# REPORTING SPEECH IN NARRATIVE DISCOURSE: STYLISTIC AND IDEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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## Introduction

One of the most pervasive features of 'narrative texts' is the reporting of what was said. In this article, I propose to examine the representation of speech and its function in factual and fictional texts in order to consider the principles of organisation and selection that underlie any representation of speech and their stylistic effects. I will consider the various possibilities available to writers to represent what people said (or were perceived or imagined to have said), since the different options may influence the way the represented utterances are received and interpreted by readers.

Reporters can choose to aver, in other words, to be responsible for what they recount, or to detach themselves from the responsibility of what is being uttered by transferring the averral to other tellers. (These tellers may be people in the real world, in the case of factual recountings or created narrators in the case of fiction.) The text below exemplifies this point (the sentences are numbered for the purposes of reference):

Man Shot Dead After Car Blast

1 - A market trader was shot dead outside his home yesterday after two men blew up his car and van.

2 - Mr Alex Syme, aged 34, raced from his home in Hamilton, near Glasgow, Lanarkshire, as the vehicles went up in flames.

3 - He chased two men who had placed incendiary devices in the vehicles, causing an explosion which ripped the roof from the van.

4 - One of the men turned and fired a leaded shotgun into his stomach.

5 - Mr Syme, a father of two girls, aged 11 and six, staggered towards his home but collapsed before he could reach his door.

6 - A neighbour, Mrs Martha Riddock, said: "I came out when I heard his wife, Marion, screaming. Alex chased the men then I heard a    shot and he came staggering up the lane clutching his stomach."

7 - A relative said: "He was a quiet man who hardly spoke to anyone. We can't understand why this happened."

8 - Police are investigating a theory that Mr Syme was the victim of a market traders war.
The Guardian - 4/11/81

In this text, there is a teller who is not present explicitly in the discourse -- the newspaper reporter. This reporter gives voice to two people, Mrs Martha Riddock and a relative, who then become the recounters and evaluators of the same events. The reporter, by making other people speak, therefore, transfers the responsibility for averring that Alex Syme's wife screamed and he staggered, and that he was a "quiet man..." Here, the particular formulation chosen -- [I recount that] 'Mrs Riddock (or a relative) said that...', does not question the reported averral. Options however, like -- [I recount that] 'Mrs Riddock claimed that...' do. If the illocutionary verb 'claim' is chosen to 'gloss' a saying, what the reporter is doing is to 'detach' her/himself from the responsibility of what is being reported ('Mrs Riddock claims something but I do not aver what she says, I simply report it'). By contrast, if the reporting verb is 'say', the reporter is neutral in relation to the supposed saying. I will discuss this point below.

Tellers can use different stylistic options to report sayings. Thus, the writer of the text above could report the same words in the following ways:

> Mrs Martha Riddock said: "I came out when I heard his wife, Marion, screaming. Alex chased the men then I heard a shot and he came staggering up the lane clutching his stomach."
> or

> Mrs Riddock said that she came out when she heard...

> or even

> Mrs Riddock described the events...

Words supposedly uttered by somebody in a real interactive situation can, therefore, be interpreted by reporters and retold differently according to different points of view and according to different social conventions and roles. What we have in written factual narrative discourse, as Fairclough (1988) suggests, is 'representation of speech' instead of a "transparent report of what was said or written [because] there is always a decision to interpret and represent" (p.1) what was supposedly said. A recounter is a social agent "located in a network of a social relation" (Kress, 1985:5) and has a specific place in a social structure, reflecting its values. Her/his texts will also reflect these values. As a consequence, the different stylistic options of speech representation may affect the ways narratives are received and interpreted by readers and offer powerful strategies for writers to convey specific meanings.

My basic assumption is that written interaction in narrative texts is based on real interaction, though represented in a reduced and tidied-up form. The existing descriptions of speech representation (Genette, 1980, Leech and Short, 1981, Dali, 1981, to mention just a few) concentrate exclusively on individual utterances. I intend to use here not only individual utterances, but consider speech representation as part units of discourse, like the exchange structure (Coulthard, 1977) and the turn taking system (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974).

