

## Discourse-level constructions: The case of speech and thought representation in English

The aim of this paper is to critically examine and improve on existing models of speech and thought representation in English from a constructional perspective. Types such as direct, indirect and free indirect speech/thought (DST, IST, and FIST) are viewed as ‘discourse constructions’, building on Dancygier and Sweetser’s notion of constructional compositionality (2005: 272-277), whereby “a specific constructional meaning is not always directly reliant on the complete configuration of forms, but may be prompted by a particular salient aspect of form” (Dancygier 2008: 665) in the right context.

The contextual knowledge required is that of the discourse situation in both the current and the represented speech event, and the ‘salient aspects of form’ combining with it are syntagmatic structure and deictic-expressive patterns. By taking these factors into account simultaneously, it becomes possible to re-draw some of the traditional category boundaries. An example of a boundary often kept vague in stylistic approaches is that between IST and FIST on account of the occurrence of “emphatic and colloquial expression[s]” (Semino and Short 2004: 85) in examples like (1):

- (1) (...) [she] was saying that she couldn’t possibly sleep in the private car (...) (Dick Francis, *The Edge*)

This analysis begs the question how soon lexis becomes too “emphatic and colloquial” for it to be permissible in IST. In my view, (1) has the syntactic structure of IST, with a tightly integrated sentence-initial reporting clause and a reported clause disallowing a number of expressive patterns (e.g. exclamative or interrogative clauses), but not expressive lexis per se.

An example of a new boundary that should be drawn is that between FIST and ‘DIST’ or ‘distancing indirect speech or thought’ (Author 2004, 2009), a ‘narrator’-oriented counterpart to ‘character’-oriented FIST. Through a close study of pronoun and proper name use, DIST is distinguished as a type echoing character discourse from the narrator’s deictic centre and displaying the latter’s judgement of referent accessibility (Ariel 1990) as reflected in NP type. Thus, in (2), use of the second person to refer to the ‘original’ speaker (the I-narrator’s husband), and in (3) use of full NPs rather than pronouns, is inconsistent with readings as FIST, in which no addressed second person appears (Banfield 1982) and in which pronouns are used to code highly accessible discourse participants such as speaker and addressee.

- (2) [I was a fool for marryin’ you. (...)] You was goin’ to do wonders, you was! You wasn’t goin’ to be a bookkeeper long – oh no, not you. (...) (Elmer Rice, *The Adding Machine*)  
(3) Father Conmee was wonderfully well indeed. He would go to Buxton probably for the waters. (...) Father Conmee was very glad to see the wife of Mr David Sheehy M.P. looking so well (...) (James Joyce, *Ulysses*)

These and other proposals are made on the basis of patterns observed in authentic data not limited to literary discourse, and the analysis is extended to include relatively new DST constructions using *be like*, *go* and related forms.

## References

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