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‘I BET THEY ARE GOING TO READ IT’: REPORTED DIRECT SPEECH IN TITLES OF RESEARCH PAPERS IN LINGUISTIC PRAGMATICS

Abstract

Titles of research articles in the humanities, including linguistics, tend to be more creative and less informative than corresponding titles in exact sciences or medicine. In linguistics, pragmatic studies are an area where reported discourse, i.e. direct speech in the form of a full speech act, occurs relatively frequently in titles of research papers. This paper analyses the metonymic and cataphoric relations between such titles and article texts on the background of the functions of text titles. It also presents the results of a survey conducted among graduate students and aimed at finding out whether titles containing reported discourse in the form of speech acts are easier to memorize and attract more attention among the articles’ potential readers.

Keywords

title, speech act, direct speech, quotation, iconicity

1. Introductory remarks: titlelogy and reported speech

The position and importance of titles in the composition of written texts has been aptly summarized by Gesuato (2008:26) who said: “Despite being short, titles are important texts content-wise: in summarising the content of the publications they name, they affect the reader’s first understanding of those publications. Also, titles are consequential texts at the level of writer-reader interaction: being the first, and visually prominent, components of larger texts, they determine the reader’s

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first impressions of those texts, and thus influence the reader's decision of whether to read more of them."

As signalled in the title of this article, it offers a comment on the use of quotations of speech acts in the titles of research articles in linguistics. Quotations, i.e. reproduced (or directly reported speech), include both fragmentary quotes in the form of a noun phrase, adverbial phrase, or other sentence fragments, and such quotations that form full utterances capable of functioning as speech acts of their own, i.e. strongly suggest that they are to be interpreted as reproduced speech acts. The latter occur much more frequently in titles of research articles in linguistic pragmatics, and are the topic of the following analysis.

The analysis brings together two areas of text linguistics: the titlelogy and the study of reported discourse, including the study of quotations. There exists a sizeable but manageable body of scientific literature on both subjects. Reported discourse seems to have gained more attention in Romance and German linguistics than in works published in Anglo-Saxon and associated circles (cf. e.g. Gülich 1978, Rosier 1999, Baudot 2002). Corpus-based studies on titles of publications in linguistics, pertaining to their formal/structural aspects and/or informational content, include Buxton and Meadows (1977), Fortanet et al. (1997), Michelson (1994), Whissel (1999), Busch-Lauer (2000), Yakhontiva (2002), Haggan (2004) and Gesuato (2008), to mention but a few. Theoretical discussions on categorisations and functions of titles appeared e.g. in publications by Hoek (1973), Rey-Delore (1978), Genette (1987), DiFazio (1994), and Baicchi (2004).

2. Categorisations, functions, rhetoric structures: state of the art

The following is a brief characterization of the proposed categorisations of titles, their rhetoric and their functions:

Hoek (1973) distinguishes between subject and object titles, designating the subject (topic) or the text as object (e.g. text genre). Basically the same distinction was re-christened by Barth (1984) as straightforward versus self-referential and by Genette (1987) as thematic versus rhematic.

Rey-Delore (1978) points out the status of titles as (metalinguistic) proper names, and characterizes syntagmatic (apposition) and paradigmatic (synonymy, substitution) relations between title and text.

As for the types of the title's rhetoric, an exhaustive description has been proposed by DiFazio (1994, quoted in Baicchi 2004), including the following figures:

- explicitation: the title renders explicit the core theme of the text,
- repetition: the first word or phrase becomes the title,

- dissemination: a word or phrase of the title is disseminated throughout the text,
- addition: the title adds an element which is basic for interpretation (mainly in poetry),
- link: the title is syntagmatically linked to the beginning of the text,
- contradiction/exclusion: the title creates expectations that are later contradicted.

Baicchi (2004) proposes to categorize articles by locating them on an axis of efficiency (interpretability), complexity and markedness, which she regards as “three faces of the same object.” In fact, she does not offer clear criteria by which to distinguish these three terms; rather, they circularly co-define each other. Markedness and complexity, described as correlated, are subsumed in the notion of efficiency; “a more efficient index allows easier retrieval of the object (and is less marked and therefore less complex)” (ibid.). Markedness is constituted by explicitness and complexity. A title is explicit if the retrieval of its referents is easy, which consists of the following components:

- the connection between the signandum in the title and the signatum in the text is straightforward, with no need of inferencing on the reader’s part,
- the referent in the title and its co-referent in the text are close to each other,
- the co-referential expressions in the title and the text are the same or similar,
- there are few referential expressions in the title that can only be indexed or interpreted on the basis of the article text.

