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# Making Sense of Mention, Quotation, and Autonymy. A Semantic and Pragmatic Survey of Metalinguistic Discourse

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UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES  
Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres  
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Making Sense of Mention, Quotation, and Autonymy.  
A Semantic and Pragmatic Survey of Metalinguistic  
Discourse

Thèse présentée en vue de l’obtention du grade de Docteur  
en Philosophie et Lettres par Philippe DE BRABANTER  
Promoteur: Jean-Pierre VAN NOPPEN

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who, though they're hardly aware of it and have no idea of what exactly I'm doing, have played a crucial role in making the completion of this PhD possible. Let this dissertation be a very big thank-you for their care and selflessness.

## Acknowledgments

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It goes without saying that I remain entirely responsible for the form and content of this dissertation and, especially, for any inaccuracies, contradictions or blatant mistakes that it may contain.

## Typographical conventions

- Italics are used for quoted (mentioned) words, phrases, etc. Italics have not been used to single out foreign words (e.g. *With* is a preposition).
- Smart quotes are used for reporting the words of others (e.g. Tarski writes, “a semantical theory ...”).
- I have used single inverted commas as ‘scare quotes’, i.e. to distance myself from a particular choice of words, or to indicate that these words are not mine. Thus, new terminology is initially introduced between single inverted commas (e.g. We have two ‘utterance-tokens’ related to one ‘utterance-type’).
- French quotation marks are used to mention senses, meanings, propositions (e.g. *A why* means « a reason »).
- Quoting policies vary from one writer to the next: I have respected this variety in my citations of other authors. Their policies have sometimes been extended to the discussion that followed a particular citation. Hence, single inverted commas or smart quotes at times play the same role as my italics.
- When quoting already quoted words, I have adopted the following standard: if the previously quoted words appeared in italics, I have enclosed them in a non-italicised pair of single inverted commas (hence, ‘*commas*’). If the previously quoted words appeared between single inverted commas or smart quotes, I have italicised the whole sequence (hence, ‘*commas*’ or “*commas*”).

At the same time, everyday language has already provided us with the method of dealing with linguistic facts, by permitting words not only to be used but also to be quoted. The point is so obvious and familiar that it is difficult to realize its cardinal importance, and even to be aware of it in ordinary grammatical discourse. (Brough 1951: 28)

Like Molière's Jourdain, who used prose without knowing that it was prose, we practice metalanguage without realizing the metalingual character of our statements. Far from being confined to the sphere of science, metalingual operations prove to be an integral part of our verbal activities. (Jakobson 1985b: 117)

Finally, the urgent task which faces the science of language, a systematic analysis of lexical and grammatical meanings, must begin by approaching metalanguage as an innermost linguistic problem. (1985b: 121)

## INTRODUCTION

This introduction is meant to serve several purposes. First, I sketch how this dissertation came about, i.e. how I originally became interested in metalinguistic discourse. Although the autobiographical details are not important as such, I believe that some idea of the genesis of such a long-term undertaking as a thesis may facilitate its appreciation and comprehension. Second, I offer a number of reasons why a study of metalanguage from a linguistic point of view can prove relevant. In particular, (i) metalinguistic utterances display a peculiar morphosyntactic and semantic behaviour; (ii) they must be theorised if one is to be able to make acceptability judgments on the claims made by linguists themselves (most of which are metalinguistic statements); (iii) they provide the most straightforward illustrations of a fundamental property of natural languages, namely reflexivity. Third, I briefly outline various aspects of the research on metalanguage and reflexivity which are important in their own right but which I have not found useful for this dissertation. Though an account of the discarded approaches might seem somewhat tedious to the reader who wants to ‘get down to the business in hand’, I felt that it would be unfair, and unwise, to simply ignore a sometimes substantial scientific production that once made, or is still making, a significant contribution to the study of metalanguage. In the last section of this introduction, I provide a synopsis of the eight chapters that make up this dissertation.

### How this dissertation came about

At the origin of this dissertation is a practical problem that I encountered while working on a translation. There were passages in the text I was translating that raised very special difficulties, of the kind that prompt some scholars to decree that translation is impossible. In the following excerpt, a blood sports expert is putting right a description of a hunting scene by a townsman:

- (1) ‘My dear fellow, you can’t talk about a fox’s tail; and as for the “dogs”, I suppose you mean the hounds; and the “cavalry in red jackets” were huntsmen in their pink coats.’ (Toulmin 1958: 25)

It was soon apparent that any ‘literal’ or direct translation was to be ruled out since it is not improper in French to refer to a fox’s tail as *la queue d’un renard*, or to hounds as *des chiens (de meute)*. Nor is it likely that *des manteaux roses* would rate as a better description of the huntsmen’s garments than *des vestes rouges*. It did not take a stroke of genius to realise that the difficulties originated in the fact that some terms of the townsman’s description were being

talked about rather than used in their normal capacity. The reason why I could not turn out anything meaningful on the basis of the literal translation of *fox's tail* or *dogs* had nothing to do with the scene depicted in Toulmin's text. Instead, it had to do with the fact that lexical items in two languages, even when they are such close translational equivalents as *dog* and *chien*, do not share all of their characteristics. In this case, one is not appropriate in the particular register of blood sports, while the other is. In the end, rather than translating (1) literally, I chose to rest my French-speaking expert's attack on French words that permitted linguistic improprieties to occur. Some of those had to be added to the description for that specific purpose.<sup>1</sup>

I had 'discovered' that something which I faintly recognised as 'metalinguistic use', a term whose meaning and ramifications were very vague to me then, 'blocked' translation.<sup>2</sup> Thinking the idea worth pursuing, I decided to write a dissertation on metalanguage from the vantage point of translation theory. It soon turned out that the literature of the field made only few allusions to metalanguage. When it did, that was often in connection with Jakobson's model of verbal communication (see Jakobson 1981a, 1985b), which associates a 'language function' (emotive, conative, referential, poetic, phatic, metalingual) to each of the six constitutive factors of every speech event (addresser, addressee, context, message, contact, code). Translation theorists, however, have tended not to use the model to theorise straightforward metalinguistic utterances such as (1) or (a) – where words, or, more broadly, language is the topic of discussion.<sup>3</sup> Rather, they have tended to apply it to indirect metalinguistic processes, as take place notably in wordplay (e.g. Delabastita 1993, 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> The published translation reads: « *Mon cher ami, vous ne pouvez parler des pattes d'un cheval; et pour ce qui est de la "horde", je suppose que vous voulez dire la meute; quant aux 'dents', ce sont des crocs* » (Toulmin 1993: 30). I have made use of so-called 'compensation' (Vinay & Darbelnet 1977: 188-92; Hervey & Higgins 1992: 34-40), a decision that brought about several alterations in the townsman's tale. Indeed, the translation of (1) leaves a lot of room for creativity, so that many very different solutions could have been suggested, including some that would make no allusion whatsoever to a hunting scene.

<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, many people had made the same discovery before. Let me just mention Christensen (1961: 70), Burge (1978: 137), Rey-Debove (1978: 220ff, 1997: 336). The blocking of translation takes a slightly different appearance in more basic examples than (1). If I have to translate:

(a) *Screen* is a one-syllable word

into French, I basically have two options:

(a<sub>1</sub>) *Screen* est un mot d'une syllabe

(a<sub>2</sub>) *Ecran* est un mot d'une syllabe.

In other words, either I do not translate the word quoted in (a), or I do, but then I am no longer talking about the same object (the word *screen*); I have altered the truth-conditions of the source-utterance. In this case, the dilemma is between translation and truth; in (1), it was between translation and meaningfulness (or relevance).

<sup>3</sup> Even though, as we shall have plenty of opportunities to notice, the metalinguistic sequences in (1) are not 'pure' instances of quotation or mention: they are in ordinary use at the same time.



It is true that puns appear to block literal translation just as much as straightforward metalinguistic utterances do:

(2) We sported bellhop costumes for our Hamlet skit; should, we pondered in unison and song, the package be delivered to, I kid you not, “2b or not 2b.” (Carter 1991: 90)

Although literal translation would yield a perfectly understandable grammatical sentence, its relevance would be likely to escape readers: what can be so funny about whether the parcel will be delivered *au numéro 2b ou pas*? The only cause of merriment would be the odd bilingual reader’s recognition of the underlying pun and of the translator’s incompetence.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of Delabastita’s valuable investigations into the translation of wordplay, it became clear that translation theory would not provide me with the tools necessary for an in-depth understanding of what I thought should be dealt with first, namely plain statements about language. In this respect, the two detailed treatments of metalanguage that I came across in the literature proved unable to help. The first, Chapter VII of Vinay & Darbelnet’s now classic *Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais*, is devoted to “adaptation and issues of metalinguistics”. Unfortunately, Vinay & Darbelnet understand the latter term in the sense that it used to have in American ethnolinguistics, i.e. “the links between a language and the set of social and cultural activities of a given ethnic group” (1977: 259),<sup>5</sup> a sense that is of no relevance to my research. The second is the chapter that Peter Newmark devotes to “Translation and the metalingual function of language” in his *Approaches to Translation*. Although he offers a series of useful warnings and guidelines, Newmark is content with an intuitive and pre-theoretical understanding of the subject. For instance, he fails to explain on what grounds he can lump together under the metalingual function both wordplay and an “English grammar for German linguists” (1981: 105), even though it is likely that the metalinguistic mechanisms involved in each could be at least partly different.

After I had come to the conclusion that translation studies fell short of my expectations, I similarly realised that Jakobson’s contribution, however popular it has become, was repetitive and narrow in scope: Jakobson never fully developed a concept which remained largely embryonic throughout his academic career, in spite of the programmatic appeal he launched in 1956:

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<sup>4</sup> A possible translation: *Pour notre pastiche de Hamlet, nous arborions un costume de garçon de courses: nous nous demandions, à l’unison et en chanson, si le colis devait, je vous le donne en mille, “être ou ne pas être” livré au numéro 2b.*

<sup>5</sup> See also Mounin (1974: 213); Bußmann (1996: 304); Crystal (1997a: 239) for further details.

Finally, the urgent task which faces the science of language, a systematic analysis of lexical and grammatical meanings, must begin by approaching metalanguage as an innermost linguistic problem. (1985b: 121)

In the field of linguistics proper, the scholar who has come closest to completing that preliminary task is Josette Rey-Debove, with her *Le Métalanguage* (1978), one of the few linguistics publications chiefly devoted to reflexivity in language. The only booklength studies published since, John Lucy's *Reflexive Language* (1993) and Jacqueline Authier-Revuz's *Ces mots qui ne vont pas de soi* (1995) are less concerned with the basic syntactic, lexical and semantic problems raised by metalanguage, and, to my knowledge, Rey-Debove's book remains the only one that attempts to make sense of all the basics of the subject.

It is while reading Rey-Debove that I became aware of most of the peculiarities of metalanguage that make it a topic worthy of linguistic investigation. An outline of those requires a preliminary distinction between the aspects of metalanguage that pertain to a linguistic system and those that do to its use (i.e. to actual utterances produced in a context). There are items whose metalinguistic character is unmistakable even out of context (in the lexicon), words such as *verb*, *sentence*, or *conjugate*, which, from the outset, denote 'something linguistic'. Although they are useful for building metalinguistic utterances (especially in somewhat technical discourse), they are not very interesting from the point of view of the linguist.<sup>6</sup> The fact that they are 'about language' is not enough to make them so. If such were the case, then one might also ground the specific linguistic relevance of the discourses of gardening, interior decoration or charity on the mere fact they are about gardening, interior decoration or charity. In linguistics, it is not what a type of language use is about that makes it a relevant topic, but the linguistic questions that it forces the scholar to ask, and the kind of light that it sheds on the workings of language. In this respect, what I have tentatively called *metalinguistic use* above has all it takes to fill the linguist's bill. That is particularly true of its main building blocks, those expressions that Rey-Debove calls 'autonyms'. We have already seen that they cause direct translation to fail (cf footnote 2 in this introduction). But they also display a very peculiar morphosyntactic behaviour. They appear to function like singular nominal constituents (NPs or Ns), whatever their initial grammatical nature (e.g. adverb, V + NP, sentence, etc.) and number, witness:

(3) *Holidays* rhymes with *erase*.

(4) You can put *got a job* before or after the adverb *immediately*.

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<sup>6</sup> I qualify this statement in Chapter 7, where I examine a possible overlapping area between metalinguistic words and the kind of metalanguage that only occurs in the context of an utterance.

(5) Out of context, the meaning of *she did it* is extremely underdetermined.

In French, moreover, they systematically behave like singular masculine nominals:

(6) *Voisines* est plus beau que *concierge*.

Finally, it is remarkable how many different sorts of sequences can occur in the autonymous position: in addition to the examples above, let me mention affixes, foreign words, pseudo-words, and even non-linguistic sequences. Rey-Debove insists that linguists must supply a valid account of autonoms and of all their peculiarities; in particular, they must be able to pinpoint criteria on which the acceptability of utterances containing autonoms can be evaluated. Otherwise, she explains, linguists will be in no position to determine whether their own statements about language are acceptable or not (let alone true).

Autonoms are different from the quoted strings occurring in example (1), which do double duty, as it were. If we look at “*cavalry in red jackets*”, for instance, we see that this sequence is an NP which, together with the article *the*, fills the subject position and refers to a set of actual people (not to words). At the same time, however, the point that the fox-hunting fanatic is making is a linguistic one, and the hearer’s (and readers’) attention is drawn to the string for its own sake. This double duty, which Rey-Debove describes as ‘autonomous connotation’, is one of the most fascinating aspects of metalinguistic discourse. What is more, it presents the semanticist and the grammarian with a major challenge and will therefore constitute one of the main focuses of this dissertation.

As Rey-Debove makes a point of showing, most of the features of metalinguistic discourse that she highlights have also been widely discussed in the philosophical literature.<sup>7,8</sup> As I explain at greater length in Chapter 1, the very notion of ‘metalanguage’ was the brainchild of formal logicians of the first half of the twentieth century. Their writings subsequently prompted all sorts of responses (and new questions) from philosophers of language, whose reflections have substantially nourished my thinking on metalanguage. Together with Rey-Debove, philosophers have supplied me with most of the questions and answers that are examined in this dissertation. I provide an overview of these issues in the ‘synopsis’ at the end of this introduction.

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<sup>7</sup> However, since Rey-Debove’s book dates back to 1978 (the second edition remains unchanged, despite what the title page claims), she has not been able to take in the many important philosophical studies published in the meantime.

<sup>8</sup> I must point out that the terminologies used are often different. Philosophers of language usually deal with Rey-Debove’s autonymy under the heading of ‘mention’ or ‘quotation’, while her autonomous connotation overlaps largely with their ‘simultaneous use and mention’ or ‘hybridity’. These are all terms that I shall make abundant use of throughout this dissertation.

## Linguistic reflexivity

Whether they are system-level or utterance-level occurrences, the various manifestations of metalanguage are the most tangible signs of a property known as ‘linguistic reflexivity’.<sup>9</sup> That reflexivity, language’s ability to ‘talk about’ itself, is a significant feature of human languages, is underlined by a wide range of scholars, from formal logicians like Grelling (1936: 486) and Tarski (1983a: 164) to the philosopher and linguist Paul Saka (1998: 132), via Hockett (1966: 13), Harris (1968: 17), Lyons (1977: 5), Rey-Debove (1978: 1), Jakobson (1985a: 96-97), Droste (1989a: 13-14), Lucy (1993: 11), Caffi (1994: 2464), Authier-Revuz (1995: 8ff) or Foley (1997: 39-40). Most writers go so far as to regard reflexivity as a (perhaps even the) distinctive characteristic of the natural languages of humans. Witness these three citations:

One of the most characteristic features of natural languages (and one which may well distinguish them, not only from the signalling-systems used by other species but also from what is commonly referred to as non-verbal communication in human beings [...]) is their capacity for referring to, or describing themselves. The term we will employ for this feature, or property, of language is reflexivity. Language can be turned back on itself, as it were. (Lyons 1977: 5)

This reflexivity is so pervasive and essential that we can say that language is, by nature, fundamentally reflexive. (Lucy 1993: 11)

It emerges from [J. Corraze’s 1980] study that reflexivity is the only feature [among Hockett’s 16 defining features of human languages] that is entirely absent from animal communication [...]. (Auroux 1996: 36)

All in all, I believe that the ‘internal’ motivations – the quirky grammatical and semantic behaviour – coupled with the ‘external’ reason – the fact that metalanguage is the cardinal manifestation of linguistic reflexivity – provide enough of a justification to address the topic within the framework of linguistics.

## Various approaches to linguistic reflexivity

Linguistic reflexivity can be, and has been, approached from a variety of vantage points, not all of which turn out to be pertinent to the goals of the present dissertation. I will briefly sketch

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<sup>9</sup> They are not the only ones: there also exists what some writers call token-reflexivity, i.e. a property of those “words which refer to the corresponding token used in an individual act of speech, or writing” (Reichenbach 1947: 284). Token-reflexives are basically indexicals, or deictics: their semantic value cannot be determined without reference to the circumstances in which they are being uttered. This form of reflexivity has been closely examined notably by Recanati (1979).

three, and attempt to explain why I did not find them useful for the research that I was embarking on.

### Jakobson's 'functional' perspective

Jakobson defines his 'metalingual' function as speech which "is focused upon the code" (1985b: 117), i.e. upon the language as system, not as discourse. Not much else is given in the way of a definition, and Jakobson's picture of metalinguistic discourse must be put together on the basis of piecemeal indications. From a functional perspective, the metalingual function is said to play a central role in improving communication between addresser and addressee, chiefly by means of the mutual adjustment of their vocabulary: the addressee asks for elucidation of this or that lexical item, and the addresser provides it.<sup>10</sup> From a more formal point of view, it appears that metalanguage is made up of equational utterances that are used to ask for or provide information about any aspect of a linguistic code (phonological, morphological, lexical, etc.),<sup>11</sup> a characterisation that has wrongly prompted some commentators to reduce metalinguistic utterances to paraphrase (e.g. Bradford 1994: 15, 18). A further problem with the equational statements is that their metalinguistic status is often not self-evident. Take:

(7) Hermaphrodites are individuals combining the sex organs of both male and female.

(8) An adult male goose is a gander.

Jakobson may be right in claiming that such statements "impart information about the meaning assigned to the word *hermaphrodite* [...] but [...] say nothing about the ontological status of the individuals named" (1985b: 119). At the same time, the terms occurring in subject position – to take the easiest constituents – denote living beings, not words. Indeed, substitution by names (or definite descriptions) of individual hermaphrodites (say, John Smith and Billy Brown) or individual geese (say, Alfred) is perfectly intelligible and preserves truth:

(7<sub>1</sub>) John Smith and Billy Brown are individuals combining the sex organs of both male and female.

(8<sub>1</sub>) Alfred is a gander.

This would not be the case in the following pair of examples, where the subject clearly refers to a word, and substitution by the name of a man yields the false statement (9<sub>1</sub>):

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<sup>10</sup> Other writers who have highlighted the importance of metalanguage in monitoring communication (editing, correcting, reformulating, repairing, etc.) are Lucy (1993: 17f) and Caffi (1994: 2464), both of whom foreground the notion of 'metapragmatic' activity.

<sup>11</sup> Cf Jakobson (1981a, 1981b, 1985c).

(9) Man is monosyllabic.

(9<sub>1</sub>) Socrates is monosyllabic.

Furthermore, Jakobson does not refrain from equating the verb *to be* in equational statements with *to mean* or *to be called*, producing the following pairs of synonymous sentences:

(10) A sophomore is a second-year student.

(10<sub>1</sub>) A sophomore means a second-year student.

(11) A second-year student is a sophomore.

(11<sub>1</sub>) A second-year student is called a sophomore.

It is difficult not to lose the thread of Jakobson's argument. In particular, there seems to be no clear criterion on which to determine membership to the metalingual function. At one point, Jakobson makes an explicit mention of several schools of thought in the course of history which discriminated between metalanguage and ordinary language; in particular, he claims that metalanguage and the 'suppositio materialis' of the medieval theory of supposition are the same thing (1985d: 195).<sup>12</sup> Since there is a fairly reliable procedure for deciding if a given sequence occurs with *suppositio materialis* or not, it is tempting to use it as a test for the metalingual function. The results, however, contradict Jakobson's judgment in more than one case: medieval logicians would have said that only the subject-NPs of (9) and (10<sub>1</sub>), and the subject-complement-NP of (11<sub>1</sub>) are used materially. On this basis, (7), (8), (10), and (11) are not metalinguistic utterances.

In the end, Jakobson's reliance on a vague semantic criterion – talk about the code – and a shaky formal one – equational utterances – puts him in no position to make definite, reliable judgments as to what is and what is not metalinguistic. Moreover, his insistence on the code means that he would regard as non-metalinguistic such an example as

(12) "Why do you always say *Joan and Margery*, yet never *Margery and Joan* ? Do you prefer Joan to her twin sister ?" "Not at all, it just sounds smoother" (1985b: 116),

which is unequivocally about language use, i.e. the message.<sup>13</sup> And yet, the two italicised strings are used with material supposition.

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<sup>12</sup> Roughly, *supposition* denotes the contextual relation between an NP in a sentence and, in a loose sense, its referents. Material supposition occurs when an NP refers 'to itself'. There is a clear connection with Rey-Debove's autonyms.

<sup>13</sup> Jakobson seems to have had some difficulty with the code-message boundary. At one point, he illustrates the commonplaceness of metalanguage as follows:

"I don't follow you – what do you mean ?" asks the addressee [...] And the addresser in anticipation of such recapturing questions inquires: "Do you know what I mean ?" (1985b: 117)

All in all, it is not clear that Jakobson's metalingual function has been fertile ground for useful further research. References to it are plentiful in the literature of linguistics and of literary and translation studies. As far as I can judge, however, their theoretical merits are limited: very often, they are little more than a rehash of Jakobson's already imprecise and unwieldy concept.<sup>14</sup>

#### The psycholinguists' focus on metacognition<sup>15</sup>

A significant proportion of the literature on metalanguage has been and is being produced in the field of psycholinguistics. Psycholinguists have been particularly interested in the manner in which children's ability to reflect upon language affects their acquisition of it. Pioneering work in this field was carried out by Jakobson as early as the 1950s. In 1956, he was able to write:

Metalanguage is the vital factor of any verbal development. The interpretation of one linguistic sign through other, in some respect homogeneous, signs of the same language, is a metalingual operation which plays an essential role in child language learning. Observations made during recent decades [...] have disclosed what an enormous place talk about language occupies in the verbal behavior of preschool children [...]. (1985b: 120)

It must be said that later studies in psycholinguistics have put something of a damper on Jakobson's initial optimism. Much of the behaviour that he identified as deliberately metalinguistic has been shown to involve automatic processes that would now earn it the label 'epilinguistic' instead (see below), so that his research no longer appears to have much currency in the psycholinguistic community nowadays.<sup>16</sup>

One must from the outset be aware that linguists and philosophers on the one hand, and psycholinguists on the other, ascribe the label *metalinguistic* to different objects. The former will apply it to strings of linguistic sounds or of letters, or to a particular use of language (e.g. metalinguistic expressions, sentences, discourse), whereas the latter will employ it to characterise a cognitive or psychological object, so that they will talk about metalinguistic competence, awareness, development, behaviour or activity. Of course, in metalinguistic activity, language is treated as an object too, but the psycholinguist's focus is on the speaker's deliberate attention to

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It is by no means evident that these utterances are about the code. Instead, they seem to be concerned with the use of the code in a given context, that is, with messages.

<sup>14</sup> For more criticism of Jakobson's scheme, especially his understanding of the metalingual function, see Mounin (1967: 410), who does not believe any formal linguistic features can distinguish the metalingual function; and Dominicy (1991: 164fn), who argues that it is not "justified to regard the 'metalingual function' as anything but a variant – albeit a very special one – of the 'referential function'".

<sup>15</sup> Most of this section is based on Gombert (1990). I am aware that his synthesis is a bit dated now, but I do not know of a more recent monograph on metalanguage by a psycholinguist.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Gombert's review of the psycholinguistics literature on metalanguage does not mention a single one of Jakobson's papers on the subject.

it. Whereas, according to Gombert, linguists will be on the lookout for markers of ‘self-referential processes’, psycholinguists

will search the behaviour (verbal or other) of the subjects for evidence of cognitive processes aimed at the conscious management of (reflection on or monitoring of) either language objects as such or their use. (1990: 15)

Another way of capturing the different perspectives is to say that linguists are interested in ‘language about language’, and psycholinguists in ‘cognition about language’. Such cognition in turn subdivides into reflection upon language (i.e. a speaker’s manipulation of his/her declarative knowledge about language) and the deliberate monitoring of linguistic productions. Since the object of cognition can be other than language, giving rise to e.g. metamemory and meta-learning, Gombert agrees with many other psycholinguists that metalinguistic activity is basically just a special case of metacognition. Here again, linguists and psycholinguists part company: the latter will seek to establish connections with metacognitive abilities in general, whereas the former will examine how metalinguistic utterances contrast with other types of linguistic productions (syntactically, semantically, etc.), irrespective of their conscious monitoring.

Gombert gives several examples of objects that would be labelled differently by the two kinds of researchers: psycholinguists would regard any voluntary adjustment of verbal production to the context of utterance as metalinguistic (more precisely ‘metapragmatic’),<sup>17</sup> whereas linguists would do so only if there were metalinguistic markers present. In other circumstances, we have the reverse picture, with the linguists treating as metalinguistic some objects that are not recognised as such by the psycholinguists. A case in point is a study conducted by French linguists (Boutet et al., as reported in Gombert 1990: 108-09), in which children aged 6 to 12 had been asked to judge if a series of written sequences (e.g. *marie cueille*, *sortie de camions*, or  *pierre il est très gentil*) were sentences or not. The authors identified metalinguistic arguments in the responses of children as young as 6 years old, but, Gombert argues, these are not metalinguistic in the opinion of psycholinguists, because they do not reflect a conscious knowledge of or action upon linguistic objects. Here is how one child responded to the sequence *je suis à l’hôpital j’ai des ennuis*:

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<sup>17</sup> For the sake of convenience, Gombert splits metalinguistic abilities up into ‘metaphonological’, ‘metasyntactic’, ‘metalexical’, ‘metasemantic’, ‘metapragmatic’ and ‘metatextual’ skills. This he does chiefly for the clarity of his presentation; yet he explicitly recognises the somewhat artificial character of that partition (1990: 27-28).



« On peut pas dire que je suis à l'hôpital ça va – “j'ai des ennuis” on aurait pu dire ça avant – parce que “j'ai des ennuis puis je suis à l'hôpital” ça explique bien, mais “j'ai des ennuis” ça m'embête parce que je sais pas vraiment où le mettre – “j'ai des ennuis pi je suis à l'hôpital”, pour moi c'est comme ça – parce que pour moi c'est dire que quelqu'un a beaucoup d'ennuis pi i veut les régler pi en fait il se retrouve à l'hôpital – je suis d'accord, mais là il est à l'hôpital pi après il a des ennuis alors ça je ne comprends pas » (Gombert 1990: 109)

What Gombert has in mind is this: in spite of the massive presence of quotations (i.e. 'self-referential' sequences), the child's argument does not rest on the conscious manipulation of linguistic rules. Actually, the child 'confuses' the linguistic and the extralinguistic level (Gombert talks of 'signifiers' and 'signifieds'): the sequence *je suis à l'hôpital j'ai des ennuis* is rejected because it does not reflect (is not an icon of) the order in which the states of affairs denoted take place in the child's representation of the real world.

As hinted earlier, a key distinction is made by Gombert between two types of cognitive abilities that take language as an object. The first are automatic and appear very early in the linguistic development of a child, perhaps around the age of 2. But these processes cannot be controlled voluntarily, nor can they be verbalised, argues Gombert, and therefore, rather than *metalinguistic* they should more properly be called *epilinguistic*, to borrow a term coined by Culioli.<sup>18</sup> Gombert defines these epilinguistic activities as “manifestations, in the subjects' behaviour, of a functional command of the rules organising language and its usage”. An intriguing example is provided by those instances of self-correction and heterocorrection, i.e. correction of others' productions, that are present in the speech of children aged 2 or 3 (Gombert 1990: 74f). These could initially be taken as symptoms of metalinguistic awareness. One might assume that correcting, say, a grammatical mistake, requires that the child should be aware that a rule has been broken and therefore that he should know the rule in question reflexively. This, for instance is how Jakobson saw things:

Metalingual competence from the age of two turns the young child into a critic and a corrector of the speech of surrounding people. (1985c: 158)

However, evidence now suggests that very young children are not as such aware of the violation of a rule. Rather, it seems that they perceive that their production or someone else's is unusual – does not sound quite right – and therefore supply a more acceptable form in its stead. This is confirmed by the experimental observation that very young children automatically perform the

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<sup>18</sup> From his (1968) paper, “La formalisation en linguistique”, *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, 9.

same corrections when they are asked simply to repeat a sequence which happens to sound unusual.

Another example of epilinguistic behaviour is provided by the ability of children aged 3 to 5 to distinguish between linguistic sounds and others, or more surprisingly perhaps, to segment words into syllables or even phonemes. These activities, once again, could be taken as evidence that the children in question have conscious access to syllables and phonemes. However, experiments seem to show that children are manipulating sound objects rather than breaking symbolic objects down into their components (cf. Gombert 1990: 56).

From the linguist's perspective, the epi- vs metalinguistic distinction is not paramount. Any epilinguistic activity involving metalinguistic words and/or reference, direct or indirect, to linguistic sequences will be regarded as pertaining to metalinguistic discourse. That is why I shall have no further use for the term *epilinguistic* in the rest of this dissertation.

#### Recent research in French linguistics

In French linguistics, Rey-Debove's work and, in her wake, Authier-Revuz's have sparked off a genuine interest in metalanguage, which has resulted in a large number of studies being carried out. Though these are heterogeneous in character, it appears that quite a few investigate metalinguistic use from a critical-discourse or sociolinguistics angle: the focus is on how reflexive language typifies some specific forms of discourse (e.g. children's dictionaries, scientific debate, dramatic dialogue, kindergarten interactions, advertising, political speeches, and so on) and what it reveals about the status of the various participants in the verbal exchange. If I can take my bearings from the conference on "Le fait autonymique dans les langues et les discours" (Oct. 5-7, 2000, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris), my feeling is that, in spite of their pursuing valid objects of inquiry, the speakers at the conference often had only a rough idea of the basics of autonymy and autonymous connotation (with many instances of confusion, as Rey-Debove herself pointed out in the round table that wound up the conference). In other words, there remained basic issues to be sorted out before fruitful analyses of more complex data could be embarked upon.

Such a criticism cannot be levelled at Authier-Revuz herself, who appears to have a good grounding in the foundational writings in logic, philosophy and linguistics. If her impressive two-volume book has not been found very useful for my thesis, it is because Authier-Revuz's primary objective is markedly different from my own. She does not seek to question established descriptions of metalanguage. Rather, she uses Rey-Debove's account of autonymy and

autonomous connotation as a springboard for exploring the subject that she is genuinely interested in: through a careful study of utterances involving ‘autonomous modalisation’,<sup>19</sup> she provides a remarkable overview of the various forms that are used to put some distance between the utterer and his/her own words, to ‘opacify’ an utterance. After this, she moves into less traditionally linguistic terrain, concentrating on such issues as the duality or heterogeneity of utterance-acts, and drawing massively from such theories as Bakhtin’s dialogism and even more so from Lacanian psychoanalysis. It is this emphasis on dual subjects, on heterogeneity and on psychoanalysis that made Authier-Revuz difficult to use in my research. After all, my goals were rather more down-to-earth. In a way, I wished to situate myself at a stage prior to an undertaking such as hers, a stage at which the grammatical and semantic status of autonymy, not to mention autonomous connotation, was still very much an issue. It was my feeling that there was still some clarifying to be done before one could embark on more ambitious projects. This does not mean that I cannot appreciate Authier-Revuz’s real merits: the very breadth and depth of her study is awe-inspiring; and I have not refrained from making some use of her remarkable corpus of 4000 utterances.

I am about to conclude this section on ‘the roads not taken’ and to present a summary of the themes and questions that I did pursue in this dissertation. But before I do that, I would like to say a quick word about the kind of ethnolinguistic approach exemplified in Lucy (1993), because it throws some light on the peculiar position that the student of metalanguage occupies. In a nutshell, Lucy and other contributors to his book believe that the study of linguistic reflexivity deepens our “understanding of the broader contours of human life” (1993: 1); i.e. it has an anthropological dimension. In particular, Lucy is concerned with the fact that, as scholarly discourse resorts to the same metalinguistic practices as spontaneous speech, it is therefore subject to the same limitations and potentialities. That is why there are good grounds for examining reflexivity in everyday use, so as to be able to take account of the scientist’s or scholar’s own reflexivity and the influence it has on the science produced: “A theoretical account of this reflexive capacity [of language] will be necessary, therefore, for progress in many of the human disciplines” (1993: 9).

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<sup>19</sup> Her modified version of Rey-Debove’s autonomous connotation, namely a self-representation of the utterance-act, as in *Ce qu’ils veulent, c’est de la main-d’œuvre jetable, /flexible ils disent, ces enfoirés* (1995: 125). In conformity with Rey-Debove, Authier-Revuz’s judgment is that such sequences are used to say something about extralinguistic reality and about language use at the same time.

Although valid in its own right, this openly self-critical stance must perhaps not be pushed too far. Liu (1995) criticises a tendency exhibited by several postmodern rhetoricians, which consists in denouncing their own prejudices and manipulations, thereby willingly undermining the persuasiveness of their own discourse, and therefore no longer assuming responsibility for their views (which are presented as inherently contingent and questionable). Liu suggests that these writers overlook the distinction between the scholar as theorist and the scholar as ‘rhetor’: that the theorist believes in the relativity of truth need not prevent him/her from asserting and defending his/her ideas vigorously, as if convinced of their truth. Liu disapproves of the kind of reflexivity whereby writers disparage their own assertions (for example, because they hold ‘knowing’ to be always uncertain, partly an illusion):

Since such self-reference tends to violate the imperative to persuade and hence discourages commitment and decision, it is, generally speaking, an anti-rhetorical and therefore *illegitimate* form of reflexivity from the perspective of oratory. (1995: 347)

Although I am far from certain that all the arguments presented in my dissertation hold water, I am confident that they are backed up by some evidence and am, therefore, willing to defend them. But there is, I believe, a special difficulty that a linguist investigating my topic is confronted with: in the study of metalinguistic discourse, the linguist’s reflection meets with the layman’s. Whereas the layman does not usually, say, explicitate *Wh*-movement or his handling of theta-roles, he does comment on the meaning, choice, appropriateness of linguistic forms. In this regard, lay meta-discourse may constitute a pathway into useful insights about language. It may even sometimes bring to light significant facts that had hitherto remained hidden from view. At the same time, however, ‘folk’ theories about language reflect assumptions that may be incorrect, however widely they are accepted. The funny thing in the case of the linguist looking into metalanguage is that these potentially false views are part and parcel of his/her object of inquiry. In other words, the folk theory has an impact on the data under investigation (whereas folk theories of planetary movements or of metabolism have no impact on the object studied by the physicist or the physician). This means that the student of metalanguage may be confronted with a less natural (or, as the case may be, ‘even more culture-bound’) subject matter than a linguist dealing with non-reflexive processes.

### A synopsis of the dissertation

The first two chapters are designed to provide an overview of the main results achieved by the western logical and philosophical tradition in the area of linguistic reflexivity. In an ideal world,

the person embarking on such a survey would be perfectly conversant with the methods and contents of all the disciplines whose accomplishments s/he is trying to assess. This, unfortunately, is more than the present writer can lay claim to. For all that, the contribution of logicians and philosophers is far too significant to be neglected. Any study of metalanguage that failed to take in the full import of their views could not be taken seriously. That is why, in spite of the caveats, an overview of that literature has been attempted. Special care has been taken not to distort the positions reviewed here, and to make sense of the motives behind their formulation by paying due attention to the context in which these ideas were put forward. It is up to the reader to judge whether the enterprise has been successful or not.

**Chapter 1** is concerned with the writings of logicians (or logicians-cum-philosophers). That is simply because it is they who coined the term *metalanguage* and supplied the first detailed accounts of the subject. In time, certain aspects of linguistic reflexivity, notably quotation, began to attract the attention of other writers, many of them language philosophers, who released the subject from its formal straitjacket and brought it closer to the study of everyday language phenomena.

This shift from formal logic to philosophy of language corresponds to a substantive transformation of the claims made. The logical discourse on metalanguage was essentially concerned with prescriptions. As Reichenbach (1947: 1) remarks, logic is a normative discipline. Rather than addressing itself to the actual workings of thought – which are the concern of psychology – it tells us how thinking should proceed. Logic attempts a rational reconstruction of proper thinking, one which is bound to linguistic utterances because they are the only manifestations of thought that logic can use (cf Reichenbach 1947: 2). It is therefore no wonder that logical statements about language should be prescriptive.

It is important to be aware that the concept of metalanguage emerged in connection with the logical positivist endeavour to devise an exact scientific idiom, that is to say a near-perfect instrument of enquiry and discovery, a language in full working order. There came a point at which it became clear to logicians that such a spotless instrument could not be built ‘from within’, that it would take the support of another language for the undertaking to be successful (cf Chapter 1.1). That is when metalanguages were brought in. To avoid a frequent misunderstanding, I must immediately underline that metalanguages are not instantiations of the scientific idiom at the centre of the logicians’ preoccupations; they are languages whose assistance proved crucial in the attempt to build an ‘object language’ that was meant to be

formally impeccable. The metalanguages themselves, incidentally, were often far from being ‘in full working order’.

In the positivist perspective, natural languages were widely regarded as improper for the formulation of sound scientific theories, because they were thought to be afflicted with all sorts of deficiencies. Twentieth-century formal logic devoted a substantial amount of energy to righting the wrongs that so-called misuse of language inflicted on scientific reasoning. Needless to say, some of the most important early writers on metalanguage shared in this distrust. Thus, Reichenbach (1947: 6) points up natural language’s vagueness and ambiguity. Church (1956: 47) mentions lack of precision, irregularities and exceptions to rules (cf also Carnap 1937: 2). And Tarski expresses “the hope that languages with specified structure could finally replace everyday language in scientific discourse” (1944: 347).

**Chapter 2** covers the takeover of the metalanguage issue by philosophers of language, which resulted in a partial shift from prescription to description. Rather than stating what language should be like, they were preoccupied with what it is. In particular, when they focused their attention on what was regarded by logicians as the means par excellence for keeping their language use ‘in order’, namely the ‘use-mention’ distinction, they gradually moved away from a statement of the precautions that should be taken lest some confusion or other might follow, and towards an account of how quotation works in actual discourse. However, even though some general dividing line can be traced between the claims of logic and those of the philosophy of language, the boundaries are fuzzier than one might wish them to be. As a result, it is not always easy to sift out descriptive statements from prescriptions. Logicians have been known to make valid statements regarding ordinary language use, and language philosophers have not consistently resisted the lures of prescriptivism. I have tried, in the chapters that follow, to keep this clearly in mind, and to point out possible confusions regarding the nature of the claims put forward.

It is also important to realise that, although logicians and linguists alike talk about *language*, the former use the term only, I should say, as a convenient metaphor. The languages of logicians are different in important respects from natural languages (they are not natural upshots of a language faculty, do not grow in the mind, possess no semantically ‘uninterpretable features’ such as inflections, exhibit no ambiguities, etc.)<sup>20</sup>. The metaphor is chiefly based on the following characteristics: both formal and natural languages use a limited number of resources

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<sup>20</sup> For a lucid statement of these essential differences and the logicians’ metaphorical use of the term *language* for what he calls ‘Fregean perfect languages’, see Chomsky (1993: 29) and (2000: 12, 131).

(roughly, a lexicon and a set of syntactic rules for the production and transformation of well-formed strings). It is not *a priori* evident that insights into an object (say, formal systems) that is only metaphorically related to another one (say, natural languages) will permit a better comprehension of that second object. In other words, it cannot be taken for granted that concepts developed for the analysis and construction of formal systems are in any way relevant and enlightening for the student of natural language. Chomsky carries the point further when he writes that adopting the language-metaphor for formal systems “has led to deep confusion in modern linguistics and philosophy of language resulting from faulty structural analogies between formal systems and natural language” (1993: 29).<sup>21</sup> It will in fact appear that a number of results obtained by logicians do not translate easily or at all into valid hypotheses regarding English or French. All the same, logicians and, in their wake, philosophers of language have examined such a wide variety of issues that their insights really prove invaluable when investigating natural metalanguages. This is one of the things that I hope to be able to show in Chapters 1 and 2.

Another goal I hope to have achieved by the time I close Chapter 2 is offering a statement of the necessary ingredients of a theory of metalinguistic discourse (mention and quotation). This should be the natural outcome of the way the chapter is structured: I start with the most basic theory of quotation (the Name Theory), address a related account (the Description Theory), and work my way to the more realistic ones (the Demonstrative and Identity Theories). In the process, I seek to extend the empirical validity of the theories, by taking in an ever larger variety of examples, and I also concentrate on identifying, one by one, the essential characteristics of metalinguistic discourse, i.e. those properties that any adequate theory should be able to account for as elegantly as possible.

As of the third chapter, I enter a more exploratory phase of the dissertation. There is continuity with the second chapter inasmuch as I still pursue the goal of working out a cogent account of metalinguistic discourse. At the same time, I try to seize the opportunity to address a number of complex issues which I do not think have been treated satisfactorily enough in the literature so far. However, for such an ‘exploration’ to be fruitful, it is essential to be equipped with a cogent and refined general theory for the interpretation of utterances.

**Chapter 3**, which is devoted to that preparatory task, may therefore look like a digression, since a lot of time is spent discussing topics that are not intrinsically linked with metalanguage.

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<sup>21</sup> Louis Hjelmslev thought very differently, since he wrote that linguists “can derive a practical advantage” from studying logical systems, “because some of these structures are simpler in their construction than languages, and they are therefore suitable as models in preparatory study” (1953: 68).

Still, it is my feeling that Chapter 3 is the right spot to step back for a while and improve my general understanding of ‘how language works’. I take advantage of the chapter to define a host of technical terms (*sentence, utterance, proposition, truth-conditions*, etc.) that are due to play a major role in the rest of the dissertation. I also gain a more mature insight into the various levels involved in the interpretation of utterances, and bring these levels into correspondence with types of information (contextual vs non-contextual) and types of mental operations (decoding vs inferring) required for interpreting certain aspects of utterances. These reflections also lead to a more refined picture of the various dimensions of the context, thereby permitting the adoption of a so-called ‘bi-dimensional’ semantics. Finally, Chapter 3 provides a helpful redefinition of the interface between semantics and pragmatics, one that paves the way for the analyses carried out in the next three chapters. One of the chief benefits I have derived from the chapter is the realisation that, however deviant and quirky they can be, metalinguistic utterances form just one facet of discourse in general and conform to the principles that regulate it ‘across the board’.

In **Chapter 4**, I look into Paul Saka’s recent theory of mention and quotation (1998), and focus notably on his treatment of unmarked (‘quoteless’) mention, a topic often neglected by previous theories, and on his demonstration that metalinguistic discourse (essentially, mention) and ordinary discourse (use) have a lot in common – thereby confirming a strong presumption underlying the work done in the previous chapter. But Saka’s most significant contribution is probably his very elegant account of the referential diversity of quotation and mention. Saka’s assumption is that an autonym (my shortcut term for ‘pure’ instances of mention and quotation) is capable of referring to a variety of linguistic entities (spellings, pronunciations, meanings, etc.). This property is said to result from the fact that any use of a linguistic sequence ‘deferringly ostends’ a host of ‘objects’ associated with it (its spelling, etc.). These various items are therefore made available for reference if that is what the context calls for (i.e. what is intended by the utterer).

Since many scholars disagree with Saka’s account, or even question the very notion of referential diversity, I devote a considerable portion of the chapter to trying to sort out the controversy. A number of central terms of art are defined (*type, token*, etc.), the various positions presented in the literature are reviewed, and, subsequently, a tableau is offered of some prominent varieties of metalinguistic reference. In so doing, I try to demonstrate that the position according to which all autonoms refer to the same sort of entities is untenable. In the end, however, I qualify the neat picture I have been building up by showing that the referents of some autonoms do not fit easily into any of the categories previously delineated. This observation



gives me an opportunity to make a brief and tentative point about the particularity of metalinguistic discourse as an object of inquiry for linguistics.

In **Chapter 5**, which, though one of the shortest, is a centrepiece of this dissertation, I present François Recanati's 2001 proposal for a theory of metalinguistic discourse, a proposal which I regard as currently the best on the market. One of the strengths of Recanati's account is its full compatibility with the general theory of interpretation developed in Chapter 3, but its greatest merit is probably to have clarified the distinction between what a 'metalinguistic demonstration' (my shortcut term for all instances of quotation and mention) says and what it shows. Most theories until then took it for granted that every instance of metalinguistic discourse has reference. Recanati shows that many do not. This does not prevent them from being very efficient vehicles for meaning. Thus, Recanati restores the balance between the pictorial and the linguistic meaning of metalinguistic demonstrations. Although it emerges that the linguistic meaning (including reference in the relevant cases) of metalinguistic demonstrations is not negligible, it appears that their pictorial meaning is just as rich, and probably richer. Besides, it also becomes clear that pictorial aspects of meaning sometimes have a significant impact on the strict linguistic content of an utterance.

By the time Chapter 5 closes, I take it that we have arrived at a very successful theory of metalinguistic discourse. This theory does extremely well in terms both of its empirical adequacy – it proves capable of explaining a large amount of data – and of its ability to reveal the most significant characteristics of mention and quotation in natural languages. It uncovers a series of features that are inherent in all forms of metalinguistic demonstrations, but also points up some that typify specific subcategories. Although it owes a great deal to François Recanati, a debt must also be acknowledged to Paul Saka for his account of unmarked mention and for his explanation of referential diversity. In fairness, it must be said that the seeds of the main ideas adopted from Recanati and Saka had already been planted in Chapter 2. In a way, what Chapters 4 and 5 did, was to deliver on the promises made earlier. The general framework adopted resembles a modified Demonstrative Theory of quotation mixed with an improved Identity Theory of mention (adjusted to multiple deferred ostensions). Something is due even to the Name Theory, at least to the extent that that approach correctly identified the nominal grammatical behaviour of a particular form of quotation (the form that happened to predominate in the early literature). In these respects, it can be said that each of the theories reviewed in Chapter 2 captured something of the truth about quotation and mention.

In Chapters 6 and 7, I endeavour to ‘chart’ the ‘metalinguistic domain’. This undertaking is rooted in the double realisation that (i) many different categories of metalinguistic demonstrations have been unearthed starting from Chapter 2, but they are distinguished on the basis of a variety of criteria that are not necessarily compatible. To my knowledge, there has been no completely successful effort to classify the manifold manifestations of metalanguage. (ii) Those aspects of metalanguage that pertain to the language system have not received sufficient attention in the first five chapters.

**Chapter 6** is an attempt at ‘cataloguing’ the many metalinguistic objects and uses revealed so far: the time has come to stop exhibiting new sorts of metalinguistic phenomena like so many rabbits out of a conjurer’s hat. Among various possible classifications, I eventually opt for what might be termed an ‘interpreter’s typology’ (which owes a lot to the theory set out in Chapter 3) because such an angle turns out to be the most enlightening and comprehensive: in particular, it proves capable of integrating all the other criteria that might justifiably serve as the foundation for a typology. Moreover, it allows me to gain a deeper and more complex understanding of the framework adopted for the interpretation of utterances. In particular, the crucial importance of pre-semantic (or pre-interpretative) processes is highlighted.

**Chapter 7** centres on a ‘topographical’ attempt to allocate a place to natural metalanguage, in its various guises, and situate it with respect to the relevant object language and natural language. In particular, I compare the relations that thus emerge with the picture of the metalanguages of formalised systems sketched in Chapter 1. It appears that students of natural language face a trickier task than logicians: whereas the latter basically decided on the nature of the relations between metalanguage and object language, linguists have to make sense of a complex and sometimes fuzzy network of relations. The chapter also seeks to provide an insight into the presence of metalanguage in the system of a natural language. Thus, a characterisation of what constitutes the metalinguistic lexicon of a natural language is attempted. The question is asked where autonyms fit: some theories naturally seem to place them in the lexicon. The consequences of such a decision are examined. But so are the alternative positions: if autonyms are not in the lexicon, where are they (and what are they, if not lexical items)? The closing section of the chapter is devoted to the question whether autonyms, as discourse occurrences, can be considered to be ‘mere things’, as some writers would have it.

In **Chapter 8**, I tie up some of the loose ends about hybridity that were left from previous chapters. In particular, I examine hybrid deixis in mixed quotation (cf *On Tuesday, Indonesia’s mines and energy minister, Purnmoo Yusgiantoro, said he has “told **our** LNG buyers that **we***

*will do **our** best to fulfil **our** commitments”*). I show which aspects of deixis can be thus affected (and, possibly, which cannot). I also examine cases where two languages (dialects) are blended together in a single sentence: *If you were a French academic, you might say that [the parrot] was un symbole du Logos [...]. Being English, I hasten back to the corporeal*. This leads me to raise the issue of their grammaticality. In the second part of the chapter, I turn to a looser form of hybridity, which takes the form of shifts in the universe of discourse, from ‘the world’ to language, and less commonly the other way round. In particular, I try to show that some of Rey-Debove’s examples of autonymous connotation should not, contrary to what she and others suggest, be interpreted as simultaneous use and mention (cf *Giorgione was so called because of his size*). I lay the emphasis on the ease with which grammatical substitution can accommodate such radical semantic shifts from a mundane to a linguistic plane.

## CHAPTER 1: Metalanguage and object language

The technical notion of metalanguage originated in the field of logic (formal semantics) in the twentieth century, as a key element in the effort to study and build exact scientific languages. Its advent was necessarily concomitant with that of the complementary notion of object language. As I pointed out in the introduction, it was the object language, the language ‘under construction’, that was to be flawless from a formal point of view. The metalanguage used for the elaboration of the object language was itself usually not an exact scientific idiom.

As an initial approximation, a metalanguage is a language of description of another language, that is to say, a language to ‘talk about’, to ‘make remarks about’ another language, namely the object language.<sup>22</sup> This is the basic meaning that still prevails in most current reference books (Akoun 1977: 289; Foulquié 1978: 437; Ritter & Gründer 1980: 1301; Auroux & Weil 1991: 258; Blackburn 1994: 239; Honderich 1995: 555; Mittelstraß 1995: vol. 2, 875; Mautner 1996: 265; Bach 1999: 560; Flew 1999: 229).

The concept expressed by *metalanguage* and its foreign counterparts was heralded by cognate notions, especially Hilbert’s *Metamathematik* in 1922 (cf Grelling 1936: 485; Church 1956: 47fn; Craig 1998: vol. 5, 733) and Lukasiewicz’s *metalogic* (cf Grelling, *ibid.*). Around the time when the term was coined, Carnap had developed a kindred idea under the name of *Syntaxsprache* (1934; the English term *syntax-language* is from 1937), which, from the outset, went hand in hand with *Objektsprache*. Ritter & Gründer (1980: 1301) point out Tarski’s opinion that Lesniewski was the first in the modern era to have explicitly made the distinction between language levels (in his 1919 lectures), but they also suggest that the genealogy could go as far back as Frege’s distinction between *Hilfssprache* (for the object language) and *Darlegungssprache* (for the metalanguage). Note, however, that Frege did not formulate it until the 1920s, near the end of his life (cf Imbert 1971: 19).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lucy (1993: 12) and Mittelstraß (1995: vol. 2, 1055) point out an equivocalness in the understanding of the term *object language*. Some writers conceive of the object language as the language in which you speak about ‘objects’. This conception, which is not necessarily incompatible with the more standard one, goes back at least to Russell (1940), who defines the *object-language* informally as a language in which “every word “denotes” or “means” a sensible object or set of such objects [...]” (1940: 19). Russell explicitly grounds this notion in his theory of types (see 1940: 62-77 for details). This or similar senses of *object language* are recorded in several reference works: Akoun 1977: 289 (the object language “has objects for its content”); Foulquié 1978: 437 (it is about “the objects of thought”); Ritter & Gründer 1980: 1301 (it is about “objects”); Vendler 1985: 74 (“roughly, the language used to talk about things in the world”). Note that linguists like Jakobson (1981a: 25, 1981b: 149; 1985b: 116) and Mounin (1960: 410) also understand the term in this sense.

<sup>23</sup> The relevant text, “Logical Generality”, can be found in Frege (1979: 258-62).

Many are the authors who detect precursory signs of the distinction at much earlier dates. One of them is the establishment of the theory of the two ‘impositions’ of words, first set out by Porphyry (1992: 34) in the late Antiquity and then popularised by Boethius. *Imposition* denotes the conventional attribution of a meaning to a word, especially a ‘categorematic’ word (roughly, a content-word). Porphyry differentiated between words of the ‘first imposition’ that signify outside language (e.g. *man*, *sin*), and words of the ‘second imposition’ that signify ‘something linguistic’ (e.g. *noun*, *inflection*). This distinction was later incorporated into the late medieval ‘terminist’ logic, so called because it was a theory of terms, a term being defined as “one or the other end (*terminus*) of a subject-predicate proposition” (Perler 1997: 489). Terminist logic also developed a theory of ‘suppositions’ to capture the reference of terms in a sentential context. Amongst other things, a distinction was drawn between personal supposition (a word’s reference to its denotatum, as in *Max is my friend*) and material supposition (a word’s reference to ‘itself’, as in *Max ends with a consonant cluster*, cf Introduction). Both the opposition between first and second imposition, and that between personal and material supposition, are regarded as foreshadowing the object- vs. metalanguage opposition.<sup>24</sup>

For some writers, the distinction between metalanguage and object language can be traced back to the Stoic philosophers, in particular to their attempts at solving the Liar, or Liar’s, paradox, the most famous of the so-called ‘antinomies of self-reference’ (cf Bochenski 1970: 124, 130; Mittelstraß 1995: vol. 2, 874).<sup>25</sup> This paradox, which was in all probability first formulated by the Megarian philosopher Eubulides (cf Bochenski 1970: 131; Mates 1973: 5; Mignucci 1999: 54), was the object of numerous disquisitions by the Stoic logicians.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Regarding ‘impositions’, consult Kretzmann (1967: 367-68), Mittelstraß (1995: vol. 2, 874), or Ebbesen (1998: 390, 91) for short presentations, and Ebbesen (1990) for a painstaking reconstruction of Porphyry’s theory. As for ‘suppositions’, numerous writers make connections between them and contemporary language-levels, i.e. object language vs metalanguage (Henry 1967: 254; Alféri 1989: 309ff; Blanché 1996: 955), between suppositions and contemporary solutions to the Liar paradox (Adams 1987: 377-82; Alféri 1989: 313; de Libera 1996: 847), between personal vs. material supposition and use vs. mention (Prior 1955: 218; Moody 1967: 531; Lejewski 1974: 239; Adams 1987: 380, 382), between material supposition and quotation (Tarski 1944: 343); between material supposition and autonymy (Church 1956: 61; Rey-Debove 1978: 86; de Libera 1990: 2506). Note, in this last respect, that de Rijk (1967: 587) and Honderich (1995: 860) point out the link between material supposition and the ‘autonomous’ use of language, but that is probably a misspelling on their part.

<sup>25</sup> An earlier recognition of the distinction can actually be identified, but outside the western tradition. The Sanskrit grammarian Panini (ca. 5th century B. C.) deliberately elaborated a metalanguage which contained not only ordinary words redefined for the purposes of his grammar, but also artificial ones: new designations were coined for particular grammatical regularities or elements (cf Staal 1969: 504, 1994: 2403; Pinault 1989: 354ff; Filliozat 1996: 442). To return to the Stoics, it must be remarked that their assumed separation between object language and metalanguage is bound to remain conjectural, as their writings on logic and semantics are only known second-hand (cf Kretzmann 1967: 363-64; Darrell Jackson 1969: 45).

<sup>26</sup> It is difficult to pin down exactly what Eubulides’ formulation was, because many different versions have reached us (cf Bochenski 1970: 131f). A standard contemporary formulation is: *What I am saying is false*. Mignucci (1999:

Chrysippus, in particular, is assumed to have written six books on it (Bochenski 1970: 131 writes “perhaps twenty-eight”). Intriguingly, in the twentieth century, the same paradox played a major role in Alfred Tarski’s initial elaboration of the mutually dependent notions of metalanguage and object language (cf Grelling 1936: 485; Vendler 1985: 74; Gamut 1991: 10; Honderich 1995: 820). Let us add that the Polish logician is usually credited with coining, in 1931 or 1933, the term *metajęzyk*, later to be translated into English as *metalanguage* (cf Rey-Debove 1978: 7; Jakobson 1981a: 25; Blackburn 1994: 239).<sup>27</sup>

### 1.1. Syntax and semantics

Prior to Tarski, scholars working on the construction of exact scientific languages had limited their investigations to syntax, allowing no room for the description of the relations between language and extralinguistic reality (cf Mostovski 1967: 78). This situation can be explained by the hope many logicians nourished that their discipline might be able to dispense altogether with such semantic notions as truth. This was one of the tenets of the logicist project of making mathematics a branch of formal logic. Hilbert, notably, aspired to a complete account of mathematics in strictly formal (syntactic) terms. In particular, he hoped to be able to reduce the troublesome concept of ‘truth’ to ‘derivability in a formal system’: the set of the true formulas of arithmetic, for instance, would become that of the correctly derived sentences of arithmetic.

Like *grammar* in linguistics, the term *syntax* in logic is ambiguous: it refers both to the formal structures of a language and to the study of these structures. As a discipline, logical syntax is concerned with the rules by means of which, on the basis of a limited number of axioms, a formal system can derive all of its theorems, i.e. all its true sentences. This derivation is an internal process wholly independent of meaning, or ‘interpretation’ (cf Carnap 1937: 1; Church 1956: 58). Twentieth-century logicians have been able to demonstrate the ability of formal

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59-61) reconstructs what he thinks are two possible versions of the antinomy as studied by Chrysippus; the shorter of which is: *If you say you are speaking falsely and you tell the truth about it, then you are speaking falsely and telling the truth.*

<sup>27</sup> Reference books show some hesitation in their attribution of the distinction between metalanguage and object language. For instance, Akoun (1977: 289) wrongly ascribes it to ‘linguists’. A cross-check of presumably the most reliable sources available (*OED*, *TLF*, *Le Grand Robert*), appears to confirm that the term was coined in 1931 by Tarski. The article in which it occurred was translated into German in 1935, yielding *Metasprache*. Note, however, that Carnap explains that he used the term *Metasprache* as early as 1931, in unpublished lectures on metalogic given in the Vienna Circle. Only later did he substitute *Syntaxsprache* for *Metasprache*, which is the term he was to adopt again, this time for good, in the 1940s (cf Schilpp 1963: 54). The first occurrence of *meta-language* (with a hyphen) in English probably dates back to 1936, in an article by Kurt Grelling in *Mind* (1936: 486). The *Grand Robert* wrongly credits Charles Morris with the introduction of the term into English. In French, the situation is more complex, with *TLF* and *Le Grand Robert* failing to agree. Choosing the earliest dates provided for first recordings of each, I shall follow the former for *métalanguage* (1954) and the latter for *métalange* (1957).

systems to express their own syntax (cf Carnap 1937: 3; Church 1956: 59). This means that a systematic display of the formal rules of a language does not necessitate recourse to a metalanguage. Of course, it does not rule it out either: it is in effect customary to use a metalanguage (or ‘syntax-language’) to describe the syntax of a formal system.

The modern logicians’ initial trust in syntax results from the ‘blind’, automatic character of formal procedures. Their correlative distrust of semantics comes from their awareness that terms like *true* or *false* notoriously lead to unsolvable paradoxes. The recent history of the discipline shows that the logicist project was doomed to failure. The Austrian-born mathematician Kurt Gödel is usually regarded as having dealt the deadly blow. His contribution will be briefly outlined in an appendix at the end of this section. But first, I shall concentrate on Alfred Tarski, whose results, which are often considered to converge with Gödel’s, have done a lot to popularise the notion of metalanguage.

## 1.2. Tarski’s definition of truth

It is Tarski’s work on truth that eventually rang in the era of formal semantics. Semantics, in line with the dominant point of view among logicians, is here to be understood in a strictly extensional sense, being characterised as “a discipline which [...] *deals with certain relations between expressions of a language and the objects* (or “states of affairs”) “referred to” by those expressions” (1944: 347; also 1983b: 401). The central notion of such a semantics is truth, a necessary consequence of the fact that the discipline is concerned with establishing and verifying correspondences between sentences<sup>28</sup> and the states of affairs they designate. Accordingly, a satisfactory semantic theory is one that correctly assigns a truth-value to each and every sentence of the language it describes.<sup>29</sup>

As Tarski was well aware, any manipulation of the notion of truth was likely to lead to one or the other paradox of self-reference. It is with that challenge in mind that he set about his task, framing a definition of truth that was both ‘formally correct’ and ‘materially adequate’. The first

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<sup>28</sup> This problematic term will be defined precisely in chapter 3. In the meantime, it will be used to designate either words actually produced (sentence as utterance) or the abstract structure underlying uttered tokens (sentence as ‘system-sentence’). My main reason for adopting this convention is that different authors have different understandings of terms of art. It is impossible to homogenise the vocabulary at the same time as quoting various writers and discussing their views. Such harmonisation involves tricky and sometimes debatable interpretation, and has the added disadvantage of making reference to the authors under discussion more difficult. Fortunately, I do not believe, at this stage, that the sloppy use of terms like *sentence*, *proposition* or *expression* should cause misunderstandings or false issues to emerge.

<sup>29</sup> At a later stage in this dissertation (chapter 3), only propositions (which are ‘expressed’ by sentences) will be said to have a truth-value, while sentences (or utterance-tokens) are endowed with truth-conditions.

constraint implies that the language in which the definition is couched must not give rise to antinomies, and that the semantic terms involved must be defined explicitly in that language. The second can be subdivided into two conditions which make up what Tarski calls ‘Convention T’ (1983a: 187-88; Prior 1967: 230), and some commentators ‘Criterion T’ (Gupta 1998: 265). Roughly, this convention determines first that any adequate definition of truth must be made relative to a given language (L), because truth is a property of sentences, and sentences are sentences only in relation to a particular language. Therefore, *truth* is re-interpreted as *true sentence in L*.<sup>30</sup> Second, the definition must imply all the ‘T-biconditionals’ that can be built for a given language (Gupta 1998: 265), i.e. all the equivalences of the form:

(1)  $x$  is a true sentence in L if and only if  $p$ ,

with  $x$  being a variable for the name of any sentence in L, and  $p$  a variable for the translation of that sentence into the metalanguage. To give this schema of a sentence a more concrete appearance, here is the textbook example of a T-biconditional:

(2) ‘Snow is white’ is a true sentence in English if and only if snow is white.<sup>31</sup>

Every such sentence is regarded as a partial definition of the concept of truth (Tarski 1983b: 404).

Tarski stipulated that the predicate *true sentence in L* could not belong to L, for otherwise his definition could not hope to be formally correct, as there would necessarily ensue inconsistencies, similar in form to the Liar paradox: L would be capable of constructing undecidable sentences (formulas) whose truth or falsity it could not establish formally (cf Prior 1967: 230; Mouloud 1976: 76). Note that the same point was made by Carnap not long after Tarski: writing about natural languages, i.e. languages which contain their own predicates *true* and *false*, Carnap noted that their “*customary usage of the terms ‘true’ and ‘false’ leads, however, to a contradiction. This will be shown in connection with the antinomy of the liar*” (1937: 212; original emphasis). It was to avoid such undesirable consequences that Tarski stated

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<sup>30</sup> Tarski writes:

[...] we must always relate the notion of truth, like that of a sentence, to a specific language; for it is obvious that the same expression which is a true sentence in one language can be false or meaningless in another. (1944: 342)

Let me make one remark about this citation: it is common for one and the same expression to be used across several formal languages. But one should beware of extending this idea to natural languages: it will prove very difficult for a single sentence to just as much as *exist* in various languages, even in their written form.

<sup>31</sup> Church (1956: 62fn) argues against the idea that these are trivial, self-evident, propositions. To make his point, he advocates using translation. For example, (2) translated into French is ‘*Snow is white*’ *est vrai si et seulement si la neige est blanche*; and this, Church argues, is certainly not a self-evident proposition.



that *true sentence in L*, but also other semantic properties like satisfaction, definition, designation or denotation (1944: 345; 1983b 401) must be made to belong to a higher-order language, i.e. the metalanguage (cf Gupta 1998: 266). Since, moreover, Tarski's semantics is based on the notion of truth, it follows that the semantic description of a language can only be formulated in the metalanguage.

An indirect consequence is that no proper definition of truth *à la* Tarski can be framed for natural languages, given that these contain their own semantic predicates, notably *true sentence in L*. A further implication, which is just a confirmation of the logicians' suspicions, is that natural languages cannot be free of semantic paradoxes.

But let us dwell for a moment on formal systems. First, it is important not to confuse these with their metalanguages. This is the mistake which Mounin, for one, makes in his *Dictionnaire de la linguistique*. Mounin has the term *metalanguage* denote formalised languages whose lexicon is finite and fully defined and whose theorems derive from a finite set of axioms. As will be clear from the discussion that follows, his definition does not fit the majority of the metalanguages developed by even the most rigorous logicians. Perhaps one difficulty lies in the fact that, contrary to what definitions may give one to understand, metalanguages are not always used for the description of object languages. In Church (1956), for instance, the metalanguage does not come *a posteriori*; rather, it is used to construct its object language, according to the so-called 'logistic' method. So, the metalanguage and the formalised language-to-be are in continual interaction, and this may be confusing: indeed, it is in the metalanguage that all the basic (primitive) symbols are going to be posited and that the rules for deriving well-formed formulas are going to be stated.

Considering that a metalanguage is not necessarily a formalised language, what is a logician's metalanguage made up of, what are its building blocks? First, the metalanguages sketched or developed in detail in works by e.g. Carnap, Tarski, and Church are commonly built from a natural language, or, more precisely, a portion of a natural language; most of the time, for reasons that are purely historical and contingent, English (e.g. Carnap 1947: 4; Church 1956: 47, 55). This choice is linked to the ability of natural languages to 'talk about everything', so that English or French, provided they are suitably enriched with, for instance, some mathematical symbols, can describe any expression of a formalised language. As a consequence, the metalanguage itself is usually not formalised, but, says Church, it is possible, once a formalised language has been established, to use it as its own metalanguage (1956: 47fn). This remark is presumably meant to apply only to cases where a description is restricted to syntactic aspects.

The portion of, say, English chosen as a metalanguage must contain or be augmented with certain necessary elements. Church is content with adding metalinguistic names and variables: “names of the various symbols and formulas of the object language; and [...] variables which have these symbols and formulas as their values” (1956: 60). The names in question are usually formed by enclosing expressions of the object language in quotation marks. Rivenc (1989: 39) proposes the very same extension. Carnap seems more demanding: his metalanguage must include “translations of the sentences and other expressions of our object languages [...], names (descriptions) of those expressions, and special semantical terms” (1947: 4). Tarski’s (1944: 350-51) characterisation is very close to Carnap’s, the main difference residing in an alternative proposal for the first category (the translations). Tarski suggests that the metalanguage should contain the object language, i.e. that every sentence of the latter should also occur in the former (also 1983b: 403). He does not appear to consider this option to be essentially different from that of using translations (see below). Elsewhere (1983a: 170), it is the identity between logical expressions in the object language and the metalanguage which is said to make possible metalinguistic translations of all the expressions of the object language.

At this stage, it may be useful to try and elucidate the view that a metalanguage contains its object language. It is not always clear whether the metalanguage includes the very sentences that make up the object language, or translations of those. We have just seen that Tarski wavered between those two conceptions. The same hesitancy transpires from the following comment by Prior, who makes no distinction between a sentence of *L* (object language) and its translation into *M* (the metalanguage):

*M* could include *L* as a part of itself, in which case the sentences of *L* would be their own translations into *M*. (1967: 230)

Perhaps Prior’s confusing statement is just a matter of convenience.<sup>32</sup> However, it is doubtful for a sentence to be the same entity as its translation, even if they are formally identical. Reichenbach distinguishes between two options, the first one of which seems to be identical with Prior’s depiction. But he favours a second conception according to which the metalanguage contains, strictly speaking, the object language:

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<sup>32</sup> Church (1956: 63) recognises the convenience of “borrowing formulas of the object language for use in the syntax language (or other meta-language) with the same meaning that they have in the object language”, but rejects this convenience “[a]s a precaution against equivocation”. In his scheme, any symbol or formula of the object language occurring in a meta-sentence should be understood as a name for itself, i.e. ‘autonomously’. To me, this seems to leave open the question how T-biconditionals like (2) can be built in Church’s framework.

Many of the words of the metalanguage will correspond to words of the object language, such as the words ‘and’, ‘is’; each has a meaning similar to that of the corresponding word of the object language. [...] Words which occur in different languages in similar meanings are called ‘ambiguous as to level of language’. In another conception these words are regarded as identical with those of the object language; the metalanguage then is conceived as a mixture of words of the first and the second level. This conception appears preferable because such mixed sentences cannot be completely dispensed with, as is shown by a sentence like ‘‘Peter’ denotes Peter’ [...] (1947: 10-11)

Reichenbach’s preference can be explained in connection with Tarski’s T-biconditionals. A sentence like (2), which is metalinguistic, none the less also ‘says something about’ the world, though only in a peculiar, restricted, sense. The snow and the whiteness alluded to are indeed an object of the world and a property that exists in the world. But (2) does not tell us that snow is white in the world; it does not assert the whiteness of snow as a true proposition; it is compatible with any given state of the world.<sup>33</sup> But, however peculiar its grip on the world, the connection exists, for otherwise (2) would simply not rate as a basis for a definition of truth. That is because Tarski’s definition is a variant of the so-called ‘Correspondence theory of truth’, i.e. basically the idea that a sentence (or proposition, belief, etc.) is true if and only if it corresponds to an actual state of things. Tarski’s variant is sometimes dubbed ‘disquotational’ or ‘disquotationalist’. *Disquotation* is given different (but not incompatible) definitions by different authors. On one reading it denotes the conception that *S is true* means the same as *S* (or is, in a weaker sense, ‘equivalent’ to it) (cf Blackburn 1994: 108; Larson & Segal 1995: 50; Borchert 1996: 572), so that attaching *is true* to a quoted sentence amounts to removing the quotation marks, hence *disquotation*. On another, the ‘disquotation principle’ is considered a synonym of Tarski’s *Convention T* (Audi 1999: 931). These descriptions are mutually compatible: what a T-biconditional does is throw a bridge between language and the world by asserting that a metalinguistic statement is logically equivalent to a statement about the world. This is exactly what was to be expected of semantic statements in the logician’s sense: if metalanguage was not capable of referring to the world as well as to language, it would never provide the possibility of specifying how language ‘hooks on’ to the world.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> I owe this insight entirely to Marc Dominicy.

<sup>34</sup> Many philosophers and linguists agree with the statement that the metalanguage is “the language in which one can talk about both things in the world and sentences of the object language” (Vendler 1985: 74). But there are dissenters. Sørensen, notably, judges the logician’s notion of metalanguage to be vitiated by ‘glaring inconsistencies’. In particular, logicians fail to realise that many of the objects (words, sentences) they regard as metalinguistic are actually ‘level-to-level’, i.e. they mix elements from the meta-level and the object-level. The very notion that a metalanguage contains its object language is contradictory and absurd, Sørensen argues, because it precludes the possibility of keeping language levels distinct, and therefore robs the idea of metalanguage of its

As a matter of fact, both options reviewed so far appear to comply with this constraint on metalanguage. This point is trivial where  $M$  incorporates the sentences of  $L$ . As for the other case, that in which translations are used,  $M$ 's ability to refer to language and the world is ensured if the translations of  $L$ 's sentences designate the same entities as  $L$ 's sentences. This is a standard demand on translation ('equivalence' in meaning and reference), and it obtains unproblematically in the case of the metalanguages of formalised languages, where the denotata of the terms used can all be specified unambiguously. It is less clear that such equivalence in meaning is achieved when the object language is a natural language. The French linguist Oswald Ducrot (1984: 117ff) believes that it is unlikely for words to exist in a language and its metalanguage with exactly the same meaning. His remarks are centred on everyday words that are made to enter the terminology of the metalanguage, but there is no reason to believe that they cannot be extended to other words, phrases and sentences. It is likely that the same judgment applies to translations too. At least, the latter have this merit that they do not pass themselves off as being 'the same' as sentences in the object language.

Whichever way this issue is settled, a point should be made about the nature of the translations that some logicians advocate. These differ from the metalinguistic names in two essential respects: they retain the syntactic characteristics they had in the object language; in particular, a sentence remains a sentence; it does not become a name. Besides, as a corollary to the previous point, the translations of composite expressions remain composite, whereas their names, being names, are so-called 'singular terms': they are assumed to refer to singular objects, to particulars.

We are now ready for a concrete illustration of the various components of a logical metalanguage. Our example is from arithmetic (shortened as  $Ar$ ). In Tarski's scheme, a partial truth-definition, which is a statement of the metalanguage, would take the following form:

(3)  *$2 + 3 = 5$*  is a true sentence in  $Ar$  iff  $2 + 3 = 5$

The subject 'sentence' (the formula in italics) is a name for the sentence of similar shape that occurs in  $Ar$ . That it is a meta-name is indicated by the use of italics. Tarski originally resorted to inverted commas to form 'quotation-mark names', but the kind of metalinguistic markers used was deemed unimportant, and, indeed, Tarski proposed other ways of building meta-names in

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utility. Whatever their merits, Sørensen's marginal views will not be discussed in any greater detail here, as my aim in this section is to provide an account of the dominant conceptions in the logical tradition. The interested reader, however, should consult Sørensen (1958: esp. 17-22).

“The Concept of Truth”, the so-called ‘structural descriptive names’ (1983a: 156-57), more about which in Chapter 2.2. The sentence (clause) after the functor *iff*, on the other hand, is a (translation of the identical) sentence in Ar. It is important to realise the difference between the two subordinate clauses in (3): the first one, the subject-clause, refers to an Ar expression, while the second refers outside of Ar to a mathematical state of affairs. Furthermore, if the logical term *iff* also exists in Ar – but this is contingent – its meaning will be the same in both the object and the meta-language. Finally, there is the predicate *true sentence in Ar*, which is another logical term, but one with no counterpart in Ar, and therefore exclusive to the metalanguage.

We have seen so far how Tarski believed that a definition of truth could be constructed for formal languages. We have seen too that this must be done in a higher-order language, the metalanguage, and we now have an intimation of the structure of such a language. But what of natural languages? Tarski thought it unlikely that a proper definition of truth could be framed for ‘colloquial’ languages (1983a: 153, 159, 162-63; 1944: 347). His contribution to natural-language semantics is therefore minimal (cf Mostovski 1967: 78), and Gupta (1998: 266) is justified in saying that Tarski’s definition of truth throws little light on languages where paradoxes do occur, that is, all natural languages.<sup>35</sup>

Tarski’s contrasted verdict reflects the fact that the relation between a metalanguage and its formalised object is different from that between the naturally occurring metalanguage of an ordinary language and its natural object. Accordingly, the term *metalanguage* itself means something different when applied to formal and natural languages respectively. The metalanguage of a formal language is precisely distinguished from its object language (Ritter & Gründer 1980: 1301; Auroux & Weil 1991: 288; Blackburn 1994: 240; Honderich 1995: 555; Mittelstraß 1995: vol. 2, 875; Bach 1999: 560). The fact that the metalanguage is of a higher order than the object language usually means that the expressive capacities of the former extend

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<sup>35</sup> Gupta (1998: 266) makes out a note of impatience in Tarski’s negative conclusion, and adds that other scholars have exploited his ideas to develop better responses to the problem, notably Parsons and Burge. Gupta also briefly sketches Davidson’s and Montague’s respective extensions of Tarski’s definition with a view to constructing a truth-based semantics for natural language. These are developments that I cannot go into within the boundaries of this dissertation. Let us perhaps just note John Searle’s doubts about Davidson’s project. Davidson founds his semantics on truth: to understand the meaning of a sentence is to know its truth-conditions. Moreover, since truth is a matter of the correspondence between sentences and states of affairs, Davidson understands meaning in purely extensional terms. This is what fuels Searle’s scepticism. Searle’s argument is strongly reminiscent of Frege’s distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*: any theory of meaning must be capable of explaining “not only what a speaker represents by his or her utterances, but also how he or she represents them, under what mental aspects the speaker represents truth conditions” (1996: 19). This is something that Davidson’s enterprise refuses to take into account.

beyond those of the latter, i.e. that the metalanguage contains the object language. Furthermore, as several writers observe, there can therefore be a recursive hierarchy of metalanguages (Akoun 1977: 289; Blackburn 1994: 240; Honderich 1995: 632; Mittelstraß 1995: vol. 2, 875; Flew 1999: 229). Indeed, each metalanguage can itself be turned into an object language the semantic description of which requires the creation of a higher-level metalanguage, i.e. a meta-metalanguage, and so on *ad infinitum*.<sup>36</sup>

None of these characteristics clearly obtains in the case of ordinary languages : there is no clear demarcation between object language and metalanguage. If anything, the relationship is the converse of that observed for formal languages: it is rather the object language that contains the metalanguage (see chapter 7 for qualifications). As a consequence, the metalanguage is not richer expressively than its object language, and there can be no neat hierarchy of metalanguages (these points are developed at some length in Chapter 7.1).

One should not wrongly assume that natural languages cannot therefore talk about language, and, more specifically, about themselves. On the contrary, Tarski believes that they can speak about everything, a property which he calls their ‘universality’. Here are the consequences Tarski attributes to this universality:

If we are to maintain this universality of everyday language in connexion with semantical investigations, we must, to be consistent, admit into the language, in addition to its sentences and other expressions, also the names of these sentences and expressions, and sentences containing these names, as well as such semantic expressions as ‘true sentence’, ‘name’, ‘denote’, etc. But it is presumably just this universality of everyday language which is the primary source of all semantical antinomies [...] (1983a: 164)<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Talking about Tarski’s postulate of a hierarchy of formal languages, Putnam remarks that the paradoxical aspect of Tarski’s theory [...] is that one has to stand outside the whole hierarchy even to formulate the statement that the hierarchy exists. But what is this “outside place”—“informal language”—supposed to be ? (1990: 14)

This situation, explains Putnam, has led some philosophers, e.g. Parsons, to suggest that the logician’s informal discourse is... not a language “but a “speech act” which is *sui generis*” (ibid.). Putnam thinks this an unacceptable consequence, and is tempted to believe, with Kurt Gödel, that what formal logicians such as Tarski have done is not to solve semantic paradoxes like the Liar’s, but to displace them from the formalised languages into the informal language (ibid. 15-16). The interested reader can consult PARSONS, Charles (1983), “The Liar Paradox”, in *Mathematics in Philosophy. Selected Essays*, Ithaca, Cornell University press, pp. 221-67. For my part, I have found Parsons’ arguments too complex and too remote from my own purposes to be able to fully make sense of them.

<sup>37</sup> Grelling nicely captures the connection:

Thus we have to take [sic] our choice between two incompatible goods. The one is the unrestricted capacity of expressing our thoughts, the other security against ever meeting with a contradiction. (1936: 486)

Noël Mouloud (1976: 79) offers a similar formulation of the problem, as well as pinpointing those defects that make natural languages unsuitable for a formally correct definition of *truth*, with special emphasis on ambiguity (multivocal logical forms) and indefinite semantic limits.

The ability for a natural language to act as its own metalanguage is widely recognised, from Grelling (1936: 486) or Carnap (1948: 4), to Partee (1973: 415), Honderich (1995: 555), Bach (1999: 560), or Flew (1999: 229). So is its ability to express paradoxes. This may explain some scholars' reluctance to promote the use of the term *metalanguage* outside formal logic. Thus, Mounin (1974: 213) thinks it loses its rigour and usefulness when applied to natural languages, and Blackburn states squarely that

“[t]he term is abused when any discourse about other sayings (e.g. the discourse of literary criticism) is said to be couched in a metalanguage, since there is here no reason why it should not be in just the same language as the original, and it usually is” (1994: 240).

It should be borne in mind, however, that the logician's metalanguage is itself often not formalised, and that it usually includes all of the object language, thereby generating a fair amount of overlap. No doubt Mounin (and perhaps Blackburn too) is attributing too much rigidity to logical theorisations of metalanguage.

### 1.3. The story so far

Summing up the observations above, one must stress the following points. In formal semantics, a metalanguage is a language in its own right, whereas ordinary metalanguage is nothing but a particular use or function of a language. This means that several features of the metalanguages of formalised languages necessarily differ from ordinary metalinguistic use, especially their explicit separation from their object languages and their arrangement into neat hierarchies of language-levels. There is a further assumption which, though it implicitly holds for logical metalanguages, will have to be revised when we turn to ordinary metalinguistic use: no formal system can ever be an object language and a metalanguage simultaneously; otherwise the neat hierarchies would come tumbling down. In other words, we are dealing with an either-or type of situation. It will later become clear that 'mixed' uses are rather common in everyday discourse, thus constituting a distinctive characteristic of natural languages.