## Characteristics of Represented Interaction: Organisation and Structural Features

A report of interaction in a factual text is in a sense a reduction of an initial communicative event, especially because the reported talk is embedded in a text which has a different purpose from the original social encounter. This speech is therefore a 'supposed' transcription of what

someone said in a real interactive situation. The reporter is either a witness
of the speech act or a participant in an exchange. In reality, however, most
reporters reconstruct or 'represent' the real speech event (making the text
very similar to fiction) and therefore interfere in this representation, since
no discourse is neutral. However, in factual reports there is a prior referent
to the reporting act -- the averral depends on a fact outside the text and
there is somebody responsible for it in two layers of narration -- the
primary source and the reporter, both of whom could be submitted to ques-
tions of truthfulness. In fiction, by contrast, the fact of 'speech' is created
by the author's averral. This is the most fundamental difference between
factual and fictional reports of speech.

     Another important aspect is that, because text is linear, it virtually
forces tidiness on written conversation. Composed or reported interactions
are, therefore, cleaned-up versions of talk. Writers have to represent
speech as neatly as possible in order to maintain their readers' interest in
their texts. So, real talk and reported talk, although sharing basic
characteristics in terms of overall organisation, seem to be quite different.
The basic principles of organizational features of real interaction are
reduced and simplified.

     Writers of fictional and factual speech reports are certainly aware
of turn taking mechanisms, for example, but it seems that they follow
strictly, presumably for reasons of clarity, only what Sacks, Schegloff and
Jefferson (1974) point out as being the most basic rules in any
conversation:

          "one party speaks at a time" and "speaker change recurs,
          or at least, occurs."

Writers are in absolute control of turn-taking mechanisms, so turn-taking is
not *locally organised*, but *author organised*. Therefore, turn order, turn
size, length of conversation, what parties say, distribution of turns, how
talk shifts and the ways transfers are coordinated, are all going to be
predeterminated by the writer, and not locally managed as in real
interaction. The simplification of the turn-taking system reduces
conversational organisation since the struggle for the floor and control over
turns, for example, tends not to be reported. Stylistic differences and
ideological favouritisms will determine how authors present the turns
(directly or indirectly). But as a rule, turns will be clearly separated
according to the different voices in the discourse.

     *Overlaps* are generally not reported, so each speaker is given a
turn at a time. *Gaps*, when mentioned, are reported as 'silence' and signal
a problem with the interaction. *Breakdowns* and *repair mechanisms* are also

not reported. There is no place for the interpersonal features of conversations to be reported at all *(openings and closings)*. All these features are 'ellipted' from reported interaction.

Structural properties are also reduced in the representation of speech. In naturally occuring interactions, the exchange is generally realized by three moves -- initiation, response and follow-up (see Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). In written fictional dialogues, the exchange level is mainly characterised by chains of initiations and responses. In factual reports, exchanges are still more reduced and the vast majority of exchanges are represented by just one move, generally an informing one, which is evaluatory in its function in the discourse. Both factual and fictional writers rely on the reader's ability to reconstruct the interaction.

Fairclough (1988), in his discussion of reported representation in media discourse, suggests that one of the tendencies which emerge from the analysis of this discourse is that what is represented, to a great extent, is ideational meaning rather than the interpersonal meaning.

However, because writers are in complete control of what they report, they are extremely powerful since they can reproduce what is most convenient for them in terms of their aims and ideological point of view. So, if they witness a whole conversation, they could reproduce it in full (though this would be unlikely due to space constraints) or reproduce parts of what they think is important, allocating turns to people they also think are important and leaving aside all the contributions that perhaps could be relevant from a different point of view.

Newspaper reports of speech basically reproduce the 'interview' situation. Although the interview shares some of the characteristics of casual conversation (the syntax of clause-chains, hesitations, false starts, etc.), it differs from this genre in significant ways. As Kress (1985:21) suggests, the overt characteristic of casual conversation is "to develop the text by 'agreement', and hence the textual strategies employed by the participants are exemplification, modification, reformulation and development of the previous speaker's text." The interactional nature of the interview genre, by contrast, is "much more foregrounded and a number of formal features are present to structure the interaction" (Kress, ibid:22). The interviewer has the power to start the interaction with a question, turns are taken at the instigation of the interviewer, who also determines the topic of the conversation, and has the power to end the interaction. The form of an interview is motivated by difference and according to Kress (ibid) is not developed by 'agreement', but by 'direction'. The textual strategies are direction and questioning, on the part of the interviewer, and reponse, information and definition, on the part of the interviwee.