Complexity means low explicitness, i.e. a delay in the interpretability of expressions in the title, few elements of title-text contiguity, and many indexical elements that need to be “filled in” with recourse to text items.

The functions of text titles that have been proposed in literature on the subject include:

- (a) Genette (1987) distinguishes between
 - designation, i.e. identification of the text,
 - descriptive function,
 - connotative value—not necessarily intentional (function?),
 - seductive function—attracting the reader.

- (b) Nord (1995) identified three essential functions of titles and three optional ones activated by specific interactional circumstances:

Essential functions:

- distinctive—ensuring unmistakable distinctiveness of the publication
- metatextual—ensuring the recognisability of the genre
- phatic—arousing and maintaining attention in the culture-specific target audience

Optional functions:

- referential—responsible for the comprehensibility of the information conveyed
- expressive—the function of manifesting the author’s attitude toward the text
- appellative—the potential, envisaged attractiveness of the title for the prospective readers (cf. seductive function in Genette 1987)

- (c) DiFazio (1994, quoted in Baicchi 2004) proposed the following four functions:

- onomastic—the title is the name of the work (cf. Nord 1995: distinctive function)
- metatextual—the text producer chooses one or more thematic components structuring the text (cf. the same label, different intension in Nord 1995)
- conative—addressing the receiver and directing them through the text
- intratextual—semantic relations between the title and the text.

Baicchi (2004) thinks that the conative and metatextual functions as defined by DiFazio are not distinguishable from each other, because the conative function is achieved by metatextual means. In what follows, I suggest that the conative function can indeed be subsumed under the metatextual one but not without making further distinctions, i.e. as one of the latter’s sub-categories.

Baicchi (*ibid.*) also distinguishes between what she calls endophoric and exophoric “functions” of titles. While endophoric function is performed by intratextual relations, exophoric function involves interpretation based on world knowledge external to the text itself. I regard it more illuminating to speak of properties or relations when referring to exophoric and endophoric reference, and reserve the label “function” for the uses to which titles are put; the same remark applies to DiFazio’s notion of “intratextual function.” That is to say, in what

follows I make a distinction between the two subtly different shades of meaning of “function”—the way something works, and the uses to which it is put—and reserve the label “function” for the latter type.

3. Functions of titles: synthesis and extension

The set of functions that titles are assumed to serve in what follows summarizes the proposals by Genette (1987) and DiFazio (1994) to which it adds one more element pertaining to mnemonics, and includes:

Non-gradable functions:

- Onomastic (indexical) - it is a part of the article’s proper name (its bibliographic address) and can function metonymically as its proper name

Gradable functions:

- Informative (corresponds to “metatextual” by DiFazio 1994)—it describes the macrostructure (topics) of the text and/or its superstructure (genre). In accordance with the principle proclaimed above of using the word “function” to mean “what it is good for” rather than “the way it works,” this translates into three sub-functions:
 - (a) Selection—it helps the reader to decide whether the text is of interest to her
 - (b) Categorisation—it helps the reader to classify the text (e.g. librarians, indexers)
 - (c) Interpretation—it instructs the reader how to decode the text, enabling her of creating a cognitive macro- and superstructure to be filled in with text items while reading, and interpreting particular text items by locating them in the existing macro- and superstructure
- Marketing (corresponds to “seductive” in Genette 1987)—it appeals to the potential reader promising that the reading of the article will be rewarding (e.g. in terms of the cognitive gain, practical applicability or entertainment)
- Mnemonic—it helps the reader and the author to remember, retrieve, and refer to the article and its contents.

The mnemonic function is closely related to the onomastic and informative ones but not reducible to them, as the degree to which a title performs the

mnemonic function (well) is not deducible from the former two. The onomastic function is always performed, and the amount of information about the text given in the title may correlate with the ease of retrieval of the article's contents from the memory, but not with the ease of retrieval of the title itself (the article's proper name). Similarly, the marketing function is not to be reduced to the informative function and its sub-function of helping the potential reader select the article for reading, because the degree to which the title performs the marketing function (well) can be conversely related to the information contents of the title: as noted, e.g. by Haggan (2004), puzzling is a way to get attention, and a marketing strategy.

