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PROJECTING SPEECH TO PROTAGONISTS IN ORAL AND WRITTEN NARRATIVES: A DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY*

This study examines how speech is projected to protagonists in a narrative using indirect, direct and free direct forms of speech. Spoken and written narratives of fifteen 9-year-olds, fifteen 15-year-olds and fifteen adult controls, all Swedish monolingual speakers, were elicited by means of the picture book *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969). The results showed that the 9-year-olds projected a large amount of direct and free direct speech utterances to the story protagonists in both their written and spoken stories, evidencing a *write as you speak* strategy of narration. The 15-year-olds infrequently projected speech to the protagonists, and when they did, indirect speech was mainly used. These narratives were characterized by detachment, both in writing and speaking, pointing to a tendency towards *speak as you write*. The adult controls, finally, used a lot of direct and free direct speech. In this respect their narratives were more similar to the narratives of 9-year-olds than to the 15-year-olds, effecting a U-shaped curve of development. However, in contrast to the younger age groups, the adult narrators used different strategies in the two modalities, pointing to an awareness of modality specific properties. Consequently, the adult narrators *neither* followed a *write as you speak* strategy, *nor* that of *speak as you write*.

Introduction

Language can be used to speak about speech. A special case of metalinguistic usage is when speech purportedly re-presents another specific speech event, generally known as *reported speech*. The typical linguistic forms used to report speech are *indirect speech* and *direct speech*, which both contain verbs of saying that refer to speech events. However, verbs of saying are not always explicitly there, and these cases of unframed quotations will here be referred to as *free direct speech*. One aspect these three linguistic structures have in common, is, as Özyürek (1996) notes, that "their proper usage depends on the metalinguistic capacity of a speaker to monitor and express his relation to his ongoing speech" (p. 699).

The mere names of these forms reveal that the activity is about reporting *speech*. Nevertheless, these reports can be made not only in the oral mode, but also in the written

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mode. The primacy of spoken language over written language has often been emphasized regarding the latter as a representation of the former (e.g., Bloomfield, 1933). Chafe (1986) points to the fact that speaking is learned naturally and early by every normal child, whereas writing and reading are usually acquired through deliberate instruction (which in turn depends on already acquired speaking abilities). However, the conditions of production in the written mode of expression differ in certain respects from those of the spoken mode of expression, which suggests that spoken and written language are partly independent of each other.

This study will examine how narrators in three different age groups (9- and 15-year-old school children, and adults) project speech to the protagonists in a story using indirect, direct and free direct forms of speech, both in writing and in speaking. As already stated, proper usage of these linguistic forms requires a metalinguistic capacity. Moreover, producing these forms in writing adds a further dimension of reflexive capacity, i.e., awareness of modality-specific properties and, in this particular case, that speech is reported in a different modality (writing). Speech represented in the written modality is functionally similar to, rather than equivalent to, speech reported in the spoken modality. The present study aims at showing that it takes a certain amount of metalinguistic awareness and ability to ferret out the differences connected with the uses of modality.

Projecting speech in speech and writing

The term *projected speech*, rather than reported speech, is chosen because the speech projected to the protagonists is fictional rather than authentic reproductions of speech. Furthermore, the term *projected speech* also emphasizes the active and controlling role of the narrator (the projector).

Direct and indirect speech differ in certain structural respects. Compare examples (1) and (2) below.

- (1) The researcher said, "I think this topic is interesting".
- (2) The researcher said that she thought the topic was interesting.

The first example, that of direct speech, contains two clauses. The first is a framing clause, including information about who is quoted ("the researcher") and a verb of saying (*said*), followed by the speech of that person (i.e., of "the researcher"). The deictic center moves from the narrator's position, to that of the original quoted speaker. In (2), an example of indirect speech, the deictic center remains where the narrator is and elements such as pronouns, verbs and adverbs must conform to the here-and-now of the act of reporting. Indirect speech is also syntactically characterized by the presence of the subordinating conjunction *that* (although it may be optional) and the complement clause as subordinated to the clause with the speech act verb.

Clark & Gerrig (1990) regard direct quotations as demonstrations. In producing a quotation, aspects of the source utterance event are selected and depicted. Such depictions might include aspects of delivery (like tone of voice, emotional state, accompanying gestures), language (language proper, dialect, register) and linguistic acts. This also applies to cases where speech is not reported from an earlier event, but projected to protagonists in a fictional story. In contrast, indirect quotations are merely seen as descriptions of the earlier speech event.