### Coda: Gödel's contribution

We saw in 1.1 that formal systems generally had the ability to express their own syntax. The syntax of formal systems (which, for all practical purposes, means the same as *the formal systems*) is standardly built according to the 'logistic' or 'axiomatic' method (cf Hottois 1989: 69ff). Axiomatisation aims, amongst others, at such properties as completeness, consistency and

effectiveness. A system is complete if it is capable of proving all its true sentences internally (i.e. independently of a metatheory). It is consistent if it involves no contradictions, a condition that concretely entails that it must be able to generate well-formed formulas (henceforth *wff*) which are not theorems (i.e. true sentences). The reason is that, if  $p$  is a *wff*, then  $\neg p$  is a *wff* too. Therefore, if all the *wffs* generated by the system were theorems, this would mean that  $p$  and  $\neg p$  are true at the same time, which is a manifest contradiction. Finally, a formal system is effective if it possesses systematic procedures for deciding which expression is a *wff*, and for determining if the derivation rules have been applied correctly. If a formal system is effective, then, it should be implementable on a machine.

Hilbert, the spearhead of the logicist project, entertained the belief that the consistency and completeness of mathematics would turn out to be provable internally (effectiveness, which is more of a ‘practical’ property, plays only a minor role here). This is where Kurt Gödel comes in.<sup>38</sup> In 1929, Gödel demonstrated that first-order logic (the basic predicate calculus) was complete and consistent, a result which tallied with logicist ambitions. However, in 1931, he thwarted Hilbert’s programme with the formulation of his ‘Incompleteness Theorem(s)’. For the non-specialist (including the present writer), Gödel’s results can be understood in two complementary ways. But beforehand, it is necessary to have an intimation of the method used in the proof. What Gödel did was to translate metatheoretical statements, concerning the provability of formulas, into simple statements of elementary arithmetic. (He correlated first each primitive sign and then each formula of his deductive system with a natural number.) He thus obtained arithmetic *wffs* expressing propositions of their own metamathematics. In particular, he built a formally irreproachable self-referential formula which expressed its own unprovability, something like *I am not provable*.<sup>39</sup> If one accepts that *Ar* is consistent, then one must also take it that the sentence is true. Indeed, if the formula is taken to be false, then *I am not provable* is provable, a clear contradiction that deprives the system of its consistency. The conclusion is therefore that there exists a true sentence in *Ar* which is not provable, and *Ar* is incomplete. As a corollary, one can also derive an undecidable formula expressing the theory’s own consistency. It follows that neither the consistency of *Ar* nor its inconsistency can be proved in *Ar*.

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<sup>38</sup> For this fairly technical development on Kurt Gödel, I have relied mainly on sketches in Mouloud (1976), Blackburn (1994: 159), Honderich (1995: 320), Mautner (1996: 169-70) and Flew (1999: 133). More detailed but still not too technical expositions can be found in Kneale & Kneale (1962: 712-24), Edwards (1967: vol. 3, 348-57) and Craig (1998: vol. 4, 105-19).

<sup>39</sup> A more accurate ‘translation’ is supplied by Kneale & Kneale (1962: 718):

It is impossible to prove the statement which results from completing with its own name the incomplete formula “It is impossible to prove the statement which results from completing with its own name the incomplete formula...”.



Gödel's theorem(s) can be generalised to any axiomatic system capable of expressing arithmetic, e.g. second-order logic (i.e. which allows quantification into predicates). From that level of expressivity upwards, no system is complete or able to prove its own consistency. These results have prompted some commentators to say that truth outruns provability. This is where a parallel with Tarski can be drawn.<sup>40</sup> First, if there is no internal provability of formal systems, then it is necessary to resort to a richer, more expressive language for the establishment of consistency, i.e. a metalanguage. Second, if syntax, i.e. a set of purely formal, mechanical, procedures, is not sufficient, then it must be supplemented by semantics – a term which Gödel does not himself use. Third, note the importance of self-referentiality in the formulas used in Gödel's proof. Gödel himself pointed to a similarity with paradoxes of the Liar's type.

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<sup>40</sup> A connection between Tarski's and Gödel's methods is explicitly recognised by Carnap in an article written in 1935, and also by Church (1956: 66fn) or Prior (1967: 231). McGee (1998: 649) assumes that Tarski used Gödel's theorem to build his theory of truth. See Tarski (1983: 277-78) for comments.

## CHAPTER 2: The use-mention distinction and its avatars

This bulky chapter provides an overview of the theories developed first by logicians, and subsequently by philosophers of language, to deal with the quotation of expressions. It opens with an outline of the distinction between the ‘use’ and the ‘mention’ of a term, which was given its classic formulation by Quine in his *Mathematical Logic* (1940).<sup>41</sup> This distinction has gained wide currency in logic, the philosophy of language, and also linguistics, as it was adopted, with or without reservations, by numerous scholars writing on language.

Originally, the distinction was designed to perform a clarifying function in logic: it was to permit a consistent separation of metalanguage from object language by means of the careful use of inverted commas: an expression in its normal employment was to occur without quotation marks, while one that was ‘talked about’ was to occur within inverted commas. Enclosing expressions in inverted commas was conceived of as a recursive procedure, thus making it possible to quote a quoted expression unambiguously by adding a further pair of marks.

But logicians and philosophers were also interested in the use-mention distinction for another reason: the fact that the mention of a term appears to disrupt the referential transparency of words and sentences, and to create ‘opacity’ (cf Washington 1992: 582; García-Carpintero 1994: 260). Quine himself, who stated that “[q]uotation is the referentially opaque context par excellence” (1976: 161), was interested in mention and quotation because of its connection with opacity.<sup>42</sup> For Quine and for many after him, referential opacity is the situation that obtains when a referential expression loses its transparency, i.e. its ability to refer normally. This loss is reflected in the blocking of a logical operation known as ‘substitution salva veritate’: in *Tully was a Roman*, I can replace the subject by the referentially synonymous (co-extensional) expression *Cicero* without affecting the truth-value of the sentence. By contrast, in *Tully has five letters*, no such substitution is possible. If it did preserve truth – it does not in this case – this would still be purely contingent. Such a sentential context is called ‘referentially opaque’.

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<sup>41</sup> Several writers regard Frege as the first logician to have distinguished systematically between the use and the mention of words, as early as 1892 (see Imbert 1971: 19; Bynum 1972: 33, 84fn; Mittelstraß 1995: vol. 1, 671). Needless to say, Frege did not use Quine’s terminology.

<sup>42</sup> A different note is sounded by Christensen (1961: 66), who believes that Quine should have kept neatly apart quotational and intensional contexts. The latter, which can be exemplified by sentences beginning with *X thinks that*, *X knows that* or *X says that*, are another major source of opacity. Christensen believes that these two types of contexts are opaque for different reasons: quotational contexts are opaque because they include an expression used with ‘suppositio materialis’, whereas intensional contexts inherit their opacity from the occurrence of an expression with ‘suppositio semantica’. This distinction of Christensen’s own devising is briefly presented in the section on simultaneous use and mention in 2.1 below.

Though the use-mention distinction looks quite straightforward, at least at a first glance, it has triggered an impressive range of comments and objections, most of which are to be examined here. The review proceeds as follows: after a brief expository sketch, I highlight what I recognise as the three major theoretical consequences of Quine's position. Taken together, these three features have received the a posteriori label 'Name Theory'. Many are the writers who have raised major objections against it. In my review, I have relied especially on the observations of Geach (1957, 1972), Sørensen (1961), Garver (1965), Christensen (1961, 1967), Searle (1969, 1983), Rey-Debove (1978), Davidson (1979), Recanati (1979), Goldstein (1984), Bennett (1988), Washington (1992), García-Carpintero (1994), Reimer (1996), Seymour (1996), Cappelen & Lepore (1997a), Saka (1998). After their arguments have been developed, I consider in turn the various theories elaborated in response to the assumed shortcomings of the Name Theory. Most recent commentators agree that there are three, namely the 'Description Theory' (Tarski and Quine are associated with its spelling variant, and Peter Geach with its lexical variant), the 'Demonstrative Theory', and the 'Identity Theory'.<sup>43</sup>

## 2.1. The Name Theory

Let us begin by examining Quine's (1940) first five examples:<sup>44</sup>

- (1) Boston is populous
- (2) Boston is disyllabic
- (3) 'Boston' is disyllabic
- (4) 'Boston' has six letters
- (5) 'Boston' is a noun.

In (1) a proper name is 'used' to 'mention' an extralinguistic entity, a city on the East Coast of the USA, and the property of « being populous » is correctly ascribed to this city. *Mention* can therefore be understood here as a synonym of *reference* in a sentence context. In (2), for lack of any indication to the contrary, Quine suggests that it is still the city that is mentioned, but this time the property of « being disyllabic » is wrongly attributed to it, so that the statement is false. For (2) to be true, says Quine, its subject should be put between quotation marks, as is done in

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<sup>43</sup> These theories are sometimes referred to by the names of their proponents (cf García-Carpintero 1994: 253): Tarski-Quine theory (= Name), Geach-Tarski-Quine mixed descriptive theory (= Description), Davidsonian theory (= Demonstrative), Fregean theory (= Identity). As regards the Description Theory, it is not quite correct to say that it originates in the recognition of the descriptive inadequacy of the Name account. I return to this question in 2.2.

<sup>44</sup> In this chapter, when referring to Quine's examples, I shall stick to his own use of metalinguistic markers (i.e. recursive application of pairs of inverted commas), even though it does not match my own conventions.

(3).<sup>45</sup> In the latter example, as in (4) and (5), the name “Boston” is used to mention a linguistic expression, namely ‘Boston’. Note in passing that whenever I wish to talk about a linguistic string, I must enclose it in an additional pair of inverted commas: if I want to talk about a name-without-quote-marks, I must make use of a name-with-quote-marks. This is what I have done above.

Here is how Quine defines the mention of an expression:

The name of a name or other expression is commonly formed by putting the named expression in quotation marks; the whole, called a *quotation*, denotes its interior. [...] in [(3)] a quotation is used, and the place-name is mentioned. (1940: 23)

It is important to realise that not all cases of mention are quotations. Mention takes place every time an expression is used referentially. Quotation only occurs when what is mentioned is itself a linguistic expression, be it a word, phrase or sentence. This distinction is too often neglected in the literature.<sup>46</sup>

Examples (3), (4), and (5) illustrate various types of properties that can be ascribed to a linguistic expression – phonological, orthographic, and grammatical. To these, says Quine, can be added literary and even semantic properties. In each of these cases, the mechanism will be identical: whenever we wish to predicate a property of a linguistic expression correctly, we shall mention that expression by using its name in the form of a quotation. This, Quine argues, is necessary if we are to avoid the problems encountered in (2).

What are the most significant features to emerge from this sketch ?

(i) Quotations are names, i.e. proper nouns. Quine seems never to have changed his mind, as this description recurred in many writings after 1940 (1952: 114 [reproduced in 1953: 140]; 1974: 43). In this respect, he is just another member of a long lineage of first-rate logicians and philosophers including J. S. Mill (in *A System of Logic*, as quoted in Sørensen 1961: 174), Tarski (1983a: 156, 159), Carnap (1947: 17, 1948: 237), Reichenbach (1947: 9, 10); Church (1956: 61)

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<sup>45</sup> Needless to say, this is a normative statement. Many writers with a more corpus-based inclination than Quine would object to such a prescription on the grounds that expressions are often mentioned without quotation marks being used (e.g. Christensen 1961: 61). Earlier on, Carnap recognised the existence in natural language of such uses as embodied by the subject of (2) and called them ‘autonymous’ uses, i.e. uses of terms as names for themselves (1937: 17). Autonymous use, however, was not recommended within an orderly logical framework.

<sup>46</sup> But here is a neat formulation of it by Davidson (1979: 27):

[t]he connection between quotation on the one hand and the use-mention distinction on the other is obvious, for an expression that would be used if one of its tokens appeared in a normal context is mentioned if one of its tokens appears in quotation marks (or some similar contrivance for quotation).

and Geach<sup>47</sup> (1972: 203). Many writers of relatively recent logic textbooks adhere to the view that quotations are names (Goddard & Routley 1973: 50; Cresswell 1973: 104; Rivenc 1989: 39-41; Gamut 1991: 26). Although this theory has some appeal for logicians, it has come under heavy fire from language philosophers and some linguists (see below).

(ii) As a consequence of their being names, quotations are monomorphemic. This point is made explicitly by Quine, although he does not use the term ‘morpheme’ or any of its derivatives:

From the standpoint of logical analysis each whole quotation must be regarded as a single word or sign, whose parts count for no more than serifs or syllables. A quotation is not a *description* but a *hieroglyph*; it designates its object not by describing it in terms of other objects, but by picturing it. The meaning of the whole does not depend upon the meanings of the constituent words. (1940: 26)

Quine offers a somewhat surprising illustration of this idea:

The personal name buried within [i.e. which is a part of] the first word of the statement:

(11) ‘Cicero’ has six letters,  
e.g., is logically no more germane to the statement than is the verb ‘let’ which is buried within the last word. (1940: 26)

This also entails that, inasmuch as it is a mere part of a quotation, i.e. an opaque context, *Cicero* loses its ordinary ability to refer. If it did not, then it would still contribute to the semantics of the sentence, a consequence which is clearly at odds with the general drift of Quine’s argument.

Quine supplies similar illustrations in later writings (1952: 114, 1953: 140, 1960: 144, 1976: 161), where a parallel is drawn between the so-called ‘interior’ of the quotation – i.e. the quotation minus the quotes – and the occurrence of ‘cat’ in ‘cattle’, ‘mary’ in ‘summary’, ‘can’ in ‘canary’. In both cases, we are supposed to be dealing with ‘orthographic accidents’.

(iii) A consequence of (i) and (ii) is that there can be no simultaneous use and mention of an expression in any sentence. Quine writes: “We mention *x* by using a name of *x*; and a statement about *x* contains a name of *x*” (1940: 23). The name that is used is not the expression mentioned. The expression that is mentioned occurs as part of the name in question, but it is not used since it is only an arbitrary fragment of a morpheme with no discernible meaning.

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<sup>47</sup> Even though Geach rejects both the ideas that the same item cannot be at once used and mentioned, and that the sequence occurring between the quotation marks is an arbitrary bit of morpheme. See below for a discussion of these aspects. (Cf also Davidson 1979: 33ff; Rey-Debove 1978: 152-56).

This position has an interesting implication: the word which begins (3), (4), and (5) is not the same as the one which begins (1) and (2). More precisely, ‘Boston’ in (1) is a token of a different type from that of which the subjects of (3), (4), and (5) are tokens, i.e. “Boston”. This theoretical point is important on two scores: first, quite a few writers make reference to the simultaneous use and mention of expressions (e.g. Church 1956: 61; Mittelstraß 1996: v. 4, 460), without it being clear if they are speaking carelessly or if they take a different view from Quine’s. This is an unfortunate consequence of the popularity of a terminology so widely adopted that it becomes very susceptible to unintentional and unwitting distortions, especially when a scholar fails to take in the full import of the above stated impossibility. Second, some of Quine’s detractors have targeted their criticism precisely at the idea that mention rules out use (e.g. Geach 1957), or that the subjects in (1) to (5) are tokens of two different types (e.g. Searle 1969).

### 2.1.1. Cautionary statements

Some of the rebuttals reviewed below are concerned with the applicability of the use-mention distinction to a much richer gamut of language use than was ever contemplated by Quine. It should be borne in mind that Quine’s original ambition was to provide scholars, especially logicians and mathematicians, with means of avoiding a type of confusion in language use that was liable to give rise to all sorts of false issues and misconceptions. At no point did he assert that his theory aimed at a realistic description of the use of quotation in natural languages. Quine, like many another logician, was chiefly concerned with cleaning up and clarifying formalised languages, and one should be careful not to hold him accountable for claims he never made in the first place. Wondering why such distinguished philosophers as Quine (but also Frege or Tarski) would have adopted the inadequate ‘simple-proper-name’ theory of quotation, Jonathan Bennett suggests that:

[o]ne reason is that they have been less concerned with the details of how quotation *does* work than with heading off some misunderstandings about it. [...] The remedial work doesn’t require one to be precise about how exactly the quotation refers to the word [...]. (1988: 401)<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Paul Saka is less forgiving. While he acknowledges that Quine may have held that “quotations function like names only in so far as mathematical logic is concerned” (1998: 114-15; emphasis mine), he doubts that this was Tarski’s position. In support of Saka’s claim, it is true that Tarski holds that the Name Theory is “the most natural one”, but then again, Tarski also uses *name* in the loose sense of « designation » (cf footnotes 53 and 75 below).

This, however, does not essentially detract from the merits of the various critiques. Objections and alternative proposals come mainly from writers who have taken over the distinction from logic and formal semantics to adjust it to the needs of natural language, thereby recognising its heuristic value. Indeed, as suggested earlier, the literature on the use-mention distinction and quotation exhibits a gradual shift from the province of logicians and formal semanticists into that of (ordinary) language philosophers, a shift that has brought the debate closer to the concerns of linguists.

Still, a defect must be pointed out which continues to plague the accounts even of the philosophers of language, i.e. the relative paucity of their corpus. Some writers operate with essentially the same sentences that were used by late medieval logicians, typical illustrations of which are *Homo est nomen* or *Homo est dissyllabum*. Characteristic of such examples, which I shall provisionally subsume under the heading 'pure quotation', is the fact that the quotation occurs in subject position, that it is free of any sort of determiner (or modifier), and that its predicate contains a metalinguistic term. Examples like these have the advantage of being straightforward and easy to grasp, so that they provide fertile ground for writers to bring their points home. But the exclusion of more complex, and yet perfectly ordinary, sentences sometimes weakens the theories that are set out. In the end, the soundest theory would be one that accounted for all (most of) the sentences empirically observed (or observable), not just for a tiny minority of logicians' or grammarians' examples.

A final word of warning before we embark on our survey: several theorists (e.g. Searle 1969: 74; Recanati 1979: 65ff; Davidson 1979: 28; Washington 1992: 582-83) take it for granted that quotation is a straightforward object, and that, if a theory portrays it as a mysterious, inscrutable, phenomenon, then it must be that the theory is false. Recanati (1979), for example, defends the 'naïve' thesis against Quine's 'elaborate' one. The trouble, as the following excerpts illustrate, is that different people hold different views about what is a simple, common-sense, theory of a simple object, and the debate sometimes has an air of the pot calling the kettle black. Thus, Davidson finds fault with the standard-bearers<sup>49</sup> of the so-called 'Name Theory', namely Tarski, Quine or Church, for their muddled accounts of quotation:

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<sup>49</sup> Still another caveat: some scholars are associated with more than one theory of quotation. For instance, Quine and Tarski are also widely regarded as proponents of the so-called 'spelling variant' of the 'Description Theory'. Readers should not be surprised if some names ended up being associated with more than one theory. (Cf Davidson 1979: 31)

There is more than a hint, then, that there is something obscure or confused about quotation. But this can't be right. There is nothing wrong with the device itself. It is our theories about how it works that are inadequate or confused. (1979: 28)

Washington makes a similar point, but, interestingly, he includes Davidson among those who are too keen on complications:

[The] workings [of quotation] appear to be a paradigm of simplicity: in quotation, it seems that words are used and mentioned in the same breath. Moreover, this correlation would appear to be explanatory: it seems that words in quotation are mentioned simply by being used. [...] Alfred Tarski, W. V. Quine, Peter Geach, and Donald Davidson are among those who find the appearances misleading. These writers maintain that while quoted expressions may seem to mention themselves, the identity is illusory [...] (1992: 582-83)

Ironically, Alfred Tarski himself said of the Name Theory that:

this interpretation [...] seems to be the most natural one and completely in accordance with the customary way of using quotation marks. (1983a: 160).<sup>50</sup>

I believe, therefore, that professions of plainness should be considered with caution, even if the pursuit of simplicity remains a legitimate preoccupation.<sup>51</sup> In the review that follows, I shall concentrate on the following three qualities that any good theory must exhibit:

- it must be consistent;
- it must be empirically adequate, i.e. fit its data. As regards a linguistic theory, I shall consider that the test for empirical adequacy is whether a theory can justify the grammaticality/acceptability of those sentences that are included within its object, in the present case, 'mentioning sentences';
- where several empirically adequate accounts are in competition, the best one will be that which, besides grammaticality, also accounts for the greatest number of key properties of its object.

These three qualities are not entirely independent of each other. To give but one example, it will be seen that, if a theory offers no elegant explanation for the possibility of simultaneous use and mention, it also fails (empirically) to predict the grammaticality of those sentences that display such simultaneity. In many cases, the criticism will centre on the third quality highlighted

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<sup>50</sup> To add insult to injury, here is Gómez-Torrente's conclusion: "It is important to observe that, in a hypothetical situation in which the three theories had shown [sic] to be free from undesirable consequences, the naturalness of the Tarskian theory would almost certainly recommend it against the others [i.e. Fregean and Davidsonian], which are generally quite exotic and introduce complications that should be resisted if possible" (2001: 147).

<sup>51</sup> This does not mean that a 'scientific' theory must reflect common-sense understanding. (Cf Chomsky 2000)



above, namely the ability to bring out the most important properties, the ‘manner’ in which the theory fits the data. From a practical point of view, our review of the criticism provides an excellent opportunity to bring to light the main features of quotation. When these features have eventually been identified, we shall be in possession of a test for determining what is and what is not a successful theory of quotation.

### 2.1.2. Objections

I shall begin with an argument that concerns the theory’s internal consistency. Quine stated that a quotation “denotes its interior”, thereby making the segment between the quotation marks the referent of the quotation. Yet, feature (ii) above specifies that the interior is nothing but an accidental string of letters, a piece of morpheme. This gives rise to a rather absurd picture. When I use a name, or any referential expression, it is because I want to say something regarding its referent: when I use the name *Quine*, it is in order to say something about the person Willard Quine. It is highly unlikely that utterers of (3), (4), and (5) would really wish to say something about a mere orthographic accident.

Curiously, this lack of internal consistency is not explicitly mentioned in the literature as a major flaw of Quine’s framework. Yet, it faces the theory with insurmountable difficulties: phonetic but also grammatical, literary, semantic properties can hardly be ascribed to a mere ‘infra-morpheme’, as Quine says is the case (1940: 24). Words (or, more accurately, morphemes) are the sole minimal bearers of grammatical and semantic qualities. And yet, Quine provides no less than four examples (e.g. ‘*Boston*’ is synonymous with ‘*the Capital of Massachusetts*’) to illustrate his assertion that statements assigning semantic properties require quotation of expressions just as much as statements assigning, say, phonetic properties. Strangely, Quine seems to have overlooked this upsetting consequence of his theory: one can no longer talk about what one wants to talk about, at least not by using quotation.

It is funny to realise that Quine should himself have sinned against the stipulation that word and object must be kept apart, but that is exactly what he has done. In equating the interior with the designatum, Quine is in effect suggesting that, in sentences like (3), (4), (5), there occur both the name *and* the object it stands for. Such a position is incompatible with Quine’s own insistence that, rather than the objects referred to, it is their linguistic designations that occur (e.g. 1940: 23) in utterances.

It is not difficult to get rid of the above contradiction. It is enough to posit that the interior of a quotation is not its designatum. There is, however, a price to pay for restoring the internal

consistency of the theory. The move raises an additional question: if the interior is not the referent, how does a quotation manage to depict its target, how do sentences (3) to (5) succeed in asserting something about the word *Boston*? A possible answer is provided by the French linguist Josette Rey-Debove (1978: 154-57). In contrast to the classical logicians, she upholds a ‘Common-noun’ Theory of quotation. But, like that of logicians, such a theory also requires that quotations should be monomorphemic. Her solution consists in the suggestion that the arbitrary bit of morpheme that occurs between quotation marks is the icon of a real morpheme (or sequence of morphemes). It is this iconic link that throws a bridge between a quotation and its referent, and makes it possible to ascribe grammatical, semantic and literary properties to it.

Now that the issue about consistency has been dealt with, we can proceed to the various refutations of the main tenets of the Name Theory.<sup>52</sup> Varying shades of disapproval can be distinguished, ranging from Searle’s (1969) and Recanati’s (1979) severity – they use such qualifiers as *very confused*, *absurd* and *harmful* to characterise the theory – to Bennett’s milder sentiment that the Name Theory is one “which no-one has ever accepted” (1988: 402), and should not therefore be taken too seriously.<sup>53</sup>

#### 2.1.2.1. Feature 1: quotations as names

##### (i) Objection 1

The most common objection is semantic in nature. It is argued, with reason, that there is ordinarily no resemblance between a name and that which it names. “That which we call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet”, or so the argument seems to go. In other words, aside from nicknames like *Smarty*, *Dimples* or *Goggles*, the relation between a name and its denotatum is purely conventional (arbitrary). Note that the same holds for common nouns too, just as it does

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<sup>52</sup> Most of the criticism originates in the philosophy of language. Linguists do not seem to care much about the Name Theory, perhaps because they often do not regard names as fundamental linguistic units. As a consequence, many linguists do talk freely of quotations as being names, notably Mayenowa (1967); Droste (1983, 1989b).

<sup>53</sup> Bennett (1988: 401) reports that Quine told him in a personal communication that he was using the verb *name* in the same broad sense as *designate*. This is confirmed here and there in Quine’s writings. Thus, in *Mathematical Logic*, the long definite descriptions given as equivalents of quotation-mark names are presented as “elaborately descriptive names” (1940: 26). Similarly, in *Methods of Logic*, Quine suggests that in writing *The fifth word of “The Raven” rhymes with the eleventh*,

we mention the words ‘dreary’ and ‘weary’, but what we use are names of them (1974: 43), thereby clearly equating definite descriptions and names. Tarski too repeatedly equates the two notions (e.g. 1944: 344). For a recent example, Rivenc, in his logic textbook (1989: 40), treats *name of an expression* and *structural description of an expression* as synonymous.

for all so-called ‘content’ words or phrases.<sup>54</sup> As many writers point out, the situation is radically different where quotations are concerned. The connection between their form and their referent is a necessary one instead: when I want to quote the word that denotes Socrates the philosopher, I can only have recourse to ‘*Socrates*’ or ‘“Socrates”’ (or some such quotational form).<sup>55</sup> Thus, a key feature of what are customarily recognised as names is missing. Searle, for instance, makes the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that one could more properly use *John* as a name for the word *Socrates*. This choice would at least be sufficiently arbitrary. Of course, it leads to such disturbing statements as

(6) John has eight letters,

but at least, Searle suggests, these would warrant calling the subject-NP a ‘name of a linguistic expression’.<sup>56</sup>

The incompatibility between the Name Theory and the essentially conventional or arbitrary character of names is held by a host of critics to be a sufficient argument for dismissing this theory as inadequate (Ziff 1960: 87; Garver 1965: 230-32, as part of his rejection of ‘pure mention’; Christensen 1967: 362; Davidson 1979: 30; Bennett 1988: 400-01; Washington 1992: 603; García-Carpintero 1994: 254-55; Reimer 1996: 137). Saka (1998: 114-15) suggests that the

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<sup>54</sup> With the widely recognised exception of onomatopoeia (which, though conventional to some extent, are also iconic; cf Saussure 1986: 69; Bouissac 1998: 368), and, for a different reason, multi-morpheme lexemes (e.g. Saussure 1983: 130-31; Ducrot & Schaeffer 1995: 272; Lamarque 1997: 531). Briefly, composite lexemes like *dix-sept*, *dix-huit*, *dix-neuf* are more ‘motivated’ than single morphemes like *sept* or *dix*. For instance, *dix-sept* is syntagmatically motivated with respect to *dix* and *sept*. Ducrot & Schaeffer contrast the fully unmotivated *chêne* with the relatively motivated *cerisier*, *poirier*, *mûrier*, *bananier*. Other manifestations of syntagmatic iconicity can be observed notably in the tendency to make the order of clauses comply with the sequence of the events they depict, as when *He got drunk and had an accident* is by default analysed as meaning that he first got drunk and then had an accident.

<sup>55</sup> It is important not to confuse two issues here. The necessary connection I have in mind exists between the name *Socrates* and a quotation of that name, not between the name and the individual. Socrates could have been christened *Aristides* or *Hippolitus* or any other name, and still have been Socrates. The choice of a name is a pure historical contingency. And yet, there seems to be something ‘inevitable’ about the statement, *Socrates is called ‘Socrates’*. Michael Wreen has devoted a paper to trying to elucidate such statements as these and to explain why they are felt to be ‘trifling’ (Kripke’s term), i.e. hardly informative at all. Though *Socrates is called ‘Socrates’* is not logically necessary – it is not true in all possible worlds – Wreen suggests that it is ‘pragmatically necessary’, in this sense that “anytime a token of it is expressed, the token expresses a true proposition” (1989: 360), and even that the mere existence (prior to any act of utterance), in a given world, of a sentence corresponding to the proposition ensures its truth in that world. I briefly return to this issue at the end of Chapter 3.2. Perhaps a link can also be made with what Kripke has called ‘a posteriori necessity’, i.e. the necessary truth of certain statements like *Hesperus is Phosphorus* that is only knowable a posteriori. This is a question I cannot go into here, if only for lack of the necessary competence.

<sup>56</sup> In a like manner, Davidson suggests that accepting the Name Theory entails that “nothing would be lost if for each quotation mark name we were to substitute some unrelated name, for that is the character of proper names” (1979: 30). Sørensen (1961: 189) half-seriously suggests using *John* as a proper name for *of*, and García-Carpintero (1994: 255) has an example where *villar* refers to the name of Barcelona.

systematic relation that prevails between a quotation and its referent works two ways: “we can productively go from knowing any expression to knowing its quotation [and] we can go from knowing the quotation of any expression to knowing the expression itself” (1998: 115). This double movement faces the Name Theory with an insuperable obstacle, the two sides of which Saka identifies as the ‘forward productivity problem’ and the ‘reverse productivity problem’. Saka’s position nevertheless needs to be qualified: so-called reverse productivity is only partial, in the sense that it is valid only for quotations in a language L1 of strings belonging to L1. If, however, what is quoted is a string of another language L2, knowing the quotation does not entail knowing the L2 string (namely its meaning and grammatical behaviour, as can be illustrated by *But then I don’t hold with the precept de mortuis nil nisi bonum (I speak as a doctor, after all) [...] (Barnes 1985: 75)*). It would take an English speaker with a certain competence in Latin to go from identifying the quotation to knowing the Latin expression in any useful sense of *knowing*.)<sup>57</sup>

#### (ii) Objection 2

Searle (1969) supplies a second, context-based, argument for rejecting the Name Theory. Whereas a proper name, says Searle, will normally be used when its bearer is not present,

the device has no point when the object we wish to talk about is itself a stretch of discourse, and hence is easily produceable and does not require a separate linguistic device to refer to it. (1969: 75).

The same argument is adduced against the Name Theory by other writers (e.g. Sørensen 1961: 189; Christensen 1967: 360; Recanati 1979: 68). Though its practical value cannot be disregarded, I am not sure the argument wins the day. It is not unusual to resort to proper names even when their bearer is present. For instance, I would usually say things like *This is Joyce* only if Joyce (or perhaps her picture) is around; I will often use proper names when calling out to someone present in the context of utterance (e.g. *Frank and Antoinette, so great to see you!*) or when allocating roles (*John, you’ll be the radical whinge; Paul, you’ll be the romantic; Ringo, you’ll be the good-natured dimwit; George, you’ll be the mystic*), etc.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> This point is made by Rey-Debove (1978: 139).

<sup>58</sup> Note also that there is in this respect no qualitative difference to speak of between proper names and common nouns. The latter too can be used either in the presence of their referent (e.g. *Pass me the salt* or *What do you think of my new trousers/haircut?*), or in its absence. Naturally, we can assume that Searle omits to extend his argument to common nouns simply because they play no part in Quine’s theory. But the proper-common similarity undermines, I believe, the significance of the argument.

I believe that Searle's argument loses some of its strength when one bears the previous examples in mind. Indeed, what they show is that the linguistic device of proper names is also sometimes used in a context where the entity one wants to talk about can be pointed at (in a variety of ways), i.e. a context in which the use of the name is perhaps redundant. I say *perhaps* because it is well-known that pointing leaves room for a vast amount of underdetermination, so that naming is sometimes felt to be indispensable if no ambiguity is to arise. Searle's argument would preserve most of its strength if, contrary to an act of pointing, the 'presentation', as he calls it, of a linguistic object involved in quotation left no room for underdetermination (and therefore, to push the analogy further, made naming entirely dispensable). However, as I show in 2.4, the object 'we wish to talk about' by means of a quotation is not systematically the 'stretch of discourse' produced in the quoting sentence (it may be the type of which this is a token, or another token). It follows that resorting to 'a separate linguistic device to refer to it' no longer appears as unnecessary or absurd as Searle makes it out to be.

### (iii) Objection 3

While we are dealing with Searle, there is a third counterargument, this time syntactic in nature, put forward by Searle in *Intentionality* (1983: 183-90), where he takes up the critique first developed in *Speech Acts*: quotations often occur in syntactic positions that do not license names, and, accordingly, quotations cannot properly be names. Here is Searle's example (1983: 185):

(7) [...] note the difference between "Gerald says: 'I will consider running for the Presidency'" and "Gerald said he would 'consider running for the Presidency'".

Searle deems it incorrect to regard the quotation as a proper noun because inserting *Henry* after *would* in the second sentence results in ungrammaticality. Searle's grammaticality judgment is flawless, but does his argument toll the knell of the Name Theory? The answer is not clearly affirmative. What Searle has done is not to come up with the incontrovertible proof that the theory is misguided; rather, he has put his finger on two distinct uses – there are more – of quotation marks. Next to 'pure' quotation, which is the object that the use-mention distinction was originally designed to deal with, there is also what some have called 'mixed quotation' (e.g. Cappelen & Lepore 1997a), i.e. a mixture of indirect and direct speech. What Searle has definitely achieved is a demonstration that the Name Theory is unfit (i.e. empirically inadequate) for an integrated account of quotation, one that would propose overlapping treatments for all varieties of quotation. If our eventual conclusion is that such a theory is what must be striven for

(as Cappelen & Lepore insist), then it will be time to discard the Name Theory on grounds of empirical inadequacy.

Mixed cases are too intricate a phenomenon to be discussed within the narrow confines of this review of the literature on use and mention. I therefore prefer to postpone dealing with their full complexity until later chapters. For the time being, I simply wish to point out that Searle's third objection unwittingly demolishes another implicit assumption of Quine's doctrine, something which Garver (1965: 232) had identified as the 'Postulate of Comprehensiveness', in short the presupposition that any linguistic sequence that occurs in discourse is either used or mentioned, with the implication that there is no third possibility. The one exception brought up, but also immediately made harmless, by Quine, namely *Giorgione was so called because of his size*, will be discussed in due course.

#### (iv) Objection 4

Another objection exploits the evident iconicity of quotation. As we have seen, Quine himself is aware of the picturing quality of quotations, using as he does the terms *hieroglyph* and *picture* to characterise the relation between a quotation and its referent.<sup>59</sup> But, presumably because his quotations are names, they cannot be assumed to be icons of anything. Therefore, as Bennett (1988: 401) has perceptively noted, the Name Theorists are forced to insist that the systematic (rather than conventional) relation that seems to hold between a quotation and its referent is purely accidental, i.e. that the appearances are deceptive. This, in effect, is the main reason why Quine will eventually suggest using spelling descriptions<sup>60</sup> as an expedient to avoid the iconic temptation:

The quotational context "9>5" of the statement '9>5' has, perhaps, unlike the context 'cattle' of 'cat', a deceptively systematic air which tempts us to think of its parts as somehow logically germane. (1976: 161)

It is unquestionable that Quine prefers orthographic descriptions precisely because they are free of the picturing dimension suggested by quotation: "it is rather spelling that provides the proper

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<sup>59</sup> One writer who argues against regarding quotations as hieroglyphs or pictures is Christensen, who does not think this conception goes far enough: pictures are, to a lesser or greater extent, different from their models, whereas quotations are not; they are, rather than picture, that which they refer to. This lies at the basis of one version of the Identity Theory, which is reviewed in 2.4.

<sup>60</sup> These will be illustrated and explicited in the section on the Description Theory (2.2).

analysis for purposes of the logical theory of signs” (1976: 241).<sup>61</sup> But, of course, as the last line once again makes clear, Quine is concerned with the advancement and clarity of the language of science, not with a proper description of the workings of quotation in natural language.

#### (v) Objection 5

I shall add a final objection to the Name-Theory, though it is one that is not found in the literature;<sup>62</sup> something like it does, however, occur in refutations of the Demonstrative and Identity Theories. The argument is that quotations behave referentially unlike proper names. The latter are used to pick out an individual (a token). Quotations by contrast, can also be used to pick out collections of individuals, and even ‘types’. This comes out clearly in examples like:

(8) Whenever someone says *Go!*, she starts.

(8<sub>1</sub>) *Boston* has six letters.

The quoted sequence in (8) designates several utterances of *Go!*, while in (8<sub>1</sub>) it refers to a type. This variation in the scope of reference is perfectly alien to proper names. The argument should be recognised as valid even by those who categorically deny that quotations can refer to a variety of objects (e.g. Cappelen & Lepore 1999), since these writers hold the view that quotational reference is systematically either to classes of tokens. It is unlikely that they would claim that genuine names designate classes of tokens too.<sup>63</sup> (More about the complex issue of the reference of quotations in Chapter 4).

#### 2.1.2.2. Feature 2: quotations as monomorphemic expressions

The monomorphemic doctrine is a favourite target of rebuttals of the Name Theory. Quite naturally, it is also generally linked to considerations on the possibility or not of the simultaneous use and mention of an expression, to be discussed in the next section.

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<sup>61</sup> I believe García-Carpintero is wrong when he writes that “Quine acknowledges the pictographic character of quotations [...] but apparently fails to see that his own preferred account does not accommodate [sic] it” (1994: 256fn). Clearly, Quine does not fail to see anything; he deliberately wants to get rid of the picturing relation.

<sup>62</sup> The one exception of which I am aware is Josette Rey-Debove, who writes: “If what is meant by *proper name* is « noun designating an individual to the exclusion of an extensionally defined class of same-named individuals », then an autonym is not a proper name” (1978: 133)

<sup>63</sup> Due allowances must be made for transfers from the class of proper nouns to that of common nouns. For instance, *A Napoleon* can be used to refer to (or rather describe) a type, so can *another Waterloo*, etc. In the above discussion, I have, like all the other authors mentioned, kept to a strict, perhaps rigid, reading of proper nouns as logically singular terms, full stop.

### (i) Objection 1

The first objection is in essence the same as that which we called the productivity problem above. The comparison of the next two items:

(9) ‘cat’

(10) cat

prompts Garver to conclude that we understand the meaning of the quotation by “recognising its parts” (1965: 231). Otherwise, one would have to assume, as some logicians have urged, that the link between (9) and (10) is purely arbitrary (‘pure mention’). If that were the case, if the interior of the quotation marks were a mere orthographic accident, then one would logically have to admit that the meaning of each quotation has to be fixed by a separate convention, or ‘stipulation’ (Washington 1992: 585-86, 601ff). Since there is an infinite number of possible quotations – any word, but also any string of words, and even any pseudo-string can be quoted – this would entail that readers or hearers confronted with novel quotations would each time need to learn the relation that links the quotational token with its meaning. This, clearly, is absurd.

More interesting, and more relevant to the monomorphemic conception, are a series of arguments based on the assumption that direct speech reports are just a special case of quotation, a view which is endorsed by a majority of philosophers of language, and which I will adopt too.<sup>64</sup> The three objections reviewed below (Geach, Searle, and Seymour) all depend on the recognition that direct speech is a bona fide variety of quotation.

### (ii) Objection 2

Let us start with Peter Geach, who, after arguing against the analogy between quotation and examples of the *let-letters*, *cat-cattle*, *car-carry* type, expresses his even greater astonishment that some logicians should “deny that the quotation “‘man’” is logically a part of the quotation “‘man is mortal’”” (1957: 82). Geach’s argument is strengthened by the realisation that direct

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<sup>64</sup> In a neat little article, Marie-Thérèse Charlent (2000) identifies two main arguments: (i) direct discourse is about ‘the world’, whereas mention (quotation, autonymy) is just about words; (ii) quotation is a literal mention of words, whereas direct discourse is often not literal; therefore direct discourse is not a form of quotation (e.g. Rosier 1996: 163-64). Regarding (i), Charlent shows first that quotations often mention not just forms but meanings too – and these meanings bear upon the world; second, that direct speech seems so world-bound because it refers to a particular uttered token, whereas ‘pure’ quotations refer to types. Regarding (ii), she shows that, like quotation, direct discourse can focus on forms, meanings, or form+meaning complexes. Moreover, when the focus is on forms or on complexes, there is at least a pretence of literalness, but when the focus is on a meaning, literalness is not a criterion. Note that Rosier (1999: 113-15) develops further arguments against the metalinguistic construal of direct discourse, but I remain unconvinced.



speech, which is a special form of quotation, can serve to convey thoughts just as well as words uttered. There are instances like:

(11) The fool hath said in his heart “There is no God” (1957: 80),

where direct speech reports a thought without necessarily implying that the quoted words were in any way uttered, or even that the thinker had them in mind when he conceived his thought. Such examples prompt Geach to characterise *oratio recta* as a “system of description applied in the first instance to actual written or spoken language and secondarily to thought” (1957: 83). It is the second part of this characterisation that cannot be squared with the assumption that quotations are single unanalysable morphemes: an arbitrary bit of morpheme is no suitable vehicle for thoughts.

### (iii) Objection 3

In a different context, where he is not attacking the standard use-mention doctrine, John Searle provides evidence for the inadequacy of the radical monomorphemic conception. Searle (1983: 185-87) gives a sensible account of the workings of reported speech which is incompatible with the Quinean interpretation. Let us take a series of related examples, inspired by one of Searle’s:

(12) I am not a crook

(12<sub>1</sub>) Nixon said that he was not a crook

(12<sub>2</sub>) Nixon uttered the words, “I am not a crook”

(12<sub>3</sub>) Nixon said, “I am not a crook”.

In a nutshell, Searle stresses that any satisfactory account of the differences between these examples must distinguish three acts: an utterance-act, a propositional act, and an illocutionary act.<sup>65</sup> The utterer of (12), Nixon, performs all three acts: he utters a sequence of sounds (utterance-act); these sounds are words that make up a sentence endowed with meaning (propositional act); the sentence is asserted (illocutionary act). In (12<sub>1</sub>), the ‘reporter’ repeats the propositional act – the clause in indirect speech is meaningful – but not the utterance-act – the words used may be different from the original words – nor the illocutionary act – the reporter does not assert this sentence. In (12<sub>2</sub>), the reporter simply repeats the utterance-act: the quotation is not presented as a sentence endowed with meaning, and it is not asserted. Note that this

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<sup>65</sup> One or the other of these acts can be further broken down into smaller acts. See f.i. Lyons (1995: 245-52).

implies, on Searle's part, a very strict (technical) reading of *uttered the words*. It is not at all inconceivable to utter (12<sub>2</sub>) and then add something like *but of course he is*, thereby showing that the propositional act has been repeated as well. However, this is a minor problem: what matters is that the possibility exists of repeating nothing but the utterance-act, and that this is how (12<sub>2</sub>) should at relevant times be interpreted. Finally, in (12<sub>3</sub>), both the utterance-act and the propositional act are repeated, but not the assertion. Note, on this account, that it would be logically unobjectionable to derive (12<sub>1</sub>) from (12<sub>3</sub>), but not from (12<sub>2</sub>), because the latter derivation would add a propositional act without justification (see also Anscombe 1985b: 14-15).

Lyons (1995: 240-47) provides ample evidence in support of the relevance of the distinction between (12<sub>2</sub>) and (12<sub>3</sub>). For example, two utterance-tokens of the same utterance-type, *I'll meet you at the bank*, are utterances of two different sentences if the first includes bank in the sense of « financial institution » while the second has bank in the sense of « sloping side of a river ». The same argument applies to syntactic ambiguity as illustrated by *Flying planes can be dangerous*. In circumstances similar to those that obtain in (12<sub>2</sub>), the speaker is merely reporting an 'uninterpreted' sentence form (not choosing, for example, between two possible interpretations of the string), whereas in (12<sub>3</sub>), s/he is reporting an 'interpreted' sentence, i.e. one to which is attached a definite propositional content.<sup>66</sup>

The type of act that I wish to focus on right now is the propositional act. Quine's theory seems to rule out the possibility that a propositional act could be performed in quoting. There are two reasons for this: first, for a composite quotation to express a proposition, it must have a meaning which, in one way or another, is the product of the meanings of its components. Since, in Quine's view, the components of a quotation have no meaning – they are arbitrary bits of a simple name – a quotation cannot express a proposition. Second, since in Quine's scheme every quotation is a name, it cannot by any means express a proposition.

Let us observe that not all of Searle's quotations are evidently irreconcilable with this position: the quotation in (12<sub>2</sub>) is merely uttered, and the reporter is not accountable for its propositional content, if any. In a case like this, it would still be possible to argue that the quotation is the name of a sentence. But (12<sub>3</sub>) is definitely incompatible with Quine's views:

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<sup>66</sup> The terminological difference between *proposition* and *propositional content* is explained in Chapter 3. For the moment, it is enough to point out that the propositional content is an essential meaning component of sentences taken out of context, while a proposition is an essential meaning component of utterances that encodes substantial contextual information (notably the particular referents of indexical expressions).

here, the propositional act is repeated, which means that the quotation has a propositional content and therefore that its components must be meaningful as well.

#### (iv) Objection 4

Perhaps the most enlightening refutation of the monomorphemic conception is offered by Daniel Seymour. His argument is based on the occurrence outside of a quotation of (co-referential) words that substitute anaphorically for an element inside the quotation:

[...] such examples as *Jones said “Smith rules the moon”, and he does* cannot guarantee that *he* picks up Smith as its referent instead of the word *Smith* if the words occurring in the quotational context are not interpreted. (1996: 309)

The phrase *not interpreted* is to be understood as equivalent to *a mere form*, or *a mere orthographic accident*. Instead, what we have is a meaningful linguistic sequence. Clearly, the co-reference between ‘*Smith*’ and *he* can only be explained if the normal interpretation of *Smith* remains accessible within the quotation.<sup>67</sup> Any theory which blocks this interpretation must automatically leave unexplained the numerous cases of “semantic dependency between quoted and unquoted material” (1996: 314).<sup>68</sup> Note, in passing, that this judgment can be brought to bear not just on the Name Theory, but also, in Seymour’s opinion, on the Identity Theory (q.v.). As for the Description Theory, it clearly fails on this count in its spelling variant, but not, apparently, in its lexical variant. See subsequent sections for an assessment.

Seymour recommends distinguishing two sorts of quotation of complete clauses. It is not clear that his division runs along the same lines as Searle’s distinction between (12<sub>2</sub>) and (12<sub>3</sub>) above. The examples on which Seymour and Searle rest their arguments only coincide partly, with the

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<sup>67</sup> In later writings, Quine reconsidered and qualified his initial claim that quotational contexts bar referentiality. His reasons for doing so appear to be grounded in the principle of disquotation:

Consider the statements:

(6) ‘Giorgione played chess’ is true,

(7) ‘Giorgione’ named a chess player,

each of which is true or false according as the quotationless statement:

(8) Giorgione played chess

is true or false. Our criterion of referential occurrence makes the occurrence of the name ‘Giorgione’ in (6) and (7) referential by the same token, despite the presence of single quotes in (6) and (7). The point about quotation is not that it must destroy referential occurrence, but that it can (and ordinarily does) destroy referential occurrence. The examples (6) and (7) are exceptional in that the special predicates ‘is true’ and ‘named’ have the effect of undoing the single quotes — as is evident on comparison of (6) and (7) with (8). (1953: 141; original numbers; my emphasis)

If I am not mistaken, the point is this: “‘*Giorgione played chess*’ is true” is true iff ‘*Giorgione played chess*’ is true iff Giorgione played chess. I suppose that it is on the basis of this meaning equivalence that Quine rests his argument that ‘*Giorgione*’ occurs referentially in (6) and (7).

<sup>68</sup> Another suitable illustration is *Jones said “cholesterol is good for your body”, but it isn’t* (1996: 313), with *it* substituting for the word *cholesterol* inside the quotation. Many more such examples can be found in Partee (1973).

latter focusing entirely on reported speech (direct and indirect), while the former also addresses quotation in the absence of any *verbum dicendi*. Eventually, Seymour locates the discriminating factor in the absence or presence in the sentence of a ‘verb that takes a sentential complement’ (e.g. *if*-clause or *that*-clause), for instance *to say*. His hypothesis is in keeping with the standard assumption that indirect discourse (i.e. a reporting verb + a ‘sentential complement’) reproduces the meaning of an utterance rather than its form. Since *uttered* in (12<sub>2</sub>) takes no such complement – it is usually followed by an NP – it cannot govern an interpreted quotational context, whereas *said* in (12<sub>3</sub>) takes a sentential complement and will accordingly govern an interpreted quotational context. So far, Searle and Seymour are, so to speak, in agreement. However, I am not sure what Searle would make of the following example made up by Seymour:

(13) ‘Hillary obeyed the law’ is a sentence about her that Clinton uttered.

It looks as if the quoted sequence in this example is interpreted, as the co-referential *her* outside the quotation is substituted for ‘*Hillary*’ inside it. Since the quoted sentence is not the direct object of the right kind of verb, namely one ‘that takes a sentential complement’, (13) might turn out to be an awkward example for Seymour’s account. Yet, Seymour dismisses the idea that the presence of the anaphoric *her* means that the quotation must have been interpreted. His argument is that *her* is a ‘pronoun of laziness’ – Geach’s term – i.e. a pronoun which “merely stands proxy for an element which it recopies, and of course [which] once recopied, [...] can be interpreted as usual” (1996: 322). My feeling is that Seymour makes light of what might prove to be a bona fide challenge to the validity of his discriminating factor.<sup>69</sup> However, more than the details of his distinctions, what matters is the unmistakable soundness of the general drift of Seymour’s argument: (a certain type of) quotation requires that the quoted string should be interpreted.

Examples in the same vein are offered by Josette Rey-Debove:

(14) Her saying *I’m leaving tomorrow* suggested that she was leaving on her own

(15) Her writing *I’m leeving tomorrow* didn’t testify to her mastery of English spelling. (cf 1978: 156)

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<sup>69</sup> It seems that *pronouns of laziness* could be just another designation for anaphoric pronouns. This, for instance, is how Kaplan (1989a: 524) reads the term. Therefore, describing an item as a pronoun of laziness in no way supports the assumption that the item in question is not significant enough to deserve a genuine explanation. Moreover, Partee offers another example likely to threaten Seymour’s positions:

Whenever Fred sighs “Boy, do I need a drink,” he expects you to fetch him one. (1973: 412)  
As far as I am aware, the verb *sigh* is not followed by a ‘sentential complement’: ?? *He sighed that he needed a drink*. Here again, therefore, Seymour’s theory predicts that the quotation is uninterpreted, which should leave him unable to account for the anaphoric *one*.

For these sentences to be understood, it is evident that the components of the quoted sequence must be accessible. Regarding (14), the inference – that she was going to travel alone – depends on isolating the first-person singular pronoun *I* as a meaningful element. Similarly in (15), identifying the deviant spelling requires the ability to isolate the main verb from the rest of the sentence.<sup>70</sup>

More evidence can still be provided. If we look again at example (12<sub>3</sub>), *Nixon said, “I am not a crook”*, and apply Quine’s theory, we must conclude that this sentence contains no more than three words, since there is only one word after the comma: it is a proper noun that begins with the opening quotation mark and ends with the closing quotation mark. It is unlikely that such would be the conclusion arrived at by native speakers when asked how many words there are in that sentence. Most would presumably answer that there are seven.

This argument is probably weakened by the fact that it appeals to native speakers’ intuitions with regard to an object – the word – about which intuitions may be very slippery indeed, given the polysemy of the term. A better argument, therefore, is the sensible assumption that most speakers, when confronted with sentence (12<sub>3</sub>), would be able to provide some answer to the question “What does *crook* mean in this sentence?”, thereby indicating that the quotation can be and is indeed analysed into its elements. Note that it is fair to assume that a significantly greater proportion of respondents would be at a loss if they were asked a similar question about the meaning of the word *cat* in the contexts *anti-Catholic* or *The monarchists are hoping that the idea will catch on*. Some ‘orthographic accidents’ are clearly less accidental than others.

The previous discussion shows up the inability of the monomorphemic conception to accommodate direct speech. The only possible line of defence consists in claiming that the Name Theory is designed to deal with ‘pure’ mention, as in (3), (4), (5) in 2.1, not with direct speech (or mixed quotation, for that matter). However, as we saw in the previous section, there are enough other arguments against other aspects of the Name Theory to reject this defence.

### 2.1.2.3. Feature 3: no simultaneous use and mention

In principle, it is impossible to isolate this issue completely from the debate about the single-morpheme conception of quotation. If a certain category of composite quotation refers to its

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<sup>70</sup> As pointed out at the 2.1.2, Rey-Debove’s recognition of this difficulty for the monomorphemic doctrine does not prevent her from adhering to it. What gets her out of trouble is the assumption that a quotation is a single morpheme that is the icon of a multi-morpheme sequence.

interpreted logical form, or, at least, if it maintains access to the ordinary semantics of the words it comprises, then one must admit that these words are somehow also *used* within it. This position is expressly at odds with Quine's. Indeed, this was precisely the doctrine he was opposing when he posited that there could be no simultaneous use and mention: what we might wrongly take to be meaningful components of the quoted expression, Quine suggested, (i) are not actual components (monomorphemic view); (ii) they lose their ordinary ability to refer (they are no longer used).

The simultaneity problem must be set out very carefully if we are to avoid any misunderstanding. First, it must be emphasised that Quine readily admits that quotation involves simultaneous use and mention (!), but not of the same thing: the quotation as a whole is used in order to mention a linguistic string, one which has a certain problematic relationship with the 'interior' of the quotes. Consequently, when attacking Quine, it is not enough to contend that there may be simultaneity – for he says so himself – one must also demonstrate that it concerns one and the same 'thing'.

Several scholars have a clear understanding of the problem. Geach is one of them, and his opposition to Quine's preclusion has been unrelenting (1957: 81, 1972: 203). Some time after Geach, Garver challenged what he called the 'Postulate of Pure Mention', i.e. the notion that there are instances "where the ordinary use of the symbol is wholly irrelevant" (1965: 230), i.e. where the semantics of the (elements of the) quotation is suspended. To make his point, Garver submits the following example:

(16) The meaning of 'courage' is – steadfastness in the face of danger,

with the dash indicating a pause. Garver's claim is that "the phrase 'steadfastness in the face of danger' cannot be straightforwardly regarded as either used or mentioned in (16), and in certain respects it must be regarded as both" (1965: 232). It is clearly not used to refer to its ordinary denotatum, which would be a certain attitude: a meaning is not an attitude. Neither, says Garver, can it simply be mentioned; otherwise one should be able to write:

(17) The meaning of 'courage' is 'steadfastness in the face of danger'.<sup>71</sup>

That this identity-statement is untenable can be shown as follows: the referent of a quotation is a linguistic expression, that is, in Garver's understanding, a mere string of phonetic or

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<sup>71</sup> Of course I have just produced a token of an 'impossible' utterance. But Garver judges such an utterance to be ill-formed.

orthographic tokens. On this account, (17) reduces the meaning of ‘courage’ to a ‘signifier’ or ‘form-type’ (Lyons), which is unacceptable. As Garver says, “[m]eanings are expressed by linguistic expressions; but whatever they are, they are not identical with linguistic expressions” (1965: 234).<sup>72</sup>

On this evidence, Garver proposes a change in notation to capture the difference between the mention of an expression and that of its meaning. The change is warranted by the fact that the single (and sometimes double) quotes employed according to the standard use-mention distinction do not permit reference to the meanings of words. Garver’s move is in many respects comparable with Christensen’s advocacy of a distinction between ‘suppositio materialis’ and ‘suppositio semantica’ (1961: 59-76, 1967: 363-65). The Danish philosopher holds that in such definitional statements as ‘*oculist*’ means *eye-doctor* (Christensen’s notation) the subject and object occur in distinct capacities (1961: 68ff): the former shows itself as a mere form (materialis), while the latter is a form that exhibits its meaning but does not refer (semantica).<sup>73</sup> A comparable analysis also prompts Lyons to advocate a change in notation (1977: 7ff), one which, I assume, would readily be endorsed by Seymour, who also distinguishes between quotations of forms – which involve simple mention – and quotations of forms and their meanings (‘interpreted logical forms’) – which involve concurrent use and mention (cf 1996: 317).

Note, incidentally, that the validity of Garver’s objection depends in part on a particular conception of expressions (or words, or ‘linguistic signs’). It is not evident that Garver’s argument would strike home if *expression* were understood in Lyons’s sense, as a linguistic unit made up of a form and a sense (or ‘signified’). Josette Rey-Debove, for one, has endorsed just that conception, and she claims that understanding linguistic signs as two-sided entities goes a long way towards solving many difficulties stemming from the one-sided orthodoxy.<sup>74</sup>

But let us now return to Quine’s critics. Davidson, as part of his attack on Quine’s preclusion, opposes three excellent illustrations of concurrent use and mention. The first,

(18) Quine says that quotation “... has a certain anomalous feature.” (1979: 28)

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<sup>72</sup> A similar argument is found in Black (1962). Black shows that in so-called ‘meaning formulas’, i.e. answers to the question “What did S mean by that [gesture, utterance]?”, meanings cannot be mentioned expressions: in the context of *By this gesture, the policeman meant ‘Dim the lights!’*, the grammatical object cannot designate a linguistic expression, for otherwise one should be able to say *the policeman meant the expression, ‘Dim the lights!’*, which is an incorrect paraphrase. Nor is the quoted sequence used to give an order. Black concludes that the quoted sequence mimics the order expressed (or able to be expressed) by means of *Dim the lights!*. The notion of mimicry is touched upon again in Chapter 5.

<sup>73</sup> For a thorough criticism of Christensen’s views, see Rey-Debove (1978: esp. 145-48).

<sup>74</sup> Rey-Debove’s significant contribution is outlined in Chapters 6 and 7.

is of the same ilk as the examples on which Searle (1983) bases his contention that quotations cannot be names in so far as they may occupy syntactic positions that are not open to nominal constituents. Here, Davidson's point is that the standard use-mention theory makes no allowances for the meaning conveyed by the string that occurs between the quotation marks. About a similar example, Saka makes the point that the words inside the quotation marks are both mentioned, for obvious reasons, and used, "in so far as they form a predicate rather than a noun phrase, singular term, or name" (1998: 115). In this case, it is the syntactic role of the quotation that forces the conclusion that the quoted words are used.

Davidson's second example has something in common with some of the sentences discussed by Partee (1973) and Seymour (1996), even though it is not, strictly speaking, to do with co-referentiality across quotational boundaries. Rather, there is a syntactic relation between *Anapurna* and *the same name*, with the latter substituting for, or pointing at, the former, but these two phrases refer (semantically) to different objects, the first to an individual mountain, the second to the name *Anapurna*:

(19) Dhaulagiri is adjacent to Anapurna, the mountain whose conquest Maurice Herzog described in his book of the same name. (1979: 29)

Davidson regards (19) as "a genuine case of quotation, for the sentence refers to an expression by exhibiting a token of that expression" (1979: 29). This remark, though it is not unfounded, does nothing to clarify things. After all, although there is a token of *Anapurna*, it is not used quotationally. Instead, the name *Anapurna* is mentioned by means of a definite description, *the same name*, which, even if metalinguistic, is not a quotation.

The third example is originally from a note by Ross (1970):

(20) The rules of Clouting and Dragoff apply, in that order.

Ross calls it an example of 'metalinguistic anaphora' and that is all he says about it. It seems to involve reference both outside language and inside discourse, to expressions or their tokens. Davidson temporarily decides on "setting aside these last examples as pathological and perhaps curable [...]" (1979: 29), but eventually returns to them and proposes a clever solution involving pointers (1979: 39), in keeping with the principles of his Demonstrative Theory. This solution will be examined in section 2.3.

Other writers, in the wake of Washington (1992), oppose Quine's preclusion on different grounds. They uphold an Identity Theory of quotation, which, as the name intimates, is grounded



on the assumption that one and the same string is used and mentioned. Their views are developed in section 2.4. But, just as a foretaste, let me point out François Recanati's early insight that (referential) signs are necessarily endowed with a 'dual destiny' (1979: 33f, *passim*). As signs, they have the potential to refer beyond themselves, usually to an entity in 'the world', but they can themselves be realised as entities with a material existence. Recanati's opinion is that signs can be used to effect either (or both) of these potentials: they can be used 'transparently' to refer beyond themselves or 'opaquely' to exhibit themselves as signs. In some cases – Recanati's excellent example is « *Monsieur Auguste* » *est arrivé* – they are both used and mentioned: « *Monsieur Auguste* » transparently designates an individual of that name and presents itself as a linguistic sequence on which an implicit comment is made (e.g. that the title *Monsieur* is way too respectful for such a scoundrel). One intriguing but manifest implication of Recanati's position is that opacity and transparency are not mutually exclusive.

### 2.1.3. Summing up

It is unquestionable that, on a strict literal reading, the Name Theory does not pass muster.<sup>75</sup> As long as the corpus is restricted to 'pure' quotation and direct speech reports, it is empirically adequate. Therein lies the main strength of the theory. As Tarski puts it,

[...] from the point of view of the grammar of our language, an expression of the form "*X is true*" will not become a meaningful sentence if we replace in it '*X*' by a sentence or by anything other than a name—since the subject of a sentence may be only a noun or an expression functioning like a noun. (1944: 343-44)

Apart from the emphasis on *names* and *nouns* rather than *noun phrases*, Tarski's argument strikes home. Whatever theory is put forward as a replacement by detractors of the Name Theory will have to capture this characteristic of quotation. Note in this respect that some of those who dismiss the Name Theory on semantic grounds nevertheless agree that quotations function

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<sup>75</sup> Gómez-Torrente expressly rebels against such a narrow-minded construal of the Name Theory (he is concerned with rehabilitating Tarski). In particular, he argues, correctly, I believe, that Tarski never defended "the theory that quotations are like proper names in all semantically significant respects" (2001: 139). Rather, what Tarski was attacking was the notion that quotations can be syntactically composite. In effect, Tarski would be a proponent of a monomorphemic theory of quotation. But this means that such a theory still faces all the challenges set out in the section devoted to feature 2 above. Moreover, Gómez-Torrente fails to see the internal contradiction at the heart of Quine's or Tarski's account (as discussed at the start of 2.1.2). And he restricts his discussion to referential quotations. His attempt at a rehabilitation is therefore not quite successful.

*grammatically* as nouns (Garver 1965: 233) or noun phrases (Partee 1973: 413; Saka 1998: 119, 127).<sup>76</sup>

However, as soon as the corpus is extended to hybrid cases like (7) or (18), the Name Theory cannot be made to fit the data. Moreover – and this is where most of the criticism has concentrated – it fails to capture many of salient properties associated with quotation. In particular, it provides no clear or elegant explanation for its universal iconicity, its resulting productivity, its ability to refer variously (e.g. to a type or a token), its tolerance of simultaneous use. In the end, the only important property it succeeds in accounting for is the apparent opacity of quotation. Let me repeat examples (1) and (3):

(1) Boston is populous

(3) ‘Boston’ is disyllabic.

The first in the pair illustrates a transparent context, in which substitution by an extensionally equivalent item, say *the capital of Massachusetts*, does not affect the truth-value of the sentence. By contrast, (3) is supposed to illustrate an opaque context, because the same substitution changes the truth-value of the sentence: *the capital of Massachusetts* is not a disyllabic string.

I have used the verbal expression *is supposed* in the previous paragraph on purpose: a context, for instance that of quotation, can only be held to be opaque if it does not preserve truth (or falsity) when two co-extensional expressions are interchanged.<sup>77</sup> Yet, this type of substitutivity is in effect ruled out by Quine’s theory of mention: when I replace the interior of the quotation in (3) by *the capital of Massachusetts*, I am actually exchanging an arbitrary bit of morpheme for another. This will not do as a case of substitution of co-extensional expressions: arbitrary bits of morphemes (orthographic accidents) cannot be extensional synonyms, for the simple reason that they have no extension whatsoever! No wonder substitution *salva veritate* is of no avail: one important precondition, the use of co-extensional expressions, is not fulfilled. Now, even if the interchange takes place not between ‘interiors’ but between full quotation-mark names, the verdict remains the same. The proper name offered as a substitute, *‘the capital of*

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<sup>76</sup> Linguists who are mainly concerned with the syntactic role of quotation also treat quotations as nouns (substantives), cf Jespersen (1924: 96, 1946: 73, 1961: 213-15); Rey-Debove (1978: *passim*); Droste (1983: 682, 696, 1989b: 932). Harris’s position is slightly different: quotations are always NPs in the ‘base sentences’ from which all the sentences of a given language can be derived. In the derived sentences, however, they need no longer be NPs (see De Brabanter 2001: 58ff).

<sup>77</sup> The terms *opacity*, *referential opacity*, *opaque context* are not defined identically by all writers. My own notion largely conforms to the following definition by Recanati (2000: 114): “According to Quine, a linguistic context is opaque if substitution of identicals is not truth-preserving in that context”. Unlike Recanati, however, I have not chosen to consider intensionally identical expressions next to the extensionally identical ones.

*Massachusetts*’, is by no means extensionally equivalent to ‘*Boston*’, not any more so than *Willard Quine* is co-extensional with *Alfred Tarski*.

Quine’s assertion that quotation provides a sterling example of an opaque context (cf 1976: 161; as cited at the very beginning of the present chapter) could only be accepted in a very loose sense, a sense in which a bit of morpheme that is the very picture of a full-fledged word has the same linguistic status as this word. This, I suggest, hardly makes the grade. Recanati (1979: 56-61) offers a remarkably lucid statement of the situation: in Quine’s framework, ‘pure’ quotations are not opaque, as one might wrongly assume, but plainly transparent: quotation-mark names refer to their standard denotata (i.e. a particular linguistic string), just as any uttered token of *John* refers to the person John.

In the end, one is left with a paradox: the reason why truth-preserving substitution fails is not because the context is opaque... but because the expressions involved in the substitution are not extensional synonyms, and are accordingly unusable for this type of substitution. Therefore, pace Quine himself, the Name Theory accounts for the ‘opacity’ of quotation by offering a coherent demonstration that quotation is transparent.

## 2.2. The Description Theory

Several authors identify a ‘Description Theory’ of quotation, with Tarski, Quine, and Peter Geach as its main representatives. The first two are held to endorse a ‘spelling variant’, and the third a ‘lexical variant’, of the theory (cf Washington 1992; Saka 1998). I believe this characterisation to have more substance in the latter case.

What did Tarski and Quine actually say? Tarski (1983a: 156-57), for one, envisaged ‘structural descriptive names’ as an alternative to ‘quotation-mark names’. These descriptive names can be built up, for example, of names of letters, such as ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’, or, alternatively, *Ef* for <f>, or *Be* for <b>, etc. In this second notation, “corresponding to the name “snow” we have the name ‘a word which consists of the four letters: Es, En, O, Double-U (in that order)’” (1983a: 157). Tarski adds that each such name has the same extension as that of the corresponding quotation-mark name (it denotes the same expression).

Quine did essentially the same thing as Tarski. He pointed out that quotation marks are not the only means that can be used to mention linguistic expressions, though, admittedly, quotation-mark names are easier to handle than such accurate but cumbersome definite descriptions as “The word composed successively of the second, fifteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, fifteenth and fourteenth letters of the alphabet” or “The 4354th word of *Chants Democratic*” (1940: 26).

Elsewhere (1960: 143; 1976: 161), Quine proposed a similar notation to Tarski's structural-descriptive names, using letter-names linked by signs for concatenation, usually arches, yielding such descriptions as:

(the word consisting of the following sequence of letters:)

tee<sup>^</sup>yu<sup>^</sup>ell<sup>^</sup>ell<sup>^</sup>wye<sup>^</sup>space<sup>^</sup>doubleyu<sup>^</sup>ay<sup>^</sup>ess<sup>^</sup>space<sup>^</sup>ay<sup>^</sup>space<sup>^</sup>ar<sup>^</sup>oh<sup>^</sup>em<sup>^</sup>ay<sup>^</sup>en (1960: 143)

for the sentence *Tully was a Roman*.

To my knowledge, neither Tarski nor Quine claimed that their structural descriptive names explained how everyday quotation works. This would have required their regarding quotations as shortcuts for descriptions, which I do not believe they did. Actually, descriptions were merely presented as another way of preventing the confusion of language levels, of making explicit a peculiar use of a linguistic expression. I consider Quine's formula that spelling is "an alternative device to the same purpose as quotation" (1960: 143) to be sufficiently clear in that respect.

Still, Davidson (1979: 33) feels entitled to suggest that Tarski and Quine saw the possibility of a Spelling Theory of quotation, one in which quotations are treated as mere abbreviations for descriptive names.<sup>78</sup> Many writers have followed in Davidson's footsteps, including Bennett, Washington, García-Carpintero, Reimer and Saka. Like Davidson, they treat Tarski and Quine's descriptive names as in effect underlying a theory of quotation. Davidson, however, shows some caution when he says of the two notations (quotational names and definite descriptions) that since they are "mechanically interchangeable, there is no reason not to consider a semantics for one a semantics for the other: so this could be regarded as a theory of how quotation works in English" (1979: 34; original emphasis). Maybe one reason for Davidson's insistence that Tarski and Quine uphold a Spelling Theory is the critical position which that theory occupies in Davidson's groundbreaking paper: it is in contrast to the various shortcomings of the Description Theory that he demonstrates the strengths of his own Demonstrative Theory (more about which below).<sup>79</sup>

In contrast to Tarski and Quine, Peter Geach can rightly be regarded as upholding a Description Theory. Geach makes the point that a "quoted series of expressions is always a series of quoted expressions". This, as we have seen, is the doctrine Geach opposes to the monomorphemic conception. His motives have been reviewed above and need not be repeated

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<sup>78</sup> This is a bit curious, considering that Davidson (1979: 30) also stresses Quine's denial that quotations are descriptions.

<sup>79</sup> As far as I am aware, the only other writer who disputes the existence of the (spelling variant of the) Description Theory is Gómez-Torrente, who says that "it is clear that Tarski never proposed such a theory" (2001: 151 note 17).

here. Let us just, for the sake of clarity, have a look at a concrete application of the notion that a composite quotation is, logically or syntactically speaking, equal to an ordered sequence of the quoted words that occur in it:

[...] the quotation “‘man is mortal’” is rightly understood only if we read it as meaning the same as “‘man’ & ‘is’ & ‘mortal’”, i.e. read it as *describing* the quoted expression in terms of the expressions it contains and their order. (1957: 82-83)

Geach’s position has perhaps more intuitive appeal in empirical terms than the spelling variant. However, the two variants will be treated together, as they lay themselves open to the same refutation. Their common weaknesses are one reason for not ignoring the arguments against the orthographic version, regardless of whether it ever was meant as a theory of quotation. Other such reasons are the role it plays as a foil in Davidson’s shaping of the Demonstrative Theory, and the fact that the widespread adoption of Davidson’s viewpoint has led to a number of valuable insights into quotation.

Before we start reviewing the particular criticism that the Description Theory has come in for, let us note that the theory is found wanting in some of the same respects as the Name Theory. Chief among these deficiencies is that a definite description is not normally an icon of the object described. As a result, the theory is unable to capture the productivity of quotation – a genuine description is no more automatically connected with its referent than a name is. Moreover, it also fails to accommodate simultaneous use and mention.<sup>80</sup>

There are other, more specific, objections:

#### (i) Objection 1

First, there is Davidson’s contention that the Description Theory cannot account for the widespread use of quotation in introducing new notation. If the ‘spelling’ variant of the Description Theory is correct,<sup>81</sup> goes Davidson’s argument, then one needs to know “by heart the name for each smallest expression”, i.e. for each of the letters that make up the quoted expression. This poses no special difficulty as long as one is dealing with quoted sequences using known notations. But what of an utterance like:

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<sup>80</sup> García-Carpintero, however, believes that the quotational property defined by the descriptive account “is systematic and productive in the required semantic sense” (1994: 255). But see Davidson’s related argument about the introduction of new notations below.

<sup>81</sup> What Davidson has in mind is the form of this variant which uses quotational names of letters as the main ingredients of the definite descriptions.

(21) ‘𠄎𠄎\*’ is an equation of suprasigmalogistics ?

According to Davidson, the new symbols could not be translated into a structural description, so that the spelling variant must prohibit any quotation of a new item of notation, or of one foreign to the standard alphabet. Davidson concludes that this is proof that the spelling variant of the Description Theory fails to account for this common function of quotation.

Let us examine Davidson’s contention in somewhat more detail. On the basis of an example like (21), the argument boils down to a variation on the productivity problem: just as the Name Theory, on a strict reading, requires a new naming convention for any novel quotation, the spelling variant of the Description Theory requires the creation of a new ‘name of unit’ for each new element of notation. This is not unfeasible a priori; the only problem is that the proposed account is incapable of showing that what quotation does is to associate mechanically a sequence-with-quotes with any new object that needs quoting. This is a problem that the spelling variant shares with Geach’s lexical variant and with the Name Theory.

On the above reading, there is nothing intrinsically new to Davidson’s objection, and indeed some commentators have expressed doubts as to its merits (cf Bennett 1988: 409, 416). There is, however, another reading on which Davidson’s objection carries more weight. This can be illustrated by means of an example like:

(22) ‘[COMPLEX CHINESE CHARACTER]’ is a two-part classical Chinese character.

The Chinese character quoted is composite, and its composition is not simply a matter of adding elements along a horizontal axis. The 耳 is embedded within the two parts of [ABOVE CHINESE CHARACTER MINUS MIDDLE], which is itself a simple character, despite appearances (cf Campbell 2000: 367). Therefore, the character quoted cannot be structurally described within a system that entirely relies on the concatenation of names of letters (or other signs). It is such a difficulty that Bennett has chosen to address as part of his ‘parochialism’ objection. Bennett ventures the suggestion that descriptions are only appropriate for rewriting quotations couched in a language with discrete characters, or discrete words, arranged in linear order.

Bennett takes it that a proper theory of quotation should be able to explain (i) that we ordinarily understand quotations of strings whose constituents are unfamiliar to us (e.g. a Latin verse or a Chinese proverb);<sup>82</sup> (ii) that “we could understand a quotation of an expression whose

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<sup>82</sup> Bennett, as I remark elsewhere, focuses exclusively on the written medium. But I suppose the idea is defensible for speech as well: if someone quotes a Chinese proverb orally, I am at least in a position to understand that they have done just that, that the bit of Chinese I have heard is meant to stand for a Chinese utterance to which they wish

structural principles – ways of assembling its elements to form a complex whole – were equally strange” (1988: 413). In order to illustrate the second condition, which is to do with ‘holistic understanding’, he adduces the hypothetical example of the Martian language, which, for all we know, could be based on radically different structural principles, and still be a quotable language; but I suppose our Chinese example may already help us understand the point.

Now I believe that the real problem is not whether a solution is imaginable, within the Description Theory, for the problems posed by Chinese or Martian. As a matter of fact, a solution could be found, along the same lines as that proposed for (21): here, one would have to make structural descriptions compatible with other manners of putting composite sequences together. This is not technically unfeasible. The real issue lies elsewhere: the spelling variant requires that “we know what the elements are of the displayed item and know what facts about their manner of assemblage are significant” (Bennett 1988: 414). Yet, as Bennett’s second condition shows, we can understand (in the restricted sense explained in the previous footnote) a quotation of a Martian utterance (or of a Chinese proverb). On his Revised Demonstrative Theory, Bennett suggests that, when we are faced with a quotation, even of a Martian utterance, we always understand this:

The expression which shares with this: ... all its linguistically significant features,  
with the displayed item in the gap. (1988: 414).

One may disagree with the particulars of Bennett’s description, but that is immaterial here. What is important is the correct observation that, provided quoting devices have been used, a hearer/reader always recognises that s/he is dealing with a quotation. In other words, the analysability of a quotation is not a necessary condition for its identification as a quotation: speakers of English (or any language in which quotation exists) can recognise quotations holistically: even if they fail to realise that a given Chinese character is itself complex, or if they fail to grasp the organising principles of Martian morphology and syntax, they will not usually fail to understand that a quotation has been made. The possibility of holistic apprehension is something that the spelling variant of the Description Theory, which requires complete analysability, could never hope to capture, whatever technical solutions were put forward for dealing with non-linear arrangements.<sup>83</sup>

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to direct my attention. Of course, there remains the obvious difference that I do not have access to the *meaning* of the utterance, but that is not, presumably, what Bennett has in mind here.

<sup>83</sup> I am indebted to Marc Dominicy for drawing my attention to some flaws that marred an earlier version of this discussion.

### (ii) Objection 2

A second counterargument I wish to mention is the ‘quantification objection’. Whereas it is impossible to quantify into a quotation, it is perfectly possible to do so into a definite description. That is because, in the descriptions illustrated above, there are names of letters, names that can be replaced by a variable which, in turn, can be bound by a quantifier. Therefore, the Description Theory addresses an object which is different from quotation, since it allows quantification into it. On this particular point, the Name Theory does better. Although Bennett (1988: 401-02) shows how the objection can be met, I shall not dwell upon his solution in these pages. I regard the quantification objection as very much a ‘logician’s attack’, and, what’s more, as one that is directed at an aspect of the theory that certainly was not meant as a realistic depiction of the real-life workings of quotation. Since such a discussion is unlikely to throw much light on a genuine property of quotations as occurring in natural languages, I shall have no more to say about it.

### (iii) Objection 3

A third objection is the ‘semantic role objection’. Davidson argues that the Description Theory suggests no “articulate semantic role for the *devices* of quotation” (1979: 37; original emphasis). This presumably means that a structural description such as *Tee^Ah^You^Tee^Aitch*, by removing the quotation marks, deprives them of any role whatsoever. As a result, Davidson suggests, it totally fails to explain the simple fact that we can quote anything we like just by putting a token between quotation marks, or by using other markers (cf also 1979: 34-35). The objection still holds even if one uses ‘quotational names’ of letters in the translation, such as ‘*t*’ instead of *Tee*, or ‘*r*’ instead of *Ar*. The reason for this is that this blend of Description and Name Theory, because it treats the whole complex-with-quotation-marks as a single morpheme, also fails to assign any ‘articulate’ semantic role to the marks.

### (iv) Objection 4

To conclude this review, let us mention Saka’s highlighting of one respect in which the spelling and lexical variants depart from each other. Though I hinted earlier that Geach’s lexical conception might be closer to speakers’ intuitions – because it assumes that words in direct speech reports are not just meaningless bits of a single morpheme – it none the less turns out to be even less plausible “in so far as it postulates a primitive name for every lexeme in the language” (1998: 116). Clearly, just as with the Name Theory, the memory load presupposed by Geach’s views is much heavier than in the case of the spelling variant, which requires names



only for letters (or other signs used in the script under consideration), as well as for punctuation marks and a limited number of mathematical, logical, and suchlike symbols.

### 2.2.1. Summing up

Let us begin with a recap of the strong and weak points of Geach's version of the theory. Geach's proposal is in effect a modified Name Theory. Its account of opacity is by and large the same: if the theory is consistent, there can be no question of quotation's opacity. Moreover, as was mentioned above, the theory offers no direct explanation for iconicity, productivity or simultaneity. I further regard the objections based on new notations and on parochialism as no more than special cases of the productivity issue. A description's tolerance of 'quantifying in' is a logical technicality that I shall not dwell upon: in my review of the other theories, I shall not check that they rule out such a possibility. As for Davidson's argument regarding the semantic role of quoting devices, it will be reviewed in the following section. Suffice it to say, at this stage, that assigning a definite semantic role to quote marks might prove to be as objectionable as not doing so.

One point on which the Description Theory does better the Name Theory is with respect to the range of possible referents: if a quotation is a definite description, it should be capable of standing for, e.g., types and tokens. Let me end by pointing out one potential advantage of the spelling variant, its portrayal of quotation as less cognitively taxing: one need not acquire a new convention for every sequence quoted; it is enough to learn the names of letters and of a few more symbols, as well as a rule of concatenation. In this respect, the spelling variant offers a less distorted picture of the productivity of quotation.

### 2.3. The Demonstrative Theory

The Demonstrative Theory is usually thought to be the brainchild of Donald Davidson, who first set it out in 1979, chiefly as an alternative to the Name and Description Theories. It is considered by some to have revolutionised the thinking about quotation (Reimer 1996: 131), and many are those who openly acknowledge their debt to Davidson (Goldstein 1984; Bennett 1988; Washington 1992; Reimer 1996; Seymour 1996; Cappelen & Lepore 1997a, 1999; Lepore 1999; Recanati 2000, 2001a).<sup>84</sup> Historical justice nevertheless demands that the pioneering contribution

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<sup>84</sup> Lepore's and Cappelen's vital contributions are not examined extensively here. The reason is that they are chiefly preoccupied with mixed varieties of quotation. I shall delay doing full justice to these two authors until we get an opportunity to tackle mixed uses in greater detail (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8).

of the Danish linguist Holger Steen Sørensen be acknowledged. Curiously, none of the recent writers on the Demonstrative Theory even mention him (nor do, for that matter, any of the scholars cited in this chapter, except J. Rey-Debove), thereby confirming the regrettable parochialism that prevails in some areas of scientific inquiry.

As early as 1958, in a book that makes the reading of Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena* look like a summer picnic, Sørensen gave the lineaments of what was later to go by the name of *Demonstrative Theory*. In particular, he made the bold claim that a "set of quotation marks is a metalinguistic demonstrative pronoun" (1958: 51), thereby expressing his conviction that in quotation the referring is done exclusively by the quoting devices, something that would become standard fare in the literature inspired by Davidson.