4. Specificity of titles in linguistics

Busch-Lauer (2000) analysed German and English titles in linguistics and medicine collected from journal and conference papers. While the syntactic constructions in the first and second unit of the title structures were mostly nominal-nominal, the linguistics titles instantiated verbal and clausal constructions more frequently than medical titles. The most common semantic relationship between the first and the consequent units of the titles, called "title" and "subtitle" respectively by the author, was "general-to-specific topic" across disciplines and languages; in linguistics, though, the subtitles were often the only comprehensible and informative component of the two-unit title. As for the content, the medicine titles turned out to be precise and informative about the sub-genre of the following text (e.g. case study), the purpose of the research and/or its results. Linguistics titles, on the other hand, often mentioned the process of the research carried out rather than the findings, were vague and unspecified, but also creative, richer in the use of rhetorical devices, and reflective of the writers' stylistic preferences. While the medicine titles were long, precise, informative and helpful to researchers and bibliographers for their research and documentation purposes, the linguistics titles were shorter, vague, abstract, frequently catchy and rhetorically individualised, but less effective in helping readers trace relevant research developments. Similarly, Haggan (2004), who compared the syntactic encoding, structure and content of over 700 journal article titles in literature, linguistics and education, identified important disciplinary differences in terms of content and rhetoric. The science titles offered straightforward information on the findings or topics of the papers; they were meant to offer quick and efficient guidance to the reader. In contrast to this, literature titles offered puzzling and enigmatic hints, meant to attract and entangle the reader. The linguistics titles fell in between, displaying formal features typical of science titles together with semantic properties similar to literature titles.

5. The use of speech act quotations in titles of research articles in linguistics

An analysis of the titles of 2,861 research articles retrieved from the database of *linguistlist.org*¹ showed that quotations of speech acts occurred in about 1.8% of all articles. The data was further analysed separately for selected subject fields of linguistics. In the subfield of syntax, there were 4 speech act quotes among 351 article titles (1.1 %). In the area of pragmatics, speech act quotes were included in 4 out of 106 articles. Because of the small size of the sample of articles classified as pertaining to linguistic pragmatics in this sample, all titles of research articles which occurred in the *Journal of Pragmatics* in the years 1977 through 1985 and 2000 through 2009 (1238 titles) were additionally analysed.

Between 1977 (the year in which the journal was founded) and 1985 about 3.7% of articles contained a speech act quotation. Between the years 2000 and 2009, the percentage amounted to 5.3 %; the difference of proportions was insignificant, which means that this type of title has not proved to have gained popularity among writers on linguistic pragmatics within the last three decades. The difference between the above-mentioned syntax sample from *linguistlist.org* and the sample from the *Journal of Pragmatics*, on the other hand, was significant at 0.005². The hypothetical reasons for a greater popularity of this type of title in the area of linguistic pragmatics are discussed below.

6. Semantic relations

Essentially, it is assumed that the higher attractiveness of titles including quotations for authors of articles on linguistic pragmatics compared with researchers writing on syntax is the result of a difference in the semantic relations between the title and the text in both areas. Metonymic relations between direct quotations and the article text are simple in the case of articles on syntax, where the quotation represents a fragment of the database under analysis, and complex in the case of articles on pragmatics, where the direct quotation may similarly metonymically represent the kind or a property of the speech sample under study, and at the same time metonymically represent several properties of the research situation. The research situation can be conceived of as the framing story in which the framed story—the speech situation under analysis—is contained. As pragmatics deals with language use, the use of speech act quotes metonymically relates to contextuality (of speech actions) by invoking a real-life situation in

¹ www.linguistlist.org, retrieved on September 12, 2009.

² $df=1$, $\chi^2=9.8$

which it occurred; authenticity (of data); and a degree of involvement (of the researcher) as organising principles of linguistic pragmatics.

In what follows, the following aspects of titles including quotations of speech acts will be discussed:

- semiotic properties: the type of relations between the speech act title and the following subtitle,
- title mnemonics: the ease of retrieval of particular titles;
- marketing function: the influence of the reported discourse on the choice by potential readers.

Speech act quotations in papers on pragmatic topics is exemplified by the following quotations:

- (1) It's all my fault! The pragmatics of responsibility statements.
- (2) Othering in Gossip: "You go out you have a laugh and you can pull yeah okay but like..."
- (3) "Minister, we will see how the public judges you": Media references in political interviews.
- (4) Hi Superman: What is most functional English for a Finnish five-year-old
- (5) "Will you please remove your hat – you're talking to Big Brother." Staging unequal encounters in two different speech communities.
- (6) Can I mean you?