Factual reporters are, in the main, interviewers, but in their report, what seems to be presented is what the interviewee says. The presentation of turns, therefore, is still more reduced than in fiction, where we find characters asking and answering or informing and acknowledging, etc.., in other words, having tidied-up conversations. In newspaper narratives (I am not referring here to explicit interviews, marked as such in the written media) by contrast, in the main, the 'news' is what the 'interviewee' produces, all the directions from the reporter seems to be absent and consequently only single turns are reproduced:

### Liberace Slipping Away

Palm Springs, California. Fans began gathering outside Liberace's desert home Tuesday as word came that the flamboyant showman was clinging to life moment to moment.
"There is not much time", his plubicist, Denise said. She said he was being attended at his bedside by his family and close friends.

Birmingham Daily News - 4/2/87

In this example, we have a voice saying something in direct speech and then in indirect speech. A turn is therefore given to someone that seems to be important. The reader, however, is never told who the publicist is talking to, if a question was asked and by whom.

If a dialogue is reported at all, this is what happens:

Cynthia Payne, the sex party hostess, employed a male slave to do her boring household chores, a court was told yesterday.

He did the housework, painting and decorating and in return she rewarded him with "a little bit of caning, insults and mild humiliation", she told the Inner London Crown Court.

Asked if she ever had sexual intercourse with her slaves, Mrs Payne said: "No slaves are not interested in sexual intercourse. It would be like gowing spuds in a Ming vase."

The Independent - 5/2/87

Mrs Payne is given the direct speech, since her answers are the new

information the reporter is trying to convey. Her language is inherently more vivid and interesting than the language of the questioner, so the rest of the conversation is reported indirectly. The effect of this is that the reporter seems sympathetic to Mrs Payne.

Given the discussion above, we can conclude that, although writers make use of real interactive strategies, the main organisation features of represented interaction and the structural properties of the exchange are simplified and reduced. I will now discuss in more detail the different syntactic possibilities of reporting speech.

## Options of Speech Representation

There are many options within the two modes of speech reporting that writers make use of, ranging from the most mimetic (when the narrator pretends to give the floor to her/his character) to the most diagetic or indirect form when the reader has no direct access to any words used. All speech representation in written discourse, however, falls basically into the two subtypes of interclausal relations that Halliday (1985:193) calls 'projection':

> 1 - direct or locution, where one clause is projected through another as a construction of wording. Here there is a relation of interdependency between clauses, one initiating (primary) and the other continuing (secondary) -- relation of parataxis;

> 2 - Indirect or idea, a construction of meaning, where one element is dependent (the reported clause) on another dominant one (the reporting clause) -- relation of hypotaxis.

In both cases, there is always a dynamic relationship between the reporting and the reported or represented discourses.

Leech and Short (ibid: 318-51) when proposing their categories of speech presentation in the novel arrange the various modes on a cline of 'interference' in report -- Direct Speech being regarded as the possible norm: (other options are: NRSA -- narrative report of speech act; IS -- indirect speech; FIS -- free indirect speech; FDS - free direct speech)

Narrator apparently in total control of report: NRSA

Narrator apparently in partial control of report: IS, FIS, DS

Narrator apparently not in control of report at all: FDS.

These categories, however, are "best thought of as being points on this cline, rather than completely discrete entities" (Short, 1984:11), since there are instances when it becomes difficult to distinguish one category from another. Short (ibid) gives the following fabricated utterances as illustrations of this point:

1 - Mary gave Fred some advice.