A few years later, Sørensen devoted an entire paper to quotation, in which he voiced this initial observation:

[...] when the linguist wants to talk about a particular sign, he need not have recourse to a long descriptive sign to mention it, and, more important, to a different descriptive sign for each particular sign: being in a position to introduce, physically, the sign he wants to talk about [...], he can mention it by means of a demonstrative sign. (1961: 185)

This conception is very close to Davidson's own starting-point and would deserve pride of place in any discussion of the Demonstrative Theory. However, since all of the literature on the subject grew around Davidson's 1979 paper, I shall proceed with a sketch of his theory. Then, I will describe adjustments urged by some of Davidson's followers, and finally turn to the objections of those writers who believe the theory to be incorrect.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> A partial anticipation of Davidson is also found in Geach (1957), who disagrees that the mention of sheer nonsense (i.e. strings that do not correspond to actually existing elements of any language) can qualify as quotation, and therefore excludes such mentions from his descriptive account. The explanation he then offers for them seems to anticipate Davidson:

Such a bit of nonsense as "Nothing noths" should rather be presented by means of another notation, putting this inscription in a square for example, and calling it *Figure 1*. If I wanted to report the utterer's bit of nonsense captured by figure 1, I then ought to say: "He uttered sounds transcribable as in Figure 1, under the impression that they mean something that is true". (1957: 85)

The first part of the citation looks very much like an act of pointing, moreover one that indicates an element that can be stranded outside the reporting sentence, just as in Davidson's proposal (see below). Recanati (2000: 319fn, 2001a: 653) identifies another precursor in the person of Arthur Prior (in his 1971 *Objects of Thought*), but wrongly credits him with being the first to have held such views. Finally, let me point out a parallel between Davidson and Tarski. In his groundbreaking paper, Tarski asks which conception of quotation would permit him to build a valid definition of truth for natural languages (cf 1983a: 159-65). After rejecting monomorphemic quotation-mark names, Tarski considers the possibility of treating quotation-mark names as syntactically composite, i.e. made up of two parts: quotation marks and the expressions within them. As a result, the quotation marks themselves must be regarded as "words belonging to the domain of semantics, approximating in their meaning to the word 'name', and from the syntactical point of view they play the part of functors" (1983: 161). This is close to Davidson in that quotation marks are made to play the central semantic role in quotation, and in that they also create a 'singular term'

Davidson first devotes ten pages or so to an analysis of the main shortcomings of the existing accounts of quotation, with special emphasis on the Description Theories. At the end of this review, he discerns three main conditions that a sound theory should meet:

- (i) it should, like any account of any aspect of language, be compatible with a truth-based semantics;
- (ii) it should account for the devices of quotation (henceforth systematically understood as quotation marks) by ascribing an “articulate semantic role” to them (1979: 37);
- (iii) it should capture the picturing relationship between a quotation and its referent.

Once these conditions have been clarified, Davidson writes, “[i]t is not hard to produce a satisfactory theory”. That theory he suggests calling the ‘Demonstrative Theory’.

Davidson’s creative move (which was also Sørensen’s) consists in separating the quotation marks from what we have previously called the ‘interior’ of the quotation, and which Davidson refers to as the ‘quoted material’. This stands in marked contrast with the Name Theory, which treated the whole quotation, metalinguistic markers included, as a single term. Davidson believes that such a split endows quotations with enough structure to be handled within a truth-based semantics. The split’s chief consequence is that all of the referring ends up being accomplished by the quotation marks, a discontinuous demonstrative morpheme which can be read as “the expression a token of which is here” (1979: 37-38). As to the interior, it does not refer at all. As a matter of fact, it no longer plays any semantic role in the sentence. Davidson ventures the opinion that it is not strictly correct to think of the quoted material as words. Rather,

[w]hat appears in quotation marks is an *inscription*, not a shape, and what we need it for is to help refer to its shape. (1979: 37)

Although there has been some controversy as to what exactly Davidson meant by *shape*, many writers now agree that it should be understood as meaning « word-type », whereas *inscription* denotes a written object that is iconically related to the type (cf Bennett 1988: 402; Seymour 1996: 313; Saka 1998; and a similar interpretation is suggested by Washington 1992: 595). Davidson himself bears out this reading in a recent contribution (a reply to Lepore 1999): “[m]y idea was simple: we point to an actual inscription or squiggle, but we want to refer to the type of which it is a token” (1999: 716). Unfortunately, making *shape* a synonym of *type* does not entirely clear up our problem. There are writers – the Davidsonians are a prime example – who

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(albeit a name, not a demonstrative). Tarski eventually concludes that this other conception too is inadequate to the task of building a truth-definition.

put a lot of different things into the term *type*, making it stand for a strange object indeed. This is a problem I return to in Chapter 4.3.3.3 of this dissertation. In the meantime, I shall simply go along with the idea that, for a Davidsonian, quotations refer to types.

Since his doctrine denies that the quoted material makes any semantic contribution to the sentence, Davidson suggests that nothing should prevent us from removing this semantically void object from the sentence.<sup>86</sup> Curiously, Davidson initially offers the following justification:

Quotation is a device for pointing to inscriptions (or utterances)<sup>87</sup> and can be used, and often is, for pointing to inscriptions or utterances spatially or temporally outside the quoting sentence. So if I follow a remark of yours with “Truer words were never spoke,” I refer to an expression, but I do it by way of indicating an embodiment of those words in an utterance. (1979: 38)

Clearly, this explanation will not do. The example quoted by Davidson throws no relevant light on quotation, simply because, albeit a case of mention of linguistic objects, it is not an instance of quotation (cf my remark about (19) above). Unless, of course, one agrees, against Davidson, that there may be quotations without quoting devices.<sup>88</sup> Davidson seems to have overlooked important differences (i) between quotation and mention (without quoting devices), and (ii) between quotation marks and non-metalinguistic pointing devices. But perhaps that is not crucial – a more convincing justification is offered, for instance, by Sørensen (1961: 185-86) – so let us proceed. To underline the fact that the interior of the quotation plays no semantic role, Davidson proposes a reformulation that isolates the quoted material outside the quoting sentence: instead of

“Alice swooned” is a sentence  
we could write:  
Alice swooned. The expression of which this is a token is a sentence.  
Imagine the token of “this” supplemented with fingers pointing to the token of “Alice swooned”  
(1979: 38).

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<sup>86</sup> In 1961, Sørensen already offered an strikingly similar formulation:

The sign enclosed in the quotation marks is the subject (or object, etc.) of discourse of [sentence] *S*. And the subject of discourse is not a component part of *S* [...]. Although the subject of discourse of *S* is, physically, inside the quotation marks in *S*, it is, *grammatically*, outside *S*. (1961: 186)

<sup>87</sup> Clearly in the sense of « spoken tokens ». Some translators of medieval philosophers have chosen to render *vox*, the Latin term for a spoken linguistic form, as *utterance*, e.g. Kretzmann in his translation of William of Sherwood’s *Introduction to Logic*.

<sup>88</sup> Perhaps some sort of convoluted justification could be found, along the lines that *Truer words* is short for *Truer words than these*, and that *these* functions demonstratively to refer to the words uttered by the previous speaker. It is clear that Davidson’s example includes metalinguistic reference, but that still fails to make it an example of quotation: as defined by Davidson, quotation is a type of metalinguistic reference that involves the use of quote marks.

This ability to be removed from the sentence is also interpreted, rightly I believe, by Partee (1973: 418), Goldstein (1984: 4) and Washington (1992: 595), as indicating that the quoted material plays no grammatical (syntactic) role in the sentence either. This view is confirmed by Davidson himself (1999: 716).

At the end of his groundbreaking paper, Davidson returns to the mixed cases (simultaneous use and mention) which he had set aside for a while (see examples 18, 20, 21 in 2.1.2, feature 3), and concludes that these can now be dealt with adequately within the Demonstrative Theory. The argument is simple – if somewhat awkward: the point made earlier that the interior does not refer was too strong. Actually, a pointer can ostend whatever is in its range, including “an inscription in active use” (1979: 39). Therefore, in (18), *has a certain anomalous feature* is both used and mentioned (i.e. demonstrated, pointed at). Davidson suggests showing this by means of the following more explicit paraphrase of (18):

(18<sub>1</sub>) Quine says, using words of which these are a token, that quotation has a certain anomalous feature. (1979: 39)

Similar paraphrases are offered for his other two examples. Although I do not wish to pre-empt the objections that will be examined below, it is fairly obvious that Davidson’s paraphrase is successful only because the quoted expression in (18) does not involve deictics or translation, and is not a sequence of foreign words.<sup>89</sup>

### 2.3.1. Adjustments

Let us now review a number of minor adjustments put forward by those philosophers that judge Davidson’s theory to be essentially sound. Goldstein, who reads the demonstrative quotation marks as meaning « the expression with the shape pictured herein », considers this reading to be imperfect. To make his point, he adduces the following excellent example:

For when Elvis says ‘Baby, don’t say “don’t”,’ he is not just requiring his baby to refrain, when confronted with a certain request, from uttering tokens of the same phonetic shape as ‘don’t’, but from uttering any tokens that *mean* the same. (1984: 4)<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The problem with deictics (examined in detail in Chapter 8) is also pointed out by Washington (1992: 596fn). Translation is pointed out by Tsohatzidis (1998: 662). The problem with foreign sequences can be illustrated by *Saussure said that the “lien entre le signifiant et le signifié” is arbitrary*. A distinct issue concerns the scope of *these*: the boundaries of sequences mentioned are not manifest, once quote marks are removed.

<sup>90</sup> A similar idea emerges from Peter Geach’s discussion of example (11) above. The view that direct speech may serve the purpose of reporting thoughts implies that quotations can be used to refer to the intended meaning behind the choice of a given token or sequence of tokens. If the Demonstrative Theory, which in Geach’s time had not yet been set out, were to be able to account for this, our understanding of the concept of ostension would have to be

The example implies that the reference to *shape* in Davidson's paraphrase is insufficient. But this, Goldstein contends, does not seal the fate of Davidson's theory. Rather, one needs to take account of the full complexity of the act of pointing, for

it is a familiar fact that pure ostension may leave the intended reference underdetermined. One may be referring to the particular token contained within the quotation marks[,] to any token that looks similar to the one exhibited, to any token that means the same, to any token that has the same syntax, i.e. when referring to phemes [...], to any token that displays a similar pattern and so on. (1984: 4)

For this diversity of referents, Goldstein argues, one could employ different quoting devices, but it is none the less a fact that in practice misunderstandings are rare. When all is said and done, the only trouble with Davidson's theory is his use of the term *shape*. Apart from that, quotation is an act of demonstration entirely taken care of by the quotation marks.

Bennett points out another difficulty with Davidson's original theory. In a nutshell, since every token has an infinity of features, not all of which can be relevant to the identification of the proper referent of the demonstration, Davidson's paraphrase for quotation marks – which, in the case of “*sheep*” could also be formulated as

the inscription-type each token of which is like this: sheep (1988: 402) –

is too indeterminate: it leaves in the dark which features are relevant to the token-type relation.<sup>91</sup> To remedy this situation, Bennett comes up with two amended versions of Davidson's theory, which he calls the ‘weakly amplified’ and the ‘strongly amplified’ theories. He eventually embraces the latter, as a result of which each quotation can now be specified as follows:

The largest (weakest) type every token of which resembles this: ... in respects  $R_1, R_2, \dots, R_n$ , with the displayed item – a token of the referent – in the gap [...] and with R's that are all and only the features that are linguistically significant in the language to which the displayed item belongs. (1988: 416, 17)

The reason why Bennett talks of the *largest (weakest) type* is not explicitated. Is it that there might be sub-types subordinated to a larger type? I am not sure and I do not think it necessary to pursue the matter here. More significant is Bennett's argument that the above enrichment enables the Demonstrative Theory to meet all the objections that were raised against the Description

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expanded as well. This, some ‘Demonstrativists’ refuse to do (e.g. Cappelen & Lepore), while other writers (Goldstein, Saka) lightly take the step.

<sup>91</sup> Washington (1992: 595ff) develops a similar argument.

Theory (see 2.2). I am not quite sure, though, how well it fares with respect to Bennett's own parochialism objection. On Bennett's preferred account, we understand a quotation only if we know (in the sense of « have internalised ») the relevant features of the language in question. This means that we do not properly understand, say, a Martian quotation unless we know Martian. This, to me, is not consistent with the argument put forward in the statement of the parochialism objection – that “we could understand a quotation of an expression whose structural principles – ways of assembling its elements to form a complex whole – were equally strange” (1988: 413). But Bennett makes the common-sense remark elsewhere that, say, English-speakers understand the quotation of an English expression better than that of a Martian one (cf 1988: 407), and that this is an empirical fact. In that respect, it is true that the strong amplification captures this dissimilarity. But does it meet the parochialism objection? Perhaps what Bennett has in mind is that, unlike the Description Theory, his amplification explains how a Martian quotation will be made sense of *provided the reader has internalised the relevant features of the language*, and that this is sufficient.<sup>92</sup>

A final comment is in order regarding Bennett's claim that his version of the theory assigns a semantic role to quotation marks: these marks are characterised as expressing “a function from token expressions to definite descriptions of expression types” (1988: 418). In

“sheep”

the function is expressed by the pair of quotation marks, its *argument* is the displayed item, and its *value* for that argument is a definite description of the form

The expression which shares with this: ... all the features [R<sub>1</sub>, etc.] (1988: 417)

### 2.3.2. Objections

The above expansions did not in any way question the validity of Davidson's understanding of quotation. The following objections, on the other hand, are intended to establish its inadequacy.<sup>93</sup>

#### (i) Objection 1

Corey Washington (1992: 588) remarks that, like the Name and the Description Theory, Davidson's scheme overestimates the importance of quotation marks. The fact is that there may be quotation without quotation marks. Therefore, any explanation that hinges on their presence is in no position to deal with a significant proportion of quotations. Washington actually only

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<sup>92</sup> I mention in passing a remark that will be developed in Chapter 4: it is likely that Bennett's *type* is made to contain too many features, so that some of them are mutually incompatible, making the type an inconsistent object.

<sup>93</sup> Most of the following criticisms apply with equal vigour to Sørensen's forerunner of the Demonstrative Theory.

brings this observation to bear on spoken cases of quotation. As far as writing is concerned, he considers unacceptable such inscriptions as *Hello is a salutation* (1992: 590): this sequence is incorrectly punctuated and therefore ill-formed. This judgment of ill-formedness is debatable, but we need not go into this issue right now: Washington's argument is cogent enough even if applied only to spoken utterances.

Let us see in some more detail how it can affect our assessment of Davidson's theory. If all of the referring is done by the quotation marks, then, says Washington, the subject of

(23) 'Hello' is a salutation (1992: 589)

can only be the quotation marks. Remember that Davidson wrote that, in a case like this, the quoted material plays no semantic role whatsoever, and that not only Goldstein and Washington but Davidson himself understood this as also implying that it was grammatically void. If that is granted, (23) must be equivalent to

(23<sub>1</sub>) ' ' is a salutation.

On Davidson's account, this is still an acceptable sentence.<sup>94</sup> However, if, as is usual in spoken quotations, the mention of *Hello* is performed without any sort of quotation gestures, then (23<sub>1</sub>) must be able to be rewritten as the unacceptable

(23<sub>2</sub>)     is a salutation.

Though this is a somewhat daring derivation, I believe it to be theoretically consistent: there are cases, at the very least in speech, in which the mention of a term is not signalled by any quoting devices, be they linguistic or paralinguistic (special intonation, ocular movement, finger-pointing, etc.).<sup>95</sup> This should mean that the ordinary counterargument, according to which, in cases like (23<sub>2</sub>), we have implicit quotation marks that fulfil the function of subject, is not always tenable: there are instances of mention (without quotes or any other signal), which, on a Davidsonian account, are reducible to (23<sub>2</sub>). Washington's conclusion is that, since no current (in 1992) linguistic theory licenses ellipsis of the subject in such cases, Davidson's theory must be false.

In spite of the conceptual complexity of Washington's reduction, its validity is acknowledged by, e.g., Saka (1998: 119) or Reimer, who takes it to entail "that any view of quotation that

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<sup>94</sup> Gómez-Torrente thinks it is not, because quotation marks alone cannot be interchanged salva congruitate with such possible grammatical subjects as "'this', 'Socrates', 'it', 'John's nickname'" (2001: 130).

<sup>95</sup> In those cases, it is often a meta-predicate that guides the hearer's interpretation.



regards the quotation marks as an essential part of the referring expression is mistaken” (1996: 134).<sup>96</sup> Earlier, the French linguist Rey-Debove had already made an analogous point about Sørensen’s theory. If the quotation marks can function as the grammatical subject, then “[a] sentence in which the autonomous word [i.e. word mentioned] is not enclosed in quote marks would be ungrammatical, for lack of a subject” (1978: 142).

One scholar who might disagree is Christensen, who deems perfectly acceptable such a statement as *Owns a million dollars!* (1961: 61f). Christensen, however, specifies that the utterance must be properly accompanied by an act of pointing. Christensen is right. But that is not what matters most. More interesting is a comparison between his own example and (23<sub>2</sub>) in terms of acceptability: it seems to me that, if the verb is the copula *be* rather than a full verb like *own*, elliptical utterances of that kind become barely acceptable, even in the presence of an act of pointing. Who, on seeing a Studebaker and pointing at it, would ever utter *Is a Studebaker!* ? Probably everyone would leave out the copula as well and exclaim, *A Studebaker!*. This poses an even greater challenge to Davidson and his followers.

Still, I can think of several rejoinders that could perhaps be offered to the arguments above. First, a Demonstrativist might claim that (23<sub>2</sub>) is just not possible because the quotation marks cannot be dispensed with. But such a response may appear to shift the discussion away from description and on to prescription. Note, however, that Gómez-Torrente, who is a professed Tarskian, believes Washington’s criticism to be ill-grounded; and he adduces an explanation in terms of semantic reference vs user’s reference. This explanation is illustrated by the example *Donald is Davidson’s name*, a sentence which, Gómez-Torrente argues, is grammatically correct but false (as its subject ‘refers semantically’ to an individual person, not a name). However, he adds, the sentence is communicatively effective if its utterer “succeeds, as he usually will, in conveying to his readers his intention to refer to [Davidson’s name] with his use of ‘Donald’” (2001: 130). I am not ready to endorse Gómez-Torrente’s argument because, in my view, all reference is user’s reference, i.e. a matter of the speaker’s intentions. More importantly, whatever the merits of Gómez-Torrente’s theory of reference, his account fails to say anything useful about a sentence like *Hello is a salutation*, since its subject has no ‘semantic reference’: the

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<sup>96</sup> García-Carpintero agrees with Washington that if the absence of quotation marks is understood in a way similar to the empty categories, e.g. empty subjects, posited by contemporary linguistics, then the demonstrative account fails. But he believes that other, unobjectionable, accounts, of the ‘implicit’ quotation marks can be given, in terms of contextual clues (e.g. a meta-predicate) or of conversational implicatures. (See 1994: 262-63 for a development).

sentence would therefore have to be judged ungrammatical, both as a written and as a spoken utterance. This seems to me to be unacceptable from a descriptive point of view.

Two further arguments are available to those who, although sticking to a Demonstrative account, are willing to concede that quoting-without-quote-marks is not inherently ungrammatical. A first move consists in granting that quotations are demonstrations, but adding that they are a deviant form of demonstration.<sup>97</sup> Whereas ordinary demonstration (notably pointing) precludes such sentences as *Is a Studebaker!*, quotation licences the analogous *Is a salutation*. In other words, whereas the act of pointing that accompanies an utterance can sometimes replace both the designation of an entity (an object) and the copula, quotation can only be substituted for the subject-NP. This position is perfectly consistent, but I believe that it suffers from excessive adhocery, and deprives the analogy between quotation and demonstration of much of its vigour: indeed, it forces one to develop an additional theory of ordinary vs deviant demonstration. Yet another option remains available: rejecting the principle according to which quotation marks ‘do all the referring’. This is the position advocated notably in Reimer (1996), Saka (1998) and Recanati (2001). Clearly, if the referring is taken care of (at least in part) by the ‘interior’ of the quotation, then there is no urgent need to declare implicit quotation ungrammatical. Thus, one may, as do the three writers above, retain something of the demonstrative dimension brought to the fore by Davidson, without being forced to adopt positions that are too prescriptive (i.e. rejecting quoteless mention as ungrammatical). Note, however, that there are several ways in which quotation marks can be relieved of the burden of reference, and these may have different consequences on other aspects of a theory of quotation. Saka’s and Recanati’s views on these issues are discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5, whereas Reimer’s are quickly examined at the end of 2.3.

We are not finished yet with the examples (23)-(23<sub>2</sub>). It may seem tempting to derive a further objection from Washington’s demonstration: if (23<sub>1</sub>) is equivalent to (23), then perhaps it is also equivalent to ‘*Hi*’ is a salutation, ‘*Howyeh*’ is a salutation, ‘*Bonjour*’ is a salutation, and a host of others; all of which are equivalent to each other. This is definitely not tenable: nothing could then prevent one from asserting that (23<sub>1</sub>) is equivalent to ‘*Get the hell out*’ is a salutation, despite the fact that the truth-value of the latter sentence is different from that of (23<sub>1</sub>).

This subsidiary objection, however, neglects an important aspect of Davidson’s theory. If quotation marks are demonstratives producing a sort of directly referential term, then their

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<sup>97</sup> A similar way out is pointed out and then dismissed by Gómez-Torrente (2001: 150 note 10).

reference cannot be fixed independently of a particular act of demonstration. In this respect, quotations are not essentially different from demonstrative pronouns or, for that matter, from all indexical (deictic) expressions like *I*, *there* or *in future*: the assignment of reference is done relative to the context of utterance: with every new context, reference is likely to vary. If quotation marks are indeed demonstratives, then each instantiation (23<sub>1</sub>) is likely to have different truth-conditions. Therefore, it is incorrect to regard a single token of (23<sub>1</sub>) as being able to simultaneously stand for ‘*Hi*’ is a salutation, ‘*Howyeh*’ is a salutation, ‘*Bonjour*’ is a salutation, and ‘*Get the hell out*’ is a salutation<sup>98</sup>

### (ii) Objection 2

The next objection I wish to bring up relies on the identification of a property of quotation that has not been brought up so far: its iterativity, or recursiveness. The objection is voiced by Saka (1998: 119-20), who takes this example as his starting-point:

(24) “‘Sit’” is a noun phrase.

Saka regards this statement about a quotation within a quotation as a true sentence, in conformity with his conception of quotations as syntactically nominal constituents. However, he remarks, if this sentence is rewritten on the model proposed by Davidson then it will yield the following:<sup>99</sup>

(24<sub>1</sub>) “Sit.” That is a noun phrase.

(24<sub>1</sub>) is correct and has the same truth-conditions as (24). As (24<sub>1</sub>) still includes a quotation, Saka suggests that it should be further paraphrasable; i.e. the quotation marks should be rewritable as another demonstrative, yielding two possible outcomes:

(24<sub>2</sub>) Sit. That that is a noun phrase.

(24<sub>3</sub>) Sit. That. That is a noun phrase.

Saka goes on to show that (24<sub>2</sub>) fails because it is ungrammatical. Yet, that is a result I will not take into consideration, because the proposed paraphrase does not comply with Davidson’s

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<sup>98</sup> Cappelen & Lepore (1997a) offer a similar defence, arguing that the Demonstrative Theory thereby accounts for opacity:

Sentences containing demonstratives need not preserve their truth-value when different objects are demonstrated. If you substitute a word-token of one type for another of a different type as the demonstrated object, different objects are demonstrated and thus the truth-value of the original (utterance of that) sentence may change. (1997a: 440)

This means that, as long as the quote marks are present, the Demonstrative Theory stands fast.

<sup>99</sup> Saka has slightly altered the paraphrase offered in the *Alice swooned* example: Davidson’s *The expression of which this is a token* is replaced by *That*. Given that both expressions are NPs and include a demonstration, I do not think the alteration in any way affects the conclusions reached.

insistence that the demonstrated token falls outside the mentioning utterance.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, I shall consider only (24<sub>3</sub>). According to Saka, (24<sub>3</sub>) must be dismissed on the grounds that it does not match our standard understanding of (24). Is Saka correct? (24) says of a verb enclosed in quotation marks that it is a noun phrase. What does (24<sub>3</sub>) say? Proceeding from right to left, we see that (24<sub>3</sub>) asserts that a certain object pointed at is an NP. The object in question is a token of the demonstrative *that*. This means that (24<sub>3</sub>) asserts the truth: the demonstrative pronoun always functions as an NP, every bit as much as a sequence within quote marks does. Therefore, strictly in terms of its truth-conditions, (24<sub>3</sub>) appears to be no different from (24). Note that this was a very predictable outcome: on a Davidsonian account, every quotation, understood as an act of ‘linguistic pointing’, necessarily generates an NP. Therefore, so far, we have only proved able to establish something of a truism. Perhaps, however, we have not yet exhausted all of the meaning conveyed by (24<sub>3</sub>): there still remains *Sit* to account for. Or does there? Remember that on the Demonstrative account the demonstrated token is semantically and grammatically inert. Davidson, and such prominent followers as Cappelen & Lepore, would deny that the leftmost *that* in (24<sub>3</sub>) fulfils any semantic function at all. On their account, there is nothing that warrants looking left of the leftmost *that* and wondering what its semantic contribution can be. What’s more, they would already deny that (24<sub>3</sub>) is a correct paraphrase of (24).<sup>101</sup> Rewriting, they would say, must stop at (24<sub>1</sub>), because the token that occurs left of the mentioning sentence is itself semantically inert. It is in this semantic (and syntactic) inertness that their refusal of recursiveness is rooted. And since the inertness of the quoted material is a central tenet of the Demonstrative account, there appears to be no room left for a property like recursiveness, which apparently clashes with inertness. Here is what Cappelen & Lepore have to say: “[...] learning to quote is learning a practice with *endless but non-iterable application*” (1997a: 439; original emphasis).<sup>102</sup> Besides, this non-iterativity apparently stems from the fact that quotations are demonstrations. Naturally, Cappelen & Lepore are aware of cases in which several pairs of quotation marks are used. But this is no problem to them, given that everything within the outer quote marks is ‘semantically inert’. If you use two pairs of quotation marks, you are pointing at a

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<sup>100</sup> Which, in this case, is no longer even a sentence. But I suppose that Saka might wish to regard it as a single-morpheme utterance analogous to, say, *This!*. Let us temporarily play along with Saka.

<sup>101</sup> The same point is made by Gómez-Torrente (2001: 133-34, 150 note 11), who therefore concludes that Saka’s argument is not well-taken.

<sup>102</sup> Lepore (1999: 708) repeats this claim. Cappelen & Lepore appear more rigid than Davidson himself, who agreed that a pointer could ostend even “an inscription in active use” (cf the brief discussion of Davidson’s account of mixed cases near the beginning of 2.3).

token with its own quote marks, and that is where it stops. This expression does not, in turn, point at a token of an ordinary, non quoted expression.

In the previous paragraph, I have abruptly interrupted the course of Saka's objection. This I have done because I believe Saka's own argument to be flawed. What Saka initially seeks to do is point up a shortcoming of the Demonstrative Theory, namely its inability to account for the recursiveness of quotation. The fact is, however, that since the Demonstrativists explicitly question the assumed iterativity of quotation (cf Cappelen & Lepore 1997a: 439-40), they cannot without further ado be accused of failing to identify that property. Therefore, the first step of Saka's demonstration should consist in establishing recursiveness as an indisputable property of quotation. But, rather than providing the necessary evidence, Saka appears to presume the case resolved:

[...] English does not distinguish between exterior quote marks and interior quote marks except as a stylistic device to remind the reader when there is a quote within a quote; the interior quote marks do not, intuitively, possess a sense distinct from the exterior marks. (1998: 120)

On that basis, he develops an argument the validity of which hinges on a property whose existence is denied by the very people that he is taking on. What Saka should have done was to show that Cappelen & Lepore are wrong in claiming that quotation and demonstration in general are not iterative. Had he done that, he could then have proceeded with his demonstration. Unfortunately, he was unlikely to advance his case with an example like (24). After all, the purpose of uttering (24) is to make a point about a sequence enclosed in quotation marks. It is to that sequence that the predicate, *being an NP*, is applied. In this case, there is no reason to assume that the inverted commas within the double quotation marks in turn function demonstratively (referentially) to say something about the enclosed verb *sit*. In other words, there is no apparent reason to assume that quotation is recursive in this very instance.

If we are to shed any light on the issue of recursiveness, we must first ask the question, "Are there cases of quotation (and demonstration at large) that are iterative?". In order to provide a satisfactory answer, the terms of the problem must first be clarified: as it turns out, three different conceptions of recursiveness should be distinguished. First, there is recursiveness in the sense of the possibility of enclosing in an additional pair of marks an expression that is already between inverted commas, and so on without any theoretical limit. This 'typographical' conception, as it might be labelled, which was mentioned at the very beginning of this chapter, raises no particular issues: it is widely adopted by most writers on language, even those who deride the

typographical complexity induced by the adoption of the standard use-mention distinction, like Searle (1969: 74). But this first conception is not very helpful for the present purposes; it has more to do with what Cappelen & Lepore would call ‘endless application’ than with ‘iterability’. The second conception of recursiveness can be simplistically depicted as the view according to which the conventional and/or compositional meaning of the entity quoted (the ‘interior’ of the quotation or an item associated with it) remains ‘alive’. We saw that Quine or Tarski deliberately denied the existence of such a property because it clashed with the doctrine that quotations are single morphemes. But we also saw that a resolution was available if, like Josette Rey-Debove, a quotation (i.e. a single morpheme, on these accounts) was assumed to be an icon of a string made up of any number of morphemes and possessing its own compositional meaning.

The semantic inertness postulated by Davidson is in some respects comparable to the monomorphemic hypothesis: where the Name Theory has a monomorphemic name, the Demonstrative Theory has an inert ‘thing’. What the name and the ‘thing’ have in common is that their parts make no semantic contribution to the mentioning sentence. This analogy can be exploited with a view to understanding how the Demonstrative Theory could be made compliant with what might be termed ‘compositional recursiveness’: the solution may be assumed to reside in the iconicity of quotation.

But first, I must provide evidence of the existence of compositional recursiveness. In order to do this, I have drawn my inspiration from Daniel Seymour’s critique of the monomorphemic doctrine and decided to devise examples including a direct speech report itself embedded in a wider direct speech report:

(25) In view of the ruthless selfishness of modern society, it is with a genuine thrill that I heard Archibald Carston-Powers exclaim, “As the Scriptures maintain, ‘the last shall be first!’”.<sup>103</sup>

(26) O’Leary tells us: “Marx wrote, ‘Religion is the opium of the people’”; and it has to be acknowledged that O’Leary has every reason to repeat what Marx was the first to highlight, especially now that the occult is rearing its ugly head again.

The utterer of (25) reports an utterance by another speaker which itself contained a quotation. The embedded citation from the Bible does not occur as an inert object: its compositional meaning plays a role in the overall utterance. If it did not, the hearer would be in no position to figure out why Carston-Powers’s words filled the utterer of (25) with delight, and what this had

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<sup>103</sup> My reader will have noticed that this is not a plain case of direct speech: the embedded quotation is not the direct object of *maintain*. This, however, does not affect the present argument. On the Demonstrativist account, notably on Cappelen & Lepore’s variant, quotation marks play exactly the same role in direct quotation and in so-called ‘mixed’ quotation.

to do with the presupposed selfishness of contemporary society. A similar analysis can be brought to bear on (26). There too, the embedded citation (Marx's formula) must be compositionally active if the hearer is to make sense of the allusion to the occult at the end of the sentence.

Though these two examples are artificial creations, I am fairly confident that similar ones could be unearthed if a corpus search made such findings easy, or if enough time was spent poring over large amounts of text.<sup>104</sup> As I hinted above, the strength of (25) and (26) lies in the fact that they include direct speech reports. While reviewing Seymour's criticism of the Description Theory in 2.2, we saw that many are the instances in which direct speech reports must be assumed to be 'interpreted', i.e. semantically active. All it takes is some semantic dependency between the quoted material and the rest of the 'mentioning sentence'. In (25) and (26), all the reporting verbs, *exclaim*, *maintain*, *tell*, *write*, can take a sentential complement (a *that*- or *if*-clause). This grammatical characteristic was held by Seymour to single out those verbs that are used to introduce an interpreted quotation. This judgment concurred with the distinction made by Searle between verbs whose direct-speech complement only repeats an utterance-act (e.g. *utter*) and those whose complement also repeats a propositional act (*say*, etc.). If Seymour and Searle are right – and I believe that the odds are in their favour – then there is no reason to assume that the conditions in which a direct speech report is interpreted cease to obtain when this report is embedded in what is already a quotation, especially when there is some semantic dependency between the report and the rest of the sentence, as is the case in (25) and (26).

Now, because of its insistence on the inertness of the quoted material, the Demonstrative Theory seems to rule out the process just described. But let us take up (26) again and rewrite it à la Davidson:

(26<sub>1</sub>) [Marx wrote, 'Religion is the opium of the people'] O'Leary tells us this, and it has to be acknowledged that O'Leary has every reason to repeat what Marx was the first to highlight, especially now that the occult is rearing its ugly head again.

If the 'thing' in square brackets is not 'alive', then hearers have no meaningful access to the doubly embedded *Religion is the opium of the people* and cannot, therefore, make full sense of the allusion to the occult. A solution can nevertheless be imagined along the same lines as Rey-

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<sup>104</sup> Examples of quotations embedded in quotations can be found in Nunberg (1990), at the point where he discusses the punctuation rule of 'quote alternation', e.g.:

Then the Lord said unto Moses: "Go in unto Pharaoh [sic], and tell him: 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: "Let my people go, that they may serve me."'"" (1990: 46).

Debove's rescue of the single-morpheme doctrine. To that end, however, it must first be realised that, if quotation is a form of demonstration, it is a special one, in this sense that it appears to involve two concurrent demonstrations, that of a token and that of the type (shape) with which the token is associated. The solution therefore reads as follows: the token (the inert thing) exhibited by a quotation gives access, via iconicity, to a type whose compositional meaning is active.<sup>105</sup> There is no contradiction in holding simultaneously that the quoted material is inert (or monomorphemic...) and that quotation is iterable, provided, that is, that recursiveness is made dependent on the type referred to rather than the token displayed in the mentioning sentence. As a matter of fact, this analysis offers the only viable option for the Demonstrative Theory: if the type referred to was not compositionally active, then the theory would encounter major difficulties even with simpler cases than the embedded quotations of (25) and (26), just as the original monomorphemic doctrine did. For example, its proponents would be hard put to explain how hearers can access the meaning of any complex quotation (i.e. a quotation made up of several morphemes). Worse even: failing the linguistic 'activity' of the type, the theory would have to reject the possibility of attaching semantic, grammatical, or 'literary' predicates to a quotation (cf Quine in 2.1, 2.1.2): indeed, it would be just as odd to attribute a meaning, a grammatical behaviour or a stylistic peculiarity to an inert thing as to a bit of morpheme.

By way of an illustration, here is what the Demonstrative Theory must (and can) say in the case of (26): the types referred to by each quotation are linguistic objects endowed with compositional meaning.<sup>106</sup> The string *Marx wrote, 'Religion is the opium of the people'* is inert only as the direct object of *tells us*. And the string *Religion is the opium of the people* is inert only with respect to the mentioning sentence *Marx wrote [this]*. Still more specifically, *Religion* does not play a compositional role in the analysis of either *O'Leary tells us [this]* or *Marx wrote [this]*. Yet, as part of the type iconically related to the displayed token, namely *Religion is the opium of the people*, it retains its meaning of « system of faith or worship ». It is because this type is accessible via the token displayed that the overall sentence makes sense, that it can be judged to be consistent.

Let us now leave compositional recursiveness and turn to the third notion of recursiveness relevant for quotation, namely the view according to which a quotation may refer to a word or

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<sup>105</sup> In this development, I shall, like many Davidsonians, use the word *type*. My own use of it, which is chiefly informed by John Lyons, is explained in Chapter 4. Let me just point out for now that, where the Davidsonians talk of *sentence-type*, I would prefer to say *system-sentence*.

<sup>106</sup> Unless, of course, what is quoted is a pseudo-word or a non-linguistic sequence.



string of words which itself occurs in a referential capacity. This might be termed ‘referential recursiveness’. If this third conception holds water, the Demonstrative Theory as it stands may seem to be in real trouble. For there is no way we can fall back on the solution offered for compositional recursiveness: an a-contextual type (e.g. a system-sentence) can have a compositional meaning but cannot support reference: reference is a property of acts of uttering located in time and space.

Since Cappelen & Lepore implied that demonstrations in general were non-iterative, I shall begin by countering that broader claim: I shall show that non-quotational acts of pointing can be recursive. Let us assume that Bart and Homer are hiking through the woods. The hike is signposted with arrows, but Homer has lost track of them and thinks he and his son are lost. “How do you know we’re going in the right direction?”, he whines. To which Bart responds by pointing at an arrow fifty yards ahead that itself points forward.

In this case, I believe that the first demonstration (Bart’s act of pointing) goes together with a second one (the arrow that is found to be pointing forward). In other words, the object pointed at by Bart is a ‘sign’ that does not cease to function demonstratively; it is not inert. On the contrary, its ability to signify is reactivated by Bart’s pointing. There exist other such cases of demonstrated tokens that in turn demonstrate something else.<sup>107</sup> Let us picture two oral examiners waiting for their next student. One of them asks who the following casualty will be. The other responds by pointing at a student number on their list. This number stands for Jane Brown, the student in question, the one who was ‘intended’ by the initial question. Clearly, in this case too the demonstrated token is not an inert thing; it does not cease to signify something beyond itself.

This, I take it, establishes the iterability of acts of pointing. But, given that I wish to reserve the property of reference for linguistic expressions, proving the existence of referential recursiveness proper requires finding examples of recursiveness that are quotational. This, I must say, is a task that kept me busy for a while. At first, I tried building intricate examples like the following:

(27) In the previous sentence [e.g. *I don’t think ‘Derek’ is a suitable name for this French baby*], “Derek” is a quotation-mark name that refers to ‘Derek’, which in turn refers to an individual (the baby named ‘Derek’).

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<sup>107</sup> I owe Marc Dominicy the general idea for the following example.

In other words, I tried to come up with a true sentence which asserted the recursiveness of reference. But the artificiality of (27), and my difficulties in deciding whether the twofold assertion could be true or not – it probably is not – eventually made me give up such complex constructions. It took me some time to realise that my dissertation (and most articles on quotation) abounded in referentially recursive quotations. Let me take the very basic example (4), *'Boston' has six letters*, again. If, in relation to (4), I write,

(28) In an utterance of (4), “‘Boston’” is used to refer to an orthographic form,

I assume that everyone will agree that I have produced a true assertion. Making this kind of empirically true assertion amounts to referring to an entity and predicating a valid property of it. This means that the subject of (28) – a name plus two pairs of quote marks – has reference. Moreover, since the property validly predicated of the subject's referent – the name with the inner pair of quote marks – is that of referring to a further entity, we have a situation in which the subject of (28) refers to a quotation which itself refers to an orthographic form. In other words, we have a case of iterated reference.

Let me emphasise two apparent constraints on referentially iterative quotations. The first is trivial; it holds that the 'metaquotation' (the one that embeds a further quotation) must be referential in the first place. Although a good many theorists have taken for granted the referentiality of quotation (from Quine and Tarski to Saka, through Davidson), it is far from certain that all quotations refer. I touch upon this point in my presentation of the next objection against the Demonstrative account. The second constraint is slightly less obvious but just as interesting. It is a constraint on the nature of the referent of the metaquotation: this referent must be a token.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, it must be a token that instantiates a referential expression within an other utterance than the mentioning sentence (or, at least, another clause in that sentence). That is indeed what happens in (28): the subject does not refer to its 'interior' but to the type-identical token that occurs in example (4).

One obvious consequence of this last clarification is that, if it is granted that quotations can be referentially recursive, then it must also be granted that they can refer to objects other than types. In a way, the Demonstrative Theory is perfectly consistent in its joint rejection of recursiveness

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<sup>108</sup> It is possible that a token like *'Boston'* does not of itself refer. Someone like Lyons holds that a token only refers via the referring expression that it instantiates. That may well be, but it does not affect the conclusion that, concerning the matter in hand, the metaquotation must refer to a token.

and of reference to tokens.<sup>109</sup> This being said, I believe it is wrong on both scores. The funny thing is that the Demonstrative Theory could embrace recursiveness and reference to tokens without jeopardising its internal consistency. We saw above how the theory can be made compatible with compositional recursiveness: quotational demonstrations are twofold: the token displayed is inert but the type referred to – if that is the nature of the referent – remains compositionally active. This adjustment of the theory was basically no more than a natural extension of its potential. Now, if my depiction of referential recursiveness is correct, then that further property can also be integrated at a minimal cost. All that is needed is for the theory to allow quotations to refer not just to types but also to tokens. Since a token is, by definition, part of the product of an utterance-act, there can be no a priori objection to its ability to function referentially.

A Davidsonian might still wish to say that accepting recursiveness means rejecting the thesis that the quoted material is syntactically and semantically inert, and that this is definitely too high a price to pay. Now why should this look like too great a sacrifice? In a 1999 paper, Ernest Lepore argues that only if one accepts the thesis above can there be a hope for a ‘recursively specifiable’ (i.e. finite) theory of quotation (and, therefore, of any language exhibiting quotation). If, on the other hand, one assumes the quoted material to be linguistically active in the quoting sentence, then one must face the task of defining the ‘quotable lexicon’. Indeed, the lexicon (say, of English) should list every linguistic sequence usable in any grammatical English sentence, including any quoting sentence. Lepore claims that the task of defining the quotable lexicon can simply not be accomplished: since just about anything can be quoted, the quotable lexicon would have to include an infinity of items. Moreover, these items are of such different natures that no recursive specification could be given for them. But as the lexicons of all natural languages include a ‘quotable lexicon’, the lexicon of, say, English cannot be specified recursively either, and any hope of a finite theory of natural languages must be given up.

I shall not, at this stage, take a stand on Lepore’s contention that there can be no recursive specification (finite definition) of the quotable lexicon. This perplexing question deserves a detailed treatment (see Chapter 7.2.2.1). What I can say, however, is that, if he is right, then inertness is the only buffer against a theoretical disaster. If inertness is an essential condition for

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<sup>109</sup> Incidentally, this disproves Gómez-Torrente’s claim that the Fregean, Davidsonian and Tarskian theories of quotation are compatible with several accounts of the kind of object referred to by the referring part of a quotation (2001: 128). In the present case, the Davidsonian’s acceptance of recursiveness is conditional on his/her acceptance of tokens-as-referents.

the feasibility of a theory of quotation (of natural language at large), it is easy to understand why Cappelen & Lepore would be ready to pay the comparatively small price of renouncing a property of recursiveness that hardly plays any role in their framework.

My rejoinder to Cappelen & Lepore would consist in this: the adjustments I have proposed are not contradictory with the semantic and syntactic inertness of the quoted material. Seeing this requires realising that compositional and referential recursiveness are notions that capture a different kind of iterability than typographical recursiveness. The latter functions very much like a set of Russian dolls nested one inside another. In the same way that the largest or outermost doll contains the second largest doll, which itself contains the next in size, and so forth, the highest-level quotation contains the next highest-level quotation, etc. In both cases, recursiveness is strictly a matter of repeated inclusion.

If compositional and referential recursiveness worked Russian-doll-style, the postulate of the linguistic inertness of the quoted material would become untenable. But the fact is that they do not. As regards compositional recursiveness, it rests on the grammatical and semantic activity of something outside the instance of quotation: it is the type associated with the token enclosed in quote marks that is compositionally active. The occurring tokens remain inert. Since the lexicon needs to specify only those building blocks that play a linguistic role in sentences, it need not account for inert tokens, but neither need it account for the related types since these are, by definition, outside of the sentences uttered.

As regards referential recursiveness, it is clear that a quotation with  $n$  pairs of quote marks does not refer to its interior (a quotation with  $n-1$  pairs of quote marks), and that this interior does not in turn refer to its own interior (a quotation with  $n-2$  pairs of quote marks), and so on. When a quotation refers, it does so outside of itself. That is precisely the idea that I tried to capture when I voiced the second constraint on the iterability of reference. If the referent of a quotation is not its interior – it hardly ever is – then referential recursiveness is not at all incompatible with a theory that holds ‘interiors’ to be inert things.

In the end, I am tempted to believe that Cappelen & Lepore’s rejection of recursiveness was rooted in a misunderstanding, or at least in a narrow understanding of the notion. If recursiveness is understood across the board as a mechanical operation that is ‘directed inwards’, then it is impossible to grant its existence and preserve the consistency of the theory: linguistic inertness must go out of the window, with all sorts of undesirable consequences. On the other hand, as soon as three types of recursiveness are differentiated, each with its own characteristics, it appears that none of them threatens the basic principles of the Demonstrative Theory.

Typographical recursiveness is a mechanical procedure with no linguistic consequences. Compositional recursiveness is directed outwards: it locates linguistic activity in the type associated with a token that is allowed to remain inert, if such is the theorist's wish. Referential recursiveness too is directed outwards: it locates linguistic activity in another token, albeit one that instantiates the same type as the quoted material of the metaquotation. Referential recursiveness is reminiscent of my initial example with Bart and Homer. In that little story, Bart pointed (outwards) at an arrow which itself pointed (outwards) at a place beyond it.

With such a refined conception of recursiveness, the Demonstrative theorist can safely acknowledge that the subjects of both (28) and (4) are referential expressions (a judgment that is actually imposed by a theory that treats all quotations as referential). What's more, he can now also safely acknowledge the connection between (28) and (4), namely the fact that the subject of (28) refers to the subject in (4), which itself is a referring expression. This is something that a monolithic understanding of recursiveness would have prevented on the grounds that it threatened the stability of the Demonstrativist's theoretical edifice.

### (iii) Objection 3

There is one final objection that I want to develop before we move on to the next theory. In spite of its strength and its obviousness, it was not formulated until François Recanati published his 2001 paper on 'open' quotation. This is all the more surprising because the objection is absolutely straightforward, much more so than the previous two we have examined. Recanati's point is this: the Demonstrativists' claim that it is quotation marks that refer deprives them of any framework to account for hybrid uses, i.e. cases of simultaneous use and mention (notably scare quoting<sup>110</sup> and mixed quotation). Remarkably enough, even Cappelen & Lepore, whose 1997a paper endeavours to lay the foundations for an integrated account of quotation, have failed to comprehend fully the import of this problem.

If the quotation marks are something like a demonstrative pronoun, then their syntactic behaviour must be that of an NP. Yet, as we already saw in our discussion of the Name Theory, there are quotations that appear in other kinds of slots, or that do not fill a slot at all. A case in point is Searle's example (7) in 2.1.2, where the quotation is a part of a VP. A Davidsonian paraphrase of the relevant segment of (7) yields this:

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<sup>110</sup> This notion captures a particular form of hybridity in which quotation marks (called 'scare quotes' in this instance) are used "to show that a word has a special sense" (Crystal 1995: 278) or "as a warning to the reader that there is something unusual or dubious (in the opinion of the writer) about the quoted word or phrase" (McArthur 1992: 839)

(7<sub>1</sub>) Consider running for the Presidency. Gerald said he would this.

The syntactically and semantically active part of (7), namely the mentioning sentence *Gerald said he would this*, is ungrammatical: the quoted part can simply not be replaced by an NP. Scare quoting offers another illustration of the limits of the Demonstrativists' account:

(29) But there is something relentless about the outpourings of evidence “proving” that women are best off at home with the kids, whatever their preferences or circumstances. (*The Independent, Thursday Review*, 15/03/2001: 5)

Removing *proving* from the sentence and replacing the remaining quotation marks with a demonstrative pronoun yields an ungrammatical string. As it stands, the Demonstrative Theory is not equipped to deal with such examples. It is possible to fall back on the position that the theory is only meant to fit the data of pure quotation and direct speech. But that move is unsatisfactory if, like Cappelen & Lepore, you lay claim to an integrated account. Another possible answer consists in invoking ellipsis or superimposition (with *said* taking “two distinct direct objects at the same time” (Recanati 2001a:657)). Cappelen & Lepore suggest that (7) can be rewritten as either of the following pair:

(7<sub>2</sub>) Using an expression of which this is a token, Gerald said he would consider running for the Presidency.

(7<sub>3</sub>) Gerald said { that he would consider running for the Presidency.  
“consider running for the Presidency”.

Since hybrid cases will be treated at greater length in Chapter 8, I will not spill all the beans right now. I do not feel I am in a position to judge the elegance or intuitiveness of the proposed paraphrases. Recanati has no such qualms when he writes about a similar instance of Cappelen & Lepore's paraphrase that it is “convoluted and gratuitous”, and part of “a baroque account” whose sole purpose was to maintain the misconception that all quotations have reference (2001a: 657). I do not wish to choose sides at this stage; all I need to say is this: (i) there exists a more elegant, less ‘convoluted’ alternative to Cappelen & Lepore's account, based on the notion of ‘open quotation’, which will be examined in Chapter 5; (ii) Cappelen & Lepore's reformulations have apparent defects: first, it seems impossible to apply them to instances of scare quoting (and other types of hybridity that do not involve a *verbum dicendi*); and, second, they would seem to fail with mixed quotations containing indexicals or consisting of a foreign-language sequence. I return to these issues in Chapter 8.1.

Before we draw the conclusions from this subchapter, let me say a word or two about a ‘missed opportunity’. I hinted earlier, in connection with the question whether mention-without-quotes is grammatical or not, that Reimer advocated relieving quotation marks of the whole burden of reference. Her alternative proposal consists in reinterpreting quotation marks as *demonstrations* rather than *demonstratives*, that is, as “devices of ostension which serve to help fix the reference of a demonstrative expression” (1996: 135), not as referring expressions in their own right. This allows her to account for other quoting devices, such as italics, which, she says, were difficult to explain in Davidson’s scheme. Reimer’s contention is that the italics cannot reasonably be regarded as a demonstrative morpheme, while at the same time the quoted material – the same string *without* the italics – is a token devoid of semantic and grammatical function.<sup>111</sup> In the end, she decides that a quotational complex (quoted material + quoting device) is a demonstrative, i.e. an NP, because she deems this a more economical solution than considering the ‘semantic’ category of quotations as being *sui generis* (1996: 137fn). This decision lands her in the same difficulties as the Demonstrativists. That is because she failed to realise that there was theoretical room for a kindred conception on which quotations are demonstrations, with only some of these demonstrations (the traditional, non-hybrid, examples) functioning as NPs. Reimer thus came close, but only close, to a solution to the simultaneity objection. In Chapter 5, we shall see that François Recanati offers just such a solution.

### 2.3.3. Summing up

The Davidsonian theory undoubtedly fares better than the Name and Description accounts. This is hardly a surprise given that, in contrast to its two rivals, it was designed to fit real linguistic data. However, it is not altogether empirically adequate: as we have just seen, it cannot, at least in its standard form, account for hybrid cases such as mixed quotation and scare quoting. In other terms, it fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for the property of simultaneity. On the other hand, it has no difficulty in accounting for iconicity: the referent of the quotation, a ‘type’, is trivially an icon of the token displayed in the mentioning sentence. In this way, the theory also predicts the full productivity of quotation: any sequence, be it a ‘new notation’ or a pseudo-linguistic sequence, can be quoted: all it takes is to produce a token of it. As for opacity, it is easily explained by the fact that every quotation requires a new demonstrative act. Each new

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<sup>111</sup> Note that Sørensen, who is aware of the problem posed by italics, nevertheless thinks it can easily be solved: [...] in the case of italics, the subject cannot be isolated, physically, from the subject of discourse: the subject of discourse is that which is italicized, the subject being the italic form [...]. The subject, in the case of italics, may, by a well-known analogy, be called suprasegmental. (1961: 187)

such act is likely to designate a different object: it is the case, in particular, if I demonstrate a token of a distinct type: the meta-designations *Boston* and *the capital of Massachusetts* are tokens of different types. Therefore, they are not co-extensional and cannot suitably be used in substitution *salva veritate*. Once again, what the theory does is show that the apparent opacity really is disguised transparency. Finally, as regards recursiveness, I believe I have been able to show that there is no a priori reason why the Demonstrative Theory should not be able to account for this property, whether it be understood as compositional or referential iterability. Such a possibility, however, is dependent on renouncing another tenet of the standard Demonstrative framework, its insistence that quotations refer to types and nothing else. Once again, the acknowledgment of something like referential diversity does not look like too steep a price to pay, all the more because some Demonstrativists had already taken that step (e.g. Goldstein). It is my firm belief that the two changes advocated above, namely the recognition of recursiveness and variability in reference can be made within a Demonstrative account.

All in all, it is simultaneity that forms the main obstacle to the successful application of the theory. This problem is an immediate consequence of Davidson's decision to make quotation marks bear the full semantic weight of quotation, and of its corollary, the semantic inertness of the quoted material. These decisions directly result from the second feature (point ii) that Davidson regards as necessary for any sound theory of quotation, namely the requirement that an "articulate semantic role" be ascribed to quotation marks. I therefore suggest that this requirement should be abandoned. Perhaps such a bold move might lead to a solution for the Demonstrative Theory. Remember, however, that the referential role of quotation marks is so much at the heart of the theory that it remains to be seen whether a modified Demonstrative account can be put together without it. Chapter 5 should go a long way towards answering the question.

#### 2.4. The Identity Theory

On the face of it, the Identity Theory is the simplest possible theory of quotation. It states that the grammatical subjects of

(30) Socrates was a philosopher

(31) "Socrates" has eight letters. (from Searle 1969: 73)



are identical. In other words, the noun *Socrates* in (31) is used to mention itself; it is “used and mentioned in the same breath” (Washington 1992: 582). Mention, therefore, is nothing more than a particular, anomalous, use of words (Christensen 1967: 358; Searle 1969: 75-76).

The theory is not new. Its conception is often attributed to Frege (on the basis of a short passage of “On Sense and Reference”), and it has been endorsed by a long line of twentieth-century philosophers including Wittgenstein, Brody (1967) and Searle. In fairness, it was the theory of quotation as far back as the late twelfth century. As we saw at the outset of Chapter 1, medieval logicians had developed a theory of ‘suppositions’ to capture contextual reference. The Scholastic tradition usually agreed on a tripartite division between ‘suppositio personalis’, ‘simplex’ and ‘materialis’:<sup>112</sup>

(32) **A man** was crying.

(33) **Man** is a species.

(34) **Man** is a one-syllable word.

Expressions supposit personally for individual entities: personal supposition usually is the relation that obtains between an expression and individuals in the world, as exemplified in (32). Expressions supposit simply for universals: in the late Middle Ages, these were understood either as common natures existing in ‘the world’ (by realists) or as concepts existing in ‘the soul’ (by nominalists or conceptualists). Simple supposition is exemplified by *Man* in (33). Expressions supposit materially for ‘themselves’: material supposition usually is the relation between a spoken or written expression and ‘itself’: in (34), *Man* supposits for the word *man*.

How this taxonomy of uses relates to our present preoccupation is as follows. The subject terms above were regarded as tokens of the same word-type, to use modern terminology. Such a conception was facilitated by circumstances: first, Latin had no articles; second, no systematic marking of quotation was ever prevalent in the Middle Ages (cf e.g. Trentman 1977: 86). As a result, the same form *Homo* would have been used in each of the Latin counterparts of (32)-(34). A peculiar consequence of this principle of identity was that medieval logicians assumed that a term like *Homo* was capable of having personal supposition in any sentence in which it occurred (cf. Ockham’s *Summa logicae*, I, 65). In the above examples, endowing the subject term with personal supposition would make (32) a true sentence, and (33) or (34) false sentences: no individual man is a species or a word. By contrast, if *Man* is assumed to occur in (34) with material supposition, then the sentence is true.

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<sup>112</sup> See Maierù (1972: 306-17) for detailed sketches of the views held by various medieval authors.

Material supposition supplies one version of the Identity Theory,<sup>113</sup> a version on which the idea of simultaneous use and mention is perfectly straightforward. There exist other versions of the theory, the most elaborate of which is to be found in a 1992 paper by Corey Washington. One major difference between this recent account and supposition theory is Washington's insistence on the presence of quotation marks as required punctuation (in written quotation, naturally; but then spoken quotation is never much in the foreground in philosophical discussions anyway). With regard to an example like (31), the question must be asked as to what it means to say that its subject is used to 'mention itself'. In his rebuttal of the Identity Theory, Saka (1998: 121) considers three likely answers. The first consists in replying that the 'quote-marks-plus-noun' complex refers to the quote-marks-plus-noun complex; the second that the 'interior' refers to the interior; the third that the quote-marks-plus-noun complex refers to the interior.

The first answer is clearly inappropriate. Since the expression mentioned in quotation is assumed to be the same that, in ordinary contexts, is simply used, this mentioned expression cannot include quoting devices. There remain the second and third possibility. Saka assumes that the third answer 'must' be the correct one, because the Identity Theorist ascribes no semantic value to the quotation marks, these being supposed to play only a pragmatic role. If the quoting devices are just a pragmatic signal, says Saka, then the quote-marks-plus-noun complex must have the same semantic value as the interior of the quotes. In this way, the situation covered by the third answer "counts as self-reference" (1998: 121).

In spite of its attractiveness, this description is at odds with the position of certain proponents of the theory. Reimer, who advocates a Demonstrative-Identity hybrid, writes that "[a]ccording to the identity theory, [...] quotationally embedded expressions [by which she means interiors of quotations] refer to themselves" (1996: 132). Likewise, Washington holds that the expression that does the mentioning is the 'quoted expression', i.e. Quine's 'interior'. In other words, both Reimer and Washington would elect Saka's second answer as the right one.

Saka's retort would be that such a conception fails to "explain the semantic value of either the quote marks or the quotation [...] as a whole" (1998: 121). However, we have seen that Identity Theorists usually attribute a pragmatic signalling function to quote marks (e.g. Christensen 1961: 62; Searle 1969: 76; Washington 1992: 588ff; Reimer 1996: 132). Washington suggests that

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<sup>113</sup> Just for the record, let me point out that, with its *suppositio simplex*, the theory of suppositions has the potential to account for the mention of meanings in addition to forms. This does not mean that simple supposition is just a variety of mention; rather, that it can be used to cover certain aspects of mention. I will not pursue this complex issue in this dissertation.

quotation marks are punctuation: in the same way that an exclamation mark signals a command or exclamation, quote marks signal quotational use. Like other punctuation marks, inverted commas carry no syntactic or semantic value.

(i) Objection 1

Saka believes that this conception lays itself open to another version of the ‘recursion problem’. Let me quickly develop this argument, before I venture my own criticism of it. Saka’s starting-point is the incontrovertible observation that *Socrates* and ‘*Socrates*’ are generally used to refer to different objects, the first one to a philosopher, the second to his name.<sup>114</sup> Yet, Saka’s argument goes, this manifest difference cannot be captured by the Identity Theory: if quotation marks are semantically void, then *Socrates* and ‘*Socrates*’ (and “‘*Socrates*’”, etc.) can be interchanged without affecting the truth-conditions of the sentence in which they occur. Saka’s view is that, if quoting devices are mere punctuation marks, then their repetition can at most serve the purpose of emphasis, as the doubling (or trebling) of question marks or exclamation marks would (cf 1998: 122).

This being said, Saka would be ready to acknowledge that *Socrates* and ‘*Socrates*’ can at times mean the same. Any scholar accepting the possibility of mention-without-quotes,<sup>115</sup> for instance any supposition theorist, must admit that *Socrates* in

(35) *Socrates* is an eight-letter word

means the same as ‘*Socrates*’ in (31), at least on the most salient interpretations. But Saka would not be ready to accept that this ‘local’ equivalence in meaning is enough to demonstrate that *Socrates* and ‘*Socrates*’ are semantically equivalent overall. When quotation marks are used, they necessarily signal a different form of reference (or a different use, as some would have it), so that the subject of (31) cannot but mention a linguistic object (even if that mention occurs simultaneously with ordinary use, as in scare quoting). Since sequences that do not occur within

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<sup>114</sup> A similar criticism is voiced by Rey-Debove (1979: 19): on the Identity Theory, a quotation is a mere object that is presented. Therefore, it “cannot cross boundaries between language levels; as it remains itself, it will have the same value in the second-order and the third-order language”. This objection, because it is not based on the role of quotation marks, has the advantage of applying to speech as well as writing.

<sup>115</sup> Clearly, there are writers who dismiss (35) as not well-formed. Washington, for one, would argue that it is wrongly punctuated. Prescriptions aside, what matters here is that utterances like (35) are perfectly commonplace.

quotes usually do not mention a linguistic object, there must be a difference; one, says Saka, that cannot be captured by the Identity Theory.<sup>116</sup>

I see two possible flaws in Saka's argument. The first one is his assumption that punctuation has no effect on truth-conditions. As Marc Dominicy has pointed out to me (personal communication), there are types of punctuation with a genuine truth-conditional impact. If one looks at pairs of brackets in a particular formalisation of propositional logic, for example, it is easy to see how they can affect truth-conditions, witness the non-identity of  $(p \wedge q) \vee r$  and  $p \wedge (q \vee r)$ . There is no a priori reason to rule out the possibility that quote marks might work in the written variant of a given natural language in the same way as brackets do in this version of propositional logic.

My second problem with Saka's demonstration is the more general assumption that only elements endowed with a semantic value can make a truth-conditional difference. The acceptance of this 'traditional' conception of the boundary between semantics and pragmatics is a necessary condition for the cogency of Saka's argument. If it can be shown that other types of elements, e.g. items that fulfil only a pragmatic function, can affect the truth-conditions of an utterance, then Saka's argument is in danger of falling flat. In Chapter 5, we shall see how François Recanati has put together an account that takes quotation marks to be punctuation marks but also 'pragmatic indicators', and to be capable of affecting truth-conditions.

It is clear, therefore, what line of defence can be adopted by Identity Theorists. They can, like Reimer and Washington, stick to the position that it is the interior of a quotation that mentions itself (Saka's second answer) and that quotation marks function as a signalling device. If they couple such a position with a renewed outlook on the semantic-pragmatic divide such as François Recanati's, then they can easily deal with Saka's objection.

### (ii) Objection 2

Still, Saka may have a point: it is not clear that the Identity Theory can account for the recursiveness of quotation. As usual, typographical recursiveness raises no particular issues, even though one may note some writers' reluctance to endorse it, mainly because of its strong associations with the Name Theory. Here is how John Searle ridicules the multiplication of quote marks:

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<sup>116</sup> Perhaps Searle was being too brazen when he asserted about (30) and (31) "the obvious truth that the same word begins both sentences" (1969: 74), and made fun of multiple embedding within quotation marks (see the citation below).

On this account, the word which begins 2 [i.e. “*Socrates*” has eight letters] is not, as you might think, “Socrates”, it is ““Socrates””. And the word I just wrote, elusively enough, is not ““Socrates””, but is “““Socrates””” which completely new word is yet another proper name of a proper name of a proper name, namely ““““Socrates””””. And so on up in a hierarchy of names of names.... (1969: 74; original punctuation).

As regards compositional and referential recursiveness, the theory hits a snag. If the mentioning and the mentioned expression are one and the same thing, then any iteration of quoting would work like Russian dolls, always signifying inside. Yet, as we saw with examples (25), (26) and (28), compositional and especially referential recursiveness require that the object mentioned should lie outside of the quotation marks. On any strict reading of the Identity thesis, such a process is ruled out in principle. (This problem is linked with that of referential diversity, which is discussed a few pages below).

Another thorny issue that crops up when dealing with the Identity Theory is whether it warrants a discussion in terms of reference or not. Searle, for one, denies that a quotation has a reference. Rather, what he believes happens is that a word in quotation “is *presented* and then talked about, and that it is taken as presented and talked about rather than used conventionally to refer is indicated by the quotes. But the word is not referred to, nor does it refer to itself” (1969: 76; my emphasis; see also Recanati 1979: 67-70). This conception is close to that found in Ockham’s *Summa logicae* (I, 64), where Ockham argues that words in material supposition are not used ‘significatively’.<sup>117</sup> When one realises that Ockham’s *significatio* is for all practical purposes the same thing as modern-day *denotation* or *pre-contextual reference*, the analogy is easy to grasp.

Washington, by contrast, does not take a stand for or against reference, sticking as he does to the version that quotations mention linguistic objects. The question is whether his mention can be anything else than reference. Washington writes somewhere that, taken together, “[n]aming, describing, and demonstrating [...] exhaust the standard ways of mentioning non-linguistic objects” (1992: 582). These three ways are also the traditional forms of reference in the philosophical literature. Washington then goes on to say that ‘quotational use’ is fundamentally different from these. But quotational use is still a way of mentioning objects, albeit linguistic objects in this case. Elsewhere, Washington points out that “[o]bjects mentioned are the semantic values of mentioning expressions” (1992: 584), which, in an extensional semantics – which is

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<sup>117</sup> See Moody (1935: 41, 1967: 531). Note also how close Alféri’s interpretation of Ockham is to Searle’s statement: a sign does not exercise its reference “when it is simply *quoted*, between implicit inverted commas, in a metalanguage that presents it as a sign and neutralises its reference” (1989: 314).

what Washington seems to be concerned with – should imply that mention is the same thing as reference.<sup>118</sup> Such is, for instance, the interpretation of the Identity doctrine favoured by García-Carpintero (1994: 256) and Reimer (see above).

The term *reference* has stirred controversy perhaps ever since it was first used by philosophers, and this sub-chapter is not the place where the issue can be settled. In Chapter 5, I shall elaborate on the difference between displaying, demonstrating and referring, all of which may be involved when linguistic objects are mentioned. I shall make mine Recanati's contention that reference does not take place in all instances of quotation. I must nevertheless remark that, even on Recanati's account, most of the metalinguistic examples in this sub-chapter (i.e. (31), (34), (35) and (36), (37), (38) below), are fairly straightforward cases of 'referential' quotation. That is why I shall not refrain from using the term *reference* in the discussion that follows.

### (iii) Objection 3

The next objection I wish to examine originates in the very notion of identity. If the mentioning and the mentioned expression are one and the same thing, then the category to which the mentioning expression belongs<sup>119</sup> must vary with that of the mentioned expression. Precisely this claim has come under fire from several writers, notably Sørensen (1961) and Reimer (1996).<sup>120</sup> These two writers' arguments are comparable, though not identical. Sørensen believes that the Identity Theory (to which he refers as the 'standard hypostasis theory') requires that the subject in '*Happily*' is an adverb must be both a noun and an adverb. A noun because it occurs in subject position – Sørensen means *NP* –, and an adverb because that is what the Identity Theory claims it remains: the same word occurs in '*Happily*' is an adverb and in *They were happily married*, namely an adverb. This dual membership is a strange demand if there ever was one. In a slightly different perspective, Reimer disputes the notion that the 'semantic category' of the mentioning expression varies with that of the mentioned expression. On that account, the subjects in

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<sup>118</sup> The following depiction of *mention* in Washington (1998: 549) lends support to this interpretation: I do not think many a reader would be upset were *mention* to be replaced with *refer*:

[...] to mention an individual is to say something about it; to make it the topic of conversation [...]. An individual mentioned in a speech act is one whose characteristics help determine how the act is to be evaluated: whether a claim is true, a question pertinent or a response correct depends on the individuals mentioned in the act and what is said about them.

<sup>119</sup> Washington (1992) and Reimer (1996) label this category *semantic*. This label should be understood as being broader than 'lexical category' since, next to parts of speech, it also covers descriptions. At the same time, it is important to realise that, although called *semantic*, it has a clear grammatical dimension.

<sup>120</sup> Gómez-Torrente has a similar argument, though framed in different terms (2001: 137).

(36) *With* is a preposition.

(37) ‘Match’ presumably means ‘beat’ (Lodge 1989: 24)

are a preposition and a verb, respectively. Relying on an argument similar to Sørensen’s, Reimer thinks that this view is surely incorrect, because it would leave us unable to explain the grammaticality of these sentences: neither a preposition nor a verb can function as proper grammatical subjects. Though this argument looks very strong, I am not sure it is conclusive. But showing why would make us wander too far from the subject, so that I suggest leaving the matter to rest until Chapter 7.2.2.2, which is a more fitting setting for such a discussion.

#### (iv) Objection 4

In any case, there is, I believe, a more decisive criticism that can be levelled at the Identity Theory, something that Saka calls the ‘multiple ambiguity problem’ (a similar rebuttal occurs in García-Carpintero 1994: 261). A version of this argument has already been adduced as point (v) of 2.1.2 (feature 1), against the Name Theory. At the origin of this objection are formulations such as the following, which are found in the writings of Identity Theorists:

[quotation marks] function rather like the pointing finger by calling our attention to the very object about which we want to say something, and for this reason have produced. (Christensen 1967: 361; emphasis mine)<sup>121</sup>

“the device [of proper names] has no point when the object we wish to talk about is itself a stretch of discourse, and hence is easily produceable and does not require a separate linguistic device to refer to it” (Searle 1969: 75; already cited earlier in this chapter; emphasis mine).

What these passages claim is that there is, indeed, identity between actual tokens of words, and the ‘subject or object of discourse’. What we wish to talk about is this very thing that we produce in speech or writing.

The critic’s idea is fairly simple: if, as the Identity Theory contends, quotation consists in simultaneously using and mentioning the very same entity, then the conclusion is inescapable

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<sup>121</sup> Notwithstanding Saka’s associating him with the Demonstrative Theory, I believe that Christensen implicitly supports the Identity Theory (perhaps rather than being a true proponent of it). My claim is based on such passages as this: between (30) and (31), “[t]he distinction, however, is not one between use and mention of an expression; it is rather between two uses of one and the same expression in different capacities” (1967: 361). Besides, contrary to e.g. Sørensen and Davidson, Christensen never maintains that it is the quote marks that do the referring. On the other hand, it is true that he makes abundant use of words like *display*, *produce*, *demonstrate*, *point*, *present*, *exhibit*. So, there is a demonstrative dimension to his understanding, but that is true too of Searle, for instance, and of Reimer who explicitly seeks to combine Demonstrative and Identity accounts. Even Washington recognises that “[a]lthough Davidson’s theory is false, [...] quotation has more in common with demonstration than with naming or describing.” (1992: 605).

that only tokens, not types, can be quoted (because only tokens appear in discourse). Saka contends that this doctrine is plainly false, since quotation is ‘multiply ambiguous’, that is, it is capable of referring not just to tokens of the quoted expression (including itself, as in the Searle citation) but to a type as well. Actually, Saka goes on, it can also refer to form-content pairings, derivational forms, lexemes, etc. His verdict is irrevocable: pace Identity Theorists, quoted tokens refer not only to themselves but also to other linguistic entities with which they are in relation.<sup>122</sup>

Though Saka’s argument is essentially sound, I wish to qualify it in one respect. It does not go without saying that only tokens refer. Some writers rather adhere to the view that only ‘interpreted expressions’ or ‘form-content pairings’ refer. It is not necessary to contrast the two positions at this stage. A substantial part of Chapter 4 is devoted to the question of the reference of quotation (including so-called ‘multiple ambiguity’). The only thing I wish to say right now is that Saka’s argument holds irrespective of the kind of linguistic object that is regarded as ‘doing the referring’. Whether the mentioning expression is a token, a type, or a Lyonsian expression, it refers to a wide array of objects that cannot all be regarded as simply ‘its very self’. The only possible line of defence for an Identity Theorist would consist in claiming that a whole range of different linguistic objects occur in utterances that include quotation. For instance, a token is used when a token is mentioned, a type when a type is mentioned, a form-content pairing when a form-content pairing is mentioned, and so on. This counterargument is unsound, not just because it is absurd and *ad hoc* but also because it will always fail to account for the reference of the quotation in such examples as the following:

(38) [...] we discovered [...] that shop assistants said **“lovely”** when you gave them the right change, [...]. (Lodge 1996: 40)

The quotation refers to a series of tokens, namely the utterances produced by various shop assistants on various occasions. Saving the Identity Theory would therefore require claiming that a series of tokens do occur in this sentence. No one is ready to do that.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> One writer who would strongly object to Saka’s views is Christensen (1961: 60-61). For him, there is no systematic ambiguity (over and above ordinary polysemy or homonymy) because a string always has the same meaning. It is simply the use to which it is put that is going to make that string behave differently and exhibit various ‘things’ (In Christensen’s theory: a form vs a meaning vs a referent). The apparent ambiguity is therefore just an artefact of various discourse capacities.

<sup>123</sup> In addition to the objections reviewed here, Saka also identifies a ‘speech act (circularity/vacuity) problem’, which leads him to conclude that the Identity Theory provides no means of distinguishing between quotation and non-quotation. The argument is difficult to follow; one constantly wonders if Saka is relying on his own version of what the Identity Theory should be or on Washington’s formulation of what it is. The demonstration depends heavily on careful use of quotation marks, but given the above hesitation, it is hard to figure out if Saka is using the



(v) Objection 5.

Let me now turn to a final counterargument that can be derived from Droste (1983: 680), though the Dutch linguist's preoccupation is not directly with theories of quotation but with the kinds of lexical relations that hold between the headnouns of the subject-NPs in the following batch of examples:

(39) This book is very interesting.

(40) This book is burned at the edges.

(41) This 'book' was the first English word I had heard in almost twelve years.<sup>124</sup>

The headnouns of (39) and (40) stand for the conceptual content and the material volume, respectively. Are they homonyms or just two distinct senses of one and the same polysemous lexeme? Droste believes the latter view is correct, as witnessed by the unquestionable acceptability of the following sentence:

(42) This book is very interesting, but since it is burned at the edges, I would prefer another copy.

The fact that the anaphoric *it*, whose reference is to a volume, nevertheless substitutes for *This book*, whose reference is to the content, is proof enough that we are dealing with one and the same word. This has been a standard test in papers on the opposition between polysemy and homonymy: the presence of a 'zeugma-effect' in a sentence like (42) would support a verdict of homonymy; on the other hand, the absence of any zeugmatic oddity points towards polysemy. Now, the question is what happens if we try to build on the model of (42) an example including (41) and either (39) or (40). The answer is obvious: we get a zeugma-effect, e.g.:

(43) ?? This book is very interesting, and was the first English word I had heard in twelve years.

Therefore, Droste's conclusion is that an expression and its quotation are homonymous words.<sup>125</sup> This evidently runs counter to the basic assumption voiced by Searle and echoed by Recanati (1979) that they are 'obviously' one and the same word.<sup>126</sup>

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right number of inverted commas. Moreover, in the end, this problem looks to me like a mere variation on the recursion problem. I shall therefore not discuss it in any detail here.

<sup>124</sup> I have modified Droste's original example, '*Book*' is written with four letters, to pre-empt the objection that the three subject-NPs are not comparable, that of (36) not being determined by a demonstrative.

<sup>125</sup> A similar conclusion is arrived at by Josette Rey-Debove, but for different reasons (see 1978: 101-02).

<sup>126</sup> Recent research in lexical semantics (by Asher, Lascarides, Copestake, Briscoe, Pustejovsky, etc.) has nevertheless questioned the general validity of such tests as zeugmas and the prohibition of 'crossed-readings'. I cannot, unfortunately, explore these questions at any greater length.

### 2.4.1. Summing up

Washington (1992) asserts that the present theory fares better than any other with respect to the various objections raised previously. Let us review its strong points: to start with, iconicity is no problem because the theory dispenses with it: an object, whatever its nature, is, in a trivial sense, its own picture. Simultaneity is no problem either, for the equally trivial reason that the theory defines quotation as the simultaneous use and mention of a given sequence. Opacity too receives a straightforward explanation, since mention is defined as an anomalous use under which ordinary reference is suspended. As for productivity, it is also part of the package, given that the theory requires no new convention for each new quotation: just use whatever sequence you wish to quote, and the trick is done. Moreover, compared to Davidson's account, the Identity Theory has the added advantage that it is not overly dependent on quoting devices.

For all that, there are weaknesses. We saw that the theory did not succeed in capturing the compositional and referential recursiveness of quotation, a failure linked to its inherent inability to account for the various types of objects that can be referred to (or at least mentioned) in quotation. This, on any account whose central principle is the identity between the mentioning and the mentioned string, appears to be an insurmountable obstacle.

All in all, the chief target of the theory's opponents is its endorsement of what many regard as an inadmissible violation of a fundamental principle of language use, which can be formulated as follows: the entities that a sentence talks about do not occur in it, only designations of these entities do (cf Quine 1940: 23; Tarski 1944: 344; Geach 1957: 85; Sørensen 1961: 174ff, 183fn; Rey-Debove 1978: 145-47. See also, for qualifications, Carnap 1937: 156 & Reichenbach 1947: 10). In non-quotational contexts, the situation is clear: when I utter *My best friend is in love with Maria*, neither my best friend nor Maria are present as individuals in my utterance-token. This goes without saying. The writers just cited generalise this principle to quotational use as well. Identity Theorists do not: they deliberately maintain that in quotation the grammatical subject and the 'subject of discourse' coincide, as do the grammatical object and the 'object of discourse'. In so doing, of course, they are keenly aware of transgressing a widely held principle, but they regard the principle itself as a fallacy. In the end, the issue revolves around the question whether mere objects can be constituents of sentences which are otherwise made up of linguistic forms. The preceding discussion suggests a negative answer, but the problem is really too complex to be settled once and for all at this stage. It is addressed again, in much greater detail, in Chapter 7.2.2.2.

## 2.5. General conclusion

Before attempting a brief evaluation of the theories reviewed in this chapter, it may be useful to recapitulate their respective positions on a number of important points. In this regard, the table provided by Washington (1992: 586) proves invaluable. I give my own adapted version of it below (I have added the rightmost column):

	What does the mentioning ?	What is mentioned ?	Category of mentioning exp.	Role of marks
Name T.	the whole complex	Expression	Name	Part of name
Spelling T.	the whole complex	String of letters	Definite description	Part of description
Lexical T.	the whole complex	String of words	Definite description	Part of description
Demonstrative T.	Quote marks	'Shape' (type)	Demonstrative	Referring exp.
Identity T.	Interior	Expression	Anything	Pragmatic signal

**Table 1:** a comparison of the various theories

A few remarks are in order: *the whole complex* means « the quotation as a whole, including the quote marks ». I temporarily take *expression* to mean loosely « any linguistic unit, be it a phonetic or orthographic form, or a combination of form and meaning; perhaps even a non-linguistic entity ». Washington's *Anything* I understand as conveying the idea that the mentioning expression can be a word from any part of speech, or a phrase, a sentence, a non-word, a non-linguistic entity even. The final column requires some elucidation: neither the Name nor the Description Theory (in either of its variants) ascribes a particular semantic or grammatical role to the quotation marks: they are non-significant parts of a monomorphemic name (note, however, that they may be taken to signal that the linguistic object one is dealing with is a quotation-mark name). The Demonstrative Theory attributes the main semantic role to the quote marks: they do all the referring. The Identity Theory regards them as a (contingent) pragmatic signal or index with no particular grammatical or semantic role.

The Name and Description Theory are untenable. They are not empirically adequate if the description is to be extended to cases other than 'pure' quotation and direct speech. Their faults are a direct consequence of the context in which they were elaborated: rather than a descriptive

or explanatory purpose, they were designed to serve a normative purpose in the field of logic. It would be too easy, therefore, to poke fun at some of their more blatant inadequacies.

The situation of the other two theories is quite different, because they were, from the outset, developed to meet the demands of natural-language data. As it turns out, they are considerably more successful than their two rivals, in terms both of their empirical adequacy and of their power to throw light on the most interesting properties of quotation. As they stand, however, neither really makes the grade. The question, then, is which one is more likely to lend itself to such amendments as to clear the remaining obstacles. In particular, the resulting theory should be capable of accounting at once for such properties as recursiveness, variable reference and simultaneity. In this context, the role assigned to the markers of quotation should prove central, as should the kind of impact of pragmatics on semantics (or, at least, on truth-conditions) that is acknowledged by the theory.

Overall, the Demonstrative Theory holds greater promise than the Identity Theory. The chief reason is that the latter will forever remain incapable of explaining how various tokens of a quoted sequence variously refer to their very selves,<sup>127</sup> to other tokens, to types, to form-content pairings, etc, according to the context in which they occur. To be sure, the Demonstrative account has its faults too, but there still seems to be room for improvement. In particular, it must be investigated if a description can be supplied that makes demonstration compatible with non-referring quotation marks. In Chapters 4 and 5, I propose, amongst other things, to study two recent endeavours that sort out many of the issues left pending. Not surprisingly, those contributions, by Paul Saka and François Recanati, can be regarded as extensions and modifications of the Demonstrative account. Before examining Saka and Recanati, however, we shall have to equip ourselves with a solid semantic and pragmatic theory of the interpretation of utterances. That is the task undertaken in the next chapter.

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<sup>127</sup> An extremely rare occurrence; though, on the Identity Theory, the only possible pattern.

### CHAPTER 3: Towards a general framework for the interpretation of utterances

This chapter initially came into existence as a parenthesis inside Chapter 4, i.e. the chapter devoted to the views of Paul Saka: it was originally meant to clarify a number of concepts that were essential for making informed judgments in rather tricky arguments. But then it dawned on me that additional theoretical clarifications would have to be made in subsequent chapters as well. In the end, I realised that I needed to equip myself with a fairly sophisticated semantic and pragmatic theory if I was to say something relevant about metalinguistic discourse. A piecemeal presentation of key theoretical notions proved to be inexpedient and the need for a separate chapter loomed larger and larger. In becoming a chapter in its own right, my various theoretical considerations have undergone a substantial overhaul. In particular, whereas they were originally introduced in connection with concrete problems (the ‘current events’ of my investigations), I have had to strip them of their immediate relevance and to integrate them into a sort of top-down exposition. As an inevitable result of this process of abstraction, my motives for dwelling on certain theoretical issues rather than others may not be readily apparent. I none the less trust my reader for bearing with me throughout this chapter and for waiting until subsequent chapters to assess the relevance of the points I am to make presently.<sup>128</sup>

I will begin with a presentation of the framework for analysis set out by John Lyons in his *Linguistic Semantics*. This will provide me with what can be called a ‘one-dimensional’ semantics, i.e. a semantics in which propositions have a fixed truth-value. When that is done, I shall show how these views can be incorporated within a bi-dimensional semantics such as is used by David Kaplan and, especially, François Recanati. When that, in turn, has been done, I will briefly consider the interface between semantics and pragmatics. In particular, I shall address the question whether pragmatic factors can affect the truth-conditions of a sentence and still remain pragmatic in nature.