As visible in this small sample, the utterance recognizable as direct quotations may be the first part of a bipartite structure—the title followed by a subtitle (as in 1-4), be the second part of a bipartite structure—the subtitle preceded by a title (as in 5), or stay alone (as in 6).

The title or part of a title containing a reported speech act will be labelled "speech act title" and the other kind "descriptive title." In the former two cases, the following semiotic relations are to be considered: the relationship between the speech act title and the descriptive title, and the relationship of each title type to the text of the article.

6.1. Semantic relations within the title

The first relationship can be considered without any recourse to the following text. If there is a univocal cohesive relation at all linking both titles, it may occasionally involve cataphoric and anaphoric co-referentiality of the referring

expressions in both of them (cataphora *sensu stricto*), but the typical relation between the speech act title and the following specification (in the descriptive title) of the kind of linguistic phenomenon displayed in the speech act is cataphora *sensu lato* (Bruti 2004: 42). It lacks the defining property of anaphor and cataphora *sensu stricto*, i.e. the co-referentiality of two elements one of which is indexical. Cataphoric element in general is a signans with a deficient or no signatum, i.e. an element representing a gap in information which must be retrieved from the following text. In cataphora *sensu lato*, it is not the case that the signatum can be assigned to a given expression only after this expression is found to be co-referential with another subsequent term, but there is a momentary suspension or reduction of the flux of information by means of opening pending connections in an informational structure that will be completed at a later point (Bruti 2004: 44). The relationship between the cataphora and its subsequent does not need to be of strict coreferentiality; a link or association is enough as long as the referential information given in the cataphora is fragmentary and indefinite to a greater or lesser extent, and the created information gap is completed by the information provided in the subsequent (but not the other way round).

The relationship between the two parts of the title is straightforward (explicit) if the speech action exemplified by the reported discourse is named in the other part, as in (1)-(3). In (4) and (5), the relationship is less explicit because the genre of speech action is not specified in the descriptive title. We only know that the speech act in (4) is supposed to be uttered by a five-years-old and related to her/his linguistic needs (as signalled by the lexeme “functional”). The speech act in (5) is supposed to be uttered in a situation of an unequal encounter and, in particular, in a *Big Brother* reality show episode. The social situation is described in terms of the properties of the participant’s characteristics (age, nationality) or the social occasion (unequal encounter, *Big Brother* show). However, in (4) any indication is missing whether the speech act title is a positive or negative exemplification of “the most functional English,” and whether the occurrence of Superman as a referring expression in the speech act title is marginal or central to the topic discussed. In (5), the descriptive title contains an uninterpreted reference to two different speech communities, suggesting that the speech act title refers to one of them but not stating what they are. The speech act title and descriptive title (4) and (5) are non-contiguous in that they show one of the following characteristics:

- the descriptive title fails to contain an expression identifying the (relevant aspect of) speech action performed in the quotation in the speech act title,
- the descriptive title contains a referring expression whose relation to the speech action in the quotation is not specified and cannot be inferred.

As pointed out by Bacchi (2004:18), being “inefficient” in terms of the ease of retrieval of the object—in this case, the lack of contiguity between the two parts of the title—does not necessarily prevent it from being effective in terms of its functions; delayed interpretability can be a means of arousing interest by opening a cognitive gap which only the reading of the article can close.

The two instances of inefficiency exemplified by (4) and (5) do not exhaust the possibilities in which the two parts of the title may be non-contiguous, but they show how contiguity, apart from the sameness and similarity of reference, is co-created by the reader rather than something inherent in the title itself. The evaluation of their contiguity depends on the two parts of the title, not simply referring to the same entities, but on their summing up to the description of the topic corresponding to the reader’s expectations regarding articles in this particular field. Viewed from this perspective, a judgement of contiguity appears as based on convention and expectations created by the knowledge of the superstructure of this particular genre—in this case, a research article in linguistic pragmatics. A well-interpretable (efficient) and contiguous title of a research article in this field provides the reader with the information about which aspect of (which) language is in the focus of analysis, e.g. formal (e.g. syntactic, lexical, phonological), semantic or pragmatic (e.g. politeness, type of speech action), and information about the relevant aspects of the context (e.g. speaker, place, text type).

It is striking that the strongly preferred option is for the speech act title to precede rather than follow the descriptive title (this was the case in all but one of the forty seven articles in the database of *linguistlist.org* and all but one article in the *Journal of Pragmatics* in the years 1977-1984 and 2000-2009).