A speech situation is typically polymodal in that both hearing and vision are important components, and information in the two modalities can be expressed simultaneously. This means that, along with the proposition expressed in words, for example, a change in tone of voice can be made, a certain speech register can be selected as well as facial expressions and manual gestures. In the case of speech projected to protagonists in a story, these depicted aspects attribute personal characteristics to the protagonist and help distinguish the intended referent from other referents/protagonists. In the case of free direct speech, where no verb of saying is present, the use of the voice becomes very informative. In addition to signalling changes in perspective, modifications in tone of voice and gestures can contribute to making narrations vivid and characters more alive (Tannen, 1986).

In contrast to speaking, writing is primarily monomodal, and possibilities to package information simultaneously are restricted. Orthographic conventions can be used to represent such things as sentences, words, phonetic segments, and some aspects of speech acts (for instance, quotation marks can be used to set off reported speech and a question mark to signal uncertainty or a request for information, etc.), but in order to depict aspects of delivery in writing, fewer options are available than in speech. However, boldface, italics, underscoring and uppercase letters can be used to depict some such aspects. In the example below, reduplication of letters are used to depict the speech of the speaker.

- (3) I slumped into my seat muttering, 'Shud-urrrrrrrp,' out of the side of my mouth like a humiliated teenager¹.

In example (3), the verb of saying (*mutter*) provides us not only with information that quoted speech is to follow, but also with a description of that speech. When simultaneous packaging and depictions in quotations are restricted (in written language), the importance of such lexically and linearly distributed descriptive information increases. Consequently, it has been shown that verbs of saying in written (literary) texts are varied and expressive (Page, 1988) and more so in written texts than in speech (Tannen, 1986).

Chafe (1982) states that dense packaging (*integration*) is typical of written language. Our discussion of verbs of saying amplify that generalization (*mutter* can in a sense be said to be more expressive (contain more information) than, for instance, *say*, which is used more commonly in speech). Furthermore, Chafe asserts that *detachment* is typical of written communication, while *involvement* is typical of spoken interaction. It was mentioned above that direct speech in combination with paralinguistic features can contribute to vivid narration, and Chafe (1982) has indeed shown that direct speech is more commonly used in the spoken modality than in writing. Similarly, it can be hypothesized that indirect speech is more typical of written language. The use of indirect speech contributes to a greater distance between the narrator and the characters, and the speech become more stylistically integrated in the surrounding discourse.

Research questions

Most studies on the development of forms of direct and indirect speech are on their oral use (e.g., Hickmann, 1993; Goodell & Sachs, 1992; Ely & McCabe, 1993; Özyürek, 1996),

¹ Fielding, *Bridget Jones's diary*, p 50.

and from these previous studies a general developmental course can be established. Although all forms can appear as early as at two and a half years of age (Ely & McCabe, 1993), young children prefer direct quotations, and especially unframed ones, to align themselves with the speakers quoted. As they grow older and become aware of the need to orient the listener and of the requirements of the communicative situation, framed direct quotations are more frequently used, and only later indirect speech more systematically used. The first question to explore in the present study is therefore to see to what extent this effect is replicated in the oral productions.

The second issue will be to follow the development of forms of speech in the written narratives. The 9-year-olds have only recently learnt how to read and write stories, while they have long experience of oral narration. Consequently, it might be expected that in this age group, strategies typical of oral production will be used in the written production to a greater extent than in the older age groups. More specifically, it can be hypothesized that written narratives will also be characterized by involvement and frequent use of direct and free direct forms of speech. Hildyard & Hidi (1985) found that spoken and written texts produced by elementary school children did not differ until the age of twelve, when written texts started to manifest a higher degree of structural complexity. Thus, awareness concerning modality-specific aspects seems to be limited up to a certain age. A second hypothesis then will be that the written narratives of the 15-year-olds will differ from those produced by the younger children. More particularly, indirect speech could be expected to be used more frequently in the older age group.

Method

In this particular study, Mercy Mayer's (1969) wordless picture story book *Frog, where are you?* was used as an elicitation instrument. This booklet has been widely used in cross-linguistic studies of language acquisition (see Berman & Slobin, 1994). The booklet consists of 24 pictures and depicts the adventures of a little boy and his dog as they go out into the woods to search for a frog which has disappeared from the boy's room. During the search they meet and interact with a variety of animals in the forest, and finally they find the frog again. The subjects were fifteen Swedish 9-year-olds and fifteen 15-year-olds monolinguals recruited from schools in middle-class areas in Göteborg. In addition, fifteen adult control subjects were recruited from groups of undergraduate students taking other subjects than linguistics and psychology.

