

# Philosophical and Linguistic Issues in Quotation Research

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There are many different varieties of quotation in natural language. These traditionally include so-called pure quotation (“*Cat*” is a three-letter word that rhymes with “*mat*”), as well as direct and indirect discourse. Philosophers of language have been fascinated with the self-referential aspects of pure and direct quotation, where language is used not to talk about the world, but about words. Linguists, meanwhile, have all but ignored these metalinguistic forms of quotation, discarding it as mere *mention* of language as opposed to genuine language *use*. Formal semanticists, inspired by Frege, have devoted much attention to indirect speech (and attitude) reports.

Over the past 15 years linguistics and philosophy have already joined forces to study (i) various issues relating to perspective shifting in indirect discourse across languages, including *de se* reports, logophoricity, and indexical shift, and (ii) the ubiquitous phenomenon of “mixed quotation” illustrated in (1) (e.g. in philosophy: Cappelen & Lepore 1997; in linguistics: Potts 2007).

(1) Quine said that quotation “has a certain anomalous feature”

In this introductory talk I present a very rough sketch of the current landscape of quotation research in the intersection of philosophy and linguistics, covering all the areas which will be exemplified at the workshop. In particular, the following five topics:

## 1. The distinction between direct and indirect speech

As pointed out above, linguists traditionally assume a rather rigid direct vs. indirect discourse distinction. Maier (2009, 2012), however, argues on the basis of data from Japanese and Ancient Greek, respectively, that the traditional categories of direct and indirect speech should be thought of rather as the end points of a quotation continuum. This idea resonates with some observations about reported speech in (non-Indo-European) languages that seem to have only one mode of reported speech, most closely resembling our direct speech. Examples of such languages are Matsigenka (Ludwig, Munro, Fleck, & Sauerland, 2009) and the infamous case of Pirahã (Everett, 2005, 2010).

## 2. Opacity and compositionality of quotation

Quotation seemingly violates a number of principles that are almost unanimously accepted and regarded as central elsewhere in the study of language. In quotations synonyms cannot be replaced by each other without changing the meaning of the quotation. Quotation thus seems to violate the principle of compositionality (Werning, 2004, 2005; Werning et al. eds., 2012), which is equivalent to the principle of substitution *salva significatione*: If one replaces the noun *furze* – we indicate meta-linguistic quotations by italics – in the quotation “*furze*” by its synonym *gorse*, the referent and hence the meaning of the quotation changes: the referent of “*furze*” is the expression *furze*, but that of “*gorse*” the expression *gorse*. Another, but related phenomenon is that quotation is referentially opaque and does not allow quantifying in.

## 3. Role shift in sign languages

A class of languages that at first sight behaves rather differently from German or English, are the various sign languages. Sign languages have a unique way of indicating reported speech, called role shift. It may consist in a slight shift of the head and torso, breaking eye contact with the current addressee, but often a marked facial expression or change in articulation will serve to shift the perspective to that of the reported speaker:

(2) JOHN  $\overline{\text{I TIRE}}^{\langle\text{---role shift}\rangle}$   
‘John was like, “I’m tired”’

Though often characterized as the signed analogue of direct speech, role shift is known to combine aspects of

both direct and indirect discourse (Herrmann & Steinbach 2007; Quer 2005). So how should we analyze it, semantically?

#### 4. The semantics of free indirect discourse

The literary style called free indirect discourse is a way to vividly describe what the protagonist in a story is thinking or saying. Interestingly, it exhibits characteristics of both direct and indirect discourse. The example below illustrates this mixture, as witness the indexical *tomorrow* from (1b) and the pronoun and tense forms of (1c).

(3) Oh, well, tomorrow she'd have time to write that review, Mary said to herself.

Although discussed in detail by narratologists, linguists and philosophers have said little about this mysterious hybrid. Schlenker (2004) has brought the phenomenon to the attention of theoretically minded linguists and philosophers, and it seems that this difficult crossover between philosophy, linguistics and literature is slowly gathering steam in the field of formal semantics.

#### 5. Varieties of subclausal quotation

Since Davidson (1979) put mixed quotation on the philosophical agenda, it has received a steady amount of attention from both linguists and philosophers. Closely related, and partly overlapping notions/phenomena include open quotation (Recanati, 2000, 2001, 2008) and scare quoting (e.g. *you have to be a part of the "old boys network."* cf. Predelli, 2003), both typically forms of what Potts (2007) calls subclausal quotation. So, the first issue in relation to mixed quotation is whether these phenomena can be subsumed under one header, or whether for example scare quotes and regular mixed quotes should be treated differently.

Secondly, as Davidson already pointed out, it seems mixed quotation involves simultaneous use and mention. Davidson's own analysis of this double nature, is couched in his so-called Demonstrative Theory of Quotation. Semanticists, and many philosophers of language, have objected to this theory, because, among other things, it has trouble dealing with the apparent compositionality and recursive potential of (mixed) quotation.

What remains is the observation that there are two levels of meaning at play in mixed quotation, but it is proving to be quite hard to pin down how these interact with each other. The interaction has been described in terms of presupposition (Geurts & Maier 2005); conventional implicature (Potts 2007); pragmatic enrichment (Recanati 2001); and, finally, as simply a matter of strictly compositional semantics (Werning 2011).

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