2 - Mary gave Fred some advice on how to keep greenfly off his roses. (p.12)

Utterance 1 is an example of a NRSA; utterance 2 is also a NRSA but there is a specification of "the subject matter of the advice, and therefore [it] gives at least some remnant of the propositional content." (Ibid)

The description proposed by Leech and Short is a useful way of handling speech presentation in the novel. However, by presenting a 'cline' of interference, the authors suggest that fictional narrators have the possibility of interfering in the report, as if there was a prior referent to the act of narrating. So, narrators can be in control or not in control. The assumption, then, is that there is something to be reported. But if we are dealing with fictions, there is only one averral, (I hereby recount a fiction) -- that of the real author and all the rest has to be dealt with intra-textually: there is no 'wording' (direct speech) or 'meaning' (indirect speech) processed before the actual text or any previous occasion that can be referred back to. The author, then, will always be in total control of the text presented and the different options will be chosen according to how authors want to convey their meanings.

It follows that it is misleading to say that in DS the narrator is not in control. If the quote is introduced by illocutionary verbs of saying (claim, propose, suggest), the narrator explicitly interferes with the report, while, if the quote is introduced by neutral verbs of saying (say, tell) s/he abstains from explicitly interfering in the report. But because 'quotes', as Halliday suggests, are manifestations of paratactic interclausal relations, the narrator is also always in control, even when the presentation of quotes is neutral. What happens in fiction is text manipulation. In factual reports, of course the situation is in some respects different, since there is a prior

referent to the represented speech. But even here, the recounter is also in control, since s/he can choose what to report.

Another problem I found is that Short (1984:11) proposes a set of differences which distinguish the direct from the indirect forms in factual speech representation. In Direct Speech, the reporter is said to represent faithfully:

a - the illocutionary force of the original saying,

b - the propositional content,

c - the words and structures uttered,

while in Indirect Speech s/he is said to represent only (a) and (b); FIS likewise (a) and (b) (though it differs in being indeterminate in relation to (c)); NRSA only (a).

In Direct Speech, therefore, there is a straightforward faithful relationship between the form of speech and what it is supposed to represent. Because Short only considers 'speech' and does not take into account how the primary discourse contextualizes the secondary one, the proposed cline is in a way a simplification, since the glossing clause (when not neutral, but marked by illocutionary verbs -- 'he advised her: "It's getting late"') can determine the illocutionary force. What we have here is a glossing verb that is in fact a NRSA followed by the DS which conveys the speech act. The force of the illocution is in cases like this already suggested to the reader in the primary discourse. Faithfulness to the words originally produced can be challenged then, since a writer, by glossing quotes with illocutionary verbs, not only reports but also interprets the saying and influences the reader's processing of the text.

Short also claims that NRSA is different from IS because NRSA only represents faithfully the illocutionary force. The distinction between the two options is however a mistaken one, because there are examples where the saying is introduced by an illocutionary verb plus a reported clause ('he suggested that we should go'). The reported clause can represent the proposition in exactly the same way as in IS.

What has not been considered, it seems to me, is that 'speech' does not have an illocutionary force, but several illocutionary potentials one or more of which are going to be attributed or assigned by the hearer or reader. The difference between the neutral and the non-neutral glossed forms is that the latter gives the reporter an opportunity to influence the reader's assignment and interpretation of the illocutionary force. Here lies a potential source of bias. A reporter can distort the original saying, even

when reproducing faithfully the words uttered, simply by using a glossing verb. A statement, for example, of the kind: 'I'll go there' can be reported as 'He threatened: "I'll go there' or as 'He boasted: "I'll go there". The interesting point about the options writers have is that DS protects the speaker's words (non-verbal and interactional clues can dramatically affect the interpretation) while IS, including the free types, transfers averral from the speaker to the reporter. Faithfulness can always be challenged.

In factual narratives, reporters stand between the reader and facts that are supposed to have occured in the real world. The reporter's style of representing speech therefore can effect the ways utterances are received and interpreted by readers. The different choices (direct or indirect) are powerful strategies used. In the next section, I want to consider some of these strategies.

