's unawareness, Paul wants to tell Frank, his roommate, what Joanne said. Which of the following sentences would Paul be most likely to use? You can tick more than one if you feel it's appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) Joanne said that I could buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.
- b) Joanne said that I should buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.
- c) Joanne said that I have to buy Mary a book if I want to make her happy.

**Scenario 2B:** Tom is at his Grandma's and he's looking for a way to earn £5. Grandma tells Tom that there are many things he could do to earn £5, such as vacuuming, doing the laundry, doing the dishes, mowing the lawn or doing the shopping. She then says to Tom:

If you mow the lawn, I'll give you £5.

Tom knows that his Grandma is lying – she’s so stingy that she has never ever kept a promise to give someone money. He wants to tell his mum what Grandma said. Which of the following sentences would Tom be most likely to use? You can tick more than one if you feel it’s appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) Grandma said that I could mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.
- b) Grandma said that I should mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.
- c) Grandma said that I have to mow the lawn if I want to earn £5.

**Condition II: no alternative antecedents**

**Scenario 3B:** Little Bill is irritated. He’s kept a pot of water near the fire for an hour, thinking that the water would boil. But it didn’t. His mum says:

If you heat the water up to 80°C – which is 176°F –, it’ll boil.

Little Bill knows that his mum is wrong. He’s been learning at school about the boiling point of water. He just thought that keeping a pot of water near the fire for an hour will heat it up to 100°C. Little Bill wants to tell his friend what his mum said. Which of the following sentences would Bill be most likely to use? You can tick more than one if you feel it’s appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) Mum said that I could heat the water up to 80°C/176°F if I want it to boil.
- b) Mum said that I should heat the water up to 80°C/176°F if I want it to boil.
- c) Mum said that I have to heat the water up to 80°C/176°F if I want it to boil.

**Scenario 4B:** A teenage girl wants to go out. Her father, annoyed with the constant mess in the girl’s room, says:

If you clean your room, I’ll let you go out.

The teenager isn’t sure whether to trust her father on this. After all she’s only 15 and he and mum made it clear that there’s no going out until she’s 18. She is on the phone with her friend. She wants to tell her friend what her father said. Which of the following sentences would the teenager be most likely to use? You can tick more than one if you feel it’s appropriate – if so, please indicate your first/second/third choice.

- a) My father said that I could clean my room if I want to go out.
- b) My father said that I should clean my room if I want to go out.
- c) My father said that I have to clean my room if I want to go out.

Immediately below, participants provided their answer to the test question and any other comments which they might have (marked as optional).

On the final page, participants provided demographic information: age, gender, native language(s), and country of residence. They then indicated whether or not they had studied linguistics and/or philosophy at university level and, if so, their highest level of study. All participants confirmed that they had taken part in just one of the surveys.

### 6.1.3 Predictions

We hypothesise that manipulating the believability variable will have no effect on the choice of the modalised report. That is, we predict that there will be no reliable differences between answers to scenarios A used in Experiment 1 and their counterparts B used in Experiment 2.

## 6.2 Results and discussion

### Condition I: material interpretation (Scenarios 1B and 2B)

- (i) Preferred response: In line with our predictions, a chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – among participants responding to Scenario 1B ( $\chi^2(2,42) = 30.14$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ), as well as participants responding to Scenario 2B ( $\chi^2(2,34) = 12.41$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ) (see Table 4). Specifically, as predicted, for both scenarios, participants demonstrated a preference for the *could* formulation, which we attribute to sufficiency, but not necessity, of  $p$  for the truth of  $q$ , which results from the foregrounding of many alternative causes.
- (ii) Multiple responses: As mentioned, participants were given the option of selecting more than one response if they thought it was appropriate. When doing so, they were asked to indicate their first/second/third choices.

For Scenario 1B, the findings revealed that, in three instances where *could* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice. Moreover, in two instances where *should* was indicated as the preferred choice, *could* was selected as the second choice. Thus, for Scenario 1B, there were five instances out of a possible 42 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

For Scenario 2B, the findings revealed that, in three instances and one instance where *could* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* and *have to* were selected as the second choice, respectively. Moreover, in one instance where *have to* was indicated as the preferred choice, *could* was selected as the second choice. Taken together, for Scenario 2B, there were five instances out of a possible 34 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

Taken together, the results indicate a significant preference for the *could* formulation, which was predicted as a favoured choice for sufficiency contexts.

**Table 4** Experiment 2:  
Preferred responses to  
Condition I, Scenarios 1B  
and 2B

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Scenario 1B	69.0%	31.0%	0.0%
Scenario 2B	61.8%	17.6%	20.6%

**Table 5** Experiment 2:  
Preferred responses to  
Condition II, Scenarios 3B  
and 4B

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Scenario 3B	6.8%	47.7%	45.5%
Scenario 4B	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%

### Condition II: biconditional interpretation (Scenarios 3B and 4B)

- (i) Preferred response: In line with our predictions, a chi-square goodness of fit test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – among participants responding to Scenario 3B ( $\chi^2(2,44) = 14.67$ ;  $p = 0.0009$ ), as well as participants responding to Scenario 4B ( $\chi^2(2,40) = 49.4$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ ) (see Table 5). Specifically, as predicted, for Scenario 3B, participants demonstrated a preference for the *should* formulation and, for Scenario 4B, participants demonstrated a preference for the *have to* formulation. We attribute these choices to the necessity of  $p$  for the truth of  $q$ .
- (ii) Multiple responses: As mentioned, participants were given the option of selecting more than one response if they thought it was appropriate. When doing so, they were asked to indicate their first/second/third choices.

For Scenario 3B, the findings revealed that, in three instances and two instances where *should* was indicated as the preferred choice, *have to* and *could* were selected as the second choice, respectively. Moreover, in five instances and one instance where *have to* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* and *could* were selected as the second choice, respectively. Taken together, for Scenario 3B, there were 11 instances out of a possible 44 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

For Scenario 4B, the findings revealed that, in three instances where *have to* was indicated as the preferred choice, *should* was selected as the second choice. Moreover, in two instances where *should* was indicated as the preferred choice, *have to* was selected as the second choice (and *could* was also selected as the third choice in 1 of these instances). Thus, for Scenario 4B, there were five instances out of a possible 40 in which more than one response was deemed to be appropriate.

Taken together, the results indicate a strong preference for the necessity modals, as predicted for necessity contexts.

### Conditions I and II: Compared responses

A Fisher's Exact test revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – between participants in Conditions I and II ( $p < 0.0001$ ), with the *could* formulation being preferred among participants in Condition I, the material interpretation (65.8%), and the *have to* formulation being preferred among participants in Condition II, the biconditional interpretation (64.3%) (see Table 6).

**Table 6** Experiment 2:  
Conditions I and II, compared  
responses

	<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Condition I (Scenarios 1B and 2B)	65.8%	25.0%	9.2%
Condition II (Scenarios 3B and 4B)	3.6%	32.1%	64.3%

**Table 7** Variation in  
believability in Scenarios  
1B–4B

	Condition I	Condition II
	Sufficiency of <i>p</i> for <i>q</i>	Necessity of <i>p</i> for <i>q</i>
Advice	1B: <i>U may be false</i>	3B: <i>U is false</i>
Inducement	2B: <i>U is false</i>	4B: <i>U may be false</i>

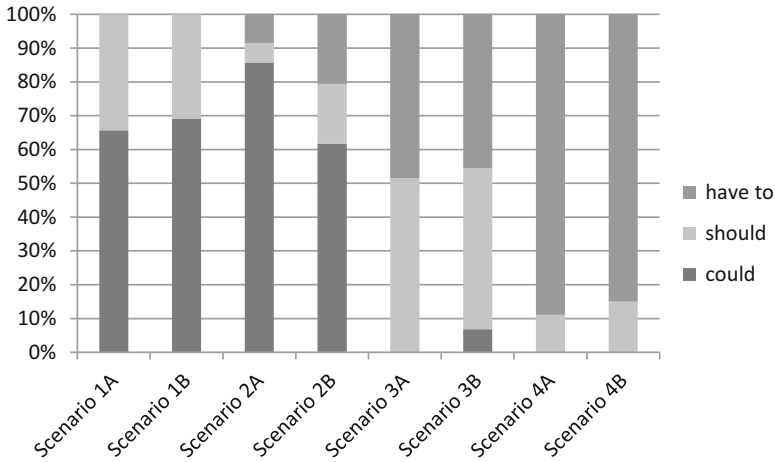
### Experiments 1 and 2: Compared responses

All conditionals used in Experiment 1 were assumed to be believable for the reasons discussed earlier. The contexts in which the conditionals in Experiment 2 were uttered were manipulated so as to lower/eliminate their believability. In Scenario 1B, we learn that the reporting speaker *S'* assumes that the reported speaker *S* is unaware that what she said is false. However, the information that *S'* is surprised at the reported speaker's unawareness, and the earlier suggestion that *S'* does not have much relevant information about Mary, may introduce some doubt about the correctness of the reporting speaker's assumption. In Scenario 2B, the reporting speaker *S'* assumes that the original speaker has lied. The correctness of the reporting speaker's assumption is supported with the negative affect expressions *so stingy* and *never ever*. In Scenario 3B, the reporting speaker *S'* knows that what *S* said was false and that *S* is unaware that what she said is false. Nothing in this scenario casts doubt on the correctness of the reporting speaker's assumption. In Scenario 4B, *S'* is not sure whether what *S* said was true or false. The variation in believability for these scenarios is summarised in Table 7 above.

As discussed earlier, we are interested in whether (i) the belief of *S'* in the truth of *U* has any effect on the choice of *U'*. All scenarios used will provide some insight into this question; from the perspective of *S'*, in 1B *S* may be holding a false belief (about what her sister would like), in 3B *S* is holding a false belief (about the boiling point of water), in 2B *S* is lying (about rewarding the grandson with money) and in 4B *S* may be lying (about letting the daughter go out). Additionally, we are also interested in whether (ii) the belief of *S* in the truth of *U* – as assumed by *S'* – has any reliable effect on the choice of *U'*. Here, scenario 2B will be crucial as, from the perspective of *S'*, it involves a lie. Scenario 4B will also be relevant here as it involves a potential lie.

As predicted, a Fisher's Exact test revealed no reliable differences between answers to scenarios A used in Experiment 1 and their counterparts B used in Experiment 2 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The overall findings are illustrated in Figure 1.





**Fig. 1** Experiments 1 and 2, compared responses

The parity between the responses to counterpart scenarios in the two experiments indicates that neither the belief of  $S'$  in the truth of  $U$ , nor the belief of  $S$  in the truth of  $U$  – as assumed by  $S'$  – has any reliable effect on the choice of  $U'$ . This result raises the following question: when the reporting verb *say* is used by  $S'$ , should there be a theoretical expectation that a successful modalised indirect report of a conditional  $U$  will result in a belief attribution by  $H'$  to  $S$ ? It seems to us that whereas it can be assumed that a successful modalised indirect report of a conditional  $U$  with the reporting verb *say* will result in a thought attribution by  $H'$  to  $S$  (attribution of a thought assumed to be communicated by the original  $U$ ), it cannot be assumed that it will necessarily result in a belief attribution by  $H'$  to  $S$ . Whether it does or does not depends on tacit assumptions, or otherwise, of cooperation, sincerity and normality (e.g. Searle 1969; Grice 1989; Politzer 2004).

This result is not surprising if one agrees that it is not clear whether the verb *say* should be classed as a propositional attitude verb (e.g. Capone 2013; but see Richard 2006), an issue which is linked more broadly to the classification of predicates into factive and non-factive (e.g. Hazlett 2010) and, even more broadly, to context-dependence of heteroglossia (e.g. Martin & White 2005). Indeed, the result follows from the assumption that the verb *say* is neutral with respect to (i.e. can be used to communicate a variety of) the reporting speaker's, and, to some extent, the reported speaker's, cognitive attitudes to  $U$ .

More specifically, the fact that a modalised indirect report of a conditional  $U$  with the reporting verb *say* is neutral in the above sense is linked to the fact that we process and interpret conditionals under different cognitive conditions, including certainty and degrees of uncertainty. Crucially, as the hearer of  $U$ ,  $S'$  does not have to believe that the major premise of a conditional  $U$  is true in order to be able to reason on the assumption of its truth and, given such an assumption, entertain – though

not accept – the conclusions of inferences afforded by material or biconditional interpretations. This fundamental ability to reason from a conditional U on the assumption of its truth is why S' does not have to believe in the truth of U to be able to transform a conditional U into a modalised report U' as if S' believed that U was true.

In our view, the findings of Experiment 2 draw attention to what seems to have been generally neglected by probability approaches to conditionals but what is potentially an important element in understanding the role of conditionals in our lives – the fact that we can process them on the assumption of the truth of the major premise and the related ability to entertain conclusions of classical inferences without necessarily accepting them.

## 7 A note on the speech act variable

The question of whether the number of alternative antecedents has an effect on the modalised reports of conditionals was the main research question in this study. However, because our participants were working with conditional advice and conditional inducements across both conditions, I and II, in both experiments, it is also relevant to ask whether the speech act variable had any effect on the modalised formulation choices.

A Fisher's Exact test also revealed a reliable difference in preferred response to the question – i.e. *could*, *should*, or *have to* – between participants in the advice conditions and those in the inducement conditions: Scenarios 1A and 2A ( $p = 0.002$ ), Scenarios 1B and 2B ( $p = 0.005$ ), Scenarios 3A and 4A ( $p < 0.001$ ), and Scenarios 3B and 4B ( $p < 0.001$ ) (see Table 8).

Let us start with Condition I (scenarios 1 and 2). In Experiment 1, the *could* formulation was more frequent in the inducement scenario (2A) than in the advice scenario (1A), which might be taken to suggest that alternative antecedents are more prominent with conditional inducements than they are with conditional advice. However, in Experiment 2, *could* was actually slightly more frequent for advice (1B) than for inducement (2B). So, whereas Experiments 1 and 2 both show a reliable

**Table 8** Choices of modalised reports by speech act

		<i>could</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>have to</i>
Condition I: material interpretation	Scenario 1A	65.7%	34.3%	0.0%
	Scenario 2A	85.7%	5.7%	8.6%
	Scenario 1B	69.0%	31.0%	0.0%
	Scenario 2B	61.8%	17.6%	20.6%
Condition II: biconditional interpretation	Scenario 3A	0.0%	51.5%	48.5%
	Scenario 4A	0.0%	11.1%	88.9%
	Scenario 3B	6.8%	47.7%	45.5%
	Scenario 4B	0.0%	15.0%	85.0%

difference in the formulation choices for advice versus inducement, the pattern for *could* is opposite. Having said that, at a more coarse-grained level, taken together, the *could* and *should* formulations – which are consistent with many alternative antecedents and the better and worse alternatives contexts (see section 3) – tend to be chosen more frequently for advice (1A and 1B) than for inducements (2A and 2B).

In Condition II, there is a very clear patterning with the *have to* formulation being more frequent for inducement than for advice in both experiments. However, it is not clear whether this effect is due to the speech act variable or due to the suspension of the negative face-want strategies (because of the father's annoyance).

In summary, whereas significant effects have been observed for the speech act variable, more experimental work is needed to eliminate any potential confounds.

## 8 Conclusion

We have found that modals used in indirect reports of 'if *p*, *q*' conditionals covary with the number of alternative antecedents in predictable ways, which suggests that modals used in indirect reports of 'if *p*, *q*' conditionals may be a diagnostic for biconditional versus material interpretations of conditionals. In particular, the *could* formulation is preferred when many alternative antecedents are foregrounded (the material interpretation) whereas the *have to* formulation is preferred in contexts where there are no alternative antecedents (the biconditional interpretation). It was also found that lowering/eliminating the believability of the conditionals has no significant effect on the results. We believe that this result highlights the significance of the cognisers' ability to entertain conclusions of classical inferences on the assumption of the truth of the major premise even if they do not believe in the truth of the major premise.

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# Pronominals and presuppositions in that-clauses of indirect reports



Alessandro Capone, Alessandra Falzone, and Paola Pennisi

*When speakers speak they presuppose certain things, and what they presuppose guides both what they choose to say and how they intend what they say to be interpreted. (Stalnaker, 2002, 701).*

**Abstract** In this paper, after outlining the general problem of the pragmatics of indirect reports, we dwell on two notoriously thorny problems: a) how do we interpret the pronominals contained in that-clauses of indirect reports; b) how do we interpret the presuppositions of that-clauses of indirect reports? (These two problems appear to us to be connected either through the specific nature of the solutions or through some general format of the problem). Theoretical considerations lead us in the direction of the idea that if two pragmatic principles clash, one should give way, but since we do not know which one has to give way, we should be prepared to accept that the strongest or highest-ranking principle will defeat (in the sense of temporarily suspending) the other (see Huang 2014). Here we encounter a Principle, which Capone (2006) brought our attention to, that is not usually discussed in pragmatic theories, but which seems to play a crucial role, at least sometimes:

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Do not expect the hearers and the speakers to do what is not possible for them to do.

In this paper, we recognize that the problem of opacity is connected with the problem of voices: who is responsible for a given section of the utterance. Given the presence of polyphony (the presence of two or more voices in the same utterance or section of the utterance (see Macagno and Capone 2016), this problem can be resolved either through contextual clues or through pragmatic principles (see Huang 2014; Douven 2010; Kecskes 2013). We prefer to see the interplay of principles and contextual clues as one in which the interpretation process is pretty orderly, with general principles providing the defaults, while contextual clues occasionally defeat the defaults in certain problematic cases. However, the issue of responsibility, which we try to regiment through the Paraphrasis/Form-style principle, does not only concern the issue of opacity but also the issue of how to find a referent for indexical expressions contained in the that-clause of a report and how to satisfy the presuppositions of the that-clause. In this case the Paraphrasis/Form-style Principle makes wrong predictions, which have to be rectified thanks to a different principle. The pragmatic theory we apply certainly needs some flexibility (see Huang 2014 on the hierarchy of pragmatic principles), but a flexibility which is not injected into the theory by a mechanical ordering of the rules (that makes pragmatics similar to a generative apparatus), but by explaining why a certain principle takes precedence over another in terms of considerations of rationality (see Capone and Poggi 2016).

**Keywords** Indirect reports · presuppositions · pronominals · context

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, after outlining the general problem of the pragmatics of indirect reports, we dwell on two notoriously thorny problems: a) how do we interpret the pronominals contained in that-clauses of indirect reports; b) how do we interpret the presuppositions of that-clauses of indirect reports? (These two problems appear to us to be connected either through the specific nature of the solutions or through some general format of the problem). Theoretical considerations lead us in the direction of the idea that if two pragmatic principles clash, one should give way, but since we do not know which one has to give way, we should be prepared to accept that the strongest or highest-ranking principle will defeat (in the sense of temporarily suspending) the other (see Huang 2014). Here we encounter a Principle, which Capone (2006) brought our attention to, that is not usually discussed in pragmatic theories, but which seems to play a crucial role, at least sometimes:

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resolved either through contextual clues or through pragmatic principles (see Huang 2014; Douven 2010; Kecskes 2013). We prefer to see the interplay of principles and contextual clues as one in which the interpretation process is pretty orderly, with general principles providing the defaults, while contextual clues occasionally defeat the defaults in certain problematic cases. However, the issue of responsibility, which we try to regiment through the Paraphrasis/Form-style principle, does not only concern the issue of opacity but also the issue of how to find a referent for indexical expressions contained in the that-clause of a report and how to satisfy the presuppositions of the that-clause. In this case the Paraphrasis/Form-style Principle makes wrong predictions, which have to be rectified thanks to a different principle. The pragmatic theory we apply certainly needs some flexibility (see Huang 2014 on the hierarchy of pragmatic principles), but a flexibility which is not injected into the theory by a mechanical ordering of the rules (that makes pragmatics similar to a generative apparatus), but by explaining why a certain principle takes precedence over another in terms of considerations of rationality (see Capone and Poggi 2016).

## 2 What context for pronominals?

Indirect reporting (alternatively, indirect reports) is a crucially important topic for linguistic analysis – certainly one of those topics where linguistics and philosophy (or pragmalinguistics and philosophy) intersect. Marxian linguistics inspired by Volosinov (1971) believes that indirect reports are a locus that shows the fundamentally dialogic nature of language. This is not a place where we will engage in an ideologically-biased discussion – Volosinov arrived at the conclusions he arrived at because the ideological perspective he embraced (working in a communist country) was one with heavy emphasis on collective practices – the individual plays a role in a collectivity of human beings who do things together (saying things in this neutral way does not amount to an unacceptable or uninteresting claim, I should say, in favor of Volosinov). An indirect report is certainly a locus where it is unclear that one can neatly distinguish the responsibility of the original speaker (the one who proffered the original utterance) and the responsibility of the reporting speaker (the one who utters the report). Opacity crucially hinges on the assignment of responsibility and voices, rather than on the paratactic theory by Davidson (1968) (which however is clearly successful in the case of direct reports). Furthermore, the issue of authorship is also unclear, because, while the reporter can be certainly considered the author of the utterance, it is not impossible to consider the speaker of the original utterance the author of at least some parts of the utterance. So, if it is difficult to discern the voices populating this locus, this practice (or what is going on at this locus, that is to say the mini-interaction compressed in the indirect report) attests to the essentially dialogic nature of language. Now, we wanted to make all this clear, because even if the considerations by Volosinov were accepted with enthusiasm within sociolinguistics, there is an ideological side to this story. The emphasis is certainly different from the one present in Chomskyan linguistics, where language need not be thought



of as mainly having a communicative function or as being embedded in society, being (merely) indispensable for the expression (or articulation) of thought. The considerations by Volosinov – with their emphasis on language as a vehicle of communication and interaction (or dialogue), allowing many voices, and not only the individual one, to speak (and sometimes to speak in a chorus, given that the mini-dialogue compressed into an indirect report looks like a chorus, as some kind of collective action) - seem to us to be right, up to a point. Although we accept them for independent reasons and certainly not because we are sympathetic to the kind of mentality or ideology that brought such ideas to life (at most we are looking at things with the distance of the anthropologists who see an important connection between certain linguistic ideas and a certain theory of politics), we want to say that whatever we have to say on the praxis of indirect reporting has little to do with socio-linguistics and is much indebted to the Gricean pragmatics we have been working on (Levinson 2000, Huang 2014). Our general considerations come from a philosophical-linguistic tradition, in which rationality is seen as an important tool shaping language use and allowing us to understand what is going on at the inferential level (Grice 1989). Such a machine (to use a metaphor) greatly amplifies the semantic and syntactic potential of the language (Recanati 2004). Some of the pragmatologists have thought that such an influence is far from being superficial and has even shaped the structure of language – so much so that they have attempted to explain anaphora in the world languages by pragmatic principles that exploit syntactic regularities stripped to the bone (Levinson 1991, Levinson 2000). We have never had much to say on pragmatics and anaphora (but see Huang 1994, 2000, 2014), although we have always suspected that this is an issue awaiting further and definitive research (see Davis 2016a for many cogent objections to Levinson's and Huang's system that deals with anaphoric problems (Huang 1994, 2000; Levinson 1991, 2000)). We will confine ourselves to the more modest and certainly weaker claim that, given the syntactic and semantic resources of human languages (and of language, in general, intended as a predisposition to learn rules and principles of syntax and semantics), the machine to be called 'pragmatics' is capable of (enormously) amplifying that potential (Recanati 2004, Levinson 2000, Huang 1994, Leonardi 2013)). Of course, the use of the term 'machine' is only a metaphor. It is certainly true that, especially according to current pragmatic theories (e.g. Relevance Theory), the pragmatic processes are mainly unreflective and automatic, but in many cases it is possible to derive a pragmatic inference by using reasoning (see Cummings (2014) on the idea that pragmatic processes should be explain by a theory that is holistic and interacts with world knowledge as well). This is pretty important – and Grice was aware of this. The power of pragmatics lies in its ability to exploit reasoning (this is why originally Grice was inclined to say that a desideratum of a pragmatic theory is that conversational implicatures should be calculable – a property that is even more important than cancellability according to us). While the reasoning involved is rarely disciplined by deductive rules - even though Relevance theory, for sure, makes abundant use of deductions in the calculation of conversational implicatures (albeit not of explicatures) (see Hall's (2014) interesting discussion on constraints on explicatures) – this is not

to say that some kind of normativity should be totally absent. In a way – that is perhaps a bit loose and not as strict as for deductive logic – we could say that good reasoning must be involved. Recently, Hall (2014) has engaged in a very interesting discussion of the limits of pragmatic power, responding to objections by Stanley (2007) and Elbourne (2008) aimed at showing that free enrichments are too powerful and predict the wrong inferences. Although Hall replies in general terms saying that a constraint on explicatures (due to free enrichments) is that they should be local processes (a ramification of Relevance theory which we see as extremely problematic and possibly faulty), there is a part of her reply which we considerably liked (because it steers the discussion in the right direction): the inferences which, according to Stanley or Elbourne are faulty, indeed are not generated by Gricean mechanisms as there is no reasoning which can be said to belong to good reasoning conducive to such explicatures. A limit to what can be done by free enrichments is that they should be calculated by good reasoning – and this presupposes that there are ways to calculate the conversational implicatures and explicatures which can be assessed objectively (Hall explains by specific arguments why the enrichments predicted by Stanley and followers are not acceptable). Although much was done in the existing literature on Gricean rationality to show that in the case of a scholar confronted with a single problem, following a certain reasoning he is led towards a certain implicature and by following another he is led towards a different one (Kroch 1972), this does not mean that one cannot assess reasoning objectively. It is also possible, in theory, to be led to two different interpretations by following different paths of reasoning, but at least it could always be shown that in some specific case there is an intrinsic ambivalence in the communicative situation that generates this genuine fork in interpretations. This is not to say that every situation is one in which we cannot decide whether to go to the right or to the left. We are not very often positioned like the donkey who has delicious carrots on the right and on the left and is genuinely puzzled about where to start eating (the example is by Timothy Williamson, Oxford lecture). We should be able to describe a situation in which two or more readings are compatible as a situation in which one has no more reason to choose an interpretation over the other. If, instead, there are situations in which one has more reason to choose an interpretation than another, we could always specify why a majority of scholars think that the reasons for choosing a certain interpretation are more cogent than the reasons for choosing an alternative. A theory of Gricean rationality cannot be systematic unless there is a consensus on the objective features of the theory that lead in a certain direction rather than in a different one – which does not mean that for every complicated case we should decide a solution by voting, but merely by considering certain objective elements such as, for example, a comparative dimension of informativeness that allows us to measure informativeness at least comparatively, even if not by reference to numerical values (the first scholars to value informativeness as one of the criteria for weighing pragmatics interpretations are Atlas and Levinson 1981, whose system was then imitated by Relevance Theorists). Regardless of the specifics of the pragmatic theory we embrace, whether Relevance theory or neo-Gricean pragmatics, there is a consensus that pragmatic processes should always go for

optimal informativeness – they should always maximize informativeness. (A notion originally proposed in Atlas and Levinson 1981; by the way, this is what Levinson's theory and Sperber and Wilson's theories have in common). Although there is a certain overlap between informativeness and usefulness; this is not to say that the overlap should always be pernicious. In any case, we should be allowed to decide case by case what form a pragmatic theory should take, and this form should accord with the general format of the theory.

We should now say, in a rather optimistic way, that pragmatic reasoning and, in particular, explicatures play an important role in the praxis of indirect reporting (see Macagno and Capone 2016), both at the level of what the speaker does, when he reports an utterance by someone else (or even by himself) and at the level of what the hearer does, when he tries to understand the report and in particular when he is in the business of separating voices, and specifically the voice of the original speaker from that of the reporting speaker. As Capone (2012) said in a previous paper, reporting speech in an indirect way can be considered a language game and we should be busy understanding and explaining the praxis involved in this game.

One of the things that could be said from the very start is that, in indirect reporting (seen as a praxis), all indexical elements present in the utterance (especially those exhibited by the *that*-clause of the indirect report) are interpreted with reference to objects that belong to the context of utterance<sup>1</sup> (Richard 2013) and that are salient in that context – this saliency promoting them to elements belonging to the common ground, to use a term that is dear to Stalnaker (2002). When we say that they are interpreted, we mean that values are assigned to pronominals. So, if we have the utterance in (1)

(1) John said that he is happy

(accompanied or followed by a demonstrative gesture), this is understood as saying that *a* is happy and John said that, where *a* is a referent assigned to 'he' through a contextual function taking input from the sentence and the context and some relationship of saliency and giving as output '*c* said that *a* is happy', where *c* = John. But, to exemplify the problem at hand in connection with indirect reporting, it would be best not to choose a sentence that is ambiguous like (1) – as (1), to be sure, is preferentially used with a 'de se' reading (see Higginbotham 2003, Davis 2013, Douven 2013 and Jaszczolt 2013 on the problem of 'de se' and anaphora). So let us take (2) as an example:

(2) Mary said that he is happy.

Since Mary is female, (2) cannot be interpreted as having a 'de se' interpretation (save for exceptional cases). So, here it is clear that (2) must be interpreted with

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<sup>1</sup>According to Richard (2013), a speaker who says 'Mary believes that he (john) went to Paris' is not committed to the fact that the original speaker (the subject of the belief) used the pronominal mode of presentation ('him') in thought. This intuition goes hand in hand with the intuition that in order to assign reference to the pronominal the hearer must search the context of the reporter's utterance and not that of the reported speaker.

reference to context, but with reference to which context, the context of the reporter or the context of the reported utterance? Richardson (2013) in a very important and influential volume says, without motivating this well (we should say), that the context we are entitled to search, in the attempt to assign an interpretation to the pronominal 'he' in (2) is the reporter's (and the hearer's) context and not the context of the original speaker. Now we are at a quandary. Is this praxis (I mean the one brought to light and correctly described by Richard) something that owes its life to a convention of use (possibly of an arbitrary type) or can it be motivated using the same kind of reasoning we can use in saying that an expression X admits a certain preferred interpretation Z rather than an alternative interpretation N? In other words, it is not impossible that the question "Which context should we search, the reporter's and hearer's context or the original speaker's context?" can be decided not through a semantic/discourse rule of an arbitrary type but through a preference which can be motivated through pragmatic reasoning. Ideally, we would want a pragmatic theory to be pragmatic through and through and not to be aided by semantic constraints – conventions being, obviously, semantic rather than pragmatically determined notions (semantic constraints will be accepted as a last resource, if this is really indispensable and if we can find no other plausible explanation). Capone (Forthcoming) has capitalized on the idea that – independently of motivations due to economy – one should search the reporter's context (shared by the hearer) because the hearer normally cannot inspect or scan the reported speaker's context (for the purpose of establishing contextual functions determining the reference of pronominals) because he was not there (and thus he cannot have access to that context, at least not in a direct way). He relies on the reporting speaker in order to receive the story of what happened (and of what was said) but this is normally a partial story, very much like a summary, as Norrick (2016) says. And the reporter normally does not bother to provide the minute details of the context, but somehow assumes that the hearer is not interested in these minutiae. Given that the hearer cannot (is not allowed) to inspect the context of the original speech act (the original utterance reported), it would be really unreasonable to have a rule of the following kind:

G1: When you hear a report of an utterance U as proffered by So and reported by Sr, take the pronominals present in the that-clause (embedded in the report) to refer deictically to the context of the original speaker, rather than to the context of the reporter.

Such a rule would have to be based on the false (or unsatisfied) presupposition that a) the hearer can have access to the context of the original utterance; b) that the reporter has a duty to sum up the main features of that context, namely those that should be available for anaphoric coindexation; c) that there is a practice according to which the reporter sums up the main elements of the context and the hearer looks at them to establish anaphoric reference (deixis possibly being a kind of anaphora). Assuming a), b) and c) is not really reasonable or feasible.

The hearer must have noticed that, following this implausible turn of our thoughts, we have slid from the notion of deixis to the notion of anaphora,

because surely once the objects of the context are offered as part of a summary (that accompanies the summary of the indirect report), we should create symbols that refer to elements of the original contexts and these symbols should be referred to during the act of interpretation (and narration) of the indirect report. Given that now we have introduced a chain of symbols that refer back to elements of the original context and the pronominals of the report should refer to the elements of the original context through such symbols, it is clear that we have an anaphoric chain. Now, while intuitively one could define deixis as a special case of anaphora (but we are not saying that one should – one can find intuitions like this for example in Corazza's most interesting work (2004, 152–153) - there is a difference between deixis proper and deixis that can function only through anaphora. To be sure, a rule like the one sketched above (and which I hope was not taken seriously or too seriously by our readers) would involve a double anaphoric pattern, if deixis is to be considered, by itself, an anaphoric pattern. So, we are not here really arguing against the idea that deixis could be described as a kind of anaphora, but all we are saying is that we find it a terrible complication to say that deictic elements in that-clauses of indirect reports should be interpreted as doubly anaphoric patterns. To be sure, this would be a novelty to be considered bizarre at least by some of us.

Now, if we want to avoid these bizarre consequences, all we have to do is to say that, no, we cannot accept the generalization G1, as it is implausible, it leads to complications, and, also it does not faithfully describe the actual praxis of indirect reporting. Furthermore, it is really difficult, if not impossible for the hearers to apply such a rule unless the reporters apply it too. The application of the rule by the hearers supervenes on the application of the rule by the reporters, which means that if the reporter does not apply the rule, the hearer cannot do so either. Another problem involved in accepting a rule like G1 is to say that, if an indirect report normally is a succinct way of summing up a situation of utterance, G1 would force the reporter to use a summary that is less succinct than the one normally available and would, as a consequence, force the hearer to listen to a summary that is less succinct than the one which is normally to be heard in our ordinary communicative practices. So, if anything, a move such as providing a rule along the lines of R1 would be best avoided by using Occam's modified Razor, which tells us to be parsimonious with our entities. A shorter report should be preferred to a longer one, on the basis of considerations of parsimony, provided that a hearer has a way to interpret the utterance; and the only way available to the hearer to interpret the utterance is to confine his or her search (for information) to the context of utterance (that is to say the context of the report). Even from the point of view of the hearer, parsimony counts, as having access to a longer report would mean having to decide whether to choose a context rather than another. So the inferential task and onus for/on the hearer becomes heavier. Furthermore, he is now positioned between the carrots on the right and the carrots on the left. Both types of carrots looks delicious, so where has it to start eating? Choosing the ones on the right rather than the ones on the left would be quite arbitrary. The hearer of the indirect report is in a position similar to that of the donkey. Which context should he choose? Are there reasons for preferring the context of the reported utterance to the context of the report and

which are these reasons? Probably there are none. For sure, two contexts would lead to the multiplication of entities that provide potential referents for the pronominal used in the that-clause of the indirect report. So which objects should *s/he* choose as referents? One could say that the search could be constrained by relevance. The hearer would only have to choose elements of the type provided by the pronominal. But the pronominal in English is, normally, a minimal linguistic element that barely provides information such as ‘male/female’ or ‘subject/object. Now granting that in the context of utterance (of the report and of the original utterance, taken together) there are many objects having the characteristics male/female male or subject and object, how should the hearer choose one rather than another object? Suppose Relevance Theorists say that the content of the that-clause constrains the search for relevance. Since the that-clause contains a sentence such as ‘he is happy’ we should look at an object that is male, possibly the subject of an action or the agent of a state, and also having the characteristic ‘being happy’ (a property of this type at least). But We doubt that the reporter in summarizing the context should arrive at this level of detail, because if the context contained all these presuppositions as part of the common ground, then there would be no point in uttering the asserted indirect report. Presupposition theories normally solve (or solved) the projection problem for presuppositions (of complex sentences) by saying that there is a neat distinction between what is asserted and what is presupposed. What is asserted is not presupposed. And thus if something is asserted, it is not presupposed (see Stalnaker 1999). Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet, following Soames (1982) and Heim (1983) (also see Huang 2014), use this method for the understanding of the projection problem of presuppositions in complex sentences. To provide an example, one who says:

(3) If France has a king, the king of France must be happy

as a whole, does not presuppose that the king of France has a king, and the presupposition of the definite description ‘the king of France’ of the consequent evaporates, because the sentence (3) as a whole asserted (even if conditionally) that France has a king. (Also see Huang 2014).

We do not know if this is the best way of resolving the projection problem for presuppositions – certainly there are and more advanced methods, such as van der Sand (1992) and his followers. However, one thing we know for sure. Many of us are persuaded that there is a contrast between asserting and presupposing. Thus, if we followed a constraint such as G1, we would have to sum up the context of the original utterance to such a level of detail that we would have to assert (qua reporters) the presuppositions. At this point, there would be no point in providing the assertion, that is to say in providing a report of what the original speaker asserted.

So far, all we have proven is that it is improbable that the hearer will search the two contexts of utterance available (or potentially available) at the same time and thus it is most rational to confine one’s search to one context of utterance only. So which one should the hearer choose? The context of utterance he has (immediate and direct) access to is an ideal candidate, because the search is easier, more reliable, more direct and quicker there. (Levels of informativeness seem to constrain the interpretation procedure, see Atlas and Levinson 1981). If we search something,

it is natural to search an area that is closer to us. Thus, if Mario lives on two floors, unless he have a distinctive memory of having lost a certain object on the second floor, he will search for it on the third floor, which is where he normally lives. In the case of contexts, the one is selected where the hearer is more likely to find the object of the search. Epistemic access is important, as the hearer has direct epistemic access to the reporter's context but not to the original speaker's context.

Although we do not think we have fully determined an explanation of the way the normal praxis of reporting should be structured, at least we have done our best to explain how this description of the praxis should be done by taking into account the rationality of the reporter and of the hearer.

### 3 What context for presuppositions?

Now we should, albeit briefly, dwell on a similar problem. The problem is the following. When we encounter a presupposition in a that-clause of an indirect report, how do we know that this is a presupposition of the reporting speaker or, rather, a presupposition of the reported speaker? This is a particularly thorny problem, because intuitively the that-clause is a locus where the utterance was authored both by the original speaker and by the reporter. Also, we are never sure whether the original speaker is responsible (and to what extent) of the content of the that-clause or rather whether responsibility should be allocated to the reporter.

Usually, Capone (2010, *Forthcoming*) adopted a strategy based on the following principle:

#### **Paraphrasis/Form Principle**

The that-clause embedded in the verb 'say' is a paraphrasis of what Y said, and meets the following constraints:

Should Y hear what X said he (Y) had said, he would not take issue with it, as to content, but would approve of it as a fair paraphrasis of his original utterance. Furthermore, he would not object to vocalizing the assertion made out of the words following the complementizer 'that' on account of its form/style. (Capone 2010, 382). (See Norrick 2016 for discussion).

This principle can probably be deduced through pragmatic principles of a more general type, as Capone (2010) said. But this is not our concern here. All we want to know is whether this principle is useful in understanding and explaining (in addition to describing) the praxis of indirect reporting. If anything, Capone has always taken this principle to militate in favor of the idea that the original speaker is responsible, when offensive, foul or slurring language occurs in the that-clause, for what is said in the that-clause of the reporting utterance. Of course, the application of this principle is modulated in context and we have admitted that in context one can settle the potential interpretative ambiguity in a way that is contrary to the predictions of the Paraphrasis/Form Principle. (See Haugh 2014).

So, the Paraphrasis/Form principle would predict that (possibly) the original speaker (rather than) the reporting speaker is responsible for the presuppositions of that-clauses in indirect reports. (We may, however, remain silent as to whether the



reporter accepts the presupposition or not; perhaps we may say he does or we may say he doesn't). However, like all predictions by the Paraphrasis/Form Principle, this should be confirmed (or otherwise cancelled) by contextual information. So *a priori*, we can say that the actual context has the power of cancelling such predictions if a potential contradiction between the contextual information and the prediction is perceived (a contradiction has to be settled somehow and one of the conflicting pieces of information has to be eliminated). What happens when contextual information conflicts in practice with the information predicted by the Paraphrasis/Form Principle? Which piece of information should be eliminated? Is the Paraphrasis/Form principle of such a high status that contextual knowledge can be modified by eliminating that part of it that is in conflict with the Principle? It is difficult to say what should happen in practice, unless we locate the problem at the level of the communicative practice. What we know for sure is that, if a principle A cannot be applied because by applying it we violate a principle B that is superior to it, then the principle (A) should (temporarily) be abandoned. So, it is not the case that if information contained in the background defeats Principle A, we should abandon it *ipso facto*. We should at least consider whether there is a stronger motivation, that is to say that the practical problem encountered in reconciling information belonging to the common ground and the Principle A is impossible to resolve because in resolving it in favor of Principle A we violate a principle that is superior to A. So what kind of principle that looks like a Principle B such that its status is higher than A do we have to grapple with?

In Capone ([forthcoming](#)), it was argued that a reason why the presuppositions of that clauses of indirect reports are attributed (by default) to the reporting speaker and NOT to the reported speaker's is that they should be satisfied by the context. But which context? The reported speaker's context or the reporting speaker's context? In Capone ([Forthcoming](#)) the idea was put forward that (in the same way in which deictic elements in that-clauses of indirect reports are assigned reference by taking into account the reporter's and the hearer's context because this is immediately accessible to the hearer), presuppositions of NPs or other elements in that-clauses of indirect reports should be satisfied by the context of the reporter and the hearer because this is the only context that is available to the hearer. If a presupposition is not satisfied, as Levinson (1983) following Strawson says, the discourse is not (and cannot be) felicitous. In some ways the hearer must be involved in assessing whether the discourse is felicitous or not. Thus, the presupposition is satisfied only if the context of the hearer satisfies it. This point is easily proved by accommodation (Stalnaker 1999). Suppose that the speaker says 'John's sister has arrived' even if the hearer does not know (hence the context *prima facie* cannot satisfy the presupposition triggered by 'John's sister') that John has a sister. At this point, the context is defective and the hearer must accommodate the presupposition (he does that by failing to object to the presupposition, by tacit acceptance/acquiescence). Now, if anything, what the discussion has proven is that scholars like Stalnaker and, in general, most practitioners on presuppositions accept that the context is something the hearer must have access to to see if the presupposition is satisfied.



That is, it must be a context shared by the speaker and the hearer (see Capone's 2000 considerations on speaker/hearer presuppositions).

At this point, we have reached a level in which we more or less know what kind of principles are in conflict in this kind of potential communicative situation. On the one hand, the Paraphrasis/Form-style Principle says that the original speaker ought to be responsible for the presupposition. However, if this is accepted in practice, another principle has to go (has to be abandoned), which is that a presupposition must be satisfied by the context, minimally by admitting accommodation. However, the principle B, which we have now located as the Presupposition Satisfaction Principle makes the contrary prediction, because it cannot be satisfied if the context we refer to is the context of the reported speaker (but it can be satisfied if by the context we refer to is the context of the reporting speaker/hearer). One principle has to go, and this has to be the Paraphrasis/form-style Principle. But we saw that in other cases too this principle could be defeated – one of most notorious cases being the case of translated indirect reports (see Capone [Forthcoming](#)). In any case, at this point all we have to try to understand is why the Presupposition Satisfaction principle is higher ranking than the other Principle A. We can only speculate that the reason is that the presupposition satisfaction principle is something of a semantic kind – and this explanation will do in the absence of a theory that considers presuppositions genuinely pragmatic phenomena that are cancellable in positive sentences as well as in negative counterparts (see Huang 2014, especially p. 66). We cannot exclude that such a theory will appear at one point. But at this point, the problem will have to reduce to the following: why is it that a type of conversational implicature defeats another type of conversational implicature?<sup>2</sup> Although it is difficult to predict the details of such a possible theory, we know that if a presupposition is projected (whether semantically or pragmatically) it must be compatible with the context (a minimal assumption which is alternative to presupposition satisfaction, according to Levinson 1983). The hearer has to ascertain whether it is compatible with the context, and thus there is the problem that the hearer should have access to the reported speaker's context. Our assumption

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<sup>2</sup>See Huang 2014. Huang (p. 66) discusses the projection problem for conversational implicatures and arrives at the conclusion that “each incrementation of the informational content of an utterance must be consistent with the informational content that has already existed, otherwise it will be cancelled according to the following hierarchy: The conversational implicature cancellation procedure

- a. Background assumptions;
- b. Contextual factors;
- c. Semantic entailments;
- d. Conversational implicatures;
- e. (i) Q-implicatures;  
(Q-clausal implicatures;  
Q-scalar implicatures);
- (ii) M-implicatures;
- (iii) I-implicatures

is that he cannot. Thus, the principle prevails that what is impossible should not be expected. This is certainly a higher ranking principle than the Paraphrasis/Form-style principle. Our hypothetical discussion aimed at surmounting obstacles posed by a possible future pragmatic theory has steered us in the direction of a principle (that plays some role in pragmatic theories as one of us said in Capone (2006) in his discussion of Grice's circle) that is quite general and higher ranking:

Do not expect the hearers and the speakers to do what is not possible for them to do.

There are other facts which ought to be noted in connection with presuppositions and indirect reporting (or belief (indirect) reports). Consider an utterance such as (4)

- (1) Mary believes that the king of France is bald.
- (2) Plato believed that Aristotle was the most important living philosopher.
- (3) Mrs Clinton said that President Obama was one of the best Presidents of US.
- (4) Mrs Clinton said that the President of US should care for the overall international balance among states.

Let us assume that belief reports are a kind of indirect report, without much argument (the demonstration would not be difficult anyway as they certainly are closer to indirect than to direct reports). Then the considerations we have accepted so far were conducive to accepting the proposition that the presuppositions should be satisfied by the context of utterance (the context of the reporter) rather than by the context of the original speaker. Let us now assume, without argument, that the subject of the belief coincides structurally with the logical characteristics of the original speaker of an indirect report. Then our theory assumes that the presupposition ought to be satisfied by the context of the reporter – thus the reporter and the hearer have to be taken as presupposing that there is a king of France (in 4), that there is a philosopher called 'Aristotle' in (5), that there is someone who is President of US and is called Obama (in 6), that there is someone who is President of US (in 7).

But one can easily see that these presuppositions can be satisfied by the original speaker's context too – we may assume in these cases that this is so because it happens that the reporter's context overlaps with the original speaker's context. But in some cases, there is no overlap. We may say things such as:

- (5) John said that Mattarella went to Noto to see the famous baroque buildings there.

The speaker says this even if he does not believe that John can identify the Italian President of the Republic with Mattarella. Thus, the context of utterance satisfied the presupposition that there is a certain man called 'Mattarella', but the context of the original speaker does not satisfy that presupposition. We should, however, grant that when presuppositional triggers are used in the that-clause of the indirect report, probably as a consequence of the opacity issue, we take for granted, unless

we have clear indications to the contrary by the context that the original speaker mentally uses the mode of presentation corresponding to the presuppositional trigger. However, he need not do so. (see Devitt 1996; Wettstein 2016). But the issue of the mode of presentation used in thought is something different from the issue of the satisfaction of the presupposition. When the context does not indicate otherwise, the presuppositional trigger will be assumed as a mode of presentation used in thought by the original speaker and, in this case, the presupposition must be satisfied both in the context of the original speaker and in the context of the reporter/hearer. However, if contextual clues militate against the hypothesis that the presupposition triggers correspond to words vocalized in thought or speech by the original speaker, then it is clear that the presuppositions of the presupposition triggers must (only) be satisfied by the reporter's context. So, now the space of alternatives is the following. There is the case in which there is an overlap between the reporters' and the original speaker's context and the case in which there is no overlap. If there is no overlap and, furthermore, the presupposition triggers do not correspond to modes of presentation used in thought by the original speaker, it must be taken for granted that only the reporter's context will have to be accessed in the satisfaction of the presuppositions. We should finally specify that we made this précis because there are different types of presupposition triggers. There are triggers like 'before', 'again', 'after', 'it was X to', 'stopped', 'regrets that' that do not correspond to modes of presentation of the reference. For these cases, none of the previous considerations on modes of presentation will apply. So, we should be happy to present as a general case the cases in which presuppositions in indirect reports are satisfied by the context of the reporter, while the exceptions to this generalizations have to be discussed specifically in terms of a general theory about the use of modes of presentation of the reference.

## 4 General Conclusion

We have probably touched the tip of an iceberg. We probably need a meta-theory saying what a pragmatic theory should look like, by specifying what can happen and what cannot happen in this theory. Some scholars like Grice (1989) or Jaszczolt (1999, 2005, 2016) have been busy working out constraints on what a pragmatic theory should look like. In this paper we have also mentioned considerations by Capone (Forthcoming and by Capone (2006), in addition to important considerations by Hall (2014). But the suspicion is that much more needs to be said at this level of abstraction, which can then be applied to specific cases that arise here and there.

All in all, we are satisfied with our treatment of pronominals and presuppositions in that-clauses of indirect reports. These phenomena are very similar, as pronominals too introduce some presuppositions or are interpreted in connection with their presuppositions. These parallel stories should be conducive to a more detailed investigation of the similarities between these two distinct orders of phenomena.

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# Discourse Markers in Different Types of Reporting



Péter Furkó, András Kertész, and Ágnes Abuczki

**Abstract** The present paper is informed by discourse marker research, often considered a testing ground for pragmatic theories. The paper's primary aim is to illustrate the benefits of the cross-fertilization between IR/DR and DM research and to argue that the analysis of discourse markers can serve as a heuristic tool to reveal differences in the use of indirect and direct reports across a variety of genres and text types in our four sub-corpora: (1) NC=natural conversations, (2) CI=celebrity interviews, (3) MPI=mediatized political interviews, and (4) SD=scripted discourse. The combination of automatic and manual annotation, complemented by the statistical analysis of the results, attempts to answer the following two sets of questions: (1) What patterns can be observed in terms of the frequency and grammatical features (tense, aspect, voice) of reporting verbs? (2) What kind of cross-genre differences can we observe with reference to reporting and the use of DMs in different types of reports (in terms of the frequency and functions of DMs, different report types, host units and p-contexts)?

**Keywords** discourse markers · types of reporting · corpus linguistics · discourse annotation · voicing · *p*-model

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The present paper is informed by research in a sub-field of pragmatics, discourse marker research, often considered a “growth industry” (Fraser 1999: 931) and, at the same time, a “testing ground” (Bordería 2008: 1354) for pragmatic theories. The paper’s aims are to illustrate that the analysis of discourse markers (henceforth DMs) can serve as a heuristic tool for revealing differences in the use of indirect and direct reports (henceforth IRs and DRs) across a variety of genres and text types, as well as to demonstrate the benefits of the cross-fertilization between IR/DR and DM research.

Different types of reports, as well as DMs, are used as inherently metatextual and/or metacommunicative devices. Cappelen & Lepore (2007), for example, describe both IRs and DRs (in their terms direct/indirect ‘quotations’ or ‘attributions’) as “language turned on itself”, while the functions of DMs have been alternatively described as meta-communicative (Frank-Job 2006), metatextual (Traugott 1995), or discourse-interactional (for an overview cf. Heine to appear: 10). Even though the insertion of DMs into IRs has been proposed as a possible test for distinguishing between IRs and DRs (cf. Capone 2016: 60ff), few papers have explored in detail the interaction (or overlap, as we will see in section 5.2) between the two types of meta-communicative devices. Norrick (2001) discusses the use of DMs in narratives, while Norrick (2016) relates IRs and narratives. However, to our knowledge, a detailed discussion of a three-way connection has not yet been offered. Similarly, Blakemore (2013) discusses at length the role of ‘subjectivity markers’ in free indirect style, and explains how DMs as a subgroup of subjectivity markers contribute to the illusion that the recipient (reader) of the IR is participating in the producer’s (narrator’s) thought processes (Blakemore 2013: 582ff). Once again, the additional roles and functions DMs display in IRs are outside the paper’s scope.

The present paper is also informed by the work of Kertész & Rákosi (2016) on the inferential structure of indirect reports, which argues that indirect reports can be reconstructed as two consecutive plausible inference processes (cf. Rescher 1976): that of the original utterance, conducted by the reporter, and that of the processed report, conducted by the listener (of the indirect report). Kertész & Rákosi’s (2016) model explains the relationship between these two (as well as the inferential nature of indirect reports in general) by introducing the concept of the p-context-dependence of IR production and processing. The present research adapts the notion of p-contexts with respect to the categorization of individual instances of DMs in both IRs and DRs (for details, see 5.4).

## 1.2 *The Class of Discourse Markers*

DMs comprise a functional class of linguistic items that do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the speaker's attitudes to the proposition being expressed, and for facilitating processes of pragmatic inferences. A variety of definitions have been offered, each informed by a particular theoretical framework (Conversation Analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics, Rhetorical Structure Theory, Relevance Theory, etc., for an overview, see Fischer 2006; Furkó 2007).

In the present paper we take a highly inclusive approach to DMs and define them as a set of syntactically diverse linguistic items (e.g. *of course, surely, I think, well*, etc.) that meet (all or most of) the following criteria: (1) they are used for either attitudinal or meta-communicative / metatextual functions (cf. section 1.1 above), (2) they lack conceptual meaning, (3) they do not add to the propositional content of IRs and DRs, and (4) their distinctive properties include (discourse) indexicality, context-dependence and multifunctionality. For a typical example of a DM, see well in example 1:

**Example 1:** *Well, I was asked what I thought about that.* (MPI)

Thus the term DM will be used as an umbrella term whose extension includes items with a primarily textual, discourse-connecting function, as well as primarily non-connective, interpersonal attitude markers. The former, textual markers are alternatively referred to as discourse markers (cf. Schiffrin, 1987), connectives or connectors (cf. Celle & Huart, 2007), or mots du discours (cf. Ducrot, 1984); the latter, interpersonal markers are alternatively referred to as pragmatic particles (cf. Meyerhoff, 1994), pragmatic expressions (cf. Erman, 1987), pragmatic force modifiers (cf. Nikula, 1996), or illocutionary force indicating devices, 'IFIDs' (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987). The categorization and functional taxonomy of DMs is, naturally, beyond the scope of the present study; for an overview of the relevant terminological considerations, see e.g. Fraser (1996).

## 1.3 *Types of Reports: DRs, IRs and Voicing*

The distinction between two types of reports, i.e. *direct* and *indirect reports* (or direct and indirect accounts of events and previous utterances) is vindicated in Capone (2016: 55–75). However, since the boundary between the two categories is not clear-cut, there are still certain controversies and open questions regarding the distinction. Generally, both are used to report on an earlier utterance, implying the original speaker's intentions, as well. However, direct reports (henceforth: DRs) are formally considered to be pure quotations (often marked by quotation marks or italics) where the voices of the reporter and the original speaker are clearly distinguished, and where explicatures are not required or relevant (Allan 2016).



Indirect reports (henceforth: IRs), on the other hand, constitute more complex linguistic phenomena, relying on explicatures and undergoing pragmatic changes (explicatures) and grammatical transformations (compared to the original utterance), such as pronoun change, indexical change, paraphrasis, backshift, summary, expansion and elimination of certain parts of the original utterance (Wieland 2013: 389–391). Polyphony (cf. Capone 2016) is a further feature of IRs, and it is exactly the problem of distinguishing the different voices (on the part of the hearer) that makes the study of IRs challenging. As Weigand (2015) puts it, language essentially has a dialogic structure, which is also mirrored in reports. Generally, the hearer of a report is usually not able to have access to the original context of the reported utterance, therefore, s/he has to perform transformations that enable the interpretation of that utterance (cf. Capone 2016: 2).

Kertész and Rákosi (2016: 435–470) argue that each indirect report provides latent background assumptions about the premises and statements related to the original utterance as well as any further information necessary to infer the producer's conclusions. Thus, the linguist/hearer needs to identify as many background assumptions and create as many contexts as are necessary in order to determine all the relevant factors for the production (as well as processing) of an IR. As a result, the conclusions of the inference(s) drawn by the reporter and the premise of the inference produced by the listener are not always (completely) identical (2016: 448). Furthermore, IRs also work as pragmatic vehicles to express irony, humour, sarcasm, etc. Ideally, indirect reporting involves the abilities of understanding and representing both the locutionary and illocutionary content of speech, among others (cf. Wieland 2016). Nevertheless, variance in the plausibility of the premises or background assumptions may cause failures in the communication process (Kertész and Rákosi 2016: 450). In contrast to the more complex inferential nature of IRs, DRs are not polyphonic; therefore, they do not hide slots for different voices to make comments, and are consequently more straightforward to interpret/evaluate (Capone 2016: 71).

In the example of a DR given below we can find a word-for-word quotation of the reported utterance where the pronoun remains the same as in the original utterance and the tense of the verb in the report is not backshifted:

**Example 2:** *I said, Mom, we gotta go.* (SBC, NC sub-corpus)

In contrast, as illustrated in examples 1 and 3, the features of IRs may include pronoun change (compared to the original utterance), paraphrase, reformulated structure, backshift and summary:

**Example 3:** *The Conservative party have said, for instance, on the NHS, they want to take a billion pounds.* (MPI)

In addition to the (more or less straightforward) distinction between DRs and IRs, we would like to draw attention to a third type of reporting, namely the phenomenon of *voicing*. Voicing the discourse of others is defined as a device whereby speakers can distance themselves from what is being said, and position themselves in the voices of others rather than their own (White 2000). It is a recurrent theme in the

2016 Capone volume that in most IRs it is untenable and unlikely that the reporter of the IR reproduces the (exact words of the) original utterance. When we analyse utterances of *voicing*, we do not compare with, or refer to, an original utterance, since during *voicing* speakers report an utterance that is probable, typical or likely to be heard or produced by a speaker other than the present one. In short, while DRs and IRs both report on earlier utterances or exchanges, voicing presents a hypothetical/imaginary utterance. Typical reporting expressions in *voicing* include the following (also shown in examples 4 and 5):

- what sy. often says, why don't they say, (sy. will say . . .)
- what somebody tends to say/is likely to say/ is likely to have said
- reporting verbs often co-occur with negatives and conditionals, e.g. 'No one asked them if . . .', 'If you were here and someone told you . . .'; 'They would keep saying . . .' 'we could say . . .' 'somebody would say ..'

**Example 4:** *No-one asked them, "Well what does that mean with the things you're not going to go ahead with?"* (MPI)

**Example 5:** *Well, there's never been any question of him (Tony Blair) standing down. You know I, but not just I, and many other people across government and in the parliamentary party, you know, in the Labour Party as a whole, it - have said, in difficult times, we're right with you; carry on, because we've got a big job to finish. That's where he is, you know he is absolutely up ...* (MPI)

As examples 4 and 5 illustrate, conversationalization and a resulting increase in the use of DMs often appears in connection with voicing. The examples also show that voicing cuts across the usual formal distinctions between IRs and DRs and can occur with or without pronoun change or quotation marks.

## 1.4 Research Questions

We will approach the use of DMs in different types of reports with a view to answering two sets of research questions:

- 1 What patterns can be observed in terms of the frequency and grammatical features (tense, aspect, voice) of reporting verbs? (Answers in section 4)
- 2 What kind of cross-genre differences can we observe with reference to reporting and the use of DMs in different types of reports:
  - 2.1. Is there a statistically significant difference in terms of the frequency of DMs in reporting across the four sub-corpora? (Answers in 6.1)
  - 2.2. Is there a statistically significant difference in terms of the distribution of the different types of reporting (DRs, IRs, V) across the four sub-corpora? If so, what factors may account for the differences? (Answers in 6.2)

- 2.3. What are the most salient functions of DMs in reporting? What similarities and differences can be observed in terms of the contributions of DMs to reporting across genres on the basis of our corpora? (Answers in 6.3)
- 2.4. What differences can be observed, in terms of the relationship between the reports that function as host units for DMs, and the previous discourse segments? (Answers in 6.4)
- 2.5. What further findings and perspectives does the study of p-contexts add to the analysis of DM use in reporting? Does it yield more nuanced differences among the genres/sub-corpora under scrutiny? Do the distributions of the p-contexts which DMs are associated with differ significantly across genres? (Answers in 6.5)

## 2 Research Material

Our material under scrutiny consists of the following sub-corpora:

- a BBC corpus of 37 confrontational mediatized political interviews (henceforth MPI sub-corpus) selected from *Hard Talk* and *Newsnight* through the method of downsampling (cf. Khosravini 2010);
- celebrity interviews (henceforth CI sub-corpus) downsampled from CNN's *Larry King Live*;
- a corpus of scripted dialogues (henceforth SD sub-corpus) based on the first season of the TV series *House, M. D.*;
- 30 randomly selected informal/natural conversations of the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois et al. 2000–2005) (henceforth NC sub-corpus).

In a previous study (Furkó & Abuczki 2014), we found that genre seems to be a powerful variable in the production of discourse relations as well as in terms of the resulting patterns of DM uses. While MPIs and CIs share similar formal and functional features with respect to turn-taking mechanisms, asymmetrical speaker roles, and the observable interactional frames (first-frame participants, i.e. interviewers/interviewees vs. second-frame participants, i.e. audience members), CIs appeared closer to NCs in terms of both the frequency and functional spectra of several DMs. For example, the turn-taking mechanism in MPIs can be characterized as more mechanistic and predetermined than in either NCs or in CIs, resulting in higher frequencies of presentation markers such as *I think* and *I mean*, rather than reception markers such as *well* and *oh*. We have also found that in the MPI sub-corpus the higher frequency of evidential markers such as *of course* with non-interactional functions might be explained by the fact that by using evidential markers the speaker recognizes that the context is heteroglossic, s/he is presented as responding to prior utterances, or anticipating a response expressing alternative viewpoints.

In the present study we will attempt to nuance such observations and relate cross-genre differences in DM use to different patterns of reporting in the four sub-corpora.

We decided to include the SD sub-corpus in order to substantiate previous research into the differences between NC and scripted conversations (SD). Both Chovanec (2011) and Dynel (2011) argue in favour of the legitimacy of the latter type of data in the field of linguistics in general and discourse analysis in particular. Dynel (2011) observes that scripted discourse mirrors “language users’ everyday communicative patterns” (2011: 43) and invokes “an illusion of real-life conversations” (ibid.). Furkó (2010) argues that similarly to linguists who rely on their own intuitions in order to make grammaticality judgements, the discourse analyst who looks at dramatized dialogues relies on script writers’ intuitions about conversational mechanisms and communicative strategies (Furkó 2010: 114). Moreover, since the script-writer’s intuitions and skills manifest themselves in the “verisimilitude of fictional interactions” (Dynel 2011: 43), the study of scripted data strikes up a balance between thought experiments in linguistics, and field methods that rely on the study of real-life conversations. Relating the functional spectra of DMs to the analysis of different types of reports can also broaden our perspective on the use of scripted discourse as data for analysis.