Each subject was asked to narrate the story, picture by picture, in his or her own words, and each subject told the story once orally and once in writing (the 9-year-olds wrote by hand while the 15-year-olds and the adult controls wrote on a computer). Further, the order of the two conditions (speech vs writing) was controlled. Half of the subjects in all age groups started with the spoken condition and half with the written. Consequently, all in all, 90 narratives (45 written and 45 spoken) were collected. The narrative task was monological in character in the sense that there was no listener present in the spoken condition (the subject told the story to a camera) nor in the written condition. Before telling the story, the subjects were invited to look through the picture book, so as to get acquainted with its content. For more details on the recording procedures, see Strömqvist & Ahlsén (1998).

Three types of speech acts were coded for: indirect speech, direct speech and free direct speech. Only speech acts were taken into account, leaving out cognitive acts (e.g., "I will maybe never see my frog again, the boy thought to himself"). Indirect speech was operatio-

nalized as utterances with the form "X said that __", where the embedded clause had to be a proposition. Direct speech typically had the form "X said: __" or "__, X said", where the represented utterance could be a proposition or even an animal cry. The same holds for free direct speech ("__!"). Each speech act was also coded for speaker (boy, dog or other (e.g., frog, vole, reindeer)) and a voice quality analysis was carried out for all the spoken narratives, especially regarding the instances of free direct speech. It was noted if the tone of voice changed when a narrator shifted speaker/story character and deictic center. The written narratives were further analyzed from the point of view of correct use of quotation marks (or dash) to indicate speech. Finally, all types of verbs of saying entered the analysis.

Results

Twelve of the fifteen 9-year-olds used some kind of projected speech in the spoken versions, and thirteen of the subjects in the written narratives. Thus two of the 9-year-olds chose not to use indirect, direct and free direct speech in either narrative modality, and one 9-year-old used it only in the written one. The distribution of forms is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: The distribution of projected speech in speech and writing in the narratives of the 9-year-olds

9 years, N=15									
	indirect speech "X said that __"			direct speech "__, X said"			free direct speech "__!"		
	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other
<i>Speaking</i>									
N subj.	2	0	0	10	1	1	7	2	2
N tokens	2	0	0	17	1	1	55	8	11
Verb types	3								
<i>Writing</i>									
N subj.	2	0	0	9	3	1	7	3	3
N tokens	2	0	0	23	5	2	57	9	5
Verb types	3								

About two-thirds of the subjects used direct speech (49 tokens) and half of the subjects used free direct speech (7 subjects and 145 tokens). On the other hand, instances of indirect speech were rare; they were used only by two subjects (and only 4 tokens). Furthermore, the table shows that a variety of story characters got to say something in the narratives, although the majority of the utterances were projected to the boy. Notably, there are no evident differences between the two modalities (spoken and written). If all instances of projected speech are divided by the number of users, the average number of speech projections will be 8 in the spoken modality as well as in the written one. In the spoken narratives, six out of seven nine-year-old users of free direct speech employed changes in tone of voice to indicate speech acts and speaker identity, while none of the 71 instances of free direct speech in their written narratives was marked by any corresponding kind of notation. Altogether three different speech act verbs were found: *säga* ('say'), *skrika* ('shout'), and *ropa* ('call').

In the group of 15-year-olds, 4 subjects chose not to use projected speech in either of the conditions, while another 4 subjects used indirect, direct or free direct speech only in the spoken condition. Thus, 7 subjects used at least one type of speech projection in both modalities. The total distribution of forms is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The distribution of projected speech in speech and writing in the narratives of the 15-year-olds

15 years, N=15									
	indirect speech "X said that _"			direct speech "_ , X said"			free direct speech "_ !"		
	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other
<i>Speaking</i>									
N subj.	8	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	0
N tokens	9	0	1	7	0	0	5	0	0
Verb types	3								
<i>Writing</i>									
N subj.	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
N tokens	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Verb types	2								

The total amount of projected speech was low in this age group. Free direct speech was used only by one subject (5 tokens) and although 1/3 of the subjects used direct speech, only 12 instances were found. The share of indirect speech was considerably greater in this age group (8 subjects and 14 tokens) in comparison to the 9-year-olds (2 subjects and 4 tokens). Yet another difference between the age groups was that the boy was the only story character (with one exception) to whom utterances were projected. Slightly more tokens of projected speech were found in the spoken versions than in the written ones (22 versus 9 tokens). However, the mean number of form usages was the same (2 forms/user) in the two modalities. In the five cases of free direct speech, a change in tone of voice to distinguish the narrator from a story character, was not noted. Three different verbs of saying were used in the spoken narrations (*säga* ('say'), *ropa* ('call') and *be* ('ask')), and two types in the written ones (*säga* ('say') and *vråla* ('howl')).