From the reader’s perspective, an expansion from a quotation (an instance) to general notions commenting on some of its aspects can be regarded as cataphoric, to the extent to which the relation between the two parts of the title does not require recourse to the article text for its interpretation. If this relation is underspecified, each part of the title is cataphoric (from the reader’s perspective) with respect to the following text only. Cataphora “is a marked phenomenon as compared to anaphora, since it represents a gap of information, and, in semiotic terms, a signans with deficient or no signatum” (Baicchi 2004: 19). Cataphoricity follows from the indexical status of speech act quotations: they stand as instances for the categories of phenomena they represent, but it is not clear to the reader which aspect of the utterance in the quotation is relevant to the text’s topic, at least until the descriptive title is read, and sometimes also after that. In other words, the speech act title is a microstructural element offered prior to any hint regarding the macrostructure of the text.

6.2. Semantic relations between title and text

The second type of relationship is between the title and the article text. Each part of the title, the descriptive title and the speech act title, has its separate own relationship with the article text. Apart from these separate relationships, there is a relationship between the article and its full title.

As mentioned before, the relation between the speech act title and the article text is metonymic with the speech act title being indexically related to the article text if the speech act title and the text contain the same quotations. This relation is cataphoric *sensu lato* for the descriptive title, and for the whole title viewed as a single entity.

While each of the two parts of the title could stand on its own, their contribution to the informativeness of the title with respect to the article's contents is different. As a rule, the descriptive title is the more informative one, and this is always true when the speech act merely exemplifies the type of speech action labelled explicitly in the descriptive title. In such a case, the speech act title hardly contributes new information. In some cases, though, the quotation in the speech act title not only exemplifies the type of speech action but also adds some information on the context, as in (5), where it narrows down the reference of the expression "unequal encounter" to the more specific context of a *Big Brother* reality show episode, and (7):

- (7) "To all the former cats and stomps of the Navajo Nation": Performance, the individual, and cultural poetic traditions.

Here, similarly as in (5), the reference of the expression "cultural poetic traditions" is further specified by a referring expression in the quotation itself as a nation. Presumably, this reference could be moved to the descriptive title, which would then read: "Performance, the individual, and cultural poetic traditions among the Navajos." This, however, is merely likely and not guaranteed; hence there is a degree of non-contiguity here as well. The indexical expressions in the quotation do not guarantee that their referents constitute the main or only context under discussion. They are exemplifications and as such they may be picking up just a subset of the contexts discussed in the article.

It is notable that the stylistic means of cataphora *sensu lato* is typical of text openings in fine literature, e.g. in novels, that frequently start in *medias res* rather than offer the exposure of the identities of their protagonists before letting them act and speak. In Lisa Marklund's novel *Studio 6*, the continued concealment of the speaker's identity, which was not revealed until the last chapter, is the main device applied to sustain the reader's attention. I propose the term "logophoric postponement" to refer to situations in which a speech act is being reported at first

without revealing the speaker's identity. In their use of logophoric postponement, speech act quotes in titles are similar to dialogical openings of novels and stories, and metonymically mark the affiliation of linguistic pragmatics with the arts rather than a more exact pool affiliated with structuralist linguistics, and linguistic disciplines dominated by structuralist approaches.

Quotations have been fruitfully regarded from a narratological perspective. A reproduced speech act in a text introduces the element of story-telling, i.e. the promise of a plot and characters. Gallèpe (2002) proposes to utilise in this context Vuillaume's (1990) notions of the primary and secondary levels of fiction. The first level contains the characters featured in the events told (including or not including the narrator), the second one contains the reader and the narrator only. Through a quotation, the primary level of the situated speech is re-created and a language user is being introduced (corresponding to the framed story in fiction). The descriptive title, on the other hand, represents the presence of the reflecting observer, the narrator herself, in the case of scientific studies identical with the author (in fiction, the framing story). I propose to identify this secondary level of fiction with the speech actions performed in a research article: defining the object of research, methodology and objectives, stating, objectioning, quoting, supporting, exemplifying, ..., drawing conclusions and interpretation of data. The primary level of fiction is occupied by the data itself—in the case of linguistics, the linguistic material to be analysed, and for pragmatics in particular, situated speech. The use of quotations in the title together with the descriptive title points to the coexistence of these two levels of fiction, the objectifying voice of the narrator and "the story itself" featuring at least one language user, the source of the quotation. By using an authentic or a fake quotation, the writer suggests several things:

- a process-oriented approach to language,
- the research being based on authentic speech,
- direct or at least a multimodal perception of the events discussed by the researcher,
- emphasis on the language user and the psychological/sociological approach,
- emphasis on the context.