### 3 An Overview of the Research Process and Methodology

We will apply some notions of the *p-model of data and evidence* - such as *sources* and *reliability* (Kertész & Rákosi 2012, 2014) as well as *inferential structure* and *report processing* (Kertész & Rákosi 2016) - to the analysis of IRs, narrowing it down to the study of the context-dependence of IRs and the adjustment of p-contexts to the role of DMs in reports. In the framework of the p-model, the pluralism of linguistic theories and research methods is fruitful and should be utilised in order to obtain more reliable and better-founded solutions to the problems of linguistic research (Kertész & Rákosi 2014: 7). Accordingly, we also aim to follow the cyclic and prismatic nature of linguistic theorizing and employ a dynamic process of argumentation; therefore, we will be answering the above research questions (in 1.4) from two different perspectives, retrospectively re-evaluating our data as well as our methodological norms:

1. from the perspective of automatic semantic annotation and concordancing (with subsequent manual correction) with a view to maximizing the number of instances of the different types of reports to be considered in our data;
2. from the perspective of careful manual annotation of randomly selected reports from all four sub-corpora.

In short, we believe that there is no single correct solution to problems, hence the different perspectives taken in the course of answering our research questions. The two perspectives differ in terms of the research questions they are aimed at

answering (perspective 1 is aimed at answering RQ 1 and RQs 2.1–2.4, perspective 2 attempts to answer RQs 2.1–2.5; cf. sections 4 and 6.1–6.5) as well as the type of methodology involved (from quantitative through combined to qualitative methods), the role the researchers' intuitions and interpretation play in the analysis (in increasing order), and in terms of the degree of inductivity / deductivity of the individual approaches, as we proceed from deductive / top down to inductive / instance-based / bottom-up analyses.

## 4 Research Perspective 1: Automatic Semantic Annotation and Keyness of Reporting Verbs and Expressions

### 4.1 Description of the Process and Terminology of Automatic Semantic Annotation

In this section we will apply two established corpus linguistic instruments as a first approximation to the differences between reporting verbs and other reporting expressions across the four genres under scrutiny. The first instrument is automatic semantic annotation (ASA) complemented by manual error correction and filtering. ASA, as the name suggests, is the application of a computerized semantic tagging (CST) system, and, as such, offers a highly objective and replicable comparison of the relevant lexical items across the various sub-corpora.

There are a variety of CST systems, including artificial intelligence-based, knowledge-based, corpus-based, and semantic taxonomy-based systems (for an overview, cf. Prentice 2010). The present analysis will draw on the results gained from the UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS, cf. Rayson et al., 2004), which has the major advantage of combining these approaches: grouping lexical items in terms of a taxonomy of semantic fields as well as assigning semantic categories to all words (Prentice 2010: 408). The system uses an automatic coding scheme of 21 semantic fields (see Table 1 below), subdivided into 232 sub-categories (the complete coding scheme can be found at <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/>).

In order to identify and compare reporting words and expressions in the four sub-corpora, we looked up the semantic tags assigned to frequent reporting verbs such as *say*, *tell*, *ask*, *recommend* etc. and then used those semantic tags to identify further types and tokens relevant to reporting. What we found was that all instances of reporting verbs and expressions we managed to trawl from the sub-corpora through this method are either tagged with Q2.1 (terms relating to communication) or Q2.2 (speech act terms) according to the USAS coding scheme.

The tag Q2.1 in the USAS annotation system is described as “Terms relating to spoken communication”. Prototypical examples in the USAS manual include *chat*, *chatter*, *comment*, *converse*, *give an account of*, etc. The most frequent reporting words and expressions that were tagged as Q2.1 in our corpus were *say*, *talk*, *point (out)*, *interview*, *mention*, *(give a) speech*, *(make a) point*, *note* and *(make a) statement*.

**Table 1** Semantic fields in USAS

<b>A</b> General and abstract terms	<b>B</b> The body and the individual	<b>C</b> Arts and crafts	<b>E</b> Emotional actions, states and processes
<b>F</b> Food and farming	<b>G</b> Government and the public domain	<b>H</b> Architecture, buildings, houses and the home	<b>I</b> Money and commerce
<b>K</b> Entertainment, sports and games	<b>L</b> Life and living things	<b>M</b> Movement, location, travel and transport	<b>N</b> Numbers and measurement
<b>O</b> Substances, materials, objects and equipment	<b>P</b> Education	<b>Q</b> Linguistic actions, states and processes	<b>S</b> Social actions, states and processes
<b>T</b> Time	<b>W</b> The world and our environment	<b>X</b> Psychological actions, states and processes	<b>Y</b> Science and technology
<b>Z</b> Names and grammatical words			

**Table 2** Normalized frequencies of the relevant USAS categories

Corpus	Q2.1 pttw	Q2.2 pttw
<b>MPI sub-corpus</b>	139.7	101.1
<b>SD sub-corpus</b>	71.69	91.26
<b>CI sub-corpus</b>	56.9	48.7
<b>NC sub-corpus</b>	28.14	21.46

The Q2.2 tag is described as the category of “Speech act terms”. Prototypical examples in the USAS manual include *abrogate, accuse, address, announce, answer, shout*, etc. The most frequent reporting verbs that received a Q2.2 tag were *tell, call, question, ask, name, answer, explain*, and *suggest*.

In order to catch a first glimpse of the co-occurrence patterns of DMs and different types of reporting we also identified lexical items we include in our study as DMs under two annotation labels:

Z4, described in the USAS manual as the “discourse bin” including items such as *oh, I mean, you know, basically, obviously, right, yeah, yes*.

A5.1, described as “evaluative terms depicting quality”, including DMs such as *well, OK, okay, good, right, alright*.

## 4.2 Results of the Automatic Semantic Annotation

Table 2 above summarizes the normalized frequencies of each semantic category identified as relevant to reporting:

Table 2 shows that terms relating to spoken communication, as well as speech act verbs, are rather unevenly distributed across the four sub-corpora. As for the dispersion values, Juilland’s D is 0.68, which is a variation coefficient of 31.93% for words tagged with Q2.1, while Juilland’s D is 0.72, and CV is 28.34% for speech act

**Table 3** Normalized frequencies of co-occurrences of reporting expressions and discourse structuring / evaluative lexical items

Corpus	Q2.1w/ Z4	Q2.2w/ Z4	Q2.1w/ A5.1	Q2.2w/ A5.1
MPI	3445	2528	836	386
SD	1301	3270	384	1046
CI	614	641	110	91
NC	1024	766	183	159

verbs. Thus, we can safely observe that in mediatized political interviews metacommunication is the most widespread, while in spontaneous everyday conversations it is the least salient in the four sub-corpora under scrutiny, with SD and CI showing approximately median values of frequency.

Table 3, on the other hand, shows normalized frequencies of co-occurrences of reporting expressions (tagged Q2.1 and Q2.2) and lexical items tagged as Z4 or A5.1, some of which are expected to be DMs in the sense we are using the term here:

These co-occurrence patterns between the two groups of meta-communicative devices also suggest that metacommunication is more explicit and nuanced in MPIs and SD than in the other two subgenres. This was confirmed by random spot-checks of stretches of discourse where Q2.1 and Q2.2 tags cluster together in the concordance plot, as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

As can be expected, the higher the frequency of Q2.1 and Q2.2 tags in a given sub-corpus, the more likely that clusters occur within it. However, meta-communicative devices tend to cluster for different reasons in the sub-corpora, as illustrated by examples 6 and 7 below:

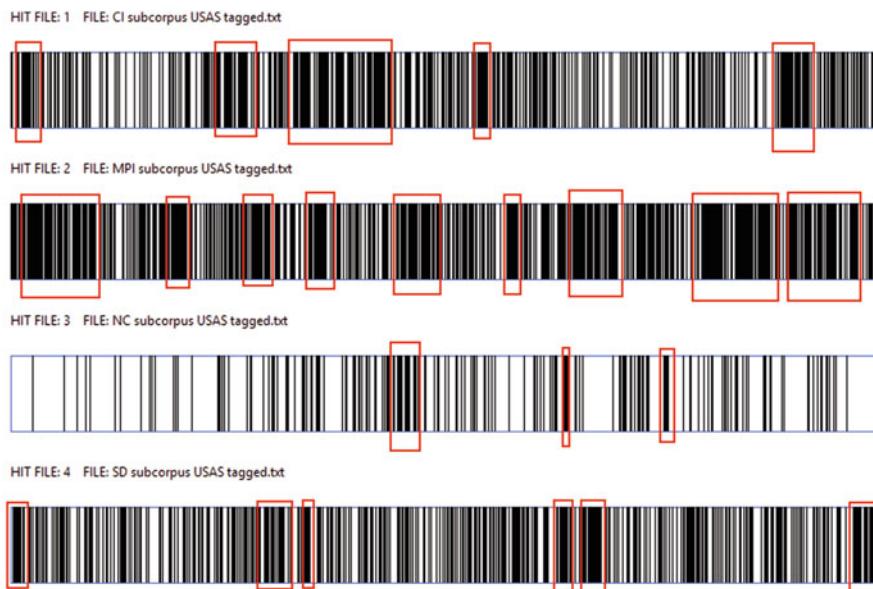
**Example 6 (extract from the MPI sub-corpus):** *IE: They [the weapons inspectors] were effectively thrown out for the reason that I will give you. [ . . . ] So when you say <Q2.1> the inspectors, when you imply <Q2.1> the inspectors were in there doing their work, that is simply not the case.*

*IR: I did not imply <Q2.1> that, I merely stated <Q2.1> the fact that they were not thrown out, they were withdrawn. And you concede <Q2.2> they were withdrawn.*

*IE: They were withdrawn because they couldn't do their job. I mean let's not be ridiculous about this, there's no point in the inspectors being in there unless they can do the job they're put in there to do. And the fact is we know that Iraq throughout that time was concealing its weapons.*

*IR: Right.*

*IE: Well hang on, you say <Q2.1> right, they were concealing their weapons, they lied <Q2.1> both about the existence of their nuclear weapons programme and their biological weapons programme and it was only when people were interviewed <Q2.1>, when they defected from the Iraq regime and were interviewed <Q2.1>, that we discovered the existence, full existence of those programmes at all.*



**Fig. 1** Concordance plots of Q2.1 and Q2.2 tags across the four sub-corpora

**Example 7:** *And one of these days he walked up to me and said <Q2.1>, You don't like me, **do you**. I said <Q2.1>, **Now**, Jimmy, that's not fair. [...] I said <Q2.1>, How in the world did you get in here? **And** he said <Q2.1>, Through the window. I said <Q2.1>, Next time, Sonny, you come through the front door just like everybody else. (CI)*

As illustrated by the examples above, random spot-checks of Q2 tag clusters suggest that in MPIS such clusters indicate the negotiation and explication of previous statements (cf. *when you say / when you imply / I did not imply / I merely stated / you concede*). These explicative reports suggest a heightened sense of pragmatic accountability on the part of both interviewers and interviewees.

On the other hand, the extract taken from CIs above is also illustrative of the two other sub-corpora, in that Q2 tag clusters mainly indicate the use of reporting verbs in narratives, i.e. sequences of events and the accompanying reporting words / expressions.

The two extracts also foreshadow the different patterns of DM uses associated with reporting statements (DMs are highlighted in bold), in that (often the same) DMs in MPIS appear to have mainly rhetorical functions and reinforce argumentation (exemplified by *so / and / I mean / and*), while in CIs and NCs there is an important functional salience of frame shifting in general, and the marking of narrative sequence (*and / and*), as well as evaluation / side sequences (*now*) in particular.



**Table 4** Keyness of reporting words in the four sub-corpora

reporting verb	sub-corpus/its reference corpus	number of tokens per 10000 words	keyness (log likelihood)
say	MPI/CI	24.9	35.5
saying	MPI/CI	14.2	97.37
said	CI/MPI	43.5	9.965
tell	CI/MPI	13.5	14.14
tell	NC/MPI	8.5	11.27
talk	CI/MPI	25.5	15.31
figured	SD/MPI	2.2	11.641
figured	NC/MPI	1.9	8.41

Having identified the relevant reporting verbs and expressions and their dispersion across the four sub-corpora, the second corpus linguistic instrument we applied was the keyness of the relevant words and expression with respect to the frequency of those words in a reference corpus. In the course of calculating keyness we compared the four sub-corpora in pairs: measuring keyness in a particular sub-corpus against a second sub-corpus used as a point of reference, resulting in six keyness pairs altogether. In order to calculate keyness, two separate statistical methods were used, Log Likelihood and Chi-Square Tests, yielding converging results. Because of space considerations we only include the Log Likelihood scores of reporting verbs that have keyness in one sub-corpus with respect to a different sub-corpus used as a reference corpus. The results are summarized in Table 4 above.

The keyness of various forms of reporting verbs suggest different patterns of reporting across the four genres under scrutiny. The keyness of both ‘say’ and ‘saying’ in the MPI can be associated with the confrontational quality of the genre, since they are mostly used in challenges as well as in requests for clarification:

**Example 8:** *You say ‘exaggeration’. Why would a serving British officer risk his career to go public with something he is obviously deeply concerned about?* (MPI)

**Example 9:** *But when you say that Saddam is a monster that is irrelevance, I’m afraid, to how you deal with the situation...* (MPI)

**Example 10:** *So you’re saying in this election, you will replace them as the official opposition* (MPI)

‘Said’, on the other hand, is the reporting verb that occurs more frequently in narratives than any other form of the lexeme ‘say’ (or ‘tell’). Thus, its keyness in CIs reveals the same pattern of clustering in narrative that we found in connection with the Q2 tag clusters in this sub-corpus - consider example 7 above.

The keyness of ‘talk’ in CIs underlies the non-confrontational, conversational nature of the genre. While many of its uses can only marginally be considered IRs, there are typical IR uses in CIs and NCs that are not present in the other subgenres:

**Example 11:** *We often **talked** about her high moral principles* (CI)

**Example 12:** *You know like how we have always **talked** about life being out there* (NC)

‘Figured’ is similarly marked for informal and conversational use, hence its keyness in CIs and the NC sub-corpus:

**Example 13:** *But he **figured**... if I don’t do it, it’s gonna fall on you or Pat.* (NC)

**Example 14:** *I think they’re trying to **figure** out how they – they’re doing the movie “The Producers”* (CI)

‘Tell’ also has keyness in both NCs and CIs; however, its most frequent use is not in IRs but in gambits / invitations to elaborate on a certain subject:

**Example 15:** *Jack, this is a beautiful animal. **Tell** me about it.* (CI)

**Example 16:** *Would you **tell** me the circumstances of how he came to live with his cousins?* (CI)

In sum, we have seen that automatic semantic annotation and a consequent keyness analysis of reporting expressions reveals interesting patterns of use and leads one to hypothesize about cross-genre differences in terms of different types of reports, as well as the role of DMs in IRs, DRs and voicing. The first perspective we have taken involved a quantitative, highly objective, top-down inductive analysis resulting in a number of issues to be explored in the course of the next stages of our research.

There are important details about the use of reporting verbs as well as their correlations with a variety of DMs that remain concealed behind the statistical data. Two cases in point are, firstly, the frequency with which the semantically tagged words are actually used as reporting words, whether, for example, they are associated with “use” or “mention” (cf. Wieland 2013), and secondly, whether individual DMs that show up in the collocation searches have a focus over the (in)direct reports whose reporting verbs they collocate with, or simply appear in proximity to reporting verbs by coincidence, as their host unit happens to precede or follow the report. In order to resolve these issues, individual reports and DMs have to be manually annotated and processed, a methodology we now turn to.

## 5 Research Perspective 2: Manual Annotation

### 5.1 List of Annotation Levels

First, let us briefly list our annotation levels and tags, which will be described in more detail in sections 5.2–5.4. In accordance with our research questions (cf. 1.4), we annotated our corpus material along the following lines (5.1.1–5.1.5):

### 5.1.1 Tokenization of Reporting Verbs/Expressions

First, we have tokenized reporting verbs and expressions. See section 6.1 for our findings.

### 5.1.2 Types of Reporting: IR / DR / V

In terms of the types of reports, we have distinguished and tagged indirect report (IR), direct report (DR) and voicing (V). For the definitions of DR, IR and voicing, see section 1.3; for the findings of the manual annotation see Fig. 3 in 6.2.

### 5.1.3 DM Functions and Contributions to the Reporting

The following categories of DM functions have been tagged:

- boost
- hedge
- distance
- alignment
- neutral – e.g. boundary marking
- the DM is the reporting verb or the report itself

For details of the annotation process see section 5.2; for the findings see section 6.3.

### 5.1.4 Host Unit Function

As for the function of the host unit, we have tagged them as either confrontational (C) or supportive (S). For terminology with examples see section 5.3; for their distributions see 6.4.

### 5.1.5 P-Contexts

DMs can be associated with:

- p-context 1.1
- p-context 1.2<sup>1</sup>
- p-context 2
- p-context 3

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of statistical analysis, we later merged categories 1.1 and 1.2 as p-context 1.

For the definitions of the tags details see section 5.4 below; for the results see 6.5. Having listed the tags we used, let us now turn to a more detailed description of the categories and terminology of the manual annotation (sections 5.2–5.4 below).

## 5.2 *The Annotation of the Contributions of DMs to the Different Types of Reports*

For the purposes of statistical analysis, we later merged some of these categories: 1. *boost* and 2. *hedge* were merged under the category of *pragmatic force modifiers* (PFM, subjective functions); 3. *distance* and 4. *alignment* were merged as the category of *positioning* (intersubjective functions); while the 5. *boundary marking* contribution (textual function as opposed to the previous subjective and intersubjective functions) was left intact because of its high number of occurrences, which is due to the frequency of connectives such as *and*, *because* and *so*. After the preliminary stages of the annotation we also identified a sixth type of DM contribution, for which we decided to use a new annotation tag (DM as IR), cf. examples 17a, 17b and 18 below:

**Example 17a:** *And I thought, OK* (CI)

**Example 17b:** *So I said, “Oh.”* (CI)

**Example 18:** *I was like . . .* (NC)

In the above examples DMs play a role which is unlike their contribution in any of the other categories, since here the DM either constitutes the report itself (cf. example 17a and b) or is used as a reporting expression (cf. example 18). In such uses DMs are not optional in syntactic terms, and clearly contribute to the propositional meaning of the utterance.

Discussing the status of such uses of lexical items that are otherwise most frequently used as DMs is beyond the scope of the present paper. As we mentioned in the introduction, we take an inclusive approach to DMs and, therefore, decided to annotate such instances under a separate category.

The conversion of our preliminary functional categories resulted in four final categories (1-4), each illustrated by examples 19–24, respectively:

- (1) **PFM** (DMs functioning as pragmatic force modifiers, expressing subjective functions)

**Example 19:** *There are people who will say **well actually** I went into the Health Service and got fantastic treatment from it* (MPI).

- (2) **Positioning** (intersubjective functions)

**Example 20:** *And they sent me to a psychiatrist, said I was lying to get insurance. **Now**, who could make up a story like that?* (CI)

**Example 21:** *And says, oh, the fish are running, don't you want to come up here, and blah blah* (NC)

(3) **Boundary marking** (DMs with neutral, textual and/or framing functions)

**Example 22:** *I called our house, and Mandy answered the phone, and I said where's... you know where's... where...? Is Ron there?* (NC).

(4) **DM is the report itself** (exemplified by 23) or **DM is the reporting** (shown in 24) **expression** (shown in 24)

**Example 23:** *And I said, "OK." / So I said, "Oh."* (CI)

**Example 24:** *He says, he looks at me and he goes, Beth, nothing ever flaps you.* (NC)

### 5.3 The Annotation of Host Units

When annotating the function of the host unit (the previous discourse unit) of different types of reports we started out with a wide range of descriptive labels. Because of the low inter-annotator agreement on the initially fine-grained categorization, we decided to collapse functional tags into two broad categories. We subsumed host units conveying *criticism, challenge, confrontation, asking for clarification, reminder, disalignment and disagreement* under the category of **confrontational function**, exemplified by 25 below:

**Example 25:** *That wasn't what you said, you said they were thrown out of Iraq.* (MPI)

On the other hand, the host unit was tagged as **supportive** (illustrated by example 26) in cases of *narrative development, justification, explanation, clarification, comment, elaboration, case history and exemplification*:

**Example 26:** *Prior to them leaving Iraq they had come back to the Security Council, again and again, and said we are not being given access to sites. For example, things were being designated as presidential palaces, they weren't being allowed to go in there.* (MPI)

### 5.4 The Annotation of the Types of P-Contexts DMs can be Associated with

Moving on to our next level of annotation, we apply the notion of *p-context* (Kertész & Rákosi 2016) in order to account for the roles of DMs in different types of reports, including indirect report and voicing (as mentioned in 1.1 and 1.3). Originally, Kertész & Rákosi (2016) applied the notions of *information content, reliability* and *plausibility value* (introduced in their *p-model of data and evidence* cf. Kertész &

Rákosi 2012, 2014), to explain the inferential structure of IRs. They claim that the hearer (of an IR) has to evaluate the reliability of the source(s) of information, and, therefore, the plausibility value of the IR, based on the evaluation of the sources. Subsequently, in order to thoroughly capture the context-dependence (and reliability) of IRs, they introduced the concept of *p-context*:

The *p-context* differs from the notion of ‘context’ as normally used in pragmatics. The prefix ‘p’ serves to restrict the contextual information merely to those factors that may influence the plausibility value of statements. The *p-context* includes, among other things, the available reliable sources in terms of which the plausibility value of statements can be judged. It also covers a set of statements together with their plausibility values with respect to the sources in the *p-context*. Indirect reports involve three different *p-contexts* corresponding to the three speech acts involved: (1) that of the production of the original speaker’s utterance, (2) that of the reporter’s production of the indirect report and (3) that of the listener’s processing of the report. These three *p-contexts* usually cover different statements and different sources, and statements may be assigned different plausibility values within them. (Kertész & Rákosi 2016: 449).

Tested on our pilot corpus examples, our **categorisation of the role of DMs** in DRs, IRs and voicing with respect to the *p-model* has resulted in the following threefold taxonomy (*p-contexts* 1–3):

**(1) DMs that belong to our first p-category can be associated with *p-context* 1, the *p-context* of the original speech act (henceforth: SA):**

Those DMs that fulfil their functions in *p-context* 1 are inside the DR/IR/V, i.e. in the original utterance, relating to the **original speaker’s production** of the utterance or the IR producer’s epistemic stance to the original utterance. Within *p-context* 1 we can distinguish two subtypes, depending on reliability of the information (suggested by the speaker’s DM use):

- ***p-context* 1 type 1:** The IR/DR/V involves DMs (typically boosters) that express/increase the reliability of the source (e.g. *sure, of course, actually*), illustrated by example 27:

**Example 27:** *And something he said to me really stuck in my mind. He said, “Look, actually, you know there is light, there is the chance of a deal. The problem is there isn’t a tunnel.” And I think that’s a wise thought . . .* (MPI)

- ***p-context* 1 type 2:** The IR/DR/V involves DMs (typically hedges) that decrease the reliability of the source (e.g. *oh, well, “disfluency you know”*), shown in an example for voicing in example 28 below:

**Example 28:** *Say that happens, and so you take a knock, and people say well, my goodness, you’re losing support to UKIP. Do you then open the bonnet and have a look at European policy with a view to hardening it up?* (MPI)

When quantifying and cross-tabulating the *p-contexts* in which DMs played a role the distinction between type 1 and type 2 DMs was abandoned and we considered DMs relating to *p-context* 1 in a single group.

(2) **DMs that belong to our second p-category can be associated with p-context 2, the p-context of the reporting SA:**

DMs that play a role in p-context 2 are used in the reporting SA where the source of information is referred to, relating to the **speaker's production** of the IR. As shown in example 29, where a hedge is used in a challenge, these DMs (e.g. *I think, like, general extenders*) typically convey information about the producer's certainty / uncertainty about the content of the reported utterance, that is, they comment on the reporter's own power of recall:

**Example 29:** JON SOPEL: *You talked about the last time you were on the programme when you said about Tony Blair, the whole loans business could speed up his departure from Downing Street, and you said, **I think**, the timetable is ...*

JOHN PRESCOTT: *I didn't say that by the way.*

JON SOPEL: *You said the timetable in people's minds is still reasonably the same.* (MPI)

(3) **DMs that belong to our third p-category can be associated with p-context 3, the p-context of report processing:**

P-context 3 corresponds to the **listener's processing** of the report, and can therefore be considered the meta-level of the report/reported utterance. The source includes both the original speaker and the reporter, since this p-context involves the listener's guesses about the contribution of the original speaker and the reporter to the report so the listener can separate their roles. DMs operating on this meta-level facilitate the listener's processing of the report (see examples 30 and 31). DMs that play a role in p-context 3 are usually outside the DR/IR/V, e.g. *feedback-search you know*, and connectives such as *and* and *but*. The listener's p-context contains the DR/IR/VIR in such a way that its plausibility value is re-evaluated by the listener.

**Example 30:** *And yet you have Patricia Hewitt saying this is the best year ever for the NHS.* (MPI)

**Example 31:** *She just told me that, you know, it was a long time ago.* (NC)

The results of the annotation of p-contexts can be read in 6.5.

## 6 Results of the Manual Annotation

Once we finalized the annotation scheme, two expert annotators applied it to tag DMs and the different types of reports that served as their host units in each of the four sub-corpora. Next, we used ReCal to calculate inter-annotator agreement, which yielded the following values, presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Subsequently, we removed instances of reporting where any of the annotation tags resulted in inter-annotator disagreement, yielding the data which is summarized in the following sections.

**Table 5** Inter-annotator agreement on the contribution of DMs to the various reports

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)	N Agreements	N Disagreements	N Cases	n Decisions
Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	93.2%	0.904	0.904	0.904	408	30	438	876

**Table 6** Inter-annotator agreement on functions of DMs in different p-contexts

	Percent Agreement	Scott's Pi	Cohen's Kappa	Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)	N Agreements	N Disagreements	N Cases	n Decisions
Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	97.9%	0.968	0.968	0.968	429	9	438	876

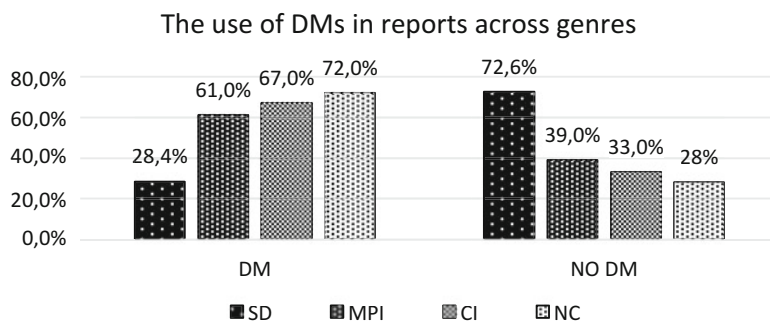
### 6.1 Co-Occurrence of DMs and Reporting Verbs/Expressions

After cleaning the data of disagreements, Fischer's exact tests and Crosstabs tests were performed to decide if there is a relationship between two categorical variables (e.g. sub-corpora and DM use: DM/no DM; sub-corpora and p-context; etc.). As mentioned above, statistical tests were run only on those tokens where inter-annotator agreement was observed.

Fig. 2 and Table 7 summarize the presence and absence of DMs in reporting verbs/expressions across the four sub-corpora and provide a cross-tabulation of statistical significance, respectively. As Table 7 shows, there is a statistically significant difference in terms of the frequency of DMs in reporting across the four sub-corpora. However, the findings in 4.2 have to be reconsidered in the light of the results of manual annotation. It is still probable that metacommunication in the MPI and SD sub-corpora is more salient than in the other two sub-corpora due to the fact that the former contain more of the lexical items that are frequently used as reporting verbs and expressions (marked Q2.1 and Q2.2 tags), as well as the fact that these items co-occur more frequently with lexical items tagged as A5.1 and Z4 (many of which are DMs in the sense we are using the term). However, as mentioned above, lexical items identified as frequent reporting verbs have a whole range of uses that are not associated with reporting. Moreover, there are a number of lexical items tagged as Z4 or A5.1 that are discourse structuring and/or evaluative devices other than DMs, and even tokens that qualify as DMs might co-occur in the left or right contexts of reporting verbs and expressions without having them or the reported utterance in their scope.

Accordingly, as Table 7 shows, metacommunicative items that have been identified as DMs in the course of the manual annotation occur more frequently within





**Fig. 2** Presence and absence of DMs in reporting across the four sub-corpora

**Table 7** Cross-tabulation of occurrences of DMs within reports in four genres. The  $p$ -value is < 0.00001. (The result is significant at  $p < .05$ .)

<b>Results</b>			
	<b>DM is present</b>	<b>DM is not present</b>	<b>Row Totals</b>
<b>CI</b>	138 (86.95) [29.98]	68 (119.05) [21.89]	206
<b>MPI</b>	149 (102.98) [20.56]	95 (141.02) [15.02]	244
<b>SD</b>	88 (130.84) [14.03]	222 (179.16) [10.24]	310
<b>NC</b>	107 (161.23) [18.24]	275 (220.77) [13.32]	382
<b>Column Totals</b>	482	660	<b>1142 (Grand Total)</b>

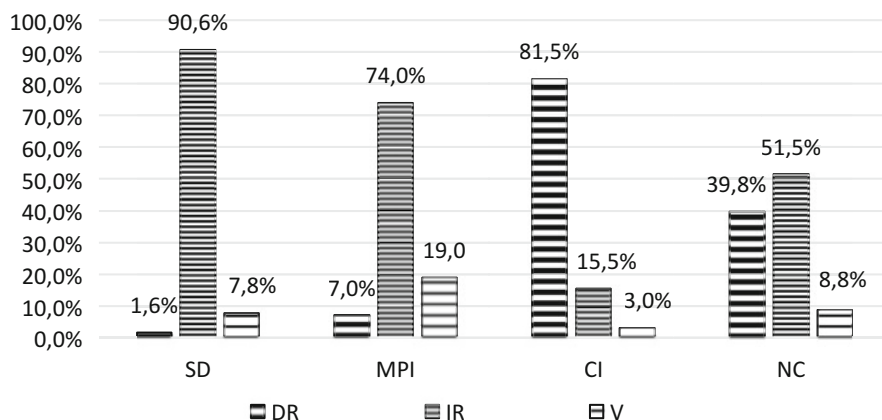
different types of reports in NCs and CIs rather than in MPIs or SD. The significantly low frequency of DMs in SD might be explained by the lower occurrence of DMs in planned discourse overall.

## 6.2 Types of Reporting in the Manually Annotated Data

The frequency of DMs in reporting needs to be considered with reference to the different types of reporting. Fig. 3 below summarizes the percentage of IRs, DRs and voicing in the four sub-corpora as observed in the random sample we used in the course of manual annotation.

The results are not surprising with respect to the SD, MPI, and NC sub-corpora: the percentage of IRs decreases, while the percentage of DRs increases parallel to the decrease in the degree of planning, i.e. the increase of spontaneity. This can be explained by the fact that, compared to DRs, IRs require “an additional memory load” on the part of both producer and receiver because of the multiple discourse contexts that are accessed and represented (Cummings 2016: 49), as well as the need for grammatical transformations, explicatures, etc. as explained in section 1.3 above. DRs, on the other hand, are often markers of informal, spontaneous discourse as they are easier to produce and process ‘on the fly’ as the conversation

## The distribution of the types of reporting

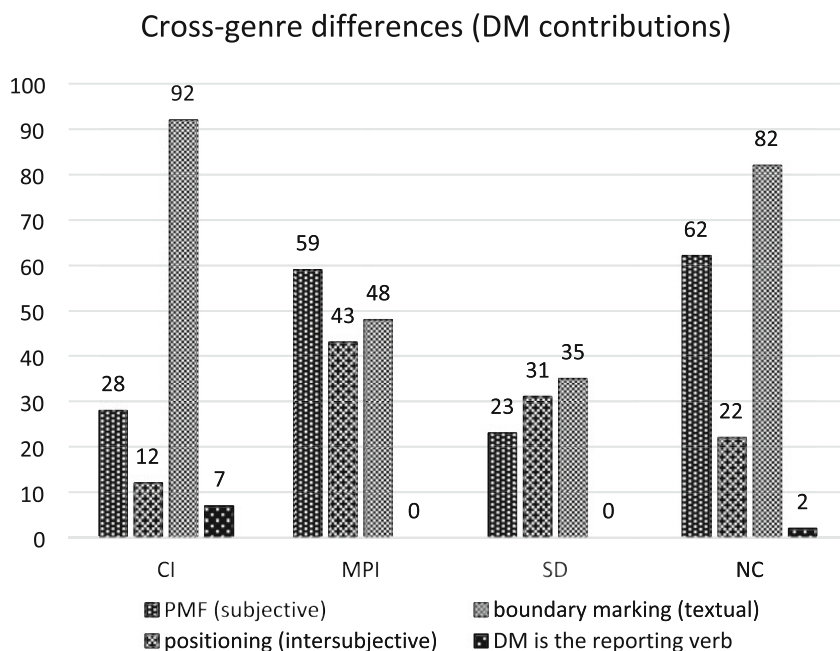


**Fig. 3** The distribution of the different types of reporting across the four sub-corpora

unfolds in real time. In this respect the finding that DRs are even more frequent in CIs than NCs is surprising and might be explained by, on the one hand, the non-confrontational nature of CIs, and on the other, the effect of dramatizing, which DRs often evoke (cf. Capone 2016: 60). Holt (2016) also observes that the formal features that distinguish IRs from DRs are resources available to conversational partners “in order to shift footing more or less dramatically” (Holt 2016: 185). Moreover, she lists DMs (or discourse particles in her terminology) as an example of such formal features, in addition to deictic reference, tenses, pronouns, and vocatives (ibid). The contributions of DMs to different types of reporting (discussed in the next section) will confirm that the salience of DMs in CIs can be explained in terms of (dramatic) frame shifting.

### 6.3 *The Functions of DMs and their Contributions to Different Types of Reporting across the Sub-corpora*

As Figure 4 below illustrates, the most salient functions of DMs in reporting are associated with boundary marking (including frame shifting) in NCs and CIs, while DMs associated with pragmatic force modification and intersubjectivity are more frequent in MPIs and SDs and less prominent in more spontaneous and less confrontational conversations. At this point it became apparent that the similarities between MPIs and the scripted conversations in our data are the result of the choice of House, MD for our SD sub-corpus and the resulting confrontational nature of the exchanges. The co-occurrence of (Q2-tagged) metacommunicative verbs with discourse structuring (Z4) and evaluative (A5.1) devices already showed similar



**Fig. 4** The contribution of DMs to reporting across the four genres under analysis

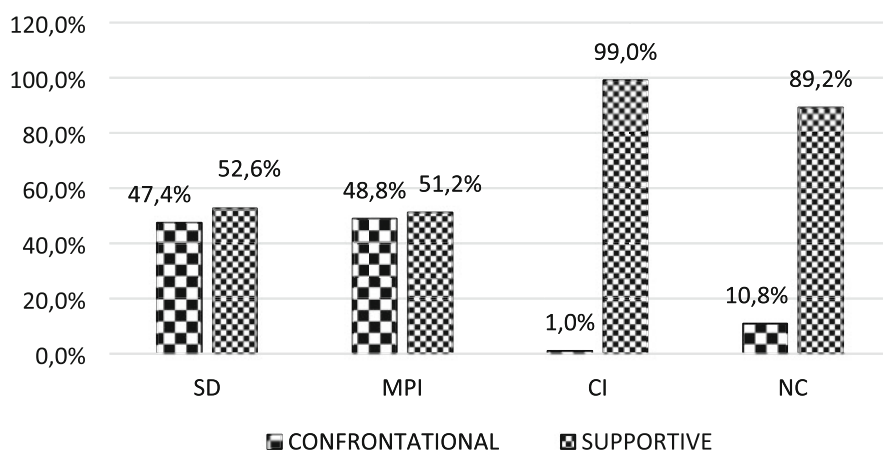
patterns in the two sub-corpora, which lead us to believe that for some reason metacommunication is more important in these genres than in more spontaneous exchanges. The reason becomes apparent in light of the prominence of DMs used as PMFs and positioning devices, which we will detail in section 7.

It is also interesting to consider that DMs are themselves reporting verbs in CIs and NCs only, which, once again, underlies the informal, casual quality of the exchanges in these sub-corpora.

#### ***6.4 The Function of Reports with Respect to the Previous Discourse Unit***

Fig. 5 below summarizes the functions of IRs, DRs and voicing in terms of their relation to the previous discourse unit, which, depending on the report's position in the turn, can be the current speaker's own utterance, or the previous speaker's contribution:

### The distribution of host unit functions across genres



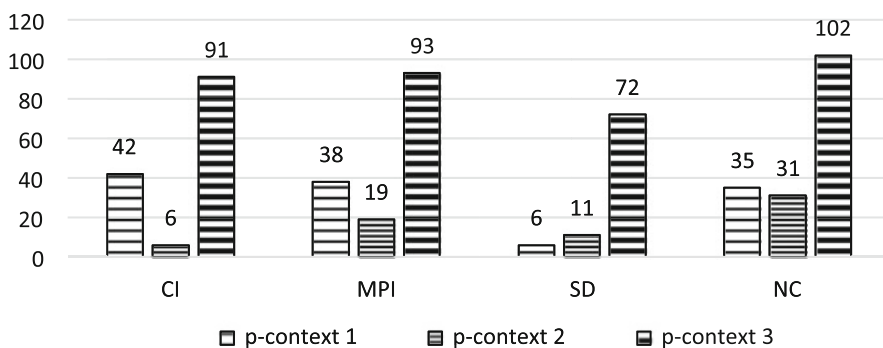
**Fig. 5** The distribution of host unit functions

As mentioned before, contrastive reports can be of different kinds: they might express contrast or disruption on the ideational, textual, rhetorical or interpersonal level (for a detailed account of the different levels cf. Crible 2016), convey rephrasing, reformulation, disagreement, reminder, challenge, etc. Supportive reports, on the other hand, can also be of many different types (justification, elaboration, narrative development, clarification, etc.), but what they have in common is that they do not disrupt the topic development, argumentation, interpersonal alignment, temporal sequence, etc. of the previous discourse unit (be it an utterance, turn, exchange, or the complete conversation up to that point). We have found it useful to collapse the different subcategories into the two primitives of contrast and support, moving from a high-granularity annotation scheme and a great degree of inter-annotator disagreement to low-granularity and perfect inter-annotator agreement (cf. tables 5 and 6 above). Fig. 5 shows that the resulting frequency distribution enables us to highlight the differences between confrontational style characterised by the MPIs, as well as the scripted exchanges in our sample, and the more supportive, non-confrontational exchanges that occur in NCs, as well as in CIs. It is interesting to notice that participants in CIs even exceed the frequency of supporting moves in spontaneous, everyday conversations, underlying, once again, the familiar, “soft and fool-good” style (cf. Lauerbach & Fetzer 2007: 22) we can observe with respect to the genre of celebrity interviews.

**Table 8** Crosstabs test of the relevance of DMs to p-contexts

Results				
	p-context 1	p-context 2	p-context 3	Row Totals
CI	42 (30.80) [4.07]	6 (17.06) [7.17]	91 (91.14) [0.00]	139
MPI	38 (33.24) [0.68]	19 (18.41) [0.02]	93 (98.35) [0.29]	150
SD	6 (19.72) [9.55]	11 (10.92) [0.00]	72 (58.36) [3.19]	89
NC	35 (37.23) [0.13]	31 (20.62) [5.23]	102 (110.15) [0.60]	168
Column Totals	121	67	358	546 (Grand Total)

### Cross-genre differences (p-contexts)

**Fig. 6** The distribution of p-contexts DMs are associated with in IRs, DRs and voicing

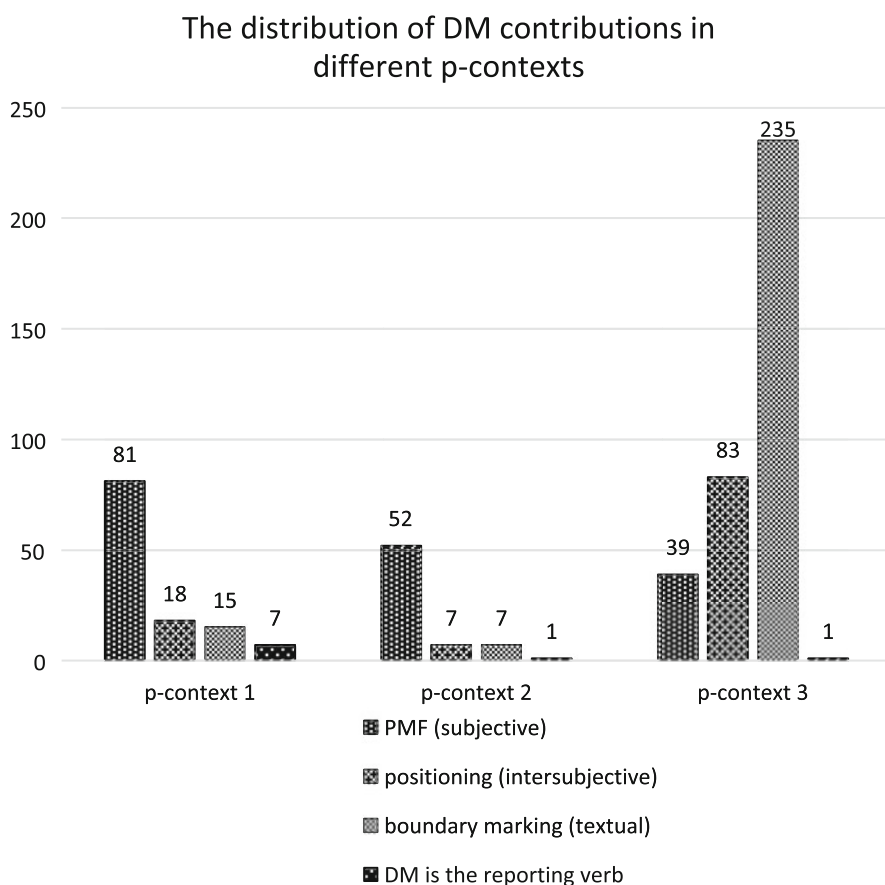
## 6.5 Cross-Genre Differences in the P-Contexts DMs can be Associated with

In Table 8 above we can observe that there are statistically significant differences in the frequency with which DMs fulfil their functions in the respective p-contexts. The cross-tabulation presented in Fig. 6 and Table 8 above uses dependent variables, and the  $p$ -value is .000026, so the result is significant.

Despite such differences, in all four sub-corpora DMs contribute most frequently to p-context 3 of the reports in which they occur, i.e. they function as facilitators of the processing of the reports. As we saw in the previous section, these p-context 3 functions differ across the four genres in that in CIs and NCs the facilitation of processing usually takes the form of marking frame shifts, while in MPIs and SD DMs ease the processing of the report on the interpersonal plane, i.e. in terms of modifying the pragmatic force of the report, or as positioning devices aligning or distancing the speaker with respect to the content (or explicature) of the reported proposition. While the second p-context in which most DMs fulfil their functions is p-context 1 in CIs, MPIs and NCs; SD stands out in this respect, causing the statistically significant differences in the overall functional distribution. The fact that DMs very rarely mark the original speaker's production (p-context 1) of the report is more likely to be due to the scripted nature than to the confrontational

quality of the exchanges in the SD sub-corpus, since, as we saw earlier, we can observe similarities between the MPI and the SD sub-corpus in terms of the distribution of the contrastive and supportive functions individual reports have. In any case, our categorization of DM functions with reference to the three p-contexts of the reports has enabled us to find more nuanced differences between two sub-corpora that, overall, display similarities in the frequency and co-occurrence of metacommunicative devices, IRs, and contrastive reporting units, as well as the primarily (inter)subjective functions of DMs. Naturally, further analysis and validation will be needed in order to decide whether or not frequency of reference to p-context 1 is an indicator of unscriptedness.

In addition to the analysis of the distribution of the contributions of DMs to reporting across genres (presented in Fig. 4 above in 6.3), we have also cross-tabulated the contributions/functions of DMs and the p-contexts that DMs can be associated with (presented in Fig. 7 below).



**Fig. 7** The distributions of the contributions of DMs to reporting and the p-contexts in which DMs fulfil their roles

## 7 Discussion: Prototypical Uses of DMs in Reporting across the Four Sub-corpora

In light of the results detailed in the previous sections, we have identified some of the most prototypical functions and uses of reports in the four respective sub-corpora, as well as the typical functions and uses of DMs that have focus over the reports. In the following, we will provide some examples.

### 7.1 Core Examples from the MPI Sub-corpus

On the basis of the manual annotation, frequency counts and statistical significance tests, we can safely say that a prototypical report in confrontational political interviews such as *Hardtalk* and *Newsnight* appears to be an indirect report which is in contrast with the previous discourse unit (typically the previous speaker's utterance) on the interpersonal level, and includes a DM which is used for disalignment, pragmatic force modification or other interpersonal functions and can be associated with p-context 3 of the report, i.e. helps the hearer process the pragmatic force of the utterance or its relation to the previous discourse unit. The original speaker of the utterance that is reported is typically the interlocutor, and the reporting verb is in the present or past tense, second person (singular or plural). This prototypical report is exemplified by 32 and 33 below:

**Example 32:** *Well, you say that **but** the screening process, the fingerprinting of all asylum seekers has only just come in.* (MPI)

**Example 33:** *IR: Prime Minister **but you said**, in your view, it may be necessary to go to war without a second resolution.*

*IE: Well I said that in one set of circumstances.* (MPI)

Another prototypical report, exemplified by 34, is an IR where no DM is present, the report is in contrast with the previous utterance on at least one plane of discourse, the original speaker of the utterance that is being reported is the interlocutor and the reporting verb is in the past tense, second person (singular or plural).

**Example 34:** *That wasn't what you said, **you said** they were thrown out of Iraq.* (MPI)

A third type of report with a genre-specific constellation of IR features, shown in 35, is an IR which is contrastive, contains a DM or a combination of DMs used for foregrounding (*look*) or backgrounding (*yes . . . but, of course...but*), thus facilitating the processing of the IR on the part of the hearer (i.e. it is a p-context 3 DM), and where the original speaker of the reported proposition is somebody other than the current speaker or hearer:

**Example 35:** *Look, Tony Blair is right to say, as he did recently, that what happens in the Gaza Strip should not be an excuse for anyone to be radicalised. And of course that's right, but we have to deal with the world as it is.* (MPI)

In mediatised political interviews we find that if a DM relates to p-context 2 (the current speaker producing the report) the IR typically refers to a previous statement produced by somebody other than the current speaker or hearer, and the DM is typically an evidential marker, i.e. it marks the speaker's certainty / reliability or uncertainty / unreliability with regard to the accuracy / explication of the report. For examples, see the dialogue below:

**Example 36:** IR: *Hans Blix said he saw no evidence, either of weapons manufacture, or that they had been concealed.*

IE: *No, I don't think again that is right. I think what he said was that the evidence that he had indicated that the Iraqis were not cooperating properly and that, for example, he thought that the nerve agent VX may have been weaponised.*

*And he also said that the discovery of the warheads might be - I think I'm quoting here - may be the tip of an iceberg. I think you'll find that in that report.* (MPI)

Surprisingly enough, voicing appears more frequently in MPIs than in any of the other three sub-corpora. In these reports the DM typically also relates to p-context 3, expressing positioning with reference to the proposition/speech act being voiced. In the course of previous research (cf. Furkó 2013) it was observed that the DM *oh* typically conveys disalignment, while *well* marks alignment to the voiced utterance. This has been confirmed in the present study in the course of our analysis of different types of reporting:

**Example 37:** *It's rather an odd situation we have here where the, the government are trying to legislate, or the House of Commons is trying to legislate very very quickly, that this is a bill that passed all its stages in the House of Commons, minimum of debate in one day, and then they say, oh it doesn't need to come into effect for eighteen months or two years.* (MPI)

**Example 38:** *But what happens if an employer says, well all well and good, but we don't really want to see these union leaders, we've got better things to do.* (MPI)

## 7.2 Core Examples from Scripted Discourse

In our sub-corpus of scripted dialogues, gleaned from the popular TV series *House, M.D.*, and therefore comprising mostly confrontational exchanges, a prototypical report is also an indirect report that is usually a challenge or is otherwise in contrast with the previous utterance in terms of the ideational, rhetorical or interactional planes of discourse. The original speaker is usually the hearer, thus the reporting verb is in the second person singular, often in the present tense, and is usually



not one of the variant forms of the lexemes *say* and *tell*, the most frequently used reporting verbs in non-scripted discourse. The report usually functions as a (rather rude and challenging) request for clarification:

**Example 39:** *You offering to protect me?* (SD)

**Example 40:** *Are you asking us to jeopardize our medical licenses for this treatment?* (SD)

**Example 41:** *You told me you hadn't changed your diet or exercise, were you lying?* (SD)

If the report contains a DM it is usually associated with p-context 3, i.e. it relates to the processing of the report, usually to the explication of the reported utterance, and the reporting verb is in the present tense, second person singular, and often a verb that increases the type-token ratio of reporting verbs in the sub-corpus:

**Example 42:** *So you're warning me that I may be treating a non-existent ailment?* (SD)

**Example 43:** *So, when you say "Call me if you need anything", you mean, "Don't call me".* (SD)

### 7.3 Core Examples from Celebrity Interviews and Natural Conversations

As we saw previously, reports in CIs and NCs are very similar in terms of the type of reporting (IR, DR, voicing), the function of the report (contrastive/supportive), and the frequency of DM appearing in the report, as well as the DM's typical functions and its relation to p-contexts, etc. Therefore, in the present section we discuss the prototypical reports in CIs and NCs together, the only difference being that in CIs these prototypical examples occur even more frequently than in NCs and often with dramatizing effects.

The prototypical reports in this category are, consequently, direct reports that are supportive moves with respect to the previous discourse unit, and which include a DM that relates to p-context 3, i.e. which facilitates the hearer's processing of the report by marking frame shifts or other boundaries on the rhetorical or textual discourse planes. The DM is usually one of the most frequent, low type-token ratio DMs such as *like*, *oh*, *you know*, *well*, or a connective such as *and*, *so*, or *but*. The reporting verb is also typically one that decreases the type-token ratio of Q2-tagged lexical items, usually a variant form of the lexemes *say*, *talk* or *tell*:

**Example 44:** *They said something like, you know, what, it's the butterfly, you can't catch.* (NC)

**Example 45:** *She comes out from hiding, and says, **Oh**, whatever your name is, says, **oh**, mighty princess. Allow me, to get a nurse for the baby.* (NC)

Within this prototypical DR we find examples where the DM is either the DR itself or is the reporting verb of the DR (cf. section 5.2. above):

**Example 23 (repeated):** *And I said, “**OK.**” / So I said, “**Oh.**”* (CI)

**Example 24 (repeated):** *He says, he looks at me and he goes, Beth, nothing ever flaps you.* (NC)

DMs relate to p-context 1 more frequently in CIs and NCs than in the other two sub-corpora, but unlike in MPIs, they do not typically function as positioning devices, but make the report livelier, or more dramatized in the case of CIs:

**Example 46:** *So Mom said, well my next free day’s like October fourth.* (NC)

**Example 47:** *Now the next thing I know, she says, “**You know**, I am just so heavy now, you won’t believe how heavy.”* (CI)

Voicing is also typically found in the two sub-genres under discussion:

**Example 48:** *and he’ll go ahead and say, this is what needs to be done.* (NC)

**Example 49:** *So you can’t say well I don’t have an education.* (NC)

**Example 50:** *my wife said, which most wives, I’ve found out, will say to the husband when his check comes. They say, “**Well**, why don’t you just have it put into the account?”* (CI)

**Example 51:** *She could look at it, and then she would say, “Come here.”* (CI)

## 8 Conclusions

### 8.1 Summary of Findings and Implications

In conclusion, the qualitative and quantitative analyses, and the automatic (RP1) and manual (RP2) annotation of reports in the four sub-corpora have led to the following findings.

In answer to RQ1, from the perspective of automatic annotation (RP1) we have found that the frequency and grammatical form of reporting expressions reflect metacommunication that is more explicit and nuanced in MPIs and SD than in the other two subgenres. Moreover, a cluster analysis revealed that the explication of the report is often negotiated in MPIs, whereas clusters reveal narrative sequences in CIs and NC. The former finding has important implications for Capone’s Paraphrasis/Form Principle:

Should Y hear what X said he (Y) had said, he would not take issue with it, as to content, but would approve of it as a fair paraphrasis of his original utterance (2016: 66).

While we do not question the validity and theoretical importance of the principle, it is interesting to consider that in MPIs the accuracy and felicity of IRs, on the one hand, and the original speaker's approval, on the other, need to be separated. An IR might be both accurate and felicitous; nevertheless, the original speaker might (possibly for deceptive or manipulative purposes) take issue with it, as we saw in example 6 (the interviewee's first utterance) above. Conversely, an IR might be completely inaccurate and still be accepted by the original producer, especially if the reporter and the original producer are the same (cf. example 6, interviewer's first utterance).

In answer to RQs 1 and 2.4 we have found that there is a statistically significant difference between MPIs and SDs on the one hand, and NC and CI, on the other, in terms of the saliency of contrastive / hearer-oriented reports in that in the former two subgenres various types of reports are often used with a challenging function, and reflect a higher degree of pragmatic accountability. Research perspectives 1 and 2 yielded converging results in that a higher type token ratio, i.e. a wider variety of reporting expressions can be observed in the MPI and SD sub-corpora, parallel to the typical use of reports as confrontations, disalignments, reminders and requests for clarification.

In answer to RQs 2.1 RP 1 and 2 yielded diverging results. Automatic annotation and cluster analysis suggested that DMs co-occur with reports more frequently in SDs and MPIs, while the manual annotation of random samples revealed that DMs and reports co-occur in CIs and NC more often, especially since DRs are more frequent than IRs in these genres. RP 1 still suggests that the co-occurrence of the two kinds of meta-communicative devices reflects a higher degree of explicitation and meta-marking in more confrontational discourse types, although manual annotation is needed to filter out uses of *say*, *tell*, *talk*, etc. which are not reporting expressions, as well as DM tokens that are in the left or right context of reporting expressions but are outside the scope of the reports.

With respect to RQ 2.2 we found the most surprising results. While voicing has been previously identified as a characteristic of spontaneous, everyday, casual conversations (cf. Tannen, 2010), our data suggests that voicing is more frequent in MPIs than in any other genres. This could be explained by the fact that, unlike in IRs and DRs, in the case of voicing there is no expectation that the exact / approximate proposition has actually been put forward; consequently, this type of reporting lends itself to manipulative uses and abuses. This has important implications for the study of political discourse in general, and Critical Discourse Analysis in particular (cf. Furkó 2017).

As for RQ 2.3, we have seen that the most salient functions of DMs in reporting are associated with boundary marking (including frame shifting) in NCs and CIs, while DMs associated with pragmatic force modification as well as positioning / intersubjectivity are frequent in MPIs and SDs but less salient in more spontaneous and less confrontational conversations. We have also found that DMs are used as reporting expressions or as complete (direct) reports or voicing expressions in NC and CIs only, parallel to the informal, casual tone implied by such uses.

With respect to RQ 2.5 we have seen that DMs have a salient role in p-context 3 in all four sub-corpora, i.e. in aiding the H's interpretation of the report and placing the report in the context of the surrounding discourse. While p-context 3 DMs in MPI and SD reports mostly contribute to the interactional plane, DMs in CI and NC reports do so to the textual and rhetorical planes. Moreover, we have found that by making reference to the role of DMs in the three p-contexts identified by Kertész & Rákosi (2016) we have been able to differentiate between two seemingly similar, confrontational discourse genres, MPIs and conflict-driven scripted dialogues. Without reference to p-contexts, the traditional functional categories used for describing DM functions (on all of the four, i.e. on the ideational, rhetorical, textual and interpersonal, discourse planes) did not yield any statistically significant differences between the use of DMs in MPI and SD reports. While further analysis and validation will be needed we have identified a possible correlation between the frequency of reference to p-context 1 and the degree of planning / scriptedness.

## 8.2 *Directions for Further Research*

Because of space considerations, we have been constrained to limit our analysis to prototypical examples of the roles of DMs in reporting in the four sub-corpora. As mentioned earlier, we removed instances of reporting / tokens of DMs where any of the annotation tags resulted in inter-annotator disagreement.

However, we are currently working on a paper that deals with more peripheral examples (cf. Furkó et al. [forthcoming](#)) based on marginal cases of reporting, as well as DM uses where inter-annotator disagreement occurred. Looking at marginal cases will also provide more insight into possible reasons for the divergence of RP1 and RP2 in some cases, while we will be able to take a closer look at Capone's Paraphrasis/Form Principle referred to in 8.1 above.

An additional direction will be the study of DMs in reports produced by speakers of languages other than English to reveal cross-linguistic or possibly cross-cultural differences of reporting in the different genres. We have already begun to look at DMs in Hungarian reports, but decided to focus on English examples for space considerations.

In the course of our research we have also identified metalinguistic elements that do not fulfil most (or any of) the criteria we used as an operationalisation for DM status (cf. introduction above), although they do play subjective, interpersonal and textual roles that are very similar to the functional spectrum of DMs in reporting. Thus, the fuzzy boundary between propositional and non-propositional markers, DMs and modal particles is another research avenue that might be worth exploring.

Finally, as mentioned above, p-contexts as indicators, or, possibly, measures of (un)scriptedness and other, more nuanced distinctions between (sub)genres is another area of research we wish to explore.

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## Appendix – List of Abbreviations

- A5.1:** evaluative terms depicting quality, including DMs such as *well, OK, okay, right*, etc. (a USAS tag)
- ASA:** automatic semantic annotation
- C:** confrontational
- CI:** celebrity interviews sub-corpus
- CST:** computerized semantic tagging
- DM:** discourse marker
- DR:** direct report
- H.:** hearer
- IR:** indirect report
- MPI:** mediatized political interviews sub-corpus
- N:** number of
- NC:** natural conversation sub-corpus
- PFM:** pragmatic force modifier
- Q2.1:** category of terms relating to spoken communication (a USAS tag)
- Q2.2:** category of speech act terms (a USAS tag)
- RP:** research perspective
- RQ:** research question
- S:** supportive
- SA:** speech act
- SBC:** Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English
- SD:** scripted discourse sub-corpus (House, M. D.)
- USAS:** UCREL Semantic Analysis System
- V:** voicing
- Z4:** the “discourse bin” including such items as *oh, I mean, you know, basically*, etc. (a USAS tag)

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# Indirect reports in Modern Eastern Armenian



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**Abstract** In this work we consider the distribution of complementizers in Modern Eastern Armenian. There are two complementizers: *wor* and *t'e*. They both introduce complement clauses, but *t'e* also expresses a dubitative value, implying that the speaker has doubts on the content following the complementizer. Moreover, *t'e*, when embedded under verbs of saying, shifts the anchoring of indexicals, moving the anchor from the speaker – better called *utterer* – to the subject of the saying predicate. On the basis of this and further evidence coming from the analysis of sequence of tense and *if*-clauses, we will argue that the position of *t'e* in the left periphery of the clause occupies a high position in the syntactic hierarchy. The aim of this work is on one hand, a better understanding of indirect reports and their syntax and, on the other, a more precise characterization of indexicals across languages.

**Keywords** Complementizers · dubitative · first person · indirect discourse · Modern Eastern Armenian · context shifting

## Introduction

In this chapter we analyze the properties of complement clauses of *saying* verbs in Modern Eastern Armenian – henceforth MEA. We devote special attention to the distribution of indexical elements, such as the (non-imperfect) tenses of the

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indicative – present, past and future – the personal pronouns – *I, you*, etc. – and temporal and spatial adverbs – *yesterday, tomorrow* etc. and *here, in this room* etc.<sup>1</sup>

In MEA there are two complementizers: *wor* and *t'e*.<sup>2</sup> *Wor* introduces both indicative and subjunctive clauses, whereas *t'e* can only introduce indicative ones. We argue, also on the basis of evidence provided by *if-clauses*, that *t'e* occupies a hierarchically higher position in the structure than *wor*. We will show that the complementizer *t'e* triggers special interpretations: it can either contribute in expressing a dubitative value, or, when embedded under *say*, introduce a (quasi) direct discourse, replacing the speaker's coordinates with the upper subject ones.

Following Giorgi (2010, 2016), we develop the hypothesis that the higher complementizer *t'e*, is a context-shifter, giving rise to the expected pattern concerning the distribution of indexicals.

This chapter is organized as follows: in sections 2 and 3 we present the data concerning embedded clauses, in section 4, we discuss a theoretical account for these observations and provide a brief comparison with Hindi, which exhibits similar phenomena. In section 5 we draw some conclusions and suggestions for future work.

## The Data: Embedded Complement Clauses Introduced by the Complementizer *wor* (that)

In the following discussion we analyze the distribution and interpretation of the embedded verbal forms in MEA. Consider the following examples:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The two authors have elaborated every part of this research together. However, as far as legal requirements are concerned, Alessandra Giorgi takes official responsibility for sections 3.2, 4 and 5. Sona Haroutyunian for sections 1, 2 and 3.1. Modern Eastern Armenian is the official language of the Republic of Armenia and Nogorno Karabakh. Western Armenian is the language spoken by the Armenian diaspora around the world. In this work we will consider data from MEA. However, with respect to the phenomena discussed here, Western Armenian does not seem to differ in a considerable way.

<sup>2</sup>For the transliteration of the Armenian examples we adopt the system based on the works of the linguists Heinrich Hübschmann and Antoine Meillet as referenced in A. Meillet (1913:8–9). However, in order to be closer to MEA pronunciation, the complementizer is transliterated as *wor* (instead of *or*).