My reasons for standing by a Lyonsian framework that is apparently superseded by a more powerful one are multiple. There are the somewhat flimsy biographical motivations: it is thanks to Lyons’s *Linguistic Semantics* that I ‘came of age’ in the field of semantics. This coming of age resulted in the wholesale adoption of Lyons’s framework and in the drafting of substantial

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<sup>128</sup> As a precaution, however, I will occasionally hint at the applicability of this or that notion to a study of metalinguistic discourse. Yet, in this chapter, I will try to avoid dealing with metalinguistic (especially quotational) examples so as not to pre-empt the discussions that follow at later stages of this dissertation.

portions of text saturated with Lyonsian terminology. In the end, so much material had been written under Lyons's auspices, so to speak, that it would have been too impractical subsequently to simply replace the old idols with the new. But I also acted under more compelling motivations: Lyons's scheme has the notable advantage of being very clear and meticulously defined, an invaluable asset. Furthermore, there are distinctions made by Lyons that are overlooked by the more powerful theories: in particular, Lyons dissociates the type-token relation from the expression-form relation, a move that will prove useful at a later stage in this dissertation (cf next chapter). Finally, there is, appearances notwithstanding, a way in which Lyons's theory can be integrated into a more comprehensive bi-dimensional framework. There was therefore no reason to throw out the baby with the bathwater.<sup>129</sup>

### 3.1. John Lyons's semantics

According to Lyons, it is sentences that are carriers of truth-conditions, insofar as they express a propositional content. Utterances, on the other hand, are carriers of a truth-value, insofar as they express a proposition. The propositional content is the meaning that can be derived from an utterance by any interpreter fully competent in the relevant language, regardless of the context of utterance. This notion subsumes the product of the hearer's knowledge of lexical meaning, his/her understanding of syntactic structure, and his/her application of the principle of the compositionality of meaning. Being context-insensitive, propositional content is vastly underdetermined: for example, it does not encode the semantic values of indexicals (deictics), proper nouns or referential definite descriptions. That part of the meaning, which is clearly context-bound, but 'anticipated' by the conventional meaning of these expressions, is encoded in the proposition. It is because an utterance expresses a proposition, and because, in Lyons's view, the proposition is determinate or 'saturated' (its referring expressions have been granted a semantic value relative to the context), that the utterance (as a token)<sup>130</sup> can be granted a truth-value. No truth-value can be ascribed to a propositional content, since it is indeterminate. Still, when a competent speaker has computed the propositional content of an utterance, s/he can already figure out its truth-conditions. As a matter of fact, Lyons establishes a firm connection

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<sup>129</sup> For the sake of completeness, let me point out that Lyons (1977), which constitutes a much more detailed discussion than Lyons (1995), already complexifies the issues in such a way as to make his analysis compatible with more sophisticated theories.

<sup>130</sup> Following Lyons and others, I have mostly taken *utterance* to designate the product of an act. However, where relevant, a distinction will be drawn between *utterance-acts* (= énonciations) and *utterance-tokens* (= énoncés). I will not usually distinguish between spoken and written utterance-tokens: my use of the term *utterance-inscription* for written tokens will therefore be sparse.

between propositional content and truth-conditions: “Sentences have the same propositional content if and only if they have the same truth-conditions” (1995: 148). There is an intimate connection too between propositions and truth-value: (in a given world,)<sup>131</sup> a proposition has its truth-value once and for all. In the historical world that I live in, the proposition that « Napoleon Bonaparte (the Emperor, not my neighbour’s dog, nor my Haitian friend, etc.) was defeated at Waterloo (Belgium, Walloon Brabant) in 1815 A. D. » is true once and for all.

With respect to the truth-evaluability of utterances, the propositional content and the proposition are the most important aspects of meaning. But there are others. In Lyons’s scheme, propositional content is only one facet, albeit the most important one, of the non-contextual meaning of a sentence: ‘sentence-meaning’, as Lyons labels it, also includes the so-called ‘characteristic use’ of a sentence.<sup>132</sup> This component of meaning simply encodes the default interpretation associated with a particular category of sentence (or ‘sentence-type’): grammatically declarative sentences are characteristically used for making statements, interrogatives for questions, exclamatives for wishes, and imperatives for directives. Inclusion of characteristic use accounts for the meaning difference between *Brandy can be bought with special coupons*, *Can brandy be bought with special coupons?* and *Buy brandy with special coupons*. If sentence-meaning were reduced to propositional content, as it often is in other accounts, these three sentences would have to be judged to possess the same contextual-independent meaning, a conclusion that is too manifestly at odds with speaker’s intuitions. In Lyons’s scheme, their different characteristic uses explain their distinct sentence-meanings. This being said, characteristic use does not condemn a sentence to a single actual use: each instantiation of *Brandy can be bought with special coupons* need not be a statement; it may be used to perform a speech act that ‘conflicts’ with the characteristic use of the sentence uttered, e.g. an order, an encouragement, a denial, etc. The default assumption that, being declarative, the utterance in question is a statement, is defeasible.

Just as propositional content does not exhaust the versatility of sentence-meaning, the proposition expressed by an utterance does not account for all of the ‘utterance-meaning’, i.e. the content that an interpreter can put together when making full use of the information provided by the context of utterance. Next to a complete proposition, utterance-meaning notably encodes

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<sup>131</sup> The relevance of this parenthesis comes out clearly when I introduce the bi-dimensional framework.

<sup>132</sup> And perhaps also thematic meaning, i.e. the meaningful contribution of the order and manner in which speakers and writers present the theme they are talking about. (See Lyons 1995: 154-57 for a discussion).

which kind of illocutionary act has been performed and what set of conversational implicatures can be inferred on the basis of the uttering of the sentence under consideration.

In the last few paragraphs, I have relied on a standard distinction between sentences and utterances. Though Lyons does not redraw the boundaries between these two categories, he supplies some further clarifications that are worth more than a cursory glance. First in line is the distinction between utterances as tokens and as types. In Lyons's terminology, the type-token relationship is strictly a matter of formal resemblance (cf 1977: 21). This means that it is not affected by ambiguity or underdetermination or the variety of speech acts that the sequence can be used to perform: all tokens of *He was in the grip of a vice* instantiate the same utterance-type, regardless of whether *vice* designates a form of moral turpitude or a metal tool, or of whether the utterance is intended as a plain statement of fact, a warning or an indictment. Now, whereas types are abstract entities,<sup>133</sup> utterance-tokens are located in time and space: they are the products of the process of using language (= the products of utterance-acts). What a speaker utters is often, but by no means always, a sentence. The latter term is endowed with two distinct senses, one concrete, the other more abstract, which are not always clearly distinguished in the literature (cf 1977: 29-30). In the concrete sense, sentences are a subset of utterances; Lyons calls them 'text-sentences'. In the more abstract sense, sentences are theoretical constructs useful notably in settling matters of grammaticality or determining propositional content; Lyons calls them 'system-sentences'. It is mostly in the latter sense that the term is employed in the present section. One way of justifying the division between text- and system-sentences is to show how it helps us make sense of the paradoxical observation that the utterance of a sentence does not always result in a sentence (cf. 1995: 260f). In textbook cases, the products of uttering system-sentences are text-sentences. But what of the next example ?

(1) Have you seen Mary ? I haven't. Peter hasn't either. She is never here when she should be. (Lyons 1995: 261)

There are four utterance-tokens (separated by punctuation marks), only two of which, the first and fourth, would usually rate as (syntactically complete) text-sentences. The second and third are sentence-fragments, and yet they are perfectly understandable. That is because these fragments result from the utterance of the system-sentences *I have not seen Mary* and *Peter has not seen Mary*. Lyons suggests that it is only via the (reconstruction of a) system-sentence that

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<sup>133</sup> I do not wish to commit myself to a particular ontology, nor do I need to do so. I will simply assume that types exist, at least, as theoretical objects. Perhaps they are more than that, I do not know.



the meaning, in particular the propositional content, of these fragments is accessed. If the utterance-token *I haven't* was not related to the system-sentence *I have not seen Mary*, then it could equally mean « I have not been to Germany before », « I have never been married », etc. If we do not posit the existence of something like system-sentences, the argument goes, it is impossible to explain how hearers/readers rightly interpret such indefinitely ambiguous sequences as *I haven't*.

Just as the underdetermination of *I haven't* is resolved by appealing to the various system-sentences tokened by this utterance, so is the ambiguity of *He was in the grip of a vice*. We saw above that, as a result of a terminological decision, we could not avail ourselves of the utterance-type vs utterance-token opposition to explain this ambiguity. Here again we need to realise that tokens of the same utterance-type may be related to distinct system-sentences:<sup>134</sup> some tokens of *He was in the grip of a vice* are utterances of a sentence whose propositional content is something like « a male individual (already referred to, or pointed at) is experiencing the unpleasant consequences of an uncontrollable immoral habit », while others are paired with the very different content, « a male individual (already referred to, or pointed at) is being held firmly between the two jaws of a metal tool ».

A logical consequence of the foregoing is that it makes no sense to try and ascribe definite truth-conditions (or truth-values) to utterance-types, unless they are forms of logical necessity or logical contradiction. In practice, definite truth-conditions can only be attributed to utterance-tokens inasmuch as they are associated with a particular system-sentence. In other words, fixing the truth-conditions of an utterance depends on a prior process of disambiguation. This applies not just to cases of lexical ambiguity (like the example in the previous paragraph), but also to syntactic ambiguity. Let us assume, rather untypically, that I have accidentally overheard someone produce the following utterance-token but have not been able to make out anything of its linguistic environment:

(2) She hit the man with the stick.

In this case, all I can do is recognise an utterance-type that is grammatically ambiguous: it can be related to two sentences (each with its own propositional content), one that can be uttered to assert that a determinate stick was used by a female person to hit a determinate man (*with a stick* is an instrument adjunct), while the other can serve to assert that a female person hit a

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<sup>134</sup> I had already made this point in passing under feature 2 of Chapter 2.1.2.

determinate man who was carrying a stick (*with a stick* is a postmodifier of *man*). It is important to note that neither sentence is to be regarded as ambiguous. Under normal circumstances, when the hearer is in the presence of the utterer (and there are no external disturbances caused by noise, or speech and hearing impairments, and the like), an utterance-token that instantiates an ambiguous utterance-type will often turn out to be unambiguous, because the context usually has a disambiguating effect. That is, the context makes it clear which system-sentence is uttered by means of a given token. I shall make use of this possibility of pairing various tokens of the same utterance-type with different sentences in the tricky discussion of examples (4) and (5) in the next chapter.

I will discontinue my presentation of Lyons's theory presently. Other aspects of it will be set out in the next chapter. These are too remote from our present concerns to be dealt with here. To conclude this section, let me just make a general point: it is clear that context is the major criterion on which Lyons's distinctions are based: sentence-meaning is entirely context-insensitive; utterance-meaning includes the entire contribution of contextual factors. It would not be surprising, therefore, if different views from Lyons's were to originate in a different conception of the context. This, as we shall see presently, indeed proves to be the case.

### 3.2. Bi-dimensional semantics

Lyons's are consistent but contentious positions. To begin with, there are a host of scholars, especially philosophers of language, who freely use propositional content and proposition as synonyms. More importantly, many are those who ascribe truth-conditions not to a sketchy propositional content à la Lyons, but to a complete proposition. A case in point is Bach, who argues that it "makes sense to speak of open or incomplete propositions but not truth conditions" (2001: 42 note 9). In other words, an incomplete proposition cannot, in Bach's opinion, have truth-conditions, because there is no such thing as incomplete truth-conditions. This, however, is precisely Lyons's point of view when he makes truth-conditions relative to propositional content: propositional content is even more skeletal than incomplete propositions à la Bach. We are forced to conclude that different scholars have different conceptions of what truth-conditions are.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> It is not always easy to make out exactly what is the standard view. Take the following description by Crimmins in his encyclopaedic article on "Proposition":

Propositions, then, as standardly understood are contents of utterances and of propositional attitudes, they are not individuated in terms of any particular language, they are tightly bound up with, or identical to, their truth conditions,

Unlike Lyons, Recanati subscribes (on this score, at any rate) to something like Bach's conception: to him, truth-conditions are a feature of propositions, not of propositional contents. On the face of it, this should make Lyons's and Recanati's views irreconcilable: Lyons's proposition has a truth-value, Recanati's has truth-conditions. The incompatibility, however, can be disposed of. How this can be done is best shown on the basis of an example:

(3) Lytton is my next-door neighbour.

If I factor in the conventional meanings of the five words and ascribe to the sentence the correct syntactic analysis, I obtain the following propositional content: « the bearer (or one of the bearers) of the name *Lytton* is the next-door neighbour of the utterer of the token (3) ». This is the part of the proposition expressed that I would understand if I had found this inscription jotted down on a slip of paper, without any notion of where and when it was written, who it was written by or for.<sup>136</sup> Although Recanati recognises the existence of this level of meaning – he calls it ‘character’, according to David Kaplan’s terminology, or ... ‘sentence meaning’ (2001b: 75) –<sup>137</sup> he does not endow it with truth-conditions: this level of interpretation provides a mere semantic skeleton waiting to be fleshed out. But let us return to our analysis of (3): if I am given access to the context of utterance, and thus come after the fact that the utterer of (3) is Ms Madeline Alldark from Stoke Newington, who lives at 34, Eagleburger Terrace, and that the bearer of *Lytton* is Mr Lytton Powell, who lives at number 36 on the same street, I can infer the proposition expressed by (3): « Mr Lytton Powell [+ all sorts of details] is Ms Madeline

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they are unchanging bearers of truth, falsity, contingency, or necessity, and they stand in relations of entailment, exclusion and compatibility. (1997a: 287; my emphasis).

There might seem to be a contradiction between the idea that propositions “are the same as their truth-conditions” and the notion that they are “unchanging bearers” of truth etc. Truth-conditions entail the ability to be true or false in a given context, while being an unchanging bearer of truth or falsity amounts to having a fixed truth-value, independent of the context of occurrence. Yet, I believe that the apparent contradiction stems from the brevity of Crimmins’s presentation: I understand “unchanging bearers of truth” to be tautologies (while unchanging bearers of falsity are logical contradictions). But next to these ‘eternal’ propositions there are others (actually the vast majority) that have truth-conditions, but no fixed truth-value. This is what Crimmins’s mention of *contingency* implies (although the formula *unchanging bearer of contingency* is not very felicitous). On this reading, contingent propositions, even though they encode the semantic values of referring expressions, are still to be judged true or false. This means that there is a further ‘circumstance of evaluation’ relative to which a truth-value can be ascribed to the utterance.

<sup>136</sup> The unknown slip of paper provides a valid characterisation of the propositional content only when the utterance tokened on the slip is complete and instantiates an unambiguous utterance-type. If, in my example, the type had been ambiguous, I would have had to reconstruct as many propositional contents as there were sentences possibly utterable by the token in question (see 2 above and the *vice* example). And if it had been syntactically incomplete, e.g. *No, she me*, I would only have been able to infer an extremely fragmentary content (cf example 1 above).

<sup>137</sup> The term *character* and its Kaplanian counterpart *content* will be discussed below. Note in passing that quite a few scholars simply equate propositional content with sentence-meaning, i.e. that they attribute to sentences no meaning (semantic content) other than truth-conditional.

Alldark's [+ all sorts of details] next-door neighbour ». If I further assume that the context of utterance is an aspect of the world  $w_i$  in which I too live (the historical world that we take for granted), then, in a way, provided my identification of the referents is sufficiently detailed,<sup>138</sup> the proposition also provides me with a truth-value: the utterance asserts a true proposition. This being said, if I allow for the existence of other possible worlds  $w_j$  (with  $j \neq i$ ), then the proposition need not be true: its truth or falsity will have to be decided in accordance with the facts and situations that constitute the reality of that world. For instance, in the counterfactual world of *If Lytton had not been my next-door neighbour*, the proposition above is false. Therefore, if possible worlds are taken into account, a proposition provides me with truth-conditions instead of a fixed truth-value.

Lyons's basic account can be described as one-dimensional to the extent that it recognises only one context: no distinction is introduced between the world  $w_i$  with respect to which referents are assigned to referring expressions and the world  $w_j$  in reference to which the truth of the proposition thus obtained must be evaluated.<sup>139</sup> Recanati, by contrast, distinguishes between two sorts of context and can therefore be said to operate with a 'bi-dimensional' semantics. M. Leezenberg (1997: 223) traces this type of semantic theory to Hans Kamp's work on tense-logic; Kamp's original term was 'double indexing'. By 'double indexing', Kamp meant the distinction of two kinds of context that enter into truth-evaluation, the 'context of utterance' and a 'circumstance of evaluation'. Originally, this innovation was intended to capture the (possible) difference between the moment of utterance and the time determined by the tense operators of a sentence. I quote Harry Deutsch, who offers an excellent illustration of the point at issue:

Consider the sentence

(1) Jones will remember what Smith said just now.

The truth or falsity of this sentence at a moment in time  $t$  depends on the truth or falsity of the present tense sentence

(2) Jones remembers what Smith said just now

at moments  $t'$  future to  $t$ . But the referent of the occurrence of 'now' in (2) must refer back to  $t$  and not to any future moments  $t'$ . This means that the semantic rule for 'now' cannot be simply the rule which states that at any time  $t$ , 'now' refers to  $t$ . Instead, the rule must say that a use of 'now' at a time  $t$  will refer at time  $t$  and any other time to  $t$ . Thus, the rule for now must be

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<sup>138</sup> How detailed a proposition is is a contentious issue that I cannot go into here (see f.i. Kaplan 1989a: 502-04 for a discussion on whether the proposition must be specific as to time). For Lyons, however, it is clear that a proposition is complete and therefore truth-evaluable.

<sup>139</sup> In fairness, this comment is valid only relative to the basic framework set out in Lyons (1995). Lyons (1977), which is more comprehensive, contains enlightening discussions of time, tense and possible worlds, and deals with (tenseless) propositions that may be true at time  $t_1$  but not at  $t_2$ . (See f.i. Lyons 1977: 809-23).

‘double-indexed’. In general, the semantic rules for indexicals must involve the pairing of two sorts of parameter: contextual and circumstantial. The contextual parameters (speaker, time of utterance, place of utterance, world of utterance, addressee and so on) fix the referent of an indexical so that its interpretation is unaffected by any circumstantial parameter (possible world, moment of time) required by the presence of tense or modal elements. (1998: 878)

To sum up, Kamp’s idea is that, when a sentence contains a temporal indexical, it is relative to the context of utterance that the value (reference) of that indexical must be fixed, not relative to any (later or prior) context signalled by an indication of time (tense marker or other) in the sentence. Yet, there is no doubt that the truth of a sentence containing such a marker of pastness or futurity must be evaluated relative to the relevant past or future context (the sentence does not have to be true relative to the time of utterance). Hence, the inevitability of distinguishing two contexts (two indices).

This double-index picture of semantics has been adopted and extended by a variety of writers, notably Kaplan and Recanati. In the literature, the context of utterance is usually defined as comprising a limited number of parameters that are instrumental in supplying indexicals with a reference: speaker, time and place of utterance are always included. But there is no general agreement, it appears, on exactly which (and how many) other features deserve to be included in addition (e.g. the addressee or the various targets of demonstrations). This has prompted some writers to claim “that an indefinite number of contextual aspects can be relevant” to the context of utterance; hence it is not possible to “tell in advance which one will be needed”, i.e. to ‘parametrise’ contextual features (Leezenberg 1997: 224; reporting Cresswell’s views). In the literature consulted, many definitions symptomatically leave open the exact composition of the context.

Whatever features we agree to include within the context, the insight that led to the development of the double-index picture was undoubtedly fruitful. When Kaplan adopted it, he articulated it with his distinction between ‘character’ and ‘content’. I pointed out earlier that Lyons’s propositional content was the same as Kaplan’s character. More accurately, it is the same as the character of a sentence, but other linguistic units have character too, e.g. words and phrases. “The character of an expression is set by linguistic conventions”, writes Kaplan, and therefore, “it is natural to think of it as *meaning* in the sense of what is known by the competent language user” (1989a: 505). Kaplan adduces an interesting insight in support of character: there is a sense of *meaning* “in which, absent lexical or syntactical ambiguities, two occurrences of the *same* word or phrase *must* mean the same. (Otherwise how could we learn to communicate with language ?)” (1989a: 524; original emphasis). That sense of meaning is what Kaplan calls

*character*. Character can accordingly also be understood as the sense of expressions as ‘types’.<sup>140</sup> ‘Content’, by contrast, is understood as applying to expressions as contextual occurrences. The content of an occurrence is determined by its character. Kaplan suggests regarding both character and content as functions, roughly in the mathematical sense of the term. Character could then be defined as a function from a context to a content; that is, in a given context of utterance, character will select a certain content.

Let us take indexicals as an illustration:<sup>141</sup> the character of *I*, its conventional meaning as a ‘type’, can be expressed reflexively as « the person who, in the relevant context, utters the token of *I* ». When a competent interpreter encounters a token of *I*, s/he will identify its utterer as the content of *I*. That the content, in this case, should be a referent stems from the fact that we are dealing with a referential expression. But that need not always be the case: the content of a description (or a common noun) would be a class, that of an utterance-token a proposition.<sup>142</sup> Since “[i]t is contents that are evaluated in circumstances of evaluation” (1989a: 501), content can be defined as a function from circumstances of evaluation to ‘extensions’; content therefore outputs extensions. In the case of utterances, the extension is a truth-value. Curiously perhaps, the extension of an indexical is an individual, actually the same individual that is its content. It may seem odd, at first sight, that evaluation should not affect indexicals, whereas it affects utterances in such a striking way (it inputs a proposition and outputs a truth-value). In reality, the reason for this seeming oddity is simple, and it has already been provided in the long citation from Deutsch (1998) above. Contrary to nonindexicals (e.g. common nouns), indexicals have a nonstable character but a stable content.<sup>143</sup> Each context of utterance is likely to provide a different referent for an indexical like *I*. It is said that character is unstable because it outputs different values in different contexts. As soon as a referent has been assigned, however, it

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<sup>140</sup> I must warn my reader that, in Kaplan’s or Recanati’s mind, *type* conflates two notions, which Lyons calls *type* (a formal entity) and *expression* (a combination of form(s) and conventional meaning), respectively. Since the distinction is not crucial at this stage, I will abide by these writers’ usage as long as I discuss their theories. The differentiation between type and expression is performed in the next chapter.

<sup>141</sup> For the following discussion, I have relied especially on Kaplan (1989a: 506); Levinson (1997); Leezenberg (1997); Deutsch (1998).

<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately, as we could already notice in the Crimmins citation a few pages earlier, the present use of *content* is at variance with its meaning in Lyons’s *propositional content*.

<sup>143</sup> Two notes of caution: the formulation *unstable character* is potentially confusing. Earlier, I described the character of *I* as something like a definition of the word as type. In that sense, obviously, character is very stable, given that there is only one type *I*. One must therefore understand *unstable* as applying to the output of character understood as a function: the same conventional meaning, applied to various contexts, yields various referents. As for the stable content of indexicals, it too may generate confusion. What must be understood is this: once the content of an indexical has been determined relative to a given content of utterance, this content will remain unchanged as long as the context of utterance remains constant.

remains unchanged whatever the circumstance of evaluation. That is why the content of an indexical is said to be a stable function: it outputs a constant. Note that this is just another manner of making the same point that is developed in Deutsch's argument about *now*. To throw the most revealing light on the specific nature of indexicals, it is useful to contrast their behaviour with that of other expressions, say descriptive phrases (i.e. containing a common noun). The way I understand Kaplan, a phrase like *the chairman of the board* has an invariant character, but this character does not output a referent: instead, it yields "an intension that still needs to be evaluated at a circumstance (i.e., a possible world-time pair) in order to yield an extension" (Leezenberg 1997: 224). As a result, the content of *the chairman of the board* is unstable, because it will yield different extensions in different circumstances of evaluation. The discrepant behaviour of indexicals and nonindexicals is what prompts Kaplan to suggest the following summary: "Occurrences of two phrases can agree in content although the phrases differ in character, and two phrases can agree in character but differ in content in distinct contexts" (1989a: 524). To illustrate the first situation, we can think of John uttering "I have bought a car" and Pete uttering "He has bought a car" about John: *I* and *he* have a different character but the same content (in this example). Other classic examples are the names *Hesperus* and *Phosphorus* or the descriptions *the morning star* and *the evening star*, which all have a different character but the same content (the planet Venus). The second situation is perhaps more difficult to illustrate, because Kaplan's formulation is confusing. His mention of *two phrases* seems to imply that he is not talking of two tokens of the same type, but of two distinct expression-types. If that is the case, however, I cannot see clearly how these could have the same character. I therefore choose to interpret Kaplan as follows: if we take two distinct tokens of the description *the chairman*, its character remains unchanged, but its content may be « Alistair Cook, of M. Straw & Son Ltd » in one case, and « Robin Campbell, of J. Short & Sons » in the other. This resembles (but is not identical with) the opposition between Sinn and Bedeutung as theorised by Frege, a kinship indeed acknowledged by Kaplan (cf 1989a: 524).

Earlier, I ventured that the adoption of the double-index picture has proved a fruitful move. Let me now lend some support to that claim. Leezenberg (1997: 225) and Deutsch (1998: 880) point out that this move has led to a possible account of the difference between a 'logical truth' and a 'necessary truth' (see Kaplan 1989a: 508-10, 522-23). Logical truth is a property of a sentence that expresses a true proposition in all contexts of utterance (without being necessary); whereas necessary truth is a property of a sentence that expresses a true proposition relative to all

circumstances of evaluation. Leezenberg (ibid.) states that logical truth is a matter of character while necessary truth is a matter of content (cf Kaplan 1989a: 538). Let me illustrate:

(4) 27 is the cube of 3

(5) I am here now.

(4) is necessarily true, whatever the context in which it is uttered. The null impact of the context stems from the fact that (4) contains no indexicals. What is more, whatever the particular world relative to which it is to be evaluated (Belgium in 1830, the Moon in 1969, Venus in 2525), the proposition expressed by (4) is true.<sup>144</sup> As far as (5) is concerned, its peculiarity resides in the fact that, although it “cannot be uttered falsely” (Kaplan 1989a: 509), it does not express a necessary proposition. That is because each utterance of *I am here now* expresses a different proposition (« Ph. De Brabanter is in room AZ4.109 on 4/2/2002 at 8.55 GMT », « J.-P. van Noppen is in room AZ4.109 on 4/2/2002 at 9.14 GMT », etc.). Each time a speaker says *I am here now*, s/he is inevitably ‘there’ ‘then’. But Ph. De Brabanter’s being in room AZ4.109 on 4/2/2002 at 8.55 GMT is an entirely contingent fact. He could have been in a million other places at that very moment. Likewise, there is no need for Ph. De Brabanter to have been in room AZ4.109 when J.-P. van Noppen uttered (5) at 9.14 GMT on 4/2/2002 (Ph DB actually was not).<sup>145</sup>

The difference between logical and necessary truths can be neatly captured by tables with two variables, one for the context of utterance, the other for the circumstance of evaluation.<sup>146</sup> These tables encode the application of two functions, character and content. As we have seen, when character is applied to utterances, it is a function that maps contexts into contents, the output of which is propositions. As for content, it maps circumstances of evaluation into extensions, the output of which is truth-values. In the leftmost column of the three tables below, I give three different contexts of utterance. These I have chosen to regard as being contained in a wider world, which is the reason why I have chosen the abbreviations  $w_i$  etc. to stand for them. In the topmost row, I give three different circumstances of evaluation, each of which corresponds to the world around each of the contexts of utterance. Let us first look at a table for sentence (3), about which I shall assume that it expresses a true proposition relative to its context of utterance:

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<sup>144</sup> Perhaps some sort of ‘counterfactual world’ can always be devised in which the most ‘eternal’ context-independent truths can be falsified. On the other hand, it may be that philosophers agree that there are restrictions on the proliferation of possible worlds; I do not know. Another potential objection is easier to dispose of: what happens if we do not use base 10 as our standard? In base 8, for instance, 27 (i.e.  $27_8$ ) equals  $23_{10}$  (i.e. 23 in base 10). And  $27_{10}$  is the same as  $33_8$ . I suppose the issue boils down to a matter of explicitness:  $27_{10}$  necessarily is the cube of  $3_{10}$ .

<sup>145</sup> Another example of logical but not necessary truth discussed in the literature is *I exist* (cf Kaplan 1989a: 540; Deutsch 1998: 880).

<sup>146</sup> I am indebted to Marc Dominicy for bringing so-called ‘double-index’ analyses to my attention, and helping me understand how two-variable tables work.



	w <sub>1</sub>	w <sub>2</sub>	w <sub>3</sub>
w <sub>1</sub>	T	?	?
w <sub>2</sub>	?	?	?
w <sub>3</sub>	?	?	?

**table 2** (*Lytton is my next-door neighbour*)

This is a sentence that expresses a contingent proposition. For the sake of argument, I have assumed that it is true when uttered in the context of utterance  $w_1$  and evaluated relative to that same world (in other words, Madeline Alldark was speaking the truth). This situation is represented by the *T* in the top left cell. The cell to its right represents the evaluation of the same proposition in a different circumstance, for instance in ten years' time; and similarly for the top right cell: quite obviously, with a 'synthetic' sentence like (3), it is impossible to tell a priori if it would be or was true in a different world. Such an evaluation requires empirical evidence. The cells in the  $w_2$  line represent a different proposition, e.g. « Mr Lytton Cheney is Miss Susie Sioux's next-door neighbour ». The proposition is different because it has undergone saturation (a referent has been assigned to each of its referring expressions) in a different context of utterance, one in which the speaker was Susie Sioux and *Lytton* stood for Mr Cheney, not Mr Powell. There is nothing that guarantees the truth of such an utterance relative to any circumstance of evaluation. The same comment applies to the  $w_3$  line, which might for instance represent the proposition, « Mr James Stewart is Mr John Ford's next-door neighbour », assuming that John Ford calls James Stewart *Lytton*.

Table 2 and its accompanying comment were meant to help my reader understand how to interpret such tables. More interesting are table 3 and table 4, which summarise the possible truth-values of sentences (4) and (5). Here the tables come into their own, as they make the difference between a necessary and a logical truth impossible to miss:

	w <sub>1</sub>	w <sub>2</sub>	w <sub>3</sub>
w <sub>1</sub>	T	T	T
w <sub>2</sub>	T	T	T
w <sub>3</sub>	T	T	T

**Table 3** (*27 is the cube of 3*)

	w <sub>1</sub>	w <sub>2</sub>	w <sub>3</sub>
w <sub>1</sub>	T	?	?
w <sub>2</sub>	?	T	?
w <sub>3</sub>	?	?	T

**Table 4** (*I am here now*)

As we can see, neither the context of utterance nor the circumstance of evaluation have any impact on the truth of *27 is the cube of 3*. By contrast, table 4 shows that the logical truth *I am here now* is certain to be true only when it is evaluated with respect to the context of utterance, i.e. when  $w_i = w_j$ . In a one-dimensional scheme, where only the shaded cells along the diagonal are taken into consideration, it would be very difficult indeed to bring out the difference between (4) and (5): relative to their context of utterance, tokens of both are always true.

Let me wrap up this section with a few hints as to the relevance of the foregoing to a study of metalinguistic use. To begin with, Recanati (2001a) examines several instances of hybrid quotations whose analysis requires a distinction between context and circumstance of evaluation. As a matter of fact, Recanati goes even further and proposes a redefinition of the context “as a triple  $\langle L, s, c \rangle$  where  $L$  is a language,  $s$  is a situation of utterance comprising a number of parameters [speaker, hearer, time, etc.], and  $c$  a circumstance of evaluation [e.g. a possible world]” (2001a: 679). This broad notion of the context must not be confused with the context of utterance we have used so far in this section. The latter is relabelled ‘situation of utterance’. As for the inclusion of a language  $L$ , it follows from the assumption that the context *lato sensu* plays a role at a ‘pre-semantic’ stage of interpretation: in order for semantic interpretation to begin, the sentence one is dealing with must first be assigned to a particular language (more about this idea in section 3.3). Recanati’s overall motivation for defining the broad context above is (i) that there are many cases of hybrid quotation that involve a ‘context-shift’; (ii) that such shifts can affect any of the parameters included in the context *lato sensu*. Though I do not wish to spill the beans at this stage, let me offer a foretaste of what Recanati means by ‘context-shift’, albeit with respect to a non-quotational example:

(6) In the film, a giant spider swallows New York City. (Recanati 2000: 168)

The whole sentence is about the actual world – the film is an aspect of the actual world – but the assertion is to be evaluated relative to the world of the film. There is, therefore, a shift in the circumstance of evaluation (which Recanati 2000 simply calls a ‘world’): “The complex representation is true in the actual world iff the embedded representation is true in the world introduced by the prefix [*in the film*]” (2000: 168). Other world-shifting expressions are *X believes that* and *if*-conditionals.

Example (6) illustrated a circumstance-shift. But, as we shall see in Chapter 5, other examples involve language-shifts or shifts in the situation of utterance. It is easy to realise, for instance, that direct speech always triggers a shift in the situation of utterance  $s$ , since values are assigned

to indexicals relative to the context in which the quoted sequence was uttered, not the situation in which the reporting sentence is uttered. To sum up, since shifts can affect both the situation of utterance and the circumstance of evaluation (plus the language), it is necessary to operate with a bi-dimensional semantics.

As a final comment, I would briefly like to show how the distinction between logical and necessary truth can be applied to certain types of metalinguistic utterances. Some metalinguistic statements are logical truths in the same way as *I am here now*. In footnote 55 (previous chapter), I alluded to Michael Wreen's discussion of *Socrates is called 'Socrates'*. Wreen's claim was that the proposition expressed by that sentence is true in every world where that sentence exists. Although I have some reservations about Wreen's terminology,<sup>147</sup> I understand his point to be that *Socrates is called 'Socrates'* is a logical, though not a necessary, truth. As a matter of fact, Wreen makes an explicit connection between such a 'proposition' and other 'analytic but contingent' propositions like « I exist » or « Language exists » (cf 1989: 362).

Now, next to logical truths, are there any metalinguistic statements that are necessary truths (apart from the trivial cases of identity-statements or disjunctions of opposites) ? At one point, Josette Rey-Debove talks about sentences like *'Hook' ends with a 'k'*, which "provide the empirical proof of their truth" (1997: 345). Given the conventional nature of languages, one would normally consider purely contingent the fact that the noun for a curved piece of e.g. metal used for hanging things on ends with a *k*. And indeed that is a historical accident. At the same time, it is equally clear that each utterance (inscription) of this sentence will be true (at least with respect to its own utterance-context). No differences with *Socrates is called 'Socrates'* so far. Moreover, it is easy to imagine a world in which *hook* was not always spelt with a final *k*: such a world used to exist; it was England between the 13th and the 16th century, a time when the word was variously spelt *hook*, *hoke* or *hooke*. But does that positively prove that *'Hook' ends with a 'k'* is not necessarily true ? A lot depends on what one understands the referent of the subject to be: if that referent is a lexical unit that changed form over the centuries, then the sentence is clearly not necessarily true (it is not even logically true). If, on the other hand, the subject is understood to refer to a specific form (the form *hook*), then the 'extent of its truth' is greater than that of the logical truth *Socrates is called 'Socrates'*: whereas the latter might prove false relative

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<sup>147</sup> For instance, I am not too sure what he means by such a proposition as « Chevaux are called "chevaux" » being different from « Horses are called "chevaux" ». Wreen's propositions look like a hybrid between propositions and sentences, as is confirmed by his claim that « I exist » and « Wreen exists » are distinct propositions (1989: 367). In my framework, a proposition includes no indexicals, and *I exist* can only be a sentence or an utterance.

to worlds where the individual Socrates existed (but was called some other name), ‘*Hook* ends with a ‘*k*’ would prove true in every world in which the form *hook* existed. I am not sure that this makes [*The form*] ‘*Hook* ends with a ‘*k*’ a necessary truth on a par with *27 is the cube of 3*, but it makes it a ‘stronger’ logical truth than *Socrates is called ‘Socrates’*’.

### 3.3. The division of labour between semantics and pragmatics<sup>148</sup>

We saw in the previous section how important one’s conception of the context was. Two kinds of context were distinguished, a restricted one (the context or situation of utterance) and a larger one, the circumstance of evaluation. This distinction helped us reach a better and more complex understanding of matters of truth and falsity. But there are other issues relative to which a splitting of the context is often advocated, for instance, the question of where (or whether) to draw the line between the facts that pertain to semantics and those that pertain to pragmatics.

The first thing we need to clarify is whether the distinction relevant for keeping apart semantics and pragmatics overlaps with our previous context/circumstance division. According to Bach (as outlined in Recanati 2001b: 85), there is a narrow semantic context (who speaks, where and when, etc.), and a wide pragmatic one (relevant to the determination of what the speaker meant: which speech act was performed, what implicatures s/he intended the interpreter to infer). The narrow context includes those elements that are necessary for “the semantic interpretation of indexical elements” (Bach 2001: 40). This means that the narrow context can be equated with what we have so far called the ‘context of utterance’. The wide context, on the other hand, is indefinitely open, because what a speaker means is ultimately not constrained by the proposition s/he expresses. With an utterance of *Agamemnon eats chips*, a speaker may mean (implicate) « Great men too have mundane needs », « You should speak British English » [as a response to a previous speaker’s use of *fries*], « You’re talking rubbish », « It is high time you went out and got us something to drink », etc. The aspects of the context that allow an interpreter to understand the speaker’s meaning cannot be determined a priori; they cannot be reduced to a minimal set of ‘necessary’ features, which is what the narrow context is understood to be. Now, though the move is tempting, the wide context cannot without further ado be equated with the circumstance of evaluation. After all, the circumstance of evaluation only includes those aspects of the context that are relevant to the assignment of a truth-value to the proposition expressed by

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<sup>148</sup> Two of the main references for this section, the papers by Bach and Recanati, were published in *Synthese*, 128, n° 1-2, an issue devoted to the semantics/pragmatics interface, and where several other interesting papers can be found, notably Kenneth Taylor’s contribution.

a sentence. The wide context, by contrast, involves all sorts of elements that have no impact on truth-value. In short, whereas the circumstance of evaluation pertains to the second semantic dimension, the wide context pertains to the pragmatic dimension of utterances.

### 3.3.1. How many levels for the interpretation of utterances ?

Now that this has been clarified, we can move on to a second question: how many levels are relevant to the interpretation of utterances ? Answers range from two to five. The most conservative estimates distinguish only between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is meant’ (= ‘what is communicated’). What is said is the meaning of the sentence; what is meant the meaning of the utterance (it includes ‘what is implicated’). Many scholars, however, have argued that two levels is not enough. A brief look back on Lyons’s framework shows that he recognises two main levels, but that each of these, in turn, splits into two sub-levels. At the most basic level, we have propositional content, then sentence-meaning (adding characteristic use), then the proposition, then utterance-meaning (adding implicatures). Recanati (2001b) initially offers for discussion something like Lyons’s picture (minus the contribution of characteristic use). Here is a presentation of his ‘triad’ (cf Recanati 2001b: 76):

- sentence meaning (conventional and context-independent; not necessarily a truth-evaluable proposition) [= Lyons’s propositional content]
- what is said (context-dependent, propositional: results from ‘saturation’, i.e. the fleshing out of the semantic skeleton) [= Lyons’s proposition]
- what is implicated (wide-context-dependent, propositional: not constrained by the semantic skeleton: “the inference chain [that leads to the implicated meaning] can (in principle) be as long and involve as many background assumptions as one wishes”. [= Lyons’s utterance-meaning])

Recanati further points out that the intermediate level, what is said, is regarded by some (the ‘minimalists’) as semantic, and by others (the ‘maximalists’) as pragmatic.<sup>149</sup> This discrepancy can be brought into correspondence with distinct notions of what is said. On the minimalist account “‘what is said’ departs from the meaning of the sentence (and incorporates contextual elements) *only when the sentence itself sets up a slot to be contextually filled*” (2001b: 77; original emphasis). In other words, what is said<sub>min</sub> is the propositional content augmented with the values of indexicals, full stop. The maximalist believes that this does not suffice, that what is said sometimes (or often) exceeds these strictly semantic operations. There are several arguments

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<sup>149</sup> *Minimalist* and *maximalist* in the sense of seeking to reduce/enlarge the range of phenomena that fall within the compass of pragmatics.

that can be adduced in support of a distinction between what is said<sub>min</sub> and what is said<sub>max</sub>. First, there are sentences whose ‘intuitive truth-conditions’ seem to diverge from the (strictly semantic) proposition that can be inferred. Let me give two examples:

(7) I haven’t taken a bath (cf Bach 2001: 25-26)

(8) It is raining (cf Recanati 1993: 371; Bach 2001: 36-37)

On a minimalist interpretation, sentence (7) is true if the speaker has never taken a bath, but false if he took one, say, two months before uttering (7). That is because the proposition (what is said<sub>min</sub>) does not include a temporal specification of the period during which the state of ‘being bathless’ holds. But of course this clashes with our intuitions. The addressee of (7) would surely hold the sentence to be true if the speaker had not had a bath on that day. Likewise in (8), where the proposition is something like « rain is falling somewhere now ». On a strict semantic reading, (8) is true even if the speaker is uttering his sentence on a cloudless day in Brussels, but rain is falling, say, in Turkmenistan or New Zealand. Once again, the clash is evident with what ‘we’ would intuitively regard as the truth-conditions of (8). Recanati argues that examples like (7) and (8) include ‘unarticulated constituents’, a term coined by John Perry.<sup>150</sup> Unarticulated constituents are, as the name makes plain, not part of the (overt) syntactic structure of the sentence, but, in spite of that, they make a contribution to the meaning of the utterance. The presence of unarticulated constituents is assumed to trigger what Recanati has called ‘free pragmatic enrichment of truth-conditional content’ (1993: 243, 258-68), which is the process whereby the gap is bridged between the purely semantic interpretation and the intuitive truth-conditions of the utterance: it is by pragmatically enriching what is said<sub>min</sub>, notably by supplying a value for an unarticulated constituent (e.g. « near here » for example 6), that we come to a truth-evaluable proposition that matches hearers’ understanding of what the utterance says.

Next to this first type of phenomenon (which Bach calls ‘expansion’) there is a second type, namely ‘completion’ (cf Bach 2001: 19-21). Both processes are said to result from ‘conversational implicatures’, i.e. the phenomenon by which elements implicit in what is said are made explicit.<sup>151</sup> Whereas expansions are additions to an already complete proposition,

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<sup>150</sup> There are many other good examples discussed in the literature. I mention the unarticulated constituent in square brackets: *She took out her key and opened the door [with it]* (Recanati 2000: 153, 2001a: 671); *I haven’t/I have had breakfast [today]* (Recanati 1993: 242, 2001b: 77; Bach 2001: 28); *You are not going to die [from that cut]* (Recanati 2001b: 77; originally Bach’s example). Many of these examples have been under scrutiny since the 1980s. The original references can be found in the papers and books just mentioned.

<sup>151</sup> This stands in contrast with implicatures, which are propositions implied by an utterance-act, and which, as we saw with the *Agamemnon* example, are not restricted by what is said.

completion turns incomplete propositions (or ‘proposition schemata’) into full-fledged propositions. Possible examples are:

(9) Jack and Jill climbed far enough

(10) Jack and Jill are ready. (both from Bach 2001: 20)

In (9), the second argument of the two-place predicate *enough* is not syntactically realised and cannot be retrieved from the rest of the sentence. As a result, there remains a gap in the proposition expressed. Similarly in (10) the predicate *ready* is also in need of a second argument that is not supplied by the sentence. Accordingly, no complete proposition can be semantically inferred from it.

Bach’s notion of completion needs to be further elaborated upon. In order to fully appreciate its import, one must be aware of Bach’s attachment to what Grice called the ‘Syntactic Correlation’ constraint. This principle holds that what a sentence says must be strictly a matter of the compositionality of meaning. In other words, what is said must correspond to “the elements of [the sentence], their order, their syntactic character” (Grice as quoted in Bach 2001: 15). Bach, however, points out that Grice “explicitly allowed for indexicality and ambiguity” (ibid.). That is because (i) the referents of indexicals are entirely determined by their conventional meaning and (ii) the various meanings of ambiguous sentence-types are “a projection of the syntax of the sentence” (ibid.) as used in various contexts.

The gist of the principle is that, if an aspect of the meaning of an utterance is not supported by a syntactic element or relation in the sentence, then this aspect cannot be part of what is said; it falls outside the semantic interpretation of the sentence. Conversely, any syntactic element in a sentence needs to make a contribution to what is said: semantic interpretation is complete only when it has exploited the potential contribution of every syntactic element. Wish that it were so simple... The problem is the existence of syntactically elliptical constructions. Bach is aware of those. He even states that “Syntactic Correlation should not be construed as requiring that every element of what is said corresponds to an *uttered* element of the uttered sentence” (2001: 17; original emphasis).

In regard of the last remark, it is legitimate to ask if Bach’s completion is not, after all, a semantic process. In other words, one may ask if sentences (9) and (10) are not simply syntactically elliptical versions of, say, *Jack and Jill climbed far enough to get a pail of water* and *Jack and Jill are ready to get married*. In the end, Bach states that there is no reason to assume that they are. Though he does not demonstrate his claim, it may be assumed that Bach

would contrast (9) or (10) with examples like (1), i.e. Lyons's illustration of sentence-fragments. In (1), it is clear that the second and third utterance-tokens are syntactically elliptical sentences: the kind of 'completion' they require in order to reconstruct 'what they say' would, I assume, be regarded by Bach as remaining within the limits of semantic interpretation.

I agree with my putative Bach that there is a genuine difference between (1) and (9) or (10). I am not sure, however, that this proves beyond reasonable doubt that there are no unrealised syntactic constituents in (9) and (10). Bach himself seems to leave the door open for this possibility (cf 2001: 42 note 7), but I am not sure I grasp the full import of his comment. Note also that Recanati seems to (mis)understand Bach precisely along those lines. In a recap of the five levels of interpretation distinguished by Bach, Recanati describes what is said as "less-than-minimal", while the outcome of completion is referred to as a "minimal proposition". If, as I think I should, I take *minimal* to mean « remaining within the scope of semantics », then Recanati wrongly assigns Bach's completed propositions to semantic interpretation. Bach, however, is adamant that both completion and expansion are types of conversational implicatures. Given that implicatures form one of the two levels of pragmatic interpretation, completion must be understood as exceeding semantic interpretation.<sup>152</sup>

So, completion, as delineated by Bach, is a process that is – at any rate, logically – subsequent to the completion of semantic interpretation. This being said, we have just seen that there might exist another form of completion, one which indirectly affects the content of what is said. In order to make better sense of this suggestion, I would like to take another look at Lyons's discussion of sentence-fragments. Lyons writes that propositional content cannot be identified until it is known which sentence is uttered by a particular utterance-token. To reach that understanding, hearers need to rely on information above the sentence-level, i.e. on information provided by the rest of the text or exchange (cf 1995: 263-68). This defines an additional kind of context, one that philosophers of language are not usually much concerned with, namely textual context, or 'co-text'. I am not entirely clear whether this (grammatical) context plays a fundamentally semantic or a pragmatic role. Nevertheless, I am quite certain that there is a pragmatic dimension to the way it is exploited by the hearer. Indeed, the co-text is only informative if hearers assume a certain degree of cohesion and coherence. This means that they must ascribe intentions of cohesion and coherence to the speaker, an interpretive move that is definitely pragmatic.

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<sup>152</sup> It must be said in Recanati's defence that his recap is based on earlier contributions by Bach and that I did not have the opportunity to check them for consistency with his present views.



It can be inferred from Lyons's views that (the pragmatic) context plays a role before semantic analysis begins. A similar view is shared by other writers, notably Recanati. As early as 1979, Recanati showed that, before any semantic interpretation can be undertaken, a hearer needs to assign the utterance heard or read to a particular language. Here too, it is difficult to say that 'being English' or 'being French' is a piece of information that occurs as part of the semantic content of an utterance. Though an utterance wears its linguistic membership on its sleeve, as it were, this information is likely to be pragmatic rather than semantic in the strict sense: it shows rather than says to what language it belongs.<sup>153</sup> Recanati also concurs with Kaplan (1989a: 559) that disambiguation too is a pre-semantic process: "[b]oth disambiguation and language-determination are pragmatic processes which must take place *before* the semantic process of content-determination can even start" (2001a: 676; original emphasis). Furthermore, we shall see in Chapter 5 that Recanati makes still other pragmatic factors play a pre-semantic role in his analysis of certain hybrid types of quotation.

To sum up, it could be said that there are two types of completion involved in the interpretation of utterances, both of which are pragmatic in character. The first type of completion is a process whereby a syntactically incomplete sentence-fragment is turned into (or, at least, associated with) a complete sentence, one on the basis of which a particular propositional content can be identified. This is 'pre-semantic completion'. The second type is a post-semantic process, which turns a semantically (though not, on Bach's account, syntactically) incomplete schema into a full-fledged proposition. Both notions of completion underline the fact that semantic interpretation is often in itself incapable of yielding complete contents.

The previous discussion is worthwhile in its own right, but it also has a practical justification within the framework of this dissertation. The discrimination that was operated between various levels of interpretation, especially between what is said<sub>min</sub> and what is said<sub>max</sub>, plays a prominent role in permitting a theoretically consistent explanation of certain types of quotational hybridity, i.e. cases of simultaneous use and mention. This issue is taken up again in Chapter 5.4, together with the so-called pre-semantic role of pragmatic factors.

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<sup>153</sup> In a completely different framework, Roland Barthes suggests that "the whole set of messages in French conveys [in the sense of *connotes*], e.g., the signified 'French'" (1993: vol. 1, 1518). Here too Barthes regards linguistic membership as coming on top of 'denotative' content.

### 3.3.2. Indexicals revisited

The narrow semantic context was previously defined as containing those features that are necessary for assigning a reference to indexical expressions. Most theorists seem to agree with this definition, but they would usually wish to qualify it. Indeed, there is a problem with the definition of the term *indexical* itself, and many writers, at least since Kaplan (1989a and b), have advocated a distinction between ‘pure’ indexicals and non-pure indexicals. The former set is made up of words like *I, here, now, today, tomorrow, current*; the second of demonstrative pronouns, determiner phrases headed by a demonstrative determiner, or personal pronouns used demonstratively (*he, she, they*).<sup>154</sup>

In 3.2, I suggested defining the character of *I* as « the person who, in the relevant context, utters the token of *I* ». If this definition is correct, as most scholars would agree it is, then the character of *I* is all that is needed to be able to identify the referent of any of its tokens in a given context of utterance. That is certainly linked with the fact that, along with a time and a place, the utterer is a necessary condition for the possibility of performing an utterance-act. That is why *here* or *today* are also regarded as pure indexicals.

When Kaplan (1989a) originally<sup>155</sup> separated pure demonstratives (e.g. *this* or *he*) from pure indexicals, he did so on the grounds that demonstratives need to be associated with a (usually non-linguistic) demonstration in order to determine a referent, whereas no such constraint applies to pure indexicals. According to Deutsch, this prompted him to add to the context of utterance an extra parameter, “a coordinate for a ‘demonstration’” (Deutsch 1998: 880).<sup>156</sup> This move in effect amounted to enlarging the context of utterance by further objective features (“brute facts of the context”, just as much as the speaker, time and place, cf Kaplan 1989b: 588). It is therefore safe to assume that he regarded the assignment of a reference to demonstratives as a purely semantic affair.

Later, however, he changed his mind and endorsed the idea that what determines the referent of a demonstrative is not the attendant demonstration but the speaker’s ‘directing intention’. There seem to be various motives for reserving a place for intentions in the character of demonstratives. Kaplan (1989b: 583-88) appeals to situations in which an act of pointing is

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<sup>154</sup> Items in this last set are usually treated as anaphoric pronouns but they are used demonstratively in a significant proportion of cases.

<sup>155</sup> Kaplan (1989a) was devised in the 1970s.

<sup>156</sup> I am following Deutsch here because his account is simple and intelligible. Still, I am not positive that it is entirely correct. Kaplan (1989a) actually supplies two seemingly acceptable accounts of demonstratives, a ‘Corrected Fregean theory’ and an ‘Indexical theory’ (see p. 528), only the second of which corresponds to Deutsch’s description. Reading David Kaplan is an enlightening but eventful experience.

misdirected or too vague: in such instances it is the intended target that is the referent, not the wrong individual or the fuzzy set that is the target of the actual demonstration. In this and other examples, Kaplan's point seems to be that the speaker's intentions supersede the observable target of demonstration.<sup>157</sup>

Other writers who discriminate between pure indexicals and demonstratives are Bach and Recanati. Bach comes up with the subtle insight that the referents of demonstratives are determined "in context" but "by the speaker's referential intention" (2001: 32; emphasis mine). If I understand him well, his rationale is that the character of demonstratives cannot, unlike that of pure indexicals, be regarded as an unequivocal function mapping objective features of the context onto content. Reference-assignment depends on subjective (speaker-dependent) factors as well. As a result, the referents of demonstratives are not semantic values, they are not part of what is said<sub>min</sub>.<sup>158</sup>

François Recanati too is of the opinion that the conventional meaning of demonstratives must include a reference to the speaker's intentions (1993: 355, 2001c: 198-99). This meaning should therefore be defined as "what the speaker who uses it refers to by using it" rather than "the object which happens to be demonstrated or which happens to be the most salient, in the context at hand" (2001b: 86). If Recanati (and Kaplan and Bach) are right, then the character of a demonstrative is not as rigid an instruction as that of *I*; it "does not uniquely identify the referent in the context of utterance" (1993: 235): appeal must be made to the wide context.<sup>159</sup>

The previous discussion of demonstratives highlights the existence of what some call 'linguistic underdetermination' (or 'semantic indeterminacy'), namely the idea that semantic interpretation sometimes (often) proves unable to output truth-evaluable propositions. Recanati (2001b, c) pushes this idea to extremes. Semantic indeterminacy is said to affect not just demonstratives, but NPs including a genitive (*John's book*), and many other expressions, even the 'pure' indexicals *here* and *now*. In relation to the last mentioned, Recanati points out that the place of utterance and the time of utterance are vague characterisations in need of further refining: "How inclusive must the time and place in question be? It depends on what the speaker means, hence, again, on the wide context" (2001b: 86). On such an analysis, the process of

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<sup>157</sup> I am not sure this provides enough evidence to say that Kaplan thought that reference-assignment was at least a partly pragmatic process in the case of indexicals. Kaplan tentatively discusses these issues in (1989b: 575-76).

<sup>158</sup> Bach insightfully notices that demonstratives can also be used to assert general not singular propositions. I can point at a particular tree but intend to make a comment on the tree-type, e.g. *that tree is deciduous*.

<sup>159</sup> Recanati offers other arguments in support of the special behaviour of demonstratives. In (1993: 81-84), particularities are highlighted not in connection with truth-evaluability but with what Recanati calls linguistic and psychological 'modes of presentation' (after Frege's terminology).

saturation (supplying indexicals with a referent), which is traditionally regarded as a prerogative of semantic interpretation, becomes a pragmatic process. Recanati (2001b: 79) calls saturation a ‘primary pragmatic process’, i.e. a contextual process that “help[s] determine what is said” (ibid.). Some primary processes are compulsory (saturation), while others are optional (free enrichment). Primary pragmatic processes stand in contrast with secondary pragmatic processes, which take ‘what is said’ (or the speaker’s saying it) as their input, and infer extra propositions on that basis. Implicatures are typical secondary pragmatic processes.

If Recanati is right in generalising semantic indeterminacy, then there seems to be little room left for what is said<sub>min</sub>: indeed, what is said<sub>min</sub> is mostly not truth-evaluable because it mostly constitutes only a fragment of a proposition.

### 3.3.3. Bach vs Recanati ?

Let us take stock. It appears that quite a few semanticists and pragmaticists agree on the empirical data reviewed so far. Where they differ is on the theoretical consequences that must be drawn from these observations. At the maximalist end of the spectrum, there are those who, like Recanati, come to question the age-old notion of what is said<sub>min</sub>. In the end, Recanati is ready to preserve the minimalist interpretation of what is said, but only with the proviso that it should be defined in pragmatic terms. On this reading, what is said<sub>min</sub> is what is said<sub>max</sub> “minus the unarticulated constituents resulting from pragmatic enrichment” (2001b: 88). A writer like Bach, by contrast, draws no maximalist conclusions from the same data as Recanati’s. By denying the pervasiveness of ‘pragmatic intrusions into semantics’ and by upholding the meaningfulness and usefulness of a purely semantic understanding of what is said, he even shows himself to be something of a minimalist.

Earlier, I briefly sketched Recanati’s analysis of utterances containing unarticulated constituents. Bach (2001) offers a defence of how these and other examples involving hypothetical covert syntactic arguments can be treated within a framework that strictly respects the semantics/pragmatics divide. Relative to *It is raining*, Bach (2001: 36-37) recognises that there is something like an unarticulated constituent (the location) and that the semantic interpretation of the sentence can only be incomplete. But this he does not see as a threat to his theoretical positions. According to Syntactic Correlation, these positions would be threatened only if unarticulated constituents attested to the presence of a covert syntactic argument in the sentence. Bach, however, draws the same conclusion about expansion as he did about completion: there is no strong evidence in support of covert syntactic arguments. Accordingly,

there is no reason to assume that what is said (in the semantic sense) goes beyond the explicit proposition expressed by the sentence.

In this case as in others, one has the feeling that Bach's and Recanati's views are not diametrically opposed. On the contrary, they exhibit an impressive amount of overlap. In my opinion, Bach and Recanati agree on the essential points. They both distinguish more than two levels of interpretation for utterances. Though Bach recognises five and Recanati four, the two pictures offered match almost to perfection. The fact that what is said<sub>max</sub> in Recanati's scheme corresponds to completion and expansion in Bach's is no real problem. After all, Bach himself subsumes these two levels under the category of conversational implicatures. Furthermore, both writers agree that semantics does not always deal with fully fixed truth-conditions.<sup>160</sup> Because semantic analysis may output incomplete propositions (e.g. due to the presence of demonstratives), it is inevitable for pragmatic factors to enter into the determination of truth-conditions. Lastly, Bach and Recanati turn out to fix the boundaries between semantics and pragmatics at roughly the same place: pragmatic interpretation begins with primary pragmatic processes and with implicatures, respectively.

Where, then, does the discrepancy come from? My guess is that the two writers are loyal to different fundamental principles. Recanati systematically seeks to offer a psychologically plausible picture of things. In this respect, he makes much of what he calls the 'availability principle' (see 1993: 246-50), which, roughly, states that linguistic analyses of what is said should respect "the intuitions shared by those who fully understand the utterance – typically the speaker and the hearer, in a normal conversational setting" (2001b: 80). According to Recanati, these intuitions support the maximalist conception of what is said: in the minds of speakers, what is said includes the fruits of primary pragmatic processes. As a result, the competing notion of what is said<sub>min</sub> can hardly lay claim to much theoretical validity. It is no surprise that, in his defence of what is said<sub>min</sub>, Bach should attack the availability principle. Bach's contention is that

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<sup>160</sup> This is a contentious position. Most of the writers mentioned in Chapter 2 would hold that any semantic difference must be reflected in the truth-conditions of an utterance and, conversely, that any factor affecting truth-conditions can only be semantic in nature. I shall touch upon those views in point (i) of 4.1.2, when I address a point of contention between Saka and Cappelen & Lepore. Let me also make a remark about logic: if the product of semantic interpretation is not necessarily fully propositional, then propositional logic might seem to have to incorporate a pragmatic dimension (!), at least when it deals with natural-language strings. Indeed, when you are concerned with logical entailment, identity, contradiction, etc., you must be able to rely on objects that are fully propositional, i.e. able to bear a truth-value. What logic does, it seems, is to adopt an artificial solution: it bypasses incompleteness by fleshing out the narrow context with additional elements (along the same lines as Kaplan's original suggestion for demonstratives). Incidentally, Kaplan (1989a, 1989b: passim) offers some thoughts on this issue.

semantics, as a theoretical discipline, has no clear use for speakers’ intuitions: “To “preserve intuitions” in our theorising about what is said would be like relying on the intuitions of unsophisticated moviegoers about the effects of editing on a film” (2001: 26-27). Bach’s mistrust of lay speakers’ intuitions as a basis for theory-building is reminiscent of many similar cautions in Chomsky (1993) and (2000).

Thus, whereas Recanati is constantly preoccupied with intuitions and psychological verisimilitude, Bach’s central concern seems to be with the improvement and preservation of a framework that has proved its worth over the years, a framework within which the Syntactic Correlation constraint is of paramount importance. Recanati’s more iconoclastic attitude was bound to give rise to a modicum of theoretical friction. But, as I have repeatedly insisted, the disagreements pale in comparison to the points of agreement. In the end, if one is not immediately interested in the more radical consequences of the two frameworks, it is perfectly sensible to regard them as compatible to a large extent. That is the position I shall adopt.

### 3.4. Recapitulation

By way of rounding off this chapter, I have attempted to provide a comparative table of the terms used by the authors whose theories have been examined above:

<b>Lyons</b>	<b>Kaplan</b>	<b>Recanati (2001b)</b>	<b>Bach</b>
propositional content	character	sentence meaning (character)	context-invariant content
sentence-meaning			
proposition*	content*	what is said <sub>min</sub>	what is said
proposition	content	what is said <sub>max</sub>	completed proposition (implicature 1)
		what is said <sub>max</sub>	expanded proposition (implicature 2)
utterance-meaning		what is meant (including what is implicated)	what is meant (including what is implicated)

**table 5:** a comparison of the various terminologies

There are several things about this table that need clarifying:

- The table is incomplete; it leaves a number of cells empty. This is due either to the fact that the writer concerned uses no special term for the concept in question (at least in the papers or

books consulted), or to the fact that, though the term exists, it has not been used in the foregoing discussion, and there is therefore no point in cluttering the table with the extra information.

— I have tried to ensure that the table could be read cumulatively from top to bottom. But this could only be done imperfectly. Taking the Lyons column, it must be understood that propositional content is part of sentence-meaning and that sentence-meaning itself is part of the utterance-meaning. There is a problem, however, with the proposition. Though it includes the propositional content (it results from its saturation) and is a constituent of utterance-meaning, it does not encode the characteristic-use aspect of sentence-meaning, and therefore does not contain sentence-meaning. Moreover, Lyons sometimes uses utterance-meaning contrastively with sentence-meaning. When he does, utterance-meaning covers only those aspects of the meaning that result from taking the context into consideration, to the exclusion of the meaning that results from linguistic competence. It is with that in mind that I chose the wording *what is meant* to fill the bottom cells in the third and fifth column. *What is meant* has a cumulative sense that *what is implicated* does not have. What is implicated corresponds to Lyons's utterance-meaning in its contrastive sense.

— There is a difficulty with lines 3 and 4. Let us begin with line 3: according to Bach, what is said is sometimes a complete proposition and sometimes an incomplete proposition schema. When it is incomplete, it can be turned, thanks to conversational implicatures, into a truth-evaluable proposition. That is what we find on line 4. Still, it must be understood that the two levels thus distinguished are conflated in the case of those sentences whose semantic interpretation (what is said) is already a full-fledged proposition. This is a natural consequence of the fact that such complete propositions do not need to rely on completion to become a complete proposition on line 4.

Another writer who makes something out of the observation that semantic analysis sometimes outputs incomplete schemata is Recanati (2001b), though he does not choose to reflect the resulting distinction in his terminology. For Recanati, what is said in the minimal sense is either a proposition or not, depending on the kind of sentence under consideration. That is exactly the same position as Bach's. By contrast, what is said<sub>max</sub> is the level supposed to capture any pragmatic enrichment, whether it be a case of completion, expansion, or whatever else. That is the reason why what is said<sub>max</sub> is brought into correspondence with two levels in Bach's scheme.

Now the reason why an asterisk has been added in the cells in line 3 for Lyons and Kaplan is because these writers do not take account of those cases in which what is said is less than propositional. For these writers, therefore, the terms mentioned in line 3 apply only to those

instances of what is said that are complete propositions. (I never said this comparison was going to be plain sailing).

— A final comment on the dividing line between semantics and pragmatics: Lyons chooses not to take a stand on the issue. In a way, he is even ready to regard the whole of utterance-meaning as being semantic. Semantics, on this account, would be the study of all aspects of meaning, never mind that they are context-dependent or intention-dependent.

As I indicated in footnote 157, Kaplan cannot seem to make up his mind about whether reference-assignment is semantic or pragmatic. As a result, he is not in a position to draw the line between the two fields: his content could pertain to either.

It is, on the other hand, very clear where Recanati stands. If we consider only the more detailed account in (2001b), both his sentence meaning (character) and what is said<sub>min</sub> fall within the ambit of semantics. The second level, however, is to be regarded as no more than a (debatable) theoretical construct devoid of psychological reality. Besides, it is not purely semantic inasmuch as it is defined pragmatically. As regards pragmatics, it includes what is said<sub>max</sub>, i.e. the ‘genuine’ notion of what is said, plus what is implicated.

Let me now come to Kent Bach. His views on the division of labour are just as definite as Recanati’s: semantics is concerned with the context-invariant content and, much more crucially, with what is said. As for pragmatics, it splits into two main domains, that of implicatures and that of implicatures. This subdivision corresponds roughly to Recanati’s discrimination between primary pragmatic processes and secondary pragmatic processes (which take what is said<sub>max</sub> as their input, and output further propositions, notably implicatures).<sup>161</sup>

At the end of this chapter, I assume that we are now equipped with a powerful theoretical framework capable of handling most of the issues that we will be concerned with in subsequent chapters. In particular, we now have at our disposal sufficiently refined distinctions to tackle the knotty problems that arise in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

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<sup>161</sup> For this distinction, see Recanati (1993: 260-68, 2001b: 78-79).



## CHAPTER 4: Paul Saka and the reference of autonoms

In this chapter, I have chosen to give a detailed presentation of Paul Saka's conception of quotation both because it has great merits of its own and because the discussions which it triggers are central to a thorough understanding of metalinguistic discourse. Among the qualities of Saka's theory, the following deserve a special mention: first, it meets many of the requirements that were highlighted at the end of Chapter 2 and thus brings us closer to a satisfactory theory of quotation. Second, it shows how close the use of an expression and its mention are. In so doing, it opens the door to a straightforward account of (i) simultaneous use and mention, and (ii) shifts from ordinary to metalinguistic reference and vice-versa (a topic that is discussed at length in Chapter 8). This also means that metalinguistic discourse is viewed as just one of the many varieties of utterance-acts, albeit a particularly intriguing one. Third, it suggests a useful distinction between mention and quotation: *quotation* is no longer treated as synonymous with *mention of an expression*. A strong objection against Saka's move has been voiced by Cappelen and Lepore. The scrutiny of their arguments will allow me to put to the test the framework for the analysis of utterances set out in Chapter 3. Fourth, Saka argues that quotations and mentions are capable of referring to a variety of objects, but he also provides a very elegant explanation for how such referential diversity is made possible. Since he is, to my knowledge, the first scholar to supply such an explanation, I shall make use of the opportunity to investigate at length the vexed issue of metalinguistic reference.<sup>162</sup>

To sum up, the present chapter opens with an outline of Saka's views (4.1) and proceeds with an overview of the criticism that can be levelled at them, as well as of the counterarguments and adjustments that can be offered in response to this criticism (4.2). The main objection, directed at 'referential diversity', requires an in-depth development (4.3): I begin by defining a few terms of art that will play a central role in the discussion (4.3.1). After this, I present the various positions on metalinguistic reference that are encountered in the literature (4.3.2). This is followed by an outline of what I consider to be the best criteria for fixing reference and by a review of the main varieties of metalinguistic reference (to expressions, to form-types, to form-tokens) (4.3.3). The inevitable conclusion – that quoted and mentioned sequences refer to different sorts of objects –

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<sup>162</sup> It must be specified from the outset that not all instances of metalinguistic discourse (mention and quotation) are endowed with the power to refer. Which do and which do not is clarified in the next chapter. When I eventually come to the issue of metalinguistic reference in this chapter, I shall make sure to consider only examples that are referential on the criterion presented in Chapter 5.

turns out to need qualifying: it seems that some referents fit into none of the categories of linguistic entities distinguished, or then belong to two at the same time. The roots of such a situation and its potential consequences are examined at some length (4.3.4).

#### 4.1. Saka's Theory

Paul Saka has presented a 'Disambiguated Ostension Theory' of quotation that is original in several respects, the most remarkable one being the distinction he puts forward between mentioning and quoting. Here is the starting-point of his theory:

I claim that every use of language is an act of multiple ostension, partly direct and partly deferred, of at least the following kinds of items.

- (a) orthographic form: *cat*
- (b) phonic form: /kæt/
- (c) lexical entry: <*cat*, /kæt/, count noun, CAT>
- (d) intension: CAT
- (e) extension: {*x*: *x* a cat}

[...]

Thus, the utterance of "cat"—which directly ostends or exhibits the phonic token /kæt/—deferringly ostends the corresponding form type, the lexeme <*cat*, /kæt/, count noun, CAT>, the concept CAT, the customary referent {*x*: *x* a cat}, etc. These items form a package deal in which you cannot get the label without getting the rest. (1998: 126)

On this basis, Saka offers definitions of *use* and *mention*, which I reproduce below:

(u) Speaker *S* uses an expression *X* iff:

- (i) *S* exhibits a token of *X*;
- (ii) *S* thereby ostends the multiple items associated with *X* (including *X*'s extension);
- (iii) *S* intends to direct the thoughts of the audience to the extension of *X*.

(m) Speaker *S* mentions an expression *X* iff:

- (i) *S* exhibits a token of *X*;
- (ii) *S* thereby ostends the multiple items associated with *X*;
- (iii) *S* intends to direct the thoughts of the audience to some item associated with *X* other than its extension. (1998: 126)<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Note how these definitions repeat the bias observed in Chapter 2 in favour of nouns, especially names. Clearly, many mentionable items have no extension at all, e.g. interjections, word-endings, or pseudo-words. Perhaps *extension* should in relevant cases be read as « the concept standardly associated with the item, if there is one ». Naturally, the pro-name bias stems from the fact that it is with regard to names that failures to observe the use-mention distinction can have the most undesirable consequences.

The parallels between use and mention are striking: they are both modes of exercising (cf i) a conventionalised language (cf ii). Saka in effect regards them as two sides of one coin: “You simply cannot have a language without the potential for both use and mention” (1998: 131). On the basis of their common features, it is easy to imagine on what condition they are compatible: all it takes is a combination of the intentions mentioned in (iii) under (u) and under (m). If we admit that one and the same speaker may wish to draw a hearer’s attention simultaneously to the denotatum of an expression and to some linguistic aspect of this expression, then we must agree that Saka’s theory supplies an explanation for simultaneous use and mention.<sup>164</sup> Saka’s multiple deferred ostensions also provide a framework for understanding how a mentioning expression can be used to designate a variety of linguistic objects. Moreover, we have an explanation for opacity that is very similar to that offered by the Identity Theory: in mention, a speaker pragmatically suspends the ordinary referential function of a referring expression by directing the hearer’s thoughts away from the extension of this expression.<sup>165</sup> Similarly, as regards iconicity and productivity, Saka’s framework accounts for them very much the way the Identity Theory does.

All in all, Saka’s account of mention is close to the Identity Theory, witness this statement: “in both use and mention, the speaker exhibits the same form” (1998: 129). There is, however, a crucial difference: whereas Searle or Washington problematically maintain that there is a perfect fit between the mentioning and the mentioned expression, Saka judiciously allows a whole series of possible relations between the two, thereby avoiding the main fault of the Identity Theory, namely its inability to account for the diversity of possible referents of an expression in mention. Moreover, Saka remarks that his multiple ostensions lead only partly to a picture theory: when what is mentioned is a form (orthographic or phonic), there is indeed an iconic relation between referring expression and referent. When, on the other hand, a lexeme or intension is ostended, the iconic relation does not suffice or is irrelevant.<sup>166</sup> Here, a convention must be adverted to, one which applies to all speakers of a linguistic community: this convention is that the direct ostension of a linguistic token deferringly ostends the series of items listed in the first citation at the beginning of 4.1. Finally, as regards recursiveness, Saka assumes that quotation, not mention,

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<sup>164</sup> It is reminiscent of Recanati’s ‘dual destiny’ of signs (cf end of 2.1.2.3).

<sup>165</sup> Some more details are provided when I discuss the opacity of quotation a few pages below.

<sup>166</sup> Goldstein (1984: 4) too noted that, although it is a necessary ingredient of any suitable theory of mention/quotation, iconicity is insufficient. Recanati (2001a: 641) similarly remarks that what is mentioned by a quotation is not necessarily a shape, and goes on to produce an example in which a direct speech report ostends a meaning rather than a form. However, Recanati believes that the notion of iconicity can be extended to those examples as well. See Chapter 5.5 for a discussion.

is recursive. This is manifestly true of ‘typographical’ recursiveness: no absence of quote marks can be iterated in any clear way. If, however, one thinks of ‘compositional’ and ‘referential’ recursiveness (cf. Objection 2 in Chapter 2.3.2), which are independent of the iteration of quote marks, then there is no reason to assume that it is blocked in mention. All that is required is for the object indirectly ostended by the mentioning utterer to be compositionally or referentially active. Nothing in Saka’s theory prevents this situation from occurring. This point is illustrated in the course of my discussion of Objection one under 4.2 below.

Now that use and mention have been defined, it is possible to tackle quotation. As we saw above, mention is conceived of as purely a matter of intentions. In other words, use and mention are not distinguished syntactically or semantically, but only at the pragmatic level.<sup>167</sup> Quotation, on the other hand, is a matter of semantics. Saka’s contention is that quotation marks, which are the defining characteristic of quotation, have a syntactic and semantic role of their own. That role, however, does not reside in referring (pointing) as in the Demonstrative Theory:

Syntactically, a pair of quote marks is a discontinuous determiner (a complex symbol which, applied to an argument expression, produces a noun phrase). Semantically, a pair of quote marks is a concept or intension, QUOT, which ambiguously or indeterminately maps its argument expression *X* into some linguistic item saliently associated with *X* other than the extension of *X*. [...] Thus, the speaker who uses quote marks announces “I am not (merely) using expression *X* but am mentioning it”. (1998: 127)

In other words, quote marks have a conventional linguistic meaning (explicitating the intention to mention) and a conventional linguistic function (generating an NP). They are, however, very different from the Davidsonian quote marks, as they are not, of themselves, a referential NP.

The articulation between mention and quotation can now be clarified. It is tempting to assume that quotation is simply mention-with-quote-marks, i.e. mention disambiguated from use. In Saka’s view, it is not: given that quoting expressions are noun phrases, they are, like all other NPs, capable of both use and mention! One must therefore distinguish between the use of quotation and the mention of quotation.

Let us begin with the use of quotation: it is like the standard use of a non-quotational expression inasmuch as the speaker intends to direct the thoughts of his audience to the extension

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<sup>167</sup> There is something unsatisfactory to the idea that use and mention are grammatically the same. This can be made clear as soon as one turns away from examples which mention names (or nouns): a sentence like *With is a preposition* is grammatically deviant in that a preposition fills its subject slot. This is a point I briefly return to at the end of 4.1.2.

of the expression used. In this case, however, this extension is not extralinguistic but linguistic. In typical Fregean fashion, Saka makes the extension of an expression dependent upon its intension. What is the intension of an expression-in-quotes? Take the inscription “*cat*”<sup>168</sup>; its intension is QUOT (*cat*), not CAT (which is the intension of *cat*, i.e. of the item as found in the lexicon). Since QUOT (*cat*) “indeterminately maps [*cat*] into some linguistic item saliently associated with [*cat*] other than the extension of [*cat*]”, the extension of “*cat*” is ambiguous: the token or type *cat*, their spoken counterparts, the grammatical structure [*cat*]<sub>N</sub>, or the concept CAT (cf 1998: 128). This ambiguity, however, is not essentially different from that of any ordinary word, say the noun *mug*: like a standard lexical item, a quotation possesses its own intension, and this intension in turn determines a more or less varied extension.

In this respect, it may be said that quotational NPs are more like ordinary nouns than they are like ordinary NPs. Quotational NPs could be labelled ‘discourse nouns’. I venture this suggestion because, I believe, a parallel can be drawn with Quine. Remember that, on what I take to be a correct interpretation of the use-mention theory, ‘pure’ quotations are not opaque, as one might wrongly assume, but plainly transparent: quotation-mark names refer to their standard denotata (which are linguistic entities), just as, in the context of an utterance, *John* refers to the person John. Something similar happens here with the introduction of the QUOT function. Quotation is not merely another use; it creates a distinct linguistic object, whose intension, extension, structure, etc. is different from those of its linguistic referent. As a consequence, Saka’s quotation should not be understood to create a referentially opaque context, in the strict sense of the term. As quotations, ‘*Boston*’ and ‘*the capital of Massachusetts*’ are not co-extensional expressions. They cannot, therefore, be used to determine whether a context is opaque or not. Naturally, there are differences between Quine and Saka. One is that Saka’s quotations do not exist in the lexicon of a natural language; they are not quotation-mark names, but contextual creations. The other that, unlike Quine’s framework, Saka’s does leave room for opacity. This possibility results directly from the separation of mention and quotation: a quoting context is not opaque (for the reasons just supplied), but a mentioning context is: that is because the extension of a mentioned expression remains unchanged; it is its ordinary extension. Whereas quoting results in the replacement of the ordinary extension with a linguistic one, mention simply results in the suspension of the ordinary extension: the thoughts of the hearer are deflected away from it.

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<sup>168</sup> Saka’s joint use of double inverted commas and italics indicates that he is talking about an item which in turn is used to talk about language. I adopt the same convention in the present discussion.

The most challenging aspect is presumably how to make sense of Saka's contention that quotations can be mentioned. The main hindrance is our habit of using these terms as quasi-synonyms: *quotation* equals *mention*, provided what is mentioned is something linguistic (cf my terminological fastidiousness towards the beginning of Chapter 2). But in Saka's scheme, *quotation* and *mention* are absolutely not on a par. They do not denote distinct language functions. Only *mention* denotes a special employment, as a complement to *use* (in the restricted Quinean sense). Quotation is rather analogous to a grammatical morpheme (a 'discontinuous determiner'), perhaps on a par with, say, the accusative case or the past tense. Therefore, there is no reason why a word + quote marks should not, just like a stem + accusative ending, be liable to both use and mention.

These are the theory-internal motivations behind the 'mention of quotations'; if Saka did not provide for this possibility, his theory would be inconsistent. But I have not said much about what concretely happens when one mentions a quotation. How different is this from using a quotation? Let me cite Saka:

In the case of use, *S* intends "*cat*" to refer to the extension of "*cat*", namely to one of the items listed under (ii<sub>b</sub>) [the token or type *cat*, their spoken counterparts, the structure [cat]<sub>N</sub>, or the concept CAT]. In the case of mention, *S* intends "*cat*" to refer to some item saliently associated with "*cat*" other than its extension, namely to one of the items listed under (ii<sub>a</sub>) [the token "*cat*" or its spoken equivalent, their corresponding type(s), the NP structure ["<sub>DET</sub>[cat]<sub>N</sub>"<sub>DET</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>, the intension QUOT (*cat*)]. (1998: 128)

I realise how involved this passage may look. Yet, I believe the point made by Saka is not needlessly abstruse:<sup>169</sup> Let me use a parallel to try and show why: at the most basic level, I can mention a sequence of language *L* without bothering to make plain my intention to do so. In that case, I am going to mention the item in question without using inverted commas or other markers: it will look like ordinary use, but the context should generally ensure disambiguation. In this regard, Saka's mention is close to the Identity Theory but also to Carnap's 'autonomous use' (except that Carnap viewed autonoms as names of words):<sup>170</sup>

(1) Boston is disyllabic. [instead of: 'Boston' is disyllabic.]

Just as such notational 'sloppiness' or 'unrigorousness' is possible for sequences of the first-level metalanguage  $L_m$ , it is also possible for sequences of the second-level metalanguage, i.e.

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<sup>169</sup> The following development is my reconstruction of what I take to be the drift of Saka's argument.

<sup>170</sup> More about 'autonyms' in due course.

sequences that denote a linguistic object that is part of  $L_m$ . In other words, I can choose not to (or, perhaps more realistically, can neglect to) make it plain that what I am talking about is already a ‘metasign’ (i.e. one with linguistic reference). Let me illustrate this by means of examples in which, for the sake of clarity, only single inverted commas are used.<sup>171</sup> Let us assume that someone wrote:

(2) ‘‘Boston’ is disyllabic’. In this sentence, ‘Boston’ is used metalinguistically.

I do not suppose many readers would find fault with (2), unless they were formal logicians. Yet, the referent of the second ‘‘Boston’’ is not the name of the city of Boston, i.e. ‘Boston’. It is ‘‘Boston’’. Accordingly, if I wrote, as a comment on (2):

(3) The referent of ‘‘Boston’’ in (2) is ‘‘Boston’’,

this would be no evidence of sloppiness on my part. It would just reflect the fact that, in (2), the putative writer mentioned a quotation rather than used it, that s/he did not carefully explicitate his/her intention by adding another pair of inverted commas. Of course, disambiguation is possible: a writer can choose to use a ‘metaquotation’.<sup>172</sup> (2) can be rewritten as

(2<sub>1</sub>) ‘‘Boston’ is disyllabic’. In this sentence, ‘‘Boston’’ is used metalinguistically,

thus making it clear that the writer is using a meta-metasign (Saka talks of *metametawords*) whose referent is already a quotation. The difference between (2) and (2<sub>1</sub>) simply reproduces that between (1) and its correction, but at a higher metalevel. For the sake of completeness, I would have to rewrite my comment (3) as:

(3<sub>1</sub>) The referent of ‘‘‘Boston’’’ in (2<sub>1</sub>) is ‘‘Boston’’

It must be emphasised that, though the subjects of *is used* in (2) and (2<sub>1</sub>) are different in Saka’s framework, they have the same referent. However, the utterer of (2) must count on the context to help fix the right level of reference (for which purpose the choice of the predicate should suffice); whereas the utterer of (2<sub>1</sub>) uses grammatical means to do so.