## Stylistic Differences in Direct and Indirect Speech Representation -- The Glossing Verbs

In direct speech the quote is given as a source of information that could always be challenged in terms of veracity, if necessary. The indirect mode of presentation does not, on the other hand, give the reader even the theoretical possibility of checking the veracity of what was reported. The reporter absorbs in her/his discourse what was supposedly said and has total control over what is reported, since there is an integration of the secondary discourse into the first. There is not even the pretence that the voice of the character is heard. The reporter is thus only committed to giving a description of the character's utterance meaning. Reporters also use this mode to state a position. They interfere in the secondary discourse in order either to evaluate it, or to agree or disagree with it. If the direct quote is introduced by verbs that I call the *illocutionary reporting verbs* -- 'allege' or 'claim', as I mentioned in the beginning -- they indicate noncommitment of the reporter to the supposed reported saying: 'I say s/he said it but I *explicitly do not aver it*. As Fairclough (1988) points out, IS is ambivalent to what it represents and it is never neutral in relation to the secondary discourse. Reporters use direct speech, on the other hand, to reiterate and to reinforce their primary discourse. In many cases, the content of the speech is apparently redundant, since the narrator in his/her discourse has already presented the events in the 'orientation' or 'complicating action' section of the report. Thus the vast majority of direct speech representation in factual reports are evaluative devices in Labov's (1972) sense.

Authors in both fictive and factual contexts have the choice to represent speech in a determinate way, as dicussed above. Authorial

interference, however, depends on a particular choice. Not only the option chosen, but also the selection of glossing words, for example, is part of the relationship between the primary (the reporting) and the secondary (the reported) discourses. According to Eco (1985:29), this choice is not only stylistic and but also ideological.

There are degrees of author's interference in 'quoting' and 'reporting' and the interesting aspect to be considered is how they are used to reproduce interaction since the possible choices determine different meanings.

If, for example, an author like Hemingway chooses to tell his story in a quasi-dramatic way by using the neutral reporting verbs in the inner periphery of the dialogue -- *say* and *tell*, and consequently little glossing, this position of 'apparent' neutrality is significant. The 'again apparent' lack of mediation results in a more actualised and therefore more vivid text. The reader, then, must infer more from the bare account of external (reported) behaviour and from the quotes themselves. S/he has also to supply the implicit illocutionary act (see Austin, 1962, Searle, 1969 and Leech, 1983) that characterises the various turns.

If, on the other hand, authors like D. H. Lawrence and Garcia Marquez choose to gloss the uttering of supposed speech acts of their characters in the inner periphery explicitly by the use of either illocutionary verbs (propose, urge, accuse, remark) instead of neutral verbs, they disambiguate the force of the supposed act for the reader. In this cases, the author's intervention is strongly felt. Interpretation of the quote is then explicit rather than implicit as in the previous cases. The same is true for factual reports.

Another set of verbs, although not interpretative as the illocutionary ones, strongly convey the presence of the author in the text. These verbs signal tha *manner* (or the *attitude*) in which the quote is supposedly performed (cry, whisper, giggle, etc...). I call these verbs *descriptive*. They have the function in the text of 'stage directing' the reader to the action. The implication of the *shout* or *gasp*, however, has to be derived from the content of the quote. But they are also mediating the supposed speech production to the reader.

The verbs that gloss Direct Speech are an essential part of the way writers represent interaction. It is very important to say, however, that most of the information these verbs carry can, especially in fiction, be equally well handled in glossing phrases accompanying the verbs. An author can gloss utterances with the reporting verb 'say' plus either an adverb, an adjective, or a prepositional clause which will mark either manner or attitude. These are some examples I found in the books I examined:

                    automatically
                    anxiously
                    gently
                    evenly
                    despairingly
                    stubbornly
                    disagreeably
SAID                curiously
                    quietly
                    defiantly
                    exultantly
                    quick and soft
                    his voice raised
                    in a lower tone

It is interesting to note that some authors qualify verbs that are already signalling manner or attitude:

|                     |                    |
| ------------------- | ------------------ |
| sighed softly       | sighed heavily     |
| murmured audibly    | murmured feebly    |
| whispered horribly  | whispered hoarsely |
| whispered stoically | yelled suddenly    |
| whispered with extreme rapidily. |       |

Some of these examples sound funny, redundant and sometimes even incongruous, like 'whispered softly'. This kind of investigation is important because by examining the ways authors represent speech we immediately are confronted with significant stylistic differences. An author like D. H. Lawrence, for example, interprets for the reader the content of the utterances and makes explicit kinesic, paralinguistic and prosodic features. In Hemingway, on the other hand, the impact of the narrative comes from the dialogue itself and the illocutionary force has to be derived by the reader exclusively from the words presented.