<sup>3</sup>In previous work – cf. Giorgi and Haroutyunian (2014, 2016) – we analyzed the verbal system and the position of the auxiliary. We argued that MEA is a Verb Second (V2) language, where V2 order is triggered by a left peripheral focus. We will not consider this issue in this work, because it is not immediately relevant to this topic. In the examples we will mostly use sentences exhibiting the basic word order, namely Subject-object-participle-auxiliary. Moreover, in MEA the verbal forms of the indicative, with the exception of the aorist, are periphrastic, present tense included, and are constituted by an invariable participle and auxiliary *be*. There are eight different participles. For a description of the participles, see Haroutyunian (2011, ch.1) Dum-Tragut (2009, pp. 201–214). On Armenian word order, see also Tamrazian (1991) and (1994). To help the non-native reader to go through the examples, we will write the complementizer in bold characters.

- (1) Ara-n as-um ē **wor** Anna-n ut-um ē  
 Ara-ART say-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara says that Anna is eating’
- (2) Ara-n as-um ē **wor** Anna-n ker-el ē  
 Ara-ART say-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara says that Anna has eaten’

In sentences (1) and (2) there is a main verb of saying in the present tense, followed by an embedded present – in (1) – and an embedded past in (2).<sup>4</sup>

So far, the temporal interpretation is the same as in English, namely, in (1) the saying and the eating are simultaneous, whereas in (2) the eating precedes the saying. The complementizer introducing these clauses is *wor* (that).

The same holds in sentences (3) and (4):<sup>5</sup>

- (3) Ara-n as-ac‘ **wor** Anna-n ut-um ē  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara said that Anna was eating’
- (4) Ara-n as-ac‘ **wor** Anna-n ker-el ē  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara said that Anna had eaten’

In sentence (3) the main verb has the aorist morphology, expressing a past value. The eating is simultaneous with the saying, whereas in (4) it precedes it.<sup>6</sup>

Note however, that in example (3) the embedded verbal form is the same as in example (1), hence it can be literally translated as *is eating*. In English, or in

<sup>4</sup>Irrelevantly to the present discussion, the present and past value of the embedded verbal form is due to the different participle used.

<sup>5</sup>Note that the present tense in MEA is a continuous verbal form, even with eventive predicates, like the Italian one and contrary to English. Consider the following examples:

- (i) Hakob-n ut-um ē  
 Hakob-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Hakob is eating’

Analogously, in Italian:

- (i) Gianni mangia  
 Gianni eat.3SG  
 ‘Gianni is eating’

Hence, a simultaneous interpretation of the embedded verbal form is possible in MEA even with predicates such as *to eat*. Moreover, as in English, both in MEA and in Italian the present tense can also be interpreted habitually.

<sup>6</sup>The embedded verbal form in example (4) is constituted by a perfect participle and a present tense auxiliary. Hence, the literal translation would be *has eaten*, even if the interpretive value is just past. These issues will be more deeply investigated in further work

Italian, a sentence such as *John said that Anna is eating* would have a Double Access Reading, meaning that the eating takes place both at the time of the saying and utterance time. However, in Armenian this is not the case, in that the eating does not have to be going on at the time of the utterance as well. MEA in fact is not a Double Access Reading language. We will discuss this issue with more details in section 4.1 below.<sup>7</sup>

In sentence (3) and (4), an embedded indicative imperfect could substitute for the other forms of the indicative, as in the following examples:<sup>8</sup>

- (5) Ara-n as-ac'    **wor** Anna-n ut-um ēr  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG  
 'Ara said that Anna was eating'
- (6) Ara-n as-ac'    **wor** Anna-n ker-el ēr  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG  
 'Ara said that Anna had eaten'

The presence of the imperfect, however, does not significantly change the temporal interpretation and therefore these examples are not especially relevant to the discussion in this section. We will briefly consider them again in section 4.1.

The sentences given above are all simple assertions, reporting what *Ara* said. The interpretation of indexical adverbs is provided by the temporal and spatial location of the speaker uttering the sentence (which from now on, for reasons that will be clear in a little while we will call the *utterer*):

- (7) Ara-n as-ac'    **wor** Anna-n yerek das-er-ə sovor-el ē  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART yesterday lesson-PL-ART learn-  
 PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara said that Anna yesterday learned her lessons'
- (8) Ara-n as-ac'    **wor** Anna-n das-er-ə sovor-el ē ays senyak-um  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART lesson-PL-ART learn-PRF.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG this classroom-LOC  
 'Ara said that Anna learned her lessons in this classroom'

*Yesterday* and *in this classroom* are interpreted with respect to the utterer's temporal and spatial location, i.e. *yesterday* is the day before the one of the utterance and *in this classroom* refers to the classroom where the utterer is located. These observations will be relevant for the discussion in sections 3 and 4 below.

<sup>7</sup>In these contexts, Armenian normative grammars tend to prescribe the imperfect. Speakers however, do not seem to have a preference in this direction.

<sup>8</sup>In examples (5) and (6), the participle is the perfective one and the auxiliary appears in the imperfect morphology.

Consider now *to hope* – irrelevantly, in Armenian it is expressed by means of the locution *to have hope*. This predicate can either select for a subordinate indicative or a subordinate subjunctive.<sup>9</sup>

- (9) Ara-n huys un-i **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-elu ē  
 Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-FUT.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara hopes that Anna wins the competition’
- (10) Ara-n huys un-i **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-el ē  
 Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara hopes that Anna won the competition’

In examples (9) and (10), the embedded verbal form is an indicative, and the main verb *hope* is a present one. The following ones are identical, with the only difference that the main verbal form is a past one:

- (11) Ara-n huys un-er **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-elu ē  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 FUT.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 ‘Ara hoped that Anna wins the competition’
- (12) Ara-n huys un-er **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-el ēr  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 PRF.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG  
 ‘Ara hoped that Anna won the competition’

The following examples, instead, exhibit an embedded subjunctive. In (13) the main verb is a present verbal form, whereas in (14) it is a past one:

- (13) Ara-n huys un-i **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-i  
 Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-SBJV.3SG  
 ‘Ara hopes that Anna wins the competition’
- (14) Ara-n huys un-er **wor** Anna-n mrc‘uyt‘-ə hałt‘-er  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 SBJV.PST.3SG  
 ‘Ara hoped Anna to win the competition’

<sup>9</sup>The difference between indicative and subjunctive in this case is the utterer’s commitment with respect to the embedded content. The utterer is more committed when there is an indicative, and less with a subjunctive. The implications of these judgments are not entirely clear and we will disregard this issue in this work. Also, the participle used in example (9) and (11) is the one expressing futurity, as shown in the glosses. However, the relevant point under discussion here is the tense and mood of the auxiliary. The analysis for the various forms of participles goes beyond the limits of this work.

So far, these paradigms are very similar to the Italian ones, with the only difference that in Italian, especially with an embedded past, *to hope* necessarily selects a subjunctive.

Consider also the following examples:

- (15) \*Ara-n huys un-i    **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-er  
 Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'Ara hopes that Anna won the competition'
- (16) \*Ara-n huys un-er    **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-i  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-SBJV.3SG  
 'Ara hoped that Anna wins the competition'

Sentences (15) and (16) violate the basic rules of the *consecutio temporum et modorum*, in that in (15) we have a main present followed by an embedded past subjunctive, and conversely, in (16), the main past is followed by an embedded present subjunctive. The same is true in Italian. Consider the Italian paradigm:<sup>10</sup>

- (17) Gianni spera che Maria vinca la gara  
 Gianni hopes that Maria win.SBJV.3SG the race  
 'Gianni hopes that Maria wins the race'
- (18) \*Gianni spera che Maria vincesses la gara  
 Gianni hopes that Maria win.SBJV.PST.3SG the race  
 'Gianni hopes that Maria won the race'

<sup>10</sup>This is the *consecutio* found in classical Latin as well. Note that in Italian, in order to express pastness of the embedded event with respect to the main predicate, a compound form must be used:

- (i) Gianni spera che Maria abbia vinto la gara  
 Gianni hopes that Maria have.SBJV.3SG win the race  
 'Gianni hopes that Maria won the race'
- (ii) Gianni sperava che Maria avesse vinto la gara  
 Gianni hoped that Maria have.SBJV.PST.3SG win the race  
 'Gianni hoped that Maria won the race'

In Armenian as well, a compound form must be used:

- (iii) Ara-n huys un-i    **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-el ē  
 Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara hopes that Anna has won the competition'
- (iv) Ara-n huys un-er    **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-el ēr  
 Ara-ART hope have- PST.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP  
 AUX.PST.3SG  
 'Ara hoped that Anna had won the competition'

- (19) \*Gianni sperava che Maria vinca la gara  
Gianni hoped that Maria win.SBJV.3SG the race  
'Gianni hoped that Maria wins the race'
- (20) Gianni sperava che Maria vincessesse la gara  
Gianni hoped that Maria win.SBJV.PST.3SG the race  
'Gianni hoped that Maria won the race'

As can be seen, the paradigms are identical. As argued for Italian in Giorgi (2009), this shows that in both languages the subjunctive morphology undergoes a *tense agreement* rule, barring past-under-present and present-under-past.<sup>11</sup>

## The Data: Embedded Complement Clauses Introduced by the Complementizer *t'e*

### *Dubitative t'e*

The complementizer *t'e* introduces finite complement clauses in the same contexts we illustrated in the preceding section. Let's consider the clausal complement of *to hope*:

- (21) Ara-n huys un-i t'e Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə hałt'-elu ē  
Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-FUT.PTCP  
AUX.3SG  
'Ara hopes that Anna wins the competition'
- (22) Ara-n huys un-i t'e Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə hałt'-el ē  
Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-PRF.PTCP  
AUX.3SG  
'Ara hopes that Anna won the competition'

In examples (21) and (22) the embedded verbal form is an indicative, whereas in the following examples an embedded subjunctive is present:

- (23) \*Ara-n huys un-i t'e Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə hałt'-i  
Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-SBJV.3SG  
'Ara hopes that Anna wins the competition'
- (24) \*Ara-n huys un-i t'e Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə hałt'-er  
Ara-ART hope have-3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART  
win-SBJV.PST.3SG  
'Ara hopes that Anna won the competition'

<sup>11</sup>For a similar perspective, see also Costantini (2006) and Laskova (2012, 2017).

- (25) \*Ara-n huys un-er **t'e** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-i  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART  
 win-SBJV.3SG  
 'Ara hoped that Anna wins the competition'
- (26) \*Ara-n huys un-er **t'e** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-er  
 Ara-ART hope have-IMP.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'Ara hoped that Anna won the competition'

Independently of any other consideration, with this predicate, a clause introduced by the complementizer *t'e* featuring a subjunctive is impossible. The ungrammaticality of examples (23) and (26) contrasts with the acceptability of (13) and (14) above. Examples (24) and (25) would in any case violate the subjunctive agreement rule as well: in (24) a past subjunctive appears under a present and in (25) a present subjunctive appears under a past tense, but the ungrammaticality of (23) and (26) calls for an explanation.

Note also that the verbs *xndrel* (ask, plead), *harc'nel* (ask, inquire), *uzenal* (want), *kamenal* (want, wish), *c'ankanal* (wish, desire) only take an embedded subjunctive and are never compatible with this complementizer. Consider the following paradigm:

- (27) Ara-n c'ankan-um ē **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-i  
 Ara-ART wish-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 SBJV.3SG  
 'Ara wishes that Anna wins the competition'
- (28) Ara-n c'ankan-um ēr **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-er  
 Ara-ART wish-PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART  
 win-SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'Ara wished that Anna won the competition'

Examples (27) and (28) show the usual sequence of tense rule, where an embedded subjunctive must exhibit an agreeing form with respect to the main one. These examples minimally contrast with the following ones:

- (29) \*Ara-n c'ankan-um ē **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-um ē  
 Ara-ART wish-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara wishes that Anna wins the competition'
- (30) \*Ara-n c'ankan-um ēr **wor** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-um ēr  
 Ara-ART wish-PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART  
 win-PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG  
 'Ara wished that Anna won the competition'

Examples (29) and (30) are ungrammatical because the embedded verbal form is an indicative and not a subjunctive. Finally, example (31) and (32) show that in these cases the complementizer *t'e* is impossible, due to its incompatibility with the subjunctive (obligatory here):

- (31) \*Ara-n c'ankan-um ē **t'e** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-i  
 Ara-ART wish-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART win-  
 SBJV.3SG  
 'Ara wishes that Anna wins the competition'
- (32) \*Ara-n c'ankan-um ēr **t'e** Anna-n mrc'uyt'-ə halt'-er  
 Ara-ART wish- PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG that Anna-ART competition-ART  
 win-SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'Ara wished that Anna won the competition'

The verbs listed above all follow this paradigm.

The interpretation to be assigned to *t'e* clauses, when they are available, is not the same as the one assigned to *wor* clauses. As pointed out above, the complementizer *t'e* in fact is used when the utterer wants to express an attitude, usually doubt, with respect to the embedded content. For instance, in the grammatical examples (23) and (26), the utterer wants to convey the idea that *Ara* had an inadequate opinion about *Anna's* chances of victory, and that she, the utterer, doesn't think such a victory possible. We can call this complementizer a *dubitative* one. The reason why the subjunctive is not available with *t'e* is addressed in section 4.

### ***Reportive t'e***

Consider now the distribution of *t'e* with saying predicates:

- (33) Ara-n as-um ē **t'e** Anna-n ut-um ē  
 Ara-ART say-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara says that Anna is eating'
- (34) Ara-n as-um ē **t'e** Anna-n ker-el ē  
 Ara-ART say-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara says that Anna has eaten'
- (35) Aran as-ac' **t'e** Anna-n ut-um ē  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara said that Anna was eating'
- (36) Aran as-ac' **t'e** Anna-n ker-el ē  
 Ara-ART say-AOR.3SG that Anna-ART eat-PRF.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Ara said that Anna has eaten'



In examples (33) and (34) the main predicate is a present verbal form, whereas in (35) and (36) it is a past. The distribution of the embedded verbal forms is the same we observed with the complementizer *wor*.

As is the case of examples (21) and (22) above, the presence of the complementizer *t'e* can give rise to a dubitative interpretation: the speaker implies that she does not (fully) believe what *Ara* said.

However, such an interpretation is not the only one, in that the sentences in question can also be interpreted as instances of direct discourse, reporting what *Ara* said, with his own words. A sentence such as (33) can be used by the speaker for reporting the following direct speech:

- (37) *Ara-n as-um ē*: “Anna-n ut-um ē”  
*Ara-ART say-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG*: “Anna-ART eat-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG”  
 ‘Ara says: “Anna is eating” ’

In this case, there is no dubitative interpretation, but simply a report of what was said. We dub this construction a *reportive* one. The same holds for examples (34), (35) and (36). Hence, these sentences are all in principle ambiguous between a dubitative interpretation and reportive one.

Here we consider the distribution of indexicals in clauses introduced by *wor* and *t'e*, when the embedded clause is a reported speech. Consider the following examples:

- (38) *Hakob-n as-ac' wor mekn-um ē*  
*Hakob -ART say-AOR.3SG that leave- PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG.*  
 ‘Hakob said that he will leave’
- (39) *Hakob-n as-ac' t'e mekn-um em*  
*Hakob -ART say-AOR.3SG that leave- PRS.PTCP AUX.1SG.*  
 ‘Hakob said that he would leave’

As pointed out above, both examples can be used to report the following direct discourse:

- (40) *Hakob-n as-ac'*: “Mekn-um em”  
*Hakob -ART say-AOR.3SG*: “leave- PRS.PTCP AUX.1SG.”  
 ‘Hakob said: “I will leave” ’

The sentences in (38) and (39), however, do it in very different ways. In example (38), where the complementizer *wor* is used, the subject is a null pronoun and the verb appears with the third person morphology. This is an almost literal translation of the English sentence.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>The lexical pronoun can also be used, as in the following example:

- (i) *Hakob-n as-ac' t'e yes mekn-um em*  
*Hakob-ART say-AOR.3SG that I leave-PRS.PTCP AUX.1SG.*  
 ‘Hakob said that he would leave’

Sentence (39), introduced by *t'e*, is quite different. The verb appears with first person morphology and cannot mean that the utterer is going to leave, but only that *Hakob* is going to leave, so that the literal translation of the embedded clause in (39) would be '*that (I) leave*'. In order for the embedded verbal form to refer to the utterer, *wor* must obligatorily be used:

- (41) Hakob-n as-ac' **wor** mekn-um em  
 Hakob -ART say-AOR.3SG that leave- PRS.PTCP AUX.1SG.  
 'Hakob said that I will leave'

In other words, a first person embedded under *wor* identifies the utterer, when embedded under *t'e* it identifies the subject of the superordinate clause. Temporal indexicals exhibit a very similar behavior. Consider the following contrast:

- (42) Erkušabti Hakob-n inj as-ac' **wor** vaḷə mekn-um ē  
 Monday Hakob-ART me say-AOR.3SG that tomorrow leave-PRS.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG  
 'On Monday Hakob told me that he will leave tomorrow'
- (43) Erkušabti Hakob-n inj as-ac' **t'e** vaḷə mekn-elu em  
 Monday Hakob-ART me say-AOR.3SG that tomorrow leave-FUT.PTCP  
 AUX.1SG  
 'On Monday Hakob told me that he would leave tomorrow'

In sentence (42) with the complementizer *wor*, the verb appears with the third person morphology. Hence, the embedded subject can either refer to *Hakob* or to someone not mentioned in the sentence, as in the English translation, or in the Italian equivalent. On the other hand, in example (43) the embedded first person can only refer to the superordinate subject and not to the utterer. Interestingly the embedded temporal indexical *tomorrow* has two different interpretations: suppose that the utterer utters the sentence on Thursday, then in (42) *tomorrow* identifies Friday, i.e. the day after the one in which the sentence is uttered. In (43), on the contrary, *tomorrow* is *Hakob's* tomorrow, namely, given the temporal specification in the main clause, it refers to Tuesday. Similarly with spatial expressions. Consider the following examples:

- (44) Hakob-n inj as-ac' **wor** ays senyak-um k'n-um ē  
 Hakob-ART me say-AOR.3SG that this room-LOC sleep-PRS.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG  
 'Hakob told me that he sleeps in this room'
- (45) Hakob-n inj as-ac' **t'e** ays senyak-um k'n-um ē  
 Hakob-ART me say-AOR.3SG that this room-LOC sleep-PRS.PTCP AUX.3SG  
 'Hakob told me that he sleeps in this room'

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In this sentence, the first person pronoun *yes* appears in the subordinate clause, so that the literal translation would be '*that I leave*'. The presence of the lexical pronoun is emphatic/focused, as is usually the case in pro-drop languages such as Italian and Armenian.

In the sentence introduced by *wor*, i.e. (44), the locution *in this room* identifies the room where the utterer is located. On the contrary, in sentence (45) it identifies the room where *Hakob* is speaking.<sup>13</sup>

Concluding these brief remarks, the presence of *t'e* determines a complete shift of the interpretation of the embedded indexicals, from the utterer to the subject of the main clause. In section 4.2 we show that this is not an isolated case across languages, in that the same distribution can be found in Hindi.

## Towards an Explanation

As emerges from the examples discussed above, the sentences introduced by *wor* are neutral from the point of view of their interpretation, in that *wor* does not add any special interpretive flavor to the clause it introduces. The complementizer *t'e*, on the contrary, is licensed in two different contexts. On the one hand, it can express a dubitative meaning, implying that the speakers do not fully believe the embedded content. This function can be realized when embedded under verbs such as *hope* and *say*. On the other, it can also introduce direct speech under verbs of communication such as *say*.

Here we are going to argue that the licensing contexts for *t'e* are two outcomes of the same basic value. Our hypothesis is that in both cases *t'e* can be characterized as a *context shifter*, encoding the speaker's temporal and spatial coordinates. In order to clarify this point, we have to briefly illustrate the properties of the so-called Double Access Reading in MEA.

### *The Double Access Reading and the Dubitative t'e*

We are going to develop here the hypothesis discussed in Giorgi (2010), concerning the syntactic representation of indexicality in embedded contexts. She argues that in Italian the highest projection in the complementizer layer hosts the speaker's temporal and spatial coordinates. In embedded contexts, this position is syntactically projected in clauses where the verb is an indicative form, whereas in subjunctive clauses a lower complementizer position is realized.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Spatial adverbials in sentences such as (44) and (45) would be preferably located on the right of the clause, hence as the last phrase. The word order given above is preferably associated with a focus on the predicate. The issue here however is not the basic position of adverbs, but their indexical interpretation, hence for uniformity with the other examples we adopt even in this case the order adverb-participle-auxiliary.

<sup>14</sup>Actually, the issue is more complex than that, as discussed in Giorgi (2010), but for the present purposes this generalization is sufficient.

As we are going to discuss in a while, this hypothesis provides an explanation for the availability of the Double Access Reading in languages such as Italian and English. Consider the following examples:<sup>15</sup>

(46) Anna told me that she is pregnant

(47) Anna mi ha detto che è incinta  
'Anna told me that she is pregnant'

In these cases, the embedded eventuality must be interpreted as simultaneous both with the time of Anna's saying and the Utterance time. If this condition is not met, the sentences are infelicitous:

(48) #Two years ago Anna told me that she is pregnant

(49) #Due anni fa Anna mi ha detto che è incinta  
'Two years ago Anna told me that she is pregnant'

The addition of the temporal adverb in these cases makes it impossible to interpret the embedded present tense as simultaneous both with the main predicate and the Utterance time.

Furthermore, in subjunctive contexts, the Double Access Reading is not available, due to the fact that the relevant temporal configuration is never realized. In fact, as we illustrated above, the subjunctive realizes a purely agreement relation and not a real temporal one. Hence, in sentences such as the following ones, the interpretation is always a simultaneous one:

(50) Gianni spera che Maria sia incinta  
Gianni hope.PRS that Maria be.SBJV.PRS pregnant  
'Gianni hopes that Maria is pregnant?'

(51) Gianni sperava che Maria fosse incinta  
Gianni hope.PST that Maria be.SBJV.PST pregnant  
'Gianni hoped that Maria was pregnant'

(52) \*Gianni spera che Maria fosse incinta  
Gianni hope.PRS that Maria be.SBJV.PST pregnant  
'Gianni hopes that Maria is pregnant?'

(53) \*Gianni sperava che Maria sia incinta  
Gianni hope. PST that Maria be.SBJV.PRS pregnant  
'Gianni hoped that Maria was pregnant'

<sup>15</sup>There is an ample literature on the Double Access Reading. See, among the others, Ogihara (1995), Abush (1997), Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), Schlenker (1999), Sharvit (2003) and Giorgi (2010).

Sentences (52) and (53), where the embedded verbal form does not agree with the main one, are ungrammatical.

The hypothesis developed in Giorgi (2010) is that this is due to the properties of the complementizers introducing the indicative and the subjunctive. It is not possible to reproduce here the whole relevant discussion, because it lies outside the scope of this work. The basic idea is that, though homophonous in standard Italian, the two complementizers actually have different properties, in that, for instance, the subjunctive complementizer is deletable, but the indicative one is not.<sup>16</sup> The indicative complementizer lies in a higher position in the syntactic structure, with respect to the subjunctive complementizer and carries in its specifier position a null demonstrative, referring to the utterer. Given the presence of the utterer's coordinates, the embedded event must have an indexical interpretation in the embedded context as well. On the contrary, the subjunctive complementizer does not carry the utterer's coordinates and this is why the Double Access Reading in Italian is available only in indicative clauses.

MEA is not a Double Access Reading language, contrary to English and Italian, but similarly to other Indo-European languages, such as for instance Romanian.<sup>17</sup>

- (54) Anna-n inj as-ac' **wor** hli ē  
 Anna-ART me say-AOR.3SG that pregnant AUX.3SG  
 'Anna told me that she is pregnant'

Contrary to the equivalent sentences in English and Italian, (54) does not imply that Anna is pregnant at utterance time. This point is further illustrated by the following example:<sup>18</sup>

- (55) Erku tari afaj Anna-n inj as-ac' **wor** hli ē  
 Two years ago Anna-ART me say-AOR.3SG that pregnant AUX.PST.3SG  
 'Two years ago Anna told me that she was pregnant'

In Armenian, the sentence, even when featuring a temporal adverb such as *two years ago*, is perfectly grammatical. Note that in Italian, to make the sentence with the adverb *two years ago* felicitous, the imperfect must be used:

<sup>16</sup>Note that in many languages the indicative complementizer and the subjunctive one have a different lexicalization. See for instance Damonte (2011) for an analysis of Salentino, a Southern Italian dialect.

<sup>17</sup>On cross linguistic issues concerning the Double Access Reading, see Giorgi (2008).

<sup>18</sup>In Romanian, the judgment is the same as in MEA:

- (i) Acum 2 ani Gianni a spus ca Maria e insarcinata  
 Two years ago Gianni has said that Maria is pregnant

The presence of the temporal adverb *acum 2 ani* (two years ago) does not give rise to ungrammaticality. See Giorgi (2008) for a discussion.

- (56) Due anni fa Anna mi ha detto che era incinta  
 Two years ago Anna told me that she be.IMP pregnant  
 ‘Two years ago Anna told me that she was pregnant’

In Armenian as well the imperfect verbal form can be realized, as shown in the following example:

- (57) Erku tari ařaj Anna-n inj as-ac‘ **wor** hři ěr  
 Two years ago Anna-ART me say-AOR.3SG that pregnant AUX.PST.3SG  
 ‘Two years ago Anna told me that she was pregnant’

The difference however between (55) and (57) is only one of register, (57) being considered the “correct” form by normative grammars, whereas, in everyday life, native speakers of MEA mostly use (55). Recall that, as illustrated in the previous section, the complementizer *wor* introduces both indicative and subjunctive clauses, whereas the occurrences of dubitative *t’e* are incompatible with the subjunctive.

On the basis of these observations, our hypothesis is that *wor* is the syntactically low complementizer, corresponding to the one introducing Italian subjunctive clauses. As a matter of fact, even when an indicative is realized, no Double Access Reading is present in MEA. Hence, the difference between MEA and Italian is that *wor* never hosts in its specifier position the empty demonstrative referring to the utterer.

On the contrary, dubitative *t’e* does host the empty demonstrative and, as a consequence, it is incompatible with a subjunctive. Furthermore, dubitative *t’e* in these cases can exhibit the Double Access Reading as well, as shown by the strong marginality of the following example (the locution *How is it possible at 60?* has been added to provide a dubitative context):

- (58) ?\*Erku tari ařaj Anna-n inj as-ac‘ **t’e** hři ě. (Mit‘e hnaravor ě 60 tarekanum?)  
 Two years ago Anna-ART me say-AOR.3SG that pregnant AUX.3SG. (How possible AUX.3SG 60 years?).  
 ‘Two years ago Anna told me that she is pregnant. (How is it possible at 60?)’

In this example, the embedded verbal form is a present indicative and the sentence is ungrammatical. We are arguing that this is due to the fact that *t’e* carries the utterer’s temporal and spatial coordinates, which give rise to an indexical interpretation of the embedded present tense. The presence of the null demonstrative is connected to the dubitative value of this complementizer, because it expresses an evaluation by the utterer, which in this way is explicitly represented in the syntax. Concluding, we can say that in these cases, the embedded context is *shifted*, because *t’e* introduces the utterer, which would not be there with *wor*.

As far as the interpretive properties of *t’e* are concerned, we propose that *t’e* carries a semantic, lexical, feature +dubitative, which is read off at the interface with the semantics.

Note finally that the dubitative value is independently realized by this particle in several contexts. Consider for instance the following examples.<sup>19</sup>

- (59) Ara-n mtac-um ēr **t'e** inč elk' gtn-er.  
 Ara-ART think-PRS.PTCP AUX.PST.3SG that what solution find-  
 SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'Ara was thinking what solution he could find'
- (60) Ara-n č-git-i **t'e** ov k'haft'i mrc'uyt'-ə.  
 Ara-ART NEG-know.3SG if who win.COND.FUT.3SG competition-ART  
 'Ara doesn't know who will win the competition'

In these cases *t'e* introduces an interrogative clause. It can also express a value similar to English *if*, for instance in the following case (where it appears in its augmented form *et'e*):

- (61) **Et'e** žamanakin hasn-es gnac'k' knstes  
 If time arrive-SBJV.PRS.2.SG train sit.COND.FUT.2SG  
 'If you arrive on time you will catch the train'

Or, in the same vein, in the following one:

- (62) Ara-n č-i hiš-um **t'e** Anna-n haft'-el ē mrc'uyt'-e t'e woč  
 Ara-ART NEG-AUX.3SG remember-PRS.PTCP if Anna-ART win-PRF.PTCP  
 AUX.3SG competition-ART or not  
 'Ara doesn't remember if Anna won the competition or not'

Finally, *t'e* can co-occur with *wor* and, as expected the order is *t'e wor* and not *wor t'e*, which would be ungrammatical.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Interestingly, in example (59) *t'e* introduces a clause with a subjunctive. Note that in this sentence, the dubitative value is not due to an attitude of the utterer, but it expresses an evaluation of the superordinate subject, hence the presence of the subjunctive does not violate what said so far. For a complete analysis of all the values of this particle when equivalent to English *if* or *whether*, further research is needed. Here we are only mentioning these data as an additional support to our hypothesis.

<sup>20</sup>The reverse ordering of the clauses is available in both cases, but the reciprocal distribution of *t'e* and *wor* is the same:

- (i) Aydpes č'-ēr lini **t'e wor** Anna-yin ls-er  
 That way NEG-AUX.PST.3SG be.SBJV.3SG if Anna-DAT listen-SBJV.PST.3SG  
 'It wouldn't be like that, if he had listened to Anna'
- (ii) Lav gnahatakan kstanas **t'e wor** daser-d lav sovor-es  
 Good mark get.COND.FUT.2SG if lesson-ART.POSS.2SG well learn-SBJV.2SG  
 'You'll get a good mark, if you learn your lessons well'

- (63) **T'e wor** Anna-yin ls-er aydpes č'-ēr lini  
 If Anna-DAT listen-SBJV.PST.3SG that way NEG-AUX.PST.3SG  
 be.SBJV.3SG  
 'If he had listened to Anna, it wouldn't be like that'
- (64) **T'e wor** daser-d lav sovor-es lav gnahatakan kstanas  
 If lesson-ART.POSS.2SG well learn-SBJV.2SG good mark get.COND.FUT.2SG  
 'If you learn your lessons well you'll get a good mark'

Examples (63) and (64) show that, on the basis of the hypothesis that linear precedence mimics structural hierarchy, the complementizer *t'e* occupies a higher position with respect to *wor*.<sup>21</sup>

Concluding this section, we can say that the dubitative reading is instantiated by means of the complementizer *t'e*, which is higher in the structural hierarchy than *wor*. *T'e* can realize the utterer's spatial and temporal coordinates in its specifier position, similarly to the Italian complementizer *che* introducing indicative clauses. When this happens, the embedded clause expresses an attitude of disbelief/ doubt by the utterer with respect to the embedded content and is incompatible with the subjunctive, even if the matrix verb would allow it. Moreover, even if MEA is a non Double Access Reading language, the marginality of examples such as (58) above tells us that our hypothesis is on the right track. The dubitative value can be realized by means of *t'e* in indirect interrogatives and hypothetical constructions. In these cases, as expected, the subjunctive mood is possible as well.

### ***Reportive t'e and a Brief Comparison with Hindi***

In section 3.2 we illustrated reportive *t'e*, i.e. the cases where it introduces complements of saying predicates. We have shown that in these cases the indexicals present in the embedded clause are not interpreted on the basis of the utterer's spatial and temporal location, but on the basis of the speaker's one, i.e. the subject of the main clause.

The hypothesis we discussed in the previous section, i.e. that *t'e* can be a *context shifter*, can account for these cases as well.<sup>22</sup> The complementizer *t'e* hosts in its specifier position a null demonstrative referring to the main subject, i.e. the speaker who originally uttered the embedded content. Therefore, in the embedded clause

<sup>21</sup>On the relationship between linear order and structural hierarchy, see the seminal work by Kayne (1994) and subsequent developments.

<sup>22</sup>In its reportive function, *t'e* does not carry the feature +dubitative we mentioned in the preceding section. We can look at it as a case of lexical ambiguity, or we could resort to a more complex theory, according to which *t'e* can be inserted even in this case with its interpretive features, which however are *redundant* and not interpreted in that the pragmatic context does not license them. Further study is indeed required to clarify this issue.



the spatial and temporal coordinates relevant for the interpretation of indexicals – indicative tenses, pronouns, spatial and temporal indexical adverbials – are those of the main subject. In a way, these contexts are similar to the Italian and English quotation cases, such as the following ones:<sup>23</sup>

- (65) Partirò domani, disse Gianni  
‘I will leave tomorrow, said Gianni’
- (66) I will leave tomorrow, said John

In these cases, due to the presence of *disse Gianni* (said Gianni), the event is located in Gianni’s future, the first person pronoun *I* does not identify the utterer, but the speaker *Gianni*, and *tomorrow*. The main difference between English and Italian on one side, and MEA on the other, is that in Italian and English it would be impossible to have the reference for the indexicals we see in (65) and (66), when the sentence is introduced by a complementizer:

- (67) Gianni ha detto che partirò domani  
‘Gianni said that I will leave tomorrow’
- (68) John said that I will leave tomorrow

The event is located in the utterer’s future, not John’s, and analogously *I* and *tomorrow* refer to the utterer.

Interestingly, we find a similar pattern in another western Indoeuropean language, namely in Hindi. In this language the particle *ki* introduces complement clauses of verbs of communication, such as say, perception, such as see and hear, thinking and belief etc., as in the following case (from Zanon, 2013, ex. 45):<sup>24</sup>

- (69) Acchī bāt hae **ki** āpko nōkrī milī hae  
Good thing is that you.HON.DAT job meet.PRF AUX.PRS.2SING  
‘It is good that you have found a job’

Moreover, like MEA, Hindi is not a Double Access Reading language, as illustrated by means of the following examples (from Zanon, 2013, exx. 19 and 20):

- (70) jōn ne kahā **ki** karīnā garbhvatī hae  
John.ERG say.PRF that Kareena pregnant is.PRS.3SING  
‘John said that Kareena was pregnant’

An embedded present tense is not interpreted with respect to the utterer’s temporal location, but only with respect to that of the speaker. Coherently, therefore, the presence of the temporal locution *two years ago* does not modify the status of the sentence, as illustrated in the following example:

<sup>23</sup>See Giorgi (2016) for an analysis of these cases in Italian and English.

<sup>24</sup>These data are discussed in Zanon (2013). See also and Koul (2008), for a general perspective, and Manetta (2011), for a view of movement and subordination.

- (71) do sāl pahle j̄on ne kahā **ki** karīnā garbhvatī hæ  
 two years ago John.ERG say.PRF that Kareena pregnant is.PRS.3SING  
 ‘Two years ago John said that Kareena was pregnant’

In example (71) the embedded verbal form is a present tense, as in (70) and no Double Access Reading effect is observable.

Let’s analyze now the distribution of indexicals in embedded contexts (from Zanon, 2013, exx. 65 and 66):

- (72) j̄on ne kahā **ki** mæ̃ bazār jāūgā  
 John.ERG say.PRF that I market go.FUT  
 ‘John said “I will go to the market”’
- (73) j̄on ne kahā **ki** vo bazār jāegā  
 John.ERG say.PRF that he market go.FUT  
 ‘John said that he would go to the market’

Examples (72) and (73) constitute a minimal pair, the only difference being the person – first vs. third – appearing in the embedded clause. The two sentences can have the same interpretation, in that both pronouns *mæ̃*(I) in (72) and *vo* (he) in (73) can refer to John, i.e. the subject of the superordinate clause. This is exactly what happens in MEA, with the only difference that MEA has a dedicated complementizer for the meaning in (72), i.e. *t’e*.

In Hindi the verbal form of the clause embedded under a verb of saying can also be realized as a subjunctive, when expressing a modalized meaning, as in the following case (from Zanon, 2013, ex. 73):

- (74) j̄on ne kahā **ki** mæ̃jītū̃  
 John.ERG say.PRF that I win.SUBJ  
 ‘John said that I (may) win’

Interestingly, in this case the first person pronoun *mæ̃*(I), must refer to the utterer and not to John. Again, this distribution resembles what we found in MEA. Hence, we can account for these cases by means of the theory discussed above. In Hindi, as in Italian, there is only one complementizer *ki*, which can occupy two different positions, a high one, hosting the null determiner pointing to the speaker, or a lower one where no such element is realized. In Hindi *ki*, like *t’e* in Armenian, can work as a context shifter and appear also with a reportive function.

Finally, note that indexicals, such as first and second person pronouns, and temporal and spatial expressions, must be allowed to shift – in Italian as well in quotation contexts, or in Free Indirect Discourse, as discussed in Giorgi (2016) – depending on the reference of the null determiner in the high complementizer position.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we analyzed the properties of two complementizers – *wor* and *t'e* – in MEA. We saw that *t'e* has two special functions when used in embedded contexts: it can express a dubitative meaning – i.e., it can be used by the utterer to express disbelief with respect to what the subject of the main clause said or believed – and can be used as a reportive complementizer, i.e. to introduce a sort of direct speech attributed to the subject of the main clause. In these usages, *t'e* is incompatible with the subjunctive, even in those contexts which might normally allow it and in the reportive cases it determines a complete shift of all the indexical elements: tenses, pronouns, spatial and temporal adverbials. We explained these properties by hypothesizing that *t'e* occupies a position in the syntax comparable to the one occupied by the Italian *che* when introducing indicative clauses. In Italian, this projection hosts in its specifier position a null demonstrative pointing to the utterer, giving rise to the Double Access Reading. We argue that in MEA the specifier position of *t'e* can host such a null demonstrative, which can either point to the utterer – as in the dubitative reading – or to the subject of the main clause – as in the reportive reading. We concluded with a brief comparison with the Hindi complementizer *ki*, which can be used in reportive contexts as well, determining a complete shift of the indexicals present in the embedded clause.

Our analysis shows that complementizers play an important role in the syntax-semantics interface, in that they aren't just simple conjunction particles, but trigger the correct interpretation in the various contexts.

Further research is needed to clarify the relationship between the dubitative *t'e* and its usages in hypothetical constructions, meaning *if* and *whether*, and in indirect interrogatives. Finally, a closer look should be given to languages known to exhibit similar phenomena, especially for investigating the connections between these phenomena and the lack of the Double Access Reading.

**The list of abbreviations** The paper adopts interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses according to Leipzig Glossing Rules (<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>), detailed below:

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
AOR	aoist
ART	article
AUX	auxiliary
COND	conditional
DAT	dative
FOC	focus
FUT	future
IMP	imperfect
INF	infinitive

LOC	locative
NEG	negative
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRF	perfect
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCP	participle
SG	singular
SBJV	subjunctive

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# Relinquishing Control: What Romanian *De Se* Attitude Reports Teach Us About Immunity To Error Through Misidentification



Marina Folescu

**Abstract** Higginbotham (2003) argued that certain linguistic items of English, when used in indirect discourse, necessarily trigger first-personal interpretations. They are: the emphatic reflexive pronoun and the controlled understood subject, represented as PRO. PRO is special, in this respect, due to its imposing obligatory control effects between the main clause and its subordinates (Chierchia (1989)). Folescu & Higginbotham (2012), in addition, argued that in Romanian, a language whose grammar doesn't assign a prominent role to PRO (if it assigns it a role at all), *de se* triggers are correlated with the subjunctive mood of certain verbs. That paper, however, didn't account for the grammatical diversity of the reports that display immunity to error through misidentification (IEM henceforth) in Romanian: some of these reports are expressed by using *de se* triggers; others are not. Their IEM, moreover, is not systematically lexically controlled by the verbs, via their theta-roles; it is, rather, determined by the meaning of the verbs in question. Given the data from Romanian, I will argue, the phenomenon of IEM cannot be fully explained starting either from the syntactical or the lexical structure of a language.

**Keywords** *de se* attitudes · *de se* triggers · syntax-semantics interface · cross-linguistic evidence: English and Romanian · obligatory control effects · immunity to error through misidentification

## Introduction

Higginbotham (2003) starts from the observation that certain linguistic items, in English, necessarily trigger first-personal interpretations. The particular linguistic items are the emphatic reflexive pronoun and the controlled understood subject,

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represented as PRO, used in attitude reports in the indirect discourse mode.<sup>1</sup> Chomsky (1981) argued that, although controlled PRO doesn't have a phonetic realization, it has an interpretation: it is necessarily anaphoric to the main clause subject. The interpretations these items are seen as triggering are the so-called *de se* readings of certain sentences. Higginbotham assumes that there is something particularly *de se* in the relevant cases that cannot be cashed out as either *de re* or *de dicto* readings. He argues that in English, contrary to what one may expect, this *de se* element is *always* connected to PRO, in the sentences where it appears, and only sometimes with the emphatic reflexive pronouns. This feature of PRO is exploited by Higginbotham with the following result: even in some cases where PRO doesn't seem to make any appearance, like the ones where someone says (or thinks) "I am pained", it is the fact that there can be no split reference between the subject that thinks "the subject of that state (i.e. being in pain) is being pained" and the subject that undergoes the feeling of pain that is responsible for that report having immunity to error through misidentification (IEM henceforth).<sup>2</sup> In such cases, there seems to be a sort of mental PRO that ensures that it is nonsensical to ask who is being pained.

Higginbotham (2003) argues that there is a very strong connection between *de se*, IEM and PRO. This connection is supposed to be the following: whenever we have a report where PRO is present, that report is *de se*; whenever we have a report that is *de se*, that report will have IEM; and, moreover, whenever we have a PRO context, that context is guaranteed to have IEM. To be precise, this is not to say that non-PRO contexts cannot be *de se* or, equivalently, that a *de se* attitude report is never triggered by other items. Higginbotham's claim is that PRO always signals a *de se* report. This is because a *de se* report (or, equivalently, a report that has IEM) presents the subject as the experiencer of the state the report is about and Higginbotham's observation is that the semantic contribution of PRO is to always present "the subject as the experiencer of the event or state *e* as given in the higher clause."<sup>3</sup>

These are all very general claims, especially since the main argument is based on the syntactical structure of only one natural language: English. To argue that the very nature of thought, in general, is determined by how a *particular* language is structured may seem too bold, even if we subscribe to the controversial Sapir-Whorf

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<sup>1</sup>I use "indirect discourse" with the same meaning as Cumming & Sharvit (2016: 489): "the matrix clause in "Whenever Alice begins a game of chess, she expects PRO to win" is an attitude report in the indirect discourse mode." All the examples discussed in the current paper have the same structure.

<sup>2</sup>Beginning with the work of Wittgenstein (1958) and Shoemaker (1968), it has been commonly held that certain reports of experience are such that it makes no sense for one to wonder whether it is oneself that is having that experience. For instance, if one says "I am pained", it is nonsensical for that person to ask the following question: "I know it is pain that is being felt, but is it *I* who is feeling this pain?" Higginbotham (2003: 507) argues that a report (or a thought) like "I am pained" has IEM because, whenever I am in that painful state, my thought is of the form "the subject of that state is being pained." The question of identifying myself with the subject of the state doesn't even arise in such cases.

<sup>3</sup>Higginbotham (2003: 514).

hypothesis, broadly understood to mean that language doesn't just give us a way to express our thoughts, but, rather, that it determines the formation of those very thoughts. However, a more modest idea, that certain thoughts display IEM and that thoughts like those are systematically expressed in certain ways in different languages is worthy of further consideration. Folescu & Higginbotham (2012) investigated whether data from other languages, in particular Romanian, support a thesis like this. According to Folescu & Higginbotham (2012), in Romanian, PRO does not play the syntactical role it does in English; however, the data discussed suggests that Romanian may have obligatory control elements akin to PRO, which force a *de se* interpretation of the relevant reports, and thus support the idea that those reports have IEM. The subjunctive mood of certain verbs was found to be (weakly) correlated with *de se* triggers and, thus, introduction of reports that have IEM.

Folescu & Higginbotham (2012), however, didn't take into account the grammatical diversity of the reports that display IEM in Romanian: some of these reports are expressed by using *de se* triggers; others are not. Moreover, in this paper I will argue that in Romanian, there are reports that syntactically do not look as if they're expressing *de se* attitudes (since they do not use any *de se* triggers) that are, nonetheless, expressing thoughts with IEM. Their IEM, moreover, is not systematically lexically controlled by the verbs, via their theta-roles; it is, rather, determined by the meaning of the verbs in question. Given these more complete data from Romanian, I will argue, the phenomenon of IEM cannot be fully explained starting either from the syntactical or the lexical structure of a language. This shows that maybe we should think that a certain context having IEM is determined by that context being about the right kind of psychological state. I will thus suggest that psychology rather than language may be the key to understanding the phenomenon of immunity to error through misidentification.<sup>4</sup> Capone (2016: 253) seems to make a similar point, when he writes that "the first-personal dimension of PRO in constructions like 'John remembers walking in Oxford' should be further characterised by making use of a mode of presentation like 'I.'" It may be unclear, without further work, what exactly makes a state be of the right psychological kind, or what exactly is an I-mode of presentation. Such work will not be done in this paper, which is occupied with understanding how far language can take us in deciphering whether the psychological state in question is of the right kind.

To begin, in § 14, I briefly review Higginbotham's claims about the connection between IEM, *de se*, and PRO. In § 14, I talk about the Romanian counterparts of the relevant examples used by Higginbotham, showing why their syntax is importantly different and why there is no room for PRO in their grammar. These examples are relevant, because they constitute clear cases of IEM, even though their IEM character can't be pinned down on anything in their syntax.

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<sup>4</sup>This is building on the thesis developed in Recanati (2007: 145–47), according to whom IEM belongs to reports about mental states with the right kind of mode – i.e. perceptual mode, or memory mode, etc.



In § 14, I will investigate whether there may be something else, not in the syntax, but in the lexical features of the relevant verbs, that determines whether the reports they belong to have IEM or not. Can a different type of obligatory control have the same effect in Romanian as PRO has in English? To answer this question, I will discuss several examples of verbs whose lexical properties impose obligatory control and contrast these with verbs that do not have lexical control effects on the subjects of subordinates. The upshot of this discussion will be that IEM is not, in effect, connected with this type of obligatory lexical control, since IEM belongs, in equal measure, to sentences using the first and second type of verbs. The IEM/no-IEM distinction, thus, is orthogonal to the lexical control/no-control properties of the relevant verbs. The conclusion of this investigation is that IEM cannot be gleaned *only* from the linguistic structure of a language, be that English or Romanian.

### The connection between IEM, *de se*, and PRO, in English

According to Higginbotham (2003 & 2010) there are two types of contexts that can and have been read as distinctly *de se*. We have, on the one hand, pronomial (reflexive) complements and, on the other, controlled complements. Compare, for instance, sentence (1) and (2), where the first has a pronominal complement, while the other has a controlled one, inside the scope of the attitude verb:

- (1) George wants [him/himself to eat the hamburger.]  
 (2) George wants [PRO to eat the hamburger.]

Higginbotham (2010: 255), argues that the grounds warranting the assertion of sentence (1) are different from those warranting the assertion of sentence (2). To find out whether George of sentence (1) has that particular desire, one will probably use an inferential process based on an identification between the subject of the embedded sentence with the referent of a certain definite description. Here's a scenario supposed to make this idea vivid: suppose that George is part of a group of hungry people but he, being the selfless character that he is, wants that the hungriest member of the group eat the only available hamburger. If it turns out that George *is* the hungriest member of the group, George will correctly be said to have the desire that he himself eat the hamburger. Only after George is identified as the hungriest member of the group, is the assertion of sentence (1) warranted. Sentence (1), thus, isn't (necessarily) a *de se* report: on this scenario, George may not realize that he is *indeed* the hungriest person in the group. If, on the other hand, one described the situation by using sentence (2), one will have communicated that George has the desire that the hamburger be his, no matter how hungry anyone else in the group may be. Higginbotham (2010) argues that this reading is forced by PRO: a context whose interpretation requires PRO is necessarily *de se* and always has IEM. In using (2), the speaker excludes the possibility that George doesn't realize that it is he himself who wants to eat the hamburger.

There are two types of PRO-contexts that Higginbotham considers: infinitival complements (like sentence (2) above) and gerundive complements, like sentence (3):

(3) George imagined [PRO flying through space.]

We can include explicit markers, like “himself”, to replace the silent PRO in a sentence like (3), thus obtaining:

(4) George imagined [himself flying through space.]

Doing so, however, changes not only the appearance of the initial sentence, but also its interpretation: sentence (4) could be understood to say that George imagined of himself that he was flying through space without realizing that he himself was the one flying. On the other hand, Higginbotham claims that sentence (3) cannot be interpreted in this way: it would be contradictory to say that George imagined flying through space, without realizing that it was he who was flying. According to Higginbotham, this proves that PRO, and not the reflexive pronoun, is always linked with *de se* and IEM.

This amounts to saying that, in some sense, PRO is more immune to error through misidentification than the reflexive pronoun; contexts containing PRO are clearly *de se*, while those constructed with the reflexive pronoun may not be so. In the next section, I will consider the Romanian counterparts of the examples discussed here, in order to show that, in Romanian, if these contexts have IEM, their IEM character is not correlated with PRO.

## Neither *de se*, nor IEM is connected to PRO, in Romanian

In this section, I provide answers to two main questions, by offering a detailed discussion of several examples from Romanian, which are the counterparts of the examples discussed by Higginbotham (2010).<sup>5</sup> First, what contexts, if any, can be said to be *de se* reports, in Romanian? Second, what is the syntax of the Romanian sentences corresponding to the English ones that have controlled complements inside the scope of attitude verbs? The answers to both of these questions will show that neither *de se* nor IEM is connected to PRO, in Romanian. Cross-linguistic data of this kind indicates that it is not that obvious that some sort of “mental PRO” can account for IEM across the board, no matter the type of expression used in a particular language.

<sup>5</sup>This section provides all the data mentioned, but not discussed, in Folescu & Higginbotham (2012: 54–57). In this sense, the material discussed here is supplementary to the one discussed in the earlier paper.

### *The emphatic reflexive pronoun*

The emphatic reflexive pronoun is a first good candidate for indicating whether a certain report has a *de se* reading. Here is the translation of sentence (1), in Romanian:

- (5) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânce chifteaua el<sub>i</sub> însuși.]*  
 George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [să eat-3SG hamburger-the he<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub>]  
 ‘George wants himself to eat the hamburger.’

Sentence (5) has the same interpretation as its English counterpart: it sometimes signals a *de se* context; other times its evaluation depends on an inferential process, as the discussion in § 14 pointed out. In such cases, the *de se* reading does not apply. In addition, sentence (5), just like its English counterpart, is not showing IEM, since its evaluation sometimes requires that we explicitly identify George with the referent of a certain definite description (as explained in § 14). The emphatic reflexive pronoun, then, in Romanian, behaves just like its English counterpart: it sometimes figures in contexts that have a *de se* reading, but the usage of this linguistic item does not give rise to contexts that are *intrinsically de se*.

### *Subjunctive subordinate clauses*

The next possibility is to see whether infinitival and gerundive complements of the relevant kind have an understood subject, of type PRO, in Romanian, just like in English, since PRO, in such cases, is the alleged bearer of IEM and forces a *de se* interpretation, according to Higginbotham. Or, even if PRO were not part of their syntax, their IEM, if they had it, could still be intrinsically linked to their syntax. In what follows, I investigate this possibility.

The first thing to notice is that, in Romanian, the subordinate clause, in the contexts of interest, is (usually) a subjunctive clause, and not an infinitival one, as it is in English.<sup>6</sup> This is a feature common to Balkan languages: their historical evolution has seen the gradual replacement of infinitival clauses by subjunctive ones.<sup>7</sup> Whenever an infinitival complement is required in English, a subjunctive clause should be expected in Romanian. Sentence (5) constitutes a first example of this phenomenon. We should note that, by contrast to its English counterpart, the subject of the subjunctive clause is expressed, in sentence (5).

<sup>6</sup>I say ‘usually’ because the infinitive is, in some very rare cases, accepted. However, when the infinitive is accepted, the subjunctive is also allowed. In all these cases, the subordinate (be it in infinitive or subjunctive) is lexically controlled by the main verb. See the discussion in Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: 91).

<sup>7</sup>Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: 112).

A type of null subject is sometimes allowed in Romanian subjunctive clauses:

- (6) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânce pro<sub>i</sub> chifteaua.]*  
*George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [să eat-3SG pro<sub>i</sub> hamburger-the.]*  
 ‘George wants to eat the hamburger.’

This null subject is not PRO, however, because the verb used in the subordinate clause has AGR features. Dobrovie-Sorin instead argues that “by virtue of its being “identified” by the AGR features of the verb, the null subject of Romanian subjunctives is rather of type *pro*, comparable to the subjects of tensed sentences.”<sup>8</sup> Even if this hypothesis were incorrect and the null subject were not *pro*, neither is it PRO, given that we have AGR.<sup>9</sup> So, if sentence (6) constitutes a *de se* context, its generation is structurally different from the way *de se* contexts are generated in English. Sentence (6), moreover, displays IEM features, due, primarily, to the use of an IEM verb (in the sense of Folescu & Higginbotham (2012: 55).) To see that this is so one should simply ask whether one can assert (6) and also say that George doesn’t realize that it is he himself the one supposed to eat the hamburger. For contrast, consider sentence (7), which is not acceptable in Romanian:

- (7) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânce pro<sub>i</sub> chifteaua, dar nu-și<sub>i</sub>*  
*George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [să eat-3SG pro<sub>i</sub> hamburger-the, but not-și<sub>i</sub>-DAT*  
*dă seama că el<sub>i</sub> este cel care ar mânca-o].*  
*realize-3SG that he<sub>i</sub> is who would eat-it].*  
 ‘George wants to eat the hamburger, but doesn’t realize it would be he himself eating it.’

Its unacceptability is determined by it being impossible, in (6), to have split reference between the subject of the main clause and that of the subordinate, because the person of the subordinate verb is the same as that of the main verb, in this case.

I conjecture that this type of subjunctive always behaves in this way in Romanian: split reference isn’t allowed; so, when correctly formed, a subjunctive clause of this kind will always generate an IEM context. It remains to be seen what exactly is the syntactical feature that triggers the *de se* connection.

As indicated in Folescu & Higginbotham (2012: 55), there are two types of subjunctive constructions, in Romanian: Subjunctive I and Subjunctive II. Subjunctive I, exemplified by (6), is used whenever the speaker wants to assert something about a particular person, who is taken to be the unique subject of both the main and the subordinate clause: no split reference (between the main subject and the subject of the subjunctive) can arise. If, on the other hand, the speaker wants to highlight that

<sup>8</sup>Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: 114). This claim was disputed, in recent years, since it was arrived at in the so-called ‘pre-minimalist era.’ However, the fact that the verb of the subordinate displays AGR should conclusively rule out the possibility of PRO, irrespective of the choice of framework.

<sup>9</sup>A question that will be addressed in the next section is whether we can talk about obligatory control between the main verb and the subordinate, given that the null subject isn’t of type PRO.

the subject of the main clause is different from the subject of the subordinate, he will use Subjunctive II, as in (8):

- (8) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [ca el<sub>i/j</sub> să mănânce chiftea<sub>u</sub>.]*  
 George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [*ca he<sub>i/j</sub> să eat-3SG hamburger-the.*]  
 ‘George wants him/himself to eat the hamburger.’

It is customary, but not required, that, in a sentence like (8), the referent of the third-person pronoun in the subordinate be different from the referent of ‘George’ in the main clause. The context of utterance might, however, make it clear that ‘George’ and ‘*el*’ have *the same referent*, even in a sentence like (8). The speaker might want to indicate that George thinks about himself as the satisfier of a description, rather than as the subject of the ‘wanting–state’, for instance, in which case the speaker would use sentence (8), where the pronoun in the subordinate gets its interpretation from the formative. But, upon hearing a sentence like (8), one would expect that the subject of the subordinate be different from the subject of the main clause. This, I argue, is a feature of Subjunctive II.

Since sentence (7) is unacceptable and since, usually, by employing Subjunctive II, one can say what (7) would say if it were acceptable, we should think that Subjunctive I is a trigger of *de se* in Romanian. Sentence (6) is a *de se* context: the embedded subject may not be anyone else than the main subject, and this is due to the construction being rendered in Subjunctive I. This shows that a *de se* context, which does have IEM, can be generated even in the absence of PRO.<sup>10</sup>

Folescu & Higginbotham (2012) note this feature of Subjunctive I, without, however, noticing one of the most striking differences between English and Romanian, in cases like this. In English, infinitival contexts of the relevant kind always require a controlled null subject of type PRO in the subordinate. In Romanian, however, the embedded subject is not controlled in the same way. The syntactic structure of Subjunctive I does not *require* that the subject of the subordinate is the same as that of the main clause; it just *allows* it, if the circumstances are right. To see this, take, for instance, sentence (9), a good example of Subjunctive I, in which the subject of the subordinate is **different** from that of the main clause:

- (9) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânci pro<sub>j</sub> chiftea<sub>u</sub>.]*  
 George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [*să eat-2SG pro<sub>j</sub> hamburger-the.*]  
 ‘George wants **you** to eat the hamburger.’

The subject of the English subordinate in (9) is an NP-trace, due to subject to object raising. The syntactic structure is visibly different from that of the English sentence, in (6) – where the subject of the subordinate is of type PRO. The same is not true for Romanian: there is no difference in structure between the Romanian sentence in (6) and the one in (9). The only difference is determined by the form of the embedded verb – in (6), it is in the third person, whereas in (9), it is in the second person.

<sup>10</sup>Folescu & Higginbotham (2012: 55) makes a similar point.

Thus, in Romanian, it doesn't seem plausible to argue that, on the one hand, in (6), we have a case of obligatory control, which binding theory, rather than PRO could explain, and, on the other, a case of NP-trace in (9) (where exactly is the subject of the subordinate raised?)<sup>11</sup>

These examples indicate that, whereas Subjunctive I could be thought to trigger *de se* contexts, whether those contexts also display the IEM phenomenon cannot be gleaned from the syntactical structure alone, in Romanian. IEM, thus, cannot be said to be connected with obligatory control (let alone with PRO), since the embedded subject, when Subjunctive I is used, is not necessarily controlled by the main verb. There is no way to know, by looking at the syntactical structure alone, that sentence (6) always expresses a *de se* context, while sentence (9) never does. At the level of syntax, in Romanian sentence (6) is identical with sentence (9).<sup>12</sup>

### *Gerundive subordinate clauses*

Gerundive complements, embedded under verbs like “imagine” or “remember” are the last class of examples thought by Higginbotham to support his conjecture that a certain type of (mental) obligatory control, rendered in English by the use of PRO, is the marker of IEM. As already pointed out in § 14, in such cases, the subject of the subordinate clause is null and is of type PRO in English. Romanian, I will argue, is interestingly different here, too. PRO does not make an appearance in gerundive complements, either. The presence of IEM in such contexts seems determined by the verb used (“imagine”, “remember”), rather than by the syntactic structure of a Romanian sentence. As a side note, PRO may be present in some contexts where the subordinate is a gerundive clause; however, such contexts do not have IEM features. In what follows, I discuss these phenomena in more detail.

### **The Romanian null subject as NP-trace**

To begin, it is worth noting that both “remember” and “imagine” are so-called “reflexive verbs” in Romanian: they always include a reflexive pronoun, usually cliticized. While the pronoun associated with “remember” is always in the Dative, the one associated with “imagine” can, depending on the context, be either in the Dative or in the Accusative. Furthermore, one can have a gerundive complement

<sup>11</sup> See Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: 114–118), for a discussion of the problem of control in Romanian. She suggests that control is sometimes allowed, but never necessitated, by certain syntactic structures, but she understands obligatory control as reducing to binding theory, since PRO is not an element belonging to the grammar of Romanian subjunctives.

<sup>12</sup> This contradicts the claim in Folescu & Higginbotham (2012: 56). The data discussed there are inconclusive, as the examples discussed here indicate, especially the obvious syntactical uniformity of sentences (6) and (9), which is never mentioned in Folescu & Higginbotham (2012).

inside the scope of “remember” or “imagine” only when the reflexive pronoun is in the Dative. In other words, only “imagine” can take a gerundive complement; the complements of “remember” are *always* expressed as ‘that’-clauses. This already indicates that there are problems with Higginbotham’s conjecture: the IEM of memory contexts cannot depend on either the gerund form or PRO, since there is no PRO in ‘that’-clauses, in either English or Romanian, and using a ‘that’-clause is the only way of generating a memory context in Romanian.

Let us analyze, however, what happens in cases of Romanian gerundive complements in the scope of the verb “imagine.” The verb we are looking for is “*a se imagina*”, where the “*se*” particle designates the Accusative form of the reflexive pronoun. Consider sentence (10) (which is the closest – meaning wise – Romanian sentence to sentence (3) above):

- (10) *George<sub>i</sub> se<sub>i</sub> imaginează [zburând t<sub>i</sub> prin spațiu].*  
 George<sub>i</sub> se<sub>i</sub>-ACC imagine-3SG [flying t<sub>i</sub> through space]  
 ‘George imagines himself flying through space.’

‘George’ is the subject of the main clause, while ‘*se*’, the reflexive pronoun in Accusative, is the object of the clause, indicating that the act of imagination is about George himself. The subordinate verb, ‘*zburând*’, takes the gerund form, which excludes any AGR features. What type of subject is the subordinate null subject, then: is it of type PRO or of a different kind? Since, in the subordinate, we have an instance of subject to object raising, we can confidently rule out PRO. NP-traces (marked as ‘*t*’, in sentence (10)) and, in particular, the traces of raised subjects are considered to behave like anaphors and are thus different from control structures (of which PRO is but one example).<sup>13</sup> Sentence (10), therefore, is not displaying the usual control features that its English counterpart, does.

Sentence (10), however, seems to have IEM, since it is rather silly to ask whether the agent that imagines flying through space can be mistaken with regards to who exactly is flying. I do not believe that this is the result of there being an anaphoric relation between the NP-trace, which is the subject of the subordinate, and the object of the main sentence. Rather, I would think that the IEM features of sentence (10) are determined by the fact that (14) talks about an act of imagination. So, here we have an example of a context that exhibits IEM features, without it being a PRO-context.