As I wrote above, Saka does not put quotation and mention on a par. Quotations do not make up a subset of the set of mentions. Whether a sequence is used or mentioned is a pragmatic

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<sup>171</sup> Italics would be perfectly appropriate too, as in the rest of this dissertation. But single quote marks are easier to deal with in a case like this because they can be iterated at will.

<sup>172</sup> Naturally, s/he could also mention the latter, in which case his/her intentions would be the same as if s/he used a ‘meta-metaquotation’. The process can be repeated ad libitum.

affair: it depends on an intention of the speaker's. By contrast, whether a sequence is a quotation or not is a matter of grammar. It is easy to think of a potential objection to this conception. One might build the following argument: S1 and S2 are two speakers with exactly the same intention: they want to say something sensational about the word *Boston*. One produces (1), the other its corrective; in other words, S1 mentions the word while S2 uses its quotation. Does this reflect the undeniable fact that they had the same intention, namely to talk about that word? One might perhaps wish to answer in the negative, arguing that, on Saka's account, S2 could not have had the same intentions as S1: S2 simply chose to employ a grammatical structure. That, however, seems to me to be a misconception. Any 'simple use' of a grammatical structure usually is the reflection (or the consequence) of an intention on the part of the speaker. It is likely that when I use an imperative, it is because I want to give an order or make a suggestion; that when I use the past tense, it is in order to tell a story or recount events; that when I use a plural, it is because I want to talk about several entities rather than one; and so on. This means that 'simply using' the grammatical device of quotation marks (or italics, etc.) in fact reflects S2's intention to say something about *Boston*, just as S1 wishes to do. On Saka's account, quoting devices grammaticalise (make overt) the intention to mention a linguistic sequence. This naturally implies that the intention must already exist, as it does in cases of plain mention.

Now that mention and quotation have been differentiated, a small terminological point is in order. Cases of mention and cases of quotation still have a lot in common, notably the fact that they stand for (some aspect of) a linguistic (or pseudo-linguistic) string. This means that it may be useful to have an umbrella term at our disposal for sequences mentioned and sequences quoted. It is the word *autonym* that will be used to this end, though I must add the caveat that the word must be understood to apply only to 'pure' instances of mention and of quotation, not to hybrid instances.<sup>173</sup>

#### 4.1.1. Intermediate assessment

We have had a previous opportunity to evaluate Saka's account of mention. Does he do equally well on quotation? Saka himself claims that his framework accounts for all the facts that must be allowed for by any commendable theory of quotation:

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<sup>173</sup> This characterisation differs from Carnap's original definition of *autonym* but is in line with Josette Rey-Debove's use of the term. *Autonym* and its derivatives never really caught on in logic and the philosophy of language. Moreover, the few writers who adopted it tended to use it in various senses. In French linguistics, the concept of autonymy is now widely used by a goodly number of writers, as a direct consequence of the impact of Rey-Debove's *Le métalangage*.



- Productivity: speakers/writers need to master only one convention to be able to make quotations out of any relevant sequence, and hearers/readers have no difficulty in understanding what the quotation means. As a matter of fact, Saka takes conventionality to be an important defining feature of quotation: not all languages possess markers of quotation. When they do, the relation between form (inverted commas, italics, etc.) and function (signalling mention) is fixed conventionally. Therefore, in contradistinction to what is maintained by the Identity Theory, the range of meanings of an interpretation with quotes is different from that of an expression without quotes.
- Iterativity (recursiveness): quotations can be embedded in further quote marks. Moreover, the embedded quotations are semantically active and can continue to refer. This means that the theory can reflect the three varieties of recursiveness distinguished in 2.3.2.
- Pictoriality (iconicity): same qualification as for mention.
- Referential diversity: reference can be to tokens, types, etc. but also to “non-linguistic vocalizations and imprints” (1998: 133)
- Simultaneity: is not accounted for by Saka’s theory of quotation but by his theory of mention: one can simultaneously use and mention an expression, whether that expression is an ordinary one or already a quotation.

I wrote earlier that there was some kinship between Saka and Identity Theorists. This is true as far as mention is concerned, but not quotation: the extension of a ‘Sakaean’ quotation is different from that of an ordinary expression. In other words, quotation creates a new linguistic object, with its own intension, extension, etc. (somewhat à la Quine). There are also parallels with the Demonstrative Theory. Notwithstanding Saka’s reservations, ostension is comparable to demonstration. For both Davidson and Saka, quotation involves a twofold process: a token is pointed at (or directly ostended), and a further referent is depicted. According to Davidson, this referent is always a type;<sup>174</sup> according to Saka, it is any of the various linguistic objects that can be deferringly called forth by the exhibition of the token.<sup>175</sup> Though similar, the descriptions are nevertheless not identical: in Saka’s scheme, a token is exhibited regardless of whether it is used or mentioned. Therefore, the closest Saka gets to Davidson’s demonstrated token is with the

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<sup>174</sup> Such is the picture that emerges from Davidson (1979) and which has had a profound impact on writers like Bennett, Reimer or Recanati. But Davidson (1999: 716-17) offers this corrective: “Typically, though by no means always, what we want to pick out [by pointing to a token, an inscription] is an expression, and expressions are abstract entities we cannot directly pick out by pointing” (my emphasis).

<sup>175</sup> This twofold process is expressly acknowledged by Davidson (1999: 716), who states that “quotation is a kind of deferred ostension”. Reimer too talks of *deferred reference* and understands demonstration as involving these two steps (1996: 136).

signalling function of the quote marks. Here again, a parallel with the Identity Theorists may be pointed out (cf my remark in 2.4, footnote 121, that some element of demonstration often filters into ‘Identity talk’).

In the end, the main difference between Saka and Davidson – but it is of course crucial – resides in the function they ascribe to the quotation marks. Moreover, Saka does not demand the presence of markers of quotation for a mentioning sentence to be grammatical: mention-without-quotes is grammatical too. Cappelen & Lepore (1997a, 1999), who are probably the leading exponents of the Demonstrative Theory nowadays, seem to hold the opposite view: with respect to an argument voiced by Saka, they write that “[t]his objection is impotent, until it is established that such mentioning without quote marks occurs” (1999: 746). This citation proves at least that they are not ready to accept mention-without-quotes at its face value.

## 4.2. Objections

Saka’s theory is recent and has not come in for a lot of criticism yet. This being said, a bitter reply to Saka’s paper from the Demonstrative camp has been published in *Mind* (Cappelen & Lepore – henceforth *C&L* – 1999), followed by a short reply to the reply (Saka 1999). *C&L* wish to attack Saka on three points, two of which are central claims of his. First, *C&L* deny that Saka convincingly establishes that mention and quotation are not the same thing. Second, they understand Saka as assuming that “[o]n any given occasion, what is referenced depends on the intentions of the speaker” (1999: 741). This, they believe, is plainly false. Third, and most importantly, they refute the proposition that instances of mention and quotation are multiply ambiguous, i.e. that “they can be used to refer to different kinds of entities” (1999: 741).<sup>176</sup>

I will initially deal with *C&L*’s first two objections. Then, I will venture a few comments and criticisms of my own. As for *C&L*’s third objection, it deserves to be granted a lot more importance than the others, as it raises issues that go back a long way in the history of language scholarship. This long history justifies a much more detailed treatment, which is why these issues will be dealt with in a major section of their own.

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<sup>176</sup> *C&L* describe as ‘unorthodox’ Saka’s assumptions that mention is not quotation and that reference can be multiple, but I believe that only the first one can truly be called so. The second has been held by grammarians and philosophers from Panini to the Stoics to Augustine (and probably even to some of the Schoolmen). (See 4.3.2.3 for a brief discussion.)

#### 4.2.1. C&L's first objection

To begin with, C&L offer a demonstration (1999: 743), based on a method devised by Kripke, that the mention-quotation distinction does not exist. I must admit that its relevance in this context entirely escapes me. For the sake of argument, they posit the existence of a language E\* which does not distinguish between mention and quotation – they apparently mean it has only quotation – and eventually conclude that this language behaves exactly like English or any other natural language: in other terms, we are speakers of E\*. However, in the course of the demonstration, they resort to the argument that “E\* speakers could omit quote marks whenever what’s meant is obvious” (ibid.). This, in my book, means that they contradict their initial premise. Like Saka (1999: 751), I conclude that the reasoning is shaky.

I believe Saka’s distinction between mention and quotation is at least methodologically sound. It provides one (perhaps not *the*) opportunity to accommodate the empirical observation that, pace C&L, some written instances of reference to linguistic objects involve the use of overt quoting devices, while others do not. There is no reason to suppose that reference to metalinguistic objects (i.e. reference to autonoms) is not subject to the same conditions: examples of the mention of quotations abound in writings in the language sciences. Hence, there are good grounds for recognising both the use and the mention of quotations themselves. In a way, Saka’s decision is chiefly terminological: two distinct (surface) phenomena were discerned and were therefore in need of a label. That is what Saka supplied.

But Saka is keen to provide more than that, as he seeks to buttress his thesis that quotation is a matter of semantics while mention is a matter of pragmatics. By way of a theoretical justification, Saka examines pairs of sentences that are identical in all respects save that one includes quotation marks (or their ‘spoken equivalent’, as he says)<sup>177</sup> and the other does not:

(4) Chicago has seven characters

(5) ‘Chicago’ has seven characters. (1998: 130)

Saka’s argument is that, if quotation marks make no semantic contribution, then these two sentences must be semantically identical. Yet, Saka goes on, although they are both ambiguous, they are so in different ways: (4) can be uttered to express two propositions: the true one that a particular word-form has seven characters and the false one that a Midwestern metropolis has

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<sup>177</sup> I believe this to be a clumsy parallel. With many other writers, I doubt that speech exhibits much that is linguistically equivalent with written quoting devices: the marks used in speech are generally paralinguistic, be they prosodic or gestural (cf. so-called finger-dance quotes). Perhaps the only linguistic counterparts of quote marks in speech are the vocalisation of the quote marks as in *He said, quote I’m staying! unquote.*

seven characters;<sup>178</sup> (5) can be uttered to express the true proposition that a particular word-form has seven characters (quotation as used); and the false one that the complex ‘*Chicago*’ has seven characters (quotation mentioned). This, Saka takes as demonstrating that (4) and (5) are not semantically equivalent and that his distinction between mention and quotation is therefore validated.

The demonstration is appealing, and I must say that I originally endorsed it wholeheartedly. That was until François Recanati (personal correspondence) pointed out to me that there were other possible readings: (5), to begin with, could be about the city of Chicago (with the inverted commas functioning as scare quotes). Besides, if (4) is understood as the transcription of a spoken utterance (in which, by definition, no quotation marks occur), it could actually be about the complex ‘*Chicago*’, with the context being relied on to make clear the intended reading. The question is whether these extra readings jeopardise Saka’s analysis and conclusion. I must confess that, at this level of complexity, my intuitions let me down. I find the third reading of (4) very far-fetched.<sup>179</sup> Saka could indeed retort that if what had been meant by uttering (4) aloud was the entire complex, then intonational equivalents of the quotation marks would have been produced. That is highly likely but does not clearly rescue Saka: on the contrary, it faces him with the task of explaining how suprasegmental elements (which are standardly treated as paralinguistic!) are in fact morphemes with a semantic value of their own. Still in connection with (4), there is the further counterargument that the third reading is not possible for written tokens of this utterance. But here again I hesitate: mention, under Saka’s presentation, is assumed to be non-iterable. Still, is this a matter of description or is it a veiled prescription? Would it, for example, be completely unthinkable to rewrite (2) as:

(2<sub>2</sub>) ‘‘Boston’ is disyllabic’. In this sentence, Boston is used metalinguistically ?

If the quoted sentence to the left had originally been written by a formal semanticist whereas the comment to the right was provided by an Identity Theorist like Searle, i.e. someone who scoffs at the multiplication of quote marks, (2<sub>2</sub>) should be accepted as a possible utterance. If compositional and referential recursiveness is dissociated from the iteration of quote marks – as I think it should – then it can be performed by mention, and both (2<sub>2</sub>) and the third reading of (4) are acceptable even in writing.

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<sup>178</sup> These judgments assume a single invariant meaning for the otherwise polysemous *characters*.

<sup>179</sup> Though, if the predicate were *has nine characters*, it would become more plausible. (But then the first reading would be less so).

Finally, as regards the third reading of (5), what are we to make of it? The scare quotes, though they always denote some reluctance to endorse a previous speaker's language, may be used to indicate different things: for instance, some repugnance to the word (because, say, the utterer of (5) always uses the designations *the windy city* or *the city of broad shoulders*); or the judgment that the word has been wrongly used, for instance, wrongly applied to the city of Detroit. However, on every possible such reading, (5) is false, just as systematically as (4) is false when taken to apply to a city.

As it is, this discussion is not getting us anywhere, because it is not entirely clear what its object is. As a remedy, I suggest clarifying the debate by subjecting (4) and (5) to a Lyonsian analysis. But, prior to that, I believe we need to sort out another difficulty. With his contrastive analysis of (4) and (5), Saka is trying to strengthen his distinction between mention and quotation. But that is not, strictly speaking, what his analysis does. As it is developed, all it can hope to do is demonstrate the validity of the distinction between quotation, on the one hand, and use-or-mention (together), on the other. Indeed, since mention is a purely pragmatic affair, there is nothing linguistic about (4) (not even the predicate) that proves that we are dealing with a case of mention. This is actually reflected in the interpretations that Saka supplies for (4), one of which assumes that *Chicago* is mentioned, the other that it is simply used. In the end, therefore, Saka's analysis must rather be seen as an attempt to demonstrate that quotation marks have a semantic (read *truth-conditional*) import.

Now, if quotation marks can be shown to be truth-conditionally relevant, Saka will have made something like its original point, i.e. distinguishing quotation from mention. But one must see that the real contrast, the relevant one, is not between quotation and mention but between quotation and non-quotation. Then, non-quotation in turn can be understood to split into use and mention, but clearly this puts quotation and mention at different levels.<sup>180</sup> In consequence, if Saka's analysis leads to the expected outcome, one naturally has reason to conclude that quotation and mention 'are not the same thing', but the more important implication by far would be the truth-conditional relevance of quotation-marks.

In the light of the previous remarks, I believe we would be well-advised to modify (4) and (5) in order to avoid a 'pro-mention' bias. Better is to have a non-quotational example that lends itself to use-based just as well as to mention-based interpretations. In Saka's original examples, the metalinguistic predicate *has seven characters* so clearly orients the various possible readings

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<sup>180</sup> As is confirmed by the fact that quotations and non-quotations alike can be either used or mentioned.

as to all but rule out those under which the subject is taken to refer to the city. Since this has a blurring rather than a clarifying effect, I suggest adopting the following examples, with a ‘neutral’ predicate:

(6) I love Chicago

(7) I love ‘Chicago’.

According to Lyons’s terminology, (6) and (7) are ambiguous as utterance-types. This entails that they may also turn out to be ambiguous as utterance-tokens, if the context does not help in clearing up ambiguity. The ambiguity of (6) can be analysed as follows: tokens of (6) can be used to utter three distinct sentences on different occasions of utterance. On Lyons’s account, it is these sentences that will be said to have truth-conditions, not (6) as an utterance-type.<sup>181</sup> Let me call (*6*<sub>1</sub>), (*6*<sub>2</sub>), and (*6*<sub>3</sub>) the three sentences associated with (6). The various interpretations of *Chicago* and ‘*Chicago*’ have been spelled out before. I base myself on this prior discussion to list the respective propositional contents of (6) and (7):

- (*6*<sub>1</sub>): « the utterer of (6) loves the word *Chicago* »<sup>182</sup>
- (*6*<sub>2</sub>): « the utterer of (6) loves the city named Chicago »
- (*6*<sub>3</sub>): « the utterer of (6) loves the quotational complex ‘*Chicago*’ »

If I subject the sentences associated with (7) to the same treatment, here are the three propositional contents that can be reconstructed:

- (*7*<sub>1</sub>): « the utterer of (7) loves the word *Chicago* »
- (*7*<sub>2</sub>): « the utterer of (7) loves the city named Chicago »
- (*7*<sub>3</sub>): « the utterer of (7) loves the quotational complex ‘*Chicago*’ »<sup>183</sup>

Conclusion: strictly in terms of the propositional content (of the various sentences that can be uttered by means of (6) and (7)), no difference can be observed. This entails that the sum total of the truth-conditions of these two sets of sentences is the same, and that (6) and (7) are therefore not ambiguous in different ways. Since there is no reason why this result should not be extended to (4) and (5), we must conclude that Saka’s original claim was unfounded.

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<sup>181</sup> Note that, if I assume that a particular utterance-token is unambiguous (= I have identified which sentence it is used to utter), I can, for simplicity’s sake, afford to say that this utterance-token has truth-conditions. As a matter of fact, within a bi-dimensional framework, it is more natural to ascribe truth-conditions to utterance-tokens (as carriers of a definite proposition) than to sentences (unless the latter term is understood as « text-sentence »).

<sup>182</sup> It goes without saying that in my comments, I shall allow myself no sloppiness in the use of quoting devices. It should therefore be understood that, in my metalanguage, propositional contents, for example, are strictly unambiguous (though, they may, of course, be underdetermined).

<sup>183</sup> As Jean-Pierre van Noppen has pointed out to me, there are more potential propositional contents for both (6) and (7), centring e.g. on the song *Chicago* by Frank Sinatra.

This is perhaps a difficult result to swallow. We may, like Saka, want to hold on to the claim that (6) and (7), or (4) and (5), do not mean the same thing. Otherwise, it seems, there is no point in using quotation marks in the first place. Perhaps this impression stems from the fact that the above considerations put all the interpretations on a par. Yet, competent readers of English would probably want to establish some sort of ranking of the interpretations in terms of salience. As regards (6), we would have (6<sub>2</sub>), then (6<sub>1</sub>), then (6<sub>3</sub>), in decreasing order of likelihood. As for (7), the order would be (7<sub>1</sub>), then (7<sub>2</sub>) or (7<sub>3</sub>), then (7<sub>3</sub>) or (7<sub>2</sub>).<sup>184</sup> It is noteworthy that a different reading takes precedence in each series. This may account for our intuitive sense that (6) and (7) ‘do not mean the same’. However, matters of likelihood are not supposed to have any impact on propositional content. As soon as an interpretation has been acknowledged as possible, the sentence that underlies it has truth-conditions, and these truth-conditions are not weighted by any factor reflecting the overall likelihood of the reading. What happens is this: the context (usually) indicates which sentence has been uttered. It is at that stage that likelihood plays a crucial role. But that stage is also pre-semantic. Once the right sentence has been identified, semantic analysis begins, and truth-conditions are determined regardless of matters of probability.

And still... Still, there remains something unsatisfactory about the account that precedes. I believe it is yet possible to bring to light a truth-conditional difference between (6) and (7), or (4) and (5). This possibility centres on the analysis of (7<sub>2</sub>), i.e. the sentence relative to which the quotation marks are interpreted as scare quotes. In my initial discussion of Recanati’s third reading of (5), namely a false statement about the city of Chicago, I mentioned the possibility of understanding the scare quotes variously, but concluded that none of this affected the set of truth-conditions that could be associated with (5). The situation is different with (7<sub>2</sub>).<sup>185</sup> My suggestion is that the proposed sentence actually conflates two sentences with very different propositional contents. The first one is the same as (7<sub>2</sub>) above. Let me relabel it as (7<sub>21</sub>). As for the second, which has a distinct propositional content, I shall call it (7<sub>22</sub>). The difference between (7<sub>21</sub>) and (7<sub>22</sub>) is rooted in the plasticity of scare quoting. Scare quotes always have an echoic or (mimetic)<sup>186</sup> value: they show that the speaker is using somebody else’s word(s), or imitating somebody else’s manner of speech, and that s/he does not fully endorse them. But sometimes the distancing effect they achieve goes so far as to imply that a given word was wrongly used, in

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<sup>184</sup> (7<sub>3</sub>), i.e. with the complex-with-quotes as the subject of discourse, would probably come last, but only for the irrelevant reason that speakers very seldom refer to such objects in the first place.

<sup>185</sup> This provides, a posteriori, another reason for preferring (6) and (7) to (4) and (5). Because of its metalinguistic predicate, Saka’s original pair of examples prevented any correct apprehension of the issue.

<sup>186</sup> François Recanati’s terminology.

particular, that it was an incorrect label for the referent intended. (7<sub>21</sub>) involves scare quotes with only echoic value; whereas, in (7<sub>22</sub>), scare quoting suggests that the echoed speaker had wrongly used *Chicago* to refer, say, to the city of Detroit. Thus, we can associate (7) with a new sentence with its own propositional content:

— (7<sub>22</sub>): « the utterer of (7) loves the city named Detroit »

Clearly, this propositional content determines truth-conditions that are different from those of (7<sub>21</sub>): there is no logical equivalence between loving Chicago and loving Detroit. Moreover, this fourth interpretation cannot be obtained from the utterance-type (6). Therefore, quotation marks do have an impact on truth-conditions.

What are the correct implications of the foregoing discussion? One inference that, I assume, everyone would now be ready to draw is that the utterance-types (6) and (7) are ambiguous in different ways. The corollary is that (4) and (5) too are ambiguous in different ways. Therefore, within a framework that equates the truth-conditions of an utterance with its semantic interpretation (as adopted by Saka and C&L), Saka is right in claiming that quotation-marks play a semantic role. By the same token, C&L are wrong in rejecting Saka's distinction between quotation and mention (even granted all the qualifications I voiced earlier). Ironically, however, this ultimate reversal of fortune is not enough to vindicate Saka's theory. We saw in Chapter 3 that it was sensible to dissociate the semantic interpretation of an utterance from its truth-conditions. In such a framework, the demonstration of a difference in terms of truth-conditions is no positive evidence of a semantic difference. As we shall see when we examine some final objections to Saka's account (after we have finished looking into C&L's arguments), Saka's conception of quotation marks as grammatical markers with a semantic value lands him in some additional trouble, similar to problems encountered by Demonstrativists like Cappelen and Lepore, for instance. Thankfully, we are now equipped with a theory that is capable of explaining how certain pragmatic factors can affect truth-conditions. In Chapter 5, we shall see how Recanati takes advantage of this possibility to provide a coherent account of quotation marks.

The previous discussion also highlights what I take to be a weakness in C&L's theory. Their refusal to countenance pragmatic intrusions into the truth-conditions of an utterance confronts them with a serious theoretical difficulty. Here is why: at some stage, C&L make the following, essentially correct, statement about the truth-conditions of utterances containing demonstratives:

Sentences containing demonstratives need not preserve their truth-value when different objects are demonstrated. If you substitute a word-token of one type for another of a different type as the



demonstrated object, different objects are demonstrated and thus the truth-value of the original (utterance of that) sentence may change. (1997a: 440; already quoted in footnote 98 of Chapter 2)

Let me repeat that C&L regard truth-conditions as the central aspect of the semantics of utterances. This being said, we saw in 3.3.2 that there were some grounds for believing that the assignment of reference to demonstratives (and to some other categories of expressions) was not a purely semantic operation (i.e. there was a need to rely on the wide context, especially on the speaker's intentions). With respect to this challenging suggestion, C&L can take two opposing stances: either they reject it and are faced with the uncertain task of explaining all reference-assignment semantically (that is, with reference to the narrow context), or they accept it but then are forced to drop their objection to pragmatic factors affecting truth-conditions. In other words, they are forced to let Saka off the hook.

I am not saying that C&L are guilty of theoretical inconsistency, i.e. of having no definite idea of where semantics stops and pragmatics begins. I have done nothing more than point at a genuine challenge to their position. Now there are writers who do waver, notably Paul Saka himself. In 2.4, as part of his rebuttal of the Identity Theory, we saw how he insisted on the fact that, if quotation marks were conceived of as performing a purely pragmatic, signalling, function (as on Searle's account), then they could have no impact on truth-conditions. This shows that, like C&L, he stuck to the view that truth-conditions were the preserve of semantics. Yet, in his reply to C&L, when defending the distinction between mention and quotation, he contradicts himself, writing, "[t]his does not mean that pragmatics is "without semantic implications", as Cappelen & Lepore would have it" (1999: 751). Such hesitations and confusions are, I believe, grist to the mill of those theorists who plead for a redefinition of the division of labour between semantics and pragmatics.

#### 4.2.2. C&L's second objection

The second objection I wish to examine is not unconnected to the previous considerations. As I said earlier, C&L construe Saka's theory as upholding "the Humpty Dumptyesque idea that users of quotation can refer to different sorts of entities (be it tokens, types, syntactic structures, or concepts) simply by intending to refer to them" (1999: 746).<sup>187</sup> Their claim can be given two distinct readings: a moderate and a radical one. The moderate claim, which regards the use-

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<sup>187</sup> I do not think that the analogy is very felicitous. In no circumstances would Saka countenance that speakers select referents arbitrarily. After all, the various objects that can be ostended by uttering a token are expressly said to be conventionally associated with that token.

mention distinction, i.e. the decision to focus either on the ordinary sense/referent of a word, or on the word itself, is correct. Saka does make the use-mention distinction dependent on intentions. The more radical one, which regards the ‘specialised’ referents (orthographic or phonic form, lexical entry, intension) is less evidently so.

It is true that Saka could be reproached with leaving this last question in the dark. Nowhere does he specify whether speakers intentionally talk about tokens rather than types, for instance, or forms rather than lexical entries. But, to use a comparison, neither is it clear that speakers usually make a conscious choice between a concrete and an abstract sense of *bank* in *The bank is a Victorian building* vs. *The bank holds 3rd-world countries to ransom*. The point of this analogy is that some meaning relations that are internalised (place-institution, and, perhaps, form-lexeme) do not necessarily give rise to any reflexive awareness. It is not self-evident that the speaker who utters *The bank holds 3rd-world countries to ransom* deliberately selects the abstract referent of *bank*. That does not, as far as I know, prevent him/her from referring to the bank-as-institution rather than the bank-as-building. As regards linguistic referents, it is even less clear – actually, the hypothesis would be downright unreasonable – that speakers always know if they want to talk about such theory-dependent objects as a word-as-form rather than about a word-as-lexeme. Most speakers are not aware that such a distinction even exists, as the widespread underdetermined use of the word *word* demonstrates. As in the *bank* example, however, this observation does not mean that speakers are not (perhaps unwittingly) selecting for different referents on different occasions. Besides, as Saka himself points out (personal communication), it is safe to assume that lay speakers sometimes are fully conscious of which specific kind of linguistic object they intend to talk about. If, Saka suggests, I utter ‘*fun*’ consists of three letters, that manifestly means I wish to refer to the spelling rather than the pronunciation. Think of linguists too, who often deliberately want to talk about a derivational form rather than a lexeme, or about a type rather than a specific token.

As I have just suggested, even those cases where the speaker is not fully aware of the linguistic object s/he wants to talk about are no serious obstacle for Saka’s theory: such lack of awareness does not block the possibility of referring to words in different capacities. On Saka’s account, deferred ostensions are automatically made available as soon as a speaker directly ostends a linguistic token, and the more relevant or salient objects should normally be discerned by the hearer in the context. This holds on the condition that the speaker and hearer ‘know their language’, i.e. understand the words the speaker is using and are therefore aware of the range of items associated with the token uttered. When a speaker intends to mention a ‘linguistic entity’ –

this I regard as a reasonable depiction of what happens in real life – he does not necessarily intend to select one of the items associated with it (other than its extension). Still, reference will often be to a specific item among the cluster automatically ostended by the speaker, namely an item with particular salience in the context.

#### 4.2.3. Personal objections and questions

I now turn to a number of issues which, I believe, present greater challenges to Saka's theory than C&L's previous criticisms. First, there is the question whether Saka's theory offers an explanation for the zeugmatic effect in such dubious sentences as *Socrates is a Greek philosopher and an eight-letter word*. It is always possible to answer in the affirmative: since Saka's use-mention distinction is a matter of intentions, the oddity of the sentence may be put down to the fact that the speaker entertained two different, contradictory, intentions: the initial intention to direct the audience's thoughts to the term's extension, the subsequent intention to direct the audience's thoughts away from it. The zeugma may then be said to result from this clash of intentions. Yet, if that interpretation is granted, and the attendant reasoning is applied generally, then it becomes difficult to accept any instance of simultaneous use and mention, so much so that Saka's theory is left incapable of dealing with such perfectly acceptable sentences as *Would you have gone to the movies with such a 'giraffe'?* (Droste 1989b: 932). This means that one of the tasks facing scholars keen on pursuing the matter will consist in isolating the conditions on which simultaneous use and mention is acceptable.<sup>188</sup>

The second problem, which is potentially more damaging for Saka, has been hinted at earlier. Quotations are described as NPs (as they would be under the Name, Description and Demonstrative Theories; only radical Identity Theorists are in no trouble here). In Saka's theory, this grammatical status is a direct consequence of the syntactic role ascribed to quoting devices; remember that Saka defined "a pair of quote marks [as] a discontinuous determiner (a complex symbol which, applied to an argument expression, produces a noun phrase)". Those readers who had recognised a kinship between this conception and Reimer's (cf last § of 2.3) will already have put two and two together and inferred that Saka's views clash with the plain empirical fact that some quotations are not NPs. The irony is that both C&L and Saka find fault with each other for being unable to explain simultaneity but fail in the same process to realise that their own theory is deficient on this score.

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<sup>188</sup> Saka (personal communication) acknowledges the problem.

Now hybrid cases pose a problem only if one seeks to develop an integrated account of quotation in all its guises. What exactly is Saka's position? On the one hand, Saka seems adamant that quotations are NPs, witness the citation above, or this other one: "It is clear that quotations are noun phrases, as they function as grammatical subjects" (1998: 119). On such an analysis, Saka's theory cannot possibly be extended to hybrid instances. On the other hand, Saka claims to be able to deal with simultaneous use and mention, which is his term for hybrids; and he is aware that mixed quotations are not NPs (1998: 115), but predicates instead.<sup>189</sup> This means that he sees that in the case of mixed quotation the quote marks do not produce an NP. As Saka neglected to develop the consequences of this observation, it is difficult to figure out exactly what his position is. Still, I can think of two possibilities. Either Saka assumes that the theory of quotations as NPs must be restricted to 'pure' quotation (while another theory can be set up for hybrid uses); or he has not realised that his account was marred by an internal inconsistency. The first alternative must be rejected, as it conflicts with the claim that the theory as it stands can deal with simultaneity. In any case, even the drastic scaling down of the theory's ambitions that this alternative induces would prove futile. The reason is that even 'pure' quotations are not always NPs:

- (8) And anyway, she only said that she hasn't slept with him *yet*, [...]. But it doesn't stop me worrying about **the 'yet'**. (Hornby 1995: 121-23)
- (9) "All right, buddy," he said, "let's move that ass." It was **the "buddy"**, I think, that did it. (Salinger 1968: 126)

These two examples are substantially different from scare quoting or mixed quotation, as the quoted sequence is not used ordinarily at the same time as it is mentioned. From this point of view, these examples are just like commonplace autonyms. Still, as in scare quoting or mixed quotation, the quoted sequences do not, of themselves, appear to fill a whole NP slot. In (8) as in (9), the quotation is the head of an NP initiated by a definite article, and examples exist with the indefinite article, as well as demonstrative and possessive determiners.

If someone none the less wanted to stick to the view that autonyms are always NPs, they would have to (i) argue that '*yet*' and '*buddy*' after *the* are NPs, not nouns; (ii) appeal to the fact that an English NP can itself be determined by an article, or a possessive or demonstrative

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<sup>189</sup> Recanati (2001a: 656) makes the same point about mixed quotations being predicates. Note in passing that Saka wrote that "the material inside the quote marks" formed a predicate (rather than the whole complex). I do not know what to make of this: even if it is only the 'interior' that is a predicate, the whole complex still cannot be an NP, since such an analysis would make most cases of mixed quotation ungrammatical.

determiner (what Quirk et al. 1985: 253-57 call ‘central determiners’). Structures of the kind actually exist, cf *my few good friends*, *the many men present*, *those three changes*. Other, less spectacular, cases are *this tepid water* or *your ugly toes*. But it can be seen that all of these examples are headed either by a plural countable noun or a singular uncountable noun. By contrast, it can be seen that ‘yet’ and ‘buddy’ in (8) and (9) are grammatically singular and also countable, as they can be used with an indefinite article:

(10) Suddenly, she stopped without warning to let out a "Damn!"

(<http://www.rickgrunder.com/116text.htm>)

(11) Joel Yancey ... was always ready with a *how d’ye do*. (OED, VII, 455, col. 3)

and could be made to bear the mark of the plural:

(12) **All the “Thou shalt not’s”** of the Bible (Jespersen 1946: 73)

(13) The passive version can get rid of **all the theys** and introduce more variety in subject position (BNC CCV 925)

This means that maintaining the *pure quotation* = NP equation would require extending the rewrite rule underlying the preceding examples – basically  $NP \Rightarrow Det_{central} + NP_{uncount/plural\ count}$  – to include NPs headed by a singular countable noun. Perhaps that is not unfeasible, but, whatever its feasibility, such an extension would still fail to pass muster. Indeed, modifying adjectives are sometimes inserted between the central determiner and the autonym, as in:

(14) They use **the editorial ‘we’**... (Jespersen 1961: 214)

I do not think there is any conceivable way one could accept a rewrite rule like:

$NP \Rightarrow Det_{central} + Modifier + NP$

The conclusion is inevitable that some autonyms are not NPs but nouns instead. As a corollary, it can be asserted that Saka originally failed to notice the contradiction at the heart of his account.

Fortunately, a single alteration should work wonders. All that needs to be done is to give up the claim that quote marks output NPs. I assume that Saka himself is ready to do this. In personal correspondence, he has indicated that one cannot maintain that quotation always produces NPs. His present position seems to be that quote marks do not turn a sequence into an NP; rather, they make clear that a sequence is not used in an ordinary way. This is actually in keeping with this other description of quote marks in the 1998 paper:

Quote marks work analogously [to subscripts in dictionaries], functioning to single out (or rather narrow down) the intended reading. Their presence indicates a metalinguistic use; their absence does not necessarily indicate anything at all. (1998: 129)

I would say that such views endow quotation marks with a pragmatic rather than a semantic role. This, if I am not mistaken, brings Saka into line with the Identity Theory. As a matter of fact, it kills his own ‘recursion objection’ against the Identity Theory, an argument examined in 2.4. Of course, the move advocated here can only be successful if it is coupled with an explanation of how pragmatic markers affect the truth-conditions of an utterance. As I hinted at the end of the analysis of the *Chicago* examples, the next chapter undertakes to provide just such an explanation.

A final issue I briefly wish to touch upon has to do with the syntactic status of mention-without-quotes. This is a subject that Saka does not broach directly, but one of his theoretical positions has an indirect bearing on the issue. Towards the beginning of this chapter, I remarked that, since Saka recognises no syntactic difference between use and mention, he can throw no light on the grammatical oddness of *With is a preposition*. What we would wish for is something like an explanation of how a preposition (and many other kinds of linguistic objects) can fill the subject slot of a sentence. Such an explanation is available if we align mention with quotation. Regarding quotation proper, we have just seen that a pragmatic signal (quote marks) was capable of affecting utterances truth-conditionally, but also syntactically: in cases of pure quotation (as opposed to simultaneous use and mention), the pragmatic signal also appeared to turn any sequence into an NP or a noun. What I suggest is a division of labour between two pragmatic factors: on the one hand, quoting devices should be held responsible for changes in the truth-conditions of an utterance; on the other, the speaker’s mentioning intention (which is operative in both mention and quotation) should be held responsible for syntactic alterations (e.g. turning a preposition into an NP). On such an analysis, the syntactic status of autonoms does not depend on whether they are enclosed in quotation marks or not. Many autonoms are NPs, never mind that there are quoting devices or not, and some of them are not. This is actually what I understand to be Saka’s present position (personal correspondence). Note in passing that this offers an additional incentive to renounce the idea that quotation marks are NP-generating determiners. If many instances of mention-without-quotes are NPs too, the production of NPs becomes a mere pragmatic phenomenon, a grammatical correlate of a speaker’s intentions, and it becomes impossible to justify the ascription of a specific syntactic role to quote marks.

### 4.3. Reference

As part of their argument against referential diversity, C&L resort to an analogy: they compare Saka's examples of autonomous discourse with three examples of their own devising (1999: 744-45) that are meant to show that there is no need to assume referential diversity, that it is indeed counterintuitive. These examples are:

(15) Jack Kennedy lived in Washington D.C.

(16) Jack Kennedy was famous

(17) Jack Kennedy was loved.

C&L take it for granted that everybody would agree that the subject-NPs of these three sentences refer to the same entity.<sup>190</sup> However that may be, C&L's decision to compare autonyms with proper nouns (names) is tendentious. Names are standardly regarded as 'directly referential', just as much as indexicals are. That is, given a particular context of utterance, their content (their referent) does not vary. Now perhaps autonyms are directly referential too, but that is a question that needs looking into, not a foregone conclusion. Moreover, C&L hold that autonyms refer to classes of tokens. This, it seems, means that they could more easily be assimilated to NPs headed by common nouns than to proper nouns. On the basis of this other type of comparison, however, very different conclusions would be arrived at. Consider the following three examples, in which I assume the relevant NPs to be co-referential in the traditional grammatical sense:

(18) Back in 1944, John and Mary were dreaming of building a house.

(19) When it was eventually completed, some 22 years later, the house exceeded all their expectations.

(20) But the house was destroyed by fire in 1987, and it had to be rebuilt elsewhere.

Though the underlined sequences would usually be described as co-referential, it is not difficult to see that this co-referentiality must be understood in a looser (or, at least, a different) sense than in the *Kennedy* examples. After all, the first *a house* designates a home as imagined, the next three an actual residence, and the last one 'another', a new one (although, in some sense, the same). Whereas in sentences (15) to (17), the judgment of co-reference is based on stable reference to an individual (a token, a particular), in (18) to (20) it rests on the stable reference to a 'type' (i.e. John and Mary's home, whichever form the 'concept' takes, whichever way it is

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<sup>190</sup> Not so sure. One dissenting voice is Chomsky (1993: 22-23, 2000: 37), who vehemently disputes the postulated stability of reference, even in the case of proper names.

instantiated).<sup>191</sup> These examples show that an NP headed by a common noun can refer not just to a token but also to a type. As a result, if there is some legitimacy to the analogy between autonyms and ‘ordinary’ NPs, one must at least ask the question whether autonyms too might not be capable of referring to tokens and types alike.

The previous considerations are meant to show how difficult it is to interpret analogies of the sort suggested by C&L and derive positive conclusions from them. Some other principle is required on the basis of which the reference of autonyms can be discussed meaningfully and eventually settled. But first, the terms of the discussion and the various possible positions need to be outlined more clearly.

#### 4.3.1. The terms of the discussion

This section is devoted to elucidating the terminology used in the relevant literature. Words like *type* and *token*, but also *form*, *lexical entry*, *lexeme*, *expression*, and others have been used so far without being defined strictly. Yet, precise definitions have now become a necessity, all the more because the terms of the art are not understood identically by all writers on metalinguistic reference.

The task I am undertaking essentially amounts to answering the question, “what are the different senses of the word *word*, and what names will these be given?”. When C. S. Peirce introduced the type-token dichotomy, he did so specifically to deal with the equivocalness of *word* (Peirce 1960: § 537). Take the following example:

(21) I am going back to home sweet home.

There are two possible answers to the question, “How many words in that sentence?”: eight or seven. The first answer captures the number of separate occurrences in the sentence, never mind that some of these repeat previous ones (tokens); while the second captures the number of formally distinct occurrences (types).<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> I realise that not everyone would agree that all of the underlined NPs in (18) to (20) have reference. In particular, *a house* in (18) does not pick a particular house in the world. Rather, it describes the kind of object that would make (18) a true sentence (in other words, it calls for an ‘attributive’ rather than a referential reading). None the less, I take it that the two NPs in (20) are sufficiently uncontroversial for my overall point to be valid.

<sup>192</sup> A thorough survey of the problems with the type-token relation would take us too far afield. See Ducrot and Schaeffer (1995: 219); Crimmins (1997b) and Wetzel (1998) for some basic issues. The only objection I wish to touch upon is the contention that *type* is just another name for *class of tokens*, hence a superfluous addition to an already crowded terminology and ... ontology. That view has some currency, but I believe that there are good grounds for rejecting it. Take this discussion by Wetzel:

[...] consider the grizzly bear. At one time its US range was most of the west and it numbered 10,000 in California alone. At the end of the twentieth century its range is Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, and it numbers fewer than 1,000. But no



However, as J. Randsell (in Sebeok 1986: 1126-30) points out, Peirce himself (1960: § 537) thought that a three-term classification, including the additional ‘tone’ or ‘qualisign’,<sup>193</sup> was needed to cover the various interpretations of the word *word*. Going one step further, John Lyons advocates a double dichotomy. Let me illustrate:

(22) Because of his long fast, he was too weak to stand fast or hold fast or even run fast. (Sebeok 1986: 1130)

There are three possible answers to the question, “How many words in that sentence?”: nineteen, seventeen and fifteen. These answers are affected by the way in which one conceives of *fast* and *or*. If repetitions of the same sequences of letters are counted in, we have 19 tokens, among which three tokens of *fast* and two of *or*. If such repetitions are counted out, then we have 15 types. In particular, there are four tokens of one type FAST,<sup>194</sup> and two of one type OR. Finally, one can also understand *word* as denoting more than a sequence of letters (or phonemes), i.e. as including a sense. In this case, one can distinguish 17 form-sense pairings, the sort of combinations that Lyons labels ‘expressions’. In particular, there are three different expressions *fast* (but four tokens of the type FAST): *fast* as a noun meaning « a period of religious abstention from food », *fast* as an adverb meaning « firmly » (two tokens), and *fast* as another adverb meaning « quickly ». By contrast, there is only one expression *or* (but two tokens of the type OR).<sup>195</sup>

Let us take a second example:

(23) ‘If he is right and I am wrong, we are both in trouble’. (Lyons 1995: 49)

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particular flesh and blood bear numbers 1,000 or once had a range comprising most of the western USA; if anything it is a type which does. (1998: 510)

The right thing to look for is the kind of entity that is liable to satisfy the first argument position of predicates such as *numbering* or *ranging over*. Wetzel argues that classes of tokens are not a likely candidate, for it makes no sense to say, “Every grizzly bear numbered 10,000” or “Every grizzly bear ranged over most of the West”. The predicates above denote properties that cannot be ascribed to tokens, not even to every token of a class, unlike such predicates as, say, *having a thick fur* or *living in North America*. On the other hand, Wetzel points out, it makes sense to utter sentences like, “The species numbered 10,000” or “The species ranged over most of the West”, which, in Wetzel’s opinion, confirms that the likely referents of the subject expressions must be ‘types’.

<sup>193</sup> The actual picture is probably more complex than that, and some authors (e.g. De Pater & Swiggers 2000: 131) warn against confusing the *type-token-tone* with the *sinsign-legisign-qualisign* distinction (But Hausman 1993: 87 agrees with Randsell). However, Peirce’s writings are notoriously intricate, and I lack the necessary competence to judge who provided the right interpretation for his theory of signs and who did not. Moreover, A thoroughgoing decoding of Peirce’s thought is in no way indispensable to the drift of the present chapter. I shall not, therefore, pursue the matter any further.

<sup>194</sup> Whenever the convention proves useful, types will be written in small capitals.

<sup>195</sup> In this paragraph as elsewhere, I have adopted John Lyons’s terminology. Where Lyons has *type*, Randsell has *qualisign* (or *tone*), and where Lyons has *expression*, Randsell has *type*!

Once again, the type-token distinction fails to cover all the possible answers to the question how many words the sentence contains: there are thirteen tokens of thirteen different types. And, surely, if the sentence were used in a telegram, I would have to count thirteen words. At the same time, however, it is sensible to say that *is*, *am*, and *are* are realisations of the same word, the verb *to be*, that they are three ‘word-forms’ of one ‘word-expression’ (in this case, the lexeme *be*). In this sense, then, the sentence contains eleven different words. Only if we make the two independent distinctions between type and token on the one hand, and form and expression on the other, can we (begin to) answer the apparently innocuous query, “How many words?”.

The best way to make sense of the previous results is as follows: in Lyons’s scheme, the expression vs form dichotomy and the type vs token dichotomy are hierarchically ordered, with the latter coming under the former. Indeed, a word can be understood to be either an expression or a form. But only in the latter case is it meaningful to ask whether one is dealing with a token or a type. In other words, whereas there are form-tokens and form-types, there are no such things as expression-tokens or expression-forms.

**Expressions** can best be approached via the subset of ‘lexemes’. These make up the lexical component of the language-system, and are, accordingly, abstract entities. They “do not have a form. They are associated with a set of one or more forms” (Lyons 1977: 22; emphasis mine). Being ‘vocabulary-words’, lexemes combine form with meaning; more often than not, with a set of meanings. Two categories of lexemes can be identified: word-lexemes (e.g. *muster*, *herring*) and phrase-lexemes (e.g. *pass muster*, *red herring*). A lexeme is usually represented by a preferred form, the so-called ‘citation-form’. It is the citation-form which is used as headword in a dictionary entry. A dictionary user who wants to know more about the meaning of *corroding* will have to read the entry under *corrode*, which is the citation-form that heads it. It is important to realise that the citation form is not the lexeme; it is just one particular inflectional form which is given special prominence. The expression whose citation-form is *bring* has three (or four, see below) other inflectional forms, namely *brings*, *brought*, and *bringing*.

As the name indicates, **forms** are defined in formal terms. Since not all formal aspects are relevant, the question to ask is, “what are the distinctive features on the basis of which forms are individuated?”. Since forms can be conceived of as either **types** or **tokens**, this question can be reformulated as, “what does it take for two form-tokens to instantiate the same form-type?”. Lyons makes the preliminary remark that formal identity cannot boil down to mere material or perceptual identity. Perception must be coupled with functional considerations and our espousal of certain conventions. If it so happens that the waves on the beach have drawn a pattern that

looks just like the word *sic*, I should none the less refrain from saying that here is a token of the form-type SIC. Likewise, if the wind seems to be whispering the word *who*, I will not judge this sound to be a token of the form-type of a word. Even if we agree that perceptual considerations are not enough, there still are different notions of which linguistic features are relevant to formal identity and which are not. Take units such as clauses and sentences in spoken English. Are their prosodic features made to play a role in the decision whether one is dealing with one or several forms? As for written English, it might seem that difficulties are more easily sorted out. One might decide that formal identity is achieved if two forms are made up of “the same letters in the same order” (Lyons 1977: 20). But this is only one among several possible answers. For instance, it might also be contended that a certain amount of grammar is part of the form. On that basis, a distinction might be established between two forms *brought*, in spite of their material identity, because one is marked for pastness while the other is for perfectiveness.

The form-expression opposition is relevant in discussions not only of ‘lexically simple’ sequences (cf lexemes), but also of larger, ‘lexically composite’ units. For example, we saw in Chapter 3.1 that utterances can be viewed either as types or tokens. Therefore, since there are utterance-tokens and utterance-types, it is only natural to conclude that utterances are forms. Since utterances are forms that are associated with system-sentences, it is tempting to assume that the latter are their corresponding expressions. But, Lyons explains, a system-sentence is not properly speaking an expression (1977: 31fn). It is a subpart of each system-sentence, the so-called ‘sentence-kernel’, that is an expression.<sup>196</sup>

Most of the relevant facts about types and tokens have come up as part of the previous discussion of forms and formal identity. Let me just add that, since the identification of two tokens as instantiating the same type takes place irrespective of “their meaning or their assignment to lexemes” (Lyons 1977: 21), the type-token relationship also applies to sequences that cannot be dealt with in terms of the form-expression opposition, notably submorphemic

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<sup>196</sup> This kernel, which, unlike the system-sentence, is unmarked for sentence-type (i.e. ‘characteristic use’, cf Chapter 3), ‘encodes’ the propositional content and complies with the principle of compositionality. Like any other expression, it is associated with a form (Lyons rather loosely writes that it “has a form” (1995: 205)), and also has a meaning, one which “is (or includes) its propositional content” (ibid.). To give an illustration, *My husband is in love with his car* contains the same kernel as *Is my husband in love with his car?*: the two sentences have the same propositional content. I also assume – though Lyons makes no specific claim about this – that utterances of *My husband is in love with his car* and *Is my husband in love with his car?* are forms of the same expression, even though they are not associated with the same system-sentences (and definitely not tokens of the same utterance-type). That is because, unlike kernel-sentences, system-sentences are either declarative, interrogative or exclamative. Hence, distinct system-sentences that differ only in terms of characteristic use share the same kernel-sentence.

units (letters, syllables) or ‘semantically incomplete supramorphemic’ units (e.g. *be or not to*). In the sentence,

(24) Marsha made many attempts at marriage,

there are four tokens of the digraph-type <ma>. But, given that the digraph is devoid of any meaning, it makes no sense to discuss it in terms of forms and expressions.

At this stage, I have been able to define four terms with some degree of precision: there are expressions, which are abstract entities combining a sense (or senses) and forms; forms, which are the ways in which an expression can be realised. Moreover, thanks to the notion of formal identity, two sorts of forms can be distinguished: form-types, which are abstract entities subsuming the relevant formal characteristics of various related objects in time and space; and form-tokens, those very objects.

For the picture to be complete, I must also point out that the type-token dichotomy can usefully be supplemented by a third term, what some authors call an ‘occurrence’. If I write,

(25) *She apart doll her tore doll* is not an English sentence,

it is likely that I intend my autonomous sequence to designate not an utterance-token – after all no one is even assumed to have uttered any such sequence – but rather a type of ‘non-sentence’, SHE APART DOLL HER TORE DOLL. If I now ask what the nature of *DOLL* is in this utterance-type, how can the question be answered? *DOLL* can certainly not be a token since the assumption is that it was not uttered. Nor can it be a type; otherwise we would have to accept that SHE APART DOLL HER TORE DOLL contains two types *DOLL*, which is absurd. Being neither a token nor a type, but a part of a type instead, each *DOLL* can only be an occurrence. The term *occurrence* proves especially handy when considering grammarians’ and semanticists’ examples, because these scholars often do not study sentences as the products of utterance-acts performed in a particular context. By contrast, when considering context-dependent spontaneous productions, the term *occurrence* is much less useful, given that these productions are tokens made up of smaller tokens.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> I suppose the usefulness of the term *occurrence* can be illustrated even more convincingly by the following non-linguistic example: (cf Wetzel 1998: 510): there exists a type of the U.S. flag (OLD GLORY), of which all actual flags (material objects located in time and space) are tokens. Nowadays, OLD GLORY has fifty stars. Are these stars tokens of a star-type? No, since, being parts of a type, they are not instantiated in time and space. Are they types? No, otherwise there would be fifty star-types on OLD GLORY. The only possible answer is that these stars are something else, ‘abstract realisations’ of a type, in other words, ‘occurrences’ (see also Crimmins 1997: 299).

## 4.3.2. The various positions found in the literature

### 4.3.2.1. An autonym refers to itself

This is probably the most standard view encountered in the literature.<sup>198</sup> It seems that the earliest formulations go back about twenty-five centuries to the Sanskrit grammarian Panini (cf Deshpande 1998b: 242). Later versions occur in secondhand accounts of the Stoics' logic (cf Atherton 1993: 38, 274, commenting on Chrysippus). In the fourth century A. D., Augustine, who exhibited a keen interest in the reflexivity of language, noticed that some signs 'signify themselves' (amongst other things), e.g. metalinguistic terms such as *name* or *sign* (cf Rey-Debove 1978: 36; Crosson 1989: 123), and that so do quoted words (cf Kirwan 1989: 50).

In the scholastic theory of suppositions, terms used in material supposition are generally said to supposit for themselves (cf Chapter 2.4). In recent times, quite a few proponents of the Identity Theory have also claimed that autonoms refer to themselves – and when they deny autonoms any reference, they nevertheless agree that autonoms present themselves. But even outside the Identity paradigm, there are writers who do not refrain from using the phrase *refers to itself* or a synonym (Carnap 1937: 17; Garver 1965: 235; Seymour 1996: 309).

A closer look at these statements of self-reference reveals two positions: there are those who make self-referring a matter of theoretical principle (Identity Theorists), and those who use the phrase rather loosely as a convenient shortcut. As regards the former, any meaningful understanding of the assumption of identity forces them to argue that, in the strict sense, only reference to tokens is possible, given that nothing but tokens occur in actual utterances. Curiously, a militant Identity Theorist like Washington states that reference is to expressions, but adds that the "notion of expression is flexible, and can be applied widely, making coarser or finer distinctions" (1992: 598). Elsewhere, he even writes that "[q]uotation is generally used to mention expression types, unless there is an explicit qualification to the contrary" (1998: 550; my emphasis), a statement that seems very far removed from an Identity account of autonymy.

As regards the latter, those who do not take *to itself* literally, many in their ranks are commentators of ancient authors, notably the Scholastics, or even these authors themselves. For example, what Panini apparently wrote in the relevant 'Sutra' (a sort of grammatical aphorism), is that "[a] word (in a grammatical rule) which is not a technical term denotes its own form"

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<sup>198</sup> There are variants to the effect that autonoms 'stand for', 'denote', 'name', 'signify', 'supposit for' themselves. Since I am exclusively going to take into account those autonoms that do have reference, I shall take these other terms as local synonyms of *referring to oneself*.

(Sutra i.1.68; quoted in Brough 1951: 28; my emphasis). Moreover, it seems that Panini also allowed for reference to one's meaning. As for the commentators, such writers as Peirce, de Rijk, Mittelstraß, Adams or Alféri have all supplied more or less refined solutions to a problem neatly captured by Ebbesen in this citation: "it was often unclear what exactly was meant by 'itself' in the formula 'standing for itself'" (1998: 398). Their reflections, all of which make them sympathetic to some version of Saka's notion of referential diversity, will be reviewed shortly (under point 4.3.2.3).

#### 4.3.2.2. An autonym refers only to one kind of entity (types or classes of tokens)

This position has been adopted by distinct groups of writers:

First, there are several specialists of medieval theories of logic and language who interpret material supposition as reference to a class of linguistic tokens. Peirce, contradicting another statement of his (cf 4.3.2.3), writes that material supposition is "that of a term taken as standing merely for all repetitions of itself" or "not denoting anything but itself in its general employment" (1998: 625; emphasis mine). Moody, an authority on Ockham, writes that a term has the sort of supposition called "'material' if it be taken as an instance of the kind of spoken or written sign that it is" (1935: 41; emphasis mine). Pierre Alféri makes the less cut and dried statement that "the sign does not usually stand for its own singular occurrence [read *token*], but for the whole series of its occurrences" (1989: 311; emphasis mine).

Then, there are logicians (usually defenders of the Name Theory) who argue in favour of reference to a type or a class of tokens.<sup>199</sup> Rudolf Carnap initially states that an autonym is a symbol used as a name for itself, but at once offers this rectification, "more precisely, as its own symbol-design" (1937: 17), with *symbol-design* being for all practical purposes synonymous with *type*. And Alfred Tarski stipulates at least twice that his 'quotation-mark names', just as well as terms such as *word*, *expression*, or *sentence*, are to be regarded as denoting not "concrete series of signs but the whole class of such series which are of like shape with the series given" (1983: 156fn; also 1944: 370fn).<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> It is not clear that they would make a distinction between these two.

<sup>200</sup> Gómez-Torrente, who is a Tarskian, concurs that "in the absence of prominent contextual indications, the user of a quotation will be taken to refer to the general, linguistically relevant written expression type of the quoted expression" (2001: 149 note 6). The German philosopher Kuno Lorenz upholds a more radical version of reference to types in his various contributions to Mittelstraß (1995-96, v. 1, 114; v. 4, 459). Let me just add that such an insistence on reference to types coming from Name Theorists demonstrates once again that they did not take *name* in any strict sense. Otherwise, they would only have licensed reference to individuals, i.e. tokens.

There is a third group of writers who argue that autonoms systematically (or, at least, massively) refer to a single sort of entity: Davidson and several of his followers (cf Chapter 2.3). It is not always easy to understand these writers' reluctance to take in other sorts of referents. Bennett, for instance, expresses the belief that an autonym always refers to a type, only to offer a very tentative qualification, and in turn qualify the qualification by adding that even then, "a type is still involved—reference is being made if not *to* a type then *through* a type" (1988: 400).<sup>201</sup> The same kind of reluctance can be observed in Reimer (1996: 136fn, also 138).

My feeling is that those three groups of writers are drawn to the thesis of the homogeneous ontological status of referents mainly on account of the framework within which they operate. Authorities on medieval scholarship have to do with writers many of whom only gave consideration to general statements about words.<sup>202</sup> On the basis of such a restricted corpus, it is almost natural to infer that autonoms refer to types/classes of tokens. As regards Carnap and Tarski (and other logicians), the very nature of the task they set for themselves, developing a language for science, may go some way towards explaining why their autonoms never refer to particulars. When logicians discuss sentences (well-formed formulas), they do so regardless of any context in which these might be produced. Lack of interest for contextual information goes hand in hand with the fact these sentences often express analytical propositions (e.g. *Snow is*

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<sup>201</sup> Here is Bennett's example: *At the end of his letter, he wrote "Damn you!"* (1988: 399). Bennett's account is untenable, first, because reference *to* and reference *through* cannot be put on a par, surely; and second, because Bennett understands an 'inscription-type' as « a set of alphabetic letters, spaces, and punctuation points, arranged on one or more horizontal lines » (1988: 400). I do not quite see how such a formal object could mediate the reference to a token. I can understand how the sense of an expression mediates the relation between a form and its referent (this is the standard Fregean hypothesis), but Bennett's suggested mechanism is less readily available for interpretation.

<sup>202</sup> The illustrations provided for material supposition in contemporary dictionaries and encyclopædias are all much of a muchness: '*homme est un nom*', '*homme est monosyllabique*' (de Libera 1990: 2505); '*homme est un substantif*' (Blanché 1996: 955); '*Man is a noun*' (Lejewski 1974: 239; Ashworth 1998: 753); '*Lion has four letters*' (Honderich 1995: 860); '*homo est vox dissyllaba*' (Vignaux 1996: 412); '*The word man originally meant a thinker*', '*Sortes est dictio dissyllaba*', '*Omne ly homo est nomen*' (Peirce 1998: 625; *ly* or *li* was "a metalinguistic comment indicating that the following term has material supposition" (King 1985: 331fn; see also Maierù 1972: 296-97)); '*homo est nomen*' (Pinborg 1998: 652); '*Man is a monosyllable*' (Spade 1982: 196fn; Audi 1999: 892). Most of the examples supplied are referential, only one is not (*Omne ly homo*). All examples have a subject in material supposition and a meta-predicate denoting a general linguistic property. This means, for writers who draw no distinction between type and expression, that all of these statements are about types. I am not sure this lack of variety is a true reflection of the situation in the primary literature. Though some Scholastics seem to have had a predilection for general statements (e.g. William of Sherwood's *Introduction*; the authors quoted in Maierù 1972), others offered a wider range of examples involving material supposition. Ockham (*Summa logicae* I, 64 & 67) and Buridan (*Treatise on Supposition* [3.2.10ff]; in King 1985: 120) have a majority of general statements but also a few about tokens. Vincent Ferrer (1977: 164ff) has greater variety: *baf dicitur a me* (= someone said baf to me), *Petrus scribitur* (= someone wrote Petrus), *hoc homo est nomen* (= this homo is a noun), *homo supponit personaliter in aliqua propositione* (= homo supposits personally in some proposition), *hominem esse animal est oratio indicativa* (= *Homo est animal* is a sentence in the indicative; more about this intriguing example shortly). A wide range of examples can also be found in Walter Burley's *De puritate* (1995: §15-26), more about which a few pages down.

*white*), which are supposed to hold true irrespective of their context of utterance. Such indifference to the utterance-act explains that the metalinguistic points made by logicians have a general import and hardly ever apply to particular tokens. Finally, as far as the Demonstrativists are concerned, their choice in favour of invariable reference may once again have to be explained by the relative uniformity and artificiality of the examples used in a sizeable proportion of the literature on use and mention. In any case, I hope I was able to show in 2.3 that there was no manifest theory-internal necessity behind the rejection of variability in reference. As a matter of fact, the very adoption of a Demonstrative account would seem to encourage reference to tokens rather than types. After all, ordinary non-autonomous demonstratives mainly pick out individuals, even though they can occasionally be used to refer to types via a token, e.g. *That tree is deciduous* (cf footnote 158, in 3.3.2).

#### 4.3.2.3. An autonym can refer to different kinds of linguistic entities

In this section, I will go from the simpler accounts to the more complex ones. I shall begin with those writers who acknowledge reference to two sorts of entities. We saw above that Panini discerned forms and meanings as possible referents of autonoms. Similarly, the thirteenth-century logician William of Sherwood distinguished between reference to a phonic form and to a lexeme.<sup>203</sup> These positions are comparable, respectively, to Garver's (1965: 234; cf Chapter 2.1.2, feature 3) and to Lyons's. Another interesting observation is made by Droste (1983: 694), who distinguishes between reference to forms ('a spoken sound chain') and to utterances with their illocutionary force (e.g. a greeting). Most of the time, however, scholars divide referents into types (sometimes understood as classes) and tokens. So do, in their own terminologies, Peirce, de Rijk (1967: 587) and Mittelstraß (1996: v. 4, 147),<sup>204</sup> all of whom are commenting upon material supposition. Others are Seymour (1996: 318), who reserves the type-token

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<sup>203</sup> He offered the following definition of *material supposition*:

It is called material when a word itself supposits either [A] for the very utterance itself [*pro ipsa voce absolute*] or [B] for the word itself, composed of the utterance and the signification [*pro dictione*] – as if we were to say [A] 'man is a monosyllable' or [B] 'man is a name.' (V, 2; 1966: 107)

<sup>204</sup> In the entry for *Supposition* in Baldwin's philosophical dictionary (1901-02), Peirce writes:

Material supposition is either *discrete* or *common*; *discrete* when it refers to a particular instance of the occurrence of the term, when it is referred to as *this* or *that*; *common* when it does not refer to the special occurrence of the term merely. (1998, vol. 2: 625; slightly contradictory with his pro-type stance).

The very same terminological distinction is made by Ferrer (1977: 164). John Trentman, the editor of Ferrer's *Treatise*, also reads it as opposing reference to word-token and to word-type (1977: 35f; see also Bochenski 1970: 167-68, who offers a partial translation of the relevant passage). As regards de Rijk, it is amusing to note that he talks of 'autonomous' use instead of 'autonymous'. A similar misreading occurs in Davidson (1979: *passim*) and Honderich (1995: 860).



opposition to ‘uninterpreted’ quotations,<sup>205</sup> and, in spite of their reservations, Bennett (1988: 399-400) and Reimer (1996: 136fn).<sup>206</sup> In the context of linguistics proper, let me mention Rey-Debove (1978: 104-06) and Zellig Harris, who contrasts ‘metatype sentences’ with ‘metatoken sentences’. Metatype sentences are built on the simple pattern, ‘*X* is  $N_{meta}$ ’. Metatoken sentences are of the more complex form, *a*, ‘*q*’ in ‘*X* is  $N_{meta}$ ’, where *a* indicates *q*’s position within *X*. An example is *The word ‘book’ in word-position 2 of ‘the book’ is a noun, but ‘book’ in word-position 3 of ‘They will book him’ is a verb* (1968: 127). Harris states that these patterns must necessarily be used whenever we want to talk about linguistic types and tokens, respectively.

Moving up one level on the scale of complexity, let us turn to authors who distinguish three sorts of referents for autonoms. Most notable among these are Reichenbach and, especially, Carnap. In apparent contradiction with his earlier statement that autonoms refer to their symbol-design [read *type*], Carnap (1937: 154-56) supplies an interesting discussion of what he calls the ‘designation’ of metalinguistic expressions (what could be summed up by the labels *autonomous mention* and *heteronymous mention* (Recanati’s term): on the one hand, autonoms; on the other, non-autonomous names (e.g. *The Sermon on the Mount*; a recurrent example in the literature is *Cambronne’s word*) and descriptions (e.g. *Caesar’s remark on crossing the Rubicon*). Carnap makes out three distinct cases. The first two are basically reference to a token and reference to a type, which are differentiated on the basis of the meta-predicates attached to the autonoms; for example, *was heard by so-and-so* for tokens, and *consists of three words* for types. Carnap’s examples suggest that the distinction between straightforward (or flat) autonomy and direct speech might be relevant in identifying reference to types vs tokens.

Carnap’s third case concerns reference to formulas containing variables.<sup>207</sup> The problem, under a Name Theory, is that as soon as variables are put between quotation marks, they supposedly become constants. Tarski is probably the first logician to have noticed the difficulties raised by the autonymisation of variables (around 1930). To avoid confusion with ‘standard’

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<sup>205</sup> Uninterpreted quotations are basically quotations of forms. As a matter of fact, interpreted quotations could arguably be understood as quotations of expressions. This would make Seymour’s account essentially similar to Lyons’s.

<sup>206</sup> Truncellito (2000: 252) would add the name of García-Carpintero, but García-Carpintero’s actual words are that “the content of an ostensive sign [...] must only be something naturally related to it” (1994: 259-61), by which he means something that has the same ‘function’ in the ‘teleological’ sense. This indicates that García-Carpintero is ready to accept greater variability than assumed by Truncellito.

<sup>207</sup> Reichenbach makes out the same three cases. The default case is reference to a type: quotation-marks create a name of a word, which name denotes a symbol, a symbol being a type. This, at least, is the position that can be pieced together on the basis of assertions on pp. 4, 9ff, and 284-85. In cases where reference is to be made to a token, Reichenbach suggests introducing a distinct operator called ‘token quotes’ (1947: 284). Finally, he also addresses the mention of variables (1947: 12-14).

quotation, Tarski had considered using special ‘quotation-functions’ whose arguments are sentential variables and whose values are constant quotation-mark names of sentences (cf 1983a: 161). If I am not mistaken, the whole issue is best known in the literature as ‘quasi quotation’, a phenomenon for which Quine (1940: 33-37) advocated the use of so-called ‘corner quotes’. The following example is from Quine (1953: 112): if, wishing to refer to a formula including variables (represented by Greek letters), I put it in inverted commas and write ‘ $(\exists \alpha) (\phi \vee \psi)$ ’, I automatically create a name for a particular, namely the formula containing the letters ‘ $\alpha$ ’, ‘ $\phi$ ’, and ‘ $\psi$ ’, which have therefore become constants. By contrast, according to the convention suggested by Quine, writing  $[(\exists \alpha) (\phi \vee \psi)]$  ensures that the Greek letters remain variables and that the formula accordingly refers to any instance of this template in which any constant is substituted for a variable.

A clear exposition of the issues can be found in Goddard & Routley (1973: 50-54), who also point out the difficulty involved in choosing between ordinary quotation and their own ‘sentential quotation function’ (their version of the corner quotes). Suggesting an intuitive procedure whose application could be generalised to any situation in which one is wondering if reference is to a token or a type, they advocate

asking in particular cases of mentioning whether what is being formulated is a general law applicable to all sentences even though quoted, or whether a particular formula is being quoted even though it happens to contain variables. If the latter, quote marks are the appropriate mentioning device since we do not, when we use the quotation function, mention the variables at all. (1973: 54)

In other words, if a writer, in quoting  $x + y = z$ , wishes to refer to  $2 + 3 = 5$ ,  $8 + 9 = 17$ , and so on, then, in an orderly metalanguage, it would be advisable to write  $[x + y = z]$ . On the other hand, if the intention is to quote a particular expression as it contains variables, then ordinary marks are appropriate, as in ‘ $x + y = z$ ’ *looks different from* ‘ $r + s = t$ ’. Though the problem at hand appears to be typical of the metalanguage of formal systems, it does crop up now and then in natural, if not ordinary, metalinguistic use. Consider the next set of examples:

- (26) A simple scheme has been devised to show, for instance, that the idiom *force sb’s hand* matches a clause pattern [...]. (Cowie et al. 1983: xxvii)
- (27) The whole of the noun phrase idiom *the last word (in sth)* functions as the complement of a clause [...]. (Cowie et al. 1983: xlvi)
- (28) Even something as innocuous as *to be caught with one’s pants down* isn’t found in print until 1946 [...]. (Bryson 1995: 381)

(29) Even ‘violent expressions and metaphors’ – to kill two birds with one stone, how does that strike you, **to knock someone dead**, smash hit, **one thing triggers another**, to kick around an idea – are to be excluded from our speech on the grounds that they help to perpetuate a culture sympathetic to violence. (Bryson 1995: 428-29)

In (26), ‘*sb’s*’<sup>208</sup> plays the same role as the Greek letters in Quine’s example above. It may be said to occur in quasi quotation, as it remains replaceable by any NP denoting a person or group of persons. (27) illustrates the technical use of brackets as a marker of variability: the difference with the use of *sb* or *sth* is that brackets indicate variation between two possibilities, the occurrence or non-occurrence of the sequence enclosed. But there is a further complication in (27), as the brackets in turn contain a true variable, ‘*sth*’. Hence, (27) may be said to exhibit something like recursive variability. Using corner quotes, and assuming the respective ranges for each variable to have been specified elsewhere, (27) would look like this:

(27’) [...] the noun phrase idiom **the last word (in [sth])** functions [...]

In (28), ‘*one’s*’ is ambiguous between two readings. It may be regarded either as similar to ‘*sb’s*’ above, or as a citation-form standing for all forms of an expression, namely ‘the possessive determiner’. Any answer to this question depends on whether one’s grammatical theory regards *my*, *your*, etc. as mere forms of a more general expression, or as expressions in their own right. Note, however, that an expression is in effect a sort of variable since it is usually liable to various realisations. This suggests that the categories of quoting and ‘quasi quoting’ are not watertight. Finally, (29) confirms that everyday discourse does not mark the difference between quotation and quasi quotation: instances of the two types are quoted alongside, without anyone but the student of metalanguage noticing anything ‘odd’. The last two examples indicate that applying Goddard & Routley’s guidelines would not necessarily get one out of trouble.

Finally, there are not that many writers who identify more than three sorts of referents for autonoms. The most impressive ranges of referents are mentioned by Goldstein (1984: 4; but most are variations on tokens) and by Saka (1998: 123-25, 133): reference to itself as a token, other tokens, a type, form-content pairings, lexemes, forms, content, translated content! As I remarked earlier, several Scholastics recognised a good deal of variety in an autonym’s reference, even though they upheld something like an Identity Theory. Especially remarkable is the range of referents outlined by Walter Burley, or Burleigh (ca. 1275 - ca. 1345). In his *De*

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<sup>208</sup> An abbreviation is not the same as an autonym. Whereas the autonym belongs to a higher language level, the abbreviation is found at the same language level as that of the sequence it abbreviates.

*suppositionibus*, he makes out (translated into contemporary terms) reference to forms and to expressions (same examples as Sherwood), but also to a form as it instantiates a given grammatical category, as in *Man is in the singular number* or *Cato's is in the possessive case* (cf Burley 1995, §20).<sup>209</sup> In his *De puritate artis logicae*, he discerns five cases, the most interesting being reference to a different form than that instantiated by the referring term, and shifts in reference (basically a term in material supposition suppositing for one in personal supposition).<sup>210</sup> The most interesting aspects of the contribution of those writers who recognise reference to a considerable variety of linguistic entities will be mentioned in the descriptive sections 4.3.3.1, 4.3.3.2 and especially 4.3.3.3.

### 4.3.3. Assigning reference

As we saw in Chapter 3, the assignment of reference is in principle accomplished at the level of what is said. In other words, access is usually required to at least the narrow context of utterance. Yet, caution is in order. It is important to realise that part of the fixing of reference is done within what may be termed the 'pre-interpretative' process. That is because some idea of the reference is often needed if one is to identify which sentence is being uttered by a given utterance-token. In my discussion of the *I love Chicago* example earlier in this chapter, I identified several distinct sentences that can be uttered by different utterance-tokens of *I love Chicago*. This identification centred on the sort of referent (notably, ordinary vs linguistic) to be ascribed to the subject-NP.

That pinpointing the 'sort of referent' (although not the very referent) should be a pre-interpretative operation is required by the fact that it is part and parcel of disambiguation. My contention is that pre-interpretative processes are analogous to the interpretative processes presented in the previous chapter: both rely on the same types of information and of mental operations. This means that, in my view, the levels that proved relevant for the interpretation of utterances are just as relevant for their 'pre-interpretation' (e.g. Recanati's sentence meaning, what is said<sub>MIN</sub>, what is said<sub>MAX</sub>, what is meant). Having said that, I am not going to make full use of this insight right now. This will have to wait until Chapter 6. In the following pages, I place myself at a stage where I have already 'made sure' that I am dealing with metalinguistic rather than ordinary reference. In other words, I take it for granted that part of the pre-interpretative

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<sup>209</sup> Burley could be said to distinguish two sorts of forms: one defined materially or perceptually, the other including a grammatical component.

<sup>210</sup> For Burley's texts, see Spade's translations, which are available on-line. Adams (1987: 330) remarks that Ockham would have accepted four out of Burley's five categories in *De puritate*. For Ockham's *Summa logicae*, see Ockham (1951, 1957 and 1974).

process of disambiguation has been carried out beforehand, and assume that I do not need to dwell on exactly what elements and what operations have entered into that disambiguation.

I start this discussion with a bias in favour of referential diversity, as I made abundantly clear in Chapter 2. In that chapter, however, I made do with an impressionistic assessment of reference. In the development that follows, I will seek to provide a rationale for the determination of metalinguistic reference and, in so doing, try to buttress my personal positions.

### The role of meta-predicates

My initial hypothesis will be that meta-predicates enable the identification of a variety of linguistic entities as referents of autonyms. In this respect, I am simply following a lead suggested by Lyons. As part of his presentation of forms and expressions, Lyons attempts to show that his dichotomy has a truth-conditional impact. He takes a pair of so-called ‘self-referential’ sentences and asserts that, in spite of a clear discrepancy, both can be judged true because they call forth two distinct senses of *word* (in accordance with Lyons’s own notation, forms are in italics, expressions between inverted commas):

(30) This sentence contains the word *contains*.

(31) This sentence contains the word ‘contain’.<sup>211</sup>

That the final two words in these sentences are not the same entity under a different disguise is borne out by the falsity of this third sentence:

(32) This sentence contains the word *contain*.

It is only as an expression that (32) contains the word referred to, not as a form: as in (30), that form is *contains*. It is not illegitimate, though, to perceive a certain amount of circularity in Lyons’s argument. The difference between (31) and (32) may be seen to have resulted artificially from special typographical conventions. In everyday written English, it is unlikely that anyone would make the distinction.

It is not my intention to settle the matter at this stage. What is interesting in the above ‘demonstration’ is the underlying idea that the choice of the referent (form vs expression) can make a sentence true or false. If that is true, then it is likely that when a meta-predicate combines with an autonym it will select one sort of linguistic entity and not the other. Therefore, it becomes useful to ask the question as to what kind of linguistic entity can satisfy the meta-

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<sup>211</sup> The same test, with a pair of similar examples, occurs in Quirk et al. (1985: 68).

predicate of the sentence under consideration – provided it has one.<sup>212</sup> If Lyons himself supplied a detailed outline of the predicates that apply to expressions as opposed to those that do to forms, most of the work would already be done. The fact is that he does not. However, since he almost systematically reflects the expression-form distinction in his typographical conventions (cf the examples above), it is possible to piece together a picture of ‘predicates of expressions’ (Set 1) and ‘predicates of forms’ (Set 2).<sup>213</sup>

SET 1: [x stands for any argument as subject; y as second argument; z as third argument; « » is used for meanings; [ ] for phonetic transcriptions] *Have-sense*, *Have-meaning*, *Have-denotation*, *Have-extension*, *Have-a-usage*, *Be-gradable*, *Refer-to* (exp, y), *Mean* (exp, « y »), *Have-the-form* (exp, form), *Use* (x, exp), *Collocate-with* (exp, exp), *Be-substituted-for* (exp, exp), *Translate-as* (exp, exp), *Use-to-refer-to* (x, exp, z).

SET 2: *Be-a-letter*, *Be-an-affix*, *Be-iconic*, *Be-a-statement/question/order/reply*, *Consist-of-phonemes*, *Have-stress*, *Be-pronounced-as* (form, [x]), *Realise* (form, exp), *Occur-in* (form, longer form [e.g. utterance]), *say/ask/utter/reply/write* (x, form), *Use* (x, form), *Mean* (form, « y »)

These results are by and large consistent with my expectations. Semantic properties are ascribed to expressions; phonological, phonetic and orthographic ones to forms. And predicates denoting speech acts and speech productions in general are also applied to forms. An interesting difference emerges between *Use* and *Occur-in*. The first is treated as an equivocal item, since it can apply either to expressions or to forms. The latter case is limited to words like *so*, *but* or *and*, about which Lyons is inclined to think that they are forms without corresponding expressions (I cannot pursue the matter here). In the majority of cases, the linguistic argument is an expression, and Lyons seems to reserve *Use* for the ‘lexical selection’ that comes into the building of a sentence yet to be uttered. This stands in contrast with *Occur-in*, which appears to capture the ‘being-in-an-utterance’ of a form. Why *Collocate-with* is a member of Set 1 is explainable in virtue of the relative degree of fixedness of collocations in the lexicon, as borne out by the fact that many are recorded in dictionaries. Besides, many collocations involve several forms of at least one of their components, e.g. *come/came/comes/coming into view*, *red herring/herrings*, etc.

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<sup>212</sup> A strong initial objection might be voiced to the effect that many utterances simply cannot be handled in this truth-conditional manner, because they are utterances of interrogative, exclamative or imperative sentences. My reply would be something along the following lines: non-declarative sentences can usually be put into systematic correspondence with declaratives. For instance, *Is the door open?* has the same propositional content as *The door is open* (even though the non-propositional component of their sentence-meaning is different); and the imperative *Open the door!* shares its propositional content with *You open the door*. (Cf Chapter 3; see Lyons 1995: 182-98).

<sup>213</sup> What follows are not exhaustive lists. Comprehensive recension proved too time-consuming.

Perhaps it is more difficult to account for the membership of *Be-substituted-for*, but in the contexts in which this predicate was found to occur, Lyons was systematically considering system-sentences rather than utterances. Hence, given that system-sentences come ‘prior’ to their realisation as a string of forms, *Be-substituted-for* is taken to apply to expressions rather than forms (in a manner similar to *Use*).

In spite of the mostly unsurprising outcome of this short survey, there is one major observation to be made: certain predicates (e.g. *Use*, *Mean*)<sup>214</sup> can be attached to autonyms of either forms or expressions. Hence, the lexical meaning of the predicate is not always sufficient to identify the nature of its autonymous argument. In these circumstances, i.e. when the linguistic constituents fail to provide complete disambiguation or identification, interpreters will have to resort to information provided by the narrow or wide context. That, for instance, is what Lyons tacitly does when arguing that

(33) I hate ‘John’

refers to an expression. Lyons suggests two interpretations – there are more – on which the object-NP could not possibly designate a form. The first is “that I hate the English name referred to, in whatever medium [...] and in whatever form” (1977: 7). The second “rests upon that notion of identity or equivalence in terms of which we say that the French ‘Jean’ and the English ‘John’ constitute the same name” (ibid.). These interpretations are clearly not driven by something inherent in the predicate *hate*. There is an inescapable further implication: whenever an autonym combines with a non-metalinguistic predicate as in (33), contextual information will have to be called in to determine its reference.

#### What else, apart from meta-predicates, can help fix reference ?

(i) I shall begin with metalinguistic classifiers, i.e. with words denoting classes of linguistic units. These are often used in front of an autonym that functions as an apposition to them, as in *The word ‘love’, the adjective white*.<sup>215</sup> Most of these classifiers (usually highly frequent nouns: e.g. *word*, *phrase*, *expression*) are unhelpful, because they are ambiguous between a ‘type’ reading, an ‘expression’ reading, and so on. It is chiefly in very informed technical usage that classifiers may throw some light on the kind of intended referent :

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<sup>214</sup> As we saw in Chapter 3, meaning is diverse: its semantic aspects are chiefly a feature of system-sentences, its pragmatic ones a feature of utterance-tokens.

<sup>215</sup> I take it that appositive phrases are NPs, with the second postmodifying the first (cf Quirk et al. 1985: 1300-01; Biber et al. 1999: 638).

(34) For example, the complete correction process of the **word-form** *beartzetikan* (from the need), would be the following [etc.]. (<http://acl.ldc.upenn.edu/E/E93/E93-1057.pdf>)

(35) For example, the **orthographic form** ‘add’ occurs 4 times in the EFW database (<http://www.maccs.mq.edu.au/~max/DRC/>)

In these two examples, the metalinguistic classifiers tell us which kind of referent is intended for the autonym. Similar cases are much less likely in everyday usage, though it is perhaps not impossible for such phrases as *the sound ‘man’* to occur.