If we turn to the narratives of the adult controls, four narrators chose not to include projected speech in either their spoken and written narratives. In contrast to the other age groups where no particular order effects (order of speech and writing conditions) could be found, all these narrators started out in the spoken condition. Otherwise, we observe certain characteristics which distinguish them from the 15-year-olds but shows similarity to the 9-year-olds, as is shown in Table 3.

Firstly, indirect speech was rare among the adult narrators, while direct and free direct speech were frequently used. As was also the case with the 9-year-olds, two-thirds of the control subjects used direct speech. Secondly, the speech acts were spread out over several story protagonists resulting in several changes in perspective. What differentiated the two groups, however, was that direct speech seems to be preferred by the adults, while the younger children used more free direct speech. The number of control subjects using pro-

Table 3: The distribution of projected speech in speech and writing in the narratives of the adult controls

Adult Controls, N=15									
	indirect speech "X said that _"			direct speech "_ , X said"			free direct speech "_ !"		
	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other	boy	dog	other
<i>Speaking</i>									
N subj.	3	0	0	9	0	5	3	0	2
N tokens	3	0	0	28	0	6	4	0	2
Verb types	8								
<i>Writing</i>									
N subj.	0	0	1	9	4	6	3	1	1
N tokens	0	0	1	44	14	23	11	7	1
Verb types	28								

jected speech in the two modalities was stable (eleven subjects), but the token number was higher in the written modality (101 versus 43). On average, each narrator used 9 tokens of projected speech in writing, and only 4 tokens in speaking. All but two narrators, used more projected speech in writing than in speaking.

Except for one case, the free direct speech utterances were produced with a voice quality distinct from the narrator's voice. Quotation marks were used (correctly) for all instances of direct and free direct speech, which was not the case for the younger age groups. Furthermore, in the spoken stories, 8 different types of verbs of saying are used and in the written narratives as many as 28 different verbs. The verb types are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Types of verbs of saying in the written narratives of the adult controls

<i>säga</i>	'say'	<i>muttra</i>	'mutter'
<i>ropa</i>	'call'	<i>stamma (fram)</i>	'stammer (out)'
<i>försöka</i>	'try'	<i>be</i>	'ask'
<i>fråga</i>	'ask'	<i>hyssja</i>	'hush'
<i>förebå</i>	'blame'	<i>bli</i>	'be'
<i>voffsa</i>	'bark'	<i>höras</i>	'is heard'
<i>skrocka</i>	'chuckle'	<i>skälla</i>	'bark'
<i>skrika</i>	'shout'	<i>utropa</i>	'exclaim'
<i>utbrista</i>	'exclaim'	<i>föreslå</i>	'propose'
<i>hojta</i>	'shout'	<i>viska</i>	'whisper'
<i>skratta</i>	'laugh'	<i>genmäla</i>	'reply'
<i>svara</i>	'answer'	<i>hånkratta</i>	'jeer'
<i>börja</i>	'start'		
<i>morra</i>	'growl'	<i>utbrista färtjust</i>	'exclaim'
<i>fräsa</i>	'hiss'		'delightedly'

Discussion

It is clear from the results that the 9-year-olds use more direct and free direct speech in their oral narratives than do the 15-year-olds, who prefer forms of indirect speech. The findings from previous studies are thus confirmed. Furthermore, it is also obvious that the written narratives of the 15-year-olds differ from the 9-year-olds, pointing to a development of awareness of modality-specific properties. The general developmental pattern is that the 9-year-olds make frequent use of free direct speech, both in speaking and writing, and the utterances are distributed over several story characters/speakers. The 15-year-olds, in contrast, are very limited in their use of projected speech, and only the boy gets to say something, often by means of indirect speech. The adults, then, also make frequent use of free direct speech and especially direct speech, and utterances are projected to several protagonists in the story. The written narratives display a greater amount of projected speech than the spoken ones, and also include a considerably greater variety of verbs of saying.