### The Romanian null subject as PRO

Let us now consider some alleged counterexamples: some Romanian gerundive complements, of the relevant kind, have null subjects which are obviously not NP-traces. Moreover, in such cases, some type of anaphoric binding, which may indicate that the null subject is of type PRO, seems to be at play. Let us assume that in such

<sup>13</sup>Dobrovie-Sorin (1994: 118).

cases, PRO is part of the Romanian syntax. If, in addition, one could show that only these contexts display IEM features and are *de se*, Higginbotham's conjecture would be vindicated.

I believe, however, that such contexts display no IEM features. Consider the following:

- (11) *George a plecat [PRO cântând].*  
 George have-3SG left [PRO singing]  
 'George left singing.'

Gabriela Alboiu argues that the null subject of the Romanian subordinate clause, in sentence (11), is of type PRO, and can be nothing else but PRO.<sup>14</sup> It seems clear that a certain kind of anaphoric relation exists between the subject of the main clause and that of the subordinate. Be that as it may, does sentence (11) display any IEM features? No, because sentence (11) is not the right kind of sentence: it's not as if George left but then he kept wondering whether it was he who was singing. IEM only arises under very special circumstances: it usually takes a psychological verb to engender this phenomenon, and "leave" and its Romanian counterpart "*a pleca*" is not the right kind of verb. So, even though sentence (11) has the right syntax, having the null subject of the subordinate clause be of type PRO does not show anything with regards to IEM or *de se*. Or, more precisely, it shows that PRO, in Romanian, is not really connected with IEM and/or *de se*.

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\* \*

Let us take stock. The examples discussed so far are supposed to show that, in Romanian, neither IEM nor *de se* are connected with PRO, as they (allegedly) are in English. I chose to discuss Romanian complex sentences, which have subordinate clauses that are either infinitival or gerundive complements, because Higginbotham believed that their English counterparts provide evidence for his conjecture. There were two main findings, in this regard: first, in Romanian we have no infinitival complements of the relevant kind. In Romanian, it is the subjunctive that allows us to say the same things as the infinitive does in English. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the null subject of Romanian subjunctive subordinate clauses is not of type PRO. However, such contexts exhibit IEM features, as I established on independent grounds. So, in the case of the Romanian subjunctive, the connection between PRO and IEM is severed.

Second, I talked about the syntax of Romanian gerundive complements, inside the scope of a psychological verb, like "remember" or "imagine". It turns out that only "imagine", and not also "remember", can be used in constructions with gerundive complements, in Romanian. The subject of these subordinate clauses is an NP-trace, raised to the object of the main clause. So, there is no connection between

<sup>14</sup>This is implied in Alboiu (2009) and confirmed via private email exchange, March 20, 2010.



PRO and IEM, in this type of context, either. An NP-trace is a different type of construction than a PRO structure. Thus, Higginbotham's conjecture doesn't apply here any more than it applies in the case of subjunctive complements.

Third, I considered some cases of gerundive complements that are thought to be PRO-constructions. Even if the linguists who think this is right, these contexts do not display any IEM features, so these contexts cannot show that there is a necessary connection between PRO and IEM, in the way that Higginbotham hypothesized.

If the arguments discussed in this section are correct, PRO cannot be said to always be the bearer of IEM, since Romanian does not have PRO-contexts, in the relevant cases, and there is no way of knowing (on syntactical grounds alone) whether the agent of an act of imagining or remembering is experiencing it in a *de se* manner or not.

In the next section, I investigate whether there is any other type of obligatory control – different from PRO – that can be said to be the bearer of IEM, in Romanian.

### Is lexical control necessarily connected with IEM?

We have seen that, in Romanian, there is no connection between PRO and IEM: we encounter both contexts that have IEM, but the subject of the subordinate clause is not of type PRO, and contexts where PRO is present, which have no IEM features. To see whether the linguistic data from Romanian supports Higginbotham's conjecture, we should investigate whether there is anything else that works in the same way as PRO does in English. We should, thus, be looking for a pattern that always requires that the subject of the main clause is necessarily co-referential with the subject of the subordinate. This would be brought about by the main verb having obligatory control effects over the subject of the subordinate. Syntactic control of this kind, as we have seen, does not exist in Romanian. However, another type of control, namely lexical, could play the same role. If we found that, in Romanian, there are verbs whose lexical features impose obligatory control effects on the subject of the subordinate, and thus give rise to IEM features for the contexts in which they are used, Higginbotham's conjecture would be vindicated.

In this section, I will argue that such a connection does not exist: some verbs have the required lexical features, but others don't. Interestingly, both types of verbs may be used in contexts that exhibit IEM features – so the IEM features of those contexts cannot be explained in terms of lexical obligatory control. The examples discussed in what follows should help us see this.

Some Romanian verbs impose obligatory control effects, when they are used in the main clause of a complex sentence: “*a intenționa*” (“to intend”), “*a începe*” (“to start”), “*a încerca*” (“to try”). Their lexical features tell us that the subject of the main clause is necessarily the same as the one of the subordinate. Sentence (12) should make this explicit (variable *x* indicates that the subject of the subordinate is an anaphor, *obligatorily* co-referential with the main subject):

- (12) *George<sub>i</sub> intenționează [să mănânce x<sub>i</sub> prăjitura după cină.]*  
*George<sub>i</sub> intend-3SG [să eat-3SG x<sub>i</sub> cake-the after dinner]*  
 ‘George intends to eat the cake after dinner.’

Given the lexical features of the main verb, “*a intenționa*” (“to intend”), sentence (13) is unacceptable:

- (13) *George<sub>i</sub> intenționează [să mănânci x<sub>j</sub> prăjitura după cină.]*  
*George<sub>i</sub> intend-3SG [să eat-2SG x<sub>j</sub> cake-the after dinner]*  
 ‘George intends you to eat the cake after dinner.’

It would thus seem that we can obtain the required logical form, which Higginbotham’s conjecture postulates to be key to understanding IEM. Even though PRO doesn’t have the required role, the fact that these verbs impose obligatory control effects on the subject of the subordinate clause may indicate that we have what we need to express the same linguistic phenomenon in English and Romanian. This particular seeming is, however, problematic: there are important counterexamples to contend with. It’s true that the Romanian counterpart of “intend” is a “good verb”: it is a verb we would expect to use in contexts that have IEM features. There are other verbs, however, that can be used in contexts exhibiting IEM features, even though their lexical attributes do not carry with them obligatory control effects. There are many verbs that are misbehaving in this way: “*a vrea*” (“to want”), “*a-și/se imagina*” (“to imagine”), “*a-și aminti*” (“to remember”), to name only a few. Let us look at the following two sentences:

- (14) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânce pro<sub>i</sub> prăjitura după cină.]*  
*George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [să eat-3SG pro<sub>i</sub> cake-the after dinner]*  
 ‘George wants to eat the cake after dinner.’

- (15) *George<sub>i</sub> vrea [să mănânci pro<sub>j</sub> prăjitura după cină.]*  
*George<sub>i</sub> want-3SG [să eat-2SG pro<sub>j</sub> cake-the after dinner]*  
 ‘George wants you to eat the cake after dinner.’

Both (14) and (15) are grammatical and acceptable, in Romanian. The fact that (15) is acceptable indicates that “*a vrea*” (“to want”) is significantly different from “*a intenționa*” (“to intend”), since the latter verb could not be used in constructions like sentence (15), as shown by sentence (13). The lexical features of the latter verb impose obligatory control, but those of the former do not. Now, the problem is that sentence (14), just like sentence (12), does have IEM. But the IEM features of sentence (14) can’t be explained in terms of lexical obligatory control. This should indicate that lexical obligatory control, in Romanian, is no more useful to us than syntactic obligatory control was.

These examples indicate that IEM is not connected with lexical obligatory control in Romanian. One has to know what those sentences *mean*, in order for one to understand whether a sentence has IEM or is a *de se* report or not. The “misbehaving” verbs allow for the required theta-roles to be filled in such a way that IEM

is obtained. To my mind, this shows that those verbs have that kind of theta-roles because they are needed to be used in IEM contexts, and not that their being used in IEM contexts is explained by their having the necessary theta-roles. In other words, while Higginbotham thinks that the language is a good guide to understanding IEM and the peculiar psychological states that display the IEM phenomenon, I think the opposite is true: psychology is a good indication of why language allows for certain things to be expressed the way they are. It is precisely because the psychological states in question are reflexive that the relevant contexts (i.e. those about the states in question) exhibit IEM features, and not the other way around.

## Concluding remarks

In this paper, I argued that it is not possible to know whether a certain linguistic context, containing a reference to the first person, is immune to error through misidentification, just by looking at its syntactic form alone. This goes against Higginbotham's claim that the understood subject, PRO, in English, is always the bearer of IEM features and indicates a truly *de se* context. In order to show that this thesis is incorrect I analyzed Romanian syntax, focusing on the grammar of the sentences that are used to translate the English examples used by Higginbotham. I found that in Romanian, one can have contexts that are IEM, but their syntax doesn't contain PRO; or, one can have contexts whose syntax (probably) includes PRO, but they do not display any IEM features. Moreover, I found that there may be a syntactical form that is a trigger of *de se*, in Romanian, namely *Romanian subjunctive I*, but even here further qualifications are needed, in order to know that such a context has IEM. Linguistic form alone doesn't indicate when a sentence has IEM or a certain report is *de se*. One needs to know what the verbs under scrutiny mean, in order to get the needed information about the subjects of the different clauses.

Since both the phenomenon of IEM and that of *de se* can be found in Romanian, I argue that explaining them cannot start with an investigation of language, since, as we have seen, linguistic form may be misleading. It may be the case that certain psychological verbs and/or states are found to have IEM, because of the particular mode of (re)presentation they are characterized by. So, a report of someone remembering something will be said to have IEM, because that report is made in *the memory mode*, and all reports made in the memory mode have IEM, or something along these lines. It is true that this observation, which is adapted from Recanati, doesn't explain much; it's more of a factual observation. However, it is a way of emphasizing what IEM and *de se* states have in common: they are all reflexive states, as Higginbotham calls them, or they share a certain type of mode that injects the needed reflexivity, as Recanati argues. To better understand these characteristics, one should do well to look at the workings of the mind, rather than of language(s).

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# Accuracy in reported speech: Evidence from masculine and feminine Japanese language



Hiroko Itakura

**Abstract** This paper addresses the notion of accuracy in reported content in direct and indirect speech by focusing on the use of masculine and feminine forms in Japanese. By analyzing naturally-occurring examples of direct reports, the paper suggests that direct speech is similar to indirect speech in that the reported content is transformed and thus “inaccurate” in similar ways to indirect speech. The analysis also shows that reporters use contextual clues to signal to the hearer that the direct reports are not to be taken literally. These clues include incongruous indexical expressions used in the reporting and reported contexts as well as mitigation expressions that approximate the accuracy of the reported content used with reporting verbs. The study provides supportive evidence that distinctions between direct and indirect speech are less clearcut than traditionally believed and that these distinctions may be based on the functions and contexts in which each form is used rather than verbatim report for direct report and inclusion of the reporter’s voice in indirect report.

**Keywords** direct report · indirect report · reported speech · Japanese · gender · masculine speech · feminine speech · deixis · indexical expressions · contextual cues

## Introduction

In conveying what another speaker said previously, reporters can report the same words that were used by that speaker or use their own words to rephrase the original utterance. The former is generally referred to as “direct report,” and the latter as

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“indirect report” (e.g., Capone, 2010, 2016 but “direct speech” and “indirect speech” in Coulmas, 1986a, 1986b). Below are illustrations of each type of report:

### **Example 1**

- 1a. He said, “I am coming tomorrow. Be prepared”. (direct report)  
 1b. He said that he was coming on Tuesday so I should be prepared.  
 (indirect report)

It has been traditionally assumed that direct and indirect reports are contrasted in a number of important ways, including grammatical features (e.g., the shift in time and person deixis in the matrix sentence and in the complement clause), use of orthographic signals, and the level of accuracy of the content of the reported quote in relation to the original utterance. In Example 1a, the reported speaker’s original utterance is invoked. In contrast, the reporter in Example 1b adapts the original utterance to the reporting context. Person and time deixis have therefore shifted, as have tense markers (e.g., 1a: I am coming tomorrow is changed to 1b: he was coming on Tuesday). With regard to the level of accuracy, Coulmas (1986a: p. 2) points out that direct quotation “evokes the original speech situation and conveys, or claims to convey, the exact words of the original speaker in direct discourse, while the indirect quotation adapts the reported utterance to the reporting situation.” Coulmas adds that the fundamental differences between direct and indirect reports are that in the former, reporters lend their voice to the original speaker, while in the latter, the reporter comes to the fore. Only in indirect speech is an ambiguity considered to exist as to whether the reported content is the work of the reporter or of the original speaker. Indirect reporters are considered free to blend information about the original utterance with information from their own perspective, while such blending is not acceptable in direct speech.

More recently, varying levels of accuracy in the reported content are discussed in similar terms by Capone (2016). According to Capone, direct reports are assumed to report verbatim what a reported speaker said and therefore prevent the reporting speaker from manipulating the content of the report. By contrast, indirect reports allow reporting speakers to add potentially substantial content to their interpolations. Kecskes (2016) also describes direct report as representing the original message almost word for word from memory, and indirect report as involving the speaker’s interpretation of the semantic and pragmatic meaning of the original utterance. As an example of different degrees of accuracy, Capone (2016: p. 63) discusses how indirect reports are more susceptible to be expanded to include information about the qualities of the original speaker’s voice and attitude to the utterance as perceived by the reporting speaker, thus “going beyond the literal meaning to capture metaphoric meanings.” However, Capone adds that indirect reporting speakers need to decide how to summarize the reported speaker’s utterances in their own words but without substantially changing the content of the original utterance. The hearer of an indirect report is thus required to decipher which words belong to the reported speaker and which to the reporting speaker and be able to do so by turning to certain contextual

clues. By contrast, in direct reporting, the attribution of the reported utterance is clearly with the original speaker, therefore requiring no such cognitive work on the part of the hearer of the direct report.

Although direct and indirect reports are viewed as different with regard to the level of accuracy of the content of the reported utterances, Capone (2016) also cautions that the nature and degree of distinctions between direct and indirect reports is often corroded and may be less clearcut than was previously assumed. The question of accuracy may in fact be a matter of degree. Capone argues that direct reports can undergo drastic transformations as in reporting the original utterance, some elements of the original utterance may be lost while others may be added to it. The conventional understanding of direct report, which inserts the quoted phrase within quotation marks in written language or marks it as verbatim with prosodic features in spoken language, may mislead the hearer into believing that the reported utterance in the matrix is accurate. However, Capone raises the possibility that there may exist conventions or contextual clues to which the reporting speaker adheres while designing a direct report and enabling the hearer to detect whether or not the direct report is to be taken literally, as in the following example (Capone, 2016: p. 60):

Mommy said: Mary must have a bath (said to a 5 years old daughter)

Capone discusses how the father in this example is dramatizing the mother's words, which may have been: "Don't forget Mary's bath," for greater impact on the child. Capone suggests that if the father knows that his daughter may not take him literally, there may be clues to which the hearer (the child) can turn in order to decipher the level of accuracy of the reported utterance. Such conventions may be context-specific, as, for example, in adult-child interactions such as the above interaction (see also Kamada, 2000: p. 60).

Non-accuracy in direct reports has often been discussed in the field of discourse analysis, especially as strategies for storytelling. Bamberg (2006a, 2006b) argues for the importance of the interactional function of storytelling as opposed to the ideational function or content. From this perspective, storytelling is viewed as performance, during which storytellers draw the audience's attention to a certain point or value they wish to convey and thus construct identities and interpersonal relationships in the given sociocultural context (see also Georgakopoulou 2005a, 2005b). One of the key strategies in such storytelling is direct report. Direct reports construct dialogues involving different characters, some of whom may be known to the storyteller and the audience. Tannen (2007) points out that although direct reports may be commonly understood as utterances that directly replicate the original utterance from a prior context without any rephrasing, it is in fact the reporting speaker's or storyteller's representation of the utterance being referred to and is therefore a constructed dialogue. According to Tannen (2007), direct reports are a powerful discourse strategy for framing information regarding conversations being recounted, such as the characteristics of the participants in the story based on the reporting speaker's own values, attitudes, and perceptions. Similarly, Maynard (1996) discusses direct quotation as a tool for self-expression

and the communication of identity (see also Prior, 2015 for a discussion of the central role played by direct reported speech in representing the voices and thoughts of self and others.)

Although an increasing number of studies have been conducted on direct and indirect report (e.g., Capone, 2016), relatively little is known regarding the phenomenon in languages other than English, especially in Asian languages (but see Coulmas, 1986c). In this paper, I focus on the issue of accuracy in reported content in direct and indirect reports in Japanese with regard to the use of masculine and feminine language. In particular, I address the following questions:

- 1) How is masculine and feminine Japanese used in direct and indirect reports in Japanese?
- 2) How does the level of the accuracy compare between direct and indirect reports with regard to the use of masculine and feminine language in Japanese?

As masculine and feminine forms in Japanese are part of social deixis, I begin by describing this deixis and offer a brief summary of masculine and feminine Japanese.

## **Masculine and feminine language in Japanese**

According to Levinson (2005), deixis refers to a range of linguistic expressions that index a certain referent in terms of person, tense, and place. Indexical expressions invoke contextual features, and they need such contextual information for resolution of their meaning. Among various types of indexical expressions, social deixis refers to expressions that mark social relationships, including direct or oblique reference to the social status or role of participants in the speech event.

Japanese is endowed with a rich system of social deixis (Coulmas, 1986b; Kamada, 2000). According to Kamada (2000: p. 67–68), social deixis in Japanese includes personal reference, honorifics, and men’s and women’s language. Below, I describe some of the prominent features of masculine and feminine forms in Japanese and show how, unlike in English, Japanese masculine and feminine forms are indexical, and masculinity and femininity are indexed at the sentence level rather than as interactional features such as interruptions or dominance in amount of talk as masculine features, as often discussed in relation to English.

Japanese has a range of gender-specific morphological, grammatical, and lexical features that index traditional masculinities and femininities, usually discussed as “masculine” and “feminine” forms, respectively. Japanese masculinity is traditionally viewed as rough, assertive, and authoritative (Okamoto, 2004). By contrast, Japanese femininity is often associated with gentleness, politeness, refinement, non-assertiveness, submissiveness, and powerlessness (Okamoto, 2013; Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith, 2008; Saito, 2011; Takano, 2005). Specifically, Japanese men and



women's language is perceived as differing in terms of specific lexical sets, address terms, sentence-final particles, honorifics, and the so-called "beautification" prefix *o-* (Inoue, 2006, pp. 13–14).

Frequently discussed features of gender-specific linguistic features are self- and other- address terms. For example, in normative use, *boku* and *ore* (corresponding to the personal pronoun "I" in English) are male-associated self-address forms, whereas *atashi* is a female-associated form. For second-person address terms (corresponding to "you" in English), *kimi*, *omae*, *kisama*, and *temee* are described as male-associated, with varying degrees of formality, roughness, or vulgarity (Shibamoto Smith 2004; Kobayashi 2002).

Similar observations have been made in relation to sentence-final particles. Among these, *-zo* and *-ze* (e.g. *iku-zo* and *iku-ze*, 'I go') are perceived as strongly masculine, projecting aggression and authority, while *-na* (e.g., *omowanai-na*, '(I) don't think') and *-sa* (e.g. *chigau-sa*, '(it's) wrong') are perceived as relatively masculine (see also Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2013). In addition, the use of *-ee* instead of the standard *-ai* in forming adjectives (e.g., *urusee* < *urusai*, 'noisy') and negative forms (*nee* < *nai*, 'no') are perceived as projecting roughness (Shibamoto Smith 2004). Meanwhile, *-noyo* and *-wa* are often discussed as associated with femininity. However, these are stereotypical, and speakers' actual use of such expressions often differ from these expectations (Inoue 2006; Okamoto & Shibamoto Smith 2004, 2008).

## Direct and indirect report in Japanese

Direct and indirect reported speech in Japanese is marked by the complementizer particle *-to* (see Appendix for the list of grammatical terms and their abbreviations), a matrix or embedded clause, and a reporting verb such as *iu* ('to say'), *kiku* ('to ask') and *omou* ('to think'). This study focuses on *iu* ('to say') as the most frequently discussed example of reporting verbs (e.g., Capone, 2016; Coulmas, 1986b, Maynard 1996).

In colloquial Japanese, it is often difficult to distinguish between the two types of report, as illustrated in Example 2 below, in which the same sentence (2) can be interpreted as direct report (2a) or indirect report (2b):

### Example 2

Kinou Rika wa raigetsu kekkon suru to itta  
Yesterday, Rika, Topic, next month, get married, Comp, said

- 2a. *Direct reading*: Yesterday, Rika said, "(I) am going to get married next month".
- 2b. *Indirect reading*: Yesterday, Rika said that (she) (was) going to get married next month

Distinctions between direct and indirect report interpretations are made particularly difficult because personal references are often omitted ((e.g., *watashi* ('I') and *kanojo* ('she')), and tense is not marked with regard to present or past, both arguably fundamental aspects of Japanese (Coulmas, 1986b). These and other grammatical features thus make both direct and indirect readings of an identical sentence possible.

Coulmas (1986c: p. 171) suggests the presence of sentence-final particle as one of the linguistic markers that differentiate direct and indirect report, arguing that “sentence-final particles are common in colloquial speech, but they are not always grammatically necessary or stylistically required.” As discussed above, sentence-final particles indicate the speaker’s attitude toward the utterance or the addressee in the immediate context. They therefore cannot be grammatically included in the embedded complement clause of indirect reported speech. Example 3 below shows a contrast with Example 2 only in relation to the presence of the sentence-final particle *-wa*:

### **Example 3**

Kinou Rika wa raigetsu kekkon suru wa to itta  
 Yesterday, Rika, Topic, next month, get married, SFP (Fem), Comp, said

*Direct reading:*

Yesterday, Rika said, “I am going to get married next month”.

The feminine sentence final particle *-wa* softens the illocutionary force of the reported utterance and indexes femininity in the reported speaker (here, Rika) in the original context, thus signaling direct report. In contrast, Example 2 is ambiguous in terms of direct and indirect readings as the absence of sentence-final particle gives no clue as to direct or indirect readings. The reporting speaker may be eliminating such indexical expressions to convey gendered aspects of the reported utterances from the indirect report. Alternatively, the reporting speaker may be accurately reporting the reported speaker’s utterance, which was originally spoken without the sentence-final article in the original context (direct report).

## **Masculine and feminine language in direct reports in Japanese**

The above discussion suggests that the use of masculine and feminine forms is limited to direct reporting in Japanese. It may be expected that these forms will be used accurately in relation to the reported speaker’s identities, affective meaning, and attitude toward the utterance in the original context. However, Kamada (2000) points out that masculine and feminine forms used in direct reporting are not always accurate. As an illustration, he discusses how masculine forms were used by a reporting husband in his reference to his wife’s prior utterances. Kamada argues that the masculine forms that were clearly not used in the wife’s original utterance are nonetheless more appropriate than feminine forms, which were more likely to

have been used by the female speaker, because direct reports are used to dramatize the point of the husband’s storytelling.

Below, I analyze the use of masculine and feminine language in direct reporting with regard to the level of accuracy of their use. The analysis will be based on naturally-occurring conversations in all-male and all-female talk selected from the BTSJ (Basic Transcription System for Japanese) corpus compiled by Usami (2011), with slight modifications such as names of participants in conversations. Based on excerpts translated into English, I then discuss the level of accuracy of the reported content in direct and indirect reports.

### Masculine language in direct reports

Numerous examples of masculine forms used in direct reports are found in the corpus. In the majority of such examples, the accuracy of the gendered reported utterance is uncertain. However, contextual clues are provided, thus enabling the hearer not to take the reports literally. In the following two sections, I analyze how masculine and feminine language forms are used in direct reports along with the nature of any clues that may be provided.

#### *Constructing a stereotypical masculinity*

The following example illustrates the use of masculine forms in a direct report, which appears to represent verbatim original masculine language in the prior context featuring a stereotypical male utterance. However, the incongruity of indexical expressions in the reporting and reported contexts signals to the hearer that the direct report is not in fact accurate. (Underlined portions in the transcript consist of indexical expressions and are discussed in relation to the issue of accuracy.)

**Excerpt 1**

*Naoto and Akira (both male) are members of the same club at university. Naoto is telling Akira that he made some complaints to the club’s senior leader: Translation*

1	Naoto	zannen nagara <u>watashi</u> wa kinou Tanaka- <u>san</u> o okorazuni wa orenakatta tte sonnani okkotte nai kedo chotto mazui <u>darō</u> (Masc) gurai wa itta kedo
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1	Naoto	Unfortunately, <u>I</u> had to get angry with <u>Mr</u> Tanaka yesterday I mean, not that angry but I said something like, “Your way of handling is probably (Masc) rather bad”.
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At the end of Turn 1, Naoto directly reports his own prior speech addressing the club's senior leader, Mr Tanaka:

chotto mazui daro (Masc), gurai wa itta kedo  
 Rather, bad, probably (Masc), something like Topic, (I) said, but

In the direct report above, the masculine language form *daro*, an epistemic modal expression ('probably'), is used. The reporter (Naoto) is quoting his own prior speech as rough and abrupt in the prior context, in which he addresses the club's senior leader.

However, the direct report is not a literal representation. First, the level of politeness in the social deixis Naoto uses in relation to the addressee (his senior, Mr Tanaka) in the reporting and in the reported context is incongruous. In the reporting context, addressing Akira, Naoto refers to their club's senior leader as 'Tanaka-san,' with *-san* acting as a third-person address term, broadly equivalent to "Mr" or "Ms" but used preceding both the referent's family or given name. When combined with the referent's family name (Tanaka), it generally communicates the speaker's respect toward the referent and therefore greater formality. This is incongruous with the rough language Naoto claims to have used when speaking to Mr Tanaka in the direct report, that is, *mazui daro*. Similarly, Naoto's use of the formal self-address term *watashi* is also incongruous in the reporting context, which is an informal conversation between close friends. This also seems to function as signaling the upcoming storytelling, which dramatizes the original dialogue rather than literally reporting it. Second, the reporting speaker uses *gurai* ('something like'), which marks the direct report as an approximation of the original message (see Discussion below).

### *Using masculine language to report on a woman's speech*

Examples are also found in the corpus where a reporter is using masculine forms to reconstruct a female speaker's utterance in an imaginary dialogue:

Construction of an imaginary dialogue and incongruity of social deixis

#### **Excerpt 2**

*Takashi and Kiyoshi (both male) belong to the baseball club at their university. They are talking about another member, Satoru, who is good at baseball but is very thin and small for his age. Satoru's clothes look too big for him.*

1	Takashi	<u>aitsu</u> (Masc) wa nee ((laughter))
2	Kiyoshi	fuku bukabuka datta mon (SFP/Inf) are, <u>okan</u> (Inf) ga saa, seichou suru to omotte katta ((loud laughter)) M nanoni " <u>anta</u> (Inf) dekaku (Masc) naru kara L kattoku wa (Fem)" tte

*Translation*

1	Takash i	The fellow (Masc) is, you know ((laughter))
2	Kiyoshi	His clothes were so baggy <u>mon</u> (SFP/Inf)
		That is, you know, <u>his mom</u> (Inf) bought it ((loud laughter)) for him.
		Actually he is an M size, but (his mom) said, “ <u>You</u> (Inf) are going to get <u>big</u> (Masc) so I am going to get (you) an L size <u>wa</u> (SFP/Fem)”

At the end of Turn 2, Kiyoshi uses direct report:

“*anta* *dekaku*        *naru*   *kara*   *L*   *kattoku*   *wa*”   *tte*   (*itta*)  
 you,    *big* (Masc),    *become*, *since*, *L*, *will buy*, *SFP/Fem*, *Comp*, (*said*)

Kiyoshi directly reports to Takashi on the mother of their mutual friend, Satoru, with *dekaku* (a conjugation form of *dekai*, which is a masculine form of *ookii* ‘big’). In addition, Kiyoshi uses *anta* (‘you’) when Satoru’s mother is reportedly addressing her son. *Anta* is an impolite form of *anata* (second person pronoun ‘you’) and is often used in relation to an addressee with inferior status (Kitahara, 2009). Moreover, Kiyoshi also uses the feminine sentence-final particle *-wa*, in reporting Satoru’s mother. These indexical expressions construct multiple identities for the reported mother, including a female speaker identity with a degree of roughness and intimacy with her son.

On closer look, it is unlikely that the reported mother used those masculine and feminine forms when addressing her son. First, the direct report is clearly a construction of the reporter’s imagination as Kiyoshi did not have access to the mother’s dialogue with her son. Second, both the reporter (Kiyoshi) and the hearer (Takashi) laugh jointly, which suggests that both reporter and hearer are involved in playful talk (Coates, 2007), in which the accuracy of the reported dialogue is not as important as consolidating bonding. The direct report thus invokes humor by putting a stereotypical masculinity in the mouth of a female speaker and thus serves the function of entertainment during gossip. The referential term *aitsu* (‘that guy’) for their mutual friend (Turn 1) and the sentence-final particle *-mon*, which expresses informality, suggest that they are enjoying jocular abuse of the absent participant, which is typical of men’s talk (Coates, 2003).

Repetition of speech act: Non-adherence to a pragmatic rule

Repetition is a fundamental aspect of natural conversation, and it is pervasive (Tannen, 2007). When speakers directly talk to each other, the same clause is often repeated in consecutive clauses, for example:

*Ike, ike!*  
 Go! Go!

*Ikou, ikou!*  
 Let’s go, let’s go

On the other hand, it seems less likely that the same clause is repeated and consecutively used when accompanied with a masculine or feminine sentence-final particle.

*Ikouze* (SFP/Masc), *ikouze* (SFP/Masc)  
Let's go *ze* (SFP/Masc), let's go *ze* (SFP/Masc)

To the extent that sentence-final particles index modality, thus conveying the speaker's attitude in the immediate ongoing context, it is atypical for the same clause accompanied with a sentence-final particle to be used repeatedly within a short span of time. However, this is widely used in direct reports (Kamada, 2000), as illustrated in the following example from the corpus:

### Excerpt 3

*Natsuko and Emiri (both female) belong to the same club at university. They are talking about their previous training camp. They were given a large sum of money and went to a supermarket to do grocery shopping for the camp. The immediately preceding turns are accompanied with their laughter.*

1	Natsuko	YATTARA kago 3-ko bun gurai katten no ne
2	Emiri	“kaou <i>ze</i> (SFP/Masc), kaou <i>ze</i> (SFP/Masc)” toka itte ne

### Translation

1	Natsuko	We bought SO MUCH, three basketfuls
2	Emiri	We were saying things like “Let's buy <i>ze</i> (SFP/Masc), let's buy <i>ze</i> (SFP/Masc),” you know

Similar to the example of all-male talk discussed above, the female reporter and female hearer co-construct intimate talk in a humorous way. Although the reporter's use of masculine forms (sentence-final particle in *kaou ze* or ‘Let's buy *ze*’) to refer to their own prior utterance might have been accurate, the consecutive repetition (*kaou ze*, *kaou ze* or ‘Let's buy *ze*, let's buy *ze*’) seems to function as a clue to signal that it is a construction and is used as a strategy to enliven the discourse.

### Using feminine language in direct reports

Examples are also found in the corpus in which feminine forms are used to refer to the reported female speaker, for example, in order to construct a stereotypical femininity for a woman in a certain role. In this section, I illustrate two differing femininities constructed in direct reports.

Construction of a critical femininity

**Excerpt 4**

*Sumi and Kana (both female) attend the same course at their university. They are discussing interviews as a common data collection method for research projects, but their validity is questionable because interviewees often respond in order to please the interviewer. Sumi is telling Kana about her experience of receiving a critical comment from her interviewee. After the interview, Sumi asked her interviewee to tell her what she was genuinely thinking, but the interviewee replied that it was for the interviewer (Sumi) to work it out for herself.*

1	Sumi	sore waa “ <u>anata</u> ga hontou no koto itteru ka, <u>anata</u> ga mikiwamenakya ikenai <u>noyo</u> (SFP/Fem) “ toka itte ((laughter))
2	Kana	eh? ((surprised))
3	Sumi	“tashikani” toka omotte ((laughter))

*Translation*

1	Sumi	That kind of thing, “ <u>You</u> have to distinguish whether they are talking about the truth by yourself <u>noyo</u> (SFP/Fem)” she was saying things like that ((laughter))
2	Kana	Eh? ((surprised))
3	Sumi	I thought to myself something like, “That’s true” ((laughter))

In Turn 1, Sumi uses direct report to quote the reported speaker by using two kinds indexical expressions of social deixis:

anata	ga	hontou no	koto	itteru	ka,	ga	miki	nakyai
					anata		wame	kenai
you,	Subj,	Gen,	you,	Subj,				
	truth,	things, are		distin-				
		saying, if,		guish,				
				must,				

noyo toka itte  
SFP (SFP/Fem), things like, said

First, use of the second person pronoun *anata* by the reporting speaker (Sumi) to report how another speaker (her interviewee) talked to her expresses the reported speaker’s superior status. Sumi also uses the feminine sentence-final particle *noyo*. Indexical expressions of this type construct a stereotypical female speaker who is being critical. However, women in an authoritative position are often viewed negatively (Tannen, 1995). In this example, the reported interviewee is described by Sumi as knowledgeable, with expertise in research methods and is critical of

Sumi. The accompanying laughter and the expression of surprise from the hearer suggest that the direct report is not taken literally but is used as part of the reporter's storytelling strategies to tease the authoritative female speaker. Second, as in Excerpts 1 and 3 above, *toka* ('something like') is used to hedge the accuracy of the direct report is used with the reporting verb *itte* (conjugation form of *iu* 'to say').

Construction of a frail and distant mother

**Excerpt 5**

*Kimiko and Atsuko are discussing their mutual friends. Kimiko shifts the topic to Atsuko's mother, who recently fell sick, and asks after her.*

1	Kimiko	are kara mou heiki?
2	Atsuko	ah (onaji byouki) wa nattenai kedo
3	Kimiko	ah yokatta, yokatta
4	Atsuko	nanka mou "nemasu (Polite)" toka itte hayane shitari toka
5	Kimiko	ah sore ga ii to omou

*Translation*

1	Kimiko	Is (your mom) all right since then?
2	Atsuko	Ah, she hasn't gone back to (the same illness) again
3	Kimiko	Oh, that's good, good
4	Atsuko	She says something like "I am going to sleep(Polite)" and she goes to sleep early
5	Kimiko	Oh, I think that's good

Turn 4 contains an example of direct report:

"ne-masu (Polite)"                      toka                      itte  
(am going to) sleep (Polite), things like, (she) said

The sentence-final *-masu* in *ne-masu* ('(am going to) sleep') is an indexical expression conveying politeness from the mother to the addressee (her daughter Atsuko) as well as formality in the reported context or direct report. Yet the choice of indexical expression is incongruous for a typical conversation between mother and daughter. The polite form is unnaturally over-polite and indicates distance between mother and daughter. In addition, as in Excerpts 1 and 4 above, the reporting verb *itte* ('say') is used in combination with *toka* ('(said) things like'), which signals that the directly reported utterance is an approximation of the original message.



## Discussion and conclusion

In summary, the discussion above supports the view that although traditional views have held that direct and indirect reports are contrasted with regard to the level of accuracy of the reported utterance in relation to the original message, the nature and degree of distinctions between direct and indirect reported speech is less clearcut than was previously thought, and the question of accuracy may in fact be a matter of degree (Capone, 2016; Kecskes, 2016).

In Japanese, direct and indirect reports are often indistinguishable, and indirect reports do not convey information about, for example, the reported speaker's gender, masculinity or femininity, or attitude toward the utterance in the embedded clause. It is only in direct reports that indexical expressions such as masculine and feminine forms or other signals of social deixis are used.

The analysis has shown that in direct reports, masculine language is used to represent the original male speaker's speech as stereotypically masculine or to represent the original female speaker's speech. Similarly, feminine language was shown to be used to represent the original female speaker's speech by exaggerating a stereotypical femininity in a particular role in the situated context. Although not discussed in this paper, it is likely that feminine forms are also used to represent the original male speaker's utterance in direct report.

Although this may suggest that direct report can manipulate the original speaker's utterances by using masculine or feminine forms, as speakers do not normally speak in a stereotypical way, it is in fact possible that the original male and female speakers may have spoken in a stereotypical way or alternatively in a way that differs greatly from a typical masculine and feminine style (e.g., a female speaker using a rough masculine form). However, the analysis has suggested that masculine and feminine forms are used in a way that deviates from actual use in the reported context as part of the discourse strategy, including dramatizing the story and accentuating some point in the story. Although these strategies may be regarded as manipulating the original utterance by the reporter, there are contextual clues the reporter can use to signal to the hearer that the direct quote is not to be taken literally. Below, I summarize contextual clues involved in such a distinction and compare levels of accuracy in direct and indirect reports. This is followed by a discussion of the notion of *pragmeme* (Mey 2010) as it applies to reporting.

### Contextual clues for distinguishing literal and non-literal representations in direct reports with regard to masculine and feminine language

The first clue is *incongruity* in the use of indexical expressions introduced to refer to the same speaker in the reporting and reported context. As we discussed above in relation to Excerpt 1, indexical expressions of different levels of politeness in the reporting and reported contexts create incongruity and signal non-literality in the direct report. Similarly, indexical expressions that do not fit with the normal identity of the reported speaker and the interpersonal relationship between the participants also suggest that the direct report is a non-accurate reconstruction.

The second clue is if the reported speech is clearly imaginary, when, for example, the reporter clearly did not have access to the original utterance. A third clue is violation of the pragmatic rule that guides the use of clauses with regard to acceptability of their repeated and consecutive use. For example, it is possible that this rule may be different in the naturally-occurring direct talk and in direct reports. In addition, laughter can be used as a clue to distinguish non-literal meanings of both masculine and feminine language. Laughter is one of the para-linguistic features that signal a “play frame” in which the participants (the reporter and the hearer) signal that they are engaged in a joint activity in a non-serious, playful, humorous manner and that consolidating intimacy is more important than ideational content (Coates 2007; Tannen 2004). Lastly, hedging expressions can be used together with a reporting verb, (here *toka* and *gurai*), both of which mean ‘things like’ and ‘something like,’ to mitigate the level of accuracy of the following direct reported content. When conceptualized as verbatim reports, direct reports are not supposed to be used with hedging expressions such as these. This provides supportive evidence to Capone’s suggestion (2016: pp. 58–59) that the meaning of ‘say’ is context-dependent and the degree of exactness varies, meaning, for example, ‘exactly say’ or ‘more or less say.’ The finding that *iu* (‘say’) is often used in combination with *toka* and *gurai* and other related expressions further supports the view that the reporter is signaling to the hearer that the direct report is not – and should not be expected to be – accurate. Further research should examine instances of direct reporting verbs accompanied with hedging expressions as well as the identities of those used without them.

#### Pragmemes for direct and indirect reports

Mey (2010: p. 2884) proposed the notion of pragmemes, or general situational prototypes of pragmatic acts that are capable of being executed in a particular situation or cluster of situations. In pragmeme theory, all utterances are situated, and their intended meaning must be recovered from the situation of utterance, that is, the interlocutor should be able to recover the speaker’s intended meanings by making use of contextual clues used by the speaker to convey the message. Relating Mey’s notion of pragmemes to indirect report, Capone (2010) discusses the importance of the context-dependency of the meaning of utterances. Capone argues that although an indirect reporter has more freedom to make the report inaccurate compared to verbatim direct reports, the reporter nonetheless is under the obligation not to let the report drift too far from the original utterance or context. Meanwhile, the hearer may use a number of clues to distinguish the reporter’s voice from that of the reported or original speaker as the indirect reporter does not take responsibility for the original speaker’s voice.

This study has shown that direct report in Japanese is similar to indirect report in the level of accuracy and freedom shown by the reporter. The direct reporter does not necessarily intend to reconstruct the pragmeme or the original embedded context accurately. The original speaker’s indexical expressions for identities, affective meaning, and attitude toward the context are often exaggerated or dramatized. However, the reporter is required to provide clues that will enable the hearer to distinguish the narrating reporter’s voice and the original speaker’s content and

speech act. This is similar to how indirect reporters have been described as having the freedom to summarize the reports in their own voices but without substantially changing semantic meanings or functions in the speech acts and thus misleading the hearer.

To conclude, the present study has attempted to compare direct and indirect report with regard to the level of accuracy by focusing on the use of masculine and feminine forms in Japanese. The analysis of introspective data and naturally-occurring examples from an established corpus suggests that contrary to the traditional view, the two report forms are similar. In practice, direct report may deviate from the original speaker's utterance just as indirect reports may blend in contextual information related to the original speech act as interpreted by the reporter. This raises a possibility that the two forms of report should be distinguished at the level of function and context. Direct report may be more likely to be used in storytelling and indirect report in other contexts such as news reports, where dramatizing is not as important or even prohibited. However, the similarity between direct and indirect report presented in this study was limited to Japanese, a language enriched with social deixis. Further empirical studies based on languages that may not be as richly endowed with social deixis as Japanese will further enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between direct and indirect report.

## Appendix

Japanese grammatical features & abbreviations:

Comp:	Complementizer
Fem:	Feminine form
Gen:	Genitive
Inf:	Informal expression
Masc:	Masculine form
Polite:	Polite form
SFP:	Sentence final particle
Subj:	Subject

CAPITAL LETTERS: spoken emphatically

( ): Words in round parentheses are supplied from the context

(xxx): transcription doubts

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# The Grammaticalization of Indirect Reports: The Cantonese Discourse Particle *wo5*



John C. Wakefield and Hung Yuk Lee

**Abstract** This paper proposes a definition for the Cantonese sentence-final discourse particle *wo5*, which marks the proposition contained within a clause as an indirect report that does not belong to the speaker. The methodology for defining *wo5* is based on the natural semantic metalanguage theory and draws on Besemeres and Wierzbicka's (2003: 3) "general model for the investigation of discourse markers," the goal of which is to "come up with a formula which would make sense in all the contexts in which [the discourse particle] can occur, and which could also explain why in some contexts . . . [it] cannot be used at all" (p. 19). The definition we propose is discussed in light of what other authors have said about *wo5*, and is tested against a number of examples within which *wo5* can and cannot appear.

**Keywords** indirect reports · grammaticalization · cantonese · discourse particles · *wo5*

## 1 Introduction

Cantonese has more than 30 sentence-final discourse particles, which comprise a class of bound morphemes that attach to the ends of sentences and function to link the sentence to the discourse in some specific way. One such discourse particle is *wo5*, which marks a clause within the sentence to which it is suffixed as an indirect report. In this paper we will review what other authors have said about this particle, discuss its function and meaning based on a variety of examples, and ultimately propose a definition. The development of our definition for *wo5* used the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) methodology for defining words. The NSM theory proposes that all humans are endowed with a set of semantic primitives (or primes) that are lexicalized in all languages. Semantically complex words can be

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defined using paraphrases that are written with these semantic primes. NSM primes are hypothesized to be universal, so definitions that are written with the primes can in theory be translated isomorphically into any language, and are thus easily understood by speakers of other langua-cultures. For full details of the NSM theory, see Wierzbicka (1996), Goddard (2004, 2008, 2011) and Goddard and Wierzbicka (2002, 2014).

Besemeres and Wierzbicka's (2003: 3) "general model for the investigation of discourse markers" was adopted for defining *wo5*. The goal was to "come up with a formula which would make sense in all the contexts in which [this discourse particle] can occur, and which could also explain why in some contexts... [it] cannot be used at all" (p. 19). In other words, we have written a simply-worded paraphrase that is proposed to include all and only the meaning of *wo5*. In the process we drew from what has been said previously about *wo5* in the literature. All the descriptions of *wo5* that were deemed accurate were melded into a single definition, and those meanings attributed to *wo5* that were not deemed accurate were discarded. The determination about what to include and what to discard involved a process of trial and error tests on the definition. These tests involved solicitations of native-speaker judgments on constructed *wo5*-suffixed sentences within constructed contexts, thus testing the limits of *wo5*'s usage.

## 2 Defining the Cantonese Discourse Particle *wo5*

The particle *wo5* has been described as an evidential hearsay particle that evolved from the verb *waa6* ("say") (e.g., Leung, 2006; Yap et al., 2014). Leung (2006) said that both *wo3* and *wo5* can express hearsay, but that *wo3* only expresses hearsay when "S/he said..." begins the sentence. To us this suggests that only *wo5*, and not *wo3*, entails the function of reporting since every sentence that *wo5* attaches to is interpreted as a report, but only sentences that are already marked as reports are interpreted as such when *wo3* is attached. Many authors (e.g., Law 2004) have implied that the meaning of *wo5* is expressed in English by embedding the report as a clause complement of the verb "say," as shown here in the English translation of (1):

- (1) (X *waa6*) *keoi5 m4 lei4 wo5*  
 say s/he NEG come WO  
 'X said s/he's not coming.'

X refers to some person (or people) who said the clause that follows the verb *waa6* ("said"), i.e., *keoi5 m4 lei4* ("S/he's not coming"). When the optional subject + verb ("X *waa6*") is included in the Cantonese sentence, then the utterance being reported is the embedded clause complement of *waa6*. When X *waa6* is not included, the meaning of the sentence remains the same; the same clause *keoi5 m4 lei4* ("S/he's not coming") is understood to be a report, but in this case it now looks like a main clause rather than an embedded clause. When X *waa6* is not included as part of the sentence, then the identity of the person X (i.e. the person who

originally uttered the statement) must be figured out pragmatically by the listener. In the English translation of (1), “X said” is not optional and must be included in order to express the meaning that “S/he’s not coming” was said by someone other than the speaker.

It can be seen from this that “[clause]-*wo5*” entails the meaning “X said [clause].” The subject X is the source of the report, which is of course human, and may be singular or plural and may or may not be co-indexed with the subject of the embedded clause. Based on all of this it appears on the surface that attaching *wo5* to a complex sentence whose main verb is *waa6* (“said”) is redundant and merely functions to emphasize the fact that the speaker is giving an indirect report. It also appears on the surface that embedding a report as the complement of *waa6* expresses the same meaning as *wo5*-suffixing. We will show, however, that while the particle *wo5* does entail the meaning of “X said,” it expresses more than only this.

One distinction between “[clause]-*wo5*” and “X said [clause]” is illustrated below in example (2). A first-person subject can be used in a sentence of the type “X said [clause],” but as shown with the question marks preceding the first English translation of (2), a sentence of the type “[clause]-*wo5*” cannot be interpreted as indirectly reporting something that was previously said by the speaker(s).

- (2) *Keoi5 m4 lei4 wo5.*  
 s/he NEG come WO  
 ??‘I/we said s/he’s not coming.’  
 ‘S/he/they/you said s/he’s not coming.’

Note that the underlined subject + verb in the English translations are not present in the Cantonese sentence. They are a translation of the meaning “X said” that is entailed within the meaning of *wo5*.

Normally the reported speech is understood to have come from a third party, either singular or plural, but in some contexts it is understood to be the listener, as shown in (3). The context of (3) is a wife having told her husband, who enjoys drinking cold beer, that he shouldn’t drink cold drinks for health reasons. She later asks him if he wants to order a beer to go with his dinner and he says (3) in response.

- (3) *Ngo5 m4 jam2 dak1 dung3 je5 wo5.*  
 I NEG drink can cold thing WO  
 ‘You said I can’t drink cold drinks.’

Again the underlined subject + verb in the English translation are not present in the Cantonese sentence, but rather are expressed by the presence of *wo5*. The unspoken source of this report is understood to be the hearer (i.e., the wife) based on the discourse context stated above, and this same sentence would be interpreted as a report from a third person if the discourse context were changed accordingly.

An interpretation of *wo3*-suffixing that is not possible for any of the examples above is one in which the source of the report is the speaker him- or herself. It fact it appears that *wo5* can never be used to report something that was said by the speaker. Evidence of this is illustrated by the example in (4). Given the appropriate context,



it is perfectly acceptable in both English and Cantonese to say, “I said s/he’s not coming.” It is also acceptable in Cantonese to attach *wo5* to this sentence, but when this is done the entire sentence, including the main clause subject and verb, will be interpreted as a report from a third party.

- (4) *Ngo5 waa6 keoi5 m4 lei4 wo5.*  
 I say s/he NEG come WO  
 ‘S/he/they/you said I said s/he’s not coming.’

The sentence in (4) cannot be interpreted to mean “I said s/he’s not coming,” even though this is what it would mean were *wo5* not attached. Example (4) can only be interpreted to mean that the whole sentence “I said s/he’s not coming” is something that was said by the hearer or a third party. This is because the meaning of *wo5* makes it incompatible with sentences which report speech that originated from the speaker. This indicates that in addition to entailing the meaning “X said [clause],” *wo5* additionally includes the meaning “I did not say this.”

Another thing we observe about *wo5* is that it marks something as an indirect report rather than a direct report. The difference between direct and indirect reports is complicated and is a matter of degree rather than a strict either-or distinction (Capone, 2016). However, it is reasonable to say that (5a) is more direct than (5b) and (5c):

- (5) a. She said, “I’m hungry.”  
 b. She said she was hungry.  
 c. She said I was hungry.

The direct report in (5a) uses wording that assumes the perspective of the original speaker X of the utterance being reported. The pronoun “I” is therefore co-indexed with the main-clause subject “she.” The pronoun “I” in (5c), in contrast, is co-indexed with the speaker who uttered (5c). (5a), but not (5b) or (5c), is compatible with using intonational forms across the reported utterance (i.e., “I’m hungry”) that mimic the intonation that was originally used by X, or the emotional state of X, when s/he said “I’m hungry.” (5a) also requires a pause after “She said” so that the sentence is understood to be a direct report instead of an indirect report that has the meaning of (5c). An additional contrast between (5a) and (5c) is the change of the tense of the embedded report from present to past, respectively, though most speakers would consider it acceptable to utter (5c) using present tense.

It appears to be much more difficult to use quotative direct speech in spoken Cantonese than in English. Trying to say (6a) could easily be mistaken for (6b), which is an indirect report:

- (6) a. *Keoi5 waa6, “ngo5 tou5ngo6.”*  
 s/he say I hungry  
 ‘s/he said, “I’m hungry”’  
 b. *Keoi5 waa6 ngo5 tou5ngo6*  
 s/he say I hungry  
 ‘S/he said I was hungry.’

Examples (6a) and (6b) correspond to (5a) and (5c), respectively. One reason that these sentences are harder to distinguish from each other in Cantonese than in English is because Cantonese lacks tense and therefore cannot use tense to mark a clause as direct vs. indirect speech. A possible scenario for using (6a) might be someone reciting what someone else said in story-like fashion. As is the case for its English counterpart in (5a), the report in (6a) also requires a pause after *Keoi5 waa6* (“S/he said”) plus the use of affective intonation on the embedded report in order to be interpreted as a direct, rather than as an indirect, report.

If we attach *wo5* to the sentence in (6b), then the meaning will be the same, but with the additional connotative meaning that the speaker did not say this, as indicated in the English translation of (7b) below. In contrast, attaching *wo5* to (6a) is not allowed. This is indicated with question marks preceding the sentence in (7a) and no English translation.<sup>1</sup>

- (7) a. ??*Keoi5 waa6, “ngo5 tou5ngo6” wo5*  
 s/he say I hungry WO  
 b. *Keoi5 waa6 ngo5 tou5ngo6 wo5*  
 s/he say I hungry WO  
 ‘s/he said I was hungry (I didn’t say this).’

This demonstrates that *wo5* forces a report to be interpreted as indirect.

Each of our *wo5*-suffixed examples thus far includes a report in the form of a declarative clause. Interestingly *wo5* can also be used with other clause types, such as the *wh*-interrogative in (8), the polar A-not-A interrogative in (9), the speaker-directed imperative in (10), and the speaker- and/or listener-directed imperative in (11). (Examples (8) and (10) are both adapted from Cheung, 2007: 178).

- (8) (*Keoi5 waa6/man6 ngo5 gei2si4 heoi3 wo5*  
 s/he say/ask I when go WO  
 ‘S/he said s/he wants to know when I’m going.’  
 ‘S/he asked when I’m going.’
- (9) (*Keoi5 waa6/man6 lei5 heoi3 m4 heoi3 wo5*  
 s/he say/ask you go NEG go WO  
 ‘S/he said s/he wants to know whether or not you’re going.’  
 ‘S/he asked if you’re going or not.’

<sup>1</sup>Actually it would be possible to use *wo5* with a direct report, but only so long as *wo5* was part of the direct report itself:

*Keoi5 waa6, “ngo5 tou5ngo6 wo5”*  
 s/he say I hungry WO  
 ‘s/he said, “X said I’m hungry”.’

It is difficult to construct a context for this, but it is technically possible. In this case the speaker is giving a direct report of X’s having given an indirect report with *wo5*-sufficing. In this case *wo5* is still not being used to give a direct report.

- (10) (*Keoi5 waa6/giu3*) *ngo5 faai3di1 heoi3 wo5*.  
 s/he say/tell) I fast-more go WO  
 ‘S/he said for me to hurry up and go.’  
 ‘S/he told me to hurry up and go.’
- (11) (*Keoi5 waa6/giu3*) *m4 hou2 jing2 soeng2 wo5*  
 s/he say/tell NEG good film photo WO  
 ‘S/he said not to take pictures.’  
 ‘S/he told me/you/us not to take pictures.’

As was the case in example (1), the subjects and verbs shown in parentheses are optional in all these sentences because their meaning is already entailed within the meaning of *wo5*.

We propose the following speaker-oriented definition of *wo5* based on the observations that: 1) it marks a clause as an indirect report; and 2) it cannot be a report of something that was said by the speaker.

- (12) [clause]-*wo5*  
 someone X said something like this  
 I did not say this

The antecedent of the deictic demonstrative “this” is the clause that is being reported. For sentences that include a second- or third-person subject and one of the speech verbs *waa6* (“say”), *man6* (“ask”), or *giu3* (“tell”), then this clause is the complement of the speech verb. For sentences for which this subject + verb combination is null, or for which the subject is in the first person, then the clause is understood to be everything that precedes *wo5*. The second line of the definition in (12) indicates that a speaker uses *wo5* in order to distance him- or herself from the report. It lets the listener know that the speaker is not responsible for having said something like this and/or does not agree with it. Emphasizing *wo5* by lengthening its vowel increases the sense that the speaker is distancing him- or herself from the report, and will indicate to the listener that the speaker disagrees with, and perhaps dislikes, the content of the report.

We will now consider the extent to which our definition appears to account for other things that have been said about *wo5* in the literature. Fang (2003) said that, in addition to having the function of reporting, *wo5* can also function to express the idea that an interlocutor does not understand reason. He gave the following two examples:

- (13) *Hou2 je5 bei2 saai3 lei5 wo5*.  
 good thing give all you WO  
 ‘(You said) every good thing should go to you. (I didn’t say this)’

- (14) *Cyun4 sai3gaai3 di1 hou2 gung1 dang2zyu6 lei5...*  
 whole world Plural good work wait-Durative you  
*...heoi3 jou6 wo5.*  
 go do WO  
 ‘(You said) all the good jobs everywhere in the world will wait  
 for you to go and get them. (I didn’t say this).’  
 (Fang, 2003: 71)

Unfortunately Fang (2003) did not provide any context for (13) or (14), but based on intuition we can work backwards and imagine suitable contexts. When doing so we believe that our definition in (12) shows why *wo5* can be used in such sentences. Both sentences indicate a situation in which the speaker believes the listener has said and done things to indicate that s/he (the listener) will have everything go his/her way or get a great job without working hard and fast to find one. Obviously the listener would not have said anything very close to the content of (13) and (14), so these reports are extremely indirect. But in order for the use of *wo5* to be licensed in the mind of the speaker, the situational context would require that the listener had behaved and/or spoken in a manner that indicates it is as if s/he said s/he thinks something along these lines. In this case the “someone X” of our definition is the listener, and the antecedent of “this” is the whole sentence. The additional meaning “I did not say this” is emphasized pragmatically in these types of contexts, expressing the idea that the listener strongly disagrees with the content of the report. These sentences would be interpreted as a form of sarcasm. Related to this Fang (2003) and Leung (2005[1992]) both say that *wo5* can be used to express the opposite of what one means.

In contrast to the above, consider something that Leung (2006: 127, 129) said about *wo5*:

One of the functions of the hearsay particle *wo5* is to express objective modality; this mood is best translated into English with ‘I have heard that...’, ‘I hear that...’, ‘s/he told me that...’ or ‘Reportedly’...

... [An] utterance with *wo5* merely expresses the fact and is a simple reporting of other’s speech.

Based on (13) and (14), we can see that this cannot be right. The particle *wo5* is not an objective marker of evidentiality (i.e., source of information) that simply reports others’ speech. To further illustrate that *wo5* does not make an objective report, consider the following examples in (15a–c) that express a progressively weaker degree of confidence in the truth of the proposition. The context is one in which a father calls home to his daughter. The mother, who is with the father, tells him to ask their daughter if she drank the soup that the mother had left for her. After the father asks the daughter this question and hangs up the phone, he says one of the following sentences to his wife:

- (15) a. *Keoi5 jam2zo2 laa3.*  
 s/he drink-PERF SFP  
 ‘She drank it.’
- b. *Keoi5 waa6 keoi5 jam2zo2.*  
 s/he say s/he drink-PERF  
 ‘She said she drank it.’
- c. (*Keoi5 waa6*) *keoi5 jam2zo2 wo5.*  
 s/he say s/he drink-PERF WO  
 ‘She said she drank it. (I didn’t say this).’

Assuming that no additional connotative meaning is added to these sentences through the use of intonation, then the speaker (i.e., the father) expresses the most confidence in the proposition by stating it as if it is a fact, such as in (15a). Neutrally stating it as a report from the daughter, as in (15b), expresses objectivity towards the truthfulness of the proposition. The attachment of *wo5* in (15c), in contrast, makes the speaker sound less confident in the truthfulness of the proposition. Sybesma and Li (2007: 1764) said that compared with the particle *wo3*, the use of *wo5* indicates that “the speaker is less sure about the information s/he reports” and then paraphrased *wo5* as “I only heard this but who knows?” And this “unsure” meaning of *wo5* is especially evident when *wo5* is emphasized by lengthening its vowel. If this is done by the father in (15c), then he will appear to doubt that his daughter actually drank the soup. This again shows that *wo5* does more than objectively mark a proposition as a report.

Many authors have said that *wo5* is an evidential marker. Our definition of *wo5* in (12) entails evidentiality because *wo5*-suffixing indicates that the information was heard from someone else, which is the source of the information. In addition to a third person or the listener, the “someone X” can also refer to general hearsay, in which case the “someone” is somewhat abstract. An example of this was given by Matthews (1998), who pointed out that *wo5* is compatible with any of the expressions in Cantonese that explicitly introduce hearsay information:

- (16) *Teng1man4waa6/Teng1gin3(waa6)/Teng1gong2 lei5...*  
 hear-language-say/hear-see-(say)/hear-speak you  
 ... *sing1zo2 zik wo5*  
 rise-PERF position WO  
 ‘I hear you’ve been promoted.’  
 (Matthews, 1998: 330)

The meanings of discourse particles are notoriously difficult to pin down, so it is not surprising that sometimes meanings coming from elsewhere in the sentence or the discourse have been attributed to the particle itself. Fung (2000: 6) said that some “researchers are easily tempted to include as part of some specific [discourse particle] all sorts of meanings that are conveyed by other linguistic or paralinguistic elements.” She gave the example of Leung (2005[1992]), who proposed that the SFP

*laa1* encodes possibility, but only when it was attached to sentences with modal adverbs such as *waak6ze2* (“perhaps”), *daai6koi3* (“presumably”) or *daai6joek3* (“probably”). Fung correctly pointed out that the “possibility” meaning came from the modal adverbs rather than from the SFP *laa1* itself. Another example can be seen in Kwok’s (1984) analysis of the Cantonese evidential particle *lo1*. Kwok said that one of the functions of *lo1* is to give the reason for something, but in all of her examples of cases where *lo1* was said to mark a sentence as a reason, the sentences would still be construed as reasons if the optional particle *lo1* were removed. There is also the example mentioned at the beginning of this section, in which Leung (2006) said that in addition to *wo5*, the particle *wo3* also expresses hearsay, but only when it attaches to a sentence that is marked as a report (e.g., “S/he said . . .”). This is unlike *wo5*, which actually does mark something as a report, and therefore does not require the sentence to be marked as such in any other way.

Let us now consider some especially interesting examples of *wo5*-suffixing. Here is a sentence in which the clause being reported is the complement of a mental predicate rather than a speech verb.

- (17) *Lei5 ji5wai4 keoi5 bong1 lei5 wo5.*  
 you think s/he help you WO  
 ‘(You said) you think he helped you. (I didn’t say this)’

Again this example clearly demonstrates that a report can be extremely indirect and loosely based on an interlocutor’s previous actions and speech. Another interesting thing about this is that the clause being reported appears to be a complement of the verb *ji5wai4* (“think”) as opposed to a speech verb such as *waab6* (“said”). However, this sentence can be interpreted as having the meaning shown in the English translation, which means it can be analyzed similar to examples (13) and (14). The speaker believes that the listener’s prior speech and actions are such that it is as if s/he said: “I think s/he helped me,” and this is enough to license the use of *wo5*.

Another interesting use of *wo5* is attaching it to the name of a profession, as in this example:

- (18) *Ging2caat3 wo5. Zi1 faat3 faan6 faat3.*  
 police officer WO know law violate law  
 ‘A police officer (I didn’t say he is). (He) knows the law and breaks the law.’

Examples like these imply that the speaker does not regard the person to have the qualities that are understood to go along with his or her profession. In this example, *wo5* appears to be attached to the noun phrase *ging2caat3* (“police officer”). However, if we accept the widely held stance among syntacticians that *wo5* is a sentence-final particle (e.g., Sybesma & Li, 2007), then by definition it attaches to a sentence. As such, we analyze (18) as having a null subject and verb like this:

- (18') (Keoi5 hai6) ging2caat3 wo5.  
 s/he is police officer WO  
 '(People say) S/he is a police officer (I did not say this).'