(ii) There are indications in the literature that the kind of determiner attached to an autonym may select a particular variety of referent.<sup>216</sup> The first traces of the idea that determiners affect the reference of autonoms go back at least to St Vincent Ferrer’s *Tractatus de suppositionibus*, in particular to his breakdown of material supposition. The first division is between a discrete and a common variety, with the latter further splitting into several subcategories.<sup>217</sup> Only the first distinction is of interest to us, as it basically draws the line between reference to form-tokens and reference to abstract entities (i.e. either form-types or expressions, for Ferrer had no terms to distinguish between these two). Among the criteria that determine discrete material supposition, one is to do with demonstrative determiners, as in: *hoc homo est nomen*. Ferrer seems to hold that a demonstrative phrase can only pick out tokens, since he gives a similarly ‘discrete’ reading of *hoc est nomen*.

To my knowledge, very little has been written on varieties of autonym-headed NPs and even less on the connection between determination and the referential scope of autonoms. In this regard, as in others, Rey-Debove proves an exception. She suggests that “in French, a determiner usually occurs before any autonymous sequence that has no general referent” (1978: 65), i.e. which refers to one or more tokens. If Rey-Debove is correct, and if English is similar to French on that score, autonoms occurring on their own (i.e. uninflected and undetermined) should not normally refer to form-tokens.<sup>218</sup>

Which are the determiners that are most likely to cause reference to pick out form-tokens? As indicated above, demonstratives are first in line. Acts of linguistic pointing are widely assumed to select entities located in space and time. Remember, however, that such is not necessarily the

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<sup>216</sup> Not all NPs headed by an autonym-as-noun have reference. In this section as elsewhere, I take into consideration only those that do.

<sup>217</sup> This resembles the picture provided by Peirce in Baldwin’s dictionary, which also highlights the role of demonstrative determiners (cf citation in footnote 204). See also (Maierù 1972: 311, 316) for references to other Schoolmen who identified several varieties of material supposition.

<sup>218</sup> This hypothesis is tested further on in this chapter. Note already that Rey-Debove herself points to a variety of autonoms-as-NPs that refer to tokens: direct speech reports. This too will be discussed in this chapter.



case, as demonstrated by Bach's example, *That tree is deciduous*. Possessive determiners (and possessive modifiers) should behave in much the same way. When talking of her '*That's enough!*' or Clinton's *between you and I's*, chances are high that I am going to make a point about these speakers' special use, or choice, or pronunciation, etc. of the words referred to. Such features will not be included in the necessarily general characteristics of types and expressions.<sup>219</sup> It therefore seems sensible to hypothesise that, like demonstratives, possessives will often be used for reference to form-tokens. Indefinite determiners too (*some, several, most, every, all, any, both, either*, etc.) are likely to crop up when the intention is to talk about particular instantiations of expressions, even when the selection is exhaustive, as with *all* or *every*. But note that quite a few writers would be reluctant to grant these phrases a referential function. Finally, articles do not appear to lend themselves easily to similar predictions. It is well-known that *a(n)*, *the* (+ singular or plural), and the zero-article can all, given appropriate circumstances, be used to accomplish what are standardly called 'generic reference' and 'specific reference' (cf Quirk et al. 1985: 265).

(iii) It is possible too, when an autonym that heads an NP is modified, that the modifier may provide hints as to the sort of referent that is intended.

In sections 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2, I start my review of the 'ontological diversity' of the referents that autonyms can pick out. Since many scholars, even among those who support the idea of referential diversity, assume that the default case is reference to types (read *abstract entities*), that is what I shall begin with. However, since I recognise at least two sorts of abstract linguistic entities, expressions and form-types, and since the form-expression divide takes precedence over the type-token opposition, I shall first deal with reference to expressions. In 4.3.3.3, I tackle the more complex issue of reference to form-tokens. However, before launching into the description of the various cases subsumed under this label, I first make sure that my assumption of referential diversity is well-founded and that 'homogeneous' accounts are lacking in some respects. It is there that I have chosen to scrutinise C&L's third objection to Saka as well as their own claim that autonyms refer to classes of tokens.

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<sup>219</sup> One could nevertheless adopt the position that there are sub-types subordinated to more general types. Thus, the subordinate type CLINTON'S BETWEEN YOU AND I might be said to come under the superordinate type BETWEEN YOU AND I. On such an account, a generic statement about formal features, such as *Clinton's between you and I's are always prosodically prominent*, for example, might be judged to be about a sub-type just as well as about a set of tokens (those uttered by Clinton). I must say that, although I believe that the separate existence of types must be granted (cf Wetzel's example of the grizzly bear), I am not at all sure that types and sets of tokens can always be neatly told apart. Rather, I believe that they are sometimes indistinguishable.

All in all, the next three sections allow me to put two things to the test: (i) the validity of the terminology set out in 4.3.1; (ii) the reliability and usefulness of the main distinctive criterion I have selected, namely the sort of meta-predicate that an autonym combines with.

#### 4.3.3.1. Reference to an expression

Since writings in linguistics and in the philosophy of language are essentially concerned with generalisations about linguistic objects, it is only to be expected that they should abound in autonoms referring to expressions. Some cases appear to be entirely unequivocal, for example:

(36) In a way, the definition of *wolf* is there ‘just for the record’ [...] (Leech 1981: 205)

(37) To say what the word ‘**dog**’ denotes is to identify all (and only) those entities in the world that are correctly called dogs (Lyons 1995: 78)

(38) For *mature* (adjective), for instance, possible synonyms are *adult*, *ripe*, *perfect*, *due*. (Palmer 1981: 62)

The meta-predicates in these three examples all denote semantic properties of their linguistic arguments. Forms do not have a definition (36), do not denote (37), do not have synonyms (38), expressions do.

However, it is striking that many autonoms occur with meta-predicates that do not, on their own, disambiguate between reference to forms and to expressions. Take the following:

(39) Or is it like this: the word “**red**” means something known to everyone; and in addition, for each person, it means something only known to him ? (Wittgenstein 1967: §273)

As I pointed out earlier, meaning is a property of expressions or forms. In this particular instance, it is likely that reference is to an expression, notably because the point made is presumably valid for *redder* and *reddest* as well. But such a conclusion results from a context-based inference.<sup>220</sup>

In non-technical contexts, the identification of an autonym’s referent as being an expression also usually necessitates inferences. Regarding the following examples, the gist of these inferences is mentioned in square brackets:

(40) When the flick started (Graham used the limiting noun of his adolescence: ‘**Movie**’ was American, and ‘**film**’ made him think of ‘film studies’), [...] (Barnes 1982: 27) [These statements

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<sup>220</sup> It might perhaps be argued that we are rather dealing with an inferential principle that has general application, something like ‘the preference for the stronger, more informative, reading’. However that may be, there is still an inferential process involved.

could just as well apply to the plural forms. Therefore, what the narrator has in mind are probably expressions]

(41) Take “good”, for instance. If you have a word like “good”, what need is there for a word like “bad” ? “Ungood” will do just as well [...] (Orwell 1954: 44) [probably expression, because valid for *better* and *best*, *worse* and *worst*, and presumably, *unbetter* and *unbest*]

(42) “These guys,” said Tom, “the ones who put out this magazine at Radley. What happened to them ?”

[...]

“Ah, now this is why we must proceed with great circumspection. They were both, hum, “put out” themselves”. “**Booted out**” I believe is the technical phrase.” (Fry 1992: 25) [probably expression, because all other forms of *booted out* are also the same technical phrase. The unusual aspect, here, is that reference to the expression is achieved, not via the citation-form, but via another inflectional form]

Even in not-quite-specialised contexts, though, there are examples containing meta-predicates that can only be satisfied by an expression:

(43) In the Malagasy language, *ody* translates as “medicine,” or “something which has the power to cure.” (<http://www.nmafa.si.edu/exhibits/malagasy/calendar.html>)

(44) “The Spanish word 'desechable' is used to refer to something that after being used, sometimes just once, should be disposed of, thrown away, something not worth very much and which no one will miss [...]” (<http://www.iglhrc.org/publications/books>)

Note, finally, that some occurrences confirm the notion that there might exist entities like ‘meta-expressions’, i.e. cross-language expressions that subsume what are already expressions in their respective languages. This backs one of Lyons’s interpretations for *I hate ‘John’*:

(45) For example, English speakers can say *The dog ran through the forest* but not *The dog ran through the table* (they have to say *The dog ran under the table*); speakers of certain other languages have to use the word **through** for both. (Pinker 1991: 201) [expression, because ‘*through*’ must clearly also designate words in other languages that have a very different form (or set of forms) but standardly translate as *through*]

#### 4.3.3.2. Reference to form-types

Technical writings on language also abound in autonyms designating form-types, especially in grammatical description (*‘Children’ is a plural; The past form is ‘struck’, etc.*). In this dissertation, many sentences contain such autonyms, e.g. *The expression whose citation-form is ‘bring’ has three other inflectional forms, namely ‘brings’, ‘brought’, and ‘bringing’*. The predicates in the previous examples require (one of) their argument(s) to be a form. Moreover, since the statements made are general in scope, it is form-types rather than form-tokens that are

being referred to. Although most headwords in dictionary entries denote (rather than refer to) expressions, some denote form-types, as when *shook* has an entry with a cross-reference to that for *shake*, or as when *summat* is given as a dialect form of *something*. Note that in the previous sentence only the first form in each pair refers to a form-type, whereas the second, a citation-form, designates its corresponding expression. Autonyms for form-types also sometimes occur in other kinds of writing, notably in fiction:

(46) I tried writing a poem; because **Brigitta** rhymes with **sweeter**, but after that I could only find **neater** and **eat her**, so I sort of gave up [...]. (Barnes 1990: 295-96)

In this instance, it is clear that other forms of the autonyms would not necessarily work, f.i. *sweet* or *sweetest*, *neat* or *neatest*, *eats her* or *eating her*. Here again, it is the combination of the type of entity that satisfies the meta-predicate and of the generality of the statement made that selects form-types as these autonyms' referents: for instance, any occurrence of *sweeter* has the property of rhyming with *neater*, just as it has the property of having seven letters. Such properties are typical formal characteristics and are therefore subsumed under the type SWEETER.<sup>221</sup>

I offer just one more example to illustrate the importance of the degree of generality that is attributed to the statement made:

(47) 'Rubbish!' said Wilcox angrily. He pronounced it '**Roobish**' – it was a word in which his Rummidge accent was particularly noticeable. (Lodge 1989: 134)

'*Roobish*' is a written form-token that designates a pronunciation. Such cross-medium reference had already been noticed by medieval scholars. It occurs, rather obviously, in instances of direct speech that are referential (cf '*Rubbish!*' in (47)). Now a pronunciation is clearly a form, but on what basis can it be decided whether '*Roobish*' designates a type of form or a token? Again, the determining criterion is the generality vs particularity of the statement. In particular, the question to ask is how the verb *pronounced* is interpreted. Does it convey the punctual (*he pronounced this very instance of the word*) or the habitual (*his usual pronunciation*) aspect? This question is parallel to that as to whether the first *it* refers to a form-type or form-token. If *pronounced* is

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<sup>221</sup> If it were objected that the properties mentioned apply to a class of tokens rather than a type in the strict sense, I could hardly dismiss the claim. Still, I wish to reaffirm my belief that a property of a type is not automatically a property of a class of tokens, and conversely. We saw, in connection with the grizzly bear, that some type-related properties do not apply to the class of tokens. It is likely that this lack of automaticity works in the other direction too: it may be true that every grizzly bear faces danger more than once in its life. Assuming it is, one would still refrain from concluding that this is a 'typical' property of grizzlies. What I am getting at is this: it is reasonable to postulate types next to classes of tokens, even though they may sometimes look indistinct. Once that is accepted, it feels only natural to regard the 'typical' properties of a set of tokens to be subsumed under the relevant type.

understood punctually, then *it* refers to a form-token and so does ‘*Roobish*’; if habitually, then reference (of *it* and ‘*Roobish*’) is to a word-type. Note that this sort of hesitation would not arise in French. As a matter of fact, the French translators of Lodge’s book have opted for the *passé simple*, which indicates a punctual reading (and, accordingly, reference to a form-token).<sup>222</sup> Had they preferred the *imparfait*, we would have had a habitual reading (and reference to a form-type). Note that, although the metalinguistic comment that follows in the English original is generic in scope, it should not be assumed to indicate a habitual reading: it is also possible that a referential shift (from particular to general) has taken place (more about referential shifts from ‘the world’ to language in Chapters 6.2.2.3 and 8).

To sum up this section, let me underline that those predicates that select forms rather than expressions do not appear to make a more specific selection between form-types and form-tokens. This means that that distinction can only be made on the basis of contextual information. In particular, I have taken my cue from Goddard & Routley (cf citation in 4.3.2.3) and have relied on the scope – general vs specific – that can be attributed to the statement that the sentence is used to perform.<sup>223</sup> I am afraid there is a somewhat tautological dimension to this procedure: a type, by definition, is general, and a token particular. Yet, I do not see how to avoid circularity in this respect.

#### 4.3.3.3. Reference to form-tokens

##### C&L contra diversity

Although I do believe that the autonyms in 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2 refer to different kinds of entities, I am aware that proponents of the referential homogeneity of autonyms might wish to maintain that expressions and form-types, being abstract or general objects, are still in a way the same sort of linguistic entities, and that, therefore, no proof has been supplied yet that the referents of autonyms are ontologically diverse. It is fairly easy to see how such a case could be made with respect to types (cf footnote 219). Less obvious is how that could be achieved with respect to classes of tokens. Yet, that is precisely the position that is defended by Cappelen & Lepore. Let us see how they go about making their point.

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<sup>222</sup> The translation reads:

– Stupide!” dit Wilcox, irrité. Il ne dit pas “stupide” mais “chtupide”, avec un gros accent de Rummidge. (p. 143)

<sup>223</sup> If some of my examples had involved non-declarative sentences, these could always have been related to declarative sentences sharing the same propositional content.

I indicated above that C&L's analogical argument against Saka's referential diversity failed to convince. But C&L probably have a better case to present. To show that the subjects of Saka's various examples refer to the same sort of entities, they use a test which consists in co-ordinating any two of Saka's sentences and making the co-ordinate clauses undergo 'conjunction reduction'. The suggestion is that, if the resulting reduction is acceptable (and does not affect the meaning of the original sentences), then the subjects of the original sentences must be assumed to be semantically the same. The test yields sentences like:

(48) "Run" consists of three letters and is not used in the third-person singular. (C&L 1999: 745)

Sentence (48) is perfectly valid and indeed forces the conclusion that the autonomous subjects of "*Run*" consists of three letters and of "*Run*" is not used in the third-person singular refer to one and the same object. If all other conjunction reductions yielded similar results, then C&L would have proved their point. Moreover, they would also have demonstrated that, contrary to my initial working hypothesis, meta-predicates are of no service in establishing referential diversity.

The fact is that (48) is the only conjunction reduction they offer. And its validity is perfectly predictable on the basis of the meta-predicates that occur in it: both select a form. At the same time, however, I must admit that it proves difficult to find conjunctions of Saka's examples that are 'intuitively' felt to be downright impossible. Perhaps this is due to the fact that some of these examples are not flawless, e.g. "'Run" refers to *run, runs, ran, running*' – C&L even doubt they are well-formed.<sup>224</sup> It is true too that conjunctions that mix a predicate for expressions and a predicate for forms do not produce evident incompatibilities. If I combine some of the meta-predicates exemplified in 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2, I can come up with such compound sentences as:

(49) *Wolf* is pronounced [wulf] and is defined as "a carnivorous quadruped, etc."

(50) *Sweeter* has several synonyms in English and rhymes with *Brigitta*.

(51) *Ody* consists of three separate phonemes and translates as "medicine".

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<sup>224</sup> I must confess I have some trouble with C&L's reliance on intuitions. Clearly, there may be (and there often are) discrepancies between what a lay person thinks things are like and how they turn out on closer and more methodical inspection. In particular, speakers have intuitions about language that are different from what linguistic inquiry discloses, sometimes so different, actually, as to be downright inaccurate. A case in point are native speakers' reports on their own pronunciations in such investigations as Peter Trudgill's Norwich study (cf 1983: 89-92). Intuitions are especially fallible when brought to bear on technical, theory-dependent, notions like 'reference'. As Chomsky (2000: 130, 150f) points out, it is not clear that ordinary speakers can have intuitions about reference. It may also be useful to go back to Searle (1969: 28) for a reminder of the complexity of the notion of reference. Note, in addition that there is some inconsistency within C&L's own position: on the one hand, they are very concerned with intuitions; on the other, they are quite willing to question the well-formedness of expressions that most ordinary speakers would (intuitively!) accept as causing no particular difficulties. In a way, if I am allowed this bit of exaggeration, they profess common-sense descriptiveness while at the same time indulging in prescriptiveness

All in all, it does not prove easy to hit upon conjunction reductions that are positively unacceptable. Does that mean that I have been on the wrong track all along and that C&L are right in upholding referential homogeneity ?

In order to help me answer this question, I wish to examine what the alternative would be to my assumption of referential diversity. I pointed out in 4.3.2.2 that proponents of homogeneity claimed that the referents of autonoms were either (i) types or (ii) classes of tokens. Let us test each of these hypotheses on a batch of examples:

(52) ***Steadfastness in the face of danger*** is one of the possible meanings of ‘courage’ (modified from Garver’s example (17) in 2.1)

(52<sub>1</sub>) ***Steadfastness in the face of danger*** is a noun phrase.

(53) **‘Roobish’** is the Rummidge pronunciation of *rubbish*. (inspired from Lodge 1989: 134)

(53<sub>1</sub>) **‘Roobish’** is not a standard spelling in English.

(54) ***Found*** has the set of forms ***found, finds, founding*** and ***founded***, and means « establish ».

I take it that each sequence in bold type is an acceptable quotation, but am aware that C&L might beg to differ, though on what grounds other than prescriptions, I do not know. Within the framework I have used so far, the subject-NPs of (52) and (52<sub>1</sub>) refer to objects that can be differentiated: a meaning and a well-formed linguistic expression; those of (53) and (53<sub>1</sub>) to a phonetic form and an orthographic form; the subject of (54) to a lexeme, and the subsequent string of appositives to derivational forms. What would it mean to say that the identical-looking autonoms in (52) to (54) refer to one and the same type ? As regards (52) and (52<sub>1</sub>), this type would have to be (or perhaps to contain) a meaning and a grammatically well-formed expression. As a Lyonsian expression includes a meaning (or a set of senses), such a type is not inconceivable, but note that the conjunction reduction is a little bit strained:

(52<sub>2</sub>) ? ***Steadfastness in the face of danger*** is one of the possible meanings of ‘courage’ and a noun phrase.

If the subjects of (53) and (53<sub>1</sub>) refer to the same type, then this type is simultaneously a Midlands pronunciation and a non-standard spelling. No doubt this is not inconceivable. But note again that the conjunction reduction is not entirely above suspicion:

(53<sub>2</sub>) ? **‘Roobish’** is the Rummidge pronunciation of *rubbish* and/but (is) not a standard spelling in English.

The difficulty with (53<sub>2</sub>) comes out more clearly if one considers that the autonym in (53) stands for a phonic sequence and that in (53<sub>1</sub>) for a sequence of letters. In other words, the conjunction

reduction is a statement to the effect that a sound is not a standard spelling. The fact that this is a truism strengthens, I believe, the impression that we are talking about different linguistic objects. As for (54), I wish to focus only on the two tokens of *found*. If they are instantiations of a single type, what is this type? The only answer I can tentatively suggest is that the type has and is a sequence of five letters <f-o-u-n-d> (or four sounds [faʊnd]). I am not sure such an answer makes sense; in other words, I doubt that the type thus reconstructed is an intelligible object.

What of C&L's argument that autonyms refer to classes of tokens? First, it must be said in their defence that C&L (1997a: 441-42; Lepore 1999: 706-07) appear to be aware of the difficulty of finding types that possess all the right properties so that they can be regarded as subsuming all their quoted instantiations. They note that such abstract entities need to be capable of instantiation by very heterogeneous tokens, even "by tokens not yet conceived" (1997a: 441). C&L doubt such type-like entities exist. It is on those grounds that they suggest modifying Davidson's account so as to "treat quotes as quantifying over tokens that stand in a certain relation, call it the *same-tokening* relation, to the demonstrated token" (ibid.).<sup>225</sup> This way, a token need not be 'of a type'; it simply needs to be 'like other tokens'. They also argue that their semantic theory does not have to settle the issue how two tokens can be said to be in the same-tokening relation; it only needs to assume such a relation. They therefore propose the following formula for pure quotation ("*Life is difficult to understand*" is a sentence):

(21)  $x (ST(x, \text{that}) \rightarrow Sx)$ . Life is difficult to understand (1997a: 441),

with *ST* standing for the same-tokening relation and *S* for the property of being a sentence. C&L offer similar formulas for direct speech and mixed quotation.

C&L's move raises several interesting issues. The first is the question whether their quotations can still be considered to refer. Indeed, it cannot be taken for granted that quantification over a whole class of tokens is a form of reference. Some philosophers would say that it is (as does Michael Devitt in Craig 1998: vol. 8, 160-61), while others would say that it does not (e.g. Gómez-Torrente, who claims that C&L have abandoned reference in favour of quantification). Though I must confess to some discomfort on this issue, I shall none the less continue treating C&L's account as leaving room for the referential use of quotation. My reasons are the following: first, their objection to Saka's account is not a problem with reference per se

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<sup>225</sup> The idea is not novel: Ducrot and Schaeffer point out that in 1968 Goodman offered a reformulation of C. S. Peirce's type-token relationship in which tokens are replicas of each other rather than instantiations of a universal (cf. 1995: 219).



but with its multiplicity. Second, their comparison with the Kennedy examples suggests a referential construal of quotation. Third, in his reply to Lepore (1999), Davidson claims, rightly I think, that his token-shape relation and C&L's same-tokening relation are basically the same thing: "I claim for my same-shape relation exactly the rights and duties of Lepore's same-tokening relation; same-tokening tokens have the same shape" (1999: 717). This means that he regards his referential account as equivalent to C&L's quantificational one.

Now I see two possible readings of C&L's doctrine. According to the looser one, the same-tokening relation is entirely context-dependent; equiform autonyms can designate different classes of tokens from one context to the next, the only requirement being that this referent should be a class of tokens. According to the stricter one, the same-tokening relation includes a context-independent formal parameter: all equiform autonyms same-token each other and therefore necessarily refer to one and the same class of tokens.<sup>226</sup> If the looser interpretation is the correct one, then I do not think that C&L's objection to Saka carries much weight: indeed, if equiform autonyms are capable of referring to different classes of tokens according to the context in which they are uttered, then, somehow, Saka's assumption of variable reference is vindicated: regarding (52), the set of same-tokening tokens would be determined on the basis of semantic equivalence, whereas in (52<sub>1</sub>) it would include those instances of *Steadfastness in the face of danger* that share the syntactic property of being noun phrases (i.e. all possible instances); the same-tokening relation in (53) would be a matter of orthographic resemblance, while that in (53<sub>1</sub>) would be a matter of phonetic similarity. Regarding the dubious conjunction reductions (52<sub>2</sub>) and (53<sub>2</sub>), C&L would have every opportunity to argue that the cause of these apparent incompatibilities lies in the fact that each clause, before reduction, instantiates an unrelated (not same-tokening) token. The same reply would be available with respect to the following example, modelled on the perfectly acceptable *Jack Kennedy, who was famous and loved, lived in Washington D.C.:*

(53<sub>3</sub>) ?? '**Roobish**', which is not a standard spelling in English and/but rhymes with *furbish*, is the Rummidge pronunciation of *rubbish* and means the same as *dross*.

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<sup>226</sup> This second reading derives from C&L's earlier suggestion (though not positive assertion) that only by substituting a word-token of one type for another of a different type as the demonstrated object do you demonstrate different objects and thus affect the truth-value of the sentence under consideration (cf 1997a: 440). Coming before the same-tokening relation is introduced, this suggestion is couched in Davidsonian terminology. My second, stricter, reading is like an updated version of it.

One reason why I doubt that this looser variant is what C&L have in mind is that it undermines their initial analogy with the Kennedy examples. Another is that it somehow goes counter to their claim that their semantic theory need not look into the nature of the same-tokening relation: indeed, my feeling is that it is only on the basis of the identification of a relevant property (semantic equivalence, syntactic structure, phonetic similarity, orthographic resemblance, and so on) that a class of same-tokening tokens can be put together.

I would therefore tend to believe that the looser reading must be dismissed. What of the second, stricter, reading? To me, it looks a good deal more like a stipulation than a descriptive statement, and I am accordingly not sure that it can enlighten us on the subject of the reference of autonyms. Let us have another look at (54). On the stricter reading, the two tokens of *found*, being equiform, must be assumed to refer to the same set of same-tokening tokens. I remarked earlier that it was difficult to identify a type that was capable of subsuming the relevant properties of those two tokens. Such criticism cannot be levelled at C&L. However, that is not because their theory has a reply ready for that objection, but instead because it bypasses the issue by positing that it is not the theory's responsibility to determine how two tokens can be said to same-token each other. This means that, on the more radical version, C&L's account is a self-contained whole that is immune to failure.<sup>227</sup>

I am not sure which reading of the quantificational approach C&L had in mind when they devised their theory. What I am more certain of is that neither version offers a satisfactory account of the reference of autonyms. Besides, I believe that I have at my disposal one last strong piece of evidence in favour of referential diversity. I argued in Chapter 2.3 that three forms of recursiveness or iterability of quotation and mention should be discerned. In particular, I defended the idea of referential recursiveness, already against an objection of Cappelen & Lepore. Here is a slightly modified version of example (28) in Chapter 2:

(55) In this utterance of '*Boston*' has six letters, "Boston" is used in a referential capacity.

For reference to be iterated – I believe it is in this case – the meta-autonym "*Boston*" needs to refer to a particular token, not to a class of tokens, because nothing but a token in actual use can in turn refer. Of course, it is not fanciful, mathematically or logically speaking, to reduce a class to a single element – after all, there are even empty classes. Nevertheless, given C&L's

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<sup>227</sup> – C&L: Equiform autonyms all refer to the same class of tokens.  
– *Everyman*: How do you know?  
– C&L: Well, that's not for us to tell.

insistence (1999: 745-46) that it is impossible to refer to particular tokens, I believe that they would refrain from offering that kind of rejoinder here. I therefore suggest that this argument wins the day: if there is such a thing as referential recursiveness, then there must be a possibility for autonoms to refer to individual tokens. This means that, however broad one's definition of a type or a class of tokens, it cannot cover all cases of autonomous reference: 'particular' reference exists next to 'general' reference.

#### Varieties of reference to form-tokens

This descriptive section will take up a good deal more space than 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2. That is simply a consequence of the fact that a greater variety of situations can and must be identified.

— (i) Can a token actually refer to its very self ?

I pointed out in Chapter 2.4 that, if the identity thesis was taken in any strict sense, the most usual variety of autonym should be the form-token that refers to its very self. I immediately added that such occurrences were probably few and far between. As a matter of fact, it is even worth asking the question whether there are any cases of genuine self-reference.

Any answer to this question is heavily conditioned by the theory of meaning adopted by the researcher. Let me begin with Rey-Debove. Rey-Debove relies on a semiotic theory in which signs are two-sided and are always more than what they signify. An ordinary sign is made up of a signifier and a signified that is itself a homonymous (same-signifier) sign.<sup>228</sup> On such a conception, self-reference *stricto sensu* is ruled out on principle; only partial reflexivity is countenanced (cf 1978: 130-32).<sup>229</sup> But it must be added that Rey-Debove also supports her claim with several strong arguments, the most cogent of which is probably that

It is because the word signified is not signified by itself, but by another more complex one, that we can understand to some extent metalinguistic sentences containing foreign autonoms, for otherwise these sentences would be ununderstandable. (1978: 131)

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<sup>228</sup> In the case of autonoms, the signified and the referent are held to be indistinguishable. Therefore, any point made about the former can be extended to the latter.

<sup>229</sup> It might be tempting to compare Rey-Debove's position to Ockham's. Pierre Alféri writes:

There could as a general principle be no 'self-reference' [*sui-référentialité*] for Ockham, because he defines reference as a relation to something exterior. What is termed 'self-reference' is therefore something altogether different from reference. And it can be added that [...] language is sequential and does not allow [*ne connaît pas*] simultaneity: no linguistic unit could, strictly speaking, contain itself. (1989: 312)

But, in any case, Ockham already denied autonoms a referential status, so the question of self-reference does not really arise. This shows how much the answer to our initial question is theory-dependent.

Rey-Debove's main point is that, to a speaker ideally competent in a single language, a foreign word is no more than a signifier with an empty signified (because the sense is not accessible), whereas the autonym of a foreign word makes partial sense, because its signified (a sign) is only 'half empty': next to an unknown signified, it contains a known signifier (identical to that of the autonym).<sup>230</sup>

It is not clear, however, that Rey-Debove's theoretical options allow her to account for a case like the following:

(56) "Bien" est écrit à l'encre noire avec une capitale. (1978: 147)

Rey-Debove accepts that, on one interpretation, the referent intended by "*Bien*" can be the very token that occurs in the written utterance-token under scrutiny. This she calls an instance of "straight self-reference or exemplification" (ibid.) and, although she adds that it "almost never occurs, in the metalanguage, especially in subject position" (1978: 148), this very remark implies that she admits this possibility, however reluctantly. Does this mean that "*Bien*" in (56) does not signify more than itself? Rey-Debove does not comment.<sup>231</sup>

What could Lyons's stance be on this issue? Considering first that Lyons generally assumed that only expressions are capable of referring, not forms (1977: 24),<sup>232</sup> it should follow that his framework rules out strict self-reference by definition. However, in a review of Rey-Debove (1978), Lyons remarks that the form-expression distinction is cancelled when it comes to autonoms. These, it is claimed, are the only form-tokens to be endowed with the power to refer (1980: 296-97).

How come that autonoms are the exception to the rule that forms do not refer? To my knowledge, Lyons provides no explanation. However, I believe that the answer is something like the Fregean assumption that reference is mediated by sense. The standard account of how a referential definite description refers is that it does as a function of the compositional meaning arrived at via the conventional senses of the words occurring in the description. To cut a long story short, a series of form-tokens can refer to an external object only when each has been

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<sup>230</sup> More about Rey-Debove's autonoms in Chapter 6.

<sup>231</sup> Other adversaries of pure self-reference are Bennett, who writes that a "quotation never refers to the particular inscription that is displayed in it" (1988: 399), and Harris (1988: 79-80, and 1968: 146, which is more tentative). I have no idea how they would go about explaining what takes place in (56).

<sup>232</sup> More accurately, it is speakers that refer, not linguistic units themselves. But Lyons argues that speakers refer by means of expressions rather than forms. Whenever I talk of NPs etc. referring, which is often, I trust that my reader will understand this wording as just a convenient shortcut.

paired with a sense, i.e. only when it has been associated with the expression of which it is a grammatical realisation.

I suppose Lyons's position to be that such pairings do not exist for autonyms, because autonyms do not exist as expressions in the lexicon. Take *Homo* in *Homo est nomen*. The subject-NP is a form-token. The identification of its referent will essentially depend on the property of iconicity, not on the meaning of an expression which this form realises. In any case, this expression could not be the ordinary word *homo*, because its conventional meaning would be of no help in fixing the reference of the autonym. If anything, the associated expression should be an autonymous expression *homo* whose meaning would be something like: « the word which is spelt *homo* and whose meaning is « man » ». Lyons's assumption is that the lexicon contains no such expression.<sup>233</sup> There is accordingly no a priori reason why Lyons should rule out genuine self-reference.

Let me round up this section with an attempt to dispel a potential misunderstanding. When self-reference is discussed in the philosophical literature, it is often in connection with sentences (or utterances, or propositions). The question asked is often whether a sentence can refer to itself. The question is meaningful when applied to quoted sentences, as when a direct speech report refers to an earlier utterance. But it hardly looks meaningful when applied to other types of sentences, like *This very sentence begins with a four-letter demonstrative* (Burge 1978: 137). Non-quoted sentences, it is widely assumed, denote (perhaps rather than *refer to*) a state of affairs or a situation in the world (or *a world*). A sentence is not such a state of affairs; it is an 'object' instead. Therefore, it should not be possible for a non-quoted sentence to refer to a sentence. What may happen, though, is for an NP to refer to the sentence that includes it. Taking Burge's example above, we notice that, on one interpretation at least, the subject-NP '*This very sentence*' refers to the sentence in which it is contained. So, although there is something like self-reference at play, it is no more than partial self-reference.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Lyons's basic message is that autonyms refer differently from the norm, a conclusion that had already been reached by a writer like Sherwood, who wrote that in ordinary referential use (personal supposition) a word *supponit suum significatum pro aliquo*, i.e. it does not simply refer, but supposits its 'meaning' (in this case, its denotation) for something. About material supposition, on the other hand, he wrote that a word merely *supponit pro aliquo*. In other words, whereas access to the referent of a word suppositing personally is gained via (part of) the meaning of the referring expression, the referent of an autonym is picked out directly. Though he assumed a very different semantic theory (only individuals can be signified or supposed for), Ockham also noticed a relevant difference between personal and material supposition, calling the former 'significative' (read *referential*) and the latter 'non-significative' (*Summa Logicae*, I, 64).

<sup>234</sup> Rey-Debove (1978: 172-78) makes an excellent case against self-referential sentences. Let me add that the issues involved are often tricky. Witness this citation from Fenstad (1997: 658):

— (ii) Reference to one or more distinct tokens

This is the most standard case of reference to form-tokens. Its two main forms are examined below:

a) Direct speech reports

Since not all direct speech reports have reference (cf next chapter), I restrict myself to the referential cases. The existence of referential direct speech immediately allows me to qualify the statement in the conclusion to 4.3.3.2 to the effect that meta-predicates do not select for form-types vs form-tokens. It seems reasonable to assume that, for an act of saying to be accomplished, it takes at least a sayer and a thing said. The thing said can presumably be nothing else than an actual sequence of words uttered, namely an utterance-token (i.e. a variety of form-token). Such, for instance, is the position adopted by Rey-Debove (1978: 235f).

The most straightforward cases of direct speech substantiate this hypothesis. Let me give a few illustrations:

(57) The presidential candidate said, **“There will be no new taxes”**

(58) [...] I endeavoured to practise this word upon my tongue; and as soon as they were silent, I boldly pronounced *Yahoo* in a loud voice, imitating, as near as I could, the neighing of a horse. (Swift 1960: 246)

Both these autonoms refer to form-tokens. In the present case (as opposed to (47)), any variation in the aspectual interpretation of *say* and *pronounce* would not cause reference to switch from a form-type to a form-token. Here, the distinction is simply between reference to one token vs reference to several. If the action denoted by the reporting verb is interpreted as having been accomplished only once, the direct speech report refers to a single form-token; if it is understood to have been repeated, the report refers to several. Variation between one and several tokens, however, is only marginally important: what matters is that we are dealing with reference to particulars.

This being said, there are much less straightforward cases than (57) and (58). In particular, direct speech is often used to ‘reproduce’, so to speak, sequences of words that have not been

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Nevertheless, certain uses of language connected with fundamental properties of truth and reference seem to cross the boundary line of the paradoxical. If the “this” of “this is not true” refers to itself – and why should it not? – then this is not true if and only if it is true. (1997: 658)

Fenstad must have got something wrong: either *this* refers to itself, which means that a mere word is a bearer of truth or falsity, a conclusion that is hard to swallow. Moreover, *this* then does not refer to the sentence *this is not true*, and Fenstad’s inference that a paradox ensues is unfounded. Or, *this* refers to the sentence that contains it, and indeed a paradox ensues, but then *this* is not strictly self-referential.

uttered. Whereas it may safely be assumed that the referent will be an utterance-token whenever the quotation repeats an actual utterance, what happens when no such utterance was produced? Several cases may be distinguished (there are certainly more). First, there are direct speech reports which, rather than uttered sequences, (re)produce utterable ones, be it in the future, in an as yet unknown language, or in another ‘possible world’. I am not thinking of the direct speech reports occurring in fiction; I treat those as genuine reports of genuine utterances simply because that is what they are meant to be: they are no less utterances than fictional characters are ‘real’ people. What I have in mind are sentences like,

(59) You never whispered, *You’re my one, my all, my everything*; you were too busy feeling sorry for yourself.

(60) Perhaps one day English people will say, *I don’t give a Blair*, if Tony Blair comes to be considered as worthless as a brass farthing, a hang, a damn or a shit.

Second, there are sentences that are regarded as not even being utterable (presumably this case can none the less be analysed as ‘utterable in another world’)

(61) No one would ever say, *Gooderson tells me you were not unadjacent to mobbing up R.B.-J. and Sargent in the changing rooms*.

Third, there are inaccurate or uncertain reports of sequences that were not clearly heard or deciphered:

(62) *I’m not gonna be taken to the cleaner’s*, Griselda grumbled, though I’m not too sure I heard her right.

(63) The General exclaimed, “*J’ai vous comprendre!*”, but you know how impressionistic my French is.

Fourth, a direct speech report can designate an utterance produced in another language than the reporting language, as in this example of Recanati’s:

(64) [a man tells his wife what an Italian innkeeper’s has just told him] He said, ‘We’re going to close early tonight.’ (Recanati 2001a: 641)

Finally, direct speech may refer to thoughts, which are definitely unlike utterance-signals:

(65) The fool hath said in his heart “There is no God” (Geach 1957: 80; cited in 2.1).

I believe that a uniform explanation can be supplied for most of these ‘deviant’ instances of direct speech (but a different one is required for (65)). Once again, the question to ask is what

sort of entity can satisfy the second argument position of a reporting verb. In other words, what does it take in addition to an utterer for an act of saying, grumbling, whispering, exclaiming, and so on, to have been accomplished or, in certain cases, to be accomplishable? Put this way, the answer is once again obvious: an utterance-token. Here is how that basic principle applies to virtual reports. In (59) and (60), the form-tokens referred to are what the words would have been/will be if one day they had been/are ever uttered. In (61), the very reporting of the ‘impossible’ utterance makes that utterance possible: there could, after all, be tokens of it (in another world). Whether the reports in (62) and (63) are tokens of the same type as those which Griselda and the General originally uttered or of a type that is only formally similar to them, what is clear is that the reporter uses the quotation to refer to a particular utterance (the one that was perhaps misheard). As regards (64), my contention is that it refers to an utterance-token in Italian, namely that uttered by the innkeeper.<sup>235</sup>

As regards examples (59) to (61), my account posits something like ‘virtual tokens’. This may appear like a contradiction in terms, since tokens are defined as objects that are located somewhere in time and space. However, this looks to me like an ontological rather than a linguistic difficulty. For my purposes, there is no essential difference between *Socrates was a philosopher* and *The Minotaur was a fearless creature*. Although the latter’s subject does not refer to an entity that really existed (as far as I know), it purports to do so, and that is what matters. Virtual tokens of words are presented as existing, in the same way that mythical beings are: they exist spatio-temporally ‘in another world’.

It remains for me to clarify the sort of examples illustrated by (65). In his original comment, Geach wrote that direct speech could be employed to report a thought with no implication that the quotation was ever actualised, or even that the person who conceived the thought ever had those words in mind. I believe Geach’s argument to be sound. As a consequence, it becomes very difficult to maintain that the report in (65) refers to form-tokens of words: a thought simply is not a sequence of uttered words. Perhaps, however, a case can still be made that the report refers to ‘word-forms’ of sorts... if an Ockhamian perspective is adopted.

Ockham posited the existence of a mental language, made up of mental propositions that are sequences of ‘content words and phrases’ (mental categorematics) and ‘grammatical words’ (mental syncategorematics). Mental categorematics, i.e. basically concepts, were held to result from actual encounters of human subjects with individual objects, of which they became the

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<sup>235</sup> I return to this example in Chapter 5, because I think it presents Recanati’s otherwise excellent theory with a difficulty.



natural signs (see f.i. Panaccio 1998: 738-39). In Ockham's framework, mental terms are related to spoken or written categorematics, in the sense that the latter conventional signs signify [read *refer*] in accordance with a mental term that is prior to them.<sup>236</sup> But the relationship is one-to-many rather than one-to-one. That is because mental terms are not tied to a particular natural language, and are neither polysemous nor homonymous. Therefore, each of them subsumes several (many) spoken or written terms, never mind the language to which these belong.

With this picture in mind, it is possible to venture the following analysis of Geach's example: since each mental term can correspond to several conventional words, a written quotation can only inadequately represent the actual mental proposition that was conceived by the fool's mind. Still, the quotation purports to do just that, and can be regarded as approximately reproducing the 'form-tokens' of the mental terms that entered into the fool's particular mental act. Such an interpretation rules out reference to form-types.<sup>237</sup>

One may of course be reluctant to accept this Ockhamian reply. Ockham's theory may appear naive, though I must confess to not being familiar enough with modern-day theories of the language of thought to judge. In any case, its very naivety may make it an appropriate vehicle for a description of what is after all a very metaphorical depiction of things: *hath said, his heart*, and the quotation are metaphorical representations of a mental act. What these metaphors do is stage a mental act as if it were in essential respects alike to a speech act. That is why I did not think it unreasonable to propose an account along Ockhamian lines.

Finally, I feel I need to point out that the referential dimension of direct speech reports is certainly not the main aspect of their meaning. This can be illustrated by an example like:

(66) '**You shit,**' Robyn said aloud, when she had finished reading the letter. '**You utter shit.**' (Lodge 1989: 314)

Whereas the first speech report is referential – it functions as an NP in the direct-object slot of *said* – the second stands alone and cannot, technically, have reference (unless we postulate a case of ellipsis). Yet, it is clear that this discrepancy does not have a major impact on the speech report's ability to mean. It is in effect almost an accident – Lodge could have made '*You utter*

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<sup>236</sup> This description has an air of Frege's distinction between sense and reference. This impression is strengthened by the fact that, even though conventional signs are subordinated to mental terms, they do not signify them; instead, they signify individual things (cf Moody 1935: 40; Ducrot 1989: 31; Alféri 1989: 312-13).

<sup>237</sup> Though not to expressions. That is because the form-expression division is not relevant to mental terms: mental expressions are all supposed to have one form and one meaning, and mental forms are not assumed to exhibit local formal features. As a consequence, if an autonym refers to mental forms, it automatically designates the corresponding mental expressions.

*shit*' dependent on another *S* + *reporting V* structure without affecting meaning to any significant degree. Reference, or its absence, is far less important than what the two reports have in common.

(b) Autonym-headed NPs

In this section, I wish to follow up a lead suggested by Rey-Debove, namely the idea that it would usually take a determiner to trigger 'less-than-general' reference (cf the earlier discussion of what other parameters could help fix the reference of autonoms). Caution is in order, since, as I announced earlier, not all such autonym-headed NPs are used referentially. When care is taken to consider only those that are, it emerges that a majority refer to form-tokens:<sup>238</sup>

(67) 'I don't care. You can make all the faces you want. That's one thing that's changed around here.

*My car. My car stereo. My compilation tape. On the way to see my parents.'*

We let **the 's'** hang in the air, watch it try to crawl back where it came from, and then forget it.

(Hornby 1995: 216)

(68) 'My mother teaches, sir,' I said, liking **the 'sir'** and liking the fact that Sir Charles liked it. (Fry 2001: 66)

(69) He's changing its colour >> He is changing its colour

In each case, the apostrophe shows that letters have been removed, generally to make the sentence easier to pronounce. Note **the "its"** in [the] last example - more on this below.

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/el/teachingzone/cae/coursework/reports/apostrophe.html>

Two remarks need to be made. I ventured earlier the hypothesis that the definite article would not back predictions one way or another as to the reference of an autonym-headed NP. Yet, it appears to be associated with reference to word-tokens in all three cases above. But this is no absolute rule: in my small corpus of referential autonym-headed NPs, there are 12 instances where the determiner is just the definite article. Of these, 7 refer to form-tokens, 4 to abstract form-types, and 1 to a form-occurrence.<sup>239</sup> More significantly, (67) to (69) all contain an autonym-headed NP that is anaphorically (or deictically) related to a segment of a direct speech report or, more generally, of a larger quoted sequence; they all, in effect, involve compositional recursiveness.

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<sup>238</sup> But not all. A few examples are given in Chapter 6: (48) to (50).

<sup>239</sup> The example for this last is: *Think of it [...] as the nameless Subject of so much that happens, like **the It** in "It is raining" [...].* (*Time*, 03/06/91: 64). In this sentence, it is not assumed that "It is raining" has been or will be uttered. If this is so, then the quoted sentence must refer to its utterance-type rather than one or the other of its tokens. As a consequence, *It* designates a segment of a type, that is to say, an occurrence, in the technical sense of the term.

It would be easy if reference ran parallel to the grammatical relation of repetition (which I regard as a variety of substitution by a pro-form). Then, the identification of each autonym-headed NP would automatically yield its referent. However, we should already know that the two do not always concur. Indeed, I suggested earlier that some autonym-headed NPs refer to form-types. Take this example:

(70) [...] Mr. Beavis began to tell them about the etymology of the word “primrose.” “*Primerole* in Middle English,” he explained. “The ‘**rose**’ crept in by mistake.” They stared at him uncomprehendingly. “A mere popular blunder,” [...]. (Huxley 1954: 66)

My contention is that although ‘*rose*’ repeats the equiform part of “*primrose*”, it does not refer to it. Rather, it refers to the form-type ROSE.

What of my initial set of examples ? Here, since the highlighted autonym-headed NPs refer to form-tokens, it might be appealing to assume that reference copies substitution by a pro-form. Yet, perhaps curiously, it does not in every case. Let me make that point in connection with example (68). As I remarked above, the phrase *the ‘sir’* substitutes for (repeats) the word *sir* as it occurs in the direct speech report. This speech report, however, itself has reference, by virtue of being the direct object of *said*, and its referent is the actual utterance-token that was purportedly produced by the narrator, Ashley. I have just distinguished two levels of analysis: that at which an utterance is reported (the narrator’s level) and that at which it was performed (the level of the original speech event).<sup>240</sup> The interesting thing is that, as far as I can see, this distinction has no impact on grammatical substitution, but it has on reference. If *the ‘sir’* is interpreted as referring to part of a direct speech report, at the narrator’s level, then it refers to something that does not in turn refer (only the whole speech report does). If, however, *the ‘sir’* is assumed to refer to a token uttered by Ashley, then there is referential recursiveness. Indeed, at the level of the original speech event, the word *sir* was purportedly used referentially by Ashley to refer to Sir Charles. It is this second reading that is correct. Note that it can only be arrived at if the two levels are clearly distinguished.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> I assume that, in certain cases, it might be relevant to set apart a third level, the author’s. I do not think this complication is helpful here.

<sup>241</sup> The interpretation of (67) is similar but not identical: the *s* originally uttered (not the one reproduced in the speech report) has no reference, since it is a mere word-ending. As for the *its* in (69), here reference indeed seems to copy substitution: the antecedent is the referent. This is probably due to the fact that the ‘context-sentence’ is not a speech report; hence it does not refer to a previous utterance part of which would be the referent of the autonym-headed-NP.

Let me add that dissociation between substitution by a pro-form on the one hand, and reference on the other can be observed too in utterances that involve other meta-referential sequences than autonym-headed NPs:

(71) ‘I’ll bet you did. I’ll bet you sat there, five minutes after I’d gone, smoking a *fag*’ – she always emphasizes **the word**, to show that she disapproves [...]’ (Hornby 1995: 213)

(72) “You mean I should *acclimatize* ?”

“**That** is the English usage, is it not ? Our American guests say ‘Acclimate’.” (Golding 1985: 38)

(73) ‘I’m good at spotting people who don’t belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against *them*.’

*Them*, it appeared, meant the Party, and above all the Inner Party [...]. (Orwell 1954: 100)

In (71), the NP *the word* substitutes for ‘*fag*’ in the previous utterance. But I suggest that it does not refer to that token. Instead, it refers to a set of form-tokens, those which the female character ‘always’ emphasises and which, incidentally, include the referent of the antecedent. In (72), the second speaker’s *That* substitutes for the form-token *acclimatize* in the first utterance. Yet, it appears that the grammatical relation is incapable of restricting its reference to only that form-token. Indeed, *acclimatizes*, *acclimatizing* and *acclimatized* are also typical of English usage. Therefore, the second speaker’s first assertion is true of the expression *acclimatize*. I will take this stronger reading as overriding the weaker one according to which the form-type *acclimatize* is the referent. Note that even on that reading, reference is dissociated from substitution. Finally, in (73), ‘*Them*’ repeats the form ‘*them*’ at the end of the first speaker’s utterance (Julia’s). But what does it refer to ? The most likely answer is that it designates the set of form-tokens comprising all other similar tokens as uttered by Julia. This solution is not entirely satisfactory, though. It is sensible to assume that when Julia needs to talk about the Inner Party in subject-position, she uses the form *they*. Is it not therefore tempting to claim that ‘*Them*’ stands for the expression whose meaning is something like « two or more people or things that have previously been mentioned », and whose forms are *them* and *they* ? Well, however tempting, this does not work either, because the meaning « Inner Party » cannot be ascribed to the expression ‘they/m’: « Inner Party » is a context-bound meaning of the expression, one which has no currency in *The last time I was looking for my slippers, I found them in the fridge*, for instance. Perhaps the solution goes something like this: ‘*Them*’ refers to two sets of form-tokens, some of the form-

type *they*, others of the form-type *them*. This example shows how complex the attribution of the right reference can become.<sup>242</sup>

— (iii) Reference to non-equiform tokens (or types ?)

The idea that autonyms associated with one form-type can sometimes refer to tokens of another type can already be found in the writings of the Schoolmen.<sup>243</sup> The demonstration works best in Latin, but the examples found in the literature (e.g. Burley 1996: § 19; Ockham 1951, 1974, I, 67) tend to be rather complex. I will therefore start with simple Latin examples and then indicate how more complex ones can be handled.

I have suggested on several occasions that the theory of material supposition was a sort of precursor of the Identity account of autonymy. That is because the Schoolmen regarded terms in material supposition not as names of words but simply as the same words used in a different capacity. A consequence of their position is that autonyms take the ordinary case-marking suffixes. Hence, when wishing to speak about the third term in the ‘context-sentence’ *Asinus est hominis* (“The/a donkey belongs to a/the man”), they would have to alter its form to fit the grammatical constraints of the new sentence, as in:

(74) [In *Asinus est hominis*] *Homo est singularis*

Assuming that *homo* occurs in material supposition, we have the following situation: on the grammatical plane, *homo* substitutes for *hominis*. A similar meaning could have been conveyed by means of a pro-form like *the latter*:

(74<sub>1</sub>) In *Asinus est hominis*, the latter (term) is singular.

This substitution clearly helps us with the grammatical relations, but it does too with the semantic ones. It is safe to assume that *the latter term* in (74<sub>1</sub>) is co-referential with *homo* in (74): their referent is *hominis*. In other words, we have the confirmation that *homo* in (74) refers to a distinct form of the same expression (and not to *homo* itself). This is borne out by the next two examples:

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<sup>242</sup> I also wish to draw the attention to another confusion that should be avoided, that between substitution and co-reference. To give just one example, the autonym-headed NP in (67) refers to a word-ending ‘s’ that does not in turn have reference. But even in cases where there is referential recursiveness (e.g. examples (55) or (68)), co-reference is usually ruled out: an autonym refers to, say, a name which in turn refers to a person or place. The distinctions between substitution (the use of pro-forms), co-reference and reference still prove useful under point (iii) of this section and in the second large section of Chapter 8.

<sup>243</sup> The most relevant authors are Burley and Ockham, but Buridan ([3.2.11-12]; in King 1985: 120) makes a related point. For comments, see Ashworth (1974: 83); King (1985: 40); Adams (1987: 330); Spade (1998: 413).

(75) [In *Asinus est hominis*] Homo est genitivus

(76) [In *Asini sunt hominum*] Homo est pluralis.

Clearly, in both these examples, the referent of *homo* cannot be the equiform token or type, since neither could correctly be ascribed the property of being a genitive or being a plural.

Though I have assumed that *homo* in (74), (75), (76) refers to a token, I have given no positive evidence that this was the case. I must first point out that I have eliminated the possibility of reference to a form-occurrence ‘by fiat’: I have chosen to regard the context-sentence, *Asinus est hominis*, etc., as an actual utterance-token rather than a virtual utterance-type. But how can I prove that *homo* does not refer to a form-type? After all, *hominis*, in the context-sentence for (74) and (75), is always a singular and a genitive, and *hominum*, in the context-sentence for (76), is always a plural. This means that (74), (75) and (76) state typical properties of the referents of their subject-NPs. Although I believe that these subjects refer to tokens, as the analogy with the next example should help to show:

(77) [In *Asinus est **hominis***] Homo is written in Times 14 pt boldface,

I must acknowledge that the example is not decisive. First, one could, for particular purposes, require that the sort of formal identity underlying the type-token relationship should include typographical features. Second, other analogies can be made with examples where reference need not or even cannot be to a form-token:

(78) [In *Asinus est hominis*] Amo hominem

(79) [In *Asinus est hominis*] Homo est nomen.

As regards (78), the referent of *hominem* (understood to occur in material supposition) can be either a form or an expression: the utterer is free to choose a meta-predicate that does not necessarily require forms to satisfy the relevant argument position. (78) may have been uttered to make a point about a spelling (« I like the look of it ») or a pronunciation (« I like the sound of it ») but also about a lexeme (In the last case, probably the least obvious, the meaning of *hominem* would be something like « (the lexeme) *homo* as it is used here » or « (the lexeme) *homo*, because I hate (the lexeme) *asinus* »). The case of (79) is even more clear-cut since, on the framework adopted in these pages, its meta-predicate requires that *homo* should refer to a lexeme.

The lesson to be drawn from these examples is a confirmation that (grammatical) substitution and (semantic) reference do not necessarily run parallel. The sequence substituted for (the

‘antecedent’), which is always a token, is sometimes different from that referred to, which can be another token, a form-type, or an expression. However, I would still wish to argue that substitution does constrain reference to some extent: if the referent is a form, it must be equiform with the antecedent; if it is an expression, it needs to comprise the form of the antecedent as one of its possible realisations. No further rule can be suggested regarding the ontological status of the forms referred to: in the end, whether they are a form-type, an expression or the very form-token that occurs in the context-sentence is probably down to the speaker’s intentions.

Let me now turn to two slightly more complex examples that will give me an opportunity to strengthen a point I have already made in connection with self-reference *stricto sensu*: that attempts to assign reference to autonoms are often theory-dependent. These examples are based on Ockham (I, 67; see also Burley 1996: § 19):

(80) [In *Homo est animal*,] *Animal praedicatur de homine* [= *Animal* is predicated of *man*]

(81) [In *Asinus est hominis*,] *Homo praedicatur de asino*.

According to Ockham’s analysis, both arguments of *praedicatur* occur in material supposition. This means that, in (80), a nominative (*animal*) refers to a nominative and an ablative (*homine*) to a nominative; while, in (81), a nominative (*homo*) refers to a genitive and an ablative (*asino*) to a nominative. There is, however, some hesitation as to the precise ontological status of the referents: exactly what kinds of entities satisfy the argument positions of *praedicatur*? First, not everyone would agree with Ockham that that of which something is predicated is a linguistic entity and that, accordingly, the NP that designates it has material supposition. Geach (1980: 49-50) and Lyons (1977: 161), for instance, hold that a predicate is predicated of extralinguistic entities. On their understanding of things, only the subject-NP of *praedicatur* has metalinguistic reference. Second, there may be divergent opinions as to whether the linguistic argument(s) of *praedicatur* is/are an expression or a form. Burley writes that that is a ‘vox’, i.e. a form; whereas Lyons generally holds that predicates are expressions.

I do not intend to settle these issues one way or another. The point I am trying to get across is that decisions as to what constitutes the referent of a phrase are heavily dependent on broader theoretical options, especially when it comes to meta-reference. Though I feel a closer kinship with Lyons than with Ockham – and would therefore be tempted to write that, in (80) and (81), *homo* and *animal* are the only autonoms and both refer to expressions – I realise that such a conclusion is not grounded in anything really essential: to a certain extent, linguistic entities are not given; they are constructed as part of a conception of language.

Moreover, I have not been entirely faithful to Ockham's ideas in the previous discussion. I have equated his suppositions with various aspects of reference. In so doing, I have overlooked the fact that Ockham insisted that material supposition was not a significative use of language. Since, in Ockham's scheme, signification is for all practical purposes the same as our reference,<sup>244</sup> it must be accepted that Ockham would simply not have ascribed referents to terms suppositing materially. It is tempting to say that material supposition therefore captures a grammatical relation of substitution rather than something like reference. For example, we have seen several instances in which *homo* or *hominem* substituted for *hominis*, without necessarily referring to 'that very token'. As a consequence, one might want to envisage supposition as a hybrid relation straddling semantics and syntax: essentially semantic when applied to significative uses (personal supposition), but a lot more syntactic when applied to non-significative contexts (notably material supposition).<sup>245</sup> However appealing this solution may be, I do not think it can apply easily to all cases of material supposition. In particular, I have in mind those self-contained general statements like *Homo est nomen* or *Homo est dissillabum*, where the subject term need not substitute for anything. I shall not attempt to get to the bottom of this issue in these pages.

### Outside Latin

Needless to say, the characteristics of Latin, or at least of that brand of it used by the Scholastics, greatly facilitate reference to formally different items. But so does Ockham's theoretical decision to treat autonymy as simply a distinct use of the same words. Unlike that of metalinguistic proper names or metahomonyms, the grammatical behaviour of words that supposit materially is exactly the same as when they are used with another supposition. When

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<sup>244</sup> In Ockham's purely extensional semantics, *significatio* means something like « (conventional) denotation », i.e. an out-of-context relation between a lexical item and individuals in the world. In Ockham's eyes, only words suppositing personally, i.e. for those objects which they have been instituted to denote, are used significatively. Given that *signification* means « denotation », I take *significative use* to mean « reference » in an utterance-context.

<sup>245</sup> This conception is supported by some historical evidence. De Rijk (1982: 165-67) describes three subsequent stages which the term '*suppositio*' went through in the twelfth century, just before its heyday. Initially, it was a term of secondary importance that was synonymous with '*subiecto*', i.e. using a word as a grammatical subject, and a *suppositum* was the same as a grammatical subject. Then, it came to mean "the way in which a word is put as the subject of a proposition, and, accordingly, as the subject of discourse (*id de quo sermo fit*)" (1982: 166), i.e. it acquired a semantic dimension over and above its syntactic role. In a third stage, it emancipated itself even more from its purely syntactic origins, so that some logicians endowed both the subject and the predicate term with supposition. In its heyday, the term was usually understood as applying to the contextual reference of descriptive words. See also Kneale & Kneale (1962: 248-53) for considerations on various understandings of *suppositio*.



those theoretical choices are brought to bear on Latin, with its absence of article and its profligate case-endings, the results are as striking as in examples (74) to (81).<sup>246</sup>

In languages like French and English, speakers/writers do not spontaneously assume an Identity view of autonymy, as witnessed by the fact that an autonym of a plural noun or of something other than a noun will be treated grammatically as if it were a singular noun (of the masculine gender in French). The same holds for German, where autonoms escape case-marking. The question therefore is whether French, English or German license reference to non-equiform words. Examples are hard to come by, but, on the other hand, it would probably not be reasonable to reject such sentences as (82) and (83), but (84) is dubious:

(82) In “*Brought* denotes the past”, *bring*, which is in principle a verb, behaves like a noun.<sup>247</sup>

(83) Dans “*Chevaux* est un nom pluriel”, le mot *cheval* est utilisé de manière inhabituelle

(84) ? Dans “*Chevaux* est un nom pluriel”, le mot *cheval* fonctionne comme un singulier.

It is obvious that reference to non-equiform sequences requires a lot more research. In this dissertation, I cannot do any more than state the problem.

#### 4.3.4. Complications

We have already seen quite a few examples where the decision as to what sort of linguistic entity is referenced by an autonym cannot be made on the sole basis of the metalinguistic predicate (plus the determiners used, if any). However, in all of these cases, it looked as if contextual information (e.g. on the speaker’s very intentions) would permit determining a precise referent. The examples I wish to examine now are more problematic, in this sense that they do not seem to permit the identification of a precise referent. Instead, they encourage the recognition of the existence of hybrid linguistic entities, half-way between tokens, types and expressions.

Until now, I have assumed that metalinguistic predicates often manifest a speaker’s intention (perhaps a not-quite-conscious intention) to talk about a word or words from a specific angle: the occurrence of a predicate denoting a formal property was taken to signal reference to a form; that of a predicate denoting a non-contextual grammatical or semantic property to signal reference to an expression; that of a reporting verb to signal reference to an utterance-token. Some examples, however, appear not to fit neatly into that orderly picture:

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<sup>246</sup> Note that if the Medieval Latin of the Schoolmen simply reflected natural use, then their Identity Theory was forced upon them by their language of use. I must profess my ignorance of the actual situation.

<sup>247</sup> I’m still on the lookout for actual examples that do not include a descriptor like *the word*, as in *In Horses is a singular, the word horse behaves inhabitually*.

(85) *Man* is spelt with an <a> in the singular and an <e> in the plural.

In this case, what are attributed are formal properties, so that the subject-NP should presumably refer to a form. Yet, the two properties cannot be exhibited by one and the same form at the same time. Therefore, one must accept that ‘*Man*’ here designates an expression. Note, furthermore, that a very similar statement to (85) can be made by means of uttering a sentence that is unambiguously about word-forms:

(86) The singular *man* is spelt with an <a> while the plural *men* is spelt with an <e>.

These examples are not enough to undermine Lyons’s categories. Perhaps the only problem is that he was not careful enough in determining on what basis an autonym can be said to refer to an expression or a form. After all, Lyons does not say in so many words that a predicate denoting a formal property can only be predicated of a word-form; though that is perhaps what he gives the reader to understand. Besides, an expression is represented as combining a set of forms and a set of meanings. Therefore, nothing should prevent one from discussing the formal properties of expressions as well as forms, even to the extent that these properties only apply to one (or some) of the forms of an expression, as in (85). It could be argued that (85) implies the existence of two forms – both of which remain unnamed in that context – while (86) implies the existence of an expression of which *man* and *men* are two forms.

But there is a further difficulty, one that originates in the possibility of applying meta-predicates that select for different entities to the referent of one autonym. Nothing in principle prevents a speaker from uttering a sentence such as:

(87) *Man* means « adult male human » and rhymes with *pan*.

The first predicate denotes the conventional meaning of the word, regardless of which form of *man* is instantiated. Therefore, this predicate must be taken to apply to the lexeme *man*, which is accordingly the referent of the subject-NP. On the other hand, the second predicate denotes not just a formal property, but one which holds for only one of the forms that the lexeme is associated with. Indeed, neither the plural form *men* nor the genitive plural *men’s* rhymes with either the singular or plural form of *pan*. Therefore, the property of rhyming with *pan* is one that can be attributed to *man* only as a word-form.

The fact is that such sentences combining ‘conflicting’ predicates do occur in native speakers’ productions. Among the following examples of ‘conflations’, three are with autonoms, while the other two involve metalinguistic NPs. I have included the latter on account of the fact that non-

autonomous metalinguistic descriptions function very much like autonyms. In particular, except for iconicity, they refer in a manner similar to autonyms (cf Carnap's examples in 4.3.2.3):

(88) Joto is extremely affectionate and outgoing. His name means "superior" in Japanese, and rhymes with Toto (Dorothy's dog in the Wizard of Oz). ([www.kantrowitz.com/kantrowitz/joto.html](http://www.kantrowitz.com/kantrowitz/joto.html))

(89) For example: the word *heiau* refers to a Hawaiian temple and is pronounced hey-ee-ow. ([www.hawaiiislandlodging.com/language](http://www.hawaiiislandlodging.com/language))

(90) *Infamous* means "of incredibly bad repute, known to be evil" and is pronounced *IN-fuh-muhs*. The related noun *infamy* is pronounced *IN-fuh-mee*. ([www.bartleby.com/68/56/3256.html](http://www.bartleby.com/68/56/3256.html))

(91) [...] there are many words in English that are called PHONAESTHETIC, in which one part, often the initial cluster of consonants, gives an indication of meaning of a rather special kind. Thus many words beginning with sl- are 'slippery' in some way – *slide*, *slip*, [...]. (Palmer 1981: 40)<sup>248</sup>

I take examples (88) to (90) to be straightforward. Perhaps (91) requires a word of explanation. *Beginning with 'sl-'* is typically a predicate selecting for a form. *Being slippery* does not so obviously select for an expression, but, since Palmer announces beforehand that he is going to talk about "an indication of meaning", *slippery* should be understood as denoting a semantic, albeit connotative, property, and therefore as selecting for an expression.

There are also less obtrusive examples, like:

(92) Iris has been taught that "Negro" is the proper word, in two equally stressed syllables: "*Ne-gro*." Say it too fast, or carelessly, and you get words you don't want: "nigra," "nigger." (Oates 1990: 23)

Since it is likely that the plural *Negroes* too is 'the proper word', the first autonym presumably refers to a lexeme.<sup>249</sup> Yet, the adverbial, *in two equally stressed syllables*, states a local formal property that cannot be directly attributed to the lexeme. Indeed, it is usual for the first syllable to be uttered with heavier stress.

#### 4.3.4.1. Making sense of the contradictory data

It is a fact that, for the purposes of linguistic inquiry, we need to recognise different senses of the word *word* (cf 4.3.1). Besides, the distinction between the sorts of entities that are covered by *word* can have a truth-conditional impact: the sentence *homo est dissillabum* is true if about a form, but false if about an expression (because of the forms *hominem*, *hominis*, etc.).

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<sup>248</sup> Technically, *many words* is not a referential NP: it is only part of an NP and is used descriptively rather than referentially. Still, the underlined predicates are meant to apply to actual entities, the words listed subsequently, which is why I have judged the inclusion of (91) to be warranted.

<sup>249</sup> The same judgment should apply to "*nigra*" and "*nigger*", given that *nigras* and *niggers* are just as unacceptable as the singular forms.

Furthermore, it appears that speakers can, if they so wish, choose to refer to a particular kind of linguistic entity:

- I love ‘Cholmondeley’!
- What ? That fattish-looking word with all its useless letters ?!
- No, I love the sound of it!

All of these observations concur to show that forms are not expressions. So how come speakers sometimes intend to refer to hybrid entities like ‘form-expressions’ ? Do such occurrences as (88) to (92) call into question the separate existence of forms and expressions ?

I am not sure that I can answer these questions, but I would still like to offer a few comments:

(i) An analogy could be established with other fields of scientific investigation, where the representations of scientists diverge from those of the lay person. Whereas a botanist needs to be able to differentiate between several varieties of birches (the paper birch, grey birch, river birch, sweet birch, yellow birch, white birch, etc.), the lay person sees perhaps only one. Likewise, it might be argued, the linguist must be able to distinguish between varieties of linguistic entities (e.g. words as spoken or written tokens, as form-types, as lexemes, etc.) where the lay speaker sees little or no diversity.

The point of this analogy is this: the fact that lay discourse creates vague entities does not throw into doubt the existence of the more specific entities. It is just that, for certain purposes, speakers are content with vagueness (with using a word in an underdetermined sense). As Saka puts it,

For most purposes it is not necessary to distinguish between token-quotation and type-quotation, or between word-quotation and lexeme-quotation, or between form-quotation and content-quotation: the intended interpretation is either immaterial or else obvious. (1998: 124)

Although the phrase *the intended interpretation* is perhaps not very felicitous, Saka has a clear point: lay speakers often want to talk about a ‘word’, a ‘sentence’, etc., as vague objects. That is presumably why such underdetermined words as *word* itself exist and are found useful.

Saka’s statement comes as a counterpoint to this remark by Lyons:

“many philosophical treatments of language (in particular, treatments of use and mention and of object-language and metalanguage) are confused, if not actually vitiated, by the failure to make precise just what kind of linguistic entities are under discussion”. (1977: 25)

But of course Lyons is talking from the vantage-point of the language scholars with a difficult problem on their hands, and in dire need of instruments that can help them clarify the situation.

My feeling, however, is that the analogy with other fields of research is not completely successful: to begin with, as Lyons's citation indicates, language scholars themselves often conflate forms and expressions, probably a great deal more than botanists collapse the various birches into one. Besides, when it comes to it, the botanist can always determine whether the tree which the lay person was talking about is a sweet birch or a river birch. By contrast, in cases like (88) to (92), the language scholar seems in no position to go beyond the observation that what is being talked about is a hybrid and that there is no telling if it actually is a form or an expression. Confronted with such a situation, the linguist can adopt several attitudes: either s/he decrees that such statements as (88) to (92) are just plain wrong or meaningless (in at least this sense that they purport to refer to impossible entities), or s/he accepts that the boundaries between different sorts of linguistic entities are porous, or s/he argues that, contrary to appearances, the metalinguistic NPs in question do not refer to hybrids.

The first attitude is not satisfactory: it puts a 'form-expression' on a par with a square circle. In so doing, it presumes the case closed: there can be no such things as form-expressions. The second response may ultimately turn out to be the only sensible one. But before we resign ourselves to it, it is worth having a look at the third one. The argument against hybridity would go something like this: in (88), (89), (90), (92), reference is to an expression, but one form associated with it, the citation-form, is given special prominence.<sup>250</sup> In most cases, it could be added that some form of ellipsis is at work and that a parenthetical comment is implicit in front of the predicate denoting the formal property. For instance, the explicit version of (89) would be:

(89<sub>1</sub>) For example: the word *heiau* refers to a Hawaiian temple and, **in its citation-form, is pronounced** hey-ee-ow.

Such a reformulation could also apply to (88) and to (90), albeit redundantly in the latter case. As regards (92), it appears that the formal property stated, although it is not 'typical', is valid for all forms of the word *negro* in Iris's world. It is as if, in her English, the lexeme *negro* were ascribed an additional (albeit deviant) feature: here is a word that, in all its forms, must be pronounced with equally stressed syllables.

I still need to say something about (91). All forms of *slip*, *slide*, etc. begin with *sl-*; that is to say, the opening consonant cluster can be regarded as a property of (or associated with) the respective lexemes. Moreover, it is no surprise that the focus should be on 'the form of the

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<sup>250</sup> Note that *infamous* only has the citation-form. As for *heiau*, I have no idea whether it is associated with several forms or not.

expression’: Palmer’s point is precisely that the phonetic form of some lexemes has an impact on their meaning.

Perhaps these justifications are enough to rescue Lyons’s classification; I am not sure.

(ii) If the entities mentioned in (88) to (92) are conflations after all, they are certainly not the only hybrids that are ‘created’ in discourse. Speakers, it appears, are sometimes ready to assume the existence of entities that are more glaringly contrary to reason than ‘form-expressions’. Each of the following series of examples postulates a strange object that straddles language and ‘the world’:

(93) [... other things] she learned after he left for Chicago, or was it San Diego, or **some other city ending with O**. (Morrison 1992: 41)

(94) **Parrots are human to begin with; etymologically, that is**. *Perroquet* is a diminutive of *Pierrot*; *parrot* comes from *Pierre*; Spanish *perico* derives from *pedro*. (Barnes 1985: 56-57)

(95) To this point, we’ve been hard-pressed to forego mentioning **that game that starts with an R, ends with an L and rhymes with president weevil**. But now we’re at the part where we have to mention zombies so we can’t help it. [...] any other resemblance to Resident Evil is purely coincidental. ([www.xboxgamereview.net/www/game\\_preview/silenthill2/silenthill2preview.htm](http://www.xboxgamereview.net/www/game_preview/silenthill2/silenthill2preview.htm))

(96) 4. Going to Church. “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6). There can never be any admixture of grace with that of works. **The verb “go” is something that an individual does**. But we are not saved by anything we do, rather we are saved when we believe what Christ has done for us. ([www.accordingtothescriptures.org/surveyanswers.html](http://www.accordingtothescriptures.org/surveyanswers.html))

These are admittedly odd occurrences, though I should say that only (96) is very deviant. In any case, the creation of such strange objects in discourse does not challenge the separate existence and status of a city and its name, of a parrot and its various designations, of a game and its name, of a verb and the action it denotes. Once again, the analogy could serve to warn against throwing the baby with the bathwater by concluding to the irrelevance of Lyons’s categories.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Similar conflations are not infrequent in definitions for crossword puzzles and in certain forms of verse (comic verse, children’s poetry). Consider the following example:

Animal Rhymes

It has whiskers and rhymes with hat.  
It lives in the sea and rhymes with park.  
It eats flies and mosquitoes, and rhymes with log.  
It slithers around and rhymes with rake.  
It sings and rhymes with word.  
It eats grass and rhymes with wow.  
It lives in the forest and rhymes with near.  
It lives in the jungle and rhymes with funky.  
It lays eggs and rhymes with pen.  
It’s sneaky and rhymes with socks.  
It says, ‘oink’, and rhymes with wig.

(iii) I would like to make a final, tentative, comment on the nature of metalinguistic discourse as an object of scientific inquiry. My feeling is that there is in this respect a difference, perhaps a significant one, between everyday non-metalinguistic utterances and metalinguistic ones. The particularity of ordinary metalinguistic use (even when produced by language scholars...) is that it reflects common-sense, pre-scientific notions about language, just as everyday discourse about, say, nature or psychology does about these respective subjects. The major difference is that, in the case of metalanguage, these preconceptions affect the very object under the scrutiny of the scholar. By contrast, since nature or psychology lie outside language, lay notions about their object, however distorted, have no impact on the object of linguistics.

In this sense, it might be suggested that the metalanguage is a less ‘natural’ object of study than the object language. Perhaps that is why a number of categories whose usefulness and validity are apparent when studying first-order language seem to be inoperative (or, at least, less appropriate) when it comes to metalinguistic use. Perhaps the linguist inquiring into metalinguistic use is no longer simply studying a natural object, but also a non-natural constructed object, a bit like an ethnographer investigating ‘folk’ theories of other natural objects (the universe, man, life, etc.), rather than these objects themselves.

These are just conjectures. But perhaps they throw some light on the reason why such a distinction as form vs expression applies less convincingly to the referents of autonyms than to words occurring ‘ordinarily’, as in the early examples (21), (22), and (23). Since none of the words in these three examples refer to or denote language, they are unlikely to reflect a pre-scientific understanding of the concept of word. The situation is different in (88) to (92) (and basically in all utterances containing autonyms), where it is not unreasonable to assume that, for instance, the prevalent notion that ‘a word is a word, what else could it be?’ might affect the kind of referent intended for an autonym. Neither is it absurd to speculate that, if lay speakers

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It barks and rhymes with bog.  
It lives in the forest and rhymes with hair.  
It lives in the sea and on the land rhymes with deal.

By Chris Gunn (bogglesworld.com)

Psycholinguists teach us that young children have a great deal of trouble separating word from object, or discourse from states of affairs that prevail in the world. It seems that young children somehow ‘see through’ discourse, and cannot consider signs separately from their referents until the age of 6 or 7. Here are some striking examples from a study reported in Gombert (1990): *train* is often judged to be ‘a longer word’ than *caterpillar*. A young child asserts that a cow could never be called *ink* “because ink is used for writing and the cow to give milk” (1990: 99). Another judges that *The big rock was in the middle of the road* is not a sentence because “a car might run over it and get a flat tyre” (ibid.: 69). Whereas Gombert uses these data to show that the arbitrary nature of linguistic signs takes a long time to be accepted, a philosopher of language might suggest that children’s reluctance to embrace conventionality may help to understand the endurance of the notion of signs as being transparent, ‘self-effacing’, vehicles for objects and states of affairs in extralinguistic reality (cf Recanati 1979).

learnt about the various senses of *word* and acknowledged an account like Lyons's as being well-founded, they would become wary of producing utterances about hybrid linguistic entities.



## CHAPTER 5: François Recanati: what metalinguistic demonstrations show and say

François Recanati has been preoccupied with mention and quotation for more than two decades. He initially turned his attention to the subject as part of an attempt to show how pervasive linguistic reflexivity was, and, accordingly, how untenable the myth of the transparency of linguistic signs (Recanati 1979). Though I understand his original position to have been very much an Identity Theory à la Searle, Recanati has proved receptive to the many assets of the Demonstrative Theory. Amongst other things, he has now fully endorsed the fundamental assumption that quotation is an act of demonstration (though it must be remembered that Searle already talked of signs being ‘presented’ in quotation). Recanati’s new theory can therefore be described as a modified – read *extended and improved* – version of the Demonstrative Theory. In 2.3, we saw that the main liability of the theory was its insistence that quotation marks are a referential expression. Recanati is keenly aware of the problem and recommends dropping that central tenet of the theory. His challenge now takes the following appearance: how to develop Davidson’s touch of genius – quotation is a matter of ostension – without ascribing too considerable (too semantic) a role to quotation marks ?

We saw earlier how Reimer and Saka eventually failed to take up this challenge successfully. Recanati, however, does something that neither had thought of doing: he parts with the assumption that all quotations have reference. This move goes hand in hand with a radically modified account of quotation marks, which rather than being demonstrative pronouns, are pragmatic signals. The idea that not all quotations have reference does not, of course, entail that none of them have. There are, in effect, two well-defined subsets: ‘closed’ quotations and ‘open’ quotations. The former are ‘linguistically recruited’ as NPs, writes Recanati, and are endowed with the faculty to refer.<sup>252</sup>

### 5.1. The common properties of quotation

I shall expand on the central distinction between closed and open quotations in due course. In the meantime, though, I wish to stress the fact that Recanati’s endeavour is to be understood as an

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<sup>252</sup> Though Recanati examines only these two categories, he recognises the existence of a third one, in which quotations are recruited not as NPs but as common nouns (cf 2001a: 649fn). In personal correspondence, he has told me that what he had in mind were examples like (19), (20) and the following in Chapter 4.2.3. These are the instances I have called *autonym-headed NPs* so far.

‘integrated theory’ of quotation for the following reasons: first, it tries to account for the wide range of appearances that quotation can take; second, it does so in a way that highlights the many respects in which various types of quotation, in particular the closed and open sets, are forms of one and the same phenomenon. Recanati holds that, whether closed or open, every quotation will display at least the following characteristics:

(i) a linguistic (or pseudo-linguistic) token is displayed. Displaying cannot be brought down to merely using, in the Quinean sense.<sup>253</sup> Every token that occurs in discourse is used, even quotations, which on a correct reading of Quine’s theory are uses of the name of a linguistic expression. Displaying involves more than that; it requires drawing the attention to the token in question (for instance, by means of quotation marks or a distinctive intonation). Building upon an idea that was developed at length in Recanati (1979), it could be said that a sign in ordinary use remains inconspicuous; it remains a transparent means that provides access to something beyond itself (this is actually what makes it a sign in the first place). By contrast, when it is displayed, this transparent means is made somewhat more opaque. Attention is deflected towards the sign itself and away from the object beyond the sign that is signified or referred to.

(ii) certain properties are demonstrated. *Demonstrated* must be understood as « illustrated by exemplification », a conception that Recanati borrows from Clark & Gerrig (1990). The reason why Recanati says that quoting is a matter of ‘illustrating certain properties’ is that a quotation does not usually aim at directing a hearer’s attention to everything that makes a token the unique object that it is. Recanati calls those relevant properties ‘types’. Instead of talking of *types*, I shall use the phrase *demonstrated property* whenever possible.

When quoting, we illustrate one or more properties exemplified by the token displayed. Demonstrated properties come in many different varieties, linguistic or not: examples of the former case are a sense (intension or character) or a phonological form; examples of the latter are a language impairment, a dialect, a mental imbalance, etc. Here are three illustrations:

- (1) [a man tells his wife what an Italian innkeeper’s has told him] He said, ‘We’re going to close early tonight.’ (already cited in 4.3.3.3)
- (2) He said it was all a ‘pile of roobish’.
- (3) What does one more lie matter anyway? Politicians “misspeak” and are forgiven by their followers. (*Time*, 03/06/91: 64)

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<sup>253</sup> It is therefore also different from Saka’s ‘exhibiting’ or ‘directly ostending’.

In (1), the displayed token is an English utterance. But ‘Englishness’ is not a property that counts in this context. Rather, it is the meaning of the utterance that does. Recanati suggests that the demonstratum is “the class of sentences which have the same meaning as the English sentence, whatever language they belong to” (2001a: 641).<sup>254</sup>

In (2), which is an instance of Cappelen & Lepore’s mixed quotation, the token is probably exemplified to illustrate the Midlands (or northern) accent of the speaker whose words are reported. In (3), which is a case of scare quoting, it is presumably the euphemistic value of *misspeak* that is demonstrated. In both these cases, the linguistic meaning of the enclosed expressions makes a contribution to the propositional content of the utterance. But, since such would be the case even in the absence of quotation marks, this contribution cannot be attributed to the demonstration, and it would be wrong to suggest that, as in (1), the meaning of the displayed token is demonstrated.<sup>255</sup>

(iii) A ‘target’ is ‘depicted’. The target is what is aimed at by the demonstration of certain properties. By *depicting*, Recanati means any of the following: “mimicking, simulating, providing an iconic representation of” (2001a: 642). Distinguishing the target from the demonstratum is no child’s play. Let us begin by pointing out that, in relevant cases, there is no difference between the target and the demonstrated properties. This is the situation that prevails in cases of so-called ‘flat mention’,<sup>256</sup> as in the traditional logician’s examples:

(4) ‘Boston’ is the name of an American city

(5) ‘With’ has four letters.

In both these examples, what I am depicting (in the sense of « providing an iconic representation of ») is a lexical unit (i.e. a set of linguistic properties such as form(s), intension, word class), *Boston* or *with*, and what I am demonstrating are the very properties that make these items lexical units. When the target and the demonstrated properties are the same, Recanati writes that the quotation only has a ‘proximal’ target.

Needless to say, the demonstrated properties are often different from what is depicted. In such cases, next to the proximal target (the demonstrated properties), there is a ‘distal’ target. Such is

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<sup>254</sup> Some readers might object that a class of sentences cannot be a demonstrated property. I suppose that Recanati has judged the class of sentences – all of which share only one property, their meaning – to be equivalent to a type. Many philosophers reduce types to classes. Since, in this case, the type itself is made up of a single property (the meaning of the direct speech report), it does not seem rash to assume that the demonstrated ‘property’ is a class of sentences.