In factual reports, the use of the reporting and descriptive verbs is one of the major signals of author's interference in the secondary discourse. The purpose of this kind of representation is different from its fictional counterpart, as I have already suggested. For this reason, when speech is represented, it is just another fact in the story -- if the reporter wants to interpret factual report s/he tends to go into indirect report, denying therefore access to what was purportedly said.

In indirect speech representation, there is 'integration' of the secondary discourse into the discourse of the narrator; in other words, the

primary discourse absorbs the secondary one. The author, therefore, is in complete control of the character's supposed talk, since a speech act verb generally introduces reported utterances that are averred by the author. There is not even the pretence that the voice of the characters is heard. The reporter is thus only committed to giving a description of the character's utterance meaning "in either a semantic or pragmatic sense of 'meaning'" (Leech, 1983:188) and "makes no claim to be abiding by the wording" (Halliday, ibid:233).

Because indirect speech representation focuses exclusively on propositional content, the response and initiation underlined in the following examples could not have been reported indirectly, since both examples convey expressive meaning:

> Eventually a senior policeman came into the room and told Masterman, now a prison warder, that they believed he was responsible for murdering his first wife, said Mr Appleby.
>
> Masterman allegedly replied: "Good Lord"
>
> Daily Telegraph - 24/2/87
>
> As Gilbert, 57 hobbled from the dock he smiled to journalists and said: "It's all over, gentlemen."
>
> His wife Val, 27 years his junior, whispered: "Oh God, oh God."
>
> Daily Mirror 24/2/87

If reported indirectly, the expressions of surprise and sorrow would have had to be described in some other manner. The proposition, thus, is isolated from the illocutionary force of the reported speech act. "Everything that is not part of the proposition has to be described rather than being included in the complement clause" (Coulmas, 1985:46). The makers of the original speaker's perspective (in the case of factual reports of speech) can not be represented indirectly either, such as: paralinguistic (intonation, stress, volume, etc...) and conversational features (pauses, hesitations, fillers, false starts, repetition, self-correction, etc...), turn claiming and turn passing devices ("can I interrupt for a minute?"), discourse organising makers (requests for clarification - "Excuse me, could

you repeat"; agreement - "right?"; "you don't believe him, do you?") and forms of address.

In fictional contexts, the use of indirect speech representation is a narrative technique which generally marks the narrator's interference in the report. But because there is no outside referent, the choice of one mode or another is a textual strategy used by authors to mark transference of voice and allocation of point of view -- the characters speak through the voice of the narrator.

In factual reports, by contrast, prior referents are supposed to exist in the real world and are reported either directly or indirectly not only for stylistic reason, but with determinate aims. The different choices can reveal hidden meanings. So the interesting point to see is how the interpretation of the secondary discourse can be controlled by the way it is contextualized in the primary discourse (Volosinov, 1973).

We can see, from the considerations above, that the various choices authors have to represent speech demonstrate the importance of 'who is the sayer of what is said' (Sinclair, 1988:7), in other words, the importance of averral for the overall interpretation of the text. The choice between the different modes and the way they are represented is not only an entrance point to stylistic difference, but also a clue to how events can be interpreted according to the point of view of who reports them. In the stage of selecting and processing what to report, writers reveal their own stance towards what is represented. Through the comparison of different texts, we can say that no speech representation is objective or simply neutral. And the power of the writer to distort the meaning of a 'saying' in actual texts can be really frightening.

By examining speech representation, especiallly in factual texts, we can attempt to show that specific textual features may be understood to invoke extra-textual meanings. By making explicit the strategies used by authors to represent speech, we can start to be aware of how language is used to reflect social, cultural and ideological relation. According to Eco (1985) 'the narrator is the prisoner of her own premises' (my translation).

\* This is an extended version of the paper "The representation of Speech in Factual and Fictional Narrative" presented at the 17th International Systemic Congress, University of Stirling, Scotland, 1990. The discussion and exemplifictory texts are from my Ph.D. thesis (University of Birmingham, 1988).

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