In a case like this, the “someone X” who said “S/he is a police officer” is people in general. It is common knowledge that people refer to someone dressed in a police uniform as a police officer. This common knowledge is enough to license the use of *wo5*. In addition to making an indirect report, *wo5* also expresses that the speaker did not say this, which in this case conveys the meaning that the speaker does not agree that people should call this person a police officer. As the follow-up sentence reveals, this is related to the police officer’s unlawful conduct. This use of *wo5* can also be done with other professions, such as doctor, teacher, etc. Of course, if the context is changed to one in which someone asks what this person does for a living, then the meaning of attaching *wo5* to a profession then becomes a simple report of something that someone said. In this case *ging2caat3 wo5* (“(Someone said) she’s a police officer. (I didn’t say this)”). The meaning “I didn’t say this” would then be understood pragmatically to merely mean that the speaker only heard this and doesn’t know for sure. It would not have the negative connotation expressed in (18) where the speaker is expressing disapproval of the person being referred to as a police officer. Some authors have said that discourse particles change their meaning from one context to the next, but we believe that these differences in what is conveyed by the unchanging core semantics of *wo5* are pragmatic in nature. The meaning of *wo5* itself does not change.

### 3 Conclusions about *wo5*

Summarizing our conclusions about *wo5*, it is a sentence-final particle that expresses the meaning: “someone said something like this; I did not say this.” The antecedent of “this” is a clause contained within the sentence. Whether it is the entire main clause or an embedded clause is usually understood pragmatically, but is sometimes forced semantically. The sentence in (4) is an example of semantics determining which clause is interpreted as being reported. Example (4) begins with *Ngo5 waa6* . . . (“I said . . .”), but the second line of *wo5*’s definition, i.e. “I did not say this,” prevents it from being used to report a proposition whose original source was the speaker him- or herself. Therefore, the clause being reported in (4) is understood as *not* being the complement of *waa6* (“said”), and is instead the entire clause embedded inside a larger clause. This is shown here as (4’), with the pragmatically understood portion of the Cantonese sentence shown in parentheses:

- (4') (Jan4dei6 waa6) Ngo5 waa6 keoi5 m4 lei4 wo5.  
 someone say I say s/he NEG come WO  
 '(Someone said) I said s/he’s not coming. (I did not say this)'

Here is another example of semantics determining which clause is interpreted as the one being reported:

- (19) *Keoi5 mou5 waa6 keoi5 wui5 heoi3 wo5.*  
 s/he NEG say s/he will go WO  
 ‘(Someone said) he did not say he would go. (I did not say this).’

In (19) the verb *waa6* (“said”) is negated. This means that its complement cannot function as a report—the negation of “said” means, logically, that its complement was never uttered. Therefore *wo5* forces an interpretation in which the entire sentence is understood to be a report, as shown in the English translation.

The clause being reported in a *wo5* sentence is always an indirect report of what was said, as indicated by “something like this.” It can vary in how closely it resembles a direct report, ranging from the “She said she drank it” in (15), to general hearsay as shown in (16) and (18)), to the speaker’s summarized conclusion of what the listener’s previous speech and actions imply regarding the listener’s beliefs, such as in examples (13), (14), and (17). The second line of the definition in (12) (i.e., “I did not say this”) means that *wo5* distances the speaker from the report. The degree of distance, and whether this distance relates to doubt in the proposition, dislike of the proposition, or something else, is understood pragmatically. Consider this example from Li (1995, quoted in Leung 2006: 127), who said that “*wo5* emphasizes that the quoted content was uttered by other people”:

- (20) *baa4baa1 giu3 lei5 zik1hak1 heoi3 wo5*  
 dad tell you immediately go WO  
 ‘Dad told you to go immediately. (I did not say this).’  
 (Li 1995, cited in Leung 2006: 128; English translation ours)

It is easy to see from an example like (20) why the speaker might want to distance him- or herself from the report. It is very likely that a child who says something like (20) knows that his or her sibling will not want to be told to go somewhere immediately. And using emphatic vowel lengthening on *wo5* will emphasize the degree to which the speaker wishes to be distanced from the content of the proposition. When this is done, it conveys something along these lines: “this is not my statement; it belongs to someone else.” Based on the assumption that words are coined and particles are grammaticalized because of a culturally-based need to express their meanings, then the existence of *wo5* tells us something interesting about the Cantonese lingua-culture. Apparently there is a cultural need for Cantonese speakers to be able to distance themselves from the content of an indirect report, and this need is strong enough to have resulted in the grammaticalization of *wo5*.



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# Context-shift in Indirect Reports in Dhaasanac



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**Abstract** It has been claimed that there are three kinds of Kaplanian monsters selected by different attitude verbs in Slave (Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006) as well as in Uyghur (Sudo 2010). This chapter shows, on the basis of the collected data, that Dhaasanac has a fourth kind of monster that shifts person and temporal parameters optionally but does not shift the locative parameter in indirect reports.

**Keywords** monster · attitude verb · indexical · person · temporal · locative · Somali

It has been claimed that there are three kinds of Kaplanian monsters selected by different attitude verbs in Slave (Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006) as well as in Uyghur (Sudo 2010). This chapter shows, on the basis of the collected data, that Dhaasanac has a fourth kind of monster that shifts person and temporal parameters optionally but does not shift the locative parameter in indirect reports.

## 1 Three Types of Monsters

Kaplan (1977, 1989) claimed that indexicals such as *I*, *you*, *here*, *now*, and *yesterday* are directly referential, meaning that their reference is fixed by the context of utterance. Except for direct quotations such as in (1a), *I* can refer only to the speaker or writer in indirect report such as (1b).

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- (1) a. Baali said “I am an idiot.”  
 b. Baali said that I am an idiot.

Kaplan’s claim has prompted much debate on whether or not contexts can be shifted. Schlenker (2003) and Anand and Nevins (2004), among others, have argued that context shifters, referred to as monsters, exist in languages such as Amharic and Zazaki. Furthermore, Anand and Nevins (2004) and Anand (2006) claimed the existence of three kinds of Kaplanian monsters selected by different attitude verbs in Slave. In (2), context (c) and index (i) are tuples  $\langle a, h, l, t, w \rangle$  with the following abbreviations: author (a), hearer (h), location (l), time (t), and world (w). There are three kinds of monstrous operators: (a)  $OP_V$  maneuvers all indexicals in its scope so that the person, locative, temporal, and world parameters are all overwritten by the index, (b)  $OP_{per}$  only applies to first and second person pronouns, namely, the agent  $a$  and the hearer  $h$ , and (c)  $OP_{auth}$  shifts the reference of the first person, or the author, exclusively.

- (2) a.  $[[OP_V \Phi]]_g^{c,i} = [[\Phi]]_g^{i,i}$   
 b.  $[[OP_{per} \Phi]]_g^{c,i} = [[\Phi]]_g^{\langle ai,hi,lc,tc,wc \rangle,i}$   
 c.  $[[OP_{auth} \Phi]]_g^{c,i} = [[\Phi]]_g^{\langle ai,hc,lc,tc,wc \rangle,i}$   
 (Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006)

In the following sections, I will show that there exists another kind of a monstrous function,  $OP_{per,time}$  in indirect reports in Dhaasanac.

## 2 Indexical Shifting in Dhaasanac

### 2.1 Person Indexicals

In Dhaasanac, the first person  $I$  in the embedded clause can refer to either the matrix subject or the speaker. Even though, according to Kaplan (1977),  $I$  is an indexical that always refers to the speaker, in the Dhaasanac sentence in (3-4), the reference is optionally shifted from the speaker to *Baali* by the attitude predicate *say*.

- (3) Baali kiy-e yaa<sub>{i/speaker}</sub> deech.  
 Baali say.3SG-PAST 1SG.NOM idiot  
 “Baali said {he/I} was an idiot.”

$[\sqrt{\text{de se}}/\sqrt{\text{non-de se}}]^1$

<sup>1</sup>A *non-de se* reading is difficult when the speaker is looking at himself on TV. In a situation where he is looking at himself in the mirror, both *de se* and *de re* readings are available.

- (4) Baali<sub>i</sub> kiy-e sure<sub>{i/speaker}</sub>-chuhe jiet hi  
 Baali say.3SG-PAST 1SG.GEN-pantsCOPULAR fire RP  
 konye.  
 eat.3SG. PASS.PAST  
 “Baali said {his/my} pants were on fire.”  
 [√de se/√non-de se]

Some may argue that sentences (2-4) appear to be direct quotations, as in the case of (5).

- (5) Baali kiy-e “yaa/you<sub>{i/speaker}</sub> deech.”  
 Baali say.3SG-PAST 1SG.NOM/1SG.ABS idiot  
 “Baali said “{I/he} was an idiot.””

Direct discourse is known to be a barrier to A’ extraction (Partee 1973, Recanati 1999, Schlenker 1999). However, the object extraction in (6)-(9) does not affect the reference of *I* in the relative clauses.

- (6) Ini giri Hassan<sub>i</sub> kiy-e Yu<sub>i/speaker</sub> af  
 girl that Hassan say.3SG-PAST 1SG.ABS mouth  
 gaa dungeka he midhab.  
 on kiss.1SG. PAST be beautiful  
 “The girl that Hasan said {Hasan/I} kissed is pretty.”  
 [√de se/√non-de se]<sup>2</sup>
- (7) Maa-ya Baali<sub>i</sub> kiy-e New York ha  
 who Baali say.3SG-PAST NY PREVERBAL  
 Yu<sub>i/speaker</sub> gaa aargira?  
 1SG.ABS in see.FUTURE  
 “In NY, who did Baali say {Baali/I} would meet?”  
 [√de se/√non-de se]<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>In a situation such as when Hasan finds himself in the mirror kissing the girl without noticing that it is himself, *yu* can refer to Hasan.

<sup>3</sup>*Yu* can refer to Baali when he finds himself on TV without knowing that the person who is meeting someone in NY is himself, as well as when Baali believes that his colleague will meet someone in NY and he is unaware that he is actually the one who is supposed to meet someone.

- (8) Se giri Baali<sub>i</sub> kiey-e yu<sub>{i/speaker}</sub>  
 cow that Baali say.3SG-PAST 1SG.ABS  
 dal-sie mui yiek-a he badai.  
 give.birth-CAUS 3SG say.3SG-PAST be lost.PAST  
 “The cow that Baali said he assisted to give birth was lost.”  
 [√de se/√non-de se]

- (9) Se giri Baali<sub>i</sub> kiey-e yu<sub>{i/speaker}</sub> giel  
 cow that Baali say.3SG-PAST 1SG.ABS love  
 mui yie ka he bada-y.  
 3SG say.3SG-PAST COMP be lost-PAST  
 “The cow that Baali said he loved was lost.”  
 [√de se/√non-de se]

In parallel with the first person pronoun, the second person pronoun shifts its reference in the scope of attitude verbs as shown in (10). *Kuun* ‘you’ is shiftable in the relative clauses as in (11-15).

- (10) Baali<sub>i</sub> Hasan<sub>j</sub> gee-y kiey-e kuun<sub>{j/hearer}</sub>  
 Baali Hasan tell.1SG-PAST say.3SG-PAST you  
 shelechu chu<sub>{i/speaker}</sub>  
 friend 1SG.POSS  
 “Baali told Hasan that he was his friend.”  
 [√de te/√non-de te]

- (11) Maa<sub>i</sub> [<sub>CP</sub>giri Baali kiey-e <giri> kuun<sub>{i/hearer}</sub>  
 person that Baali say.3SG-PAST that you  
 shelechu mui yiek-a] geer gaa  
 friend he say.3SG-PAST stomach at  
 midhab.  
 good  
 “The person to whom Baali said {he was/you were} his friend is  
 nice (kind-hearted).”  
 [√de te/√non-de te]

- (12) Baali sheelech<sub>i</sub>-le gee-y kuun<sub>{i/hearer}</sub> geer  
 Baali friend-his tell.3SG-PAST you stomach  
 gaa midhab yiek-a he midhab.  
 at good say.3SG-PAST be nice/good  
 “The friend {whose heart Baali said/to whom Baali said your heart} was  
 warm is nice.”

- (13) Baali ko gee-y kuun erleka deech.  
Baali you tell.3SG-PAST you before stupid  
“Baali told you that you were an idiot.”
- (14) Maa<sub>i</sub>-ya Baali kiy-e kuun<sub>{i/\*hearer}</sub>’daale.  
person-Q Baali tell.3SG-PAST you wise  
“Who did Baali say that he was smart to?”
- (15) Ameñ-gal Baali itin hi hinyas mui  
every-people Baali you RP clever he  
yiek-a, he yie’di-e.  
say.3SG-PAST RP pass-PAST  
“Everyone to whom Baali said that he was smart passed the exam.”

While only the verb *say* triggers indexical shifting in Amharic, Zazaki and Matsés (Schlenker 1999, Schlenker 2003, Ludwig et al. 2010, Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006), it is not only the verbs *kieye* ‘say’ and *geey* ‘tell’ that shift the context in Dhaasanac. Another reportative, *fayam shiish* ‘give news/report,’ shifts indexicals inside indirect reports (see (16)). These verbs of communication are the only context shifters in Dhaasanac, even though verbs of believing or hearing are known to shift indexicals in Uyghur (Sudo 2010).

- (16) Baali<sub>i</sub> ye fayam dugaa sidhe kiy-e  
Baali me news to brought say.3SG- PAST  
yaa<sub>{i/speaker}</sub>/yu<sub>{i/speaker}</sub> gaal yie die.  
1SG.NOM/1SG.ABS them beyond pass  
“Baali reported to me that {he/I} won over them.”
- [√de se/\*non-de se]

## 2.2 Temporal Indexicals Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Moreover, the indexicals *yesterday*, *today* and *tomorrow*, which are not supposed to shift the temporal reference according to the fixity thesis (Kaplan 1977), optionally shift reference in indirect reports. In (17a), it is interpreted that Loya met Baali one day before the reference time of the matrix clause, that is, eight days ago. Due to the past tense of the matrix verb, the non-shifted reading is suppressed in (17a) and (18). *Tomorrow* in (17b) can be optionally shifted to six days before the speech. The obligatory shift of *gefere* ‘yesterday’ and *kulichala* ‘today’ may make us wonder if these are definite descriptions such as *the previous day* in English, rather than deictic indexicals. Nevertheless, the examples in (17b) and (19) clearly suggest that *berika* ‘tomorrow’ and *gefere* ‘yesterday’ are indexicals that optionally shift reference under the attitude report.

- (17) a. Ram tiiya beeyetia Baali<sub>i</sub> ye geey  
 days 7 ago Baali to me  
 kiey-e Loya gefere mu<sub>{√i/≠speaker}</sub>  
 tell.3SG-PAST Loya yesterday 3SG.NOM  
 hol arg-e.  
 REFLEXIVE meet.3SG-PAST  
 “A week ago, Baali told me that Loya met him yesterday.”  
 (√Loya met Baali eight days ago./#Loya met Baali  
 yesterday.)
- b. Ram tiiya beeyetia Baali<sub>i</sub> ye geey  
 days 7 ago Baali to me  
 kiey-e Loya berika mu<sub>{√i/√speaker}</sub>  
 tell.3SG-PAST Loya tomorrow 3SG.NOM  
 hol aargir-a.  
 REFLEXIVE meet.3SG-FUT  
 “A week ago, Baali told me that Loya was meeting  
 {him/me} tomorrow.”  
 (√Loya met {Baali/me} six days ago./√Loya is meeting  
 {Baali/me} tomorrow.)
- (18) Iny giri Baali kiey-e kulichala yu  
 the boy that Baali say.3SG-PAST today 1SG.ABS  
 arg-e hi yiek-a gefere ye  
 see.1SG-PAST RP say.1SG-PAST yesterday me  
 dugaa yimi-e.  
 to come.3SG-PAST  
 “The boy that Baali said he met {√yesterday/#today} visited me  
 yesterday.”
- (19) Hada lullee gefere nigeney<sub>i</sub> lullee  
 girls all yesterday boys all  
 kiey-e gefere nyi<sub>{√i/√speaker}</sub> af gaa  
 say.3SG-PAST yesterday 1PL.NOM mouth on  
 ‘dung’geka he midhab.  
 kiss.1PL.PAST be beautiful  
 “All girls that all boys said yesterday that {√they/√we} kissed {the  
 day before yesterday/yesterday} were pretty.”

In (19), *yesterday* and the first person plural also shift together, and the verb agrees with the first person plural.

The sequence of tenses rule does not apply in Dhaasanac. The embedded tense in (20) is not relativized by the matrix future tense. Moreover, in (21), the relative clause need not be in the past tense even with the matrix past tense.

- (20) Baali berika ha ye-ka-ge-dia  
 Baali tomorrow FUT 1SG-toward.1SG-tell-IMP  
 Loya gefere nyi hol argi-ye  
 Loya yesterday 1PL.NOM together see-PAST  
 hay yeedh-e.  
 PAST say-PAST  
 “Tomorrow Baali will tell me that Loya would have met him  
 {√today/\*yesterday}.”

- (21) Baali se giri walach hol ‘gar  
 Baali cow which sheep together together  
 sesame(-ka) kagilig-ay  
 walk-PAST catch-PAST  
 “Baali caught a cow which was walking with a sheep.”

### 2.3 Locative Indexicals

Even when other indexicals shift, the locative indexicals remain context dependent. This is illustrated in (22).

- (22) Ini giri ram tiya beeyetia Hassan  
 girl that days 7 PAST Hassan  
 kiey-e gefere alla yu af  
 say.3SG-PAST yesterday here 1SG.ABS on  
 gaa ‘dung’geka he midhab.  
 mouth kiss.1SG-PAST be pretty  
 “The girl that Hassan seven days ago said (in Nairobi) he kissed  
 here (in Nairobi) eight days ago is pretty.”

If (23) is uttered in Turkana, *alla* ‘here’ only refers to Turkana even though the reference of the other indexical *arge* ‘yesterday’ is shifted by the reportative predicate.

- (23) Baali Nairobi gaa kiey-e Hassan  
 Baali Nairobi at say.3SG.PAST Hassan  
 gefer-e Hadoya alla gaa arge.  
 meet.3SG-PAST Hadoya here at yesterday  
 “Baali said in Nairobi Hasan met Hadoya here (in Turkana) eight  
 days ago.”



### 3 Analysis

While locative indexicals never shift, time and person indexicals do shift under reportatives in indirect reports in Dhaasanac. The shifting pattern does not fit into the three types of monsters identified in Slave (Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006). While indexical-shifting in Slave is limited to either shift-together (3a) or person indexicals (3b,c), temporal parameters also shift in Dhaasanac. Therefore, I claim the existence of a fourth kind of monster, described in (24).

(24) Indexical-shifting in Dhaasanac:

$$[ [ \text{OP}_{\text{per,time}} \Phi ] ]_g^{c,i} = [ [ \Phi ] ]_g^{<\text{ai,hi,lc,ti,wc}>,i}$$

A common property of Slave and Dhaasanac is that locative indexicals remain unshifted in the case of partial shifting. According to Sudo (2012)'s analysis of Uyghur indexicals, locatives never shift even though person indexicals do as in (25). Some of the temporal indexicals are shiftable in Uyghur while no data are given in Sudo (2010, 2012). In that sense, the indexicals in Dhaasanac possibly behave in parallel with those in Uyghur.

- (25) Muhemmet    manga        toqquzinzi    ay-din  
 Muhemmet    1SG.DAT    9th            month-from  
 basla-p        men            u jer-de        uqu-imen  
 start-ing     1SG.NOM    there-LOC    study-IMPERF-1SG  
 didi.  
 say-PAST.3

“Muhemmet told me that he would study there from September.”

According to Sudo (2010), Uyghur locative indexicals (*here*, *there*) are not indexicals but demonstratives which never shift reference under attitude verbs. However, in view of the fact that shift-together does not hold in Amharic (Schlenker 1999, 2003), Aghem (Hyman 1979), and Navajo (Speas 2000), partial shifting of person and temporal indexicals in Dhaasanac is not surprising at all (Table 1).

In another East Cushitic language Somali, the first person and temporal indexicals shift under the verb *yi* ‘say’ as in (26–28):

- (26) Xusen            ba        yi-dhi                    wa-an  
 Houssein        FOC    say.3SG.MAS-PAST    FOC-I  
 buk-ay.  
 sick.1SG-PAST

“Houssein said {he/\*I} was sick.”

- (27) Gabadh-a    u            Xusen        yi-dhi        wa-an  
 woman-DEF    who        Houssein    say-PAST    FOC-I  
 la              kulm-ay    w-ay        bukt-ay.  
 her              meet-PAST    FOCUS-she    sick-PAST

“The woman whom Houssein said he met was sick.”

**Table 1** Indexical Shifting in Different Languages, added to Sudo (2010)

Dhaasanac	SAY	[say(OP <sub>per,time</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st/2nd & temporal
	REPORT	[report(OP <sub>per</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st person
	(SURPRISE)	[(surprise)OP <sub>time</sub> ]	obligatorily shifts time
Uyghur	SAY	[say OP <sub>per</sub> ]	obligatorily shifts 1st/2nd
	BELIEVE	[believe OP <sub>auth</sub> ]	obligatorily shifts 1st
	HEAR	[hear OP <sub>auth</sub> ]	obligatorily shifts 1st
Amharic, Aghem	SAY	[say(OP <sub>per</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st/2nd person
Navajo	SAY	[say(OP <sub>per</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st/2nd person
Slave	TELL	[tell(OP <sub>per</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st/2nd person
	WANT	[want(OP <sub>auth</sub> )]	optionally shifts 1st person
	SAY	[say OP <sub>auth</sub> ]	obligatorily shifts 1st person
Zazaki	SAY	[say (OP <sub>∇</sub> )]	optionally shifts all indexicals
English	ALL	[att-verb]	no indexical shift

- (28) Shalay      saadasha      hawada      ti-dhi  
yesterday      weather-DEF      forecast-DEF      say-PAST  
waxa u      noqon lahaa      qorax maanta      lakin  
FOC it      would be      sunny today      but  
rooba      da'ay      shalay/\*maanta.  
rain-DEF      rain.PAST      yesterday/today  
“Yesterday the weather forecast said it would be sunny today but it  
rained {yesterday/\*today}.”

Sudo (2010) considers the second person indexical in Uyghur to be a definite description that does not shift reference under attitude reports. On the other hand, the second person indexical in Slave is a real indexical that may or may not be shiftable depending on the attitude predicate. It is clear that shift-together does not always hold. There is not enough evidence to exclude the partial shifting of plural kinds of indexicals in Dhaasanac, Somali, and Uyghur.

## 4 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted partial shifts of indexicals in Dhaasanac. While person and temporal indexicals are optionally shiftable, locative indexicals remain unshifted. Shifting of person indexicals occur in Somali, in addition to Uyghur and Slave (Anand and Nevins 2004, Anand 2006). If the context-shifting operator, the monster, only allows shift-together of all indexicals in its scope, unshiftable indexicals are not really indexicals but demonstratives or definite descriptions, as Sudo (2010) suggests. However, the existence of another type of monster explains the data sufficiently enough to exclude such cross-linguistic variation of lexical entries.

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**Part III**  
**Discourse analysis and pragmatics**

# Law and Indirect Reports: Citation and Precedent



**Brian E. Butler**

**Abstract** In this chapter Alessandro Capone’s claim as the intimate relationship between legal reasoning and indirect reports is investigated through looking at legal citation practices, use of case law, and statutory and constitutional interpretation. Capone’s thought is informed in the chapter through a reference to the work of Ronald Dworkin and Edward H. Levi. The conclusion of the chapter is that Capone is correct that use of indirect reporting in law is ubiquitous and therefore warrants careful study. Further, and opposite of Dworkin’s hope for a univocal use of indirect reports, Levi’s analysis emphasizes the bottom-up, conversational and polyvocal aspects of legal reasoning as is noted by Capone. This in turn requires eliminating the hope for finding or imposing a determinate and univocal meaning on legal citation, case law, and statutory and constitutional interpretation. Instead, continuing dialogue is required. Indeed, legal process should try to include as many voices in the construction of meaning as possible.

**Keywords** indirect reports · statutory interpretation · constitutional interpretation · Ronald Dworkin · Edward H. Levi · Alessandro Capone · case law · legal pragmatics

## 1 Introduction

Alessandro Capone, in writing about law and indirect reports, states that, “Interpreting the law is like making an indirect report on what the original lawmakers said. Thus, the courts are more or less in the position of indirect reporters-with a difference.” This difference? – “The courts are aware of the business of reporting, they are not just reporting, and have a specific know-how and training on reporting what the lawmakers said.” Capone continues that this brings the important insight

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that “interpreting (the law) and indirect reporting amount to the same thing.” This is because, “in interpreting the law, one is making a statement about what the lawmakers said (in a statute, constitution, contract, or other type of legal document). One is not interpreting for oneself, but for some other people” and, therefore, “Analogies with indirect reporting are clear.” (Capone 2015 382).

Keith Allan argues that a report is “X’s re-presentation to Y of what Z said.” And that because “X’s report is never exactly identical with Z’s utterance; even if the same words are captured, the context is different, the voice will be different, the speaker’s intention may be different, the medium may be different” there is really not much room for distinction between direct reports and indirect reports. He concludes, therefore, that the only real criteria for identifying an indirect report is if reporter X “pragmatically enriches” the point offered in reports (Allan 211-212).

If we accept Allan’s analysis, then Capone is being too careful by stating the relationship between law and indirect reports is one of analogy. It seems more correct to say that law is, as he writes earlier in the passage, actually a whole profession centrally based upon practices of indirect reporting. Even if this claim is too broad, at least one important aspect of legal practice, the judicial decision, largely rests upon the use of indirect reports and, just as importantly, is in large part an indirect report itself. That is, a judge’s opinion is largely a summary of other authoritative texts, and therefore is built upon indirect reporting. So, Capone is on to something quite significant when he notes the intimate connection between legal reasoning and indirect reports.

Capone also claims that law has some differences from the everyday language practice of indirect reporting. This is because he believes, plausibly, that literal meaning is more prevalent in law. There certainly is a more insistent need for clarity in legal reasoning compared to daily conversation. And this is true even if we admit that in law there are some very prevalent uses of strategic vagueness. But clarity is not the only virtue in legal reasoning, as Capone notes, there is also in law the need to allow interpretation to accommodate adaptation and rejuvenation (Capone 2015 373). Indeed law, like other human institutions, often serves multiple goals and therefore requires a multi-valued understanding of a very “polyphonic task.”

If an indirect report is the transmission of knowledge mediated by what another source said, then law, at least in the form of a judge’s legal decision, is both reliant upon indirect reports and centered upon the use of indirect reports accurately. From citation of earlier cases, through interpretation of case law to constitutional interpretation, legal decisions are centrally built upon interpretation of and reasoning about earlier statements. Most important for this paper is the centrality of legal precedent understood broadly as a prior existing legal text that has authoritative legal status regarding the case at hand. Briefly put, legal decisions in order to be considered legitimate are to be based upon proper legal authority. And among the varied potential sources of proper legal authority one seems undoubtedly of great importance – precedent. Use of precedent requires interpretation. The later court cannot just cite full cases but must select and summarize. Furthermore, statutes and even constitutions do not self-execute indeed even quotation of them is an interpretive process (Macagno 593). That is, any judicial decision must necessarily

select and interpret. In the presentation of a case one major aspect of the controversy is the competition of interpretations over the meaning of purportedly relevant legal precedents. Not only is there the possibility of controversy over what precedents are relevant to the case at hand, but there will also be controversy over the meaning of precedents that are thought relevant by all parties. In this sense, like other indirect reports, the use of indirect reports in law is a ‘polyphonic task’ including the original speaker, the various reporters, and the multiple hearers. It is indeed a complex “language game” (Capone et al 2016 2). But it is even more complicated because, though not highlighted in this chapter’s arguments, there is the problem of testimony and the courts determination of fact as well as law. Most famously, Jerome Frank’s “fact skepticism” is based upon the claim, in effect, that all facts in a court of law are brought in as indirect reports (Frank 119). If this is true then pretty much all of legal decision is based upon knowledge through an intermediary. From this perspective, the court’s legal decision is a very complex intersection of various types of indirect report. Different voices with different types of authority interpenetrate. A judicial opinion is replete with commentary, judgment, various types of distancing from other voices (such as with quotation marks), as well as complicity (also sometimes shown with quotation marks).

This raises many questions. How does one test accuracy or at least the correct use of the various prior texts? Are the tests the same as those in everyday indirect reporting or do legal texts require different interpretive tools? Does the professional training and context of judicial reasoning require certain interpretive techniques? Furthermore, does the concrete and unequivocal quality of statutory law and constitution text ensure greater fidelity to the “law” whatever this mean? Might statutory law at least make some of the most problematic aspects of indirect reports more tractable because direct reports seem to prevent the same amount of freedom of interpretation. This is not so easy because, at the very least, “there are many ways to manipulate the content of a direct report” (Capone 2016 56).

Legal reasoning is indeed an exceedingly complicated language game. As stated above, elimination is an essential aspect of the transformation that indirect reporting requires (Capone 2016 61). Not only is it understood that much of each opinion is superfluous, redundant, and irrelevant in decisions – otherwise there would be no function for the holding versus dicta distinction, but even the most careful quotation brings possibilities of reordering. And the Supreme Court has used various means to even read out sections of the United States Constitution. For an egregious example see Scalia’s *Heller* decision which managed through the use of a very dubious and seemingly dishonest interpretive move to read out of the text much of the qualifying phrases in the United States Constitution’s Second Amendment. So if legal rules of interpretation or canons of construction are meant to ensure greater accuracy (Macagno 594), they also can surely be used to advance specific agendas as well. Because there is no recourse in legal reasoning to full quotations of earlier cases (“the case means what is written, nothing more and nothing less”) quoting text is subject to many interpretive issues. And if Levy is correct in his analysis of constitutional interpretation, the ability to directly report constitutional text not only does not eliminate the problems related to indirect reporting in law. Indeed,

according to Levi it actually creates more intractable problems of its own. In this sense, it might not always be correct to claim that indirect reports are essentially more “polyphonic” than direct reports (Capone 2016 71).

In this chapter I take Capone’s claims as to the intimate relationship between legal reasoning and indirect reports as correct and look at law practice through citation, case law, and statutory as well as constitutional interpretations – all arguably examples of indirect reports when utilized for a judge’s legal decision. As the domain is broad I will not attempt an exhaustive survey but will rather focus on the implications for law and indirect reports that follows from the work of Ronald Dworkin and Edward H. Levi. Because both are centrally important in legal theory, and both offer exemplar theories of legal reasoning, their theories should help to inform the intertwined issues relating to law and indirect reports.

## 2 Citation

Legal writing and judicial decisions are, obviously, full of citations. Compared to even the most careful academic literature, legal analysis exhibits an observable overabundance of citation. This practice is so prevalent that Orin S. Kerr wrote a one paragraph essay entitled “A Theory of Law” that claims that legal scholars so overemphasize the need for citation that he would offer a universally usable citation that supports the citing author stating in conclusion, “I offer this page, with the following conclusion: if you have been directed to this page by a citation elsewhere, it is plainly true that the author’s claim is correct. For further support, consult the extensive scholarship on the point.” thereafter Kerr footnotes his own very same article as support (Kerr 111). In “The Academic Practice of Citation” Jack Wong investigates citation practices as a type of indirect reporting. (Wong 189). He finds that citation fulfils a number of functions. For example, citation serves to avoid plagiarism and gives evidence of support for academic claims (Wong 190). Further, citations can be used as authority and for forming or exemplifying membership in a specific academic community (Wong 190). Of course citation can also serve a rhetorical function and serve as “strategic coat-tailing” as well (Wong 191).

Instead of resting with the identification of these diverse functions, Wong wants to find a central underlying reason all citations share (Wong 191). To get to this conclusion he separates the “function” of citation from its “meaning.” He claims that “Meaning, strictly speaking, refers to that which is semantically invariant and thus context-independent. By contrast, function is usually context-dependent (Wong 193).” He aims at the invariant. Under this analysis avoidance of plagiarism is a function rather than a meaning (Wong 194). Ultimately, his “core meaning of a citation” or “primary meaning of a citation” is “to use something . . . to support an idea that the citer wants to put forth (Wong 200).”

Even if one disagrees with a hard and fast distinction between function and meaning, or with an idea of meaning that sees it as “semantically invariant and thus context independent,” the analysis of citation as a type of indirect report is surely



important. And Wong's project at looking at various citation styles so as to attempt an analysis of each form's function, noting such things as placement location of information within varying citation styles, offers an interesting start to an analysis of legal citation.

As stated above, legal writing, both professional and academic, relies heavily upon citations. As a source of authority for the judge's reasoning citation is emphasized. In a decision, just about every step of analysis will be supported by multiple citations. Indeed, the abundance of string citations, where many citations are just listed in order without explanation, is ubiquitous. This supports Wong's conclusion that citation's central function is to support the conclusion offered by the judge (or by the brief writer). But that only starts the analysis when it comes to legal reasoning because it still is an open question as to how it supports the conclusion. Does it support through being the proper source of general rules or principles? Is it because the previous case is on point due to virtually identical facts? Interestingly, according to different legal theorists, what legal sources, for instance case law, do for specific arguments can be thought as serving quite different functions. What might be called the "standard theory" sees cited cases as sources for determinate legal rules, literally forcing the conclusion in the present case. Ronald Dworkin, on the other hand, sees them as morally obligatory sources of both rules and principles. According to Edward Levi, on the other hand, precedents cited are both the source of potential rules of thumb, but also often serve to offer more than one possibility in terms of reasoning and outcome.

But that all use of legal citation is not explained through simple idea of supportive content is seen by an extreme emphasis upon citation form – form that has only the slightest relationship to the conveyance of content beyond the ability to use proper form. Richard Posner in his book *Reflections on Judging* highlights legal citation practice as one example of the needless jargon and internal complexity of judging and legal reasoning in general. Indeed, the legal profession's fixation on proper Bluebook citation form serves as one of his most memorable examples of the needless complexity of legal reasoning in judicial opinions. In his words, "the Bluebook is elaborate but not purposive. Form is prescribed for the sake of form, not of function; a large structure is built up, all unconsciously, by accretion; the superficial dominates the substantive (Posner 97)." I would offer that this is very telling as to the nature of legal reasoning in that form greatly overwhelms any possible function. It seems as if in legal citation form serves as more function than any content being referred to. Why else would a profession require a 511 page guide to formatting citations (2010 edition), as well as an additional 180 page book for understanding the 511 page Bluebook? Could citation really need this much pre-imposed structure?

Posner doesn't think so, indeed he mocks the Bluebook's obsession with uniformity, monopoly and abbreviations (Posner 98). If getting the reader to the cited source is the real function it is really difficult to believe that this would require 500 plus pages of guidance. Posner's explanation for the obsession with citation? – Professional anxiety. For him, law is a profession without scientific rigor – it is more just a set of techniques "uncomfortably close to careful reading, to rhetoric, and to

common sense (Posner 104).” Because of this he thinks “An unconscious awareness of the limitations of legal “science” drives the search for rigor into unlikely places, such as the form of citations, and has given the profession a recipe for distraction that it does not need (Posner 104). Posner argues that instead of this needless formalist complexity, the functions that legal citation form should aim at are “to provide enough information about a reference to give the reader a general idea of its significance and whether it’s worth looking up, and to enable the reader to find the reference if he wants to look it up (Posner 97).” Simply put, it should optimize the ability to find the source cited. It seems pretty obvious that a 511 page guide that needs its own manual is not optimal for this goal. But, on the other hand, such a laborious text does emphasize to the importance of, indeed centrality, of formalities.

This is not really all that surprising given the accepted importance of authoritative precedent in legal decision-making. Proper reference and deference to authoritative text makes up a very large part of legal reasoning. Citation offers a starting-point into this topic. But citation is just the entry point into the broader aspects of indirect reports in law which have to do with the use of prior textual sources in a court’s decision-making process in a specific case. One central type of text involved in this is prior case law.

### 3 Precedent

The use of precedent exemplifies many of the issues raised by indirect reports in general. How is precedent used? In the broadest of strokes, Soia Mentschikoff and Irwin P. Stotzky in *The Theory and Craft of American Law – Elements* argue that “the *crux* of legal reasoning” is that of “finding similarities and distinctions between past and present cases and then using past cases to arrive at a decision in the present case (Mentschikoff xxvi).” They place emphasis on the fact that this is not a static process. They generalize the form of this dynamic process as such: Case one uses facts A, B, C. There the court holds for plaintiff. Case two has only facts A and B. therefore it is a new fact situation that determines its outcome. In case three, there happen to be facts A, B, C, D. Both sides argue for their reading of the new situations. In case two one side argues C is essential, the other that C was always irrelevant. In case three, of course, one side argues that D changes everything and the other that it is clearly non-dispositive. Therefore, before the case is always a new fact-situation to evaluate. Given this, use of precedent “serves two main functions.” First, it “provides a guide against inconsistency, so that similar cases are not decided dissimilarly.” This they call the “stabilizing aspect of precedent.” But, second, and seemingly in opposition to this, precedent also “allows judges enough flexibility to do “justice” in a particular case (Mentschikoff xxvii).”

As opposed to everyday use of indirect reports, in law the business of citation (as seen above) and the use of precedent is a conscious use of reporting. Further, legal training imparts specific know-how. A judge’s opinion is, indeed, largely constructed out of engagement with other authoritative texts, and therefore is built

upon indirect reporting. As noted by Capone, literal meaning is more prevalent in law than everyday conversation. But there is also imposition of technical meanings for terms as well. And there certainly is a more insistent need for allow interpretation to accommodate adaptation. Once again, it can be argued that in a legal controversy before the court law and the use of indirect reports often serves multiple goals and therefore explicitly highlights the a multi-valued and “polyphonic task” a judge’s legal decision serves.

Legal decisions are centrally built upon interpretation of and reasoning about earlier statements. Legal precedent understood broadly as a prior existing legal text has some type of authoritative legal status regarding the case at hand. In order to be considered legitimate, legal reasoning is to be based upon proper legal authority. Use of precedent, though, requires interpretation because court cannot just cite full cases but must select and summarize. In the presentation of a case one major aspect of the controversy is the competition of interpretations over the meaning of purportedly relevant legal precedents. This involves multiple levels. First, there is the question of what precedents are relevant to the case. This is not self-evident. Precedents must be identified and argued for. If a precedent is considered relevant then the meaning of the precedent is not simply given either. What a precedent means is indeed a complex language game. The court’s legal decision is a very complex intersection of various types of indirect report. Different voices with different types of authority interpenetrate. there is no recourse in legal reasoning to full quotations of earlier cases (“the case means what is written, nothing more and nothing less”) therefore questions relating to indirect reporting are unavoidable in the use of precedent.

Maybe the most ubiquitous theory of precedent in recent legal theory is that offered by Ronald Dworkin. Dworkin first notes that there is the option of adopting either a strict or a relaxed view of precedent. On a strict view, a judge is obliged to follow previous precedents that are relevant even if the judges think them wrong. On a more relaxed view, the judge must only “give some weight to past decisions on the same issue (Dworkin 1986 25).” As he notes, judges differ as to this. In either case, though, Dworkin believes that use of precedent “presses toward agreement” (Dworkin 1986 88). According to him options such as “conventionalism” fail to explain the use of precedent because “judges and lawyers often disagree on how precedents should be read.” That is, they disagree with exactly what methodological commitments the use of precedent requires (Dworkin 1986 122). And these disagreements are often due to different political and moral convictions.

His solution is to offer “Law as Integrity.” In his words, “Law as integrity supposes that people are entitled to a coherent and principled extension of past political decisions even when judges profoundly disagree about what this means (Dworkin 1986 134).” While it is often difficult to know exactly what this entails, he contrasts this conception of law with legal pragmatism and less integrated conceptions of legal practice. Dworkin claims that pragmatism only sees “reasons of strategy” to follow precedent. Law as integrity, on the other hand, excludes reasons of strategy and only uses principle. Furthermore, a “checkerboard strategy” is not allowed because of the need for integrity and coherence (Dworkin 1986 183, 240). As he puts it, the legislature is the place for policy, judges must use principle

(Dworkin 1986 244). Principle, in turn, requires proper deference to precedent and this requires attention to “fit” and political morality which is a type of “inclusive integrity” (Dworkin 1986 405).

Proper use of precedent is explained somewhat more concretely by Dworkin through his famous analogy of the “chain novel.” In the chain novel each novelist interprets earlier chapters written by other individuals, “seriatim,” to jointly create a novel “the best it can be.” A novel’s earlier chapters are delivered to the present author as a group, and the present author is to make them the best they can be through the use of “fit” as the first requirement “justifies” as a second requirement (Dworkin 1986 231, 239). This is the same for the judge. For Dworkin, precedents are so important that an earlier decision “exerts a gravitational force” even when not directly on point (Dworkin 1978 111). Indeed the judge must treat law as if it was a “seamless web.” Dworkin argues that this conception of precedent is required because of the fairness aspect of treating like cases alike (Dworkin 1978 113). In fact, for him, fairness is the only “adequate account of the full practice of precedent (Dworkin 1978 113).” Only arguments of principle are allowed – not policy because policy could be unfair to individual, checkerboard in impact. Fairness requires the judge to treat law as a seamless web even if it is, in fact, not so (Dworkin 1978 116).

Dworkin’s treatment of precedent is pretty abstract, and built upon quite general conceptions such as principle and fit. Furthermore, treating such a complex practice as modern law as a seamless web seems indeed a Herculean task (of course Dworkin names his ideal judge Hercules). But his theory does give us a picture of how precedent might function in judicial decision making. It is a practice based upon a requirement of fit between the current case and the available precedents, wherein and conflicting aspects of previous cases are to be reconciled by the use of principled argument resting upon articulated yet potential conflicting conceptions of political morality. Excluded are ad hoc or checkerboard solutions or policy considerations. Ultimately Dworkin’s results in the postulation, at least as an ideal the judge aims for, of law as a seamless web through a moral duty to follow precedent and, in turn, maybe even more idealistically, the belief that there is one right answer to every case.

Turning to Edward H Levi’s analysis of the use of case law in legal reasoning in *An Introduction to Legal Reasoning* allows for a much more dynamic and polyphonic rather than univocal conception of the use of indirect reports in law. Levi thinks it important to note both the court’s attachment to treat similar situations similarly and its ability to shift and evolve new doctrine. As he puts it, “In an important sense legal rules are never clear” because the legal process allows the community a forum to participate in solving problems as they arise (Levi 1). His identified basic pattern of legal reasoning is a three step process of reasoning by example. Initially, a “similarity in seen between cases,” Following this, “the rule of law inherent in the first case is announced,” and, finally, “the rule of law is made applicable to the second case (Levi 2).” This process, of course, depends upon what facts are considered relevant and what legitimate similarity consists of.

Each judge must engage in reasoning with precedents to identify these matters. As previous cases and current controversies are grappled with classification evolves and it is written in to in further case law. In this process competing examples of facts,

concepts and reasoning are presented as being important. An idea is brought into court and the court interprets it in light of the specific case. In later cases the idea is developed and distinguished. Concepts come arrive and are developed through a “circular motion.” In the “first stage” there is the creation of a legal concept which is “built up” as further cases are found similar. In this part of the process the “court fumbles for a phrase.” In the second stage the concept is “more or less fixed, although reasoning by example continues to classify items inside and out of the concept.” But, as Levi assumes that no concept is equal to the complexity of challenges in the world, in the third stage the concept will start to “breakdown” because “reasoning by example has moved so far ahead as to make it clear that the suggestive influence of the word is no longer desired (Levi 8-9).”

His famous and paradigmatic example of this is the “breakdown of the so-called “inherently dangerous” rule in Cardozo’s opinion *MacPherson v. Buick Motor Co.* (117 N.Y. 382, 111 N.E. 1050 (1916)) (Levi 9). Levi follows that evolution of common-law court decisions towards modern negligence law and from earlier privity requirements. For him there is a movement from specific to general. General concept are constructed, but new instances both inform and serve as means to critique these concepts. While precedent informs and constrains, it is not a seamless web. So, whereas for Dworkin the aim it to treat precedent as a primary source of materials for the judge’s construction of a seamless web, for Levi precedent is one of many source of law as a truly polyphonic, evolutionary and dynamic process, wherein multiple voices engage in an ongoing interpenetration of indirect reports, current dialogue and construction of the future.

## 4 Statutory Interpretation

Dworkin and Levi also analyze legal use of statute. Dworkin’s analysis pretty much follows the identical lines of his argument about use of judicial decisions. There is a duty to follow them, but they require principled interpretation. Indeed, here his requirements of fit and justification creates the situation where being true to law might actually require the judge to not follow the specific words of a stature if the seamless web of law requires otherwise. Famously, if a statutory duty to follow a will’s literal wording would too egregiously conflict with the duty of justice (say due to the beneficiary of the will killing the testator in order to expedite the inheritance) then the judge is required by principle to ensure justice rather than enforce the literal interpretation. Therefore, even statutory language, a “direct report” requires interpretation before application. This brings in complications beyond the standard issues of vague language, unforeseen applications, etc.

Levi’s analysis starts with the understanding that in a statute the actual words are not dictum – as Levi holds all language in case law to be. But as with Dworkin, Levi emphasizes that the words are also not self-interpreting. Therefore interpretive strategies are always necessary. Utilizing legislative intent is often important. But the problem is that it is not easy to find the actual intent of the legislature. For instance did the legislature intend its language to be read narrowly or widely?

Furthermore, Levi thinks that usually with the meaning of specific terms within a statute, “Matters are not decided until they have to be (Levi 30).” Indeed, the precise meaning of terms is something the legislature does not have to come to agreement on and can allocate to the courts as specific examples force their construction. Not only is there no necessary need to focus on specifics for the legislature but this might help the legislative process. Instead the legislature can find agreement in “semantic ascent” – that is ascending to a more abstract level where agreement can be come to just because it does not determine specific cases. Plus of course there are various strategic reasons, both legitimate and not, for statutory ambiguity.

Levi ultimately sees the words of a statute often serving as setting a broad direction – therefore ensuring some area of stability – but not creating the literalness of application and easy foreseeability that might seem to follow from the appeal to direct and explicit language. Levi’s give as an example of this the vagaries of the 1910 Mann Act, or “White Slave Traffic Act.” As his careful analysis of the evolving history of this act shows there was, from the start, confusion as to the basic concepts (what is a “slave” under that act?), facts (what is trafficking under the act) and aims (what was supposed to be punished, regulated, etc.). Levi, as a United States Attorney General, at least had the actual experience of trying to make sense of out such statutory language.

## 5 Constitutional Interpretation

Finally, there is the interpretation of constitutional language. Just like Dworkin’s use of principle when attached to fit and justification, but much more explicitly under United States constitutional law, the Supreme Court has the ability by appeal to the Constitution’s text to render legislation and previous case law invalid. Therefore, once again, the appeal to the direct language of a statute does not avoid all of the issues that comes with indirect reports. The combination of case law, statutory text and constitutional text ensures a polyphonic process. Add to this the appeal to intent, the need to identify the content of each concept, etc., and all the potential sources of statements renders the purported clarity of the direct report elusive. Recent attempts such as Scalia’s plain meaning original intent show in absurd relief the length that must be gone to in order to hold on to the pretense that there was any clear original understanding – even through the reference to “public meaning” – which given the need to refer to various disparate sources ensures that it requires the voluminous use of indirect reports. This attempt to find clear meaning through principle of plain meaning in practice seems analogous to the almost pathological and neurotic lengths shown in Bluebook anxiety over citation.

Levi adds to this the striking claim that rather than serving as the great anchor, a written constitution actually creates greater uncertainty because it allows courts, and most clearly a supreme court vested with the final authority of interpreting the constitution a power to disregard prior cases (Levi 58). Because of this practice, Levi claims that:

“There can be no authoritative interpretation of the Constitution. The Constitution in its general provisions embodies the conflicting ideals of the community. Who is to say what these ideals mean in any definite way? Certainly not the framers, for they did their work when the words were put down. The words are ambiguous. Nor can it be the Court, for the Court cannot bind itself in this manner; an appeal can always be made back to the Constitution. Moreover, if it is said that the intent of the framers ought to control, there is no mechanism for any final determination of their intent. Added to the problem of ambiguity and the additional fact that the framers may have intended a growing instrument, there is the influence of constitution worship. This influence gives great freedom to a court. It can always abandon what is said in order to back to the written document itself. It is a freedom greater than it would have if no such document existed (Levi 58-59).”

Interestingly, this implies that through an appeal to the Constitutional text, that is, through appeal to direct text, constitutional interpretation can avoid the constraining and channeling aspects of case law precedent. Here appeal to a direct report on constitutional text allows for greater interpretive leeway because while it appears more direct and literal it actually is less stable because the text is not determining and the interpretive process is concealed more readily – especially when mixed with constitution worship. Each concept in the Constitution actually “embodies a number of conflicting ideals (Levi 60).” Therefore, for Levi the ultimate choices and protections must come from the people. His central example is the commerce clause – and the Court’s ongoing attempts to make the concept of commerce between the states clear. Ironically, for Levi, whereas case law requires all the skills necessary to utilize and interpret indirect reports, the appeal to specific text actually ensures instability.

Levi argues that what follows from this is that in law “emphasis should be on the process.” This process ensures that the process of legal reasoning has a logic that “fits it to give meaning to ambiguity and to test constantly whether the society has come to see new differences or similarities.” In the process, “the area of doubt is constantly set forth’ and potential areas of “expansion or contraction” are “foreshadowed as the system works.” Levi claims that this logic is necessary because, “This is the only kind of system which will work when people do not agree completely.” Instead of a univocal system of interpretation, “The words change to receive the content which the community gives to them. The effort to find complete agreement before the institution goes to work is meaningless. It is to forget the very purpose for which the institution of legal reasoning has been fashioned (Levi 104).”

## 6 Conclusion

It is informative to contrast Dworkin’s source of a univocal treatment of indirect reports with Levi’s emphasis upon the virtues of a polyvocal process. Dworkin hopes for a single source and type of interpretation and harmonization. He creates a super judge – Hercules – to do this through use of fit and, most importantly principle. The judge will act as if and help construct law as a seamless web. A universalized picture of the rationale of law is required in order to properly interpret the earlier reports. Dworkin’s more univocal picture of legal interpretation contrasts starkly

first with Levi's particularized difference between case law, statute and constitution. For Levi the more direct quality of statutory or constitutional text serves not as stabilizing force but rather as a manner of escaping the stabilizing force of precedent. Not that case law doesn't evolve and allow for change, just that in Levi's description the legal process through common law allows for more voices, different issues and multiple constituencies to have part in it. It is the on-going conversation that gives meaning to the reports, not any specific canonical rules of interpretation. Therefore, change is much more polyvocal, more conversational, more bottom-up. Levi's picture of legal procedure and legal reasoning is that of a complex language game with multiple voices constructing and constraining the meaning of previous texts in a process that includes dialogue and conflict. Levi, it seems, would agree with Eric Whittle's statement that "If the concept of *saying* refuses to cooperate for the purposes of formal analysis, it may be time for pragmatics to relinquish assumed oversight and leave it (*saying*) to its own devices among the myriad circumstances from which it appears (265)." This is, I believe a salutary Wittgensteinian insight that could be helpful in discussions of legal interpretation and indirect reports in law. On the other hand, with Dworkin the picture is top-down and supremely judge-centered – and it seems, has more affinity to Gricean styles of pragmatics. Under Dworkin's conception there is less material used in analysis and fewer voices.

As seen from the brief analysis of citation, case law, and statutory as well as constitutional interpretation, indirect reports are ubiquitous in law. As a system, law is built upon the use of indirect reports. Capone is correct. Indeed, the anxiety of citation for, proper use of precedent, and various controversies over proper interpretive strategies in law can be read as anxiety over the proper status of indirect reports. If there is no simple solution to proper use of indirect reports – which seems a plausible conclusion given the extant literature on the subject, Levi's option in that it is more inclusive, more polyvocal, more aware of needs of language game, more allowing of continuing discourse, and more aware of the possibility of conflicting yet important and reasonable interpretations seems more worthy of adoption. This, of course, is not a direct solution to the problem of the use of and meaning of indirect reports in law, it is rather the adoption of a continuing dialogue about them. When Hercules rules (or a Scalia), other options are eliminated, other voices are silenced. Before this is allowed to happen, legal process should try to include as many voices in the construction of meaning as possible. This is proper as it might be best to not believe in the one true meaning of an indirect report beyond what a very broad and diverse set of stakeholders in the conversation take it to mean.

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# The Translatorial Middle Between Direct and Indirect Reports



Douglas Robinson

**Abstract** The article begins with the previously observed fact that there is a shifting middle ground between direct and indirect reports, in order to argue that that middle ground is occupied and complicated by translation. This case is pursued through a look at translations of four example passages: (1) the problem of translating tonality from Aleksis Kivi's Finnish fiction; (2) the problem of translating argumentative slippage from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; (3) the problem of translating grammatical gender from Friedrich Schleiermacher; and (4) the problem of translating prosodic features from Volter Kilpi's Finnish fiction. The conclusion is that our sense of the difference between direct and indirect reports is organized "icotically," through the power of group normativization/plausibilization.

**Keywords** Translation · Interpretation · Directness · Indirectness · Explication · Implication

In an article I published several years ago (Robinson 2009) about translation and Bakhtin's (1929/1984) retheorization of free indirect discourse as double-voicing, I argued for an "additive" mathematics of translatorial voice: just as the narrator adds a voice to the character whose speech s/he (directly or indirectly) reports, and as the author adds a voice to the narrator whose speech s/he (directly or indirectly) reports, so too does the translator add a voice to the multiply voiced source text. While I think the additive math of that earlier piece is correct, as far as it goes, I now believe that it doesn't go far enough. Bakhtin's theory of double-voicing seemed to me such a rich development of traditional thinking about indirect reports that it effectively superseded that traditional thinking, which could thus be left on the scrapheap of history; it occurs to me now, however, that Bakhtin might have rushed too quickly from the traditional direct/indirect binary to the productive fusion that is

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double-voicing. While I have no interest in policing the boundary between direct and indirect reports—DRs and IRs—it does seem to me now that the shadow cast by that theoretical boundary may be theoretically and analytically useful in helping us to map a shifting middle ground between the two, and specifically the way translation occupies and complicates that middle ground.

Exploring that middle ground in ordinary monolingual discourse is one of the core concerns of research into IRs. Allan (2016: 573–74), for example, notes the inevitability of divergences between direct speech (DS) and any DR of that DS, for the simple reason that the reporting speaker X is not identical with the reported speaker Z:

X's memory for meaning will be better than her memory for verbatim textual recollection (Bartlett, 1932; Lehrer, 1989). X may use a different medium from Z, e.g. written in place of spoken. X will have a different voice – literally and figuratively – from Z. Normally, X will re-present what Z said using different lexis and grammar, even when attempting a verbatim quote. Lehrer found changes in word order, substitution of nouns for pronouns and vice versa, swapping of one determiner for another, simplification and clarification through the omission of hedges, repetition, conjunctions, and removal of clefts (e.g. *What he did was buy a car* is changed to *He bought a car*). An important consideration for reports is that the reporter may choose to render the report more coherent by rearranging what was said, and/or more vivid by embellishing the original to attract and/or maintain audience attention.

On the other hand, X may have misheard or misinterpreted Z's utterance: she may deliberately misinterpret Z's utterance to save Y's feelings or to mislead Y maliciously. X will often report what Z said with some affective gloss, e.g. describe Z himself as an angel, a jerk, etc. and Z's manner as joyous, boastful, boring, or whatever.

Note there that Allan is talking about “reports,” not DRs or IRs. “Even when attempting a verbatim quote,” in other words, there will inevitably be divergences, whether they are marked syntactically or semantically or are as “unmarked” as the “affective gloss” that Allan mentions last. “This suggests,” Allan adds, “that we should speak of *indirectness in reports* rather than of *indirect reports*; however, as always, the truth is more complicated” (ibid.: 574). He warns, in fact, against conflating quotations and reports, precisely because the verbatim accuracy expected of quotations is never achieved in reports. This is an essential proviso in discussions of translating as reporting as well, precisely because the verbatim accuracy expected of quotation is ipso facto impossible in translation. Never mind even the manifold differences between any two languages; the very fact that they *are* different languages mandates a shift. In other words, even if a translation can be shown to be syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically accurate—say, *er ist zu Hause* translated as “he is at home”—it is not a verbatim quote, because every word in the “quoted” source text has been replaced with a different one in the “quoting” target text.

Capone (2016a: 55) picks up the theme of the shifting middle ground between DRs and IRs, noting that while syntactic and other explicatures often mark the presence of IRing, IR may also be present without explicatures, and the difference between the two is “only . . . a matter of degree” (ibid.: 55–56). “One way to characterize this difference,” Capone adds, “is to say that its main ingredient is accuracy or the lack of it (greater or less granularity, in the terminology of Holt

2016). Indirect reports seem to allow the speaker (and prepare the hearer) for a lower degree of accuracy than direct reports” (ibid.: 56). Talk of accuracy is again obviously quite relevant to the traditional discourse on translation quality. The issue I want to discuss here is this: “Direct reports seem to prevent the reporter from manipulating the content of the report – interpolations are banned, or so it might appear ‘prima facie’ (however, we should soon insist on the difference between strict and loose direct reports). But there are many ways to manipulate the content of a direct report without giving rise to criticism” (ibid.). The traditional normative expectation that the translation be an “accurate” or “equivalent” representation of the source text is effectively what we might call a “direct report norm,” or DR norm. The translator is to add nothing to the source text and subtract nothing from it. The source text is the DS of the source author, and the target text is the translator’s DR of that DS. As Holt (2016: 168) notes of DRing, it is also normative in translating that “the deictic centre of the utterance is the ‘original’ speech situation”—translators are expected not to make their own reporting situation the focus of the target text. But as Capone might be read as predicting—though in fact in his discussion of the overlaps between translation and IR Capone (2016b) does not touch on this—translation scholars have for several decades now been studying the “many ways to manipulate the content of a direct report without giving rise to criticism.”

Let us look at four examples, two (the first and fourth) from Finnish literature, the other two from philosophy, the second from Aristotle, the third from Schleiermacher, covering four different types of DS implicitness that are not well-served by conventional DR-normative translation: the guidance provided by (1) tonality, (3) grammatical gender, and (4) prosodic features, and the lack of guidance brought about by (2) argumentative slippage.

### Example 1: Translating Tonalizations in Aleksis Kivi

For our first practical test of the DR norm, let us look at a passage from Aleksis Kivi’s great Finnish novel *Seitsemän veljestä* from 1870—which has traditionally been translated into English as *Seven Brothers*, but which I have translated as *The Brothers Seven* (Robinson 2017b).<sup>1</sup> In the novel the eponymous siblings form a seven-headed collective protagonist that grows over the course of the novel from unruliness to self-rule. The brother who promotes collective self-rule most eloquently throughout the novel is Aapo, a calm, rational thinker who unfortunately for all of them is not the oldest; the oldest, Juhani, is a volatile sort who flies off the handle at the slightest provocation, especially at the tiniest challenge to his authority as the oldest. Twice in the novel Aapo initiates a conversation about who should be in charge, both times saying that of course that role by rights belongs to Juhani—and implicating (or perhaps I’m just imagining this) that if the brothers were smart they would overlook birth order and let the *right* person be in charge, namely him. (If he had no such ulterior motives, why did he start the conversation again after it had already been decided once?)

<sup>1</sup>See also my discussion in Robinson (2017a).

In Chapter the Fifth, during the second such conversation, Aapo poses the question of what punishment they will levy on anyone who refuses to submit to the will of the group, and Juhani hands down his autocratic decree as the oldest brother: any obdurate miscreant among the brothers will be trapped in a cave in the mountain for several days. A famous altercation ensues, in which Aapo dissents from Juhani's decree. Here is the DS in Finnish:

AAPO. Sallitaanko minulle sananvuoro?

JUHANI. Kernaasti. Mitä mielit sanoa?

AAPO. Etten kilttaa minäkään tuota rangaistus-parakraaffia, jonka tahtoisit käytettäväksi välillemme asettaa, vaan katsonpa sen veljesten keskenä liian törkeäksi, pedolliseksi.

JUHANI. Vai et kilttaa? Etkö kilttaa? Etkö totisesti kilttaa? Sanoppas sitten viisaampi parakraaffi, koska minä en milloinkaan käsitä mikä on oikein, mikä väärin. (Kivi 1870/1984: 117)

The first English translation of the novel was by Alex. Matson (1929/1962: 108–9), who rendered that passage like this:

*Aapo:* May I be allowed to say a word?

*Juhani:* Willingly. What didst thou wish to say?

*Aapo:* That neither do I approve of that punishment paragraph, which thou wouldst lay down for us, but look upon it as too cruel, too savage amongst brothers.

*Juhani:* Oh, thou dost not approve? Thou dost not approve? Dost thou really not approve? Then tell us a wiser paragraph, as I never seem to know what is right, what wrong.

Matson there uses archaic English to represent Kivi's archaic Finnish; his thous and thees are typically quite stilted, while Kivi's archaisms are lively and playful, but in every other way this passage seems to adhere perfectly to the DR norm. It is a translation as a DR of DS. Matson adds nothing to Kivi's text and subtracts nothing from it. In fact it follows Kivi's Finnish almost literally, almost slavishly. In many other places that translation strategy makes for awkward reading in English, but here that does not seem to be the case.

The second English translation was by Richard Impola (1991: 98), who renders that passage like this:

*Aapo:* Could I have the floor?

*Juhani:* Gladly. What's on your mind?

*Aapo:* I don't approve the proviso for punishment that you want to set up for us either. I think it's too harsh and brutal to apply among brothers.

*Juhani:* So you don't approve? You don't approve? You really don't approve? Tell us a wiser one then, since I never know right from wrong.

Arguably Impola "subtracts" archaism from Kivi's text. In fact I knew him quite well around the time he was publishing his translation, indeed was president of the Finnish-American Translators Association when he petitioned the association for the right to (self-)publish it under the FATA imprint (which we created for that specific purpose), and he told me that he had sought to correct for the awkwardness Matson's archaisms had brought to the novel. Apart from that, however, it seems to me that Impola too, like Matson, adds nothing to and subtracts nothing from Kivi's text.