<sup>255</sup> I am grateful to François Recanati for putting right an earlier, partly misguided, interpretation.

<sup>256</sup> *Flat mention* covers very much the same instances as have been labelled ‘pure quotation’ so far.

the situation that prevails in (1), (2) and (3) above. In (1), what is depicted is probably the very token uttered by the innkeeper. After all, what the husband is throwing some light on is the innkeeper's original Italian utterance.<sup>257</sup> In (2), the distal target is likely to be the utterance produced by the speaker from northern England (say, Vic Wilcox), of which the token in quotation marks is but a truncated icon. The original utterance was presumably something like, *Tha's all a pile of roobish*. Given the dosis of mimicry involved, there may also be a concurrent target: Vic Wilcox's particular way of realising *pile of rubbish*.<sup>258</sup> Finally, as regards (3), the distal target of the demonstration is likely to be a particular group's jargon: the writer is probably mimicking, say, some spin doctors' euphemistic talk.<sup>259</sup>

I am tempted to propose the following summary: the target is that which I wish to talk about or simply 'evoke' by means of my demonstration. The demonstrated property is the angle from which this target is approached. This angle, in turn, is selected on the basis of the token displayed (is made available by it). The utterer of (1) wishes to report the innkeeper's utterance from the point of view of its meaning, a property that is made available by the English token produced. The utterer of (2) wishes to direct hearers' attention to Vic Wilcox's utterance (and perhaps also his idiosyncratic pronunciation) inasmuch as it is pronounced with a Midlands accent, a property that is made accessible by the (truncated) token displayed. The utterer of (3) wishes to evoke a particular sociolect as being typified by the use of euphemism, a property made available by the display of the token of *misspeak*.<sup>260</sup>

(iv) Finally, each act of demonstration (hence also each quotation) has a point. The first three characteristics reviewed were to do with the so-called 'pictorial meaning' of quotations. This one is to do with the intentions realised by the speaker/writer in producing a quotation. The

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<sup>257</sup> I nevertheless admit to some uncertainty. It is not absolutely clear that the target might not be the meaning of the innkeeper's utterance, in which case we would be dealing with only a proximal target.

<sup>258</sup> The existence of this additional target is more plausible if (2) is considered as a spoken utterance.

<sup>259</sup> Recanati mentions some indicators of mimicry. In particular, he reports Cornulier's view that parenthetical clauses like *he said* always attest to mimicry: their use is a marker of the imitation of a previous utterance. Quirk et al. (1985: 1024) provide a useful list of reporting verbs that not only signal mimicry but also what aspect of a previous utterance is mimicked (Quirk et al. speak of 'indicating the manner of speaking'): *to falter, lisp, mumble, murmur, mutter, snap, sneer, sob, whisper*. Additional adverbs are helpful too, as in *Charles hinted darkly, John said casually*.

<sup>260</sup> I am painfully aware how impressionistic the analyses of (2) and (3) are. Recanati (personal correspondence) thinks that this tentativeness is simply a reflection of the fact that an act of mimicry is far more underdetermined than an act of uttering a sentence. In any case, Recanati makes a convincing case for his distinction between proximal and distal target. In particular, he shows that it is needed if one is to differentiate between iconicity (which all quotations possess) and mimicry, a graded property absent in flat mention (cf (4) and (5)) but present, to varying degrees, in cases like (2) and (3). Whenever the quotation echoes (mimics) a particular manner of saying things, a distal target must be identified (cf 2001a: 644). Besides, Recanati suggests that the distal target may be either a token or a type (ibid.), in which respect also it is different from a demonstratum that is said to always be a type.

‘quotational point’ may be to amuse, puzzle, make angry, disagree, show scepticism, make fun, appeal to authority, express condescending approval, etc. (cf Recanati 2001: 666). In the case of closed quotation (cf examples (1), (4) and (5)), where the demonstration functions as a referring expression, the point is always to refer to an expression. But even in apparent cases of flat mention ((4), (5)), there might be an additional point: imagine my uttering of ‘*Boston*’ in (4) with an overdone Boston accent. In this case, I would no longer have produced a flat mention, since I would have made a particular pronunciation a depictive property. Such a move might serve the purpose of enraging my Bostonian audience, or amusing my New York hearers, or whatever. In the case of mixed quotation, (cf (2)), the point is to let the reader know that Vic Wilcox used the very words between inverted commas. But (2) may also have been uttered with the intention to contradict a previous speaker (for instance, one who claimed that Vic Wilcox had used the words *load of crap*). Since the quotational point is a matter of the speaker/writer’s intentions, it always “belongs to the most pragmatic layer of interpretation, where one tries to *make sense of the speaker’s act of demonstration in the broader context in which it takes place*” (2001: 667; original emphasis). That is the case, writes Recanati, even when the point is fairly predictable (as is referring in the case of closed quotation, or attributing words to another speaker/utterer in the case of mixed quotation).

## 5.2. Quotation marks

Recanati (2001a: 661) concurs with Geoff Nunberg (1990) in viewing the written language as an autonomous system, namely a system whose rules may differ from the rules of the spoken language.<sup>261</sup> It is within this written system, not the natural language as a whole, that quotation marks are punctuation signs.<sup>262</sup> This means that the claim that the next two sentences differ in meaning can only be made with any clarity in reference to written language. In spoken language, the difference might well be no more than paralinguistic:

(6) Alice said that life is ‘difficult to understand’

(7) Alice said that life is difficult to understand. (C&L 1997a: 429)

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<sup>261</sup> Amongst other things, the written language uses graphical devices as ‘text-category indicators’ (punctuation, font- and face-alternations, capitalisation, etc.). As part of these indicators, Nunberg attempts to show that punctuation constitutes a “subsystem which is properly speaking “linguistic”” (1990: 19), in the sense that there are particular graphological, but also syntactic and semantic rules governing the use of punctuation. For additional differences, see Auroux (1996: 56-57).

<sup>262</sup> Note the convergence with Washington’s understanding of quote marks.

Granting this difference, Recanati ventures the intriguing suggestion that it must run parallel to that between:

(8) He is rich and stupid

(9) He is rich but stupid.

Although there is, intuitively, a difference in meaning between the sentences within each pair, many writers would claim that this difference is not semantic in nature, and some of them would wish to describe it in terms of Grice's conventional implicatures. Regarding the second pair, (9) is semantically (and truth-conditionally) equivalent to (8), but its meaning is richer than that of (8), as it can be paraphrased by means of a couple of sentences, the first of which is (8), while the second is a meta-comment to the effect that "[t]here is a conclusion *r* (e.g. 'John is intelligent') such that his being rich supports *r* to some degree, while his being stupid refutes *r*" (2001a: 662). Only the first element, roughly (8), makes a contribution to the compositional meaning (i.e. propositional content) of (9); the contribution of the meta-comment is already pragmatic in nature.

Quotation marks, Recanati suggests, perform a similar function to *but*: they too can be regarded as triggering a conventional implicature. The relevant meta-comment for quote marks is something like "the words within the marks are being used demonstratively". Recanati classifies quotation marks as 'pragmatic indicators', and proceeds to show that the interpretation of pragmatic indicators is threefold (cf 2001a: 663-64). There is:

- (a) a conventional meaning (in the written system), which consists in "the convention governing its use".
- (b) a contextual instantiation of (a): the mere occurrence of a pragmatic indicator in an utterance-context suffices to activate its conventional meaning.
- (c) an additional 'fleshing out' of the applied meaning (b), i.e. a process by which the pragmatic indicator is ascribed a contextual meaning over and above the instantiation of its conventional meaning (a) in (b).<sup>263</sup>

Here is how these three levels of meaning apply to quotation marks. I prefer to quote Recanati in full:

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<sup>263</sup> To pursue the analogy with *but*, it can be seen that the interpretation of the conjunction also exhibits these three levels: *but* has a conventional meaning (cf Recanati's description of the meta-comment above) that is automatically activated when a token of *but* occurs in an utterance. Moreover, *but* also requires fleshing out: the conclusion *r* that is mentioned in the meta-comment must be determined more precisely in context.

(a) The quotation marks have conditions of use: they are to be used only if the speaker is using the quoted words demonstratively. (b) In virtue of this conventional requirement, using the quotation marks in a particular utterance *u* indicates that the token  $\theta$  within the quotation marks in *u* is displayed for demonstrative purposes. This indication (the applied meaning of the token) has the status of ‘conventional implicature’ [...]. It is directly generated by the convention regulating the use of the expression. But (c) it must be fleshed out in context. The interpreter must identify the (distal) target of the demonstration, if there is one, and must identify the properties of the token which are ‘depictive’ and those which are merely accidental or ‘supportive’ [...].<sup>264</sup> When the applied meaning of the quotation marks has been fleshed out in this way, the interpreter is able to appreciate the demonstration’s pictorial value.” (2001a: 664-65)

In other words, each time I use quotation marks (cf b), I shall automatically indicate that the token enclosed within them is displayed to demonstrate (cf a) some of its properties. Moreover, as demonstration tout court is far too underdetermined, the hearer must perform the extra job (c) of discerning those properties that are contextually relevant (and, as the case may be, identifying a distal target too).

The three interpretative ingredients of a pragmatic indicator can be mapped onto the three acts involved in quotation, i.e. displaying, demonstrating and depicting, but the mapping is not one-to-one. Displaying, demonstrating and depicting all contribute to the meaning of an utterance, but in different ways. The token displayed has a conventional linguistic meaning. The demonstration has pictorial meaning. The token says something; the demonstration shows something. Pictorial meaning always includes an iconic component: the token displayed resembles, in some relevant way, the depicted target. Besides, in cases like (2) or (3), the pictorial meaning also has a ‘mimetic’ (echoic) component. Finally – and this is to be developed shortly – closed quotations possess an extra layer of linguistic meaning, namely the referential value of the demonstration that functions as an NP.

Recanati explains that the three aspects of the meaning of quotation marks “correspond to *steps in the generation of the pictorial meaning of the demonstration*” (2001a: 665):

- the conventional meaning (a) of quotation marks is on a par with the conventional linguistic meaning of the expression between quotes.
- its application (b) and the fleshing out (c) of the conventional meaning help fix the pictorial meaning of the demonstration.

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<sup>264</sup> There is some connection between Recanati’s ‘depictive properties’ and Bennett’s ‘relevant features of tokens’ (cf 2.3), even though Bennett restricts these to linguistic properties while depictive properties can be of any sort. This last point is noticed by Lepore (1999: 706-07), though in a different terminology.

All in all, quotation marks make a contribution to the pictorial meaning (what is shown) but not to the propositional content of the utterance in which they occur (what is said). This is perfectly in keeping with their being pragmatic indicators.<sup>265</sup>

### 5.3. 'Closed' vs 'open' quotation

Now that most of the general aspects of quotation have been highlighted, we can return to what I initially described as Recanati's chief creative move, the distinction between 'closed' and 'open' quotation. Recanati observes that some instances of quotation occupy a standard NP-position, while others do not. We saw in Chapter 2 that many scholars recognised the first fact but failed to make allowances for the second. Name and Description Theorists took it for granted that quotations behaved grammatically like nominal constituents (cf the Tarski citation in 2.1.3), but then again they were barely interested in anything other than pure quotation and direct speech. Similarly, many of their critics agreed that quotations were, from a grammatical point of view, like nouns or NPs (Garver, Saka and, perhaps unwittingly, all the Demonstrativists). And when they did point out that some quotations were not NPs, they failed to address the major consequences that this state of things must have on their theory, witness the Demonstrativists and Saka.

Recanati has the good sense to make the grammatical criterion the basis of his classification. This way, he is certain to avoid the overgeneralisations observed in earlier theories. Besides, the grammatical distinction goes hand in hand with a semantic opposition: since the quotation-NPs (closed quotations) act as 'singular terms', they are endowed with the ability to refer.<sup>266</sup> Given

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<sup>265</sup> I suppose Kent Bach might take a different view. Bach holds that what Grice called conventional implicatures are worked out at the level of what is said. Therefore, if like Recanati, Bach treated quotation marks like conventional implicatures, then he would have to infer that they may make a direct contribution to what is said. If this hypothetical reconstruction has any merit, it is to show how a local theoretical choice may have perhaps unsuspected effects on other aspects of a theory. In the present case, a choice about conventional implicatures might force Bach to adopt a picture of quotation in which quote marks are semantic rather than pragmatic markers.

<sup>266</sup> Although Recanati associates recruitment as an NP with the ability to refer, I am not sure that the latter always automatically ensues from the former. We saw in Chapter 4.3.3 that some autonyms-as-NPs are appositives to the metalinguistic head of another NP, e.g. *the word 'contains'*, *the preposition 'with'*. Take:

The phrase 'our new, happy life' recurred several times. It had been a favourite of late with the Ministry of Plenty.  
(Orwell 1954: 49)

My impression is that it is the whole NP *The phrase 'our new, happy life'* that refers, rather than either *The phrase* or *'our new, happy life'*. But perhaps this is only a minor problem. After all, many grammarians point out that appositives are usually co-referential. However, they have a tendency to use the term reference more broadly than a proponent of direct reference such as Recanati. Therefore, I am not sure whether Recanati would in the end ascribe reference to appositional autonyms.



that, in Recanati's framework, reference is performable only by singular terms, it follows that open quotations, which are not singular terms, do not refer.

Let us now illustrate the distinction:

(10) '*Comment allez-vous ?*' That is how you would translate 'How do you do' in French. (2001a: 648)

The French sentence '*Comment allez-vous ?*' is first demonstrated, then referred to by means of the demonstrative *That*. In the first case, there is no reference, because the quotation does not occupy an NP-position in a sentence. It is displayed in isolation, very much like the tokens pointed at in Davidson's paraphrases. *That*, by contrast, is a demonstrative pronoun endowed with reference, but it is not a quotation. There is, however, a quotation that does refer, namely '*How do you do*'. This quotation is 'linguistically recruited' in this sense that it has been transformed into a nominal constituent (an NP) that fills the direct-object slot of *translate*.

Reference, as I hinted above, adds an extra layer of linguistic meaning to closed quotations. We therefore have the following situation: the displayed token has conventional linguistic meaning; the demonstration has pictorial meaning; and, in closed quotation, the "demonstration *qua* linguistically recruited", i.e. '[Dem]<sub>NP</sub>' (2001a: 651), has linguistic meaning too. The question is how these various elements affect the truth-conditions of the utterance-token in which they occur.

As a general rule, pictorial meaning (iconic and mimetic) is external to the proposition expressed by the utterance; it does not affect its truth-conditions. This is in keeping with the description of quotation marks above. Linguistic meaning, by contrast, can be expected to make a different contribution. Let me start with the reference of closed quotations (of [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>): in a framework like Recanati's, reference affects the truth-conditions of an utterance. The reference of [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> does not depart from the general rule. If I refer to the word *with* and assert that it is a preposition, I have made a true statement. If I refer to *Boston* and make the same assertion, I have produced a false statement.

More complex is the impact of the linguistic meaning of the displayed token, because it depends on the kind of sentential environment that the token occurs in. With respect to closed quotation, Recanati agrees with Davidson that the displayed token is semantically inert, on the grounds that this token need not be a meaningful English sequence. If the compositional meaning of a closed quotation were to contribute to the propositional content of the sentence in which it was embedded, then this sentence would be meaningless (express no proposition) whenever the

quoted sequence was a meaningless string. Therefore, inertness is indispensable. But inertness, Recanati adds, is context-bound: it obtains only relative to the mentioning sentence: the displayed token remains “semantically active in the discourse as a whole” (2001a: 653; emphasis mine). This I understand as meaning that its content remains accessible: the ‘inert object’ that is outside the mentioning sentence inasmuch as it does not affect its semantic composition is nevertheless a meaningful linguistic sequence:<sup>267</sup> that explains how all sorts of properties (grammatical, semantic, ‘literary’, cf 1st § of 2.1.2) can be ascribed to it. Note incidentally that the present account is similar, although not identical, to the one I advocated for the Demonstrative Theory in 2.3, where I also maintained that semantic inertness must not be generalised. On that occasion, I suggested that the token displayed might be inert, but not the type referred to.

As far as open quotation is concerned, the displayed token is semantically active. That is obvious in scare quoting and mixed quotation, where the quoted sequence contributes to the propositional content, no less than it would were the quotation marks to be removed. It is true also of the isolated quotation in (10): if it were a mere inert thing, then one would not be able to judge the assertion that it is the French translation for *How do you do ?*. No mere thing devoid of meaning is ever the translation of anything.

#### 5.4. Reaping the fruit of 3.3

In this section, I will deal with a few examples of hybrid uses whose analysis requires the theoretical apparatus outlined in Chapter 3. Before I can begin my analyses, I need to point out that Recanati (2001a) makes use of a different terminology than was set out in 3.3. This being said, it is easy to make out one-to-one connections: what was referred to as ‘what is said<sub>min</sub>’, Recanati (2001a) calls ‘c-content’ (with *c* for *compositionally articulated*); what was referred to as ‘what is said<sub>max</sub>’, i.e. the level of interpretation that encodes the results of free pragmatic enrichment, Recanati (2001a) calls ‘i-content’ (with *i* for *intuitive truth-conditional*).

Recanati first observes that, with some instances of hybridity, the i-content = the c-content. That is the case with certain forms of scare quoting. Here is an illustration:

(11) One can only wonder whether Chomsky’s work would have had the effect that it did have within linguistics if *Syntactic Structures* had not been “watered down.” (Lyons 1977a: 57fn)

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<sup>267</sup> Unless, that is, it is a pseudo-linguistic or non-linguistic sequence.

Lyons is using the quote marks to imply the same idea that could have been conveyed by adding *if I may say so*. It is his belief that *Syntactic Structures* was indeed watered down, though that may sound like too disrespectful a word. The quote marks contribute some attitudinal meaning, but their presence has no impact on truth-conditions, which would be unchanged if the quote marks were removed.

Not all hybrids, however, behave like (11). Let me repeat a previous pair of examples, one of which contains a mixed quotation:

(6) Alice said that life is ‘difficult to understand’

(7) Alice said that life is difficult to understand.

One would wish to say that these two utterances have different truth-conditions. Indeed, if Alice has actually uttered the sentence *Life’s pretty tough to make sense of*, then (7) is true but (6) is not. As a matter of fact, (6) logically entails (7): whenever (6) is true, so is (7); but the reverse does not appear to be true. Recanati calls this a ‘cumulative’ kind of hybrid quotation: the sentence with the quotation marks includes the semantic content of the one without, plus something else (something that affects truth-conditions).

Recanati’s job consists in explaining how quotation marks, which he considers to be pragmatic indicators, seem to have an impact on the truth-conditions of an utterance. We have seen that most of the theorists of quotation discussed earlier had precisely shied away from adopting such a standpoint (e.g. Saka and C&L, as reviewed at the end of our scrutiny of the first objection under 4.1.2). What is different about Recanati is that he no longer holds that truth-conditions are entirely a matter of semantics: truth-evaluability is often only made possible after free pragmatic enrichment (cf 3.3.1). It is on the basis of the latter notion that Recanati accounts for the truth-conditional discrepancy between (6) and (7). The quotation marks pragmatically enrich the truth-conditions in the following manner: a reader recognises the intention behind the quotation, which is to let him/her know that the speaker meant that Alice “expressed the reported proposition and did so *using the demonstrated words*” (2001a: 673; original emphasis). This recognition, though definitely a pragmatic affair, nevertheless affects the intuitive truth-conditions of (6): its i-content is richer (i.e. more specific) than its c-content. As I hinted earlier, a reader would presumably regard (6) as false if Alice’s actual words had been *Life’s pretty tough to make sense of*. In (11), by contrast, the demonstration performed by means of the quotation marks did not affect what was said but merely what was implicated: no pragmatic enrichment of truth-conditions occurred.

When dealing with cumulative hybrids, changes in truth-conditions are put down to free enrichment. There are, however, instances of hybridity that are ‘non-cumulative’, i.e. in which the truth of the utterance with quotation does not entail the truth of the one without. This situation is exemplified by the next pair of sentences:

(12) ‘Quine’ wants to speak to us

(13) Quine wants to speak to us. (Recanati 2001a: 668).<sup>268</sup>

If we understand ‘*Quine*’ in (12) to mean « the person whom James believes to be Quine but who is in reality Tim McPherson », then (12) and (13) clearly have different truth-conditions. If the subject of discourse is McPherson, (12) is true and (13) false; quotation is not cumulative here.<sup>269</sup> A further difference with the pair (6)-(7), and one that poses an even greater challenge to Recanati’s notion of quote marks as pragmatic indicators, is that it is the c-content of (12) rather than its i-content that is affected. Alterations of the c-content cannot be made dependent on free enrichment, since the latter is possible only after the c-content has been fixed. Therefore, another explanation is required. In this case, it is the notion of context-shift that must be adverted to. In 3.2, I outlined Recanati’s ‘broad context’ as made up of a language *L*, a situation of utterance *s* and a circumstance of evaluation *c*. Each of these parameters can shift separately; as a matter of fact the various more specific parameters within *s* and *c* are also liable to shift independently of each other. Moreover, I indicated that these shifts were pre-semantic, in this sense that they take place at a stage where compositional meaning cannot yet be appraised: setting the parameters of the context is a pre-condition for the process of semantic interpretation to get under way. It is on the ability of the context to shift that Recanati will base his explanation: the alteration of the c-content in (12) is only indirectly the doing of the quotation marks. The parameter that shifts is *L*; we are dealing with a sentence-internal language-shift: (12) is uttered by, say, Laura, and all the words in (12) have the sense they have in Laura’s language, except for *Quine*, which has “the sense it has in James’s idiolect, where it refers to Tim McPherson” (2001a: 675).<sup>270</sup> Language-

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<sup>268</sup> I must once again confess to some discomfort when it comes to identifying exactly what is demonstrated and depicted by displaying ‘*Quine*’ in (12). However, since (12) includes a certain degree of mimicry, I believe that there is a distal target and that this distal target is James’s particular way of speaking (the quotational point might be, for instance, having a laugh, making fun of James, etc.). If that is correct, then the demonstrated property must be depictive, i.e. it must allow the speaker to ‘hit’ the intended target. This suggests that the demonstratum must be the (deviant) reference of the subject-NP. Note in passing that, since ‘*Quine*’ is not a grammatically recruited metalinguistic demonstration, it does not owe its referentiality to that demonstration.

<sup>269</sup> Some connections with irony will be touched upon at the end of Chapter 6.2.2.4.

<sup>270</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to write that, in James’s idiolect, *Quine* does not refer to McPherson only, but probably to McPherson and Quine. The ‘trouble’ with James is presumably that he has failed to separate these two individuals. Note also that the judgment that this is a language-shift is actually theory-dependent. It is valid with

shifts, just like language determination, are pre-semantic processes: semantic composition can only be performed if the words in an utterance have been assigned to a given language (cf my remarks at end of 3.3.1). There are numerous manifest examples of language-shifts, notably those that occur in contexts of ‘code-switching’, in which utterances are built from two languages at the same time. By way of an additional illustration, here is an example in which the shift is from one dialect of English to another:

(14) To which Mr Bailey modestly replied that he hoped he knowed wot o’clock it wos in gineral.  
(Dickens, cited in Clark & Gerrig 1990: 791)

If no language-shift were postulated in (14), then the whole utterance could not be endowed with a semantic interpretation, because strings such as *knowed*, *wot*, *wos*, *gineral* have no meaning in standard English (they do not exist). It is only by assigning the clause containing these strings to another language (another dialect) that a semantic interpretation can be built (on theoretically acceptable grounds).<sup>271</sup>

Recanati looks into other varieties of context-shifts where the parameter affected is the situation of utterance or the circumstance of evaluation. As all of those shifts take place in utterances including hybrid forms of quotation or mention, I shall not dwell upon them here. A full treatment of these questions is given in Chapter 8.

## 5.5. Assessment

Before offering an assessment of what Recanati says in his (2001a) paper, I would like to comment on what he does not say. In particular, Recanati barely deals with mention-without-quotes. Does his framework leave any room for it? Recanati does not deny the existence of the phenomenon, nor does he try to explain it away as somehow deficient. He is inclined (personal communication) to endorse something like Saka’s distinction between mention and quotation; i.e. the idea that quotation marks make explicit what bare mention leaves implicit. He is even ready to countenance the judgement that quotation marks ‘grammaticalise’ the speaker’s intention to quote (though he would of course reject the idea that their application systematically outputs NPs). This prompts me to say that he would assent to something like the proposal that I put forward at the end of my presentation of Saka: mention and pure quotation are neither

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respect to a theory that treats proper names as directly referential expressions (cf my remark under point (ii) in 4.1.2). On some versions of such a theory (but not Recanati’s...) the linguistic meaning of names is reduced to their referent. It is such an understanding that is needed if we want to justify a language-shift in (12).

<sup>271</sup> The question whether (14) is grammatically well-formed is tricky. It will be addressed in Chapter 8.

semantically nor syntactically different: many instances of either are NPs endowed with reference, some seem to be common nouns instead. In those cases, the difference is only in terms of overtness. Where mention and quotation do part company, however, is on the issue of hybridity. Mixed quotation and scare quoting seem to have no unmarked counterparts. We shall see in Chapter 6.2.1 whether that last observation is confirmed or not. In other words, we shall try to establish if there might exist unmarked cases of hybridity, contrary to appearances.

It is time now to go through our ‘checklist’ for the assessment of how well theories deal with the salient features of quotation. Recanati’s is the most empirically adequate of all the theories we have examined. That is due mainly to the fact that it offers a consistent explanation of the simultaneity of quotation: we have seen what a good job it makes of addressing hybridity in quotation. The theory has no trouble accounting for iconicity, since iconicity is generalised to every instance of quotation. The displayed token always stands in an iconic relation to the properties demonstrated and the target depicted, though this of course means that iconicity has to be understood in the broad sense of « displaying some resemblance, whatever the form such a likeness takes ». Recanati’s iconicity is a more open concept than Saka’s or Goldstein’s: for instance, the meaning of an expression – if that is the property demonstrated, as it is in (1) – is an icon of the displayed token.<sup>272</sup> Next to iconicity, Recanati also rightly identifies the frequent occurrence of mimicry (at least in all those cases where there is a distal target). The theory reflects the productivity of quotation in the same way that the Demonstrative account does, i.e. simply because it does not rely on naming. Two things can be said about opacity: first, the fact that the token enclosed in quotation marks is displayed suggests that the quoted sequence undergoes opacification, in the sense given to this term by Recanati (1979) (cf also my discussion of the ‘dual destiny’ of signs at end of 2.1.2). Second, although Recanati acknowledges the opacity of quotational contexts – they cause failures of substitution *salva veritate* – he maintains, contra Quine for example, that quoted sequences none the less preserve their normal semantic value; they are ‘semantically innocent’. This picture is consistent with his idea that semantic inertness is at most relative only to the quoting sentence. Outside of the

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<sup>272</sup> The broadness of the concept may prove a liability: in a reply to Recanati (2001c), John Searle writes that “[r]esemblance is a vacuous predicate. Everything resembles everything else in an indefinite number of respects” (2001: 286). This point is difficult to disprove; it presumably lies at the basis of Recanati’s extension of the concept of iconicity anyway. But a new problem therefore arises: it seems that, even though the properties that can be demonstrated are varied, they are not entirely unconstrained. How, then, with such a broad concept of resemblance, can one account for the fact that a quotation cannot demonstrate just any old thing ?

quoting sentence, the displayed token is semantically active.<sup>273</sup> Finally, Recanati does not broach the subject of the recursiveness of quotation, but here is how it can be seen to fit into his theory. To begin with, no question arises in the case of open quotation, as the semantic interpretation of the mentioning sentence exploits the compositional meaning and the ability to refer of the quoted sequence, every bit as much as if it were not quoted. With respect to closed quotations, the key is Recanati's insistence that the semantic inertness of a quoted sequence obtains only relative to the mentioning sentence. Outside of it, i.e. within the 'discourse as a whole', the quoted sequence remains active, i.e. it retains its ability to be interpreted compositionally. Whether it is in turn capable of referring is an issue that I address in the following paragraphs.

Indeed, the only property of quotation that Recanati has some trouble with is referential diversity. Although he rightly assumes that many quoted sequences simply do not refer at all, those quotations that do (closed quotations) can apparently refer only to types. I am not sure Recanati purposely rules out tokens as referents of certain closed quotations, but I believe a consistent construal of his theory makes this conclusion inescapable. The reason is that, as we have seen, Recanati equates the referent of a closed quotation with its proximal target. This proximal target, in turn, is the same thing as the demonstratum of the quotation. Since, in Recanati's scheme, a demonstratum is always a type, it follows that the referent of a closed quotation (and, more generally, of a closed autonym) cannot be a token.<sup>274</sup>

If the referent of a closed autonym is systematically a type, then the theory cannot explain the kind of iterated reference highlighted in Chapter 2 (example (8)). I can see two ways out of the present quandary: either the constraint on the nature of demonstrata is relaxed and we accept tokens as concrete demonstrated 'properties'; or we agree that the referent can at times be the distal target of the demonstration (remember that Recanati explicitly allows for the existence of targets that are tokens). I am not sure which option is more consistent with the general drift of Recanati's theory, but, in any case, I do not think that either solution threatens its balance or validity to any serious extent.

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<sup>273</sup> This is but a simplistic account of Recanati's views on opacity. Part III of Recanati (2000: 111-63) is entirely devoted to opacity (in its various guises). Recanati's presentation reaches a degree of sophistication that I cannot even hope to come close to in these pages.

<sup>274</sup> The relevant passages are: "Finally, when there is no distal target, the displayed token stands for an abstract type, namely the class of tokens that are relevantly similar to that token" (2001a: 645); "[in closed Q] the demonstration assumes a grammatical function in the sentence: that of a singular term referring to the (proximal) target of the demonstration" (655); "[Dem]<sub>NP</sub> refers to one of the things which Dem depicts, namely the proximal target of the demonstration" (656).

My preference, however, goes towards the second option. Let me take up example (1) again. I suggested early in this chapter that the speech report *'We're going to close early tonight'* demonstrated a class of synonymous sentences in various languages and depicted a distal target that was probably the utterance-token initially produced by the Italian inn-keeper. In 4.3.3, in my discussion of the reference of 'deviant' direct speech reports, I also determined that the referent of *'We're going to close early tonight'* must be the original token in Italian. It is only natural then to favour the alternative under which the distal target of the demonstration can also be its referent. Although I am not sure that Recanati would think highly of this solution, I see it as the only one that preserves the possibility of giving a coherent account of the reference of direct speech reports.<sup>275</sup>

This is an excellent assessment if there ever was one, but it still fails to do justice to all the qualities of the theory. Recanati's solution to the major semantic and syntactic problem that was the Waterloo of most of the other theories (quotations as referential NPs) also provides for an excellent characterisation of the division of labour between linguistic and pictorial meaning (cf 2001a: 681): (i) quotation marks, like conventional implicatures, have conventional meaning (character) in the written system: this character consists in signalling that the enclosed words are demonstrated; (ii) the demonstration can shift one or the other parameter of the context and thus indirectly affect the c-content of the utterance; (iii) the pictorial meaning may affect the i-content via pragmatic enrichment; (iv) a less peripheral contribution takes place when the quotation is closed, since the demonstration directly affects the c-content of the utterance. All in all, we are given a very clear depiction of what, in quotation, is properly linguistic, and what is not. Moreover, we also get to understand how pictorial (i.e. not directly linguistic) elements can affect linguistic interpretation either indirectly or directly.

Besides, Recanati neatly distinguishes between two issues that are often conflated in other accounts:

[...] a basic syntactico-semantic issue (Is the quotation open or closed, that is, is it, or is it not, linguistically recruited as a singular term?), and a pragmatic issue (What is the point of the demonstration?). Those issues are hopelessly confused in the standard approach (2001a: 682)

By separating these issues, Recanati has no trouble dealing with such examples as:

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<sup>275</sup> One problem I am aware of is that not all distal targets are to be understood as a referent. Actually, none of the mimetic (echoic) distal targets could also be a referent. A new question therefore arises: on what basis can referential distal targets be distinguished from non-referential ones?



(15) A ‘fortnight’ is a period of fourteen days. (2001a: 682)

(16) *Fortnight* sometimes translates into French as *quinzaine*.

Both are cases of flat mention. The pragmatic point is the same each time, i.e. making a statement about a linguistic object. Syntactically and semantically, however, they are different: (15) is open, whereas (16) is closed. This way, Recanati can simultaneously account for the similarities and the dissimilarities between (15) and (16). By comparison, Cappelen and Lepore, for instance, would have to classify both as ‘pure’ quotations, after which they would have no further means of stating the genuine difference between (15) and (16). Their ‘pure’ quotation, therefore, is a hybrid category that straddles the closed-open divide.

Another strong point of Recanati’s theory is that it gives a unified account of quotation marks: these always signal a demonstrative dimension. There is, accordingly, no need to make the awkward assumption that quotation marks are ambiguous, as some writers are led to do.<sup>276</sup> I am not saying that Recanati is the first writer to treat quotation marks as unambiguous. C&L, for instance, state that “quotes in pure quotation are treated semantically in exactly the same way as quotes in direct quotation [...]” (1997a: 440). The problem, as we saw, is that the role they ascribe to quote marks gives rise to a number of serious problems (cf Chapter 2.3). Moreover, their desire to manage with a single definition of quote marks encourages them to make a number of very unsatisfactory moves, like rejecting scare quoting out of their account. This they do on the grounds that “a full treatment of them [...] would require too much space” (1997a: 430fn), but, as we saw earlier, the better reason is probably that there is no way they can integrate scare quoting into their explanatory framework.

## 5.6. Conclusion

The end of this chapter coincides with the completion of a sort of historical journey that has taken us from the earliest modern reflections on metalanguage to the most state-of-the-art theory of quotation. I say ‘sort of’ historical journey because there have been quite a few infractions against chronology (flashbacks) and no real attempt to provide a comprehensive history of the subject. Still, the journey has been a profitable one, because it has led to the statement of a first-rate account of metalinguistic discourse, what is more, one that fits neatly into one of the best

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<sup>276</sup> Rather typical in this respect are books on English usage, which do not usually recognise a single basic function for them: quotation marks, like some other punctuation marks, are described as performing a variety of more or less related roles, but not a word is said on what these roles have in common. (See, e.g., Todd & Hancock 1986: 397-98; Greenbaum & Whitcut 1988: 587-88; McArthur 1992: 838-39)

semantic and pragmatic theories of utterances available to date. This account, essentially Recanati's, also draws upon Paul Saka's explanation of unmarked mention and referential diversity.

I am confident that such a framework is what is needed to tackle the questions that lie ahead. In particular, in the next chapter, I shall undertake the task of bringing some order into the numerous varieties of quotation and mention brought to light so far, and work them into a coherent typology. We have seen notably that a host of writers recognised something like 'pure' quotation (related to *flat mention* in Recanati's scheme), which cuts across the mention vs quotation divide. That is the area I decided to cover with the umbrella-term *autonymy* as of the previous chapter. Next to autonymy, we have also become acquainted with a number of so-called 'hybrid' uses, but autonymy itself is a complex phenomenon: only one part of it constitutes what Recanati calls 'closed quotation': numerous autonoms are recruited as nouns (cf the autonym-headed NPs in the previous chapter). Besides, autonymy and hybrid uses do not encompass all of metalanguage: there is a metalinguistic component of the language system too.

[I would like to close this chapter with a brief look at one issue that I will unfortunately not be able to develop at any length in the rest of this dissertation, although it clearly deserves a study of its own: the difference between spoken and written metalinguistic discourse. Many of the relevant observations made so far pertain to the written language (cf my remark about Nunberg at the beginning of 5.2). Written quotation (but not written mention) is signalled by quotation marks. We have seen how these devices turned out to play a major role in our assessment of the various competing theories. In Chapter 2, I used several opportunities to point out that any theory that relies too heavily on the role of quotation marks was in serious trouble. However, I did not refrain from paying close attention to them in this and the previous chapter. This preoccupation is, I believe, justified for methodological reasons, as I argued when I defended Saka's distinction between mention and quotation. But consider this: in speech, as a majority of writers are ready to concede, there are no markers of quotation that have something like a fixed conventional meaning, i.e. a character à la Kaplan (cf Geach 1957: 81; Rey-Debove 1978: 73-74; Goldstein 1984: 4; Washington 1992: 588; C&L 1997a: 431fn; Saka 1998: 118; Recanati 2001a: 661). Therefore, it may well be that the distinction between mention and quotation is irrelevant to a linguistic study of spoken autonoms. What's more, there may seem to be no purely linguistic criteria for the identification of mixed quotation and scare quoting in speech. One must in effect ask the question whether these categories do not entirely belong to the autonomous written system of natural languages. If the essential feature of quotation is that it is a form of demonstration, and if there is no linguistic marking of quotation in speech, then one must accept with Recanati that "[t]his makes quotation, at bottom, a *paralinguistic* phenomenon, like gesturing or intonation" (2001a: 680; original emphasis). There may well be differences in terms of how explicit a spoken case of quotation is, but these can apparently not be linguistic in any strict sense: a special intonation, a revealing facial expression, the use of so-called 'finger-dance quotes', all of these can only be regarded as paralinguistic features.]

## CHAPTER 6: Charting the metalinguistic domain: typology

The metalinguistic dimension of natural language extends over a varied range of objects and phenomena. Quite a few of these have come up in the previous chapters, notably metalinguistic sentences (e.g. Tarski's T-biconditionals), metalinguistic predicates (*noun*, *disyllabic*), pure quotation, flat mention, direct speech, closed quotation, open quotation, mixed quotation and scare quoting. Although these phenomena all have something in common – their metalinguistic dimension – they also each exhibit specific features that they share with none (or only some) of the others. Together, they constitute a hotchpotch of heterogeneous objects that owe their theoretical existence to several incongruent criteria. This jumble is in need of order, which is what this chapter tries to bring, by attempting a reasoned typology of the various manifestations of metalanguage.

In actual fact, several typologies are possible and some of the discriminating factors that these could be based upon were already hinted at in Chapters 2, 4 and 5. Recanati is right when he points out that the typological considerations of philosophers of language have tended to confuse two sorts of criteria, syntactic and pragmatic. Note, however, that each could be used as a sensible basis for a typology of metalinguistic discourse. We could, like Recanati, start from a syntactic test and ask if the metalinguistic object under consideration is 'recruited linguistically' or not. As a result, one could separate closed from open quotations. Moreover, since a quotation can be linguistically recruited not only as an NP but also as a common noun (cf Chapter 5, footnote 252, and the examples in 4.2.3), we would end up with a threefold classification, the divisions of which can be illustrated by the following examples:

### Recruitment as NP (henceforth, $[Dem]_{NP}$ ):

- (1) **“Jig”** is one of the words Iris has been told she must not say, ever. (Oates 1990: 24)
- (2) **‘You shit,’** Robyn said aloud, when she had finished reading the letter. (Lodge 1989: 314)

### Recruitment as N (henceforth, $[Dem]_N$ ):

- (3) Ashley registered with amusement the fact that English Portia had made do with ‘Hi’ while American Gordon preferred a formal **‘How do you do ?’** (Fry 2001: 70)
- (4) The passive version can get rid of all the **theys** and introduce more variety in subject position (BNC CCV 925).

Open quotation:

- (5) He spread his hands and raised his shoulders with an infernal smugness that will haunt me till the day I die. **‘Okay. You’ve dated the upper-class twit of the year and that’s got your dad’s attention. You’ve got Pete listening. Let’s talk, yeah ?’** (Fry 2001: 8)
- (6) Anyway, a couple of hours after this **‘distressing scene’**, Pete knocked on my door with a cup of tea. (Fry 2001: 9)
- (7) Then [Ned] had the fucking nerve to tell me that **“under the circumstances”** I’d been brilliant. (Fry 2001: 83)
- (8) A **‘sophomore’** is a second-year student. (adapted from Jakobson 1981a)

Let me just add a word about the second category, recruitment as a common noun. As indicated in 4.2.3, the sequences in bold type in (3) and (4) are turned into common nouns in this sense that they become the heads of NPs: they can be combined with various types of determiners (*a, all, the*) and modifiers (*formal*), and they can be pluralised. Note also that the mentioned strings function only metalinguistically: they are not used ordinarily. This is what sets (3) and (4) apart from (8), where the highlighted word is used and mentioned simultaneously: if the quotational demonstration were removed from (8), the sentence would still make sense and remain grammatical. By contrast, the same operation would make (3) and (4) ungrammatical.

A certain amount of ambiguity may arise when the quotation recruited as an N is originally a common noun, as in:

- (9) ‘My mother teaches, sir,’ I said, liking the **‘sir’** and liking the fact that Sir Charles liked it. (Fry 2001: 66)

Still, this example is unlike (8) because it does not concurrently involve ordinary use: *‘sir’* is purely an autonym, as the anaphoric *it* at the end of the sentence confirms: without its metalinguistic dimension, the meaning of (9) would be altered, and, as a matter of fact, the sentence would hardly be grammatical any longer (grammaticality would require a final *him*).

Now, instead of a syntactic angle, we might prefer a pragmatic approach, and classify the various manifestations of metalanguage in terms of the purposes they are made to serve, such as making a point about the meaning, grammar, use, etc. of a linguistic sequence, reporting someone’s words, or distancing oneself from an expression or turn of phrase. This would also lead to a threefold classification, with pure quotation being distinguished from direct reports and scare quoting. Although there are obvious links between these pragmatic categories and the syntax-based division, the overlap is far from perfect: pure quotation would cover (1), (3) and (4), but not (2). Direct reports include (2), but also (5) and (7). As for scare quoting, it

corresponds to only one of the phenomena subsumed under open quotation, namely (6). Finally, it is not clear what should be done with (8): can an instance of pure quotation be only optionally metalinguistic ?

While we are at it, we could also start from typographical criteria (as Saka did when he separated quotation from mention) or from a lexico-grammatical criterion such as the presence or not of a reporting verb. These starting-points would yield still further classifications, all of which are, from a certain point of view, the ‘right’ typology.<sup>277</sup> It would therefore be convenient if the various criteria could be integrated into a single framework. That is precisely what can be achieved, I believe, if we make the interpretation of metalinguistic discourse the focal point of our analysis. This means that the present chapter will chiefly be concerned with putting together an ‘interpreter’s typology’ of metalanguage.

But before I undertake this central task, i.e. before I can tackle discourse-level metalinguistic manifestations (henceforth, *metalinguistic demonstration*),<sup>278</sup> I must determine if there are aspects of metalanguage that are present in the language-system. This is the job I take on in 6.1, where I review Josette Rey-Debove’s own typology of metalanguage. Since Rey-Debove also has a lot to say about metalinguistic discourse, I shall take the opportunity to develop her views somewhat on the two major subsets of metalinguistic demonstrations which she distinguishes: autonomy and autonomous connotation. When that has been done, we shall be ready to embark on the interpreter’s typology announced above (6.2). This typology, which draws massively on the theories reviewed in Chapters 3 and 5, attempts to determine at what level of interpretation the various aspects of diverse forms of metalinguistic demonstration can be dealt with by interpreters.

## 6.1. Josette Rey-Debove

In *Le métalangage*, Rey-Debove examines what various metalinguistic items or sequences ‘signify’.<sup>279</sup> The latter term is reproduced on purpose because Rey-Debove operates within an

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<sup>277</sup> For the sake of completeness, let me mention Auroux’s distinction between ‘O-meta’ (opaque metalanguage) and ‘T-meta’ (transparent metalanguage). It is tempting to understand *T-meta* as meaning « containing no mention or quotation » and *O-meta* as meaning the complementary thereof. However, Auroux’s taxonomy is more complex than that, since an utterance of L1 whose subject is an autonym and whose predicate denotes a category that is not ‘immanent’ in a specific natural language is not O-meta, e.g. *Dog designates the concept of dog*, where the autonomous subject can be replaced with *chien*, *hond*, etc. (See Auroux 1979: 11-13). This, incidentally, suggests that not all the contexts that trigger the occurrence of autonoms need be regarded as opaque.

<sup>278</sup> The term will be used to designate highly reflexive demonstrations, not demonstrations of iconically unrelated linguistic strings, such as can be accomplished by using *this phrase* or *those words*, etc.

<sup>279</sup> A summarised but slightly less polished version of her classification can be found in Rey-Debove (1976).

essentially structuralist framework, in which the terms *sign*, *signifier*, *signified*, *signify* are very prominent. This being said, I do not believe it necessary to endorse Rey-Debove's overall framework in order to acknowledge the usefulness of the views she puts forward.

### 6.1.1. Metalinguistic words stricto sensu

Based on an analysis of signifieds, Rey-Debove distinguishes three categories of metalinguistic entities. First, in the lexicon, one finds 'metalinguistic words stricto sensu' (henceforth, *meta-words*). Meta-words stand in contrast to 'mundane' words, i.e. items which never signify anything linguistic (e.g. *water*, *whitewashed*, *to vacuum*), but also with 'neutral' words, i.e. items which may or may not signify language, depending on the context in which they occur (e.g. *bound*, *to raise*, *position*, but also *that*, *in*, *it*, *long*, *have*) (Rey-Debove 1978: 26-27). What sets meta-words apart is the fact that their meaning includes the component [+ language].<sup>280</sup> For the record, something like the category of meta-words was discerned as far back as the third century AD, when the neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry theorised the twofold 'impositio':<sup>281</sup>

Thus calling this sort of thing 'gold' and that material that shines so brightly 'the sun' belongs to the primary imposition (*prôte thesis*) of words, while saying that the expression 'gold' is a noun belongs to their secondary imposition (*deutera thesis*), which signifies the qualitatively different types of expressions. (1992: 34)

Like all other signs, a meta-word is a two-sided (or dyadic) entity made up of a signifier and a signified, or to use terms defined by Louis Hjelmslev that will prove useful in the following pages, of an 'expression' and a 'content'. In other words, signs are standardly expression/content combinations. Sometimes, however, the content itself may be complex. This can best be illustrated by those items that form the core of the metalinguistic lexicon, namely the classifying nouns that denote linguistic units. This central subset largely overlaps with Porphyry's second imposition or with what Zellig Harris describes as the 'N<sub>meta</sub>' set. These are words that have a

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<sup>280</sup> Rey-Debove (1978: 28) points out the existence of other signs of signs, those that designate non-linguistic signs, such as *gesture*, *figure*, but also *letter*. Since this dissertation is not concerned with metasemiotics but with metalanguage, metasemiotic signs will be lumped together with mundane signs.

<sup>281</sup> This was the natural-language counterpart of the more important theory of the twofold 'intentio' in the mental language. The relationships between the two systems are only deceptively simple. See Kneale & Kneale (1962: 195f) and Ebbesen (1998: 380, 381) for a brief exposition. Moody (1935: 45) and especially Alféri (1989: 314ff) examine Ockham's treatment of the two divisions. For the record, Steven Strange, a translator of Porphyry, suggests that Porphyry was the first thinker to make an explicit statement of the above distinction. Still, Strange adds that "something like it is present in Ptolemy, *On the Criterion* § 4" (1992: 34fn), and Kneale & Kneale (1962: 195) state their belief that Porphyry got the distinction from some unnamed predecessor.

complex content inasmuch as they denote classes of signs, a feature which Rey-Debove suggests capturing by means of the following formula:

$$E_1 (E_x (C_x))$$

In this formula, *E* stands for *expression* and *C* for *content*. Numerical subscripts are meant to indicate (and distinguish) individual *E*'s or *C*'s, whereas the *x* subscript is to be understood as a variable. One could in principle assign an  $E_i (C_i)$  formula to each lexical item in a language. Thus, for instance, the sentence *I can swim* could be described as consisting of  $E_{1567} (C_{1567})$ ,  $E_{784} (C_{784})$  and  $E_{64321} (C_{64321})$ . The identity in subscripts indicates that in each case the signifier has been paired with its own conventional content. By way of an example,  $E_{1567} (C_{1567})$  should be read as *the sign made up of the signifier I or [aɪ], which means « the person who, in the relevant context, utters the token of I »*. In the case of  $N_{meta}$  words, the *x* subscripts show that the signified is a class of signs. A single illustration should suffice: the meta-word *adverb* signifies a class comprising « the word a-l-w-a-y-s ( $E_i$ ), which means “at all times” ( $C_i$ ) », « the word i-n-d-o-o-r-s ( $E_j$ ), which means “in or into a building” ( $C_j$ ) », etc. (in the present case, an open set).<sup>282</sup>

As Rey-Debove herself remarks, not all meta-words are amenable to such a neat formula (1978: 34). That is because there are no clear-cut boundaries between the set of meta-words and the rest (ibid.: 32). This fuzziness takes two forms.

First, meta-words display varying degrees of ‘metalinguistic density’, dependent upon the position (degree of inclusion) of [+ language] in the definition of a lexical item (ibid.: 31):

*parole*: simple element of **language** that makes communication possible

*parler*: to utter simple elements of **language** which make communication possible

*parleur*: one who utters simple elements of **language** which make communication possible.

The further left the meaning component [+ language] occurs, the more metalinguistic the lexeme. The further right, the less metalinguistic the lexeme. On this basis, it can be established that *parole* is more metalinguistic than *parler*, which in turn is more metalinguistic than *parleur*. In this respect, some general trends can be revealed, notably the fact that meta-nouns (as names of linguistic units: *verb*, *preposition*, *subordinate clause*, etc.) are more metalinguistically dense than meta-verbs (‘*verba dicendi*’). One, however, quickly hits upon borderline cases with items

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<sup>282</sup> Though Rey-Debove does not broach the subject, it is clear that *adverb* could be defined as an  $E_i (C_i)$  whose ( $C_i$ ) would be something like « a word or phrase that typically modifies the meaning of an adjective, verb, or other adverb, or of a sentence ». However, I believe it more or less safe to regard such an ‘intensional’ version of the signified as equivalent to the extensional version given above.

such as *parloir* (« parlour »). Is it still metalinguistic ? This question would be essential in a theory that aimed at keeping object language and metalanguage neatly distinct from each other. As regards natural languages, the question is undecidable save for an arbitrary decision. It will therefore be best to consider that there exists a continuum in the lexicon between meta-words and the rest.

In the presentation of the first source of fuzziness, I have implicitly relied on a fiction according to which each word is monosemous. Only that way was it possible to bring to light the cline between the two poles, ‘fully mundane’ and ‘fully metalinguistic’. I would have been hard pressed to do so, had polysemy been taken into account: *parler*, for instance, also means « to express oneself by means of gestures » (still metalinguistic when applied to competent users of sign language), or « to be able to use a particular language », or even « to touch, to move », as in *Ce tableau ne me parle pas*. In this last sense, *parler* is hardly metalinguistic at all, whereas it is highly metalinguistic in the sense « to utter simple elements of language ». This shows that polysemy constitutes a second cause of fuzziness between the metalinguistic and mundane poles: it is not as if the lexicon were simply divided into lexemes that contain [+ language], at whatever level of inclusion, and lexemes that do not at any level. There is a set of polysemous lexemes that include one or more metalinguistic senses, but also one or more that have little or nothing to do with language, words such as *proposition*, *coordination*, *passive*, *singular*, *transform*, *generate*. It is not entirely clear where Rey-Debove’s ‘neutral’ sublexicon fits into this picture: is *position* a monosemous word that is compatible with a metalinguistic reading in the appropriate context of use, or is it a polysemous lexeme one of whose senses only is metalinguistic ? I am not going to answer this question in these pages. Instead, I shall assume that senses of lexemes, rather than lexemes themselves, are metalinguistic (or not). Moreover, I will reserve the label *meta-word* chiefly for names of linguistic units (more accurately, for lexemes which, in one of their senses, denote linguistic units). This means that the term will mostly designate words of the second imposition, or members of Harris’s  $N_{meta}$  set.

### 6.1.2. Autonyms

Rey-Debove’s second metalinguistic category is that of autonyms. Autonymy is a discourse phenomenon that typically affects those grammatical subjects that are connected with predicates containing a meta-word (especially an  $N_{meta}$  item). In a way, the set of meta-words anticipates, predicts, the occurrence of metalinguistic discourse, as was already noticed by the Scholastics, who articulated the theory of impositions with that of suppositions: when a sentence included a



predicate of the second imposition, the subject term was said to occur with material supposition.<sup>283</sup>

In Chapter 4, I decided to adopt the term *autonymy* as a shortcut for ‘pure quotation’ and ‘pure mention’ alike, i.e. for all the cases in which a metalinguistic demonstration functions grammatically as a noun or noun phrase. In so doing, I was only following in Rey-Debove’s footsteps. Rey-Debove, who does not wish to grant written metalinguistic use any privileged status, refuses to play up the importance of quoting devices. Since her theory is an attempt at a joint description of written and spoken metalanguage, quotation marks cannot be made to play a central role in it. This being said, one should not assume that such an approach is essentially incompatible with the theories reviewed in Chapter 2, 4 and 5, most of which accorded a key function to quotation marks. The correct picture, as I see it, is something like this: to the extent that it is a form of demonstration, quotation/mention is “at bottom, a paralinguistic phenomenon”, as Recanati put it. However, it is a paralinguistic phenomenon with serious linguistic implications. In particular, when the demonstration is recruited as an NP or an N, it directly affects the semantic content of the utterance in which it occurs.<sup>284</sup> What is interesting is that linguistically recruited quotations/mentions are exactly what Rey-Debove has in mind when she talks of autonyms. Though it is true that the theories that we have looked at so far focused a lot more on quotation (in Saka’s sense) than on mention-without-quotes, we also saw that, on a correct understanding, two of them at least (Saka’s and Recanati’s) did not make quoting devices a necessary condition for ‘linguistic recruitment’ to take place: the grammaticalisation of a demonstration can happen in speech just as well as in writing. Sometimes it is explicitated, by virtue of e.g. a prosodic shift in speech, or the use of quote marks or italics in writing. Sometimes, however, this grammaticalisation remains implicit. But this does not prevent it from taking place. What I am driving at is this: within the framework of a theory of autonymy, the mention/quotation distinction and, consequently, quotation marks, only play a secondary role. These aspects of the theory that are specifically to do with them come as an addition to the core of the theory, which is an account of the grammaticalisation or linguistic recruitment of quotations/mentions.

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<sup>283</sup> This articulation has become standard fare in twentieth-century linguistics, cf Rey-Debove (1978) but also Droste (e.g. 1989a: 24) or Harris, for whom the generation of metalinguistic sentences depends centrally on the initial co-occurrence of an  $N_{meta}$  item. For a sketch of Harris’s contribution to the syntax of natural metalanguage, see De Brabanter (2001).

<sup>284</sup> Note that quotations are not the only demonstrations that can be recruited linguistically. See Chapter 7.2.2 for a discussion.

There might be something odd about the equation *autonymy = linguistic recruitment of quotations*. Indeed, linguistic recruitment is a syntactic classificatory criterion, whereas Rey-Debove bases her definition of autonymy on a semantic or semiotic criterion. The oddity is only apparent, however. Linguistic recruitment turns a quotation into an NP or an N. As we saw in Chapter 5, a quotation-NP refers to a linguistic object. As for a quotation-N, it contributes its meaning (which is metalinguistic) to the meaning of the referential or descriptive expression that it heads (see 6.2.3.3). In both cases, linguistic recruitment has turned a quotation into an object which, in Rey-Debove's terminology, is 'a sign that signifies a sign', in other words, an autonym. Therefore, there is no mystery left surrounding the convergence between the syntactic criterion and the semantic one.

Rey-Debove's formula for autonyms is:

$$E_1 (E_1 (C_1))$$

The identical subscripts are meant to show that the two signifiers are type-identical and that  $(C_1)$  is the (or at least, 'a') signified conventionally associated with  $E_1$ . The formula also indicates that in Rey-Debove's opinion autonyms are not purely reflexive. In this sense, they depart from Carnap's original definition: when Carnap coined the term *autonym* in 1934, he intended it to denote a narrower object than Rey-Debove's: symbols that are used as names for themselves in the strict sense, i.e. without any additional markers. Basically, Carnap's autonyms are cases of closed-quotation-without-quotes, what might be termed 'closed mention'. Moreover, Carnap seems to have held the view that autonyms are purely reflexive (are the same object as that which they designate).<sup>285</sup> For Rey-Debove, on the other hand, they are metahomonyms of the sequence that they signify; that is to say, "an autonym signifies the same-signifier sign of which it is the designation" (1978: 33-34), but it is not identical with it. For instance, the signifier of 'slippers' in *Slippers is not a four-letter word*, is the same as in *Bring me my slippers, honey!* (i.e. s-l-i-p-p-e-r-s), but the signified of the former 'slippers' is: « the word s-l-i-p-p-e-r-s, which means "light low-cut shoes that are easily slipped on the foot" », rather than just the second part, which is the signified of the mundane term *slippers*.

The metahomonymous conception, which unites Rey-Debove with Quine and other logicians, raises several difficult issues. Chief among those is the question whether it does not entail that autonyms are, after all, part of the metalinguistic component of the language-system too (in

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<sup>285</sup> I repeat Carnap's equivocal formulation: when a symbol is used "as a name for itself (or, more precisely, as a name for its own symbol-design), we call it an *autonymous* symbol" (1937: 17).

addition to the already problematic meta-words). If such is the case, we are facing a substantial extension of the lexicon. This question is addressed in 7.2.2.

### 6.1.3. Autonymous connotation

Rey-Debove calls her third category ‘autonymous connotation’, i.e. a discourse phenomenon that partakes of connotation and metalanguage simultaneously. Here as elsewhere, Rey-Debove takes her bearings from Hjelmslev’s *Prolegomena*, according to which, to cut a long story short, connotation consists in the addition of a secondary content to an existing dyadic sign.<sup>286</sup> The new sign thus obtained, a connotative sign, is made up of an ordinary signified and of a signifier that is itself a sign. Hence the formula:  $[E_1 (C_1)] (C_1)$ ,<sup>287</sup> where the second ( $C_1$ ) is the connotative content, while the first is the denotative content of the sign that functions as the signifier of the larger one. As we can see, in connotation, a sign operates as the signifier. This stands in contrast with metalanguage, where, as we saw above, a sign operates as the signified. In autonymous connotation, which is the conflation of these two, both the signifier and the signified of the overall sign are themselves signs. Let us look at a sentence that is in all relevant respects similar to the examples used by Rey-Debove :

(10) ‘[...] For the meantime, however, perhaps young Simon can help us out with the identity of this knife artist, if that really is the current jargon. [...]’ (Fry 1992: 334),

I take it that Rey-Debove would say that the phrase *knife artist* is primarily used in its ordinary capacity as a mundane sign, and secondarily to ‘talk about’ language, in this case a sociolect (that of criminals, or perhaps of press reports on criminals). Rey-Debove would match such an occurrence with the formula  $E_1 (C_1 (E_1 (C_1)))$ , where ( $C_1$ ) = « someone who injures or murders people with a knife ». I do not actually agree with the previous analysis of (10), for reasons that are elaborated upon in Chapter 8. I nevertheless think that Rey-Debove is justified in distinguishing autonymous connotation from the semiotically simpler pattern of autonymy. That is largely because autonymous connotation also covers the two main categories of hybrid uses made out in Chapters 2 and 5, namely mixed quotation and scare quoting. Let me just give one example:

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<sup>286</sup> Rey-Debove’s formulas are inspired by Roland Barthes’s presentation of Hjelmslev’s semiotic levels in *Eléments de sémiologie*. The relevant passage is reprinted in Rey (1976: 220-23). See Barthes (1993: 1517-19) and also (1994: 158f).

<sup>287</sup> I have modified Rey-Debove’s bracketing to show that the signifier is itself a sign: [ ] marks off the higher-order signifier.

(11) Of course, the time was long past when ‘clients’ ‘employed’ Jerry Batson. A key prepositional switch had taken place a decade back, when Jerry decided that he worked with people rather than for them. (Barnes 1999: 35-36)

Both ‘*clients*’ and ‘*employed*’ are instances of scare quoting. They are also instances of autonymous connotation. Let me focus on the first of these: *clients* is used ordinarily (to describe a class of individuals) as the subject of the verb *employed*. At the same time, however, its use is not entirely transparent: the reader’s attention is drawn to the word *clients* itself. Rey-Debove’s interpretation is that the sign *clients* is connoted over and above its standard denotative meaning. As we can see, the connoted sign is Rey-Debove’s way of capturing (part of) Recanati’s pictorial meaning. Just as pictorial meaning remains outside the truth-conditions of an utterance-token – though it may affect them indirectly – Rey-Debove’s connotative content naturally falls outside the denotative meaning, i.e. that which is taken into account when the truth of an utterance is assessed. Note also that the connotative content is vastly underdetermined: the one feature that all cases of autonymous connotation have in common is that the hearer’s attention is drawn to the words in inverted commas; in other words, that the sequence in question is demonstrated. But this tells us little about the respects in which, or the reasons why, this is done: a whole process of ‘fleshing out’ still needs to be performed.

Let us now sum up the contribution of section 6.1:

— Most importantly, our discussion of Rey-Debove’s classification has allowed us to refine our picture of the presence of metalanguage in the language system. The lexicon undoubtedly contains lexical items that are metalinguistic by convention, i.e. regardless of whether they are used in a particular utterance. At the centre of the metalinguistic lexicon are  $N_{\text{meta}}$  items, but the limits of this ‘meta-lexicon’ cannot be neatly circumscribed: a considerable amount of fuzziness is caused by variations in metalinguistic density and by polysemy. The impact of metalanguage on the system will not further occupy us in this chapter, but it will be taken up again in the next one, as it raises topographical rather than typological issues.

— as regards metalinguistic discourse, Rey-Debove’s semantic-semiotic criterion allows defining two categories: signs denoting same-signifier signs (autonymy) and signs connoting same-signifier signs (autonymous connotation). Interestingly, there is a fair amount of overlap between these and the categories resulting from the application of Recanati’s syntactic criterion: autonyms are essentially the same as linguistically recruited metalinguistic demonstrations, while autonymous connotation by and large covers the same domain as open quotation/mention. The

fact that very different theoretical frameworks yield very similar findings strengthens my confidence in the stability of these results.

— This being said, I think a theory à la Recanati holds greater promise than one à la Rey-Debove: whereas it is not hard to see how Recanati's semantics and pragmatics can help refine our understanding of autonymy and autonymous connotation (markedness vs unmarkedness, linguistic vs pictorial aspects, iconicity vs mimicry, etc.), it is more difficult to make out how Rey-Debove's semiotics can improve the picture of metalinguistic discourse sketched in Chapters 4 and 5. This is especially true when the aim is to devise a typology of uses supposed to incorporate most (and perhaps all) of the criteria that can lay claim to highlighting important distinctions. Therefore, although I believe that the two schemes are largely compatible, I will not make much use of Rey-Debove's in the rest of this chapter, and will capitalise instead on the insights provided by the previous three chapters.

## 6.2. An interpreter's typology

In 6.2, I further refine the notion of discourse, basing myself mainly on the four levels<sup>288</sup> made out for the interpretation of utterances in Chapter 3. The previous description of metalanguage at the system-level remains unaffected: it can readily be integrated into a framework à la Lyons and, especially, à la Recanati: there are items whose 'lexical meaning' (Lyons) or 'character' (Kaplan, Recanati) is metalinguistic (with all the attendant problems of fuzziness pointed out earlier).

As the framework set out in Chapter 3 is a theory of the interpretation of utterances, it is entirely concerned with discourse. However, it shows how many-sided the notion of discourse itself is: there are several layers of discourse, and the level at which this or that discourse phenomenon can be interpreted will necessarily vary. In 6.2, I shall therefore attempt to determine the level of interpretation (sentence-meaning, c-content, i-content, implicated content) at which a particular form of metalinguistic demonstration can be accounted for (or, more accurately, at which this or that aspect of the meaning of the phenomenon can be interpreted). This should eventually lead to an 'interpreter's typology' of metalinguistic demonstration.

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<sup>288</sup> I could have retained five or six, but I shall pay no particular attention to propositional content (which is covered by Lyons's sentence-meaning), nor shall I make a distinction between the two types of implicatures made out by Bach (both are subsumed under the i-content, in other words, what is said<sub>max</sub>).

### 6.2.1. The speaker's perspective vs the interpreter's perspective

My adoption of the interpreter's perspective is grounded in what I consider a fundamental imbalance between the point of view of the utterer and that of the hearer/reader. In a sense, from the speaker's perspective, everything is a matter of intentions, be it 'macro' intentions like making the addressee adhere to a certain proposition or perform a particular action, or 'micro' intentions like talking about the present or the past, talking about one or more specific individuals, attributing to them one or the other property. The strict adoption of the speaker's perspective, as it were, blurs the differences between the various layers of discourse. As a matter of fact, it even makes the distinction between semantics and pragmatics redundant. That is why language scholars are usually biased in favour of the interpreter's perspective. In particular, it explains why such a bias underlies the theory of meaning reviewed in Chapter 3 and has also been adopted in the present section. Its chief advantage is that it permits an enlightening account of the fact that 'one and the same' linguistic intention can be realised and therefore 'processed' in a variety of ways.

Let me offer a few illustrations: at the 'macro' level, someone who intends to make me assent to proposition  $p$  may choose to do so by uttering, for instance, a declarative or an interrogative sentence. On the first option, the 'message' may at times be entirely interpretable at the level of the c-content or i-content (i.e. the levels at which proposition-schemata or propositions are determined).<sup>289</sup> On the second, it will necessarily take me some inferential activity to determine that a proposition  $p$  is asserted by means of what looks characteristically like a question. Hence, a full interpretation will never be reached until the level of the implicated content. The point here is that, from a narrow speaker's perspective, there is no notable difference between the two options: they both serve the same purpose: asserting proposition  $p$ . It is by adopting the interpreter's perspective that dissimilarities can be highlighted: the same message is interpreted at distinct levels, according to the means by which the intention was realised. The differences are perhaps even more conspicuous if we turn our attention to 'micro' intentions: according to the manner in which a specific intention is implemented, it will be interpretable out of context (if, for example, the intention is realised by a conventional means), or at the level of the c-content (if interpretation requires only access to the narrow context), or at that of the i-content (if

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<sup>289</sup> What matters here is that one can use a declarative sentence literally to make a statement. In a case like this, it is possible to achieve a full interpretation without access to the wide context. (Though it can still be argued that it is the wide context that helps confirm that semantic interpretation is enough, that it is not complemented/modified by computation of the speaker's intentions.)

interpretation requires some pragmatic enrichment), or, finally, at that of the implicated content (if context-based inferential processes are necessitated). Thus, the same intention will be processed at very different levels by interpreters, depending on how it is realised. This confirms that the interesting perspective for us, the one that affords a richer insight into the linguistic workings of utterances, is the interpreter's. Only by selecting that angle of approach can we throw light on the type of information (non-contextual, narrow-contextual, wide-contextual) that is needed to make sense of a particular implementation of an intention and on the mental processes (e.g. decoding – i.e. using one's linguistic competence – automatic inferences, complex contextual inferences) that must be involved in understanding a given utterance.

### 6.2.2. Pre-interpretative processes vs interpretative processes

My probing of metalinguistic demonstration has opened my eyes to something that I did not even begin to suspect when I became familiar with theories of the interpretation of utterances. This surprise finding is the fact that very substantial aspects of metalinguistic demonstration must be treated pre-interpretatively. That is because these aspects have an impact on which sentence is being uttered via the utterance under examination. Given that a sentence must have been identified before interpretation proper can get under way, all of these facets of mention and quotation need to have been processed beforehand. In other words, when faced with metalinguistic utterances, interpreters need to carry out just as many pre-interpretative tasks as they do interpretative ones.

In the end, what turns out to be left to the actual process of interpretation are essentially the less predictable, 'freer' pictorial and pragmatic aspects linked to the mimetic and echoic dimension of mention and quotation. In contrast, a good deal of the pre-interpretative work connected with metalinguistic demonstration appears to be facilitated by more or less conventionalised signals. The identification of these signals will be my main concern in section 6.2.2.2. I will start with signals that apply 'across the board' or to a large proportion of metalinguistic demonstrations, then gradually work my way to those indicators that occur only with more specific categories. When that has been done, we should be in possession of a fairly precise picture of those features that make a difference for interpreters. In other words, we should have a rough idea of what is a valid typology of metalinguistic uses from an interpreter's point of view. This idea will subsequently be tested and, if needed, refined when we come to the analysis of the interpretation proper of metalinguistic demonstration.

### 6.2.2.1. Justifying the distinction

In Chapter 3, the operations that must be performed prior to interpretation were labelled ‘pre-semantic’: they comprised the identification of the language of the utterance, that of the context of utterance, and the determination of which sentence was uttered. It is with this latter aspect, i.e. with disambiguation, that I shall first be concerned in the following pages. The reason is that disambiguation is not just a matter of clearing up lexical and grammatical ambiguities, it is also a matter of determining whether a particular sequence is used ordinarily, or mentioned, or used and mentioned simultaneously. Interpretation proper can only begin provided one has recognised a ‘using’ or (and) a ‘mentioning’ intention.<sup>290</sup>

It is easy to see why disambiguation is a theoretical necessity: the framework for the interpretation of utterances that I adopted in Chapter 3 requires that a preliminary decision should be reached about which sentence is uttered via the utterance-token under consideration. Only then can we begin to talk about its sentence-meaning, c-content, and i-content. Moreover, even the implicated meaning is ultimately dependent on the recognition of a sentence: although implicatures are not constrained by the ‘literal’ meaning of an utterance, they are nevertheless inferred from the act of uttering that sentence.

It may, however, be less obvious that pre-interpretative disambiguation is also a practical necessity. Let me first present the evidence that seems to contradict this claim: when dealing with an utterance, I will usually start interpreting it as soon as I have made out the first word or morpheme. It is likely that this process will be ‘holistic’, that it will simultaneously involve several kinds of information (non-contextual and contextual) and mental operations (decoding and inferring). In other words, in real-life situations, interpretation gets under way before a sentence has been identified, i.e. before the pre-interpretative processes, notably disambiguation, have been completed: which sentence I am dealing with is an issue that is being worked out even as I am gradually making sense of the utterance.

Many of the decisions reached as part of this gradual process are defeasible. If the first word of the utterance is *Pamela*, I may immediately decide on a referent for that word, presumably someone that is salient in the situation of utterance (or in the world shared by the speaker and myself). This way, I am immediately making guesses about the proposition expressed (level of c-

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<sup>290</sup> The term *mentioning intention* must be understood broadly as « intention to demonstrate a given linguistic object, intention to perform a metalinguistic demonstration ». Such an intention can be superimposed onto a ‘using’ intention: a mentioning intention is involved in scare quoting or mixed quotation just as much as it is involved in flat mention or pure quotation.



content or i-content). However, further information provided in the utterance may cause me to go back on my initial assignment of a reference. If the full utterance is the following:

(12) Pamela was staring at the bank,

I will have made all sorts of assumptions about it before I can be sure that I have identified the right sentence. Perhaps I will initially have thought that Pamela Brown was staring at the building hosting the financial institution which she has been forced to stop patronising because she was constantly in the red (this may all be information that is salient in the context). But the next utterance, say, *Then she saw the body slowly drifting away from it*, may cause me to realise after all that the speaker must have been talking about Pamela Smith staring at the south bank of the Mersey, a river by which she likes to sit and daydream.

The previous considerations may seem to run counter to the theoretical separation between pre-interpretative and interpretative activities, but actually they do not. Although it appears that pre-semantic, semantic (decoding and assigning reference) and ‘post-semantic’ pragmatic processes often take place simultaneously, the hierarchy fixed by the theory in Chapter 3 is nevertheless valid in practice, albeit from a logical rather than chronological point of view. In the end, if I complete the process of interpretation, it will be because I have (eventually) worked out which sentence has been uttered and which proposition it expresses,<sup>291</sup> and have drawn the relevant implications from this act. Failing such a recognition, no interpretative process can be carried through successfully.

#### 6.2.2.2. Conventional marking of mention: grammaticalisation and lexicalisation

I will first turn my attention to the identification of a mentioning intention since such an intention by definition underlies every instance of metalinguistic demonstration. Most of the time, this intention needs to be identified pre-interpretatively, as it affects which sentence is being uttered – although we will have the opportunity to make out two sub-categories of metalinguistic demonstration where such is not the case (hybrids whose c-content = i-content, and cumulative hybrids; see further). After this, I will consider other intentions that must be recognised pre-interpretatively. Let us begin by repeating examples (6) and (7) from 4.1.2:

(13) I love Chicago

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<sup>291</sup> This identification may be inaccurate, in which case I will have misunderstood the speaker. But what matters is that even if I have misunderstood him or her, I will have done so on the basis of a sentence which I assume s/he has uttered.

(14) I love ‘Chicago’.

At the end of a long discussion, I concluded that (13) and (14) were truth-conditionally unlike inasmuch as they were not associated with exactly the same sets of sentences. In particular, there was a possible interpretation for (14) under which the quotation marks functioned as scare quotes indicating that the term *Chicago* had been wrongly applied to the city of Detroit. Such an interpretation could not be arrived at on the basis of an utterance of (13).

A related point is the fact that (13) licenses an interpretation under which no metalinguistic demonstration has taken place, whereas (14) does not. This means that, whenever I am confronted with a written token of (14), I shall have no trouble making out that *Chicago* is mentioned. This is a direct consequence of my competence in the written system of English, which includes my knowledge of the conventional meaning of quote marks. Note that if I came upon a token of (14) on a slip of paper in the middle of nowhere, I would still be able to detect an instance of metalinguistic demonstration.<sup>292</sup>

What is interesting about quote marks (and other quoting devices like italics) is that they are a conventional means of disambiguation. In ‘ordinary cases’, disambiguation often involves something else than the mere linguistic competence of interpreters. With respect to the example of lexical ambiguity briefly examined above (12), it can be seen that linguistic competence alone will not necessarily ensure disambiguation. It will definitely not if *Pamela was staring at the bank* is not preceded or followed by anything clarifying the meaning of *bank* (like the utterance in square brackets about a body drifting away from it). But even if it is, there is a fair chance that some inferential task will still have to be performed to conclude that something is more likely to drift away from the side of the Mersey than from a building. What I am driving at is the fact that disambiguation usually necessitates inferences on contextual information (I discuss the ‘co-text’ shortly). By contrast, the form of disambiguation involved in recognising a mentioning intention in the presence of quotation marks is automatic.

The situation is necessarily different with cases of mention-without-quotes. It would indeed seem natural to assume that plain mention is not identifiable in the absence of contextual information on the speaker’s intentions. This is an assumption that I wish to examine with respect to the unmarked counterparts of each of the syntactic categories of metalinguistic demonstration distinguished by Recanati. Unlike quotation marks, which signal mention across

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<sup>292</sup> In this paragraph, as in the rest of this chapter, I have purposely decided not to take account of the ambiguity of quotation marks, notably their ability to signal titles of books, plays, films, etc. I have worked on the simplified assumption that quotation marks always indicate a linguistic demonstration, and nothing but.

the various categories of demonstration, the clues which I am going to highlight now apply less widely.

Unmarked [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> (closed mention)

I suggest that the default assumption about a referential expression is that it is used, in the Quinean sense, i.e. it designates (one or some of) its conventional denotata. The interpreter should accordingly need to have access to the wide context to construe an unmarked referential expression as a mentioning expression. In other words, disambiguation here would be an utterly pragmatic process.

The default reading of referential expressions which I have in mind is analogous to what Lyons calls the ‘characteristic use’ of sentences (cf 3.1). Just as, say, an interrogative sentence characteristically serves the purpose of asking a question, Quinean use (as opposed to mention) is the default capacity associated with a referential expression. Two things need to be understood in connection with the previous analogy. Firstly, characteristic use encodes an intentional aspect into the basic semantic meaning of an utterance: the default association of a particular speech act with a given sentence-type is like a wager or a speculation on the speaker’s macro intentions. The same reasoning applies to the default reading of referential expressions: a hearer/reader will normally assume that the speaker had the intention to use them ordinarily to designate objects that they are standardly associated with. Secondly, it is important to notice that such anticipations of intentions are defeasible. Nothing prevents a grammatically declarative sentence from being used to perform another speech act than an assertion (cf 3.1). By the same token, nothing prevents a referential expression from serving another purpose than that of referring conventionally.<sup>293</sup> The difference between these two illustrations is that figuring out that a declarative sentence has, say, the illocutionary force of a commitment is a ‘post-semantic’ process, whereas the use-mention distinction plays a role pre-semantically. This dissimilarity is

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<sup>293</sup> For the record, let me point out that some of the views presented here can be traced back to William Ockham. Ockham too assumed something like the characteristic use of referential expressions (his ‘terms’). His starting point was that a term was capable of having personal supposition in any proposition in which it occurred. It took special propositional conditions for material (or simple) supposition to emerge: the term must be “arbitrarily limited [...] by those who use it” (*Summa logicae*, I, 65). For such an arbitrary limitation (comparable to what I have called the ‘mentioning intention’) to be effected, a term such as *man* must be put in relation [*comparatur*] to a term that itself signifies terms, whether spoken or written (cf. I, 65). This, for instance, is the role played by ‘*adjective*’ in *White is an adjective*. Several modern commentators of Ockham have pointed out the importance of meta-predicates in making material supposition possible (Alféri 1989: 314; de Libera 1990: 2506; Panaccio 1991: 42). At a time when quoting devices were only sparsely used, a meta-predicate was regarded as a necessary condition. Panaccio rightly points out that Ockham did not go as far as proposing a pragmatic criterion for eliminating systematic ambiguities: on Ockham’s account, any term used materially remains susceptible of a ‘personal’ interpretation (cf. Chapter 2.4).

all the more interesting because it is the same kinds of information and mental operations that play a role before and during interpretation, both processes being multi-layered in the same way.

Now it appears that, in spite of the previous considerations, there are unmarked occurrences of referential expressions that a hearer/reader would never or hardly ever mistake for ordinary uses – whether or not s/he had access to contextual information. These are typically cases in which a metalinguistic predicate is attached to the referential expression and makes manifest the speaker’s mentioning intention. If I found the following example on my usual stray slip of paper:

(15) Boston is disyllabic,<sup>294</sup>

I would assume that the original utterer was talking about a word (a word-type), not about the city as such. In a case like this, the metalinguistic predicate causes the mention reading to supersede the ordinary-use reading.<sup>295</sup> In other words, the presumption in favour of ordinary use clashes with the metalinguistic predicate, whose presence decisively tilts the balance towards mention. However, other elements in the co-text or in the wide context can tip it back in favour of ordinary use, as would happen if it turned out that the utterer of (15) did want to say something about the city of Boston after all, and was using the adjective *disyllabic* in a deviant, figurative, way. Another example, where the pro-mention interpretation is cancelled by the co-text: *Lawrence is a word... or rather a sea of words. His acts are irrelevant; his whole life is a text and he was born to listen to himself recite it.* Note in passing that such reversals are greatly facilitated by the absence of quoting devices.

I have used sentence (15) to illustrate a case in which an ordinary-use reading would presumably (albeit defeasibly) be discarded. But there are cases in which such a reading cannot even be considered as a sensible option, in spite of the absence of quote marks. Such is the situation that prevails when the sequence of which a metalinguistic property is predicated is not a referential expression. This reality is usually concealed in basic discussions of mention and

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<sup>294</sup> The point I am going to make could also be illustrated by an example involving a mentioned quotation, as in ‘*Boston*’ is an *autonym* (which is equivalent to a used metaquotation, ‘*Boston*’ is an *autonym*).

<sup>295</sup> Cf also Reimer (1996: 139), who writes that the predicate is the part of the context of utterance that is most likely to reveal an intention to mention. Regarding the predicate as part of the context is not counterintuitive, but it seems more rigorous to say that the predicate, if it occurs inside the utterance under consideration, is a non-contextual clue as to a mentioning intention. I must also bring the following caveat to my reader’s attention: a meta-predicate signals a mentioning intention only if the word or phrase it is attached to is not itself a meta-word used ordinarily, as in *Adjectives are words*. A final caveat: negation often cancels the disambiguating impact of meta-predicates: there is nothing odd about utterances like *Suzanne is not a disyllabic word, she’s a woman*: whereas being disyllabic is conventionally a property of words, not being disyllabic is potentially a property of any object, linguistic or other (although it is true that there may be a preference, even under negation, for categorial congruence between argument and predicate, something that may be explainable in terms of the maxim of relevance).

quotation, because standard examples often involve proper nouns. Yet, there are many instances of closed mention where the demonstrated sequence has no referential value initially:

(16) **With** is a preposition.

(17) ‘You mustn’t mind me saying that. **Toff** has a special sense for me. [...]’ (Greene 1966: 25)

In (16) and (17), there is no default reading in favour of Quinean use. Neither the preposition *with* nor the countable noun *toff* on its own are referential expressions. In other words they could not normally occur in their standard capacity as the subject of a sentence; they would make the utterance ungrammatical. In these cases, therefore, the mention reading is not just encouraged but compulsory. If the utterance is not understood as instantiating any system-sentence, then it is simply not understood at all.<sup>296</sup> In the case of tokens of (16) or (17), the hearer/reader must preliminarily construe *with* and *toff* as being mentioned, failing which s/he cannot relate these utterances to any sentence.

#### Unmarked [Dem]<sub>N</sub>

The relevance of meta-predicates and, more noticeably even, of ungrammatical ordinary-use readings comes out just as strikingly among instances of unmarked demonstrations recruited as common nouns. Example (4) at the outset of this chapter offers an excellent illustration: the pronoun *they* in ordinary use cannot be preceded by a determiner (there are two in (4)) or be pluralised. The next two examples are equally unequivocal:

(18) [If you would like to chat with someone via an internet software, you could] cut and paste a message like the following into the subject line or body of the email message.

Here is my IP address: callto:164.15.7.18

Use it to call me in the next 30 minutes if you can.