All this sums up to the writer's metacomment on the approach and the topic of the text. This comment is largely redundant because the mere choice of the journal and the journal's title already delineate the subfield of the study and imply all the above listed properties of the approach. The comment is typically extended by adding a descriptive title, so that the full title represents the co-existence of the primary level of speech actions and the secondary level of their scientific

interpretation, indexing the co-existence of the subjects of the “framed story” and the reflecting, partly involved observer.

The quotation can stand in various relationships to the article text. In what follows, examples will be given and commented upon.

(a) Attribution of direct speech to a character in the framed story: experienced speech

(3) I’m sorry I said that: apologies in young children’s discourse

A story is indexed in the direct quotation in the title. Direct speech introduces a character who is the speaker and whose linguistic output is the topic of the analyst’s research. The quotation exemplifies the speech sample which is the topic of the analysis. The context (type of speech event) is specified in the descriptive title, which enables the reader to locate the quotation within and create the macrostructure of the story.

(8) “Is English we speaking”: Trinbagonian in the twenty-first century

Here, the story indexed by the direct quotation and its relation to the descriptive title and the article text is more complex. Again, direct speech introduces a character who is the speaker and whose linguistic output is the topic of the analyst’s research. The context (time and language community) is provided by the descriptive title similarly as in (3), but the quotation not only exemplifies the speech sample which is the object of the research but also involves the speaker’s metalinguistic comment on the formal properties of the speech sample under analysis. Thus, the macrostructure provided by the title entails the element of a direct confrontation between the researcher and the subject: they are rendered as people interested in, and commenting on, the same topic (Trinbagonian language). This marks the meeting of, and energizes the relationship between the framed and the framing stories, clearly exposing the difference between the research in the field of sociolinguistics and structuralist linguistics or natural sciences.

(b) Recognizably construed speech

A criterion of classification of direct speech is the differentiation between experienced speech (Germ. “erlebte Rede,” Gallèpe 2002) and “construed speech,” which is a sort of fake reported speech—conceived rather than experienced discourse. In construed speech, the quotation reflects the author’s conception of what may have been said, or conceived of, including thier own unspoken thoughts. It is illustrated by (9):

(9) I'll be the judge of that: Diversity in social perceptions of (ING)

The abstract confirms the assumption, triggered by the semantic relation between the declaration in the first person and the plurality suggested by the descriptive title, that the change of speaker (from a character in the "framed story" in the speech act title, to the narrator in the descriptive title) is apparent and that the formulaic quotation offers the writer's own summary of, or a comment on the topic, with no factual attribution to others.

(c) Ambiguous attribution

The difference between experienced and construed speech is frequently underspecified, i.e. the attribution of direct speech is ambiguous:

(10) How'd you get that accent?: Acquiring a second dialect of the same language

The authorship of the speech reported in (10) is not clear; a likely option is construed speech representing the kind of questions that the researcher might be addressing at speakers of the second dialect, or just at him/herself, while investigating the subject declared in the descriptive title. Depending on this, the reported discourse in the title has the status of either construed or experienced speech.

(11) So Why Do You Want to Teach French?: Representations of multilingualism and language investment through a reflexive critical sociolinguistic ethnography

Again, the relation between the speech act title and descriptive title is not explicit. As a result, a macrostructure providing a place for accommodating the direct speech cannot be created. Direct speech cannot be clearly attributed to a character within the framed or the framing story, i.e. either a subject whose attitudes and speech are the topic of the research presented in the article, or the researcher herself. It may come from the primary data (on multilingualism and language investment) analysed in the article, or from the research situation (framing story), representing the kind of question that a researcher might want to ask within his/her sociolinguistic-ethnographic pursuits. However, the descriptive title also suggests that the focus is on methodological issues so that the "framed story" can be the research situation itself (pertaining to sociolinguistics and ethnography of speech). Here, the ambiguity about the identity of the quotation

source lies in the possibility that the narrator of the framing story re-occurs in the framed story as the speaker.

- (12) When this very prestigious researcher met Mrs. Average housewife, or:
Where have all the women gone...

While the second part of the title displays a strong intertextual component in that it is modelled on a song text, the first part displays construed speech. The initial sentence fragment in (12) reads like the first phrase of a narrative. The (fake) source of construed speech remains underspecified, while the formulation suggests that the author of the article (a female researcher) is the character referred to in the title ("this very prestigious researcher") and invokes a narrator (not identical with the author) who is a bystander of the author's scientific pursuits. These pursuits in themselves can be taken to constitute the "first level of fiction."