Aapo's first question, for example, is literally "Is allowed to me a word's turn?" "A word's turn" there morphologically represents *sananvuoro*, which may also be rendered "a turn to speak." While in "May I be allowed to say a word?" Matson arguably sticks closer to the DR norm in reproducing in English the word *sana* as "word"—approximating the illusion that he is "quoting" in a different language—but the word *sananvuoro* is in fact a bureaucratic rules-of-order term aptly represented by Impola's "Could I have the floor?"; and as I'll show, one of the bones of contention in the scene is precisely Aapo's use of that bureaucratic register.

My point is that this sort of extremely nitpicky quibbling is the most one might lodge against either translation of this passage. Both remain well within the confines traditionally marked off by the DR norm. In Bakhtin's (1929/1984: 199) terms, we might say that both translators "objectify" the DS of the two characters along normatively acceptable lines. But this characterization introduces the first potential problem in the DR norm—for as I argued in Robinson (2003: 112–13), Bakhtin's tripartite distinction in the Dostoevsky book should actually be flipped on its head (Bakhtin's table is on the left, my flipped version on the right):

<p>I. Direct, unmediated discourse directed exclusively toward its referential object, as an expression of the speaker's ultimate semantic authority</p> <p>II. Objectified discourse (discourse of a represented person)</p> <p>III. Discourse with an orientation toward someone else's discourse (double-voiced discourse)</p> <p>1. Unidirectional double-voiced discourse [stylization, reliable narrator's narration]</p> <p>2. Vari-directional double-voiced discourse [parody, unreliable narrator's narration]</p> <p>3. The active type (reflected discourse of another) [hidden internal polemic, discourse with a sideward glance, hidden dialogue] (Bakhtin)</p>	<p>First type: overt multiple voicing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the speaker's internal dialogue or pandemonium of voices is frankly made public, reflected openly in speech or writing</li> <li>• Bakhtin's active type: the sideward glance at someone else's hostile word, the word with a loophole, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Second type: overt multiple voicing with a hierarchy imposed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the speaker gives the impression of being in control of the other voices that striate his or her speech</li> <li>• Bakhtin's passive type, both varidirectional (parody and the use of an unreliable narrator) and unidirectional (stylization and the use of a reliable narrator)</li> </ul> <p>Third type: covert multiple voicing with a hierarchy imposed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the speaker gives the impression of speaking with only a single voice, either his own or someone else's</li> <li>• Bakhtin's objectified and direct unmediated types (Robinson)</li> </ul>
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The idea in that right-hand column is that even what Bakhtin calls "objectified discourse"—the DS of a character as reported by a narrator, the DS of a source text as translated by a translator—is double-voiced. So, for that matter, is "direct,

unmediated discourse” (DS)—but that is less relevant here.<sup>2</sup> Every translation, in other words, adds at least one new voice to the text. That new voice may be a sincere and professionally adept attempt to reproduce the voice(s) of the source text, but there can be no possible target-language reproduction of the voice(s) of a source text that adds no new voice to the mix. The transition to a new language mandates the addition of at least one new voice. Matson (1888–1972), for example, added a composite voice of Victorian music-hall variety theater, especially of the melodramatic sort, whose male heroes were bluff and plucky; that voice, understandably, sounds quite dated now. Impola (1923–2015), for his part, added a composite voice of late-nineteenth-century American dime novels, mid-twentieth-century middle-brow American realistic novels, and perhaps even the Dick and Jane primers. Both translators worked very hard to adhere to the DR norm, and in the passage quoted above seemed to have achieved their aim; but both also necessarily, by default, revoiced the novel’s DS. As it happens, their revoicings pull it in strikingly different directions—a fairly reliable sign of translation-as-IR.

This assessment of the situation conforms quite closely to current assumptions about translation in the field of Translation Studies: equivalence norms pressure translators to suppress personal interpretations and other colorations of the text, but translators nevertheless inevitably, unavoidably, impose some recognizable and analyzable trace of interpretive personality (“style” or “narratoriality”) on the text. All I have added to the prevailing understanding of translation in the TS field is the notion that this has something to do with DR>IR.

What I find useful about that addition, to begin with, is the light it may shed on the turbulence that the DR norm may generate in reader-response. To illustrate that turbulence, let us look at a critical study of Kivi’s novel, in English, by an American scholar named Eric Schaad, who reads Finnish, but apparently also relies on translations for his reading of the Finnish of Kivi (he systematically cites both Kivi in Finnish and Impola in English). As he reads this scene, what happens in it is that “two suggestions are put forth—one by Juhani and one by Aapo—and Kivi underscores the difficulty of arriving at a solution through the voice of Juhani, who, in frustration, says he never knows right from wrong” (Schaad 2010: 186) That sounds as if Juhani is frustrated at his own pathetic ignorance; he is, after all, known far and wide as not particularly bright, often admits as much, and here, according to Schaad, bewails his deep confusion.

What I find interesting about that reading is not only that I disagree with it—in fact I find it so absurdly blind and deaf to what is actually going on in the scene

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<sup>2</sup>My reading of Bakhtin’s table in Robinson (2003: 107) is that Bakhtin expressly presents his first two levels—“direct unmediated discourse” and “objectified discourse”—as “single-voiced discourse,” not because they are that, but because speakers tend to *think* of them that way. In retrospect I’m not sure that’s the case. I suspect Bakhtin either actually thought that his first two levels really were single-voiced—this was after all an early stage of his thinking on the matter—or else didn’t believe it but presented it that way so as to bring his more conservative readers along slowly. Certainly by *Discourse in the Novel* (1934–1935/1981) he is clear that *all* discourse is internally dialogized.

that I have to work hard to figure out how Schaad could possibly have reached it—but that, once I have done that work, it becomes clear that the problem is in the “directness” (DRness) of Impola’s translation. Or, well, in the directness of something: Schaad may have read Kivi’s Finnish original directly, imposed the same kind of directness on it as Impola did, and so naturally gravitated to an English translation—perhaps only for the purpose of writing about it in English?—that exhibited the same normative DR reading strategy as he himself applied.

There is, after all, a submerged rationalism to the DR norm for translating, almost a behaviorism: just translate the text as it is. Don’t interpret. Don’t plumb the emotional depths of the text. Don’t wonder what the characters are “really” thinking or feeling, or what is “really” going on in the exchange. Don’t tonalize. Stay on the behavioral surface. If Juhani says he never knows right from wrong, that is what he means. Don’t read anything else into it.

And yet, strikingly, the path from Kivi’s text—in Finnish or Impola’s English—to Schaad’s reading leads rather energetically through tonalization. Schaad himself mentions Juhani’s “frustration”; and the textual problem that the reader faces in reading his claim that he never knows right from wrong is the lead-up repetition of *etkö kilttaa?* “you don’t approve?”—three times!—and the invitation to Aapo to propose a different punishment. To read all that as “frustration,” and Juhani’s “frustration” as an emotional bass note to his statement that he never knows right from wrong, is to tonalize it. And to my mind the only possible tonalization that would explain the repetition as frustration and the bit about not knowing right from wrong as a frustrated confession of ignorance is a cringing body language in Juhani: he is hanging on Aapo’s every word, every gesture, every facial expression, haplessly looking for guidance; his insistent repetition must be mentally tonalized as nervous, needy, even abject, as if his whole self-esteem rides on Aapo’s approval.

The actual sequence of events in the scene goes like this:

1. Juhani *decrees* the overly harsh punishment he invents—he does not present it as a “suggestion.”
2. Several brothers protest the decree in (1) vociferously.
3. Juhani treats the protests in (2) as a mutiny.
4. Aapo chimes in with his calmer dissent to (1).
5. Juhani asks Aapo for a better suggestion and says that he never knows right from wrong.
6. In response to (5) Aapo shuts down and refuses to answer.
7. Aapo’s refusal in (6) drives Juhani wild; he berates Aapo more and more intensely.
8. Finally, taking pity on him, Aapo makes his suggestion.
9. Juhani agrees with the suggestion in (8) instantly.

The interpretive problem for (5) that is posed by that larger context is the move to Aapo’s refusal in (6): if Aapo is so calm and rational, so intelligent and mature, why does he refuse to satisfy Juhani’s request? A subproblem is the move to Juhani’s anger in (7): if we read him in (5) as humbly begging Aapo for help, and to that



end confessing his ethical incompetence in frustration (at himself), how does that self-abasement suddenly turn into a wild accusatory rage in (7)?

As I read the scene, Juhani's anger (at "mutiny") begins in (3) and *escalates* in (5): he asks Aapo for a better suggestion in an angry, sarcastic tone that heaps childish abuse on Aapo, and it is that abuse that causes Aapo to shut down in (6). From Juhani's perspective, not only is Aapo too challenging his dictatorial authority, and so "mutinying" against him; he is using pretentious bureaucratic language that is above the brothers' (peasant) station. That would explain the repetition in *Vai et kiltaa? Etkö kiltaa? Etkö totisesti kiltaa?*: the verb *killata*, which Impola translates "approve," is a high-falutin' bureaucratic term that Juhani takes to be an implicit assault on his (avowedly substandard) intelligence. Juhani thinks Aapo is putting on airs, and implicating to his brothers that he, Aapo, should be in charge, rather than this incompetent ninny who happened to be born first. The repetition of *etkö kiltaa?* "you don't approve?" in (5), in other words, should be tonalized as angry sarcasm, with sarcastic emphasis on *kilttaa*, the offending word (and a more high-falutin' English equivalent than the rather ordinary "approve"); and that sarcasm continues in *koska minä en milloinkaan käsitä mikä on oikein, mikä väärin* "since I never know right from wrong." As I tonalize the passage, in other words, Juhani is not frustratedly "confessing" that he doesn't know right from wrong; he is sarcastically implicating that *Aapo* thinks he doesn't know right from wrong.

Reading between the lines—between (2) and (3), between (4) and (5), between (5) and (6), between (6) and (7), and between (8) and (9)—I would say that Juhani suspects that he has no idea what would be an appropriate punishment, but is too proud of his status as the oldest brother (and thus the boss) to admit his confusion. His authoritarian bluster—the sarcastic abuse he heaps on Aapo in (5)—conceals not only his status-jealousy and executive ineptitude, but his emergent awareness that Aapo would really be better at leading the brothers than he is, and that he really needs to find a way to save face while asking Aapo for help. As long as Aapo is refusing to help, he just becomes more frantic; once Aapo speaks up, he is so grateful and relieved that he can't agree fast enough. This is not, in other words, a dramatization of a "difficulty of arriving at a solution," as Schaad claims; it is a dramatization of complex power relations in developing an accommodating response to the personal insecurities of an inept dictator trying to save face.

Because Kivi writes all dialogue in play format, however—which I take to be a proto-modernist strategy akin to Henry James's insistence that the author "show" things rather than "tell" us about them—he depends on his readers to work all this out, without a narrator's guidance. So now let us imagine that passage rewritten in conventional novel style, using Impola's phrasings but interspersed with narratorial guidance based on my reading of the passage:

Aapo cautiously cleared his throat: "Could I have the floor?"

"Gladly," Juhani replied, keeping his voice as even as he could. "What's on your mind?"

"I don't approve the proviso for punishment that you want to set up for us either," Aapo said. "I think it's too harsh and brutal to apply among brothers."

At this Juhani exploded with anger, and began fulminating directly in Aapo's face, wobbling his head and waving his arms:

“So you don’t *approve*? You don’t *approve*? You really don’t *approve*? Tell us a *wiser* one then, since I never know right from wrong.”

This in fact is an actual translation strategy that has been applied to Kivi’s novel at least twice, in consecutive years, by the Czech translator Antonie Svobodová (1940) and the Dutch translator M.J. Molanus-Stamperius (1941/1958). The usual way of talking about such strategies is as the assimilation of non-normative literary structures and strategies in the source text to local (target-cultural) norms; but in this case it is an assimilation of one transnational but less well established narrative mode to another transnational mode that is more widely conventionalized. Both Kivi’s Finnish original and the Czech/Dutch revisions are mixed modes, DR spiced up with some narratorial IR for clarification; the difference is one of degree, the Dutch and Czech “IR translations” containing *slightly more* IR than Kivi’s Finnish “DR narration.”

Svobodová’s translation is abridged; she doesn’t translate the passage we’ve been discussing.<sup>3</sup> Here then is the passage in Molanus-Stamperius’s translation, followed by my literal translation:

„Mag ik ook mijn woordje plaatsen?” vroeg Aapo.  
 „Heel graag zelfs. Is er soms iets dat moet geregeld worden?”  
 „Dat voorstel om ons te bestraffen deugt niet, het is te streng en te wreedaardig.”  
 „Wat ook gij verzet er u tegen. Ook gij Aapo, gij wilt niet toegeven, gij beweert ook dat mijn voorstel niet deugt. Vooruit bepaal zelf de straf, ik kan toch nooit iets goed doen, ik weet nooit wanneer iets juist of verkeerd is.”(ibid.: 129)

“Can I too put my word?” asked Aapo.

“With great pleasure even. Is there something that needs to be regulated?”

<sup>3</sup>For comparison, to show how Svobodová elaborates her IR, let us consider a different passage, first in Kivi’s Finnish original, then in Svobodová’s Czech translation, then in my translation from her Czech, then in my translation from Kivi’s Finnish:

JUHANI. Voi, veikkoseni! luulenpa että haastelisit vähän toisin, jos hieman enemmän olisit katsellut ympärilles tässä maailmassa, jos esimerkiksi olisit käynyt Turun kaupungissa. Sen olen minä tehnyt, koska ajoin sinne härkiä Viertolan kartanosta. Näinpä siellä yhtäkin ihmeekseni, näin kuinka prameus ja komu voi panna pyörään ihmisten päät. Voi teitä, voi pauhaavata kylää, voi häilyväistä elämää kumminkin! Tuolta jyrisee vaunut, täältä jyrisee vaunut, ja vaunuissa istuu sen vietäviä viiksinaamaisia narreja, istuu tyttöjä kuin posliinivauvoja, tuoksuuttaen kauas ympärillensä sakean hajun kalleista öljyistä ja rasvoista. Mutta katsoppas tuonne! Jesta ja varjele! sieltähän nyt hipsuttelee esiin kultahöyhenissä oikein aika vekama mamselli tai röökinä mitä hän lie. Kas hänen kaulaansa! Valkea kuin rieskamaito, poski ruttopunainen, ja silmät palaa hänen päässään kuin päiväpaisteessa kaksi roviotulta, koska häntä vastaan käy oikea kekkale mieheksi, hatussa, kiiltomustassa hännystakissa, ja tirkist... — no vie sinun pirkele itseäskin! — tirkistelee läpi nelikulmaisen lasin, joka välkky vekkulin vasemmalla silmällä. Mutta kas nyt... — no sinun seitsemän seppää! — nytpä keksautetaan kummaltakin puolelta, ja kas kun naara nyt oikein rypistää suunsa mansikkasuuksi ja livertelee kuin pääskynen päiväisellä katolla, ja teikari hänen edessään viskelee kättänsä ja häntäänsä, heilauttelee hattuansa ja raappaisee jalallansa että kivikatu kipenöitsee, kas sepä vasta leikkiä oli. Voi, te harakat itsiänne! aattelin minä, poikannalliainen, seistessäni kadun kulmalla, rykelmä tuoreita härjänvuotia olalla, ja suu mareissa katsellen tuota teerenpeliä.

“The proposal to punish us is no good, it is too strict and cruel.”

“Whatever you protest there against you. You too, Aapo, you will not admit it, you also claim that my proposal is not good. From now on choose the punishment yourself, I still can never do anything right, I never know when something is right or wrong.”

TUOMAS. Herrat ovat narreja.

TIMO. Ja lapsekkaita kuin piimänaamaiset kakarat. Niinpä syövätkin, ryysyt rinnoilla, ja eivätpä—koira viekөөn!—osaa lusikkaansakaan nuolla, koska pöydästä nousevat; sen olen nähnyt omilla silmilläni suureksi ihmeekseni.

SIMEONI. Mutta peijata ja nylkeä talonpoikaa, siihen kyllä ovat miehiä. (Kivi 1870/1984: 126–127)

„Ach, bratříčku,“ řekl Juhani s úsměvem, „jinak bys mluvil, kdyby ses byl více poohlédl světem, kdybys byl býval na příklad v městě Turku jako já, když jsem tam kdysi hnal voly z panství Viertola. Tehdy jsem viděl mnoho podivného a poznal jsem, jak přepych a světská marnost mohou lidem zmásti rozum. Tu jede vůz, tam jede vůz, a v nich sedí samí blázni s kníry pod nosem, s nimi jedou dívky jako porcelánové loutky a šíří kolem sebe vůni drahých olejů a mastí. Tu zase kráčí manželka nebo kdovíjaká slečinka zlatem ověšená. Jen pohled' te na její krk, je bílý jako mléko, tváře purpurově červené a oči jí září, jako dva ohně, když ji potká pán v klobouku a v čistém černém šosatém kabátě. A což teprve tento hejsek, když na ni pohlíží čtvercovým sklíčkem, jež se mu blyští v levém oku! A pak se oba pitvoří; ona stáhne ústa jako jahodu a švitoří jako vlaštovka na střeše a onen chlapík před ní mávne kloboukem, rozhodí vysoko šosy, pohne nohou, až se dláždění odletují jiskry. Ó, vy straky, pomyslil jsem si, když jsem stál na rohu ulice a hleděl na ně.“

„Velcí páni jsou blázni,“ zabručel Tomáš.

„Jsou dětinští,“ přitakal Timo. „Při jídle si dávají šatky pod krk - a neumějí, věrte tomu, po jídle ani lžící pořádně olíznout. To jsem viděl na vlastní oči!“

„Ale sedlákovi kůži přes hlavu sedfít, v tom jsou mistři,“ zanařikal Simeon. (Svobodová 1940: 66–67)

“Oh, brother,” said Juhani with a smile, “you would talk differently if you’d seen more of the world, if for example you’d been in Turku, as I was when I took oxen there from Viertola Estate. I saw many strange things, and saw how the luxury and vanity of worldly people can confuse the mind. Here goes a carriage, there goes a carriage, with a man sitting alone with a crazy mustache under his nose, or girls like porcelain puppets spreading around them the scent of precious oils and ointments. Now there walks a wife or some ordinary slattern festooned with gold. Just look at her neck, it’s white as milk, her face purple, her eyes shining like two fires, when she meets a man in a hat and a plain black coat with tails. And take a gander at this fellow, with a square glass sparkling in his left eye! And then they both twist their faces; she puckers her mouth up like a strawberry and chirps like a swallow on the roof, and that fellow in front of her waves his hat, throws up his tails, moves his feet until the paving gives off sparks. Oh, you magpies, I thought, as I stood on the street corner and stared at them.”

“The great lords are crazy,” growled Tomáš.

“They’re childish,” agreed Timo. “While eating they put scarves under their necks— and believe it or not, after eating they don’t know how to lick a spoon. I saw it with my own eyes!”

“But at skinning a peasant they’re masters,” wailed Simeon.

Molanus-Stamperius only writes “asked Aapo”; Svobodová describes *how* the various brothers said things, Juhani “with a smile,” “Tomáš” (Svobodová’s Czech-marked pronunciation of Tuomas) “growling,” Timo “agreeing,” and—oddly—Simeoni (who becomes Simeon in her Czech) “wailing.” Here is my translation from the Finnish:

Molanus-Stamperius does not explicitate the IR as spicily as I did above, obviously: there is only the *vroeg Aapo* “asked Aapo,” along with the quotation marks indicating conventional novelistic dialogue. Note also, however, the addition of *Wat ook gij verzet er u tegen. Ook gij Aapo, gij wilt niet toegeven, gij beweert ook dat mijn voorstel niet deugt. Vooruit bepaal zelf de straf* “Whatever you protest there against you. You too, Aapo, you will not admit it, you also claim that my proposal is not good. From now on choose the punishment yourselves.” Rather than simply giving us Juhani’s repetition of *etkõ kiltaa?* “you don’t approve?”, which left us in an interpretive quandary, Molanus-Stamperius clarifies the scene in the light of his/her own interpretation/tonalization (which is not so far distant from Schaad’s). My main focus in this chapter is this question: should that not also be considered a kind of *hidden* or *implicit* IR?

We could push things even further, of course, to translation as full explicit IR; based on Impola’s interpretation/translation, fleshed out slightly with Schaad’s reading, that might look something like this:

Aapo asked for the floor, and when Juhani urged him to speak his mind, protested the proviso for punishment that Juhani wanted to set up for them, calling it too harsh and brutal to apply among brothers. At that Juhani, frustrated, asked him to suggest a wiser punishment for them, confessing that he never knew right from wrong.

This sort of explicit IR does in fact happen in interpreting, where DR is also the norm, especially in cases when DR is experienced as threatening in some significant way—for example, when a court interpreter is interpreting a witness’s accusatory DS and the defendant, who can only understand the interpreter’s reports,

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JUHANI. Blessed fig ‘s end, brother! methinks you ‘ld talk out of your mouth ‘s other side an you ‘ld of but seed a bit more of this old world, like say an you ‘ld of been to Turku Town, like I have, that time I drove bulls thence from Viertola Manor. I tell you, they ‘ve gone about as far as they can go, down there. I saw with mine own eyne how daubery and ‘dornment can set a man ‘s mazzard a-spin, yes sir. O you fardels and fantasticoes, O you clamouring city! Carriages clattering this way and that with citizens in ‘em wearing big curly moustachios, and girls like Cataian dolls, strowing their scents from them fancy greases and oils they smear all o’er theirselves. But look o’er there! Cheeses and rice! ‘Tis a merry mamzell, or a frisky frakin, or what have you, sashaying ‘long in gold feathers. And behold her throat! White as a pail of fresh milk, aye, and cheeks red as the plague, and her eyne burn in her head like a geminy of bonfires in great morning, soon ‘s she spies a layabout lace curtain of a Count Confect in a shiny black hat and tails, squinying—a pox on him!—squinying thro’ a square glass squinch’t up to his left eye there. And now lo—Siamese sailors seven!—now there ‘s bowing and scraping on both sides, as the brach puckers her lips up like a earthberry and skirls like a swallow singing off somebody ‘s sunlit roof, and the finical fop flutters his fingers and twitches his tail, daffs his hat and strikes sparks on the cobblestones with his chopines. Some sport, eh? You maggot-pies! mutter’d I, a mere boy standing there on the street corner, a load of oxhides o’er my shoulder and a big smile on my face, watching them grouses go at it.

TUOMAS. Cavaleros is chuffs.

TIMO. And childish as a kid with a buttermilk mustache. And they eat with rags round their necks, and—dog take it, I seen it my own self, to my great gloppenment—they wot not e’en how to lick a spoon when they ‘s finisht.

SIMEONI. But they ‘s man enough to cog and cony-catch a carlot. (2017b: 150–51)

directs aggression at the interpreter (see Clayman 2006). Interpreters interpreting the testimony of serial killers, rapists, child abusers, and so on may also find DR interpreting extremely traumatic—spending days, weeks, months saying “I killed,” “I raped,” “I beat,” and so on—and shift to IR interpreting (“He says he killed,” “He says he raped,” and so on) to preserve their mental health (see Baker 2006: 32 for the traumatizing effects of first-person DR interpreting in these conditions). Eva Ng (2011, 2013) and Andrew Cheung (2012) also found that court interpreters in Hong Kong refrain from interpreting legal professionals’ DS in the first person, presumably out of respect.

In translating, by contrast, this sort of “rewriting” strategy (to use Lefevere’s [1992] term) has in the modern era no longer been considered translation at all; it is a paraphrase that one would normally find instead in a critical commentary. In medieval (re)writing, however, where the norms governing translation were much more fluid, translations did often contain explicit glosses and other commentaries along with paraphrases/IRs as implicit glosses/commentaries.

The direction I want to take in all four examples here, however, is the other way: toward that middle ground between explicit DR and explicit IR that is unmarked as IR but involves some degree of “narratorial” explicitation of the text. This, I suggest, is what is normally known as “interpretive” translation: translation that demonstrably imposes an interpretation on the source text. In the Molanus-Stamperius translation, the rendition of *Vai et kiltaa? Etkö kiltaa? Etkö totisesti kiltaa? Sanoppas sitten viisaampi parakraaffi* as *Ook gij Aapo, gij wilt niet toegeven, gij beweert ook dat mijn voorstel niet deugt. Vooruit bepaal zelf de straf* “You too, Aapo, you will not admit it, you also claim that my proposal is not good. Go ahead, choose the punishment yourself” is arguably this sort of explicitated interpretation—arguably, because the explicitation there is very subtle, and might be read as a rough sense-for-sense equivalent of the Finnish original. A more obvious example would be my own translation:

AAPO. Sallitaanko minulle sananvuoro?

JUHANI. Kernaasti. Mitä mielit sanoa?

AAPO. Etten kiltaa minäkään tuota rangaistus-parakraaffia, jonka tahtoisit käytettäväksi välillemme asettaa, vaan katsonpa sen veljesten keskenä liian törkeäksi, pedolliseksi.

JUHANI. Vai et kiltaa? Etkö kiltaa? Etkö totisesti kiltaa? Sanoppas sitten viisaampi parakraaffi, koska minä en milloinkaan käsitä mikä on oikein, mikä väärin.

AAPO. Sitä en sano.

JUHANI. Sanoppas se uusi, kiilattava parakraaffi, sinä Jukolan tietäjä.

AAPO. Kaukana tietäjän arvosta. Mutta tämä . . .

JUHANI. Parakraaffi, parakraaffi!

AAPO. Tämähän on . . .

JUHANI. Parakraaffi, parakraaffi! Sanoppas se viisas parakraaffi!

AAPO. Oletko hullu? Huutelethan tuossa kuin istuisit tulisissa housuissa. Miksi kirkut ja keikuttelet päätäs kuin tarhapöllö?

JUHANI. Parakraaffi! huudan minä huikeasti. Se ihka uusi ja vanha, viisas parakraaffi! Sanoppas se, ja minä kuultelen äänetönnä kuin särki sammakon motkotusta. (Kivi *ibid.*)

AAPO. May I speak?

JUHANI. Gladly. What would you say?

AAPO. That I hold not with that punitive codicil that you would set amongst us either, but find it too severe, too brutal amongst brothers.

JUHANI. La, you *hold* not withal? You *hold* not withal? Soothly, you *hold*, you hold not, you hold not withal? Hoyday, then, give us a wiser *codicil*, Mr Aapo the Capo, King Aapo the Wise, seeing 's how I ne'er wot what 's right and what 's wrong.

AAPO. Nay, I nill say.

JUHANI. Tell us the new codicil you *do hold* withal, say us sooth, you Jukola soothsayer.

AAPO. I ain't no soothsayer, far from it. But this . . .

JUHANI. The codicil! The codicil!

AAPO. This is . . .

JUHANI. The codicil! The codicil! Tell us the wise codicil!

AAPO. Gone barmy, have you? You 're skriking like your strossers was aflame. Wherefore be you whooping and wauling and waggling your head like a woodcock?

JUHANI. The codicil! 'Tis that I 'm whooping and wauling anent. That new and old wise codicil! Say it, and I 'll sit here mum, bending a mum ear like a paddfish to the parping of a paddock. (Robinson 2017b: 141)

I provide a longer passage there to show that Kivi himself explicitates Juhani's anger in the line immediately following the shorter extract, when Juhani baits his younger brother as *sinä Jukolan tietäjä* "you Jukola soothsayer." It seems to me beyond question that Juhani is angry all through this scene, and therefore in explicitly "confessing" his ethical incompetence is actually implicating sarcastically that Aapo is accusing him of ethical incompetence. The emotional continuity that I read there seems to me unmistakably indicated by the repetition of *Sanoppas sitten viisaampi parakraaffi* "give us a wiser codicil" in Juhani's second line as *Sanoppas se uusi, kiilattava parakraaffi, sinä Jukolan tietäjä* "Tell us the new codicil you *do hold* withal, you Jukola soothsayer" in his third. The former line out of context might be read as setting up the humble confession that he doesn't know right from wrong; in this larger context it seems clear that he is not confessing anything, but attacking, accusing, attributing the challenge to his ethical probity not to his own humility but to Aapo's contempt for him. As I read the passage, irritated by Aapo's pretentious phraseology, the high-falutin' legalism of *parakraaffi* "codicil" and *killata* "hold with," Juhani explodes with sarcastic rage, mocking Aapo mercilessly for his airs, with such blindingly extreme petulance (the opposite of Impola's flat affect) that the brothers are shocked, and the reader laughs along uneasily.

What I've added to the passage in the way of (implicit) explicitation includes:

- Marked emphasis (italics) on the words that (I believe) Juhani finds offensively pretentious, namely *hold with* and *codicil*
- An expansion of the third repetition of "you hold not withal" to "Soothly, you *hold*, you hold not, you hold not withal?"
- Anticipatory insults in Juhani's second line ("Mr Aapo the Capo, King Aapo the Wise")
- An expansion of the insult in Juhani's third line (from "you Jukola soothsayer" to "say us sooth, you Jukola soothsayer")

Translation, in other words, as IR.

### Example 2: Translating Argumentative Slippage in Aristotle

Let's next shift from Finnish literature to Greek philosophy: *topos* 21 from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 2.23, where Aristotle seems to be saying that wild improbability

is what *makes* something true (followed by my literal translation, with romanized keywords in brackets):

ἄλλος ἐκ τῶν δοκούντων μὲν γίγνεσθαι ἀπίστων δέ, ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἔδοξαν, εἰ μὴ ἦν ἢ ἐγγύς ἦν. καὶ ὅτι μᾶλλον· ἢ γὰρ τὰ ὄντα ἢ τὰ εἰκότα ὑπολαμβάνουσιν· εἰ οὖν ἀπιστον καὶ μὴ εἰκός, ἀληθὲς ἂν εἴη· οὐ γὰρ διὰ γε τὸ εἰκός καὶ πιθανὸν δοκεῖ οὕτως· (3rd century BCE/1959: 2.23.22, 1400a5-8)

Another is from things that seem to happen but are incredible [*ek tōn dokountōn men gignesthai apistōn de*], because they would not have thought [*edoxan*] had they not been or nearly been [*ei mē ēn ē engus ēn*]. And even more: for [people] accept things that either are [*ta onta*] or are plausible [*ta eikota*]; if then [something is] incredible and not likely [*ei on apiston kai mē eikos*], it would be [considered] true [*alēthes an eīē*]; for not through its likelihood or believability, at least, does it seem so [*ou gar dia ge to eikos kai pithanon dokei houtōs*].

The problem this passage poses for source readers, including translators, is its cryptic vagueness. *Who* would not have thought, and *what* would they not have thought? Had *who* or *what* not been or nearly been, and *what* would they then have been or nearly been? And, at the end, does *what* not seem *how*? This seems like an argument stitched together out of proforms and elided/implied predicate complements. The three main lexical items are all about appearances: seeming, from *doxa* (“opinion”: *dokei* “it seems,” *ta dokounta* “the seemings, the way things seem,” *edoxan* “they think, it seems to them”), believing, from *pistis* (“belief”: *to pithanon* “believability,” *apistos* “unbelievable,” *ta apista* “things that are unbelievable”), and plausibility, from *eikos* (“likely, plausible”: *to eikos* “likelihood,” *ta eikota* “the plausibilities, things that seem likely”). Aristotle’s rhetorical strategy seems to be to set those three up to cancel each other out, leaving by a process of elimination the optative *possibility* of his fourth key lexical item, truth (*aletheia*). Factually speaking, there is no positive truth in the entire *topos*: his rhetorical strategy is to eliminate the way things seem, eliminate the way people think about things, eliminate the things people believe in, eliminate plausibility—and then to argue that whatever is left must be truth.

So what have Aristotle’s English translators done? They have latched onto that one remaining lexical item, truth, and made it the key to the entire passage—used it to fill in *all* the blanks Aristotle leaves. George Kennedy (1991/2007: 188) in particular builds Aristotle’s remaindered process-of-elimination truth into the scarlet thread running all through the passage:

Another is derived from things that are thought to have taken place but yet are implausible, [using the argument] that they would not seem *true* unless they were facts or close to being facts. And [one can argue] that they are all the more *true* [for that reason]; for people accept facts or probabilities as *true*; if, then, something were implausible and not probable, it would be *true*; for it is not because of probability and plausibility that it seems *true*. (emphasis added; interpolations Kennedy’s)

This is how a translator IRs a single *alēthes*, guarded though it is in Greek by the optative mood (the “might be” or the “would be considered to be”), first into a causal inevitability, then into a virtual repetition-compulsion:

- Aristotle writes *ouk an edoxan* “they would not have thought,” without specifying what they wouldn’t have thought, and Kennedy translates: “would not seem true.”
- Aristotle writes *kai hoti mallon* “and because more,” and Kennedy translates: “And [one can argue] that they are all the more true [for that reason].” Note how he leaves “true” outside his bracketed interpolations: a more honest notation would be “And [one can argue that they are all the] more [true for that reason].”
- Aristotle writes *ē gar ta onta ē ta eikota hupolambanousin* “for people accept things that either are or are likely,” and Kennedy translates: “for people accept facts or probabilities as true.” This to my mind is the most defensible of Kennedy’s IR explicitations.
- And Aristotle writes *dokei houtōs* “it seems so,” and Kennedy translates: “it seems true.”

As Aristotle constructs the *topos* it arises out of the circulation of opinions and beliefs (*ta dokounta*) through the group—and yet fails to persuade people. That is a strange kind of failure, in that the production of “seeming” (*ta dokounta*) is normally constitutive of *to pithanon* (things that seem persuasive) and *ta eikota* (things that seem plausible enough to be true). We think—it seems to us—that if something is plausible it must be based in reality: must have either actually happened (*ēn, ta onta*) or must have come so close to actually happening that it might as well have (*engus ēn, ta eikota*). And indeed this is what Aristotle is urging his students to argue in court, or in any other rhetorical situation, should the need arise: what most likely happened almost certainly did happen. But then we get to the most problematic line in the passage: Aristotle suggests that his students should argue, apparently eristically, that what is *least* likely to be true is in fact *most* likely to be true. He doesn’t quite say this, in fact; he tries to drive a wedge between what is considered *likely* to be true and what *seems* true, by associating the former with persuasivity and the latter with *ta onta* “what is”—but this is such a problematic move philosophically that we tend to assume that this must just be cynical advice for rhetors. The scenario Aristotle is imagining is one in which there is an incredibly unlikely event in the past that the rhetor wants or needs to claim actually happened; to that end the rhetor should invoke its very improbability (unlikelihood, incredibility) as an argument in favor of the story’s accuracy, its truthiness. In the classic gloss from E. M. Cope (1877: 2.285–86), the argument for the account’s veracity is built not on its improbability alone but on the combination of its unbelievability (*ta apista*) and the fact that people have believed it (*ta dokounta*)—since people only tend to believe what is either probable or actually true.<sup>4</sup> If it’s not probable, and yet they believed it, it must really have happened. If

<sup>4</sup>Here is the actual gloss Cope (1877: 2.285–86) offers:

The object of this topic is (says Brandis, u. s., p. 20) to weaken the force of arguments from probability. “In incredibilibus provocatur ad effectum, qui si conspicuus sit, resisti non potest quin, quod incredibile videbatur, iam probabile quoque esse fateamur.” Schrader.

‘Another (class of arguments) is derived from things which are believed to come to pass (*gignesthai*, actually to take place or happen) but (still) are beyond (ordinary) belief, (you



it had been made-up, its sheer incredibility would have made people disbelieve it; since people did believe it, they must have had sufficient evidence to overcome their sense of its improbability. To the extent that we take this to be a cynical rhetorical strategy that Aristotle is urging on his students, I suppose it's plausible enough—plausible in its very implausibility, of course, making it an excellent example of the *topos* it's glossing—to work on a jury; but at the very least we should not build this into evidence for any epistemological optimism on Aristotle's part. He is *not* saying here that the truth will out, even in situations that seem stacked against it. Even if we accept Cope's reading, all he is saying is that a jury might fall for such an argument.

But Cope is on very shaky ground, it seems to me. The big pitfall he's treading carefully around is that he needs simultaneously to subjectify and to objectify belief: to suggest that believing is about how things *seem to us subjectively*, so that this *topos* is all about manipulating an audience, and at the same time to suggest that “the true” and “the probable” are *stable objective categories of being* that can be neatly and exclusively juxtaposed in a disjunctive binary. “All belief is directed to the true or the probable,” he writes: “there is no other alternative. All that is believed—and *this* is believed—must therefore be either true or probable: this is not probable; therefore it must be true” (ibid.). As soon as we recognize that “the probable” is something that some group of people *believes* to be probable, and add that—as Cope too points out—“the true” is in fact described by Aristotle as the *ἐν ἑ ἐγγυς ἐν*, “what is or nearly is,” so that “any case of very close analogy, for

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argue, namely) that they would not have been believed at all, had they not actually been or nearly so’: i. e. either *been* in existence, or come so near to it, made so near an approach to it, as to enable us by a slight stretch of imagination to realize it so as to be convinced of its existence. Any case of very close analogy, for instance, to the thing in question might produce this conviction. *ἐγγυς* is a saving clause; ‘fact or nearly so’. Rhetorical argument does not aim at absolute truth and certainty: it is content with a near approach to it within the sphere of the probable, which is enough for complete persuasion.

‘Nay even more’, (we may further argue that these at first sight incredible things are even more likely to be true than those that are at first sight probable. Supply *dokounta esti* for the constr. and (*mallon*) *alēthes* or *onta esti tōn eikotōn kai pūthanōn* for the sense): ‘because men believe in (suppose, assume the existence of,) things either actual, real or probable: if then it (the thing in question) be incredible and not probable, it must be true; because its probability and plausibility are not the ground of our belief in it’. The argument of the last clause is an exemplification of Topic IX, § 10, *supra*, see note there. It is an inference *ek diareseōs*, ‘from division’; a *disjunctive judgment*. All belief is directed to the true or the probable: there is no other alternative. All that is believed—and *this* is believed—must therefore be either true or probable: this is not probable; therefore it must be true. *alēthes more antiquae philosophiae* identifies truth and being: *alēthes* here = *on*.

In other words, the antecedent improbability of anything may furnish a still stronger argument for its reality than its probability. Anything absolutely incredible is denied at once, unless there be some unusually strong evidence of its being a *fact*, however paradoxical. That the belief of it is actually entertained is the strongest proof that it is a fact: for since no one would have supposed it to be true without the strongest evidence, the evidence of it, of whatever kind, must be unusually strong. The instance given is an exemplification of the topic in its first and simplest form.

instance, to the thing in question might produce this conviction” (ibid.), the rigid binary disjunction Cope sketches between “the true” and “the probable” breaks down entirely. It’s all belief. It’s all *ta dokounta*, the circulation of beliefs through a group so that they become *seemings*. *ta dokounta*, *ta eikota*, and *to pithanon* are all collective constructs, all things believed by the group, so that any split between *ta dokounta* (the way things seem) on the one hand and *ta eikota* (what is believed to be truly enough that it may as well be true) and *to pithanon* (what people are persuaded by) on the other is really just a rift in *ta dokounta*, in the *seemings*. More precisely, it is a rift between what the *current* audience believes, i.e., *ta eikota* and *to pithanon*, and what the rhetor can claim many people *not* currently present have believed, i.e., *ta dokounta*. Aristotle is advising, then, that the rhetor use a rhetorical construction of *ta dokounta* to leverage *ta eikota* (make the story sound probable) and *to pithanon* (and thereby persuade the current audience). The *topos* would be to turn the current audience’s incredulity at an implausible story against them by invoking an imaginary audience from the past or from another place who faced the same implausibility but believed anyway. There is, in other words, no ontological rift between *what is* and *what is plausible/persuasive*; there is only a rhetorical one, in this particular *topos*. The rhetor can *seem* to create a rift between them by associating *what is* with *what seems true*, and distinguishing that odd pairing from *what seems likely* and *what is persuasive*—even though *what seems true* is in fact indistinguishable from *what seems likely*, and the attempt to persuade by making the unpersuasive seem *ipso facto* true (and therefore persuasive) would appear to be a rhetorical non-starter.

This “cynical” or “opportunistic” reading makes good philosophical sense—though it is not a sense that Cope and his Platonizing followers are willing to embrace. But my reading would still not explain the *dokei houtōs* (seems so) that ends the passage. To the extent that we take Aristotle to be making a purely cynical and opportunistic argument for his students’ manipulative use in the courts and the assembly, that argument has nothing to do with epistemology; but his last line makes a clear if incoherent epistemological claim: *ou gar dia ge to eikos kai pithanon dokei houtōs* “for not through its likelihood or believability, at least, does it seem so.” That is just silly: of course things *seem* true to us if they are *likely* or *believable*. It is precisely through a story’s likelihood (*to eikos*) or believability (*to pithanon*) that it seems “so.” I would suggest that Aristotle initially wrote *ou gar dia ge to eikos kai pithanon estin toiouton* “for not through its likelihood or believability, at least, *is it so*”—an atavistic Platonism that would isolate Truth from the marketplace of ideas that makes things *seem* true—and then, realizing that he didn’t quite believe that, that he was gravitating toward a doxotic epistemology in which *doxa* “opinion” and *ta dokounta* “the *seemings*” do indeed make things seem true, he crossed out those last two words and wrote *dokei houtōs* “seem so” in their place. That seems superficially to move him away from Plato toward a doxotic epistemology—*dokei* = *doxa*—but in fact it leaves him mired still in Platonism, now only in a logically incoherent way.<sup>5</sup> I would argue that Aristotle is in process

<sup>5</sup>The confusion may in fact stem from the negation. The standard Platonic position would be that things *are* or *are not* a certain way, regardless of how likely or believable they seem, and Aristotle

with his rethinking of Plato on *doxa*. He is still moving toward a full formulation (entelechial actualization) of a doxotic truth.

Philosophically, in other words—argumentatively—the *topos* is a mess. Aristotle's DS is conflicted and confused. But does Kennedy *report* that confusion directly in his translation? Does he adhere to the DR norm? No, he does not. He imposes an artificial order on the *topos*—most likely one he borrowed mostly from Cope, and the later translators and commentators who followed Cope. He fills in the gaps Aristotle left in his argument, patches up the slips, renders the whole thing coherent—and in so doing, as if coincidentally, restores it to the Platonism that Aristotle mostly challenges in the *Rhetoric*. His translation is implicit IR.

Aristotle, after all, is a great philosopher. There is no possible world in which his DS might be read as confused or incoherent. If his DS *seems* incoherent, we must simply be misreading it. This creates a mandate to read it “correctly,” which to say, plausibly, according to the Western canon of philosophical plausibility (*to eikos*), namely, through the imposition of a clear and stable binary distinction between truth and falsehood, or between truth and the mere appearance of truth. That canon, established by Aristotle's teacher Plato, is precisely what Aristotle is attempting to interrogate; the fact that his interrogation of dogmatic Platonism partially fails here—goes only halfway, leaving an awkward anomaly in his argument—is an unfortunate deviation from *ta eikota* “the plausibilities” that must be smoothed out, smoothed over, ultimately swept under the carpet. Given a choice between an Aristotle who is just plain confused and an Aristotle who is conveying a fairly standard Platonism in a slightly odd way, the translator—or canonical interpreter like Cope—must believe in the latter, as the most ideologically plausible one. In our terms here, the translator is imposing a hegemonic IR on a problematic DS.

### Example 3: Translating Grammatical Gender in Friedrich Schleiermacher

My next example also comes from philosophical discourse, this time the address Friedrich Schleiermacher (1813/2002: 72: 6–10) delivered to the Royal Academy in

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seems to take that as his epistemological starting point, and then merely to present it in the negative: “it's not how a thing seems that makes it what it is,” or “the likelihood or believability of a thing is not what makes it what it is,” etc. In the Platonic epistemology, seeming (*ta dokounta*), plausibility (*ta eikota*), and believability (*to pithanon*) are all equally and interrelatedly irrelevant to the being of a thing (*ta onta*). But this negative formulation begs the positive question of what does make a thing what it is—and this is where Aristotle falls down. The fact is, he doesn't seem to know—here in *Rhetoric* 2.23.22, in any case. His argumentation in the *Rhetoric* seems to be pushing him toward a positive answer, namely that seeming (*ta dokounta*), plausibility (*ta eikota*), and believability (*to pithanon*) *do indeed* make things true; but that seems like too radical a departure from a conservative Platonic epistemology, so he takes a hesitant step in that direction, still in the negative: *ou gar dia ge to eikos kai pithanon dokei houtōs* “for not through its likelihood or believability, at least, does it seem so.” My guess is that the negative seems safe, because it isn't propounding a radical positivity—but this isn't the *right* negative, for either philosophical safety or philosophical coherence. I think he's actually looking for something more along the lines of “for we don't disprove a claim just by invoking its implausibility or unbelievability.” By inattentively revising this negative statement of the Platonic epistemology, Aristotle effectively protects his confusion from his own philosophical inquiry, and so unwittingly renders his argument incoherent.

Berlin on the different methods of translating, followed by André Lefevere's (1977: 72) English translation:

Man versteht die Rede auch als Handlung des Redenden nur, wenn man zugleich fühlt, wo und wie die Gewalt der Sprache ihn ergriffen hat, wo an ihrer Leitung die Blitze der Gedanken sich hingeschlingelt haben, wo und wie in ihren Formen die umherschweifende Fantasie ist festgehalten worden.

We understand the spoken word as an act of the speaker only when we feel at the same time where and how the power of language has taken hold of him, where in its current the lightning of thought has uncoiled, snake-like, where and how the roving imagination has been held firm in its forms.

There are some obvious problems in Lefevere's translation—

- the awkward, arrhythmic, unidiomatic phrasings, like “has uncoiled, snake-like” for the sinuously poetic *hingeschlingelt haben* (lit. “have snaked hither”) and “roving imagination” for *umherschweifende Fantasie* (“errant imagination”: our eyes rove in English)
- the mixed metaphors, like “in its current” for *an ihrer Leitung* (lit. “by its conductance”): we have electric currents, but the interiority of “in its current” can refer only to water, not electricity

—but what I would like to suggest is that Lefevere's most significant failing in that passage is also his strictest adherence to the DR norm, namely his entirely idiomatic replacement of German grammatical gender with impersonal English “it” and “its.” This may seem like a wildly unfair accusation—in what professional translation marketplace does anyone translate *ihre Formen* as “her forms,” when the possessive pronoun's antecedent is not a person but language?—but in fact grammatical gender performs an important signaling function in the passage. It reminds us, it keeps reminding us, that it is *language* that is doing the grabbing, guiding, and holding firm. Since *die Sprache* “language” is a feminine noun—and so for that matter is *die Gewalt* “the power” in *die Gewalt der Sprache*—*ihre Leitung* “her current” and *ihre Formen* “her forms” keep referring us back to (the power of) language; without impersonal gendered pronouns, Lefevere's translation is unable to deliver the source text's reminders:

[1] wo und wie *die Gewalt der Sprache* ihn ergriffen hat

where and how *the* power of language has taken hold of him

[2] wo an *ihrer Leitung* die Blitze der Gedanken sich hingeschlingelt haben

where in *its* current the lightning of thought has uncoiled, snake-like

[3] wo und wie in *ihren* Formen die umherschweifende Fantasie ist festgehalten worden

where and how the roving imagination has been held firm in *its* forms

Of course not even the radical literalism of “her” could have signaled to the target reader that the antecedent of the grammatically feminine *ih*r is *die Sprache* “language”—English doesn't work the same way as German. I am not saying, in other words, that Lefevere should have given us “her conductance” or “her forms.” More radically still, I am also not saying that the signaling function of the gendered impersonal pronouns is an *essential* element of Schleiermacher's DS. An attentive reader should be able to figure out what “it” refers to. I'm just saying that it is *harder* to track the impersonal pronouns' antecedents without the signaling

function performed by grammatical gender. I'm talking about a certain reading phenomenology. I'm saying that an inattentive reader is *likelier* to get it wrong.

As a result, strikingly, in his early commentary on this passage Venuti (1991: 42) gets Schleiermacher exactly backwards:

The metaphors—"lightning," "snake-like," "roving"—continue the individualistic strain by depicting the subject as a coherent essence, radically independent of language, given to serpentine, potentially subversive "thought," possessing a free "imagination" that takes on various accidental "forms."

Clearly, there, Venuti is lost. He thinks that when the lightning of thought snakes down on language's current, it is "radically independent of language." He thinks that when the errant imagination has been seized and held firm by linguistic forms, Schleiermacher is at once Romanticizing the imagination as "free" (rather than held fast by language) and attributing to it "accidental 'forms.'" Not only have the linguistic forms that Schleiermacher actually assigns the task of grabbing and holding the imagination suddenly become the forms of this "free 'imagination'"; they have become "accidental" as well.

My own published translation of Schleiermacher's DS, I suggest, in its explicitation of the role played by language in conducting the lightning bolts of thought and seizing and holding the imagination, is again implicit IR:

One cannot understand the utterance as an action performed by the speaker unless one has an attendant gut sense of just how and where the power of language has laid hands upon that speaker, where, conducted by language, the lightning bolts of thought have snaked down, how and where the linguistic forms have seized and held the errant imagination. (Robinson 2013: 48)

#### **Example 4:** Translating Prosody in Volter Kilpi

In the pattern I've established through the first three examples, there is a source text that has been translated problematically in accordance with the DR norm, and a critical response that illustrates the problems in the application of that norm by misreading the text. In my fourth and final example, a return from Greek and German philosophy to Finnish literature, I will have to break that pattern, or else simulate it somehow, because the source text in question—the great modernist novel *Alastalon salissa* ("In the Alastalo Parlor," 1933/2015) by Volter Kilpi (1874–1939)—has never been translated into English, and indeed has only once been translated into any other language at all, into Swedish by the Finland-Swedish writer and translator Thomas Warburton (1997) as *I salen på Alastalo*. A handful of Finnish scholars recognized its greatness between its publication in the thirties and its canonization in the late eighties or early nineties; but its delayed canonization has meant that the rest of the world has been slow to catch up, and has not yet begun to essay translations. It is also, as we'll see, an extraordinarily difficult novel to translate, due to its radical experimentation with narrative voice and mode.

Here then is the Finnish DS with which we will be working, from a few pages into the first chapter:

Pukkila sieppasi reiviä juttuun. «Kaikettkin, kaikettkin!» pani hän ja pakisi partaansa. Ei suinkaan teertä ennen ammuta kuin hollilta ja porstuassakos hän räiskyttäisi tyhjiille seinille sen, mikä vasta salissa kärventäisi Alastalon leukakarvoja, kun makean on todistamassa tusina persoa korvaparia yht' ympärillä! Vielä rantamäkeä ylösastuessaan oli hän sanonut Evaldille, pojalleen: «raketakoot, parkin-parkin, minun puolestani parkin-parkin, mutta kyllä minä suolaan-suolaan, suolaan-suolaan! Alastalolla ovat isoset korvalehdet, kuninkaalliset korvalehdet, haavit korvalehdiksi, päätetään vähän sanahyttystä hurisemaan niihin: niihin mahtuu! Langholmakin luovii vasta Kaaskerin takana, niin on aikaa täällä kutitella hammasta! Palvataan-palvataan äijää, niin laihuu vähän liika lihavuudestansakin! Poski kukaties on päästelevinään naurun mehevää ja ryntäät hytkyvinään hyvää tuulta, mutta kerran pari, kerran pari ja montakin kertaa on harmistunut peukalo äkäisesti tuhraseva sieraimen laveata sisäpieltä, kun Pukkilan sanaväkä pistää ihran lävitse mielen ihoon ja kaikilta neljältä seinäviereltä holottaa korviin hällisevään miesten leukava nauru! En minä ole pieni, enkä minä ole isonen, minä olen Pukkila, minä, ja Pukkilan kieltenpalanen on minun suussani! Älä sinä naura, Evald, en minäkään naura, kun minulta pääsee piru parrasta, mutta katsele, kun muut nauravat, Evald, sillä lailla minäkin katselen!» oli hän vielä neuvonut poikaansa, kun he jo pyyhkivät jalkojaan kuistinedustan tuuheaan havutukkuun. - «Kaikettkin-kaikettkin!» jupisi siis Pukkila vain omia sanojaan Alastalon hännäämisiin. «Kanitti-kanitti tuulikin-tuulikin vastaan-vastaan Kivivedellä-Kivivedellä!» puheli hän puheenväliä katkaistakseen ja kieltänsä lipeällä pitääkseen, jott'ei toinen pääsisi enempää karvasta tiputtamaan korvaan: silmät vahtasivat jo Alastalon olan ylitse tampuurin lävitse saliin. Ahaa! (Kilpi *ibid.*: 23–24)

And now, since no one has made my job easier by attempting to impose the DR norm on this, I'll have to do it myself:

Pukkila girded his loins for the event. “Perhaps, perhaps,” he said into his beard. You don’t shoot grouse from a distance: surely he shouldn’t scatter-shot against empty walls the thing that would singe the hairs on Alastalo’s chin, with a dozen greedy pairs of ears witnessing the sweetness all around! While still walking up the hill from the beach he had said to Evald, his son: “let them build it, the barque, the barque, as far as I’m concerned, the barque, the barque, but I’m still going to rub salt into them, salt, salt! Alastalo has those big ear flaps, royal ear flaps, landing nets for ear flaps, let’s send a little word-mosquito buzzing into them: there’s plenty room in them! Langholma’s still tacking behind Kaaskeri, we have time to tickle the tooth here! Let’s smoke the old man, smoke him but good, so he’ll trim some of those extra kilos of his! His cheek may just let loose with affected hearty laughter, and you’ll rush in splitting your sides with good humor, but once or twice, once or twice I say, even many times will a vexed thumb smudge the inside wall of a broad nostril when Pukkila’s word-barb pierces through the lard into the mind’s skin and off all four walls resounds the chattering men’s hearty laughter! I’m not little and I’m not big, I’m Pukkila, I am, and I have Pukkila’s tongue in my mouth! Don’t you laugh, Evald, I won’t be laughing either, Evald, when I loose the devil from my beard, but watch as the others laugh, Evald, that’s how I will be laughing too!” was how he had still been advising his son as they were already wiping their boots on the dense evergreen branch in front of the porch. So “Perhaps, perhaps!” Pukkila muttered, repeating his own words for the baiting of Alastalo. “The wind-wind pawned-pawned back-back on Kivivesi-Kivivesi!” he said just to cut the talk short and keep his tongue limber, so the other man would not have a chance to drop bitterness into his ear: his eyes watched over Alastalo’s shoulder through the hall into the parlor. Aha!

The entire novel, which Kilpi himself compared with Proust and Joyce, is set in a six-hour period in the 1860s in the parlor of Herman Mattsson, the owner of Alastalo (the name of his farm/house), who was apparently based on Kilpi’s father’s step-father David Jansson (1821–1883), a ship-owner in Kustavi. The main characters

in the novel are the county's richest landowners, whom Mattsson has invited to Alastalo to discuss investing in the building of a barque. Just as Mattsson is referred to by the name of his farm/house, Alastalo, so too is Petter Filemon Pihlman—who has sailed in with his son Evald through a wide waterway perhaps 15 km to the north of Kivimaa Island (where Alastalo is located) called Kivivesi, still part of Kustavi County—referred to as Pukkila. Efram Eframsson—the richest landowner of the bunch, who in the passage above is imagined as still tacking behind Kaaskeri, a small island in the Turku archipelago that is likewise in Kustavi County but is about 10 km northwest of Alastalo—is referred to by his farm's name as Langholma. Mikkel Mikkelsson is referred to as Krookla; Malakias Afrodite as Härkäniemi; Taavetti Taavetinpoika as Lahdenperä, and so on. Other characters include Pukkila's legitimate son Evald and illegitimate son Janne, and Alastalo's wife and daughter Eevastiina and Siviä, the latter of whom Pukkila would like Evald to marry (but who has a little something going with Janne).

What makes the novel interesting for our purposes here is that Kilpi plays constantly with narratorial voice, with absolutely minimal clues as to whose voice is talking and whether that talking is out loud or interior monologue. In the passage I have selected and DR-translated above, Pukkila is what Gérard Genette (1972/1983: 185–210) would call the “focalized” character—but who is what he calls the “narrating instance”? In my DR translation the narrating instance would appear to be external to the action, what is traditionally called an “omniscient” narrator (and what Genette calls a “heterodiegetic” narrator): “Pukkila girded his loins for the event. ‘Perhaps, perhaps,’ he said into his beard,” for example, is clearly the voice of an external narrator providing mostly IR and only briefly dipping into DR with “Perhaps, perhaps.” The next sentence, “You don’t shoot grouse from a distance: surely he shouldn’t scatter-shot against empty walls the thing that would singe the hairs on Alastalo’s chin, with a dozen greedy pairs of ears witnessing the sweetness all around!”, would appear to bring that external narrator into closer contact with Pukkila’s thoughts and intentions—what is traditionally called a “close third-person narration,” or what Genette (*ibid.*: 189–194) calls “internal focalization,” pioneered for proto-modernist fiction by Henry James. As Genette (*ibid.*: 168) puts it:

We know that for post-Jamesian partisans of the mimetic novel (and for James himself), the best narrative form is what Norman Friedman calls “the story told as if by a character in the story, but told in the third person” (a clumsy formula that evidently refers to a focalized narrative, told by a narrator who is not one of the characters but who adopts the point of view of one).

“Mimetic” is Plato’s term for narrative DR. Full explicit IR for Plato is “diegesis,” in which “the poet ‘himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking’” (Genette *ibid.*: 162), or what Plato calls “pure narrative”; “mimesis” is the representation of “direct speech in the manner of drama” (*ibid.*: 163). As Genette shows at length, things are rather more complex than that.

In the next line, “While still walking up the hill from the beach he had said to Evald, his son,” the narrator seems to have retreated some distance from Pukkila’s

consciousness again, and reports what he said to Evald directly, as if inviting us to eavesdrop on their conversation from a conventionalized imaginary vantage point at which we cannot be seen or heard by the characters in the story—and that mode seems to continue to the end of the passage. Genette (*ibid.*: 189) would call this “variable internal focalization”—the narrative instance drifting in and out of a character’s consciousness.

What my DR translation obscures, however, is the sneaky literary work Kilpi does to undermine such clear-cut distinctions between internal and external narrative perspectives and voices. In my section heading I suggest that the channel through which he does this work is prosody, and mostly it is, but a more exact (if less elegant) description of that channel might have been “prosodic and other stylistic features.” For example, in the first line of the extract, the Finnish for what I DR’d as “Pukkila girded his loins for the event” was *Pukkila sieppasi reiviä juttuun*, literally “Pukkila seized a reef into the story/event/thing”—“reef” in the nautical sense of trimming a sail in preparation for heavy weather, to prevent capsizing or broaching. The narrator, in other words, uses a nautical metaphor—suggesting that he or she might very well be one of the characters (shipbuilders all). The DR translation forecloses that interpretive option, by rendering the “meaning of the sentence” without worrying about its poetic elements—indeed choosing a more conventional (Biblical) but no longer nautical metaphor for the same preparatory action, “girded his loins.” In addition to nautical metaphors, the specifically prosodic elements elided in the DR translation are mostly alliterations in the seemingly “external” or “omniscient” narrator’s voice: “pani hän ja pakisi partaansa” (PxxPP, which in the DR translation becomes “he said into his beard”) and “puheli hän puheenväliä katkaistakseen ja kieltänsä lipeällä pitääkseen” (PxPKxKxP, which the DR translation gives as “he said just to cut the talk short and keep his tongue limber”). Who is this narrator, and why is he drawing so much attention to the poetic qualities of his own narrative voice? This is anybody’s guess, in fact; my reading is that it is Pukkila himself, that the apparent continuity from the “narrator’s” heightened prose to the “character’s” heightened prose signals a shifting focalization of the same character’s voice. Based on that interpretation—which, let me emphasize, I am *not* presenting as the “true” or “correct” understanding of the passage—I would prefer to IR-translate the passage like this:

Pukkila reefed his small-talk sails. “Belike, belike!” bearded he and babbled in his beard. You certes don’t gun grouse ‘cept from a goodly gap, and was he going to stand there on the veranda blasting all over the empty walls the charge that’d singe the hairs on Alastalo’s chin, but not till they were in the parlor, where a dozen greedy pairs of ears all ‘bout could savor the sweetness? As they’d trudged up the hill from the beach he’d said to Evald, his son: “let ‘em build that barque-barque, far’s I’m concerned barque-barque! but me I’ll salt-salt, salt-salt. Alastalo’s got them prodigious ear flaps, right royal ear flaps, lavish landing nets for ears, let’s loose us a little word-skeeter into ‘em, heigh? They got room! Langholma, now, he’s still tacking on the back side of Kaaskeri, we got time to tickle the tooth! Let’s smoke-smoke the moke, so he’ll drop some of that pudge he’s packing! Who knows but what ol’ Mr. Cheek’ll chivvy-chortle hearty and jump in jiggling with matey mood, but once or twice, once or twice now, even scads of times maybe will a aggravated thumb angrily smudge the inside of a wide nostril when Pukkila’s word-barb thrusts through the



lard into the mind's skin and off all four walls boom the chatterers' chinny chuckles! I ain't little and I ain't big, me, I'm Pukkila, and it's Pukkila's squiggly tongue I got in my mouth! Don't laugh, Evald, I ain't laughing when the barbason bolts out of my beard, but see here, while the others laugh, Evald, that's how I goggle 'em!" was how he'd advised his son whenas they was already wiping their feet on the big brushy evergreen branch out in front of the porch. So "belike-belike!" pattered Pukkila, just jawing his own jabs at Alastalo. "Persnickety-rickety wind-went backety, Kivivesi-vesklivity!" burred he but to breach the bunkum battlements and to train his tongue twisty<sup>6</sup>, and so to block more bitter bubbles from bombarding his ear, his eye peering already over Alastalo's shoulder through the hall into the parlor. Aha!