The youngest age group skilfully uses changes in tone of voice in the cases of direct and free direct speech, resulting in lively narrations. The child, thus facilitates the listener's job of following the changes of perspective when delivering the narratives orally. The reader of the written narratives, on the other hand, will get into problems, since prosodic cues are of course not there and no quotation marks are used. The written dialogues of this age group merely look like speech lines written down, where no account is taken of the fact that changes in tone of voice cannot be heard in the written modality. Both the written and oral narratives of the 9-year-olds are characterized by involvement and acting, and the general strategy employed could be said to be to *write as you speak*. The findings of Hildyard & Hidi (1985) seem to be confirmed, in that the narratives in the two modalities do not differ in this age group. Further evidence of this principle (write as you speak) is the fact that in 40 out of the 42 cases (in both modalities) where the animals "speak" in the form of direct and free direct speech, they are only ascribed sound imitations (animal cries), like *ribbett, ribbett, ribbett* and *bow-wow*.

The narratives by the 15-year-olds, on the other hand, are not characterized by the same degree of involvement. Firstly, the narrators use very little projected speech, in fact, many of them do not use that option at all. Secondly, when projected speech is used, indirect forms of speech are more often used in this age group than in the younger group. Instead, typical of this group of narrators is detachment. Hildyard & Hidi (1985), in their study, conclude that "by age 12 ... we begin to notice some structural superiority of written procedures" (p. 303). In the current study of the 15-year-olds, awareness of information structuring that is typical of writing seems not only to have emerged, but is actually overgeneralized to the oral narratives, i.e., this group can be said to follow a *speak as you write* strategy. It is important to keep in mind that this particular narrative task was monological in character and that lack of feedback and interactional dynamics might result in less lively narrations. However, Nordqvist (1998) included a control group of 15-year-old narrators who told the story to a peer, under relaxed conditions. It turned out that this control group showed exactly the same pattern of use of projected speech.

The group of adult narrators in certain respects resemble the group of 9-year-olds, effecting a U-shaped form of development across the three age groups. Like the 9-year-olds, but unlike the 15-year-olds, the narratives of the adults are characterized by involve-

ment. However, there are important differences between the 9-year-olds and the adult controls. The most important one is, as has already been pointed out, that the extent of usage of projected speech in the oral and written narratives differs (more tokens are found in the written). But there are also important qualitative aspects to take into account. The adult narrators, as well as the youngest narrators, use free direct speech in the written narratives. However, in contrast to the children, the adults use quotation marks correctly, and they embed the utterances in the larger narrative discourse, which helps the reader to infer who the speaker is. Consider the examples below extracted from two of the adult narrators.

- (4) Pelle måste ideligen påminna Plutt att inte vifta så förfärligt på svansen.
 – Tyst nu!
Peter over and over again must remind Plutt not to furiously wag his tail
 – Be quiet!
- (5) – Vad är det? frågade Bert förvirrat.
 – Tror du inte att han kan ha gömt sig någonstans?
 – Varför skulle han gömma sig?
What is it? Bert asked confused.
 – Don't you think that he might have hidden somewhere?
 – Why should he hide?

In example (4) there is no verb of saying present and although there is no traditional speech-introducing clause, it can easily be inferred from the preceding context that Peter is telling Plutt to be quiet rather than vice versa. In (5) the speakers' identities can be inferred from the fact that the two free direct speech utterances are part of an exchange of utterances, starting with a question by Bert. In contrast to the younger narrators, all cases of free direct speech in the written narratives of the adults are embedded in the narrative discourse in a sophisticated fashion as is illustrated in (4) and (5). The adult narrators are well aware that prosodic cues are not present in writing, and adjust their speech projection strategies accordingly. The fact that the adults not only project animal cries to the story characters, but also propositional content, increases the need for syntactic integration of the quoted utterances in the discourse. Further evidence for awareness of the different conditions tied to the different modalities, comes from the fact that a considerable number of different types of verbs of saying are used in the written narratives. As was discussed above, this is a sophisticated way of packaging information, especially fruitful and common in written texts. What can be concluded is that the adults *neither write as they speak, nor do they speak as they write*. In comparison to the younger age groups, the adults have a greater expressive ability and possess an increased control over the processes that interact to create a rich and cohesive text.

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