To sum up, the relationship between the speech act title and the text reconstructed by the reader at the moment when she reads the title without knowing the contents of the article can be threefold:

- (1) The utterance is clearly attributable to the database of speech representing some aspects of language use analysed by the researcher (and referred to in the descriptive title); its main function is the exemplification of the relevant aspect of language use; the narrator expresses the relationship between a particular event (object of observation) and her own attempt at its objectified interpretation as representative of some general issue.
- (2) The utterance is recognisable as construed speech attributable to the narrator reflecting on the research situation, and is interpreted as his/her comment on the situation.
- (3) The status of the utterance is indeterminate between the former two.

The third of these situations is eliminated through reading the article, just as any amount of uncertainty persistent in the interpretation under (2).

While the co-existence of "two levels of fiction" is invoked in all three cases, it is more recognisable in the latter two where the quotation is or may be fictitious, and an active, creative re-construal of the situation by the narrator is involved or suggested.

7. Effectiveness of speech act titles: marketing and retrieval

In what follows, the results are presented as an empirical study pertaining to the efficiency of the speech act titles, i.e. the degree to which they realise some of the putative ends for which they are employed. The functions to be discussed are the marketing and mnemonic ones.

Marketing function. The marketing efficiency of the titles containing reported discourse was tested on a sample of eighteen graduate students of English Philology at the Academy for International Studies in Lodz, Poland, in a course on academic writing. The students were shown a list of fourteen titles (see Appendix 2, 3) and asked to select two of them to be read and discussed in the class. The article titles came from the *Journal of Pragmatics* from the years 1977-1981, 1998, 2006-2009³. While the graduate students in a course on academic writing may not be quite representative of the readership of research papers in linguistics, the scheme of the experiment imposed possibly the smallest constraints on their choice, i.e. no external utility factors. All titles consisted originally of a speech act title and a descriptive title. The descriptive title explicated the topic of the article naming the phenomenon (e.g. speech genre) under analysis and its context. The status of the quotation was thus made clear in the descriptive title: it was an exemplification of the sort of speech to be analysed in the article. In the ten articles presented to the students, the descriptive title had been removed. It was tested in how far the reported discourse component influenced the selection of the articles by the students. It turned out that the articles that include speech act titles were selected much more frequently than the remaining ones ($df=1$; $\chi^2=5.9$; $p<0.025$). In particular, out of two titles which involved the topic of a political interview (and were written by the same author), the one that contained the speech act was selected by five of the eighteen students, and the one from which the quotation had been removed was not selected. Thus, although the quotations were merely exemplifications and hardly brought in additional information to the topic of the article, they were strongly preferred.

In the further course of the experiment, twenty one students were shown sixteen article titles from the *Journal of Pragmatics* (see Appendix 3) and asked to choose four of which they would like to discuss in the class. All the articles contained titles consisting of two parts divided by a punctuation mark such as a colon, question mark or full stop, and in four of them the first part formed an utterance interpretable as reported discourse. Titles were excluded which made it clear that

³ The criterion for the choice of the titles to be included in the list was the availability of the full texts to the author of this article because the students were promised to work with the texts which they opted for as a group.

the article referred only to languages other than English, in which the students might not take any interest. Four articles contained speech act titles.

The hypothesis that the students would choose titles including reported discourse in the form of speech act utterances was not confirmed. Rather, it turned out that the students avoided titles that consisted of one part only (there were three such titles in the sample, and they were selected for reading just three times; $df=1$; $\chi^2=4.2$; $p<0.05$). Thus, the experiment suggested that the strong preference for titles including speech act titles turned out to be a side effect of the preference for two-unit sequences, that, in a corpus study by Gesuato (2004), constituted about 42% of journal article titles⁴. The majority (58%) of titles in her study consisted of one part only, and the percentage of titles consisting of a larger number of items was negligible. It seems that rather than by offering additional information, the speech act titles worked by means of adopting the title to the two-unit format preferred by the readers. It is relevant to note that it was the structural property of consisting of two parts, one of which commented on the other, that correlated with the students' preferences, rather than just the greater length of the title (in terms of the number of words, phrases, or content words included). In fact, the title chosen most frequently—by twenty out of the twenty one, i.e. over 95% of test participants—was the shortest of all and contained three content words only ("Gesture: the living medium")⁵. This is consistent with the suggestions given in a writer's guide by Lester (1993). Out of six strategies presented by Lester for writing a title, three involve two elements separated with a colon.