There, it seems to me, "Pukkila reefed his small-talk sails" hints that this is Pukkila speaking of himself in the dissociated third person. He does this from time to time, in fact, and indeed in his (ostensible) exterior monologue to his son Evald on the walk up the hill he does it again: "when Pukkila's word-barb thrusts through the lard." Pukkila's first *pakistut* "muttered" words (I make that "babbled" for the alliteration), "'Belike, belike!'," are voiced in response to Alastalo, but the muttering would seem to suggest a withdrawal from exterior dialogue into interior monologue; and the (third-person?) narrator's highly stylized (alliterative, rhythmic, syntactically inverted) speech attribution that follows—*pani hän ja pakisi partaansa* "beadled he and babbled in his beard"—strikes me as Kilpi's first strong incursion into overtly double-voiced discourse. This is explicitly marked as IR, of course, the alliteration marking it as so-called free IR, focalized on Pukkila's tonally exaggerated, exaggeratedly heightened verbal consciousness; in my reading it is Pukkila himself projecting his own voice as the focalizing narrator, working against the grain, as it were, an inversion of the standard novelistic convention in which the external narrator moves into the character's consciousness: here, I suggest, Pukkila sends his own voice outwards. The modernist double-voicing continues in the sentence beginning "You certes don't gun grouse 'cept from a goodly gap," and when the shifty narrator launches into the showy/shaky/braggy/tickey monologue that Pukkila supposedly delivers exteriorly to his son Evald but sounds much more like a modernist interior monologue, I at least begin to suspect that he isn't actually talking to Evald at all but to himself, inside his head, and to us, inside the novel. So sneaky is Kilpi here (as indeed everywhere), however, that in the end it is impossible to split the monologue into clearly differentiated interpretive options, as *either* interior or exterior monologue. It's both—and possibly even neither. The more Pukkila's first-person narration seems to depersonalize into omniscient third-person narration, the showier and ticcier and scattier it becomes, "'Persnickety-rickety wind-went backety, Kivivesi-vesklivity!' burred he but to breach the bunkum battlements and

<sup>6</sup>Note that the Finnish for what I translate as "train his tongue twisty" is *kieltänsä lipeällä pitääkseen*, with what I take to be a pivotal pun on the middle word: *lipeä* is lye, a caustic (sodium hydroxide), and Pukkila is a caustic character who would certainly want to "keep his tongue on lye" (a literal translation of *kieltänsä lipeällä pitääkseen*); but *lipeä* is also used colloquially as a synonym for *lipevä*, "smooth, glib," and a glib tongue is an excellent way to conceal a caustic speaker's true intentions. "Twisty" is my IR attempt to capture that pun, connoting both "limber" and "twisted"; the DR translation takes sides, opting for "limber."

to train his tongue twisty, and so to block more bitter bubbles from bombarding his ear . . .” The intense and almost insane alliterations, the stuttery spluttery repetitions like the cross-chop against the bow on an upwind tack, the archaic Finnish and southwestern dialect (which in places Kilpi is inventing to suit his own needs), the clever nautical metaphors, the grunting and gasping of Pukkila’s animal fears and petty iagoisms, the ubiquitous Romantic irony (in Schlegel’s sense)—all this is funny, and disturbing, and exuberant, and above all it smashes through the conventional bounds of “major” premodern writing.

Let me reiterate that what I am offering here is *not* an accurate report of what is going on in the passage. It is an interpretation. My IR translation based on that interpretation is *tendentious*. It offers enhanced but still implicit guidance to the target reader—and the guidance is interested, biased, skewed if you like, toward my interpretation. My belief is that the “prosodic and other stylistic features” that my interpretation/IR translation takes to be important signals of narrative voice and mode can just as easily and plausibly be interpreted as having no signaling function at all. They could be pure decoration . . . just for fun . . . entirely accidental. They could have no bearing on the narration at all. My DR translation proceeds out of some such interpretation, and it is not necessarily wrong.

Note also, however, that in imposing an interpretation on the passage my DR translation also implicitly—indeed surreptitiously, subtextually—IRs it. The DR translation too adds an interpretive voice of guidance to the text—the voice, perhaps, of premodern fictional narration, or at most Jamesian proto-modern “mimetic” fictional narration.

## 1 Conclusion

In Examples 1, 3, and 4 I offered first a DR translation that I personally believe to be “worse” and then an IR translation that I believe to be “better”; in Example 2 I offered only a literal translation followed by an IR translation that I believe to be imposing a false Platonism on Aristotle’s text. The first lesson we should *not* take away from this, therefore, is that there is some kind of value hierarchy between DR and IR approaches to translation—that, say, an “interpretive” or “activist” IR approach is intrinsically better than a “neutral” DR approach (in opposition to the traditional view that the “neutral” DR approach is normative).

The second lesson we should not take away from it is that an IR approach to translation is only acceptable if one agrees with the interpretation it promotes—though, well, as I suggested in Robinson (2011), that kind of bias is probably unavoidable in practice.

And now for some positive lessons. The first would be Genette’s insight (which anticipates the IR researchers’ conclusions broached earlier) that DR is an illusion:

From our own strictly analytic point of view it must be added (as Booth’s discussion, moreover, reveals in passing) that the very idea of *showing*, like that of imitation or narrative representation (and even more so, because of its naively visual character), is completely

illusory: in contrast to dramatic representation, no narrative can “show” or “imitate” the story it tells. All it can do is tell it in a manner which is detailed, precise, “alive,” and in that way give more or less the *illusion of mimesis*—which is the only narrative mimesis, for this single and sufficient reason: that narration, oral or written, is a fact of language, and language signifies without imitating. (Genette 1972/1983: 163–164)

By the same token, no report of another’s speech, no matter how accurately and verbatim it strives to represent the other’s speech, actually reproduces it. As several of the authors in Capone, Fiefer, and Piparo (2016) stressed, every report is a new speech act, which creates its own speech context to serve its own rhetorical purposes. Just as DR and IR are different *types* of speech acts—or, as Bakhtin would put that, just as “neutral” objectification, stylization, and parody are different types of double-voicing—so too do both DR translation and IR translation stage or perform the target text differently, for different purposes, and so add different voices to the source text.

The second positive lesson begins with my insistence that my readings of the four example texts are my interpretations, not the “truth,” and takes on compound complexity through my suggestion in the discussion of Example 2 that George Kennedy’s truth-oriented translation (which rests on a long commentarial/translational tradition going back at least to Cope in 1877) is organized and driven by an ideological mandate to “protect” Aristotle’s status as a great philosopher. The key question to ask about that history is whether I am suggesting that Aristotle’s commentators and translators are somehow enslaved by ideological traditions, and that I alone among them am “a coherent essence, radically independent of language, given to serpentine, potentially subversive ‘thought,’ possessing a free ‘imagination’ that takes on various accidental ‘forms’.” My answer to that question would be: *not at all*. Like Schleiermacher—especially Schleiermacher the socioecological thinker, as I read him in Robinson (2013)—I too am interested in “just how and where the power of language has laid hands upon that speaker, where, conducted by language, the lightning bolts of thought have snaked down, how and where the linguistic forms have seized and held the errant imagination.” In particular I am interested in how the power of language is organized by what Aristotle calls *ta eikota* “the plausibilities”—a concept that I have Latinized as “icoses,”<sup>7</sup> and defined as socioaffective ecologies that “plausibilize” group-normative opinions as realities, truths, identities. My readings of Examples 1, 3, and 4 are conditioned by a post-Romantic/modernist icosis that spurns the scientizing Enlightenment icosis that has normativized DR as the only “neutral” and therefore “objective” (and therefore acceptable) mode of translation. As in the Romantic hermeneutic that Schleiermacher borrowed from Herder, I *fühle mich hinein* “feel my way in,”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>For my theorization of icosis, see Robinson (2013, 2015, 2016a, and 2016b).

<sup>8</sup>For the “feeling one’s way into” passage, see Herder (1774/1967: 37):

*Ganze Natur* der Seele, die durch Alles *herrscht*, die alle übrige Neigungen und Seelenkräfte *nach sich modelt*, noch auch die gleichgültigsten Handlungen *färbet*—um diese mitzufühlen, antworte nicht aus dem Worte, sondern gehe in das Zeitalter, in die Himmels-

groping my way affectively into a complex sense of the conflicts and tensions in the four examples, and seeking to guide my reader too to as much of that affective complexity as I possibly can, in my translations and commentaries. The reason I spurn George Kennedy's truth-IR in his translation of Aristotle's *topos* 21 is that it too is driven by the Platonizing Enlightenment icosis, and is therefore—from the standpoint of my post-Romantic icosis—insufficiently attuned to the anti-Platonic complexities that I take Aristotle to have been attempting (and in this one spot failing) to articulate. (In an important sense the theory of icosis is my post-Kantian/post-Romantic attempt to solve the problem Aristotle left in his text: in it *ta eikota* “icosis” becomes a social-constructivist version of Kant's *Verständnis* “understanding,” which organizes sense-data in accordance with its a priori schemata and infuses those schemata with the feeling of “reality.”) I take sides on these matters, in other words, not because I am right and anyone who disagrees with me is wrong, but because different intellectual and artistic traditions have “icotized” or “plausibilized” texts in different ways. In the post-Kantian world of icotic theory, we live in different “realities,” and in the “reality” organized and plausibilized (“icotized”) by post-Romantic thought and art the side I take seems like the “natural” or “human” side to take—but I am also aware that there are other icoses, and therefore other “realities,” in which my views seem strange, or even perverse.

The third and final takeaway is that our sense of the difference between DRs and IRs itself is also organized icotically. So is our sense of the difference between original writing and translating, and of that between translating and interpreting (hermeneusis). So is our sense of the difference between language as structure and language as speech acts. And so on. The point is not that these distinctions are maintained *only* fuzzily, “under the radar” of our conscious awareness, through shared affects experienced collectively as conative pressure to conform with group norms, *rather than* through formal explicatures and other kinds of linguistic marking; the point is that our reliance on formal criteria and other marked evidence in the making of all such distinctions is itself organized icotically. To the extent that we know what the criteria are and know how to use them to distinguish this from that, our knowing is constructed and maintained for us through icoses that Bakhtin associates with the unification of language.

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gengend, die ganze Geschichte, fühle dich in alles hinein—nun allein bist du auf dem Wege, das Wort zu verstehen . . .

*The whole nature of the soul, which rules through everything, which models all other inclinations and forces of the soul in accordance with itself, and in addition colors even the most indifferent actions—in order to share in feeling this, do not answer on the basis of the word but go into the age, into the clime, the whole history, feel yourself into everything—only now are you on the way towards understanding the word.* (Forster 2002b: 292)

Note especially there Herder's distinction between *antworte[n] nicht aus dem Worte* “answering not on the basis of the word” (which is effectively what I've been calling the DR norm) and the Romantic hermeneutic of *sichhineinfühlen* “feeling oneself into.” For discussion, see Forster (n.d., 2002a, 2002b: xvii–xviii, and 2005) and Robinson (2013: 28–29).

What this last point implicates, as Wittgenstein (1953/1991) made clear more than a half century ago, is that our inability to make perfect, clear-cut distinctions (always the case, if we're honest) does not doom us to dispensing with distinctions altogether. The breakdown of hard-and-fast indicators in the determination of a distinction does not necessarily lead to the breakdown of the distinction itself. The radical perception that in some sense all reporting is direct, and that IR is therefore an illusion, or that in another sense all reporting is indirect, and that DR is therefore an illusion, may even convince us that the DR/IR distinction is impossible to maintain—but without destroying the distinction, or our ability to apply it in most practical cases, because the distinction's foundation is not ontic but icotic. It is maintained as if by mysterious forces—forces that are social, socioaffective, socioecological, but that seem to come from nowhere and work on us from within our own heads.

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# Historical Trends in the Pragmatics of Indirect Reports in Dutch Crime News Stories



Kobie van Krieken and José Sanders

**Abstract** Recent research has shown that the use of indirect reports in Dutch crime news stories has decreased significantly over the past 150 years. In this study we explore possible explanations for this decrease by assessing variations in the degree of intertwinement between the voices of journalist and news source in a corpus of 528 indirect reports. Results indicate that in indirect reports from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the journalist's voice was typically either dominant over or strongly intertwined with the news source's voice. In later periods, the voices of journalist and news source seem to have become disentangled. The decrease in indirect reports in Dutch news stories might thus be explained by an increased avoidance of the subjective intertwining of voices and, correspondingly, an increased separation of responsibilities between journalist and news sources. In this sense, the pragmatics of indirect reports became similar to the pragmatics of direct reports, causing the grammatically embedding indirect mode to lose its distinctive function.

**Keywords** Dutch journalism · crime news stories · voice intertwinement · historical analysis

## 1 Introduction

Journalistic discourse revolves around quoting practices (Nylund, 2003; Zelizer, 1995). Journalists use quotes to illustrate and confirm news events and to lend authority and objectivity to their writings (Nylund, 2003). As a result, news articles typically display the narrating voice of the journalist as well as embedded voices of news sources. The relative dominance of these voices is to a great extent determined by the linguistic representation of the embedded voices, i.e., the quotation form used

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to represent news sources' speech or thought. Compare the following examples, taken from a news story about the murder of a woman named Guel by her husband, B.:

1. Guel verliet vorig jaar November het huis, met hun drie kinderen.
  - (a) Ze had bij de politie verklaard dat haar man haar stelselmatig mishandelde.
  - (b) "Een overdreven verhaal," aldus B.

*Last year November Guel left the house, with their three children.*

  - (a) *She had told the police that her husband systematically abused her.*
  - (b) *"An exaggerated story," according to B.*

[12-07-2004: NRC Handelsblad]

Direct quotations such as (1.b) suggest the journalist has little control over the speech report; the voice of the news source is foregrounded (Semino & Short, 2004). Indirect reports, such as (1.a), are characterized by the grammatical embedding of a person's voice within the narrator's voice (Capone, 2010). This reporting mode suggests the journalist exerts more influence on the form of the speech report (Semino & Short, 2004). In comparison with direct reports, indirect reports constitute a highly versatile reporting mode as they allow journalists to intertwine their own voices with news sources' expressions to a greater or lesser degree (Sanders, 2010), from either transferring these expressions almost verbatim to merely paraphrasing them into brief statements (cf. (1.a) in the example above).

The pragmatic function of an indirect report is largely determined by the degree of voice intertwinement. Hence, studying the relation between the form and function of indirect reports entails a disentanglement of the intertwined voices of journalist and news source (Capone, 2012). In the present paper we will analyze the relation between the voices of journalist and news sources in indirect reports in Dutch crime news stories. Using a historical corpus of news stories published between 1860 and 2009, we will explore historical developments in the pragmatic function these reports fulfill in this genre.

## ***1.1 Direct and indirect reports in journalism***

Thompson (1996) argues that speech and thought reports are, because of their highly diverse appearances, best studied from a functional perspective. He posits that the inclusion of a discourse report in any kind of text is a marked option, thus giving rise to questions about the function fulfilled by the report. This function is partly dependent on the genre of the text (Waugh, 1995), but is also determined by the form of the discourse report. For instance, in interactions, direct quotations typically function as a means to present the reported speech vividly to the hearer as they "simulate" the original utterance (Thompson, 1996). In addition, direct quotations in dialogue may serve to indicate a high degree of faithfulness by demonstrating rather than paraphrasing what was said (Clark & Gerrig, 1990).

The majority of studies on reported discourse in journalism focus on direct quotation, presumably because this reporting mode is strongly associated with ethical issues revolving around literality and truthfulness. Although direct reports are conventionally qualified as verbatim reproductions of a news source's words, the true accuracy of direct quotations is questionable (e.g., López Pan, 2010). Empirical research has indeed demonstrated substantial inaccuracies in direct reports which lie far beyond grammatical corrections, thus signaling an undermining of journalistic core values such as truthfulness and objectivity (Lehrer, 1989). In spite of these inaccuracies, the implied faithfulness of direct reports is still considered greater compared to that of discourse reports in indirect modes (Short, Semino, & Wynne, 2002).

Vandelanotte (2004a) characterizes the distinction between direct speech and indirect speech in terms of the deictic shift that takes place in direct reports but not in indirect reports. The absence of a deictic shift in indirect reports indicates that the narrating voice of the journalist and the embedded voice of the news source are to a certain extent intertwined. Specifically, the embedded voice of the news source is transferred to the here and now voice of the journalist but, in contrast to direct speech, the journalist's voice remains present or even dominant. Indirect reports allow for only limited expressivity of the quoted speaker, indicating that their function is not so much to re-enact speech (Vandelanotte, 2004a; Toolan, 2006). Rather, the pragmatic function of indirect reports is variable and relies on the degree to which the voices of journalist and news source are intertwined. Assessing the degree of voice intertwining is therefore, however problematic, crucial to understand the functions indirect reports fulfill in journalistic discourse.

The linguistic and pragmatic variability of indirect reports and hence their complex nature might explain why these reports remain relatively understudied in the field of journalism. The study of indirect reports is important, however, because this reporting mode is a common genre characteristic of journalistic discourse (see, e.g., Fludernik, 1993: 291). For example, Semino and Short (2004) found that indirect reports occur relatively more frequently in news texts (32% of all discourse reports) than in fictional texts (10% of all discourse reports). Drawing on similar observations, Waugh (1995) even argues that indirect reports constitute the unmarked format of quotation in journalistic texts.

## 1.2 *Categorization of indirect reports*

Although their linguistic appearance is far from uniform, various classes of indirect reports can be distinguished based on constructional differences. Two major classes are grammatically embedded *that*-clauses and embedded *to*-infinitive clauses (Semino & Short, 2004): this is true for English and for Dutch (*dat* versus *te*). Grammatically subordinate *that*-clauses are the unmarked form of indirect reports in this respect that both definite (“that”) and indefinite (“what”) embedding connectors are possible. While *that*-clauses and *to*-clauses can generally

be used interchangeably to report a news source's words, *to*-infinitive clauses seem particularly well-suited to express epistemic uncertainty (Thompson, 1996), in that they imply a notion of goal-semantics. In the following example, the reported *to*-infinitive clause implies that the truth status of what is being said has not been established yet:

2. Maar toen de politiemensen informeerden naar het wapen, zei hij het kind met een scherp stuk hout om het leven te hebben gebracht.  
*But when the policemen asked about the weapon, he said to have killed the child with a sharp piece of wood.*  
 [01-08-1974: Nieuwsblad van het Noorden]

In line with their preference in cases of epistemic uncertainty, *to*-infinitive clauses seem to be also preferred over *that*-clauses when expressing speech acts with an orientation to the future, such as offers and requests (Thompson, 1996), e.g.:

3. Zij stelde de weduwe voor samen naar het huis van haar vriend, E.M., te gaan.  
*She suggested to the widow that they go together ("to go together") to the house of her friend, E.M.*  
 [28-02-1988: Limburgsch Dagblad]

The equivalent with a *that*-clause would require a modal verb to express a similar orientation towards the future:

- 3.a Zij stelde de weduwe voor dat zij samen naar het huis van haar vriend, E.M., zouden gaan.  
*She suggested to the widow that they would go together to the house of her friend, E.M.*

Mixed reports constitute a third major category of indirect reports. Mixed reports, also referred to as partial quotations, combine characteristics of indirect speech or thought with direct speech or thought. In these reports, part of an indirect report is captured between quotation marks. The part between quotation marks renders a news source's voice verbatim and is typically a controversial, shocking, or witty part of the source's utterance (Vis, Sanders, & Spooren, 2015). The combination of indirect speech with a partial direct quotation is said to establish "both accuracy and distance with respect to the original report" (Wieland, 2010: 13).

In reporting a news source's speech or thought, the journalist's choice between one of the above categories (*that*-clause, *to*-infinitive clause, or mixed report) reveals something about the pragmatic function of the report. However, each of these categories allows for various degrees of voice intertwinement, meaning that there is no clear one-to-one relation between the chosen category and the function fulfilled by the indirect report. In the present study we aim to assess voice intertwinement in the various categories of indirect reports in a historical corpus of Dutch crime news stories. In doing so, we will explore the pragmatics of indirect reports in journalistic discourse from a diachronic perspective.

### ***1.3 Indirect reports in Dutch news stories***

In Dutch journalistic texts, indirect reports are commonly used to paraphrase news sources' statements (Vis et al., 2015). Notably, however, a recent historical corpus analysis of Dutch crime news stories showed how the use of indirect reports has decreased significantly over the past 150 years (Van Krieken & Sanders, 2016). In the 1860s, indirect reports accounted for 61% of all discourse reports in these crime news stories. This percentage has decreased to less than 21% in the 2000s. At the same time, the percentage of direct quotations has increased significantly from 39% in the 1860s to almost 67% in the 2000s. Importantly, the decrease in indirect reports and the increase in direct reports cannot be (fully) explained by presuming an increasing desire of journalists to enlarge the faithfulness or vividness of their writings: in the crime news corpus, both indirect and direct reports were shown to be increasingly used to represent what news sources have said in court rooms and press conferences (i.e. verifiable reports adding faithfulness to a story) rather than what these sources have said while the newsworthy, criminal events took place (i.e. unverifiable reports adding vividness and drama to a story) (Van Krieken & Sanders, 2016).

An alternative explanation for the increase in direct reports at the expense of indirect reports might be found in an increasing preference of journalists to fully disentangle their voices – and hence their responsibility – from the voices of news sources (cf. Ekström, 2006). Following this line of thought, it could very well be the case that the pragmatic function of indirect reports in crime news stories has changed over time as to adhere to evolving journalistic standards of objectivity and neutrality (see Broersma, 2007). In this scenario, indirect reports might have lost some of the features that set them apart from direct reports and, as a consequence, might have become superfluous to a certain extent. Examining historical trends in the degree of intertwining between the journalist's voice and the news source's voice can shed light on the plausibility of this explanation.

## **2 Method**

We used the corpus collected in Van Krieken and Sanders (2016) to examine appearances of indirect reports over a period of 150 years, and were able to scrutinize characteristics of several types of indirect reports and their pragmatic function. Our corpus consists of 300 crime news stories, all published between 1860 and 2009 in a variety of Dutch newspapers. The corpus articles all report on a murder case or corpse discovery and display reconstructive narrative elements, i.e. a chronological ordering of events and/or vivid details about the events. The stories were taken from 17 different Dutch newspapers, including local as well as national newspapers, and tabloid as well as broadsheet newspapers.

The corpus has previously been analyzed on speech and thought reports, with the category of indirect reports including all stretches of discourse with one or more subordinated clauses reporting *what* a news source said or thought, but not *how*, i.e. in which exact words, it was said or thought (e.g. *He claimed that he saw an intruder*). Also included in this category are finite reporting clauses with a non-finite reported clause (e.g. *He claimed to have seen an intruder*) and truncated indirect reports (e.g. [*He claimed that he saw an intruder.*] *That he panicked and ran away*). Since the focus of the present study is on the linguistic form rather than the mode of indirect discourse, reports coded as speech, thought, as well as writing were combined into one inclusive category of indirect reports. These are distinguished from reports that are not grammatically dependent clauses, but speech or thought reports that are pragmatically embedded by post-hoc attributions (e.g. *He saw an intruder, he claimed*) in which the speech or thought is rendered indirectly but with the word order of a main clause and the reporting clause following instead of preceding the report. Such instances of *distancing* indirect speech or thought (Vandelanotte, 2004b) were excluded from the corpus. Full details on the original analytical procedure can be found in Van Krieken and Sanders (2016).

For the purpose of the present study, all indirect reports were extracted from the corpus. Indirect reports were found in 203 out of the 300 news stories, summing up to a total number of 528 indirect reports distributed over 15 decades (1860–1869:  $n = 23$ ; 1870–1879:  $n = 58$ ; 1880–1889:  $n = 31$ ; 1890–1899:  $n = 17$ ; 1900–1909:  $n = 41$ ; 1910–1919:  $n = 30$ ; 1920–1929:  $n = 57$ ; 1930–1939:  $n = 34$ ; 1940–1949:  $n = 25$ ; 1950–1959:  $n = 18$ ; 1960–1969:  $n = 43$ ; 1970–1979:  $n = 37$ ; 1980–1989:  $n = 22$ ; 1990–1999:  $n = 39$ ; 2000–2009:  $n = 53$ ). The number of indirect reports per news story varied from one to thirteen, with an average of 2.6 indirect reports per story.

The analysis was divided into a quantitative and a qualitative stage. In the quantitative stage, two independent coders categorized all 528 indirect reports into one of five categories: (1) grammatically embedded *that*-clause; (2) grammatically embedded *to*-infinitive-clause; (3) mixed report; (4) combination of two or more of the above categories; and (5) other. The first category consists of the most prototypical forms of indirect reports (Thompson, 1996), i.e. an utterance reported in a dependent finite clause preceded by a subordinating conjunction (in the case of a statement) or an interrogative pronoun (in the case of a question). The second category consists of utterances reported in an infinite clause preceded by *to*. The third category, mixed reports, are reports that share characteristics of both indirect speech and direct speech, i.e., part of the indirect report is captured between quotation marks (Thompson, 1996). The fourth category consists of indirect reports that combine two or three of the abovementioned types in one sentence. The final category consists of indirect reports that do not fall into any of these categories. The intercoder reliability was excellent (Cohen's  $\kappa = .93$ ). Disagreements were resolved upon discussion.

In the qualitative stage of analysis, indirect reports of each distinguished category were analyzed on the extent to which they represent the journalist's voice versus the news source's voice. Results of the analysis are presented in the next section.

### 3 Results

Figure 1 below shows the percentages of the various types of indirect reports per decade. This figure shows, first, that over the years, the majority of indirect reports consists of embedded *that*-clauses and *to*-infinitive clauses (together over 90%) and, second, that from the 1870s onwards, *that*-clauses account for most of the indirect reports (63.4% in total) compared to *to*-infinitive clauses (28.2% in total). By contrast, mixed reports are rare throughout the entire period (4.2%). From the 1990s onwards, however, mixed reports seem to have become somewhat more frequent whereas *to*-infinitive indirect reports seem to have become less frequent. Below we will discuss indirect reports of each category in detail.

#### 3.1 Embedded *that*-clauses

Throughout the corpus, many indirect reports with an embedded *that*-clause were found that paraphrase news sources' speech in a highly condensed manner, merely indicating the *type* of content instead of the content itself. Consider, for example, the following indirect reports taken from news stories published in 1895, 1896 and 1902, respectively.

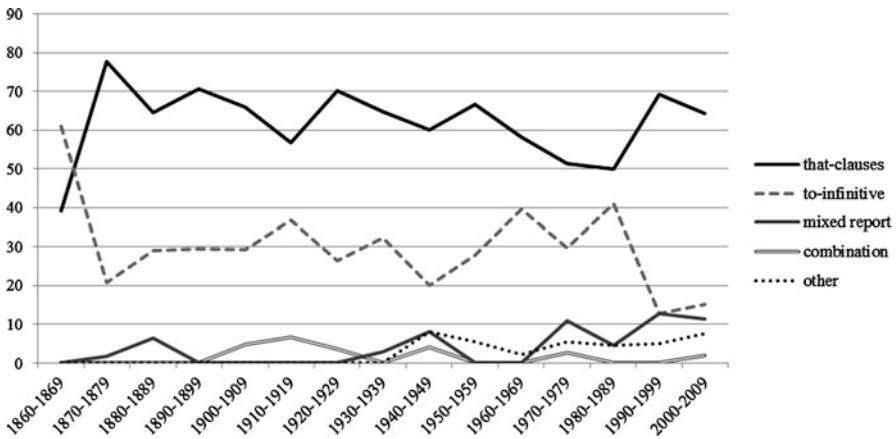


Fig. 1 Categories of indirect reports per decade (%)

4. Na eenigen tijd kwam de vader thuis en het meisje vertelde hem, wat er was voorgevallen.  
*After a while the father came home and the little girl told him what had happened.*  
[01-03-1895: Algemeen Handelsblad]
5. Nadat de heer Parasol zijne vrouw doodgeschoten had, ging hij naar den commissaris van politie en vertelde daar, wat er voorgevallen was.  
*After Mr. Parasol had shot his wife to death, he went to the police commissioner and there he told what had happened.*  
[23-02-1896: Nieuwsblad van het Noorden]
6. De slager komt op hem toe en deelt hem mede, wat hij juist te voren vrouw V. had gezegd.  
*The butcher comes to him and says to him what he had just told Miss V.*  
[16-07-1902: De Telegraaf]

In these indirect reports, the narrating voice of the journalist dominates over the original voice of the news source, which is moved to the background; there is hardly any trace of the original words uttered by the news source. Each of these reports resembles a so-called *Narrator's Report of a Speech Act* (NRSA, Semino & Short, 2004), i.e., a reference to the act of speaking rather than the content of the speech (e.g., *He talked for hours*). In speech act reports, the narrator is in full control of the form and content of the report. Similar to such reports, the degree of voice intertwinement in the above indirect reports is low due to the suppressed voice of the news source.

Similarly, embedded *that*-clauses were found that paraphrase multiple utterances into a short statement. In comparison with the above NRSA-like reports, the voice of the news source is less backgrounded in such indirect reports, e.g.:

7. Pater Cardoni heeft voortdurend ten stelligste verklaard, dat hij in den aangehoudene zijn moordenaar herkende.  
*Father Cardoni has continuously stated firmly that he recognized his killer in the arrested person.*  
[08-08-1879: De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad]

The above example shows how the voice of the journalist and the voice of the news source are intertwined in the indirect report: the journalist paraphrases multiple statements of the news source into one report while inserting his own voice by referring to the attacker as “his killer”, a reference unlikely to be used by Father Cardoni who was still alive at the time of speaking – and hence unaware of his impending death that would turn the attacker into a murderer. In other words, the killer is a killer from the journalist’s point of view, but not from the news source’s point of view. A similar case of voice intertwinement can be seen in this example, taken from a news story about the directress of a boarding school who was murdered by her nephew:

8. Maar de vermoorde vrouw had nog voor haar dood kunnen meedeelen, wie haar moordenaar was en de ellendeling, die door de oude vrouw was opgevoed en vertroeteld, werd drie uur later reeds gevat en zal zijn gerechte straf niet ontgaan.

*But before her death the murdered woman had been able to report who her murderer was and the wretch, who had been brought up and pampered by the old woman, was caught already three hours later and will not go unpunished.*

[02-08-1908: De Telegraaf]

In this example, too, the reference to the murderer signals the journalist's voice since the victim must have revealed the name of her attacker in her original statement.

A more intricate case of intertwinement was found in a story published in 1898 about a young man who shot his ex-girlfriend after she had become involved in a new relationship:

9. Van Beek scheen zich dit nog al erg aan te trekken, tenminste hij liep zijn vroegere geliefde herhaaldelijk na en dreigde haar meermalen, dat hij haar wel zou vinden.

*Van Beek seemed quite upset about this, that is, he repeatedly followed his former lover and repeatedly threatened her that he would find her.*

[07-12-1898: De Telegraaf]

The above example shows a noteworthy combination of inner states, speech acts, and events related from multiple viewpoints. In this short excerpt, we move from an epistemically modified (*seemed*) representation of Van Beek's inner state (*quite upset*) to a summary of events (*repeatedly followed his former lover*), followed by an indirect report which paraphrases multiple utterances (*repeatedly threatened her that he would find her*). This stretch of discourse thus displays a high degree of intertwinement between the voices and viewpoints of not only the reporting journalist and the quoted speaker, Van Beek, but also of implied news sources who have witnessed Van Beek's behavior and inferred from this behavior that he must have been upset.

In later periods, the voice of the news source is typically more foregrounded as indicated by the details rendered in the indirect report, e.g.:

10. De chauffeur van de vrachtauto verklaarde, dat, toen hij met zijn auto over het Schenkviaduct reed, plotseling een man, die op de ijzeren balustrade langs de weg zat, een snoeksprong nam naar de voorwielen van zijn vrachtwagen.

*The truck driver said that when he was driving his car over the Schenk viaduct, a man, who was sitting on the iron railing along the road, suddenly took a pike jump to the front wheels of his truck.*

[23-02-1950: Limburgsch Dagblad]



11. Om halfdrie 's morgens hield de directie een patrouillerende politieagent aan en meldde, dat de deur van kamer 223 van binnen was gesloten, dat luid kloppen geen resultaat opleverde en dat onophoudelijk bellen via de telefoon geen reactie teweegbracht.

*At half past two in the morning, the managing board stopped a patrolling police officer and reported that the door of room 223 was closed from the inside, that loud knocking yielded no results and that incessant calling by phone triggered no reaction.*

[11-03-1953: De Telegraaf]

In both indirect reports, the original words seem to be rendered almost literally. The first example displays expressivity on part of the news source (*suddenly, pike jump*) whereas the second example displays details (*room 223*) that are relevant in the context of the original information transfer between the news actors, but not in the context of the information transfer from journalist to reader. Hence, the voices of the news sources are foregrounded in both reports, indicating that, from a functional perspective, these reports bear more resemblance to demonstrating direct reports than paraphrasing indirect reports.

By contrast, in the most recent periods indirect reports were found that appear to fulfill a highly paraphrasing function. However, in these instances, the indirect report paraphrases or rather interprets an utterance that is reported verbatim in the direct mode immediately following the indirect report, e.g.:

12. Een ander meisje vertelt dat hij wel meer mensen had kunnen doden.

„Iedereen stond zo dicht bij elkaar en hij maaide maar met zijn stiletto. Het was heel druk die avond. Er brak paniek uit en iedereen gilte en huilde.”

*Another girl says that he could have killed even more people. “Everyone was standing so close to one another and he kept mowing with his stiletto. It was very crowded that night. There was panic and everyone was screaming and crying.”*

[18-10-1993: De Telegraaf]

13. Van den Brink denkt dat de jongeren goed begeleid worden. “Ze worden zowel op school als daarbuiten in de gaten gehouden. Tussen de verschillende instanties is geregeld overleg. Wij weten bijvoorbeeld meestal wel waar onze leerlingen buiten schooltijd mee bezig zijn.”

*Van den Brink thinks that the youth is being properly supervised. “They are being monitored in school as well as outside. There is regular consultation between the various agencies. For example, we usually know what our students are doing outside of school.”*

[20-10-2007: NRC Handelsblad]

The function of the above indirect reports (12-13) is not so much to *paraphrase* but rather to *announce* the voice of the news source. This voice is subsequently reported upon in the direct mode, signaling a complete separation of the voices of journalist and news source. Note also that in the second example, the reporting verb *thinks* is likely a stylistic variation in the representation of speech by paraphrasing the expressed opinion, rather than a prelude to the representation of an actual thought (Vis et al., 2015).

In sum, the analysis of the category of embedded *that*-clauses shows that these reports vary greatly in degree of voice intertwining. Early indirect reports were found in which the voices of journalist and news source are either strongly intertwined or in which the journalist's voice dominates over the news source's voice. In later periods, either the news source's voice is more foregrounded and easier to discern through the details and expressivity of the report, or the voices of journalist and news source are separated through a direct report directly following the indirect report.

### 3.2 *Embedded to-infinitive clauses*

Similar to indirect reports with embedded *that*-clauses, *to*-infinitive indirect reports were also found to paraphrase multiple utterances, for example:

14. Ondanks alle getuigenissen, bleef beschuldigde met ijzeren kalmte ontkennen, den moord te hebben gepleegd.  
*All testimonies notwithstanding, the accused kept denying having committed the murder with iron calm.*  
[25-06-1883: De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad]
15. Vrouw Schmidt had daarom den laatsten tijd dikwijls gedreigd hem de slaapstede op te zeggen en het was ook werkelijk haar plan zich van haar lastigen klant te ontdoen.  
*For that reason, Mrs. Schmidt lately had often threatened to deny him the closet bed and it was indeed her plan to get rid of her troublesome customer.*  
[29-07-1896: Algemeen Handelsblad]

Note that in the second example, the *to*-infinitive structure clearly reflects the orientation towards the future as implied by the reporting verb *threatened* (Thompson, 1996). This combination of *to*-infinitive indirect reports with verbs expressing an orientation towards the future is quite common across the corpus articles, e.g.:

16. (a) Mevrouw S. bezwoer haren man om noch met mejuffrouw C. te dansen, noch met haar te praten. (b) Deze lachte er om en beloofde aan haar verzoek te voldoen, doch niettemin danste hij met mejuffrouw C.  
*(a) Mrs. S. swore her husband to neither dance nor talk with Miss C. (b) He laughed at it and promised to meet her request, but nevertheless he danced with miss C.*  
 [02-06-1878: *Het Nieuws van den Dag: Kleine Courant*]

The above examples show how the voices of journalist and news source are intertwined, but the high level of paraphrasing seems to indicate that the journalist's voice dominates over the news source's voice. In other cases, the journalist's narrating voice is signaled more clearly through choices in referential expressions, e.g.:

17. Snikkend vertelde hij, den vermoorden Herman Blecher in een kroeg voor 't eerst ontmoet te hebben.  
*Sobbing, he told to have met the murdered Herman Blecher in a bar for the first time.*  
 [06-06-1908: *De Telegraaf*]
18. Mevrouw Juquelier zocht het meisje op en smeekte haar, dr. Juquelier met rust te laten.  
*Mrs. Juquelier visited the girl and begged her to leave dr. Juquelier alone.*  
 [01-11-1921: *De Telegraaf*]

In example 17, the journalist's voice sounds in the reference to the victim, who is unlikely to be referred to as "the murdered Herman Blecher" by the quoted suspect. Similarly, in example 18, it is unlikely that the quoted Mrs. Juquelier refers to her husband as "dr. Juquelier" when addressing her husband's mistress. Both indirect reports thus show voice intertwining.

In more recent news stories, *to*-infinitive indirect reports are often used to report confessions, for example:

19. De twee jongens uit Breda die zaterdagavond een NS-conducteur zo in het nauw dreven dat hij uit een rijdende trein sprong, hebben bekend afgelopen vrijdag een 77-jarige plaatsgenoot in koelen bloede te hebben vermoord.  
*The two boys from Breda who drove a train conductor into a corner on Saturday evening with the result that he jumped out of a moving train, have confessed to have murdered a 77-year old fellow townsman in cold blood last Friday.*  
 [04-06-1986: *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*]

20. De 15-jarige Michael Schmidt uit het Duitse grensdorpje Wassenberg heeft gistermiddag bekend op donderdag 25 november de evenoude Manon Seiffert door stokslagen, messteken en verdrinking om het leven te hebben gebracht. *Yesterday the 15-year old Michael Schmidt from the German border village Wassenberg has confessed to have murdered the coeval Manon Seiffert by beatings, stabbings, and drowning on Thursday November 25<sup>th</sup>.*  
[15-12-1982: Limburgsch Dagblad]

In both of the above examples, the indirect report is the first sentence of the lead paragraph of the news story. More than reporting the words of a news source in a paraphrasing style, these reports clearly fulfill an informative function by announcing the fact that a confession has been made. The original voice of the news source is, thus, backgrounded. Finally, similar to embedded *that*-clauses, *to*-infinitive indirect reports were found that interpret a news source's statement which is reported in the direct mode immediately following the indirect report, e.g.:

21. Majoor Van Kralingen zei het verhaal van de jongen niet geloofwaardig te vinden. „Iemand die zo bekend is met wapens, ze verhandelde en zelfs bij een schietvereniging heeft gezeten, weet hoe hij met wapens moet omgaan. Wat het werkelijke motief van de jongen is geweest weten we niet en het is de vraag of we dat ooit te weten komen”, aldus majoor Van Kralingen. *Major Van Kralingen said to find the story of the boy incredible. “Someone who is so familiar with guns, traded them and has even been a member of a shooting club, knows how to handle weapons. We do not know what the true motive of the boy was and the question is whether we will ever know”, according to Major Van Kralingen.*  
[04-06-1975: Nederlands Dagblad]
22. Raadsman mr. G. Houtakkers sr. vroeg de rechtbank in Maastricht Ida van S. te ontslaan van alle rechtsvervolging. „Zij kon niet anders. Door het jarenlange tyrannieke optreden van haar man, ontstond er een zodanige psychische dwang dat zij haar haatgevoelens niet meer kon onderdrukken,” beargumenteerde Houtakkers zijn beroep op schuld- en/of strafuitsluiting. *Counsel mr. G. Houtakkers sr. asked the court in Maastricht to dismiss Ida van S. from prosecution. “She had no choice. Through years of tyrannical actions of her husband, a psychological compulsion evolved that made her unable to suppress her feelings of hatred,” Houtakkers argued in his appeal to guilt and/or punishment exclusion.*  
[15-11-1993: Limburgsch Dagblad]

In sum, *to*-infinitive clauses show variations in degree of voice intertwinement similar to embedded *that*-clauses. Whereas indirect reports published in early news stories typically show high levels of intertwinement, indirect reports published in more recent stories typically reflect lower levels of intertwinement through succession of an indirect report in which the journalist's voice is foregrounded and a direct report in which the news source's voice is foregrounded.

### 3.3 *Mixed reports*

Until the 1930s, mixed reports were rare (cf. Figure 1). Only three instances were found throughout the corpus, all of which appeared in news stories published in the nineteenth century. Consider examples 23 and 24:

23. Ofschoon op zijn gedrag niets te zeggen viel en hij een goed werkman was (de eerste getuige, zijn baas, verklaarde dat hij hem altijd “braaf” gediend had), zoo schijnt het toch dat hij van een stugge en harde inborst was.  
*Although there was nothing to criticize about his behavior and he was a good employee (the first witness, his boss, declared that he had always served him “worthy”), it nevertheless seems that he had a tough and hard personality.*  
[31-05-1872: *Het Nieuws van den Dag: Kleine Courant*]
24. De eerste is, dat de man onder waanzinnig schreeuwen het huis uitgelopen is om de politie op de gracht te vertellen, dat hij zijn zuster “eventjes” vermoord had.  
*The first is that the man walked out of the house while screaming maniacally to tell the police at the canal that he had “simply” killed his sister.*  
[28-02-1880: *Het Nieuws van den Dag: Kleine Courant*]

Note that only one word is captured between quotation marks in these early mixed reports. These examples illustrate that the use of partial quotations in an indirect report functioned as a means to create distance – albeit only temporarily – between the voices of journalist and news source as well as to increase the vividness and faithfulness of the report.

In later periods, when mixed reports seem to have become more frequent, the quoted parts were often longer, for example:

25. De psycholoog meent dat de verdachte lijdt aan “een psychotische stoornis in de vorm van grootheidswaanzin”.  
*The psychologist believes that the suspect suffers from “a psychotic disorder in the form of megalomania”.*  
[27-06-2008: *De Volkskrant*]

The function of this mixed report is similar to that of the reports above, with the difference that the news source’s voice is more foregrounded in the most recent example, resulting in a stronger separation between the voice of the news source and the voice of the journalist.

Notably, some instances were found in which a mixed report develops into a direct report. Consider, for example, this mixed report from a news story published in 1935:

26. In dezen brief schrijft Muhl dat Dekker “maar eens moet overkomen. Dan zullen we dadelijk afrekenen.”

*In this letter Muhl writes that Dekker “should come over. We will then settle immediately.”*

[16-07-1935: De Telegraaf]

Here, the partial quotation turns into a straight direct report, including a deictic shift as signaled by the transfer from third person references in the first sentence to the first person pronoun *we* in the second sentence. Similar reports were found in later periods, for example:

27. Jantje verklaarde dat zij televisie keken “toen de bandieten ineens voor ons stonden. Met een Duits accent eisten ze geld.”

*Jantje declared that they were watching television “when the bandits suddenly stood in front of us. With a German accent they demanded money.”*

[25-10-1985: De Telegraaf]

In sum, the analysis of mixed reports shows how the journalist’s voice became weaker over time while the news source’s voice became foregrounded by means of larger quoted parts, which in some cases transformed into full direct quotations. This seems to indicate that the distancing effect of partial quotations has become stronger over time.

## 4 Conclusion and discussion

This study set out to examine the pragmatic function of indirect reports in a historical corpus of Dutch news stories. A previous study showed a significant decrease in the use of indirect reports in crime news over the past 150 years (Van Krieken & Sanders, 2016). In the present study we explored possible explanations for this decrease by assessing variations in the degree of intertwinement between the voices of journalist and news source.

The analysis yielded various interesting results. In indirect reports from news stories published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the journalist’s voice was typically either dominant over or strongly intertwined with the news source’s voice, as signaled most notably through choices in referential expressions. In later periods, the voices of journalist and news source appear to have become more disentangled. This disentanglement is clearly visible in mixed reports, which not only became more frequent over time but also included larger stretches of directly quoted discourse. Moreover, recent periods showed instances of mixed reports transforming into full-blown direct quotations. Finally, although indirect reports with a high level of paraphrasing and hence a dominance of the journalist’s voice were found throughout the corpus, in recent periods such (relatively short) indirect reports often precede a (relatively long) direct quotation. Instead of being

intertwined, the voices of journalist and news source follow one another separately in these instances.

Together, these findings seem to indicate that throughout the years, the journalist's voice has become more and more suppressed by and separated from news sources' voices in the linguistic manifestation and contextualization of indirect reports. The decrease in indirect reports in Dutch news stories might thus be explained by an increased avoidance of the subjective intertwining of voices and, correspondingly, an increased separation of responsibilities between journalist and news sources. In this sense, the pragmatics of indirect reports became similar to the pragmatics of direct reports, causing the grammatically embedding indirect mode to lose its distinctive function.

The increasing separation between voices of journalist and news source in indirect reports might be explained in light of the development of professional journalistic standards in the twentieth century. Ryfe and Kimmelmeier (2011), based on a diachronic corpus of news stories from the 1870s to the early 1900s, showed that as stories on the front pages of newspapers became fewer in number, the number of these stories containing quotes grew, as did the average number of quotes per story. In the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more Dutch newspapers started to transform into daily newspapers. The resulting competition between newspapers enlarged the need for journalists to write in an attractive style; their focus was on publishing appealing stories rather than truthful reports of reality (Wijffjes, 2004, 2007). It was not until the early twentieth century that the objectivity norm became a central asset of journalism – first in American journalism, and later also in European countries such as the Netherlands (Broersma, 2007; Schudson, 2001; Stensaas, 1986).

Objectivity is closely related to the demands of neutrality and factuality (e.g., Stenvall, 2008). Specifically, the objectivity norm requires journalists to refrain from adding their own viewpoints and comments to their stories. Direct speech and thought, characterized by completely separated voices, is better-suited for this purpose than indirect speech and thought (see Craig, 2006 on the objectivity implied by direct quotations). This might explain why, over time, indirect reports became more similar to direct reports and why, as a result, indirect reports lost their distinctive function and finally became relatively suppressed by direct reports.

Given the explorative nature of this study, its results should be interpreted with caution. Large-scaled quantitative corpus analyses could complement the current study by providing rigorous tests of the explanation provided above. Such analyses could also examine voice intertwining in indirect reports in journalistic genres different than news stories. For example, Sanders (2010) showed that the relative use of direct, indirect, and free indirect discourse reports differs across journalistic subgenres. Specifically, news reports were found to feature relatively more indirect reports compared to news stories and opinion articles. An interesting question is whether the degree of voice intertwining is different in genres in which indirect reports are more versus less common and, consequently, whether the function fulfilled by indirect reports differs across journalistic genres. An indication can be found in the analysis of narrative news reconstructions by Van Krieken, Hoeken and

Sanders (2016); their study shows that intertwined voices in (free) indirect reports often represent the thoughts and utterances of news sources *during* news events, but that these reports are reconstructed and legitimized by direct quotes of the news sources that were elicited by the journalist at a later moment in time.

It is important to note that the function of indirect reports in journalistic discourse may be dependent upon the topic being covered. The present study was limited to crime news. Although crime is one of the most prevalent topics covered in journalistic articles (Carpenter, 2010), the characteristics in terms of indirect reports may not be generalizable to the coverage of other topics. In economic news articles, for example, speech reports typically fulfill an argumentative function since these articles are often aimed at (potential) investors and their decision to invest in a given company or not (Zlatkova, 2012). This function might be reflected in a standard of little intertwining between the voice of the journalist and the voice of the quoted news source, often a financial expert, as a strategy to emphasize the former's avoidance of responsibility for the arguments provided (see also Waugh, Catalano, Al Masa'eed, Hong Do, & Renigar, 2016). Studying voice intertwining in indirect reports within and across various genres and news topics can shed more light on the relation between the linguistic form and pragmatic function of these reports.

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# Indirect speech in dialogues with schizophrenics. Analysis of the dialogues of the CIPPS corpus



Grazia Basile

*In all areas of life and ideological activity, our speech is filled to overflowing with other people's words, which are transmitted with highly varying degrees of accuracy and impartiality. The more intensive, differentiated and highly developed the social life of a speaking collective, the greater is the importance attaching, among other possible subjects of talk, to another's word, another's utterance, since another's word will be the subject of passionate communication, an object of interpretation, discussion, evaluation, rebuttal, support, further development and so on (Bakhtin 1981, 337).*

**Abstract** This work aims to develop some considerations on an extremely interesting topic for linguistic investigation, namely indirect speech during dialogue. In particular, we will consider ten dialogues between a therapist and schizophrenic patients, starting from a corpus of pathological speech (CIPPS – *Corpus di Italiano Parlato Patologico Schizofrenico*, in Dovetto and Gemelli, 2013). The focus of our investigation is on the cases of indirect speech produced both by the patient and by the therapist during the therapeutic session. In the cases of indirect speech we can observe a position on the part of the speaker in which what matters is not so much what is reported but the way, from a metalinguistic point of view, in which this is formulated. In indirect speech the message passes through the filter of the speakers so that they feel relatively free from duties of fidelity and can express, from an illocutionary point of view, their personal attitude through the mediation made possible by language devices.

As regards schizophrenic language, in our opinion the cases of indirect speech constitute a particularly interesting observatory in which both the patient and the therapist characterize themselves as linguistic and metalinguistic subjects, able to report contents and, at the same time, their attitude toward them.

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**Keywords** indirect speech · dialogue · interpretation · schizophrenic language · metalinguistic reflection

## 1 Reporting the speech of others: direct speech and indirect speech

Whenever we prepare ourselves to speak and, in particular, to take part in a dialogue<sup>1</sup> with other human beings, every λέγειν – as Guido Calogero affirms – always implies a διαλέγειν; that is, all our speech is a question of “speaking through”, of speaking to each other and this is the matrix of our language (cf. Calogero 1947, 164 and following). Yet the preposition διὰ (cf. Montanari 2013, s.v.), besides the spatial meaning of “through”, also has the instrumental and causal meaning of “by means of”, “with the help of”, “thanks to” (others) and we thus return to the epigraph of Michael Bakhtin stating that our discourses are interwoven with references to other discourses, reports and comments on the thoughts and speech of others (and our own)<sup>2</sup>.

The more or less punctual referencing of what others have said is a natural and physiological aspect of our speech, one of the many language games (cf. Wittgenstein 1958, § 23)<sup>3</sup> set up by the speakers in which language operates as a form of knowledge and also as a means of social interaction. In the more general context of semiotic codes, only historic-natural languages make it possible to produce utterances that may encapsulate other utterances made by others or by the speaker or even imagined and ready for future use: this is quotation (indeed, languages are referred to as *quotation codes* – cf. Simone 1990, 82)<sup>4</sup>, a phenomenon

<sup>1</sup>According to Wittgenstein, dialogue entails the language game of asking/answering and constitutes «la cellula iniziale del co-parlare umano» (Lo Piparo 2012, 159).

<sup>2</sup>In this connection, Bice Mortara Garavelli (cf. Mortara Garavelli 2009, 1) quotes the *Essays* of Montaigne regarding the continuous nature of interpretation, of books being written about books. We merely *comment upon one another*, according to Montaigne, «There is more ado to interpret interpretations than to interpret things, and more books upon books than upon any other subject; we do nothing but comment upon one another» (Montaigne 2006, 908).

<sup>3</sup>«Here the term “*language-game*” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life. Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others: Giving orders, and obeying them— Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements— Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)— Reporting an event— Speculating about an event [*italics in text*]» (Wittgenstein 1958, 11).

<sup>4</sup>This is a type of activity in which the speaker “creates” – so to speak – actors and spaces for speech: the speaker interacts with one or more actors and each actor can, in turn, create another actor assigning them a new speech space within the previous space. Such speech spaces - compared by Claire Blanche-Benveniste to the mental spaces of Fauconnier (1985), that is to small conceptual packets, so to speak, which we activate for the purposes of local understanding or action - are generally introduced by reporting verbs that precede or follow the quotation (cf. Blanche-Benveniste 1991, 262–263). In this context, Raffaele Simone speaks of a *communicative*

pervading every use of language and which appears in a variety of forms, in particular in that of direct or indirect speech (cf. Simone 1990, 81–83).

When we quote, all we are doing is to report our own or someone else's speech, that is we perform the more general activity of representing and reproducing speech (cf. Calaresu 2000, 2002, 2004). Reported speech (hereafter RS) should be regarded as a superordinate term referring to all the cases in which a speaker introduces "other people's speech" into their own discourse in a more or less explicit way and we are thus dealing with the reproduction of other people's speech<sup>5</sup>. The four classic forms of reported speech are direct speech (hereafter DS), indirect speech (hereafter IS), free indirect speech and free direct speech. Apart from the latter two cases which are primarily literary in nature, in most of our spoken and written discourse we typically make use of DS and IS.

If we are then to be able to speak of representation, there must be a so-called *distance* (or *narrative distance* - cf. Mandelli 2010, 380) between the original and the reported speech as well as a re-elaboration of the original discourse in terms of both form and content<sup>6</sup>. The problem of distance was first tackled by Plato in book III of *The Republic*, in which two different narrative styles are opposed: diegesis, in which the narrator alone tells the story and provides a descriptive narration of their own or other people's speech<sup>7</sup>, and mimesis or imitation, in which the characters tell the story through their dialogue (cf. Genette 1980, 162)<sup>8</sup>. According to Gérard Genette, the opposition between diegesis and mimesis emerges very clearly between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Henry James and his followers «in the

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*show*, a play in which several characters appear, each assigned to a certain communicative space (cf. Simone 1990, 83).

<sup>5</sup>In this context, the German term *Redewiedergabe* used by Elizabeth Gülich is particularly effective: «Der Terminus "Redewiedergabe" [...] soll also nicht eine bestimmte Form des "Wiedergebens" von Redebezeichnungen, sondern als Oberbegriff für alle Formen von Kommunikation auf der zweiten bzw. weiteren Ebenen verwendet werden» (Gülich 1978, 54). As a technical definition for speech reproduction – in accordance with Calaresu – we shall adopt the following: «Si ha RD quando un locutore L<sub>0</sub> inserisce sulla catena verbale in cui egli realizza un proprio atto di enunciazione E<sub>0</sub>, il prodotto di un altro atto di enunciazione E<sub>1</sub> (o parte di esso), reale o immaginario, da ascriversi a una fonte L<sub>1</sub>, non necessariamente diversa da L<sub>0</sub>» (Calaresu 2002, 82).

<sup>6</sup>In this connection, we can speak of *metarepresentations* present in RS, which «consist of two components: a sentential operator ('according to John', 'John believes that') and a sentence ('Peter likes grass')» (Recanati 2000, 39).

<sup>7</sup>«Isn't everything that's said by tellers of tales or poets a narrative of what has come to pass, what is, or what is going to be? [...] Now, don't they accomplish this with a narrative that is either simple or produced by imitation, or by both together? [...] Isn't it narrative when he gives all the speeches and also what comes between the speeches?» (Plato, *Resp.*, 392d–393b; Engl. ed. 1991, 71).

<sup>8</sup>«But, when he gives a speech as though he were someone else, won't we say that he then likens his own style as much as possible to that of the man he has announced as the speaker? [...] Isn't likening himself to someone else, either in voice or in looks, the same as imitating the man he likens himself to? [...] Then, in this case, it seems, he and the other poets use imitation in making their narrative » (Plato, *Resp.*, 393c–d; Engl. ed. 1991, 71).

barely transposed terms of *showing vs. telling*» (Genette 1980, 163), where *showing* corresponds to Plato's mimesis (perfect imitation) and *telling* to diegesis (pure storytelling) (cf. Genette 1980, 30)<sup>9</sup>. Mimesis thus corresponds to DS (representing or *showing*) and diegesis corresponds to IS (narrative description or *telling*).

In short, if we are to be able to talk about RS, two conditions must be met: hyperplasia, or internal multiplication of planes (within which we can identify the sub-condition of non-performativity), and representativity (cf. Calaresu 2002, 83). This means that RS must, above all, make reference – as Emilia Calaresu lays out – to a speech plane/time different from that of the *ego-hic-nunc* discourse (i.e. the condition of hyperplasia or multiple planes), the offsetting of planes that, through verbalisation, may be more or less faithfully reproduced (in DS)<sup>10</sup> or described and told (in IS) or merely suggested (as in the case of the citative conditional of the contextually recognisable indirect forms<sup>11</sup>).

Secondly, the representation of words, utterances or speeches which – through co- and/or contextual signals – are seen to belong to another locutor (a mentioned locutor) different from that of the *ego-hic-nunc*, but which for the very reason that

<sup>9</sup>Using a scale of greater or lesser mimetic potential, it is possible to identify different forms of speech typical of a narrated story: a) *narratized, or narrated, speech* is more distant and is managed by the narrator who summarises what the characters say; b) *transposed speech* in indirect style is more mimetic (and hence less distant) than the previous form but it conserves the presence of the narrator who can quote or summarise the characters' words more or less arbitrarily; c) *transposed speech* in free indirect style is characterised by an even greater presence of mimesis because the narrator's speech imitates that of the character, or the character expresses himself/herself through the narrator's voice to such an extent that it is unclear whether the words being expressed come from the former or the latter; d) *reported or direct speech* is the most mimetic (and hence the least distant) form, in which the narrator allows the character to speak directly (cf. Marchese 1990, 164–165).

<sup>10</sup>The so-called fidelity of DS compared to the original discourse is, in fact impossible. In this context Meir Sternberg (1982) speaks of a *direct discourse fallacy*, highlighting the technical impossibility of transferring the paralinguistic features of the original discourse into DS. Calaresu also insists on the fallacious and deceptive nature of DS, above all because of the objective limitations of human memory, whenever memory is not supported by writing, and secondly because we normally remember what we understood about a discourse (and interpreted and reorganised for storage in long-term memory), and finally because DS is unfaithful because the main function or reason for DS is not rendered *verbatim* in speech, unlike in many forms of writing (cf. Calaresu 2004, 52).

<sup>11</sup>As regards the sub-condition of non-performativity, if the part preceding the RS contains a reporting verb in the first person singular of the present indicative, this verb may introduce RS only when it does not carry out a performing function because reference is made to an utterance different from the one in progress (for instance in the case *I promised Maria that I would give her the book today, so I really can't lend it to you*, while in the case *Don't be angry over the book, I promise I'll give it to you tomorrow*, the verb *promise* acts as a performing verb, i.e. it represents the very action of making a promise and not describing or recounting it) (cf. Calaresu 2004, 114). On this point, Calaresu differs from Geoff Thompson, who also considers performative cases, such as *I promise*, as RS in that «speakers divide themselves as it were into two a labeller and an utterer, with the labeller presenting – i.e. reporting – the utterer's proposition» (Thompson 1996, 508).

they are collocated in speech planes/times different from the *ego-hic-nunc*, may also correspond to the same speaker (cf. Calaresu 2002, 91).

Traditionally, the mode (or form) of representation assumes the direct form (*oratio recta*) or the indirect form (*oratio obliqua*) and classical grammatical studies assume that there is an original version in DS, on which the “transformation” into IS is based through a series of rigid syntactic transpositions (cf. McHale 1978, 256)<sup>12</sup>.

As Otto Jespersen says:

either one gives, or purports to give, the exact words of the speaker (or writer): *direct speech* (*oratio recta*). Or else one adapts the words according to the circumstances in which they are now quoted: *indirect speech* (*oratio obliqua*) (Jespersen 1924, 290),

in which the IS appears as a sort of morpho-syntactic variant of DS adapted to the various circumstances of the utterance.

From a formal viewpoint, both DS and IS have introducers or linguistic signals for reproducing speech, i.e. the presence of an explicit meta-communicative framework announcing and defining the communicative operation being performed, which is to report a discourse or part of it. This meta-communicative framework, frequently called the quoting clause, is followed by a subordinator (*that, if, etc.; to + infinitive, etc.*) in the case of IS and by punctuation (colon and quotation marks, dash, new paragraph, etc.) in the case of written DS and is separate from the quoted clause which corresponds to a direct or indirect report (cf. Calaresu 2000, 25–26).

From the 1970s on, the “non-derivative” feature emerges (cf. Mortara Garavelli 2009: 14), i.e. IS is not derived from DS (cf., among others, Authier 1978, Voloshinov 1973 e Banfield 1973). In particular, Ann Banfield – in the context of the generative-transformational grammar – first provides support for her claim that «neither direct nor indirect speech can feasibly be derived from the other» (Banfield 1973, 8) and then states that, unlike DS (which represents «an *exact* reproduction of a verbal communication»), IS «is not a reproduction of a verbal communication» but requires the locutor to take up a position that assumes the form of *interpretation* (cf. Banfield 1973, 30).

In short, the idea of the absolute and reciprocal independence of the forms of DS and IS begins to emerge<sup>13</sup> and it becomes apparent that the use of one or the other depends on pragmatic and functional choices on the particular linguistic act to be performed.

<sup>12</sup>The ‘traditional’ passage from DS to IS entails a change in the person and the deixis used, the correct application of the rules on *consecution temporum*, the omission of all expressive elements or expressively marked constructions, etc.

<sup>13</sup>On this issue, for instance, cf. Valentin N. Voloshinov, who insists on the fact that the various types of RS are not “mechanically” (i.e. as a result of transformations) correlated to one another, but each pattern expresses «some tendency in one person’s active reception of another’s speech» and also handles/interprets «the message to be reported in its own creative fashion, following the *specific direction* proper to that pattern alone [our italics]» (Voloshinov 1973, 128).

## 2 Typical features of indirect speech

Having established the reciprocal independence of DS and IS and the non-derivability of IS from DS, let us first examine the characteristic features of IS in a pragmatic-functional perspective and then – specifically in §4 of this paper – investigate the characteristics of IS in the pathological language of schizophrenic patients.

As Donald Davidson (one of the leading exponents of analytic philosophy) argues in his essay *On Saying That*, the correct analysis of IS is an analysis that «opens a lead to an analysis of psychological sentences generally (sentences about propositional attitudes, so-called)» (Davidson 1968–1969, 130), which means that in the case of IS we enter an area that has to do with the speaker's subjectivity, that is with their attitudes and views which come into play when they make an utterance<sup>14</sup>.

Essentially, we enter the context of what Charles Bally in *Linguistique générale e linguistique française* defines as the *modus* (which we would today call *modality*, i.e. the linguistic manifestation of the speaker's attitude), distinguishing between the *dictum* (i.e. the representation of which it is the object) and the *modus* (i.e. the operation carried out by the thinker) in every human utterance. The latter is where our assessments, sentiments and so on lie and is thus the «âme de la phrase» (cf. Bally 1965<sup>4</sup>, § 28).

IS is not citational in nature but, rather, aims to describe, summarise and, at the same time, interpret; better still, as Alessandro Capone affirms, «indirect reporting is not only a question of reporting words, but of reporting interpretation, and it involves the practice of inferring meaning» (Capone 2016, 128)<sup>15</sup>. In short, in a contextualistic perspective, Capone speaks of cases of IS as «interpretative acts» proper<sup>16</sup>, of veritable actions in which «depending on the purpose of the report,

<sup>14</sup>In this connection, cf. also Lubomir Doležel (1964) who speaks of the polyphonic nature of narration which, in the cases of IS, becomes “subjectivity” thanks to the characters' interventions, and Franz Lebsanft who states that the indirect style is not only the means par excellence through which «le discours peut être ramené au récit», but it is also the place «par lequel le récit peut s'alterer profondément» by virtue of the fact that «le point de vue particulier d'un protagoniste se glisse dans le récit» (Lebsanft 1981, 54).

<sup>15</sup>Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson identify only one interpretative use of utterance that is acknowledged as such, and that is in the case of indirect speech in which not only an utterance but also a thought, a personal point of view is reported (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995<sup>2</sup>: 229).

<sup>16</sup>The cases of IS differ from those of DS in that the latter «may not involve interpretation or may involve (by comparison with indirect reports) a weaker degree of interpretation» (Capone 2016, 7). The distinction between DS and IS, however, is not «a clear-cut distinction» (Capone 2016, 54). Keith Allan, for instance, was unable to find any significant difference between DS and IS (cf. Allan 2016a and 2016b), whereas Elisabeth Holt – while acknowledging the difficulty in making a rigid distinction between DS and IS – calls for a granularity criterion. Indeed, «employing aspects of design associated with prototypical direct reportings helps to create a highly granular portrayal of the utterance. Rather than conveying just what was said, the speaker provides additional information through the inclusion of elements such as turn initials and intonation shifts that give insight into the stance and action of the reported speaker. [...] IRS [indirect reported

we can either summarize or expand the content of what was said in the original utterance» (Capone 2016, 7)<sup>17</sup>. If, as we saw in § 1, IS corresponds to the diegetic moment, i.e. to the more or less narrative description of someone else's discourse, then what distinguishes IS is not so much the reporting of something in terms of semantic identity as its interpretation, an operation which has to do with the way in which the speakers are rooted in a given context (cf. Wieland 2013, 405), defined by an historic and cultural point of view<sup>18</sup>.

Essentially, as a metalinguistic operation<sup>19</sup>, IS acts as a form of *mediation* between the content of other people's speech (or of the same speaker but uttered at a different time from that of the current utterance) and the filter constituted by the sensibility, the point of view and the interpretative choices of the speaker.

This mediation takes the form of paraphrase<sup>20</sup>, i.e. in a constituent and spontaneous activity of human speech in which two (or more) sequences having approximately the same sense are juxtaposed (cf. Fuchs 1982, 50), and in which the speaker "translates", so to speak, the other's discourse through their own words but filtered by their experience and sensibility. This is a micro-narration «in which a dramatic action (or to use more familiar jargon) a dialogic action is extrapolated from its context and re-used for some purpose» (Capone 2016, 100)<sup>21</sup>.

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speech], in contrast, with its focus on just conveying what was said, is less granular and less multi-dimensional» (Holt 2016, 185–186).

<sup>17</sup>Cf. note 20.

<sup>18</sup>Deirdre Wilson uses the expression *exploitation of resemblances* (Wilson 2000, 142) to explain the cognitive processes in play when we interpret an indirect account and, in IS, these resemblances are said to be interpretative, linked to the speaker's subjective point of view (cf. Wilson 2000, 143).

<sup>19</sup>The quotation of other people's message – whether in the form of DS, IS or free indirect speech – is a metalinguistic operation in which «nel messaggio dell'emittente (citante) s'innesta un altro messaggio (citato), con interruzione, deviazione, complicazione delle strutture sintattiche e semantiche del primo, a seconda del tipo d'innesto» (Nencioni 1983, 32). Interesting considerations on IS as a language game in the Wittgensteinian sense can be found in Capone (2012) and in the more recent Capone (2016) in which, among other things, the social nature of IS is highlighted as a language game in that «an indirect report can have effects on deliberation or on action, in that it can present a piece of information that can be integrated into the argumentative structure of practical reasonings. Seen in this light, an indirect report can become a "form of life"» (Capone 2016, 81).

<sup>20</sup>Calaresu specifies that IS is the paraphrastic form par excellence, both in the case of so-called "expansive" paraphrasis and in shortened (or summary) paraphrasis of the original discourse (cf. Calaresu 2004, 25). Cf. also Mortara Garavelli (2009, 20) and Capone (2016) who talks of a *Paraphrasis Principle* proper underlying IS, in that «the that-clause embedded in the verb 'say' is a paraphrasis of what Y said that meets the following constraint: should Y hear what X said he (Y) had said, he would not take issue with it, but would approve of it as a **fair paraphrasis** of her original utterance [bold in text]» (Capone 2016, 83). Moreover, «paraphrasis may involve shortening (summing up) or even expanding the report (as clarifications, justifications, or other causal explanations)» (Capone 2016, 91).

<sup>21</sup>To express this in Goffman's terms, IS is one of the various ways in which the notion of *footing* is created, i.e. the «alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance» (Goffman 1981, 128).



In this way, the speaker's *intentio significandi* is manifested – in other words the intention «qui pré-existe à l'énonciation et lui confère un “registre” déterminé» (Lecointre and Le Galliot 1973, 67) – and the *registre déterminé* typical of IS is achieved through its illocutionary force, i.e. as a specific speech act to be characterised compared to other speech acts (cf. Mortara Garavelli 2009, 3). The illocutionary force is inscribed in the utterance form of IS as a particular aspect of the modality (in the sense, as mentioned above, of the expression of an attitude of the speaker), so that «l'allocation comporterait donc une valeur surimposée au sens» and this value «se détermine à travers les actes par lesquels l'énonciateur tente de modifier les éléments de la situation de discours» (Lecointre and Le Galliot 1973, 68).

Finally, this *intentio significandi* of the speaker is achieved – in line with the proposals of Dascal *et al.* (1996) – by virtue of the active presence of the listener in that, like all language games, IS also has a cooperative characteristic. Indeed, as proposed by Alessandro Capone, «we conceive of an indirect report as a game involving at least three actors: the original speaker, the reporting speaker and the hearer» (Capone 2016, 82).

### 3 Schizophrenics and indirect speech

#### 3.1 Specific features of schizophrenics' language

Let us now tackle the specific goal of our research. It is particularly interesting to note if and how this specific interpretation of IS emerges in the case of people affected by pathologies impacting on their use of language, such as schizophrenics. Before entering into a detailed analysis of the use of IS in the speech of schizophrenic patients, let us consider some general features of the way they experience what surrounds them and how they express themselves verbally.

Schizophrenics are subjects affected, in particular, by “dissociation” (in German *Spaltung*, “split, division”)<sup>22</sup>, the disturbance that the Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuer – embracing the lessons of both Emil Kraepelin and Freud – identified and described as being distinctive of schizophrenia (cf. Bleuer 1950).

Bleuer speaks of dissociation to refer essentially to two phenomena: firstly, to a sort of fracture between the Ego and the world causing the subjects' detachment from their material and relational context until they enter forms of autism; secondly, the schizophrenic subject experiences not so much a loss of basic cognitive functions as their underuse or inadequate use (cf. Famiani 2001, 203).

<sup>22</sup>The term *schizophrenia* (from the Greek *skhizein* “to split” + *phrēn* “mind”) emerged in the early 20th century (cf. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/schizophrenia>) as a calque of the German term *Schizophrenie*, introduced by Bleuer in 1911 alongside that of *dementia praecox*.

In this context, the British psychoanalyst Wilfred R. Bion describes the schizophrenic patients as people who feel like prisoners threatened by the parts of themselves that they have expelled, as if they find themselves at the centre of numerous orbits whose planets represent the parts they have expelled. Furthermore, “in the patients’ phantasy the expelled particles of ego lead to an independent and uncontrolled existence outside the personality” (Bion 1967, 39).

In short, what forms of experience does the schizophrenic patient have? As illustrated by Gerald M. Edelman in *The Remembered Present*, the schizophrenic patient has difficulty focusing attention, misjudges the signals of perception, and may experience visual delirium and have difficulty in understanding. This type of patient feels under the continual fire of signals that make sense only in a fragmented way (cf. Edelman 1989).

Such fragmentation is also highlighted by Carlo Pastore, among others, in his description of the behaviours of three of the patients he analysed and, in particular, in one whose *being-in-the-world* is achieved through *being-in-a-thousand-pieces* (cf. Pastore 2013, 30). The experience that this patient has of the world is that of a fragmented world and, therefore, of a dramatically different form of life. It is the experience of someone who has been unable or unwilling to join in the game of other members of the linguistic community they are part of, with the result that «the schizophrenic would signal (the way toward) the above or the beyond of signs» (Irigaray 2002, 191).

What is compromised is that which can be defined as the *linguistic intelligence*, that is to say not the basic linguistic competence but the ability to make use of language in a variety of communicative contexts, to respond appropriately to various situations, with the result that language is used in a socially divergent way, above all in the case of the solipsistic and incomprehensible speech of the chronic schizophrenic (cf. Civita 1993, 111). It is as if the schizophrenic patient is using linguistic signs solipsistically, beyond their conventional codified use, thus giving rise to an expressiveness that does not follow the conventional lines but expands freely in personal and original symbolic forms (cf. Piro 1967, 312).

It is a sort of utterly personal language game, whose most evident feature is a verbal incoherence – which some call a “word salad” (cf. Piro 1992, 18) – that constitutes the most visible and easily identified form of linguistic diversity typical of schizophrenia.

The particular features of the language of schizophrenics fall within what is known as *schizophasia*<sup>23</sup>, indicating a whole array of language disturbances, from the mild to the extreme. For instance, these can range from frequent pauses often with no intended function (as happens, for example when we are searching for

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<sup>23</sup>This term was coined by Emil Kräpelin for the 1913 edition of his *Psychiatrie: ein Lehrbuch für Studierende und Aerzte*, to replace the more generic *verbal confusion*. Kräpelin speaks of a progressive incoherence of thought, with the result that the links of thought become “looser” producing a chaotic and random overlapping of words and phrases and, thus, speech that is incoherent and incomprehensible (cf. Piro 1992, 21), demonstrating an internal and external disagreement of thought and language (cf. Piro 1992, 23 and Gemelli 2013, 91).

the most suitable word for the discourse we are engaged in or when we intend to take our discourse in another direction) to difficulties in managing turn-taking in a conversation, to the use of paralogisms (using one word for another) and neologisms<sup>24</sup>, and to a veritable “drift” in the schizophrenic’s speech, resulting in a pragmatic and semantic dissolution of language, involving a descent into the abyss of an almost glossolalic dissolution of speech, in which the subject seems to totally surrender to a sort of mechanical almost autonomous game of pure signifiers (cf. Leoni 2013, 51).

In this respect, the following verbal exchange between an interviewer and a schizophrenic patient is extremely informative as the latter proceeds, so to speak, from assonance to assonance without any logical or semantic link:

*Intervistatore*: “Quale lavoro svolge?”. *Paziente*: “Mi occupo di cessi. È cessato defunto senza un filo di sapone che inquina come la benzina con il piombo che appesantisce la vita, spacca tutte le bilance; non c’è più equilibrio, ludibrio, solo qualche colibri”.

(Lorenzini & Sassaroli, 1992, 25)

In this context, Sergio Piro, one of the fathers of Italian psychiatry, speaks of semantic dissolution (cf. Piro 1967, 522–524) and loss of control of linguistic meaning, whether this be of a single word or a whole discourse. The result is an obscure, uncertain, vague and fluctuating speech linked to the subject’s hesitation and perplexity concerning the incomprehensible and threateningly obscure world in which they live: it is the language of *Wahnstimmung* (cf. Piro 1967, 447). The schizophrenic seems unable to use language for communicative purposes and gives the impression that they are themselves used by their language (cf. Bartolomeo *et al.* 2013, 226).

As far as these phenomena typical of schizophrenic language are concerned, interpretations essentially follow one of two lines: the one that considers these phenomena in terms of a poor operation of language rules (cf., among others, Chaika 1974) and the one that identifies analogies between the most typical phenomena of schizophrenic language and those normally observed in spontaneous speech (cf., among others, Fromkin 1975). Indeed, the examples of schizophrenic language analysed by Victoria A. Fromkin show that there is no difference between the so-called “errors” present in schizophrenic language and those detected in that of non-schizophrenics, but this convergence, far from constituting a negative element, may help us «to provide insight into the ways we produce speech and help in the construction of models of linguistic performance» (Fromkin 1975, 504).

Fromkin’s viewpoint has been investigated and confirmed in Italy in the studies carried out by Antonino Pennisi on original documentary evidence of psychotic patients, which was collected over a five-year period at the Mandalari ex-mental institution in Messina and the secure psychiatric hospital at Barcellona di Gotto. Pennisi’s conclusion is that the language of psychotic patients contains nothing

<sup>24</sup>Cf. the study of Valentina Cardella who, on the tendency of schizophrenics to form neologisms, word games and answers based on assonance, to interpret a discourse phylogically and so on, speaks of a self-referential use of language (cf. Cardella, 2006: 63).

unusual because their problem lies not in their language but in something else: their thoughts, existence, and cognitive processes (cf. Pennisi 1998, 284). The problem of these patients does not therefore seem to be linguistic in nature but, rather, linked to their relationships with the world in which they live and the way they experience it.

### 3.2 *Schizophrenics: from the private world to therapeutic dialogue*

In the previous section we pointed out that the use of linguistic signs by schizophrenic patients often proceeds in a solipsistic way that has nothing to do with the way in which these signs are normally and conventionally used within a linguistic community, thus giving the impression of a sort of totally personal and idiolectal language game. In actual fact, however, the often totally “private” nature of the speech of schizophrenics does not match what is commonly meant in the context of language games.

As pointed out by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*, the *raison d'être* for linguistic signs exists only within language games, in which human language works both as a form of knowledge and as a means of social interaction (cf. note 3). This is linked to human nature which, according to Aristotle's well-known definition, is a *zōon politikón* (cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1253a 1–5; Engl. ed. 1920, 28), a living, social and community-oriented being which, as such, must necessarily interact and dialogue with its own kind – something that it achieves using a variety of means, first and foremost a word-based verbal language (cf. De Mauro 2002, 31).

In a perfectly natural way, therefore, human beings manifest their vocation to build shared experiential spaces, forms of life and knowledge: there is no meaning that exists *per se*, in an abstract form isolated from its contexts and relations of usage, but «the meaning of anything inheres in its relations to other things—historical, causal, inclusive, scalar, spatial, affective, or whatever relation one can imagine» (Bruner 1983, 206).

The language game is thus not something solipsistic and idiolectal but, rather, something that occurs necessarily with and through other people and the meaning of the things that make up the reality that we express is, therefore, not given but must be built up, discovered and (often) rediscovered in reference to the context in which it lies and to the way in which the speakers use it (cf. Basile 2012, 37).

With schizophrenic patients, the problem is not so much, or not only, the fact that they have built a form of private life as that – since forms of life are social rather than individual structures – they have to continue to live in the forms of life of all the others, to which they are condemned by the very fact of being human, of having been born in a given world at a given time (cf. Civita 1993, 180)<sup>25</sup>.

The cure for schizophrenia must therefore pass through a psychological therapy during which the form of life created by the patient must be dismantled piece by

<sup>25</sup>This is why Alfredo Civita qualifies schizophrenia as a disturbance of the ecological intelligence (cf. Civita 1993, 180).

piece and a new one created, one more suitable to the world in which we live (cf. Civita 1993, *ibidem*). The construction of new forms of life – this time characterised by socialisation and sharing with other human beings – passes through the moment of analytical dialogue.

Unlike ordinary dialogue with one's peers which generally occurs on a symmetrical and equal basis, psychoanalytical dialogue develops and specialises as asymmetrical and no longer on equal terms.

The language game that is created between patient and therapist calls for a precise system of rules in which the latter is assigned a decisive role, specifically that of being responsible for the interpretation, which simultaneously constitutes the object and the sense of the dialogue (cf. Vegetti Finzi 1986, 412).

Analyst and patient analysed thus play a different and non-interchangeable role, unlike what happens in the turn-taking of ordinary dialogue. As far as the analyst is concerned, «his work of construction, or, if it is preferred, of reconstruction resembles to a great extent an archaeologist's excavation of some dwelling-place that has been destroyed and buried or of some ancient edifice» (Freud 1937; ed. 2011, 5051).

If the schizophrenic displays frequently solipsistic and incoherent speech rich in semantic “drift” etc. during the monologue (cf. § 3.1.), things change in the analytical dialogue, despite some difficulties in the management of turn-taking and, as far as the presence and the function of IS is concerned, we can observe phenomena of great interest which, as already mentioned in § 2, concern the attitudes and assumption of positions by the participants in the therapeutic dialogue.

### ***3.3 Dialogue between schizophrenic patients and therapist. A case study***

It was traditionally thought that IS – as a form of quotation quite unlike mimesis – had a predominantly literary usage or, in any case, was found more frequently in written texts than in oral communication. The last few decades, however, have seen a great deal of empirical research conducted on speech *corpora* which has shown that it certainly is not true that DS is more widespread than IS in speech and that IS is the more prevalent form of quotation in writing. The data collected by Calaresu for Italian in the DIRIP corpus<sup>26</sup>, for instance, show it is simply untrue that IS is

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<sup>26</sup>DIRIP stands for *Discorsi Riportati in Italiano Parlato* and is a corpus of just over 15,400 words collected by Calaresu between 1995 and 1996 (cf. Calaresu, 2000): it comprises 43 spoken discourses from 3 original source dialogues (Text A *Forum* is a recording of the TV programme *Forum* in which two parties in conflict appeal to a Justice of the Peace; Text B *Rubbia* is a short TV interview with the physicist Carlo Rubbia; Text C *Iraulico* is the recording of a telephone conversation between a plumber and his client) the various informants of which supply 40 different oral reports (cf. Calaresu 2004, 13).

rarely used in speech (cf. Calaresu 2004, 210) and that the differing frequency of the forms of IS should instead be attributed to the different functions it performs.

In the present paper, we have also taken into consideration a corpus of spoken Italian that, compared to other speech *corpora*, is characterised as a pathological speech corpus and, therefore, bestowed with specific features that other *corpora* do not have.

First and foremost it is a corpus of dialogical speech and, as we have seen in Section 3.2, the patient/therapist dialog falls within the framework of dialogical phenomena in which the relationship between the two participants is asymmetrical and one of the two, the therapist, has the task of analytically interpreting what the patient says and of endeavouring, as Lacan would say<sup>27</sup>, to construct or, rather, to co-construct the history of the patient's subjectivity in cooperation with the patient.

During the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic dialogue, patient and therapist interact – with a certain maieutic imbalance as far as the latter is concerned – in order to favour understanding (and the sense of being understood by the patient), so that we can refer to it as a *therapeutic alliance* (cf. Chiari 2013, 161 and 178) or even *objective complicity* (cf. Apothéloz and Grossen 1995, 189).

Otherwise, the patient/therapist dialogue presents features similar to those found in the spontaneous dialogue typical of everyday speech, such as turn taking, pauses, repetitions, misunderstandings, errors, repair processes, etc.

In this paper we have assembled a case study that consists of ten dialogues (comprising 17 hours of recorded psychotherapy sessions) between a therapist and four male subjects over 40 years of age and diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia (here referred to as Patient A, Patient B, Patient C and Patient D) taken from a *corpus* of pathological speech called CIPPS (*Corpus di Italiano Parlato Patologico Schizofrenico*). These were transcribed by hand and annotated using the transcription specifications already laid down in the framework of other academic projects and *corpora* on spoken discourse (cf. Dovetto, Gemelli, 2013).

Starting from these transcriptions, we have collected and analysed all the cases in which patient and therapist use IS to refer to something said, stated or claimed by others (or by themselves at a different time from the current utterance) in order to investigate how the speakers' *intentio significandi* is manifested. In particular, we have concentrated on the quoting clause because it is this that expresses most clearly the *intentio significandi* and the illocutionary aspect of what the locutor means to express in the form of IS.

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<sup>27</sup>In psychoanalysis, in which the entire relationship is encapsulated in a dialogue between two people, «the subject, strictly speaking, is constituted through a discourse to which the mere presence of the psychoanalyst, prior to any intervention he may make, brings the dimension of dialogue» (Lacan 2006, 176). And, according to Lacan, the dialogue – in the etymological sense of λόγος “discourse” that takes place διὰ “through, by means of” – ensures that the intersubjectivity is woven and, in the analytical context in particular, it guarantees «the intersubjective continuity of the discourse in which the subject's history is constituted» (Lacan 2006, 214).

## 4 Analysis of the collected data

Starting from the CIPPS corpus, we have selected the cases of subordinate IS and of non-subordinate IS.

It is well known that IS fundamentally exists in two forms: firstly as subordinate IS, introduced by a subordinator (*that, if*; for instance *Gianni says/claims that gymnastics is good for the body and the soul*) and by all those pronouns and adjectives introducing indirect questions (*who, when, how, why, which*, etc., for instance *I often wonder why Giulia stopped playing the violin*), i.e. the so-called *WH*-elements, or in some cases by the *to* + infinitive (for instance, *Marco told me to get out of his office*); secondly, as non-subordinate IS, sometimes also called the narratized quotation (cf. Mortara Garavelli 1995) or glossed indirect speech (cf. Calaresu 2004, 161), i.e. indicated mostly by prepositional phrases (*according to X, in X's opinion*, etc.) or by clauses like *as X says, as has been said by X* etc., or by a quoting modal adverb (cf. Calaresu 2002, 81 and 2004, 163).

For every example of IS we have considered three parameters:

- a) The collocation of the IS, i.e. if it occurs during the turns of the therapist (who is referred to as the Giver in the transcriptions) or of the patients (in the transcriptions each patient is referred to as the Follower);
- b) the dependence of the IS, in the quoted clause, on verbs requiring explicit verbalisation, i.e. *verba dicendi* (*say, tell, claim, report*, etc.), *verba rogandi* (*ask, wonder, interrogate*, etc.)<sup>28</sup> and performative verbs not in the first person which make reference to a different time of utterance compared to the *ego-hic-nunc* discourse (cf. nota 11);
- c) the illocutionary function present in the quoting clause, i.e. the attitude or point of view, the standpoint of the speaker compared to what is expressed through IS in the quoted clause.

Let us now consider the data collected. Out of a total of 3,305 turns we have isolated 113 cases of IS, which correspond to 3.4%: of these, 111 are cases of subordinate IS and 2 are non-subordinate IS. The percentage number of instances of IS in the dialogues of the CIPPS corpus is decidedly low, probably in relation to the particular format and the particular pathology of the patients, as we shall see below in our analysis of the three above defined parameters.

As for parameter a), i.e. the distribution of IS in the turns of the therapist (the Giver) vs. those of the patient (the Follower), we can observe an almost total presence of IS in the Giver's turns (21 cases out of 23 – 91.3%) for Patient A, who tends to give very short answers and participates to a very small degree. The dialogues between the therapist and Patient A are basically a Q&A session conducted by the therapist, who attempts to stimulate the patient to explain/clarify what he means by some of his expressions (which are at times rather cryptic). Thus

<sup>28</sup>In our investigation we have excluded the so-called epistemic verbs (*believe, think, seem*, etc.) as such verbs do not always result in a real utterance being made.

the cases of IS are essentially composed of attempts on the Giver's part to return to what the Follower said *en passant*, without giving many explanations, such as in the case:

- (1) tu dici che la chiusura all'interno del mondo antecedente ti consente di riflettere meglio<lp>.

Whereas, Patient B speaks in dialect and passes from one topic to another – his computer infected by a virus, his having gone into space (sic), his brother, a presumed marriage, etc. – without following any logical pattern and often with an agitated tone of voice. He is a patient who takes normal facts and builds up stories that are totally unrelated to reality, giving rise to a chain of associations that develop in a highly confused way and it is he who makes the greatest use of IS (also because the Giver tends not to intervene) with 54 cases out of 62 – 87.1%; for instance:

- (2) nun dic' chesso' gghiut' 'ncopp' 'a lun' <sp>caca so' gghiut' 'ncopp' 'o spazio si<sp>.

These are frequently solipsistic discourses in which there is no real reference to another locutor who may have said something at a different time compared to the utterance in progress.

While for Patients C and D we find an almost equal number of cases of IS used by both the Giver and the Follower: 10 cases out of 23 for the Giver (43.5%) and 13 out of 23 for the Follower (56.5%) as far as Patient C is concerned, and 2 cases out of 5 used by the Giver (40.0%) and 3 out of 5 by the Follower (60.0%) as far as Patient D is concerned.

Patient C reacts promptly to the Giver's input, recounting predominantly unreal episodes (he is convinced that he has paranormal powers, that he is God, that he is immortal, etc.) regarding which the Giver invites him to clarify what he means, as in the case:

- (3) però d'altro canto dici che hai<ii><sp> la sensazione di non essere<ee>mai stato un'entità <aa> <sp> propria.

Patient D speaks in dialect and re-elaborates real episodes and stories in a personal way, responding quickly to the Giver's input and giving rise to a balanced dialogue. However, as for Patient B, here too the Follower makes use of IS without there being a precise reference to what another locutor said at a different time compared to that of the current utterance; for example:

- (4) tu# glielo dicevi ma perché non voleva uscire con me la sera.

As far as the use of IS by the Giver and the Follower is concerned, we can generally observe that the former uses it primarily with reference to what the latter has said in order to encourage him to specify and better explain what he meant; the Follower, on the other hand, often uses IS to refer to voices, entities or locutors that are not well defined, as in:



- (5) addirittura mi dice che <sp> quando sarò in grado di  
muovere tutto l'universo <sp> non sarò ancora sicuro che lui è Dio!,

thus manifesting his difficulty in clearly expressing a thought, a point of view, etc. and his tendency to proceed in an often solipsistic way despite responding positively to the Giver's input.

Let us now consider parameter b), i.e. with regard to the presence in the quoting clause of *verba dicendi* or *verba rogandi*. There are no cases of performative verbs not in the first person referring to a time of utterance different from the *ego-hic-nunc* discourse.

The *verba dicendi*, i.e. those indicating actions or processes linked to exophasic verbal activity like *say*, *speak*, *chat*, *explain*, etc., are the main instrument with which quotations of utterances are explicitly introduced (cf. Lorenzetti 2010, 1560). In our analysis, all those cases which imply exophasic verbal activity by the locutor whose utterance is being reported in the quoted phrase have been considered as cases of IS with *verba dicendi* (in the quoting clause).

In the CIPPS corpus we have analysed, *verba dicendi* make up the overwhelming majority: in the 111 cases of subordinate IS, there are 105 cases of *verba dicendi* in the quoting clause (94.6%), and of these the verb *dire* accounts for almost all the occurrences: 101 times (96.3% of all the occurrences of *verba dicendi*), for instance:

- (6) ma tu <sp> quando sei entrato dalla porta mi hai detto che qualcuno  
<sp> avrebbe mandato un microbo.

The other occurrences regard the verb *spiegare* (3 occurrences – 2.8% of all the occurrences of *verba dicendi*), as in:

- (7) spiega un poco com'è <unclear> cosa #<F#240> ti senti#,

and the verb *lamentarsi* (1 occurrence – 0.9% of all the occurrences of *verba dicendi*), as in:

- (8) qualche volta ti sei lamentato <sp> [ . . . ] di <ii> permanere  
<ee> nel mondo antecedente.

The *verba rogandi* (*ask*, *interrogate* etc.), relative to the concrete action of asking, also imply exophasic verbal activity; as there are 6 of these in the CIPPS corpus (5.4%) they therefore represent a small minority. Occurrences of the verb *chiedere* (2 occurrences – 33.4% of all the occurrences of *verba rogandi*), as in:

- (9) chiedi al dottore se devi prendere le medicine,

of the pronominal form *chiedersi* (2 occurrences – 33.4% of all the occurrences of *verba rogandi*), as in:

- (10) mi chiedevo perché diceva ciò che non è conosciuto,

followed by the verb *domandare* in the pronominal form *domandarsi* (1 occurrence – 16.6% of all the occurrences of *verba rogandi*), as in:

- (11) mi domando io <sp> che <ee> <sp> che <ee> che <ee> che funzione ha  
</NOISE>} <sp>,

and finally of the verb *rispondere* (1 occurrence – 16.6% of all the occurrences of *verba rogandi*), as in:

- (12) {<dialect> me rispondeva <aa> ca nun pozz' veni' nun pozz'/nun  
voglio veni' rispondev' </dialect>}.

Finally, let us consider parameter c), i.e. the illocutionary function present in the quoting clause which, as we have seen, expresses the attitude of the locutor towards what is expressed through IS in the quoted clause.

The most frequently represented illocutionary function is the semantically most neutral one, so to speak, represented by the verb *say* which, in our opinion, meets a dual need: it allows the Giver to refer promptly and in the simplest possible way to what the Follower has just said and ask for explanations, clarification, etc.; whereas, it allows the Follower to proceed from one topic to another and from one association to another almost automatically and, as we have seen, often solipsistically, and thus without worrying about finding another and semantically more marked verb.

The other illocutionary functions present to a somewhat minor extent are communicating a mood (as in the verb *explain*), expressing malcontent and resentment (as in the verb *complain*), asking a question/wondering (as in the verb *ask* and *wonder*) and, finally, replying/answering (as in the verb *answer*).

## 5 Conclusions

Certainly the cases of IS collected from the CIPPS corpus are few. Nevertheless, this does not prevent us from identifying some interesting features of the speech of schizophrenic patients – in our case engaged in therapeutic dialogue – observed through the magnifying glass of IS.

The tendency of these patients – as clearly emerges in the case of Patient B with little encouragement from the therapist – is that already seen in § 3.1 which is typical of the schizophrenic monologue, through which they are immersed in a sort of entirely personal language game characterised by verbal incoherence, semantic “drift”, frequent cases of solipsis, etc. Whereas, in the therapeutic dialogue they must necessarily interact with the therapist and hence answer his questions and respond to his input.

The presence or otherwise of examples of IS in the patients’ more or less coherent and articulated answers to the therapist’s questions is particularly worthy of note as it shows us if and how far they make reference to other people’s speech (or their own at a time different from that of the utterance in progress), expressing at an illocutionary level the extent of their personal involvement, their way of comprehending and re-elaborating the speech of others through their own words – as we have seen in § 2 – which have passed through the filter of their experience and sensibility.

Despite the therapist's input, there are few examples of IS in the turns of the schizophrenic patients – with the exception of the somewhat unusual case of Patient B (cf. § 4) – and this illustrates that they have a highly limited ability to enter into a dialogue using other people's speech and to re-elaborate what others have said.

The presence of IS – albeit minimal in this case – thus constitutes a fairly significant observation point in that it confirms the major difficulties of schizophrenic patients – who, as we have seen, tend to proceed in a frequently solipsistic way – in adopting a reflective point of view (a consequence of the more general capacity for metalinguistic reflection through which the speaker may choose to discuss and explain their own words, just as the listener can ask for explanations and so on (cf. De Mauro 1995<sup>3</sup>, 128), in order to control their own discourse and, above all, in their discourse and in their answers to the therapist's questions, to relate to what others have said and therefore take part in a polyphonic dialogue with speakers who are present or absent.

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# Pragmatics disorders and indirect reports in psychotic language



Antonino Bucca

**Abstract** In this paper I deal with both direct and indirect reports. Direct reporting in schizophrenic discourse has to be interpreted in context and thus everything we say about direct reports involves elucidating the context of use and thus providing indirect reports of direct reports. The context includes the imaginary voice (an auditory hallucination) and a situation in which the patient makes complaints to institutional figures about his own situation. According to a series of recent and very important studies, psychotic language ‘disorders’ would manifest essentially schizophrenic patients’ pragmatic difficulties.

In this essay I look at some aspects of pragmatic schizophrenic difficulties, and the different forms that indirect reports in psychotic language can take. This study originates from psychopathological stories and from first-person clinical experiences. So, using numerous autograph materials (letters, denunciations, poetry, drawings, etc.) and a large number of interviews with dozens of psychotic subjects, I will try to examine the ‘disorders’ of schizophrenic language and paranoid indirect reports. Autobiographic writings of the subjects, and their statements reveal the function and the communicative values of psychotic discourse. In the end, these forms of communication – even before being considered as disorders or deficits – constitute real forms of *linguistic psychotic use* and therefore are to be considered really important for pragmatic psychopathological research.

**Keywords** psychotic language · schizophrenic discourse · paranoid rhetoric · pragmatic difficulties · indirect reports.

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## 1 Introduction

In this paper I deal with both direct and indirect reports. Direct reporting in schizophrenic discourse has to be interpreted in context and thus everything we say about direct reports involves elucidating the context of use and thus providing indirect reports of direct reports. The context includes the imaginary voice (an auditory hallucination) and a situation in which the patient makes complaints to institutional figures about his own situation. This article, *en passant*, offers materials and evidence for the conflation of direct and indirect discourse – see Capone 2016ad.

According to a series of recent and very important studies, psychotic language ‘disorders’ would manifest essentially schizophrenic patients’ pragmatic difficulties. In fact, schizophrenic subjects often have difficulties in understanding and/or in producing statements: that is, they manifest communication difficulties. The communicative difficulties of psychotic speakers are evident in particular referential, relational, contextual, and, indeed, discursive linguistic uses.

In this essay I look at some aspects of pragmatic schizophrenic difficulties, and the different forms that indirect reports in psychotic language can take. In particular, I concentrate on cases of mixed indirect reports, where the narrative indirect report contextualizes the accompanying direct report. Mixed indirect reports are cases in which the report conflates a micro-narration of the utterance event and details about fragments of the utterance, which are cited verbatim.

The fragments cited verbatim are flagged by quotation marks, at least in written discourse. In oral discourse, the quotation marks are reconstructed by the hearer on the basis of pragmatic clues or intonational patterns. Capone (2016d) has clarified that most cases of indirect reports should be interpreted on the model of mixed indirect reports and that the hearer is presented with the task/onus of distinguishing between voices – such as the reporter’s voice and the voice of the reported subject. Pragmatics, rather than grammatical devices such as quotation marks, is involved in ordinary cases of indirect reports.

As is well known, psychotic experiences are characterized by specific emotional, cognitive and linguistic conditions by which the delusional subject is represented and interacts with other human beings. For example, some forms of psychotic discourse seem to be determined by schizophasia and schizophrenic hallucinatory ‘voices’. In other cases – on a different psychotic side, at least as far as linguistic uses are concerned – rather than the pragmatic difficulties of the psychotic subject, the quantity of expressions of indirect reports increases: as evidenced by, for example, the written claims of paranoiacs subjects; i.e., subjects with clinical diagnosis of Delusional Disorder (DD)<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, apart from the superficial transparency of statements, psychotic linguistic productions communicate a message that can be referred to the denunciation

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<sup>1</sup>As for the psychopathological and clinical characteristics of the Delusional Disorder or, exactly, of the nineteenth-century Paranoia described by Kraepelin (1899), see also: Bleuler 1912; Winokur 1977; APA 2013.

of delusional facts and circumstances: that means, they express the persecutory obsessions of the patient. These delusional expressions can be predominantly oral (see just schizophasic-schizophrenic discourses), or especially written (in this case see the querulous paranoid texts). In the case of schizophasic oral productions, the psychotic-schizophrenic discourse seems to favor those forms of communication that we can propose to define as pragmatics *of the self*. Their context is constituted, on the one hand, by an imaginary ego; on the other hand, the context is constituted by a situation of judiciary actions. Instead, in the case of querulous paranoid written productions, the psychotic-paranoiac discourse seems to favor those forms of communication we can point to as pragmatics of discourse concerning *institutional figures*. The institutional figures provide the context in which the psychotic patient talks about his delirating experiences (Bucca 2013; 2014b).

Reporting the psychotic language of schizophrenic patients involves reporting the context in which their speech is situated; without such a context, the speech is uninterpretable. Hence it would be close to the truth to say that dealing with direct reports of schizophrenic patients looks like dealing with indirect reports. There is an indirect element to that speech, which we need to elucidate and expand on.

At a time when a psychotic subject comes into contact with another one, in addition to the specific characteristics of delusional forms (exactly schizophrenic and/or paranoid), a decisive role is also played by the ability of the patient to represent and/or recognize the interlocutor. Obviously, these emotional, cognitive and relational processes are also determined by the psychotic subject's ability in theory of mind (ToM), and/or in the perception of empathic feelings. It's known that schizophrenic subjects present considerable difficulties in the correct identification of another person, in empathic abilities and in theory of mind (ToM). Paranoiac subjects, conversely, do not appear to present such problems, they seem to be able to share the representations of theory of mind (ToM) and to enter into empathic tune, preferably with other lucid delusional subjects (Bucca 2009, 2012).

This study originates from psychopathological stories and from first-person clinical experiences. So, using numerous autograph materials (letters, denunciations, poetry, drawings, etc.) and a large number of interviews with dozens of psychotic subjects, I will try to examine the 'disorders' of schizophrenic language and paranoiac indirect reports. Autobiographic writings of the subjects, and their statements reveal the function and the communicative values of psychotic discourse. In fact, on the one hand, schizophrenic discourse refers to the hallucinatory voice that the sufferer perceives. On the other hand, in the case of paranoiac narrative, the patient's talk is linked to delusional rhetorical claims. So, through the examination of these particular forms of communication, I will try to bring out the meanings that can be extracted from verbigeration language and psychotic indirect reports. In the end, these forms of communication – even before being considered as disorders or deficits – constitute real forms of *linguistic psychotic use* and therefore are to be considered really important for pragmatic psychopathological research.



## 2 Pragmatic disorders of schizophrenic discourse

After the suggestive nineteenth-century insights by Emil Kraepelin (1899) and following studies by Eugen Bleuler (1911) and Sergio Piro (1967), schizophrenic language has been at the center of many research projects in recent decades, in the context of current neurosciences and of cognitive sciences (Andreasen 1979; Frith, Allen 1988). Investigations of the past arise from clinical observations in psychiatric hospitals and often concerned the *sense* and/or the *nonsense* of schizophrenic linguistic productions. Indeed, these studies mainly analyzed the incomprehensible expressions of schizophrenic subjects, i.e., their so-called “word salads” (Piro 1992; Bucca 2014b).

But even when schizophrenic linguistic productions appear incomprehensible or meaningless, the phonological, syntactic, and even semantic, structures of the statements seem to be preserved, apart from eloquence that in these subjects is often impoverished (DeLisi 2001; Moro *et al.* 2015). Even in the case of “logolatria” (i.e., in the “cult of the word” or in the so-called ‘play of words’, see classical studies: Tanzi, Lugaro 1923), in the case of stereotype and language assonances (Lecours, Vanier-Clément 1976), the ‘disorders’ of schizophrenic language should be considered essentially pragmatic. In fact, schizophrenic subjects may have difficulties in understanding and producing statements. These communication difficulties seem to have originated from schizophrenic cognitive disorders and would be highlighted in referential, relational, contextual, and discursive uses of the same statements (Colle *et al.* 2013).

Therefore, psychotic language and, in particular, schizophrenic discourses show the communicative and pragmatic difficulties of the patients (Cummings 2009, 2014). These difficulties seem to be influenced by various schizophrenic cognitive disorders. Some recent research has sought to clarify the nature of language disorders and the communication of schizophrenic subjects, leading to the more general and complex cognitive disorders of these subjects. Thus, in several scientific surveys, the role of intelligence quotient (IQ), capacity in executive functions (EF), and theory of mind (ToM) of the patients was examined. In addition to these, the various interactions between these psychic functions have been studied which, in fact, could play an important role in the pragmatic and communicative processes of these subjects (Bosco, Parola 2017).

As regards the role of the intelligence quotient (IQ), it has been observed that generally in schizophrenia it is lower than the norm. However, according to some research, more than IQ deficits, difficulties in executive functions (EF) determine most of the cognitive disorders in schizophrenic subjects. These difficulties in executive functions (EF) would be the basis for pragmatic schizophrenic disorders. Indeed, together with the difficulties of planning, prediction, and/or cognitive flexibility, they will lead to a series of general communicative difficulties such as poor attention to verbal and nonverbal expressions, the content of speech, and communicative interaction. And in particular, the difficulties in executive functions (EF) would be the basis of the scarce ability of schizophrenic subjects in

understanding metaphorical expressions, ironical or sarcastic jokes, proverbs and/or the different forms of figurative or narrative language (Sponheim *et al.* 2003; Marini *et al.* 2008).

Presumably, and this is prediction of the theory by Capone (2016d), schizophrenic patients have problems in indirectly reporting utterances by other people, in cases in which those utterances present at least some parts that are not to be interpreted literally, that is to say cases of irony or jokes. Capone (2016d) says that an indirect report of such ironies or jokes cannot be felicitous unless it concentrates on speaker's meaning, rather than literal meaning. Thus, it follows that schizophrenic patients should have problems in reporting indirectly non-serious utterances, including jokes sarcasm and irony.

However, it is not yet clear enough how pragmatic disorders of schizophrenic subjects can be explained solely in terms of difficulties in the executive functions (EF) of the patients. For this reason, in other research projects, the cognitive (or mentalisation) difficulties in the theory of mind (ToM) of schizophrenics have been studied. In fact, little attention is devoted to the mental states of the other (i.e., of interlocutor) and, more generally, the lack of interest in the intersubjective relational exchanges of the patients. Therefore, the difficulties in theory of mind (ToM) are revealed in their scarce communicative approaches, ambiguous referential functions, in violation of "Grice's maxims" and their unclear discourses (Frith, Allen 1988; Frith, Corcoran 1996; Sarfati, Hardy-Baylé 1999).

In several of these studies, patients have been asked to solve "false belief" tasks, to cope with "relevance in conversational exchanges" or to demonstrate their abilities in "understanding the stories". Again, in this case, there seems to be some correlation between the difficulties in the theory of mind (ToM) of schizophrenic subjects, their lack of understanding of metaphors, proverbs, ironies and, more generally, their problems in the different forms of figurative language, indirect reports and/or recognition of communicative failures<sup>2</sup>.

In constructing an indirect report, a schizophrenic patient has to take into consideration the intentions of the reported speaker (the original speaker). He is not reporting mere words, as in the case of quotation, but he has to sum up the gist of the discourse and make reference to an interpretation work which is, admittedly, beyond his powers. Our prediction, therefore, is that indirect reports by schizophrenic patients should be normally unsatisfactory and infelicitous, with respect to the standards of normal/ordinary speakers. The other prediction, instead, is that they should cope satisfactorily with reporting utterances verbatim, that is to say in the use of literal quotation. When a discourse is quoted, the words are referred to verbatim and, thus, there can be no difficulties with respect to ironies and sarcasm, or jokes. The possibility of sarcasm, irony and jokes simply cannot arise (see Capone's paper 2013).

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<sup>2</sup>For more details on these studies see: Corcoran *et al.* 1995; Abu-Akel 1999; Langdon *et al.* 2002; Mazza *et al.* 2008; Mo *et al.* 2008; Gavilán, García-Albea 2011; Bosco *et al.* 2012; Norrick 2016; Wettstein 2016; Capone 2016abc.

But how can these considerations be reconciled with the fact that sometimes schizophrenic subjects produce irony and sarcasm? The only way to reconcile these apparently clashing considerations is to see production and comprehension as different cognitive tasks. It is not impossible that the schizophrenic subjects have an intuitive understanding of what they say, while interpreting another person's discourse means using a theory of mind (ToM). Thus, it is possible that the comprehension process is a more difficult task for the patient.

Although there seems to be experimental evidence (even if not decisive one) of difficulties in executive functions (EF) and/or in theory of mind (ToM) and pragmatic and communicative disorders in schizophrenic subjects, some studies suggest that the best results would come from studying interactions between these psychic functions and, precisely, the evidence of the pragmatic difficulties of schizophrenic discourse. In this regard, several research projects seem to demonstrate the role of the difficulties in executive functions (EF) and in theory of mind (ToM), and disorders in pragmatic and communicative processes of such subjects (see, in particular, studies by Giora 2002; Brüne, Bodenstern 2005). For example, in these cases, some researchers have assessed the understanding of indirect reports as well as that of idiomatic and non-idiomatic metaphors in schizophrenic subjects. The results seem to demonstrate that pragmatic difficulties in indirect reports and understanding of idiomatic metaphors would be mainly related to difficulties in theory of mind (ToM), while the difficulties of understanding non-idiomatic metaphors would be mainly related to the difficulties in executive functions (EF) (Giora 2002; Champagne-Lavau, Stip 2010).

In schizophrenic discourse, therefore, the communicative and relational difficulties of the patients would be evident (Cummings 2014, 2017). A long series of researches in which different scales of assessment of communicative and linguistic abilities have been used seem to confirm these pragmatic disorders in schizophrenic subjects. Just look at the results of the various surveys in which the comprehension and production of the statements, and the discursive abilities of the sick through the "Profile of Functional Impairment in Communication (PFIC)", the "Schizophrenia Communication Disorders Scale", the "Proverb Test", or through the analysis of "Semi-Structured Interviews" (Bazin *et al.* 2005; Bosco, Parola 2017; Haas *et al.* 2015). Or consider the investigations that have allowed us to evaluate schizophrenic ability in hearing recognition of the prosodic and emotional modulation of language: in this case, pragmatic difficulties seem to be related to hallucinatory experiences (Leitman *et al.* 2005).

Other important studies have also concerned understanding and producing deceptive, ironic or metaphorical statements. In this case, the expressive aspects (verbal and nonverbal), and the elements of direct and indirect speech have been examined through the "Assessment Battery for Communication (ABaCo)": even in such researches, schizophrenic subjects appear to have the worst results in pragmatic abilities, and especially inferential ones (Sacco *et al.* 2008; Bosco, Parola 2017).

### 3 Schizophrenic schizophasia and paranoiac rhetoric

Despite the results of these studies, however, the nature of pragmatic disorders in schizophrenia is still not clear enough, and it is also unclear whether they are actually due to disturbances of executive functions (EF) and/or in the theory of mind (ToM). As some scholars have already noted, an important pragmatic context for better observing the functioning of the schizophrenic discourse could concern the analysis of the various forms of inference in the linguistic uses of such subjects (Cummings 2009, 2014).

But probably for the understanding of characteristics of the schizophrenic discourse it would be useful to go back to the clinical observations of the past and, as we said, attempts to understand *sense* and/or of *nonsense* of schizophasic language productions (Piro 1967, 1992). Schizophasia and/or verbigeration manifest themselves through different forms of *incomprehensible* language. However, as the nineteenth-century studies seem to clarify, there are substantial linguistic differences between the forms of *schizophasia* in which, exactly, it is possible to seek and understand the meaning of the statements; and the forms of *verbigeration* (i.e., word salads, verbal assonance, word games, etc.) where the statements appear to have no meaning (Pennisi 1998; 2003; Bucca 2014ab).

Indeed, if comprehension disorders in schizophrenic subjects are determined by hallucinatory perceptions, the schizophasic aspects of production can also be considered verbal forms referable to imaginary persons (different from the self): the other imaginary person perceived by the patient, precisely through the hallucinatory voices. The communicative and discursive exchanges (and often also the interpersonal relationships) of the schizophrenic subjects are directed, therefore, to another abstract self, that is to another imaginary person ‘within the self’. Just to talk to this unusual figure of the other, the subject seems to use his *delusional jargon*: that means, apparently incomprehensible expressions, or rather glossolalic and/or schizophasic linguistic forms (Bucca 2014ab).

Thus, schizophrenic schizophasia is characterized by superficial incomprehensible verbal productions, in which – even through psychiatric interviews – it is possible to understand the ‘encrypted’ or personal meaning of the statements: i.e., the ‘private’ message encoded by the patient. Whereby, unlike verbigeration forms or ‘word salads’, schizophasia appears in the form of a solipsistic delusional and hallucinatory jargon that makes it similar to a glossolalic linguistic ‘creation’ (Piro 1992; Bucca 2014ab).

However, schizophasic linguistic forms were observed above all in psychiatric hospitals in the past, also because of the long periods of hospitalization of the subjects. The recent evolution of treatment conditions and therapeutic protocols (pharmacological, psychotherapeutic, occupational, etc.) of psychoses has led to a marked change in schizophrenic manifestations, and therefore also in linguistic manifestations. Thus, for several decades, the incomprehensible aspects of schizophrenic language are increasingly characterized by verbigeration forms similar to those of aphasia or the verbal confusion occurring in Alzheimer’s

disease. Probably, schizophrenic schizophasia was a linguistic condition (mainly characterized by oral glossolalic production) typical of the psychotic conditions of the past. While now – apart from a few rare exceptions – scholars happen to study the verbigeration psychotic language productions, the same ones that are also being investigated by today’s neuroscience. In many cases, however, such research seems to be devoid of the introspective, descriptive and/or historical-philosophical perspective of the past (Foucault 1972).

If, on the one hand, schizophrenic schizophasia was the oral linguistic production typical of the conditions of the hospitalization of the past, on the other hand, querulous paranoid can be considered the characteristic linguistic form of paranoiac rhetorical productions (i.e., of delusional disorder – DD) expressed, exactly, mainly in written form (letters, complaints, memorials, etc.). Written texts, the result of a long obsessive repetition work (mainly performed during periods of internment and/or self-isolation), allow the sick to arrange, fix, and build all the elements of his morbid ideation.

The paranoid delusion discourse is *clear*. Indeed, the rhetorical formulas, argumentation styles, and persuasive intentions that the patient tends to use are quite obvious. In these cases, the delusional claim is often expressed in a language full of metaphorical formulations that relate to the interpretation of facts or circumstances, and the relative judgments of truth and reality. So, much more than in schizophrenic expressions, the use of figurative language, metaphors, irony, sarcasm, double senses is richer, varied and ‘creative’ in the written and oral productions of lucid delusional paranoid subjects. And, often, the paranoid subject seems to take on the ‘role’ of an ancient *parresiastes*<sup>3</sup>, since his ‘oratory’ exercise is actually oriented towards the revelation of *de facto* truth.

The paranoiac discourse, in the informal (oral) and above all in the formal form (the written word of querulous productions), must necessarily be clear as it brings an evident message: the denunciation by the subject of his conditions of victim of dangerous persecutory plots. Even in this case, however, it is necessary to clarify the figure of the interlocutor. In fact, the referents of paranoiac discourse are made up of all agencies (or all institutions) to which the patient’s complaints can be forwarded in order to obtain justice. Paranoiac privileged interlocutors, therefore, are represented by institutional figures: lawyers, judges, doctors, politicians, journalists, priests, etc. (Bucca 2013, 2015).

So I think it is possible to admit that schizophrenic discourses are directed towards utterances concerning *the self*, while the paranoiac discourses are directed towards the pragmatics of utterances concerning public or *institutional figures*. In these different psychotic expressive forms a decisive role is also played by the ability of the subject to represent and recognize the interlocutor’s intentions (through a theory of mind – ToM); and also in the ability to try empathic feelings (namely trying to empathize with another persons’ experience). As we know, in fact, schizophrenic

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<sup>3</sup>On the use of the word *parresia*, on its relations with telling the truth, and on the figure of *parresiastes* in ancient Greece, see: Foucault 1985.

subjects have considerable difficulties in correctly individuating people different from themselves, in empathic abilities and in theory of mind (ToM). Paranoiac subjects, instead, do not exhibit such difficulties, although they may come in tune (and thus feel empathic feelings) preferably with other lucid delusional subjects (Bucca 2009, 2012).

## 4 Psychotic linguistic uses

Although it is not yet clear enough how problems in executive functions (EF) and/or in theory of mind (ToM) can determine the disorders of schizophrenic discourse, according to various cognitive neurosciences research projects and especially cognitive and clinical pragmatics studies, psychotic expressions make evident the communicative difficulties of the subjects: that would be, just, difficulties of pragmatic nature (Cummings 2009, 2016; Colle *et al.* 2013).

In particular, the problems of schizophrenic subjects are known in understanding their communicative and relational failures or, sometimes, in recognizing misleading statements. But are we really sure that in all cases schizophrenic subjects are not able to understand and/or produce ironic statements, metaphorical or sarcastic expressions?

Let's see some clinical report of the past. Many examples of schizophrenic linguistic and communicative uses, indeed, can also be found in psychiatric nosographies: that is, in the transcripts of psychiatric talks conducted and recorded in the old mental hospitals. In this regard, a relevant aspect concerns the use of figurative language. There are several examples of schizophrenic metaphorical use in the numerous cases reported in psychiatric nosographs (Piro 1967).

Between these, we can cite a curious metaphorical expression taken from a series of clinical interviews with a schizophrenic subject. In this case, it is really interesting to note the use of the word “*nfuso*” (inspired by the dialectal voices of Neapolitans) (Piro 1992: 68). As the long clinical-semantic work of understanding this term demonstrates, the patient uses the word “*nfuso*”, giving it an evident *metaphorical twist* (1). In fact, following the figurative itinerary and/or the metaphorical meaning that is assigned to the term, “*nfuso*” would be the appellative attributed by the same schizophrenic subject to a male nurse of the mental hospital at which he was hospitalized. The nurse was considered “*nfuso*” by the sick person because his character appeared “soft” or “wet”: that is, in other words, the sick person judges or considers the nurse “good”. The “good” character of the nurse, therefore, was judged “soft”, just like “soft” and “wet” are the octopus just fished. In this example, therefore, it is evident the figurative transfer and/or metaphorical transposition of the word “*nfuso*” which is used by the schizophrenic subject with the personal meaning of a nickname (Piro 1992: 68).

(1) figurative-metaphoric itinerary of word “*nfuso*”

<i>male nurse</i>	good	soft	wet	octopus	<i>'nfuso</i>
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Of course, in a clinical study conducted in old psychiatric hospitals, many other examples of this type can be found. The figurative linguistic uses – metaphors, irony, sarcasm – in forms of schizophrenic communication would not be so rare as they may seem. The problem, rather, is to try to interpret and/or understand exactly the sense and the nonsense of schizophrenic and/or glossolalic linguistic productions. In addition, in the psychopathological context of psychoses, there are studies on delusional disorder (DD) in which paranoid rhetorical forms appear with different communicative and linguistic uses compared to psycholinguistic evidences, and to pragmatic difficulties of schizophrenic speech (Bucca 2009, 2013).

In the case of paranoid language (namely, of delusional disorder language), the patient’s interlocutor is not an imaginary subject, as in schizophrenia. As I have said, the other from the self to whom the querulous paranoid often addresses his/her writings is represented by institutional figures (health, judicial, administrative, etc.): therefore, like in their lucid delusion, the language that these sick people use is clear, transparent, direct, hardly misunderstood. The capabilities of paranoid subjects in theory of mind (ToM), and/or empathy are also typical. Thus, as in the common language, even in the communicative and discursive uses of these subjects, we can see numerous examples of figurative language (namely metaphorical and ironic expressions, or proverbs), of forms of indirect reports, or narrative tendencies (Bucca 2012; 2013).

In the following excerpt from a psychiatric interview with a paranoid subject (who discusses his delusional story), we have a clear example of metaphorical use: see the words “salt” and “gasoline”. In the same excerpt we also have an ironic and/or sarcastic expression (see the relative phrase to word “flame”) (2):

(2) L’intrusione della polizia, in questo caso c’è stato un omicidio [...], però non possiamo aggiungere noi *sale* su una ferita [...] o *benzina* sul fuoco. Perché l’azione, l’intervento della polizia e dei carabinieri, d’accordo che hanno la *fiamma* sul cappello... (Bucca 2009: 145).

[Police intrusion, in this case there was a murder (...), but we can not add “salt” to a wound (...) or “gasoline” on the fire. Because the action, police intervention, we agree that they have the “flame” on the hat...].

This short excerpt and the next one (3) are taken from paranoid language studies and, in particular, from research on communicative aspects (argumentative, persuasive and/or rhetorical) of the discourse of these patients:

(3) Lo stesso pretore è ignorante [...] è prodiga amministratrice di *ingiustizia*. Infatti mi ha condannato per reati mai commessi. Con imperterrita faccia tosta più dura del *diamante* la svergognata, invece di processarmi e giudicarmi secondo scienza e coscienza come da me sempre e continuamente richiesto [...] si ostina a voler ripetutamente superare i limiti del ridicolo (Bucca 2013: 40).

[The same judge is ignorant (...) he is a prodigal dispenser of “injustice”. Indeed he has sentenced me for crimes never committed. With an undaunted insolent face tough as “diamond”, the shameless, instead of judging me according to science and conscience as always and continuously demanded of me (...) persists in wanting to repeatedly overcome the limits of ridicule].

As can be easily observed, even in this excerpt from a complaint to the judicial authorities of a paranoid subject there are several examples of use of figurative language. Indeed, in these short sentences we can notice the current use of ironic-sarcastic terms (see the context of the sentence in which the word “injustice” is used), and metaphors (see the word “diamond”). Therefore, in the case of psychotic-paranoid subjects – even more so than in the case of psychotic-schizophrenic subjects (especially if these patients use schizophasic linguistic forms) –, there are noticeable communicative and/or discursive uses in which it is possible to find many elements that demonstrate use of rhetorical figures (similitude, metaphors, periphrasis, metonymies, etc.), of ironic or sarcastic expressions, and/or of proverbs (Bucca 2009, 2013, 2014ab).

So, psychiatric interviews and/or autograph writings seem to demonstrate the use of figurative language in schizophrenia and paranoia. Probably even in schizophasic and/or schizophrenic language productions there are many examples of indirect reports. As in case of paranoid language, in which indeed we often find expressions of this type. Let’s see the examples (4) and (5).

(4) Senza che gli facessi niente, forse vedeva in me, eventualmente, suo padre: «*non ‘nti ‘nvincinari*», con una voce maschile metteva paura, “*non ‘nti ‘nvincinari*, lasciarmi stare che sto male”. “*Ma chi ha?*”. Infatti gliel’avevo detto pure al medico...<sup>4</sup> (Bucca 2013: 135).

[Without doing anything to her, maybe he saw in me, eventually, his father: “Do not come near me”, with a masculine voice she was frightening, “do not come near me, let me be sick”. “What’s wrong with you?”. In fact, I also told the doctor about this...].

(5) Mi chiamano a caserma di *carabinieri*, l’appuntatu pa strada dici: “*u sapi ci voli parrari u marasciallu, ciavi a diri du paroli*” (Bucca 2013: 143).

[They call me in police offices, the agent tells me, “he wants to talk to you, the police officer, he has say a few words to you”].

These are cases of mixed indirect reports, where the narrative part completes and integrates the direct report section. These examples are interesting because

<sup>4</sup> The expressions in italics of examples (4) and (5) are voices in Sicilian dialect.



the narrative section provides the context within which the direct report is interpretable – without which it would not be possible to arrive at a plausible and coherent interpretation of the direct report.

In example (4), the narrative part adds an interesting comment on the quality of the voice reported, which was threatening (or in any case was taken by the hearer to be threatening). Direct reports normally report what is said, but leave unsaid the tone of voice of the speaker (so that one cannot easily distinguish serious from non-serious speech in many cases, if just the literal words are reported). Indirect reports, introduced as comments on indirect reports, can at least disambiguate or make clear what the quality of the reported voice is and, thus, add numerous and important clues for the interpretation of direct reports. The mixture of direct and indirect reports, thus, has the potential for complementing the features of direct reports, which may often be misleading as to the speaker's intentions (we often do not know how to interpret direct reports unless we have additional clues). Example (5) is also a mixture of direct and indirect reports and the indirect narrative specifies the location of the context, which is important in the interpretation of the words said.

## 5 Conclusion

Summing up, according to various cognitive and clinical pragmatic studies, psychotic language and especially patients' communicative difficulties would be clear pragmatic difficulties. In particular, it seems that the communicative and pragmatic difficulties of schizophrenic subjects would be due to their poor performance in executive functions (EF), theory of mind (ToM), social cognition, empathic feelings, and, more generally, to lack of adequacy to the communicative context. Instead, paranoid subjects do not appear to display any particular communication difficulties: apart from the (delusional) tendency of these subjects to isolation from the social context, and their obsessive-claim reference to judicial dialectics.

So, in the case of schizophrenia, the communicative conditions of these subjects are failures as they mostly violate "Grice's conversational maxims". However, according to some research, these communicative failures may also be determined by a schizophrenic form: or rather, by the delusional and hallucinatory *jargon* used by the subject. Even in the case of paranoia, according to my research, it is possible to identify a typical linguistic use. Indeed, the paranoid language – for the rest absolutely similar to the common conversational forms – is characterized by arguentative, persuasive, petulant logic-rhetorical discourse style: clearly determined by delusions of persecution, grandeur, claim, etc.

Although the communicative failures of psychotic subjects are quite evident, such difficulties may also depend on the *intentional choice* of *context* to which such subjects intend their statements to refer. In both cases this is, obviously, a delusional context. In the case of schizophrenia, as I was saying, the conversational context of the patient is predominantly constituted by the presence of another imaginary subject perceived through auditory hallucinations. In the case of paranoia, instead,

the conversational context is predominantly constituted by the formal-institutional space in which the patient gives vent to his obsessive claims.

Probably the ‘disorders’ of psychotic language may also depend on arbitrary choice of context in which the delirious intends to ‘speak’. So it seems likely that in such cases one can identify a particular and personal *psychic language use*. It is clear, however, that other studies are needed on such aspects of pragmatic difficulties and/or psychotic language uses. So, for a more detailed discussion on these issues, I refer to other work.

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