The preference for the bipartite structure suggests that the cognition of titles utilises models of speech processing based on binary divisions such as subject/predicate and topic/comment. While the actual division into the subject phrase and predicate phrase with a finite verb form is missing, the two parts of two-unit titles are likely to be interpreted as equivalent to this structure in terms of information flow.

The results of both experiments taken together suggest that speech act titles do contribute to enhancing the marketing function of titles (their being selected for reading), but this effect may be due not as much to the quotations in themselves as to the effect of adopting the title to the preferred bipartite format. In other words, adding a quotation makes perfect sense as far as enhancing the marketing function is concerned, if the alternative is a descriptive title consisting of just one syntactic-graphemic unit.

⁴ 30% in a smaller sample studied by Haggan 2004.

⁵ Even after this apparently uniquely attractive topic was excluded from the results, the profile of students' preferences remained the same—titles including quotations of speech acts were not selected significantly more frequently than other titles. Anecdotally, the title referred to a linguistic conference advertised in the *Journal of Pragmatics* and found its way onto the list owing to a misinterpretation.

Mnemonic function. The mnemonic efficiency of the titles containing reported discourse was tested on a sample of thirty graduate students of English Philology at the Academy for International Studies in Lodz. Two weeks after selecting topics to be discussed in the class from a list containing sixteen titles, the students were shown the list again and asked whether they remembered which of the titles they had chosen as the ones which should be discussed in the class. Additionally, they were asked to reconsider their choice. This pre-task was meant to make the students reread the list attentively. Up to this point, the students were confronted with a real-life task, i.e. the they did not realize that any other goal was being pursued apart from the choice of the articles to be worked upon as model texts in the class on academic writing. The task proper consisted in putting down the titles they could remember after the list of titles had been removed.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between the retention of full titles which contained reported speech acts and full titles that did not⁶. This is to say that the four titles which contained speech act quotations appeared in the responses relatively just as often as the twelve titles of the opposite type (28 vs. 93 times). On the other hand, though, it turned out that eighteen among the twenty four speech act quotations included in the responses⁷ (i.e. 75%) were quoted verbatim. From the one hundred and eighty one descriptive titles given in the responses, only sixty six (37%) were quoted without errors. In seventy five out of these one hundred and eighty one responses (c. 40%), the number of content words from the descriptive title quoted in the response (i.e. rendered correctly) was below 50%. After the exclusion of the title unit consisting of one word only, i.e. the first part of the two-unit title "Gesture—the living medium," the number of answers correctly interpreting 50% or more of the content words per the descriptive title⁸ amounted to about 45%.

In other words, while the speech act titles did not help the respondents to remember the topics of the (unread) articles they represented, they were themselves much easier to remember and quote verbatim than descriptive titles. As speech act titles occur almost exclusively at the beginning of the full titles, this makes them particularly apt to represent the titles they are parts of, just as the first lines of literary works are frequently utilised in the onomastic function (as titles either repeated or continued in the first line). This suggests that the speech act titles may play an important role as mnemonic support for the writers themselves, who thus gain easy and error-free access to indices usable in referring to articles in question.

With regard to article titles, Haggan (2004: 303) formulated a hope that the reader "pushed into a thinking mode where he tries to work out the allusions or

⁶ $df=1$, $\chi^2=0,18$, $p>0,05$

⁷ Four responses in which such titles were included quoted only the descriptive title, i.e. failed to include the associated speech act title.

⁸ I.e. one descriptive unit in a two-unit title or the whole one-unit descriptive title.

connections that the paper-writer wants him to see” will be “nudged into reading the paper in order to unravel the mystery.” However, the actual behaviour of the readers in the present study, who did not seem to be very sensitive to such attempts, seems to shatter such hopes.

To recapitulate what has been said above, the following characteristics have been suggested as effective functions of speech acts in the titles of research articles:

- they influence the selection by the reader insofar as they transform one-unit titles into the preferred format of two-unit titles;
- they can be stored and retrieved easier than descriptive titles, which is likely to be helpful in particular to the author herself;
- they are likely to play an important expressive function for the author herself, constituting a meta-comment on her positioning, aspirations and construals related to the act of observation and analysis, and enabling her of an imaginative back-projection into the situation under study.

While these innocuous suggestions require a further empirical verification, they might help to improve our initial understanding regarding the relations (or their lack) between the seductive power of a title over the writer and its effectiveness in steering the reader’s choices, and our comprehension of title-making as an expressive component of text-formative processes in the humanities.

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