The **my** in the message means you. (whyslopes.com/yourIp.php)

(19) [In a witty review of birth control methods:] 5) Vasectomy. It’s the **-ectomy** that puts me off. (Barnes 2001: 109)

The last example is particularly interesting: an ordinary reading is impossible not only because the autonym is determined by an article, but also because a suffix cannot be used ordinarily if it is not attached to the right stem.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> I am taking no account of pure expressives.

<sup>297</sup> An interesting connection can be established with an example like:

(20) Call them sexist, racist and any other “ist” you care to mention, but there’s no denying the one great talent of the collective aristocracy [i.e. eccentricity]. (*New Statesman*, 20/12/99: 16)

Although (20) looks a lot like (19), there is one significant difference (over and above the fact that (20) is marked): the quoted sequence does not stand for a single entity – the suffix *-ist* – of which the displayed token is an icon;

### Open mention

Let us now deal with the recognition of the mentioning intention behind the unmarked counterpart of Recanati's third syntax-based category, what could be called 'open mention'. A preliminary question is whether open mention even exists. When Recanati introduced the term *open quotation*, he considered only examples with quotation marks. Besides, as regards autonomous connotation, which overlaps at least with the open categories of mixed quotation and scare quoting, Rey-Debove wrote that "when used without a commentary, a word with autonomous connotation MUST bear the marks of its status. This is an obvious consequence of the fact that the metalinguistic signified is secondary, and that any 'mundane' sentence receives a satisfactory interpretation even if only its denotative meaning is taken into account" (1978: 259; original emphasis). If one looks at further examples discussed by other scholars which could come under the heading of open quotation, they too are systematically enclosed in quote marks. Besides, it appears that the removal of the quote marks (in (6), (7), (8), (11), (14)) would automatically deprive the sequences concerned of their pictorial meaning. Consider (6) again. If the marks are removed, we get (6<sub>1</sub>):

(6<sub>1</sub>) Anyway, a couple of hours after this **distressing scene**, Pete knocked on my door with a cup of tea.

In other words, it has become impossible to notice that *distressing scene* is demonstrated for a particular purpose (e.g. testifying to the narrator's reservations about the use of the phrase): the pictorial meaning is entirely lost: there are no linguistic traces left of a mentioning intention.

Still, my hunch is that there are indeed instances of open mention. First, let us note that there is one instance of open quotation in the examples examined so far in this chapter that does not lose its pictorial power if turned into open mention, namely example (5), of which I offer the altered version here:

(5<sub>1</sub>) He spread his hands and raised his shoulders with an infernal smugness that will haunt me till the day I die. **Okay. You've dated the upper-class twit of the year and that's got your dad's attention. You've got Pete listening. Let's talk, yeah ?**

Naturally, the identification of the boldface sequence as open direct discourse is less mechanical than if the quote marks were still present. However, the change in viewpoint (the shift in the

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rather, it functions somewhat like a meta-noun denoting a class of items (e.g. *capitalist*, *traditionalist*, *fundamentalist*, *environmentalist*, etc. ). The question of the borderline between autonoms and meta-words forms one of the central issues of Chapter 7.

situation of utterance) triggered by direct speech can still be inferred from co-textual clues: grammatical person (third to second person), tense (past to present), style (fairly formal letter-writing to informal conversation).

An example like (5<sub>1</sub>) pertains to what many call ‘free direct speech’, i.e. a form of direct speech which “is merged with the narration without any overt indication by a reporting clause of a switch to speech” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1032). An illustration offered by Quirk et al. is:

(21) I sat on the grass staring at the passers-by. Everybody seemed in a hurry. **Why can’t I have something to rush to ?** (Quirk et al. 1985: 1033)<sup>298</sup>

Quirk et al. write that it is the shift to present-tense forms in the middle of a narrative in the past that ensures the recognition of a speech report.

Free direct speech must be identified prior to the beginning of semantic analysis because it affects the determination of which sentence is being uttered, owing to the fact that it causes a shift in the situation of utterance. This shift is most obvious as regards temporal reference, but it may also affect other deictic aspects: in (5<sub>1</sub>), for example, the *you* and *your* in the free direct speech designate the same individual as *me* and *I* in the previous utterance.<sup>299</sup>

Besides, open direct speech (whether quote-marked or free) systematically accomplishes a specific quotational point: letting the interpreter understand that the demonstrated sequence is to be attributed to another utterer. This point is therefore also worked out pre-interpretatively. Depending on whether the instance under discussion is quote-marked or free, the identification of the point will be more or less conventional or markedly inferential.

Though open mention involves more than free direct speech, the other phenomenon worthy of attention in this respect, which could be called ‘free mixed mention’ (the unmarked counterpart of mixed quotation) will not be reviewed here, because it has no impact on the identification of the sentence uttered: its contribution is restricted to the pragmatic layers of interpretation proper. Some examples will be considered under 6.2.3.4.

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<sup>298</sup> I have removed the italics found in Quirk et al. (1985) and replaced them with my standard bold type, because the italics were simply meant as a highlighting device.

<sup>299</sup> It may seem odd not to extend this point to all instances of direct speech. Indeed, those direct speech reports that are [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> or [Dem]<sub>N</sub> also involve a shift in the situation of utterance. But this shift does not affect which sentence is uttered. That is a direct consequence of the fact that recruited autonoms are semantically inert in their mentioning sentence. Therefore, strictly speaking, only open direct speech needs to be recognised pre-interpretatively. The impact of direct speech on [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> and [Dem]<sub>N</sub> is accordingly discussed in 6.2.3, which is devoted to interpretation proper.

Let us recapitulate: we have made out three non-contextual indicators of a mentioning intention: quote marks, metalinguistic predicates, and ungrammaticality of the ordinary reading. We have also noticed how shifts in deixis reflect a mentioning intention in free direct speech. These, however, are less conventional than the other three signals in the following sense: their identification does not result automatically from the mere exercise of one's linguistic competence; it requires making inferences on contextual information (clues provided by the context).

With respect to quotation marks, we might, as I did towards the end of the first section under 5.1, suggest that they grammaticalise a mentioning intention. This is nothing unusual, given that grammatical markers can generally be viewed as signalling, or making overt, particular intentions on the part of the speaker. Consider:

(22) I saw Melanie the other day.

Let us assume that a given utterer of (22) intends thereby to assert a particular proposition. Which proposition is expressed can usually not be identified if one does not have access to the narrow (and sometimes the wide) context. However, next to the macro intention of asserting a proposition, there are a number of micro intentions that together contribute to the macro intention. In the present instance, we have, at the micro level, the intention to say something about oneself, the intention to say something about a single individual (Melanie), the intention to say something about a past state of affairs.<sup>300</sup> In standard English, these various micro intentions have characteristic realisations. Thus, the last intention is usually grammaticalised by means of a verbal marker (though not for all verbs, witness *put*, *hit*, etc.). This means that certain micro intentions can already<sup>301</sup> be recognised completely out of context: the presence of the marker for pastness is enough for the hearer/reader to recognise the intention to say something about the past. I suggest treating quoting devices in the same way as grammatical markers. In a way, quoting devices can be regarded as encoding or 'conventionalising' a particular intention on the part of the speaker. Such is, essentially, Recanati's understanding of quotation marks. Though quotation is an eminently pragmatic affair, its recognition only requires low-level information.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> I would tend to regard such a description as standard fare in linguistic scholarship. To take but one example, when Saka talks about the intention to mention a linguistic sequence, he is in effect talking about a micro intention that participates in a macro intention, e.g. making a statement, giving an order, making an enquiry, etc.

<sup>301</sup> For convenience' sake, I shall occasionally use temporal metaphors (*already*, *as early as*, *not until the next level*, etc.) to refer to the different logical levels of what usually amounts to holistic processing.

<sup>302</sup> I insist that what I am concerned with at this stage is the recognition of a mentioning intention, not a full interpretation of an utterance containing quote marks.



As regards metalinguistic predicates, they cannot be said to grammaticalise a mentioning intention, but to lexicalise it. Finally, one might talk of ‘indirect grammaticalisation’ in cases like (16) and (17), since the mentioning intention results in the ungrammaticality of the ordinary readings. The last two indicators apply massively to [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> and [Dem]<sub>N</sub>, but not to open quotation and mention. Meta-predicates tend to occur much less frequently in open cases than in linguistically recruited ones. As for ungrammaticality, it simply does not apply to open instances. That is because open mention/quotation, as it involves simultaneous use and mention, relies on the grammaticality of the ordinary-use reading: grammatically speaking, the metalinguistic demonstration plays no role.

A further consequence of these observations is that meta-predicates tend to be, and ungrammaticality is, an indicator of something more specific than just a mentioning intention: an intention to refer or describe metalinguistically.<sup>303</sup> I shall make further use of this notion in the first subsection under 6.2.2.4, where I seek to determine how scare quoting can be told apart from closed quotation. This will also give me a chance to test the hypotheses voiced in the previous paragraph. In the meantime, I just wish to expand somewhat on a point I made in passing at the beginning of Chapter 4.3.3: the question of which sort of linguistic entity is designated by a referential autonym may affect the sentence being uttered. Before a sentence can be identified, it must at least be clarified whether an autonym refers to a form or an expression (because that has an effect on truth-conditions). As a consequence, the number of sentences that can be associated with tokens of (13) and (14), for instance, increases. Not only should pure autonoms be distinguished from instances of scare quoting and from ordinary use, but the metalinguistic referring intention itself splits into the intention to refer to a form and the intention to refer to an expression, each of which underlies a different sentence. However, to avoid hindering the smooth flow of the argument too much, I shall mostly be content with the vaguer identification of the intention to refer or describe metalinguistically. Besides, I do not wish to tell apart an intention to refer to a form-type and an intention to refer to a form-token, because this distinction plays no role at the pre-interpretative level: whereas I assume that the lexeme *word* is ‘conventionally’ ambiguous for form and expression (just as the lexemes *sole*, *ear*, or *mug* are), I regard the type-token distinction as emerging only at the utterance-level. Therefore, I will have

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<sup>303</sup> I am using this complex label because not everyone would be ready to say that NPs headed by autonoms always have reference. Strictly speaking, a proponent of ‘direct reference’ like Recanati would agree that [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> is systematically referential, but not all NPs headed by [Dem]<sub>N</sub>. Quite a few of the latter would rather be said to be used in a descriptive capacity.

nothing to say about it until the sections devoted to reference at the interpretative level (point (iii) under 6.2.3.2 and 6.2.3.3).

Let me conclude this section with a more general remark. The previous considerations attest to a high degree of redundancy in language use. Though (15) is less explicit than '*Boston*' is *disyllabic*, the loss of information caused by the absence of quotation marks is compensated for by the meta-predicate. I suggest that we find a similar situation and a similar form of compensation (lexicalisation) when we compare (22) with:

(22<sub>1</sub>) I see Melanie the other day. (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 17)

Such a formulation can be encountered in some nonstandard varieties of English (e.g. in New England). In contrast to (22), (22<sub>1</sub>) exhibits no special verbal marker explicating an intention to talk about the past. However, the co-occurrence of *the other day*, which exclusively designates past periods of time, makes the recognition of the 'pastness' intention possible even out of context. It is, I believe, a similar form of redundancy that makes the subject of (15) recognisable as a case of mention. In many instances of mention, there are several signals at play simultaneously: quotation marks are often amplified by a meta-predicate. And a meta-predicate on its own is mostly a sufficient signal of a mentioning intention (though, as we saw, the inference it triggers is defeasible). In (16) and (17), the signalling function of the meta-predicate is supplemented by a more general principle, namely the presumption that the speaker produces grammatical, or, at the very least, intelligible, utterances.<sup>304</sup>

#### 6.2.2.3. When the recognition of mention requires access to the context

Naturally, context-independent recognition of the mentioning intention does not apply when none of the signals made out above is present in the utterance. In cases like these, the interpreter needs to be able to rely on contextual information. This remark holds for an utterance like *Your General is much too solemn*, which can be about General What's-his-name's attitude just as well as about the excessively respectful use of the term of address *General*. Another case in point is (13), which I repeat here:

(13) I love Chicago.

Assuming that what the speaker means is that s/he loves the word (spelling, sound, form) *Chicago*, how can such an intention be made out? Let me first suppose that the next utterance in

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<sup>304</sup> This presumption can be inferred from something like Grice's Cooperative Principle.

the discourse as part of which (13) was uttered is *It rhymes with Iago*. In a case like this, the co-text may provide enough evidence for the recognition of the mentioning intention. There are two words or phrases in the last sentence that need clarifying, *co-text* and *may*. I shall deal with them in this order. The question that must be asked about the co-text is where it fits in the detailed picture of the context offered in Chapter 3: does it partake of the narrow or wide context? We saw previously that definitions of the narrow context tended to vary from writer to writer, even though there was a general agreement on the utterer, the time of utterance and the place of utterance. The co-text does not feature among these ‘fixtures’, but neither is it found among the other occasional candidates for inclusion in the narrow context, namely the addressee and the referents of demonstratives. Yet, I do not think that these findings warrant the conclusion that the proponents of bi-dimensional semantics would necessarily place the co-text in the wide context. Rather, I believe that the co-text was simply left out of consideration because those writers were essentially concerned with sentences as units, not with strings of, and connections between, sentences.

My own position is that there are aspects of the co-text that partake of the narrow context because they are objective features of the situation of utterance, every bit as much as the speaker, time and place of utterance. These aspects cover what I would regard as the conventional meaning of the utterances occurring around the one under scrutiny, i.e. all those aspects that can, roughly speaking, be decoded, rather than inferred. This implies in contrast that the co-text also partakes of the wide context in the sense that it provides material from which all sorts of inferences and implicatures can be derived.

I also owe my reader an explanation about my cautious use of the phrase *may provide enough evidence*. If the utterance immediately after (13) is *It rhymes with Iago*, I can assume that the anaphoric *It* will be associated with *Chicago* by default. Moreover, given the fact that the predicate *rhymes with Iago* holds true of the word *Chicago*, not of the city, it is likely that *Chicago* in (13) will eventually be construed as referring to a word. This may suggest that all that needs to be carried out to recognise the mentioning intention behind *Chicago* in (13) is some decoding (i.e. plain and simple exploitation of one’s linguistic competence). I am not sure, however, that that is the case. First, it might be argued that relating an anaphoric term to its antecedent is an operation that requires inferences, even in the case of a default assumption (such as for instance the opinion voiced in Kleiber 2001: 40-46). That is an important question, though one that I do not wish or feel competent enough to pursue here.

Second, as we saw at the end of Chapter 4, cases of ‘confusion’ (perhaps, more accurately, conflation) of word and object are not infrequent. I reproduce example (93) from that chapter:

(23) [... other things] she learned after he left for Chicago, or was it San Diego, or some other city ending with O. (Morrison 1992: 41; my emphasis)

Though the relevant phenomenon in (23) is intra-sentential rather than cross-sentential, the example is pertinent to a discussion of *I love Chicago. It rhymes with Iago*.<sup>305</sup> What (23) shows is that a predicate like *ending with O* can deliberately be applied to an entity that is like a cross between a mundane and a linguistic object. Logically speaking, the masculine character referred to in (23) did not leave for a word but for a city. At the same time, it is not that city but its name that ends with *o*. Still, what the sentence says is that he left for an entity that is geographical and capable of taking a metalinguistic predicate. Nothing prevents a similar situation from obtaining for one or the other token of *I love Chicago. It rhymes with Iago*. In other words, the meta-predicate in the co-text is no incontrovertible evidence that *Chicago* cannot also be used in *I love Chicago*.

Third, there are less spectacular cases than (23) that attest to the commonplaceness of shifts from ordinary use to mention, between an antecedent and its substitute (for example, a pronoun). Though these will be examined at length in Chapter 8, I shall offer one illustration here:

(24) Yes, everything went *swimmingly*, which is a very peculiar adverb to apply to a social event, considering how most human beings swim. (Barnes 2001: 70-71)

The adverb *swimmingly* is used (in the Quinean sense), but its pro-form *which* designates not a particular manner in which things can happen, but the adverb that can denote such a manner. What this (just like numerous other examples reviewed in Chapter 8)<sup>306</sup> once again indicates is that a pronoun (or other substitute) used in a metalinguistic capacity may nevertheless be linked grammatically with a word or phrase that is used ordinarily.

In conclusion, even the presence of a co-textual meta-predicate that unequivocally applies to a phrase substituting for the antecedent suspected of being mentioned does not prove beyond reasonable doubt that this antecedent is indeed being mentioned. The default assumption in favour of this conclusion is reversible and, more often than not, it will take the interpreter some

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<sup>305</sup> There is inevitably something artificial about the fixing of what lies within a sentence and what is already part of the co-text.

<sup>306</sup> Many of Rey-Debove’s original examples of autonomous connotation display such a shift too.

amount of inferential work on contextual data to make sure that s/he is dealing with a case of mention.

As a corollary, it is not difficult to see what happens when the co-text contains no disambiguating meta-predicate that unequivocally applies to *Chicago*. In this second situation, an utterance of (13) can only be recognised as accomplishing a mentioning intention if the interpreter has access to the wide context: relevant elements in this respect might be the interpreter's knowledge of the speaker's passion for words, or of his/her aversion to large American cities, etc.

#### 6.2.2.4. Completing the picture

I am not done yet with disambiguation. I have so far focused mainly on the opposition between ordinary use and cases of autonymy, thereby neglecting simultaneous use and mention. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 4.1.2, in the breakdown of the sentences that could be associated with an utterance of *I love 'Chicago'*, further distinctions have to be drawn as well: between linguistically recruited quotation and scare quoting, between the use and the mention of quotation, and, within scare quoting, between those instances that involve a language-shift and those that do not. All of these yield different sentences with distinct propositional contents and truth-conditions, which demonstrates that the distinctions are a relevant part of the process of disambiguation. Let us review them one by one, trying to determine for each what sort of information is needed to spot the difference.

#### Scare quoting vs recruited quotations (= marked autonoms)

What sets scare quoting apart from recruited quotation is not the mentioning intention (shared by both) but the fact that, in scare quoting, the sequence in inverted commas is also used ordinarily. The question therefore becomes, "How can such a simultaneous 'using' intention be recognised?" Two situations must be distinguished. In the first, the answer is simple; the clue is in the grammar: the quoted sequence is not recruited as an NP or N; therefore, it cannot be an autonym exclusively denoting language. This is the situation that prevails in (6), (11) ['employed'], or in:

- (25) A boy tells Grossman of "his" house in Jaffa. He has never seen it, but his grandfather did.  
(*Guardian Weekly*, 2-8/11/2000: 22)

A mentioning intention is recognised (cf the quote marks) but so is a default using intention, given that the quoted sequence does not occupy the position of an NP or N.

In the other case, illustrated by (11) [‘clients’] and (14), unfortunately, the quoted sequence is an NP even without its quotation marks (more accurately, without the quotation’s being recruited as an NP). Hence, it is impossible to determine automatically if the demonstrated sequence is mentioned and used, or simply mentioned. In a case like this, detecting a using intention will require making inferences either on the other elements in the sentence or on the co-text, as for ‘clients’ in (11) – no word is likely to employ a person – or on the context at large if no clarification is offered by the sentence or co-text, as for ‘Chicago’ in (14). I regard all these processes as inferential because they require ‘world-knowledge’ every bit as much as linguistic decoding.<sup>307</sup>

There is a second way of approaching the distinction between linguistically recruited quotation and scare quoting, namely through asking whether the demonstration also has reference or is instrumental in an act of reference. In other words, if I can recognise an intention to refer or describe metalinguistically, I may be quite certain that I am dealing with an autonym.<sup>308</sup> The question then becomes, “At which level can an interpreter recognise such a referring/describing intention?”. As I suggested in my conclusion to 6.2.2.2, the combination of quoting devices with a meta-predicate is certainly a help in many instances, since meta-predicates usually apply to linguistically recruited demonstrations (i.e. autonyms). But, for this last observation to be useful, I must make sure that the complementary relationship is true too; in other words, instances of scare quoting should not combine with meta-predicates. Only on this twofold condition can a meta-predicate be considered a safe indicator.

With a view to testing this hypothesis, I put together a rough and ready corpus containing 34 instances of scare quoting,<sup>309</sup> and went searching for meta-predicates. In the end, I found ten sentences including such a predicate. But in nine of these it occurred not in immediate combination with the quoted sequence, but in a parenthetical metalinguistic comment that to some extent explained the motive for the linguistic demonstration, as in:

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<sup>307</sup> The same argument can be presented in terms of grammaticality: if the utterance becomes ungrammatical in the absence of a metalinguistic demonstration, then we can be sure that the quoted sequence was not also used ordinarily (was not an instance of scare quoting). Unfortunately, the converse observation – that the removal of the demonstration preserves grammaticality – does not automatically entail that the sequence under consideration was scare-quoted. Such a conclusion is correct in the case of (25) but not in that of (14). The fact that *I love Chicago* is grammatical even when it involves no metalinguistic demonstration does not necessarily mean that this demonstration went together with ordinary use in *I love ‘Chicago’*.

<sup>308</sup> Unless, that is, the quoted sequence is initially a meta-word. But that is a complication that does not fundamentally alter the picture I am presently sketching.

<sup>309</sup> I based my judgment that they were not autonyms on a variety of criteria: grammatical (cf recruitment), semantic (cf referentiality) and pragmatic (cf relevance).

(26) Already Mr Scargill is threatening ‘industrial action’ – which of course means *inaction*, in anybody else’s books – if he and his comrades aren’t showered with yet another round of pay rises and perks. (Coe 1995: 73)

In (26), the meta-predicate is not directly attached to the quoted sequence. It is predicated of the pro-form substitute *which*, which has itself undergone a partial semantic shift.<sup>310</sup> Hence, it does not signal an autonym. The only instance in my improvised corpus where the meta-predicate is in direct connection with the quoted sequence is the following:

(27) The badger looked up and uttered the only really “strangled cry” I have ever experienced outside fiction. (Golding 1985: 11)

The verb *utter* (and others listed under point (ii) of 6.2.3.3) raises genuine difficulties. It appears that its direct-object-NP is mostly headed by a meta-noun (or a noun denoting a sound, or thoughts expressible in sounds). We have *cry* in (27) and *word* in (28):

(28) Uttering a single, feeble word: ‘lymenner’, he expired (BNC ACV 1178).

Sometimes, as in (29), there is no meta-word:

(29) If you notice any difficulty in this respect, catch the puppy and utter a firm ‘no’ (BNC CJE 722).

The problem is that the quoted sequence in (27) is an instance of scare quoting whereas those in (28) and (29) are autonoms. Is there any grammatical indicator of this different employment? The answer is a tentative “Yes”. First, if as in (28) the quotation occurs as an apposition to the meta-word that heads the object-NP, then it must be an autonym. Indeed, as an apposition, it must refer to or describe the same type of entity as that described or referred to by the first appositive, namely a linguistic entity. This takes care of the difference between (27) and (28). As regards the difference between (27) and (29), I suggest that it is the presence vs absence of a meta-word in the object-NP that is the decisive factor: if the object-NP is not headed by a meta-word, then it is headed by an autonym recruited as a common noun.<sup>311</sup> My conclusion is therefore

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<sup>310</sup> The shift is from denoting the world and language to referring to language only. Note, however, the similarity with an example like *What was left was sex in the head, as D.H. Lawrence called it* (Lodge 1989: 56), where we have no quotation marks, and the shift is therefore from the world (and nothing else) to language. The metalinguistic comment in effect makes the scare quotes almost redundant (there is nevertheless a loss of precision regarding the boundaries of the sequence demonstrated).

<sup>311</sup> I realise that some writers might wish to regard *no* at times as a meta-word. I have no principled objection against such a position. As a matter of fact, it does not present a serious challenge to the test I defend here: I only need to suggest the following amendment: *if the object-NP is not headed by a non-reflexive meta-word*. The meta-word *cry* is non-reflexive in the sense that it does not denote the word *cry*. By contrast, even if *no* is judged to be a metalinguistic noun, it is reflexive: it (notably) denotes the adverb *no*. [Note that in (29) *no* is autonymised.] For

that, provided due consideration is given to the complications caused by *utter* and similar verbs, meta-predicates are a reliable indicator of an intention to refer or describe metalinguistically, in other words, of autonymy rather than scare quoting.

The need to separate scare quoting from recruited quotations at the pre-interpretative level has interesting consequences on our understanding of the processing of some aspects of the pictorial and pragmatic meaning of recruited quotations. Let me first talk about the quotational point or points. In a passage already quoted under (iv) in 5.1, Recanati states that the quotational point always “belongs to the most pragmatic layer of interpretation, where one tries to *make sense of the speaker’s act of demonstration in the broader context in which it takes place*”. This suggests (i) that understanding the point is part of the interpreting process proper, (ii) that this is an inferential operation that draws upon the wide context. I believe Recanati to be essentially right when the point is not conventionally marked, namely when the utterer demonstrates a linguistic sequence in order to amuse, puzzle, make angry, disagree, show scepticism, make fun, appeal to authority, express condescending approval, etc. However, our previous discussion shows that a qualification is needed. The intention to refer or describe metalinguistically is indeed a point of all instances of [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> and [Dem]<sub>N</sub>.<sup>312</sup> This means that the recognition of a quotational point may be part of the pre-interpretative process (it must be, in this case). Moreover, as combination with a meta-predicate and the ungrammaticality of the ordinary-use reading are stable indicators of the intention to refer or describe metalinguistically, here is a quotational point whose identification sometimes amounts to mere decoding.<sup>313</sup>

Linguistic recruitment as a referring or descriptive expression is also an aspect of the pictorial meaning of [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> and [Dem]<sub>N</sub>. This means that some of the pictorial meaning of a metalinguistic demonstration must be processed pre-interpretatively too. I discuss an interesting consequence of this under 6.2.3.2.

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more examples confirming the validity of the present views, see (43), (44), (45) in 6.2.3.3. The fuzzy limits between meta-words and autonyms are examined in more detail in Chapter 7.

<sup>312</sup> This I extrapolate from the fact that Recanati regards the referring intention behind [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> as a point of the quotation (cf 5.1, point (iv)).

<sup>313</sup> My claim that a quotational point may at times be marked conventionally does not entail that I disagree with Recanati. Fundamentally, the point is part of what is implicated. It is just that this point is sometimes grammaticalised and/or lexicalised, so that contextual information becomes superfluous. As regards the other possible quotational points, they are usually worked out inferentially. In this respect, it is interesting to note that even what might pass as just another instance of flat mention may conceal an additional point: if I utter ‘*Boston*’ is the name of an American city with an overdone Boston accent, I make this particular pronunciation salient in the context (I make it a depictive demonstrated property). In that way, I may seek to accomplish a number of purposes (making fun of the Boston accent, or of Bostonians, reminding my addressee that I myself come from Boston, etc.). All the extra points of such an utterance-act could naturally not be treated until the most pragmatic level of interpretation.



### Quotations as used vs mentioned

Let me now turn to the difference between used quotations and mentioned quotations. An utterance of (14) can notably be understood as « the utterer of (14) loves the word *Chicago* » (quotation as used) or « the utterer of (14) loves the quotational complex ‘*Chicago*’ » (quotation as mentioned). As we saw in 4.1.2, these two interpretations define distinct sentences with their own truth-conditions. But how can they be told apart ? The presence of a meta-meta-predicate (either within the confines of the utterance itself or in the co-text) might help detect a case of mentioned quotation. Such would be the case with the allegedly sloppy:

(30) In sentence X, ‘Boston’ is an autonym. [in strict notation: ‘‘Boston’’]

As usual, if there is no disambiguating predicate anywhere, the identification of the sentence uttered will have to rely on the wide context.

### Scare quoting with or without language-shift

Let me conclude this survey of pre-interpretative processes with a contrast between two varieties of scare quoting. This contrast can be illustrated by means of examples (11) and (12) in 5.4, which I repeat here as:

(31) One can only wonder whether Chomsky’s work would have had the effect that it did have within linguistics if *Syntactic Structures* had not been “watered down.” (Lyons 1977a: 57fn)

(32) ‘Quine’ wants to speak to us.

In (31), the quoted sequence does not undergo a language-shift, whereas it does in (32). The quoted string in the Lyons citation is cumulative (cf 5.4), because the co-text indeed confirms that Chomsky’s published book had been simplified to some extent. Hence, *watered down* is a predicate that correctly applies to *Syntactic structures* – although it may sound a bit disrespectful, or fail to convey the idea that the book was not utterly simplistic all the same. As for (32), it is non-cumulative because of the language-shift that it includes. Recanati’s explanation of its shifted nature – an explanation that appeals to all sorts of wide-contextual indications – shows clearly enough that its identification as a non-cumulative instance is heavily inferential.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> This, naturally, is only one possible interpretation of (32). In another context, a spoken utterance of (32), for instance with a deviant accent, might well be cumulative; in other words, it might well say something about the actual Quine. (In a case like that, the quotational point might be to make fun of James’s idiosyncratic pronunciation.)

If we turn again to (14), we can see that it licenses two scare-quoted readings – those mentioned as (7<sub>21</sub>) and (7<sub>22</sub>) under 4.1.2. There is nothing conventional that can distinguish these two. Appeal has to be made to the context for the determination of the sentence uttered. Note that the distinction between cumulative scare quoting and closed quotation parallels that between ordinary use and autonomy. Indeed, the propositional content of the cumulative instance is « the utterer of this token loves the city named Chicago », which is also the propositional content of (13) under its ordinary-use reading. This has an interesting consequence, which brings a corrective to the picture of the recognition of a mentioning intention sketched above: whereas the mentioning intention behind shifted instances must be identified pre-interpretatively (cf end of Chapter 5.4), this need not be the case for cumulative scare quoting: the automatic detection of the mentioning intention triggered by the quotation marks does not define a sentence distinct from the default reading of the utterance containing no metalinguistic demonstration. This means that the demonstration makes no contribution at the pre-interpretative level; its impact is entirely on the interpretative process proper.

I would like to conclude this section by venturing a few comments on the possible connections between scare quoting and irony. In a 1981 paper, Sperber and Wilson put forward a theory of irony based on the idea that an ironical sequence is to be understood as being mentioned rather than used:<sup>315</sup>

[Ironical] cases of mention are interpreted as echoing a remark or opinion that the speaker wants to characterise as ludicrously inappropriate or irrelevant. (1981: 310)

The question is what sort of mention Sperber and Wilson have in mind. Their position is very clear: in irony as in free indirect discourse, what is mentioned is a proposition, not a linguistic expression. Since, in this dissertation, I have chosen to restrict my own notion of ‘mention’ to the demonstration of ‘something linguistic’, it should follow that the treatment of irony is only peripheral to the framework presented in these pages. This conclusion, however, deserves to be qualified. First, many writers consider that indirect speech (i.e. the demonstration of a meaning, a proposition, rather than of a string of words) is to be dealt with in a manner similar to other varieties of reported speech and quotation (e.g. Davidson, Cappelen & Lepore, or Rey-Debove).

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<sup>315</sup> A position which I understand as meaning that there is simultaneous use and mention. Note also that Sperber & Wilson (1995: 237-43) offer a similar treatment of irony, but in the meantime they have abandoned the term *mention*, because its self-referential dimension makes the concept too narrow: “mention is only a special case of a much more general phenomenon: the use of a propositional form to represent not itself but some other propositional form it more or less closely resembles” (1995: 290 note 25).

Second, Sperber and Wilson point out that, in irony “[a]s in free indirect discourse, the implicit mention of a proposition sometimes involves mention of an expression” (1981: 312). Example (32) above seems a fitting illustration of this situation. Assuming Laura to have uttered (32), it is obvious that (i) she has echoed James’s peculiar lexical choice and (ii) thinks it silly and inappropriate. Although mention appears to concern a single lexical choice, (32) probably echoes some previous statement made by James about ‘Quine’, e.g. *This guy is Quine!* or perhaps even *Quine wants to talk to us*. I therefore assume that (32) complies with Sperber & Wilson’s definition of irony.<sup>316</sup>

In Chapter 5, I mentioned Recanati’s belief that (32) was underlain by a language-shift. It is therefore not unreasonable to ask if irony might not always rely on such a language-shift. Let us examine this possibility in the light of another example:

(33) What lovely weather!

If this is uttered in the middle of a downpour, it will indeed be felt to be ironical. It may for instance echo someone’s earlier forecast that the weather was going to be lovely that day (see Sperber & Wilson 1981: 310 for other possibilities). Now does (33) involve a language-shift? That is unlikely, because the utterer of (33) does not believe that *lovely* means *awful* in the lexicon of the person who made the over-optimistic forecast; unlike Laura, who assumes James to have a peculiar understanding of the name *Quine*.

Thus, we are dealing with at least two varieties of irony: instances like (32), which involve a language-shift, and others like (33), which do not. As I explained in 5.4, a language-shift must be recognised before semantic interpretation can get under way. This means, notably, that the proposition expressed by (32) is something like « Tim McPherson wants to speak to Laura and the person with her » since, in James’s language, *Quine* is used to pick out McPherson. This suggests that something of the irony (saying one thing but meaning another) has to be worked

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<sup>316</sup> I initially considered a third qualification: it seemed to me that free indirect discourse, which Sperber & Wilson readily compare with irony, sometimes places heavy constraints on lexical choices, in this sense that it reproduces much of the ‘initial’ reported utterance. This impression is reinforced by the fact that not all deictics are even affected, unlike what happens in indirect speech. As Lee (1993: 384) remarks, “spatio-temporal deictics normally referring to the parameters of the ongoing speech event in speech and coreferential with the present tense are coreferential with the past tense”. This means that, say, *now* need not be ‘backshifted’ (turned into *then*), since it continues to refer to the ‘now’ of the reported (not the reporting) utterer. In indirect speech, *now* would have to become *then*. An instance of free indirect speech like *She would talk to him here and now!* could automatically be related to the ‘initial’ (and closely similar) *I will talk to him here and now!* (see also Banfield 1993: 343-44 and Recanati 2000: 229). The problem with this view is that it completely bypasses the fact that free indirect speech is massively used to represent thought (just as much as speech). In such cases, it makes no sense to talk of faithfully mentioning an earlier piece of discourse.

out pre-interpretatively. The question then is how such a disambiguated proposition can underlie the implicature that the speaker finds (32) ludicrous or at least inappropriate.<sup>317</sup> A mere comparison of the proposition with the situation of utterance sheds no light on the absurdity of (32), since the former says something true about the person present in the latter, i.e. Tim McPherson. The element which, I believe, makes the identification of irony (the recognition of the absurdity of (32)) possible is the fact that *Quine* is demonstrated metalinguistically: the quote marks are not simply used to signal a language-shift, but also to keep the spotlight on *Quine* as a word. Therefore, I suggest that it is the comparison between the proposition « Tim McPherson wants to speak to Laura and the person with her » and the highlighted use of the word *Quine* to express that proposition that permits the right implicature to be arrived at.

Such an explanation is not available in the case of (33), which involves no language-shift. Here is my tentative suggestion: the proposition expressed by (33) is something like « the weather is lovely in place *x* at time *t* ». In other words, none of the irony has been computed pre-interpretatively. Everything takes place at the interpretative level of what is meant: there, the proposition is compared to the wide context, some of whose salient features must be: (i) the fact that it is raining in buckets; (ii) the hearer's knowledge that someone (the hearer him/herself or someone else) had forecast a spell of sunny weather and that, therefore, (33) is echoic.<sup>318</sup> It is on the basis of that contextual information that the hearer will be able to understand that the utterance implicates a dissociative attitude on the part of the utterer and is to be taken ironically.<sup>319</sup>

In spite of a few differences, my account of (32) and (33) is similar in most important respects: irony is inferred by means of implicatures as part of the process of interpretation proper (= post-semantically). Such an inference is made possible by the fact that the utterance is (i) understood to be echoic, (ii) attributed to an earlier utterer, (iii) made an object of rejection or disapproval (cf Sperber & Wilson 1995: 240). The main dissimilarity is that (32) involves a language-shift and a manifest metalinguistic demonstration; whereas (33) does not: there may be

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<sup>317</sup> Sperber & Wilson insist that this sort of implicature is not strictly propositional (1981: 296-97). In a paper about wordplay, I showed the need to accept that implicatures are not always propositional in nature (2002: 481-82).

<sup>318</sup> There will often be other clues, such as tone of voice, facial expression, or the utterer's well-known penchant for sarcasm, etc.

<sup>319</sup> I suppose that a similar treatment could be offered for other cases of ironical antiphrasis involving no language-shift, e.g. *He's a real genius!* to mean that the subject of discourse is an absolute moron.

something like a meta-demonstration, but the level of reflexivity is likely to be less than in (32).<sup>320, 321</sup>

#### 6.2.2.5. Intermediate recapitulation

Our overview of disambiguation from the point of view of linguistic demonstration has yielded substantial results. As a general remark, it is striking how much of the process of interpretation is actually pre-interpretative (from a logical rather than chronological point of view). We have seen that a lot of work (decoding and inferring) has to go into the recognition of a variety of intentions that affect which sentence is being uttered. These include the mentioning intention (trivially), but also a simultaneous ‘using’ intention, the intention to refer or describe metalinguistically, the intention to report someone else’s words, and something that could be described as the intention to ‘shift the context’ (here exemplified by language-shifts). We have also seen that some pictorial (recruited demonstration) and pragmatic (quotational point) aspects of mention/quotation need to be processed before interpretation begins, and that these aspects are often identifiable even in the absence of any contextual information.

Several elements have proved to play a significant role in enabling the interpreter to identify the intentions referred to above. They by and large validate my assumption that most of the diverse factors usable as a basis for a classification should come out in a survey of how interpreters process utterances. Let me sum up:

- quotation marks (or other such devices) grammaticalise a mentioning intention.
  - meta-predicates lexicalise the same intention, but less unequivocally than quotation marks.
- Still, meta-predicates also permit finer distinctions. When directly attached to a metalinguistic demonstration they mostly denote an intention to refer or describe metalinguistically (i.e. they

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<sup>320</sup> Is (33) a genuine case of mention if it echoes a previous *The weather’s going to be lovely today*? It is difficult to gauge whether the echoic and echoed utterances display a high enough degree of similarity to be regarded as iconically related. Similar doubts arise in connection with example (54) at the end of 6.2.3.4, which I have nevertheless chosen to regard as iconic (to some degree).

<sup>321</sup> Another phenomenon that would have deserved all my attention here is ‘metalinguistic negation’, which is an additional variety of open metalinguistic demonstration. Recanati has a striking formula which shows how close it is to Sperber and Wilson’s irony:

[...] in metalinguistic negation the speaker does two things: he demonstrates an objectionable utterance, and rejects it as objectionable. (2000: 196)

In a remarkable paper, Horn (1985: 132-35) shows that the objection and rejection may be triggered by whatever characteristic of the demonstrated utterance (pronunciation, inflections, gender, stylistic level, connotations, conversational implicatures, etc.), thus indicating that metalinguistic negation is amenable to an analysis in terms of demonstrated properties and depicted targets. Note, finally, that Horn extends his reflection to other metalinguistic operators (*or (even)*, conditional clauses, echo-questions – e.g. *Do I WHAT?* – etc.). All of these are worthy of investigation; unfortunately lack of space (and time!) has prevented me from exploring them at any length.

largely rule out a simultaneous using intention). But, when the meta-predicate is a (certain category of) *verbum dicendi*, disambiguation between scare quoting and autonymy depends on the presence vs absence of a further metalinguistic noun. When occurring in the co-text (i.e. attached to a substitute of the sequence under examination), meta-predicates often signal (or confirm, if there are quote marks) that the utterer simultaneously intended to use and mention the sequence in question. Finally, the question whether the predicate is ‘meta’ or ‘meta-meta’ usually suffices to tell used quotation and mentioned quotation apart.

— as a form of ‘indirect grammaticalisation’, we have also noticed the importance of the ungrammaticality of the ordinary reading in signalling not only a mentioning intention but also, more specifically, an intention to refer or describe metalinguistically.

— a last aspect that has proved relevant, as a signal (or confirmation if there are quote marks) of open mention, are shifts in deixis.

### 6.2.3. The interpretation of metalinguistic demonstration

#### 6.2.3.1. Conventionalised vs non-conventionalised signals

It is useful, at this stage, to clarify the difference between two ways of making the speaker’s intentions accessible to interpreters, namely conventional and non-conventional means. The features highlighted in 6.2.2 were at, or near, the conventional pole. It would be unusual to enclose a string in quotation marks and not intend to demonstrate it metalinguistically. By the same token, it would be odd to attach a meta-predicate to a sequence that was not meant to be ‘talked about’ from a linguistic angle. Thus, there are conventional means (typographical, grammatical or lexical) that perhaps not systematically, but very frequently, mark certain intentional aspects of utterances. I have suggested that in these cases some intention of the speaker’s is standardly ‘encoded’ into the form of the message. By contrast, there are other aspects of the speaker’s intentions which are not ordinarily encoded in utterances. A case in point are the implicatures that the speaker expects the addressee to derive from his or her utterance-act. When I produce an interrogative sentence, say, *Are you going to the kitchen?*, as an indirect directive meant to make you bring me a glass of water, I will not usually explain that I mean this question-like utterance to be understood as an injunction: this is usually something that you will have to work out for yourselves through one or more inferences.

But of course there is nothing in the way language is used that prevents the speaker from providing such explicitations. Being extremely versatile, language can be used to make plain all

sorts of intentional or interpretative characteristics of particular language choices. In concrete terms, this means that an utterance (or the co-text around an utterance) frequently contains indications as to how this or that word or phrase is meant to be interpreted in its context. In particular, it is always possible, when uttering a sentence containing a metalinguistic demonstration, to include in that utterance or in its co-text all manner of information regarding demonstrated properties, depicted targets and quotational points, even though these are essentially pragmatic aspects of meaning that are normally worked out via contextual inferences.

In other words, the speaker can always choose to lexicalise, and therefore make more or less automatically available, information that is in essence inferential, and whose interpretation should normally require the interpreter's access to what we have called the 'wide context'. Let us take:

(34) 'Boston' is the name of an American city. (already mentioned in 5.1)

As it stands, (34) is a sentence some of whose intentional aspects can be worked out completely out of context: the quote marks signal a mentioning intention; the meta-predicate *is a name* arouses a strong suspicion that the demonstration is recruited as a singular term and is therefore used in a referential capacity. Furthermore, if that presumption is well-grounded, the iconic nature of metalinguistic demonstration allows, in this case, the automatic identification of the referent of 'Boston'.<sup>322</sup> These are the intentional (or, at least, context-dependent) aspects of (34) that are more or less encoded in the sentence.

Naturally, there are many other intentional aspects that should normally only be interpretable by someone who had access to the wide context, i.e. was in a position to make context-based inferences regarding the speaker's reasons for uttering (34). For instance, everything that is to do with mimicry or with quotational points other than referring should come under that category. Yet, nothing prevents the utterer to explicitate any element s/he chooses, witness:

(34<sub>1</sub>) 'Boston', as Kennedy would have pronounced it, is the name of an American city.

(34<sub>2</sub>) 'Boston', as Kennedy and all those pompous bastards would pronounce it, is the name of an American city.

In (34<sub>1</sub>), the speaker makes it clear that a special pronunciation of Boston, that of Kennedy – who perhaps stands proxy for a larger group – is a depictive property demonstrated by means of the displayed token. This way, a pictorial aspect of (34<sub>1</sub>) has been made available at a lower level

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<sup>322</sup> I return to this question shortly, under point (iii) of 6.2.3.2.

than should otherwise be the case.<sup>323</sup> In (34<sub>2</sub>), the speaker explicitates not only a depictive property but also a quotational point that is superimposed onto the referring intention: criticising, pouring scorn on a group of people that have something in common with Kennedy. There still remains some inferential work to do, for instance determining which group the speaker is targeting. But note that even this workload could to some extent be lightened if, for instance, the speaker inserted *Boston*, or *New England*, in front of *bastards*.

My motive for separating conventionalised from non-conventionalised indications of intentional aspects of meaning has to do with the agenda I have set myself for the last part of this chapter. In 6.2.2, not only have significant features of the meaning of metalinguistic demonstrations been shown to be processed pre-interpretatively, but they have also often turned out to be accessible at lower levels of analysis than their essentially pragmatic nature might have given reason to predict. In the rest of this chapter, I wish to focus on this last aspect and identify systematically those remaining features of metalinguistic demonstrations that can regularly be taken care of at lower levels of interpretation. This task basically amounts to asking the following questions: (i) under what conditions can aspects whose interpretation typically depends on the wide context be interpreted relative to the narrow context (level of c-content) or even out of context (level of sentence-meaning) ? (ii) under what conditions can aspects that are typically processed relative to the narrow context be interpreted out of context ?

For the purpose of bringing this task to a successful completion, it would be inexpedient to take account of non-conventionalised means of explicitation. Indeed, it would nearly always be possible to cook up some intra-sentential comment that made redundant any information drawn from the narrow and wide context. The conclusion – that practically every intentional or contextual aspect of meaning can be accessed by interpreters at the lowest level of analysis – would not be very helpful, since it would highlight no more than an inevitable offshoot of the versatility of language. More enlightening is a review of the conventional marking of intentions, i.e. the identification of stable conditions under which ‘higher-level’ aspects of meaning can be processed at a lower level of interpretation. 6.2.2 has provided us with a useful list of such stable indicators. The sections that follow are meant to fill out the picture, and determine if a survey of the interpretative process proper yields further conventional markers or simply confirms the significance of those pointed up earlier.

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<sup>323</sup> Example (2) in Chapter 4 – *He said it was all a ‘pile of roobish’* – shows that altered spelling, especially in the representation of dialogue, is a more or less conventional indication of the depictiveness of pronunciation.



Here is how I will proceed: I will take as my point of departure Recanati's syntax-based classification: [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>, [Dem]<sub>N</sub>, and open quotation/mention. For each of these categories, I will address myself to the following three issues: at what level of interpretation (i) the various remaining aspects of its pictorial meaning (demonstratum and distal target) can be determined; (ii) its remaining point(s) can be discriminated; (iii) its reference (if it has one), or the reference of the NP which it heads (if it heads one), can be fixed.

In the end, by putting together the results of 6.2.2 and 6.2.3, I hope to be able to come up with a comprehensive description of the criteria (typographical, pictorial, inferential, syntactic) that genuinely affect the (pre-)interpretation of metalinguistic demonstrations, and with a detailed characterisation of the various relevant sub-categories within the three categories of metalinguistic demonstrations that constitute our starting-point.

#### 6.2.3.2. [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> (closed quotation and closed mention)

##### (i) level at which the various aspects of pictorial meaning can be determined

As we saw under 6.2.2.4, there is an aspect of the pictorial meaning of [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> that must logically be processed before the beginning of interpretation proper, namely the linguistic recruitment of the demonstration as a referring expression. This has an intriguing consequence when [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> exclusively serves the purpose of referring, i.e. in cases of flat mention.

In ordinary circumstances, the properties demonstrated by the displayed token that are 'depictive', and the targets which they depict – in other words, the results of the process of fleshing out – are not signalled by conventional markers; their determination requires making inferences on the basis of the wide context (see my discussion of (34) and its derivatives). In flat mention, however, the demonstration only has a proximal target (which, Recanati claims, is its referent). Since this referent is said to be a type, and since this type is somehow iconically related to the displayed token, it is also easily identifiable even in the absence of any contextual information.<sup>324</sup> This situation entails that the whole pictorial meaning of flat mention is usually accessed automatically by interpreters; it is decoded at the level of sentence-meaning rather than inferred. Such is naturally not the case with those closed autonyms that possess an additional mimetic (or echoic) dimension. In their case, the identification of one or more distal targets relies heavily on contextual inferences and has to wait until the level of the implicated content.

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<sup>324</sup> I qualify this description somewhat under point (iii) of the present section.

(ii) level at which the point(s) can be discriminated

We saw under 6.2.2.4. that all [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> shared a quotational point (referring metalinguistically) that must be identified pre-interpretatively and can often be made out in the absence of contextual information.<sup>325</sup> There is a second quotational point which, I suggest, is often marked conventionally. This point underlies direct speech reports. Let me repeat that not all of these can be subsumed under [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>: there are instances of direct speech that are open quotations, as in (5) or:

(35) I am lucky because I know that, even if every single plane falls out of the sky, the Turkish shop at the end of my road will be open. “You want some cheap cigarettes, darling ? I make you a very nice price.” [end of §] (*New Statesman*, 20/12/99: 15)

Those were treated under 6.2.2.2 because their identification as direct speech reports had a pre-interpretative impact.

The occurrences of direct discourse I wish to talk about here function as the direct objects of reporting verbs,<sup>326</sup> a feature which makes them identifiable out of context. This has an interesting consequence on the recognition of a quotational point shared by all instances of direct speech: letting the interpreter know that another speaker somehow salient in the context previously uttered the demonstrated sequence.<sup>327</sup> Let us have an example of closed direct speech:

(36) Dorothy said, ‘My mother’s on the phone.’ (Quirk et al. 1985: 1022)

In closed direct speech, this point can be worked out as early as the level of sentence-meaning because it is lexicalised and grammaticalised: the *verbum dicendi* has two arguments, the first of which stands for the speaker alluded to above, while the second stands for the original

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<sup>325</sup> Naturally, there remain cases (e.g. *I love ‘Chicago’*) where there are no meta-predicates and where the ordinary-use reading is grammatical: these cannot be dealt with in the absence of co-textual or contextual indications.

<sup>326</sup> This is an oversimplified picture of direct speech, but I must confess that I do not intend to provide any sort of detailed account of the many facets of this utterly complex phenomenon. Let me just say that in canonical instances, where the reporting clause occurs in initial position, the direct speech report does appear to behave like a direct object. When, however, the reporting clause is in medial or final position, that analysis is less convincing. For instance, in ‘*Generals*,’ *they alleged*, ‘*never retire; they merely fade away*’, the reporting clause could be regarded as subordinate, having the value of a comment adverbial (it is replaceable by *allegedly*). On this reading, the direct speech report would be the main clause. This example shows that the limit between closed and open instances of direct speech is not watertight.

<sup>327</sup> Or could or would utter it, or could or should have uttered it, or entertained or would or might (have) entertain(ed) a thought that can be given a verbal expression such as the demonstrated sequence. As many writers have shown, direct speech is far from being always verbatim (e.g. Rosier 1993: passim). In particular, it cannot be when the ‘original’ sequence was not even uttered, as in reported thought (cf Geach’s example in Chapter 2 and 4).

utterance.<sup>328</sup> In other words, closed direct speech allows the decoding of the point underlying all direct discourse.

Naturally, there may be further, contextually more important points, but these cannot, I believe, cancel the conventional point just highlighted, which applies across all cases of closed direct speech. Even if the ‘real’ point of displaying the quoted sequence in (36) were, say, to trick the reader into falsely assuming that such were the words uttered by Dorothy, the utterer of (36) must nevertheless have intended the reader to attribute the quoted sequence to Dorothy, failing which his attempt at deception misfires. If it turns out that Dorothy never uttered the words in quotes, the utterer of (36) can, for instance, be accused of violating Grice’s Cooperative Principle. But if this utterer produced (36) without intending his addressee to believe that Dorothy had used the quoted words, then the only plausible conclusion would be that he or she is not a competent user of the written system of English: the attribution of the quoted sequence to the subject of discourse of the reporting verb is part and parcel of understanding a sentence involving closed direct speech.<sup>329</sup>

This, I believe, is true also of unmarked cases of closed direct speech, such as:

(37) [Meeting fans] does get to be a pain in the ass ... But I try to make a point of saying **dammit, I’m going to do it anyway**. (*The Face*, 10/94: 49)

(38) Sometimes, taxi drivers refuse to take me home. Others pat me on the shoulder and say **well done**. (*The Face*, 9/93: 89)

Although the absence of quotation marks may make the pre-semantic identification of a mentioning intention less evident, I none the less assume that, as soon as that has been performed – which it must if interpretation proper is to begin – the interpreter will recognise a direct speech report while s/he is piecing together the sentence-meaning of the utterance: the fact that the quoteless sequence is itself a complete utterance that functions as the direct object of *say* (or another reporting verb) is a sufficient indication as to the nature of that sequence.

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<sup>328</sup> In free direct speech, this would require inferential operations (on at least the co-text).

<sup>329</sup> I believe this argument to be perfectly compatible with the view that direct speech is not verbatim. When Rosier (1993) rejects the naïve conception according to which direct discourse faithfully represents previously uttered words, she argues that direct speech rests on a pact between reporters (journalists, in her corpus) and addressees (newspaper readers): “if you use quote marks, I’ll believe in the authenticity of the words you’re reporting” (1993: 640). In other words, her claim is that literalness, neutrality, objectivity are an effect rather than a reality. I entirely share Rosier’s views. What is needed for my argument about the quotational point to be valid is not that direct discourse should be faithful in essence, but simply that it should be used to create an impression of reality. (See also Charlent 2000 for a position similar to mine).

(iii) level at which reference can be fixed

The now standard view about reference is that its assignment to referential expressions can only be performed relative to the narrow context (for some indexicals) or the wide context (for other indexicals such as demonstratives, for proper names and definite descriptions). Now the fact that contextual information is regarded as an absolute necessity comes as no surprise, given that reference is one of the chief means through which language can link up with ‘the world’. And yet, when looking at closed autonyms, one is struck by the fact that the referents for many of them can be identified in the absence of any contextual information.

It appears that the pre-semantic recognition of both a mentioning intention (which eliminates the ‘use’ interpretation) and a metalinguistic referring intention (which rules out scare quoting) often suffices to automatically deliver a referent for the autonym. This deviant behaviour of autonymy with respect to the fixing of reference can best be illustrated by a pair of examples, which I shall once again assume have been found jotted down on a slip of paper of unknown origin:

(39) My brother saw the play yesterday.

(40) More idiosyncratic is *The bed’s not been slept in* in which *sleep in* again seems to function as a unit. (Palmer 1981: 136)

Regarding (39), I have no access to the precise referents of either of the expressions *my brother* and *the play*. All I know about them is what little information is conveyed by the conventional lexical meaning of the words involved (for instance, that the subject is male). Moreover, I cannot identify the referents of the indexical expressions (*my* and *yesterday*) either. By contrast, I have no trouble working out the referents of both ‘*The bed’s not been slept in*’ and ‘*sleep in*’. Moreover, no information concerning the context, narrow or wide, is likely to further refine my identification of the referents. It is easy to make out the cause of this deviant situation: the inherent iconicity of autonyms. In (40) my knowledge of the iconic character of autonymy is enough for me to gain direct access to the relevant referents.

Still, even though a large number of closed autonyms can be assigned a referent as early as the level of sentence-meaning, not all of them can. A qualification is in order, which takes account of the exact nature of the referent. In (40), the first autonym refers to an utterance-type rather than any precise token, while the second also refers to an ‘abstract’ object (a hypothetical lexeme), not to a specific occurrence. Since there is only one type THE BED’S NOT BEEN SLEPT IN,

and only one hypothetical lexeme *sleep in*, there is no difficulty involved in working out ‘which one’ the speaker has in mind.

The picture is different when an autonym refers to another token (or several other tokens) of the same type: very often, its precise referent(s) will not be so easy to pinpoint:

(41) At the end of his letter, he wrote “**Damn you!**”. (Bennett 1988: 399)

If I try to answer the question, “which token?”, with any precision, I will have to draw upon my knowledge of (at least) the narrow context (including the co-text). Determining the intended token will necessitate the previous identification of the letter at the end of which it occurs, a job that cannot be done until I know who the writer is and which one of his letters (41) is about. This example does not, therefore, essentially deviate from the following case of ordinary use, *At the end of the day, he bought the table*. Determining which particular table was bought will require the same kind of contextual information as proved vital in the previous example: the referents will be incorporated into the c-content of the utterance.

While I am at it, I wish to pre-empt the possible suggestion that the ability to assign a referent automatically to a referential expression of any kind (metalinguistic or not) is entirely dependent on the nature, abstract or concrete, of the referent. Although that is indeed the determining factor in the case of closed autonymy, it does not seem to play any significant role in the case of non-metalinguistic reference. Let me illustrate this by means of Bach’s now well-known example (quoted in footnote 158):

(42) That tree is deciduous.

Some tokens of (42) may be uttered with the intention to talk about the tree-type of which the tree pointed at is a token. However, even when that is the case, the referent of *that tree* can only be identified if the interpreter has access to the context, in other words, if s/he can see which tree is being pointed at. This indicates that the abstract/concrete (or, for many a writer, type/token) opposition is only secondary to the iconic/non-iconic distinction.

Let me conclude this section with an ultimate qualification. There are tokens of referential expressions used ordinarily whose reference can already be fixed at the level of sentence-meaning.<sup>330</sup> This is the situation that arises when context-dependent information becomes

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<sup>330</sup> Provided, that is, one does not construe the ‘rest of the sentence’ as being part of the context. Although such a move might be intuitively appealing, it is theoretically inexpedient: according to the framework developed in Chapter 3, the context only begins outside the boundaries of the sentence: the intra-sentential ‘co-text’ is not part of

redundant because the very same information has already been supplied by an element occurring in the sentence itself, as can be illustrated by *On **that** very day, September 1, 1939, Hitler launched his attack on Poland*, or *Einstein assured his wife that there could be no such things as square circles, but she didn't like **that***, or *Since I knew that Gordon lived at number 107 Castle Street in Edinburgh, I decided to confront him **there***. The intra-sentential co-text directly provides the reference of the indexical expressions. Any further information supplied by the context of utterance (e.g. a finger pointed at a date in a book or on a calendar) would contribute nothing more than a confirmation of what had already been established at the sentence-level. It must nevertheless be pointed out that the indexicals in the above examples are (also) used anaphorically within the sentence, and that this intra-sentential anaphoric function goes a long way towards explaining why they can be assigned a reference out of context.

#### 6.2.3.3. [Dem]<sub>N</sub>

[Dem]<sub>N</sub> behaves very much like [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> with respect to the various aspects to be reviewed. That is because [Dem]<sub>N</sub> can occur with or without quoting devices, it can (but need not) be used flatly, i.e. with no mimetic intention, and it can be used to accomplish a similar range of purposes to [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>. The few features that deserve an extra mention are briefly commented on below.

##### (i) level at which the various aspects of pictorial meaning can be determined

When [Dem]<sub>N</sub> is used 'flatly', its whole pictorial meaning can at times be decoded at the level of the sentence-meaning. The only significant difference with [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> is that the proximal target of an instance of [Dem]<sub>N</sub> is not its referent, because [Dem]<sub>N</sub> cannot have a referent. Still, when the NP headed by [Dem]<sub>N</sub> is used referentially (it can also be used descriptively), the proximal target is an icon of the referent of that NP (see below, point (iii), for a discussion). Whatever other (i.e. mimetic) aspects of the pictorial meaning can only be inferred on the basis of contextual information.

##### (ii) level at which the point(s) can be discriminated

As we saw under 6.2.2.4, all instances of [Dem]<sub>N</sub> are used to accomplish the quotational point that consists in referring or describing metalinguistically. This point, which has a pre-interpretative impact, is often signalled more or less conventionally by a meta-predicate or the

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the context. This, of course, is a theoretical decision not devoid of some arbitrary flavour. As I remarked in a previous footnote, the limits of the sentence (and, as a consequence, the separation from the co-text) are fuzzy.

ungrammaticality of the ordinary-use reading. This is in all respects similar to [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>. The question is whether [Dem]<sub>N</sub>, like [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>, may also have a second quotational point that is marked conventionally. This amounts to asking if there are direct speech reports that grammatically belong to [Dem]<sub>N</sub>. The answer is a careful “Yes”, even though the examples that fit the bill are scarce:

(43) Suddenly, she stopped without warning to let out a “**Damn!**”.  
([www.rickgrunder.com/116text.htm](http://www.rickgrunder.com/116text.htm))

(44) [...] feet on the floor, head in hands, I shout a useless (and disappointingly uneloquent) ‘**No, no, no**’ as I wake. (BNC G1X 1639)

(45) The head lets out a high-pitched ‘**We!!!**’ and proceeds to present his case, voice grating. (BNC GUR 1806)

Though the highlighted sequences are very short, they are direct speech reports all the same, because they are attributed to a speaker via a reporting verb. Moreover, for each example, there is an extra clue bearing out that one is dealing with direct discourse, not just with flat mention: in (43), the capital *d* and the exclamation mark; in (44), the repetition of *no*; in (45), the imitation of a special pronunciation through the duplication of the final *ll*. Naturally, it takes a special category of verb to license [Dem]<sub>N</sub> direct discourse: next to *let out* and *shout*, other likely candidates are *bark*, *blurt out*, *give out*, *mouth*, *mumble*, *mutter*, *scream*, *whimper*, *whisper*, *yell*, etc. What is certain, however, is that, in each of the above instances, the quoted sequence is attributed to the subject of discourse of the reporting verb ‘automatically’ by any interpreter competent in English, without there being any need for contextual evidence.

(iii) level at which the reference of the NP headed by the autonym can be fixed

First, as has been pointed out repeatedly, not all NPs headed by [Dem]<sub>N</sub> are employed referentially. Some simply function descriptively, as they characterise a kind of entity without designating any particular individuals, as in (3) or:

(46) Joel Yancey ... was always ready with a *how d’ye do*. (OED, VII, 455, col. 3)

(47) His own papers were works of art on which he laboured with loving care for many hours, tinkering and polishing, weighing every word, deftly manipulating *eithers* and *ors*, judiciously balancing [...]. (Lodge 1978: 18)

I must say in passing that I am not too sure what to do with (43), (44) and (45) in this respect: though the [Dem]<sub>N</sub> in them are all determined by an indefinite article – which seems to indicate

that the NPs do not refer – the fact that the [Dem]<sub>N</sub> are direct speech reports seems to suggest opposingly that they refer to a particular token (that uttered by the reportee).

Now there are [Dem]<sub>N</sub>-headed NPs that are definitely referential. Among them, only those that refer to a unique abstract entity iconically related to the displayed token can be assigned a reference before the level of the c-content. Such cases exist but are in a minority: most referential [Dem]<sub>N</sub>-headed NPs designate one or more particular tokens whose identification hinges on the interpreter's access to at least the narrow context. A few exceptions are reproduced below:

(48) Feeling that he too ought to do something for the cripples, Mr. Beavis began to tell them about the etymology of the word “primrose.” “*Primerole* in Middle English,” he explained. “The ‘**rose**’ crept in by mistake.” They stared at him uncomprehendingly. “A mere popular blunder,” [...]. (Huxley 1954: 66; already cited in Chapter 4)

(49) Keeping the “Ever” in Evergreens (<http://doityourself.com/shrubs/evergreens.htm>)

(50) At Seafirst, we put the ‘sure’ in insurance! ([www.seafirstinsurance.com/about\\_us.htm](http://www.seafirstinsurance.com/about_us.htm))

In (48), ‘*rose*’ is an icon of the relevant spoken or written sequence viewed as a type, not as a particular token. The referent of the NP *the ‘rose’* can therefore be fully identified out of context and already encoded into the sentence-meaning of the utterance in which it occurs. My contention is that the same analysis applies to (49) and (50).

#### 6.2.3.4. Open quotation and mention

##### (i) level at which the various aspects of pictorial meaning can be determined

As has almost become customary by now, it is useful to distinguish ‘flat’ from mimetic demonstrations. Flat open quotation can be illustrated by Recanati’s *a ‘fortnight’* example ((15) in 5.5) or example (8) in this chapter.<sup>331</sup> In flat open quotation, the demonstrated property (and proximal target) is a type or lexeme (the lexemes *fortnight* and *sophomore* in the examples referred to), and the utterances in which they occur are like hybrid definitions that straddle the world and language: a mundane entity is defined at the same time as the word designating it (I briefly return to these two sorts of definitions in Chapter 7.2.1.2, point (iv)). In such cases, iconicity once again ensures that the whole of the pictorial meaning can be processed as early as the level of the sentence-meaning.

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<sup>331</sup> These are well and truly examples of flat quotation, in spite of the fact that they involve simultaneous use and mention. All it takes for a sequence to be demonstrated flatly is that the pictorial meaning should not exceed the proximal target (that there should be no mimetic aspects to it).



(ii) level at which the point(s) can be discriminated

Once again, the point(s) of open quotations is/are usually determinable only at the level of the implicated content. But I suggest that certain sub-categories of open quotation systematically exhibit a point that is marked more or less conventionally, and is therefore recognisable at a lower level of interpretation. Such is the case of mixed quotation, which conventionally exhibits the same basic point as direct speech. Let me illustrate:

(51) The president said that a failure by Congress to approve new taxes would lead to ‘larger budget deficits, higher interest rates, and higher unemployment.’ (Quirk et al. 1985: 1024)

As with direct speech reports, one of the purposes of producing a quotation of this sort is to let the reader know (or make him/her believe) that the subject of discourse (here, the president) used something like the very words between quote marks. This is a point of all instances of mixed quotation. As mixed quotation is by definition signalled by a reporting verb and quote marks that enclose an incomplete utterance, it is recognisable as such out of context. This entails that the point underlying all its occurrences is itself also identified at the level of sentence-meaning.

In a previous discussion (6.2.2.2) of the ways in which cases of open mention can be identified, I remarked that free direct speech did not exhaust the range of open mention. A further subcategory is made up of instances that could be described as ‘free mixed mention’. They share with free direct speech the characteristic of not being introduced by a reporting verb, and with mixed quotation that of being mixed into the mentioning sentence. What I have in mind are allusions to a proverb or to a well-known utterance by a political, literary or other personality that are covertly incorporated into a larger utterance (which, consequently, is ‘polyphonic’). Naturally such allusions could be signalled by means of quoting devices – and they often are – but there are instances where the allusion is made even more allusive by the absence of any marking.<sup>332</sup> The Polish linguist Mayenowa pointed out a few as early as 1969. Here are three examples that are similar in most essential respects to her original Polish examples:

(52) BMP files weren't of good quality, and, since **beauty is in the eye of the beholder**, I've pulled out some of the screens that I like. (BNC, HAC 4519)

(53) Perhaps the question is not **to be or not to be** a Web presenter, but rather, when **to be or not to be** ? ([www.effectivemeetings.com/technology/webpresentations/web\\_dilemma.asp](http://www.effectivemeetings.com/technology/webpresentations/web_dilemma.asp))

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<sup>332</sup> Such instances may be used as counterexamples to Partee's belief that cases of ‘mixed direct and indirect quotation’ “do not occur in ordinary spoken language” (1973: 411). Although marginal, the very existence of mixed mention demonstrates that mixed cases need not always be written occurrences signalled by quote marks.

(54) So ended the attempts of these **poor, yearning, tired huddled masses** to gain asylum in the US.  
(*New Statesman*, 17/01/2000: 16)

In (52), even in the absence of any signalling, the clause *beauty is in the eye of the beholder* is sufficiently well-known to be widely identified as mixed reported speech by those interpreters who possess the appropriate background knowledge.<sup>333</sup> To them, the demonstrated saying appears as if it were accompanied by quotation marks. Whether the citation will be rightly attributed to its originator (in this case, conventional received wisdom) is irrelevant. Interestingly, the recognition of free mixed mention automatically causes the identification of the underdetermined quotational point characteristic of free direct speech: letting the reader/hearer know that the demonstrated sequence is to be attributed to ‘somebody’.<sup>334</sup> The same analysis applies to (53), with perhaps the certainty here that almost everybody will not only recognise the passage but also associate it with Shakespeare. In (54), the sequence *these poor, yearning, tired huddled masses* is used to refer to a group of Haitians who had tried to enter U.S. territory clandestinely. At the same time, it conjures up (discreetly demonstrates) an excerpt from the short poem by Emma Lazarus that is inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty, the symbol for the United States’ hospitality towards immigrants. The text, however, is altered, since the original wording of the relevant passage is:

(54<sub>1</sub>) Give me your tired, your poor / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free [...]

The alterations observed do not, I suggest, prevent these well-known lines of the poem from being mentioned for demonstrative purposes.<sup>335, 336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Though performed automatically by interpreters possessing the relevant background knowledge, this identification cannot be regarded as conventional: it requires inferences on information that is not literally stated in the utterance. It is not surprising that Rey-Debove should call such instances ‘crypto-citations’ (1978: 261).

<sup>334</sup> One might argue that the recognition of free mixed mention and that of the quotational point just highlighted are interdependent. In the three examples, it is arguably the interpreter’s knowledge that there is a sequence that needs to be attributed to a previous speaker that prompts his/her treating it as a piece of reported speech.

<sup>335</sup> (54) is admittedly a borderline case, as it stretches the limits of iconicity to extremes. Note also that, contrary to (52) and (53), it does not rate as a case of Rey-Debove’s autonomous connotation. Rather than matching the formula  $E_1(C_1(E_1(C_1)))$ , where the two signifiers are identical, it conforms to  $E_{1m}(C_1(E_1(C_1)))$ , where the subscripted *m* points to a modified signifier. Though not strictly autonomous, this category of connotation might be termed ‘metalinguistic connotation’. I discuss more examples of metalinguistic connotation in De Brabanter (2000, 2002)

<sup>336</sup> Though (52) to (54) are written examples, it is easy to see that a similar situation obtains with spoken utterances. Various writers (e.g. Geach 1957: 81; Cappelen & Lepore 1997: 431fn; Recanati 2001a: 661) point out that there is no systematic counterpart of quotation marks in speech, and that therefore many spoken instances of autonomy and open quotation/mention are likely to be implicit. As regards the latter, disambiguation is usually provided by a meta-comment. Other forms of disambiguation are available too: one can use the expression *quote ... unquote* (but this, then, rates as a metalinguistic comment), or produce so-called ‘finger-dance quotes’, i.e. “twitch two curled fingers to represent quotation marks” (cf McArthur 1992: 840), make special gestures or an unusual face, or use a sufficiently distinctive intonation to demarcate a sequence from the rest of the utterance. In uttering aloud tokens of

Finally, as regards scare quoting, I do not think that a systematic ‘conventional point’ can be uncovered there. Obviously, the reader recognises a display, for demonstrative purposes, of the sequence enclosed in quotes, but that is true of every single competent speaker when faced with any use of linguistic quoting devices: these devices testify to a demonstration. Now the reasons why the demonstration is performed vary widely from one instance of scare quoting to the next. What some writers identify as a general distancing effect, in my opinion, boils down to the fact that the sequence is displayed at the same time as it is used. I believe that the distancing effect stems from the very fact that the sequence in question is not just used ordinarily; it is a direct consequence of the ‘opacification’ of the words as described by Recanati (1979). But this is not to be regarded as a quotational point. Further points, such as encouraging the reader to distrust another person’s choice of words, or making fun of media people, or denouncing ideological manipulations, will all have to be worked out on the basis of wide-contextual information.

(iii) this question is irrelevant in the case of open quotation: the quoted sequence does not refer to a linguistic entity. If it did, it would not be an instance of open quotation in the first place.

#### 6.2.4. Conclusion

Although my original intention in this chapter was to put together a valid typology of metalinguistic demonstrations, there is a peripheral finding that strikes me as being quite significant, and that is how much of what is called the ‘interpretation’ of an utterance is actually, technically speaking, pre-interpretative. In this respect, it is no accident that 6.2.2, which is mainly concerned with the determination of which sentence is being uttered, should be longer than 6.2.3, which deals with interpretation in the narrow sense. Another striking finding is how much of what in theory requires access to the wide context (notably the speaker’s intentions) can actually be processed at a lower level of interpretation. The observation that there is quite some room for the decoding of conventional markers may appear to run counter to many present-day assumptions. I do not, however, believe that it presents a challenge to inference-based models of communication as are set out, for example, in Sperber & Wilson (1995). Simply, it may bring a mild corrective to an all-out inferential conception of communication: however important, pragmatic inferences are not indispensable everywhere; not, for instance, whenever their

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(52), (53) and (54), however, it is possible to effect autonomous connotation even in the absence of any signalling, provided the interpreter has the necessary background knowledge at his/her disposal.

meaning or value is conventionally encoded in an utterance. This means that semantic analysis remains a valid preoccupation.

Now, apart from these results, which I regard as valuable from a broad methodological and theoretical point of view, I had promised to offer an interpreter's typology of metalinguistic demonstrations. This is what is presented in the five flow charts that follow. I have tried to arrange the relevant typological criteria in such a way as to include all of them. The underlying idea is that each node (each split) in the typology is justified by a feature that 'makes a difference' for the interpreter. Other orderings were no doubt possible, but I believe that the one I have chosen 'does the job'. The first chart incorporates three criteria that apply across the board and are useful in identifying a mentioning intention (quoting devices, the ungrammaticality of the ordinary-use reading, the presence of a meta-predicate). However, their application is not 100% decisive – there is one path that leads to an indetermination between mention and ordinary use, another one that leads to a choice between open and recruited quotation, and a last one that leads to recruited mention but is defeasible – a situation which simply reflects some of the genuine difficulties with the disambiguation of utterances. The next four charts deal with recruited quotation, recruited mention, open quotation and open mention, in that order, and therefore appeal to more 'local' distinctive criteria.<sup>337</sup> It can be seen that the overlap is not perfect with the three-term syntactic division that underlies most of this chapter. However, this situation, which results from choosing the presence/absence of quoting devices as my first distinctive criterion, poses no special problems, as the syntactic division emerges clearly enough in the charts.

To make the interpretation of the charts easier: the distinctive criteria appear between square brackets; the symbols '⊕' and '∅' indicate that a criterion is met or not met, respectively; next to those symbols, one finds a description of the subcategory (or of a significant property) of metalinguistic demonstration that results from the application of the criterion; finally, illustrations are given for all subcategories in a different character (Arial Narrow 12).

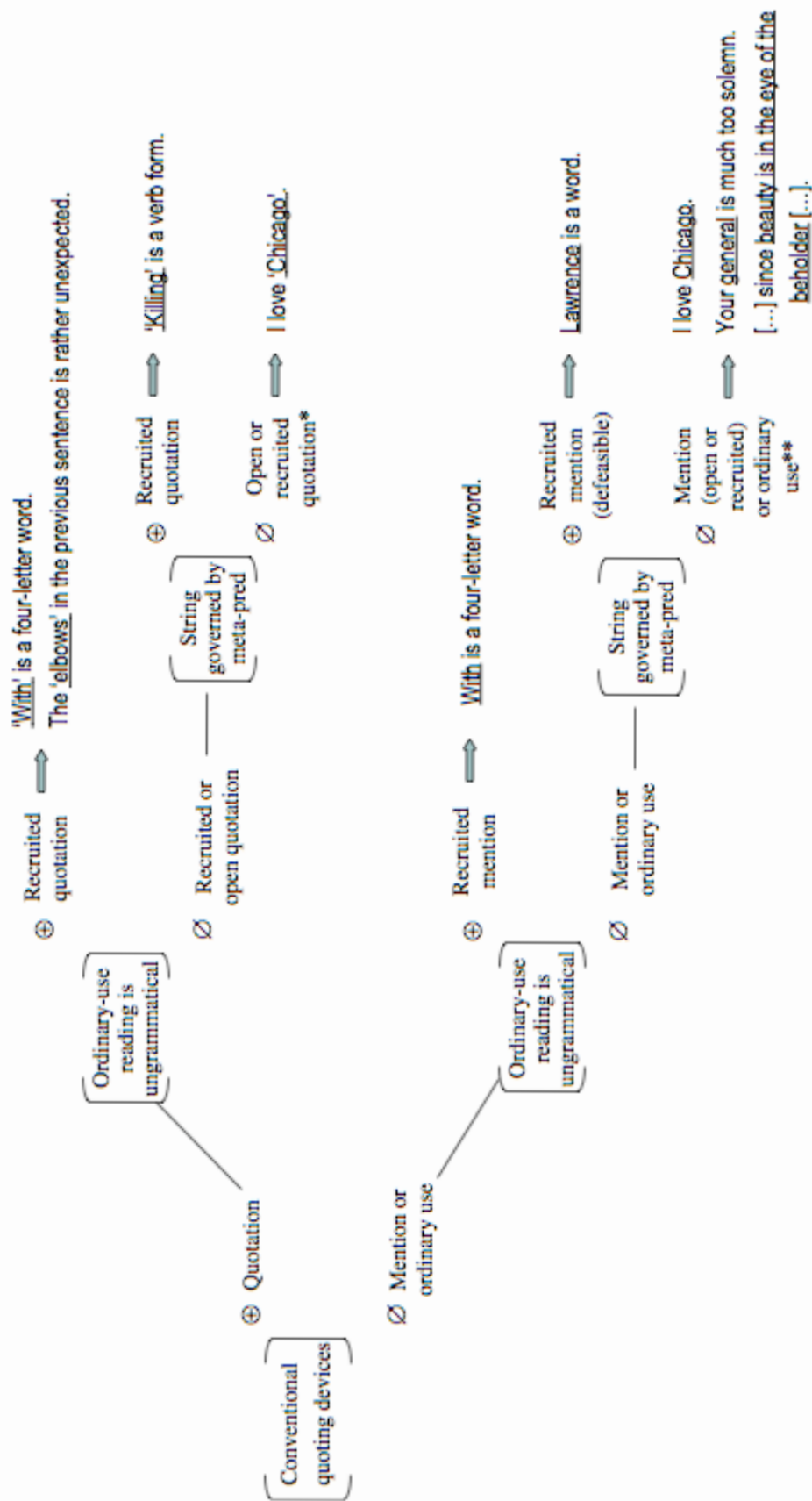
A final remark: I could not, through lack of space, include the criterion 'mimesis vs flatness'. This, however, is only a minor drawback since the distinction is rarely signalled conventionally (parenthetical clauses like *he said* are an exception, cf footnote 259), and a vast majority of metalinguistic demonstrations can take a mimetic interpretation over and above a flat one. Even ostensibly flat demonstrations can be mimetic, especially spoken ones, for instance when uttered

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<sup>337</sup> An exception is [being governed by a reporting V], which applies across the board to the four categories.

with deviant pronunciation or quirky intonation (cf examples (4) and (5) at the end of Chapter 5.1). In the end, perhaps only meta-metahomonymous examples are unlikely to take on a mimetic dimension. I have included two, a quoted quotation in Chart 2, and a mentioned one in Chart 3.

CHART 1 : RECOGNITION OF MENTIONING INTENTION



\* & \*\* : Further distinction will require the processing of contextual information.

CHART 2 : RECRUITED QUOTATION

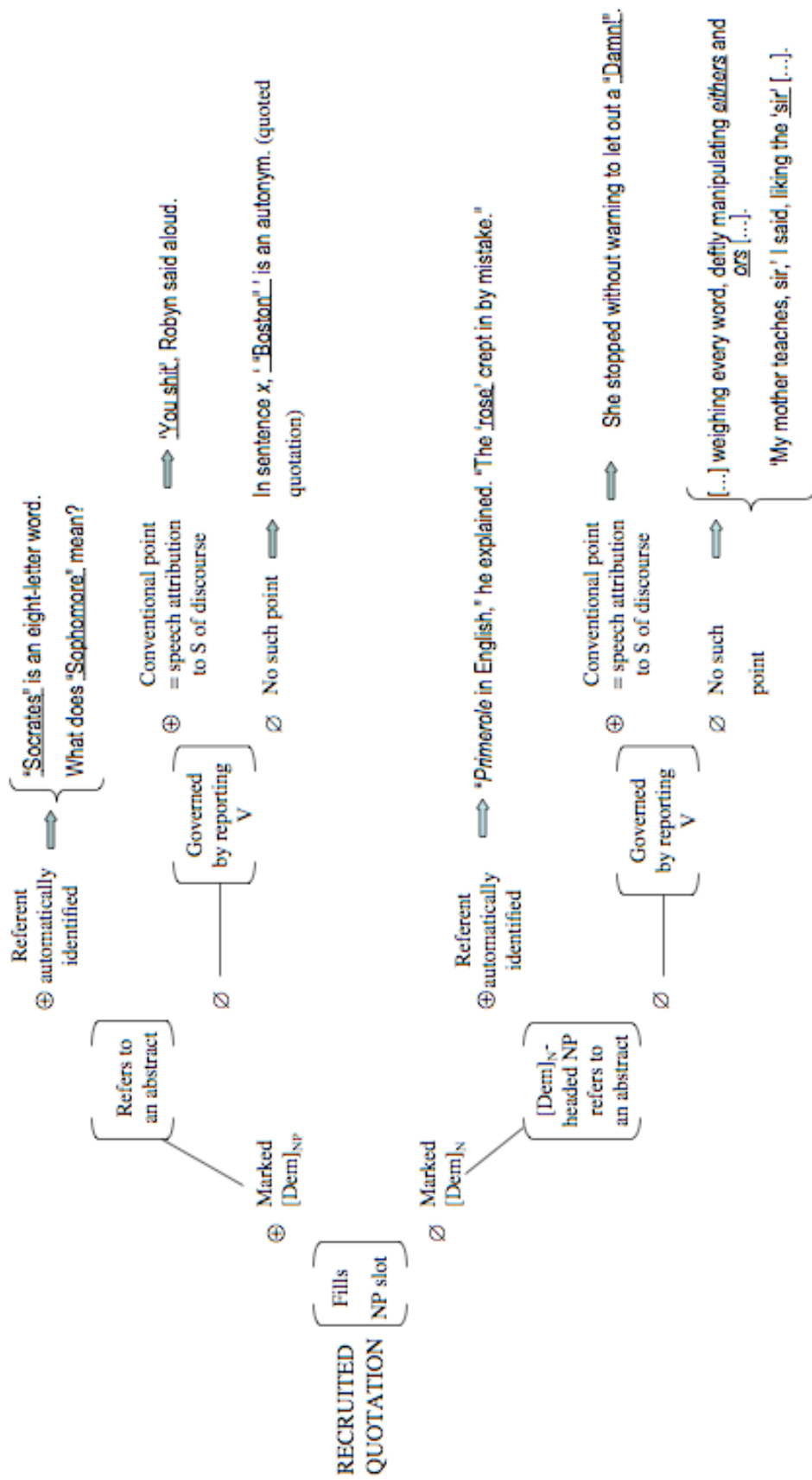
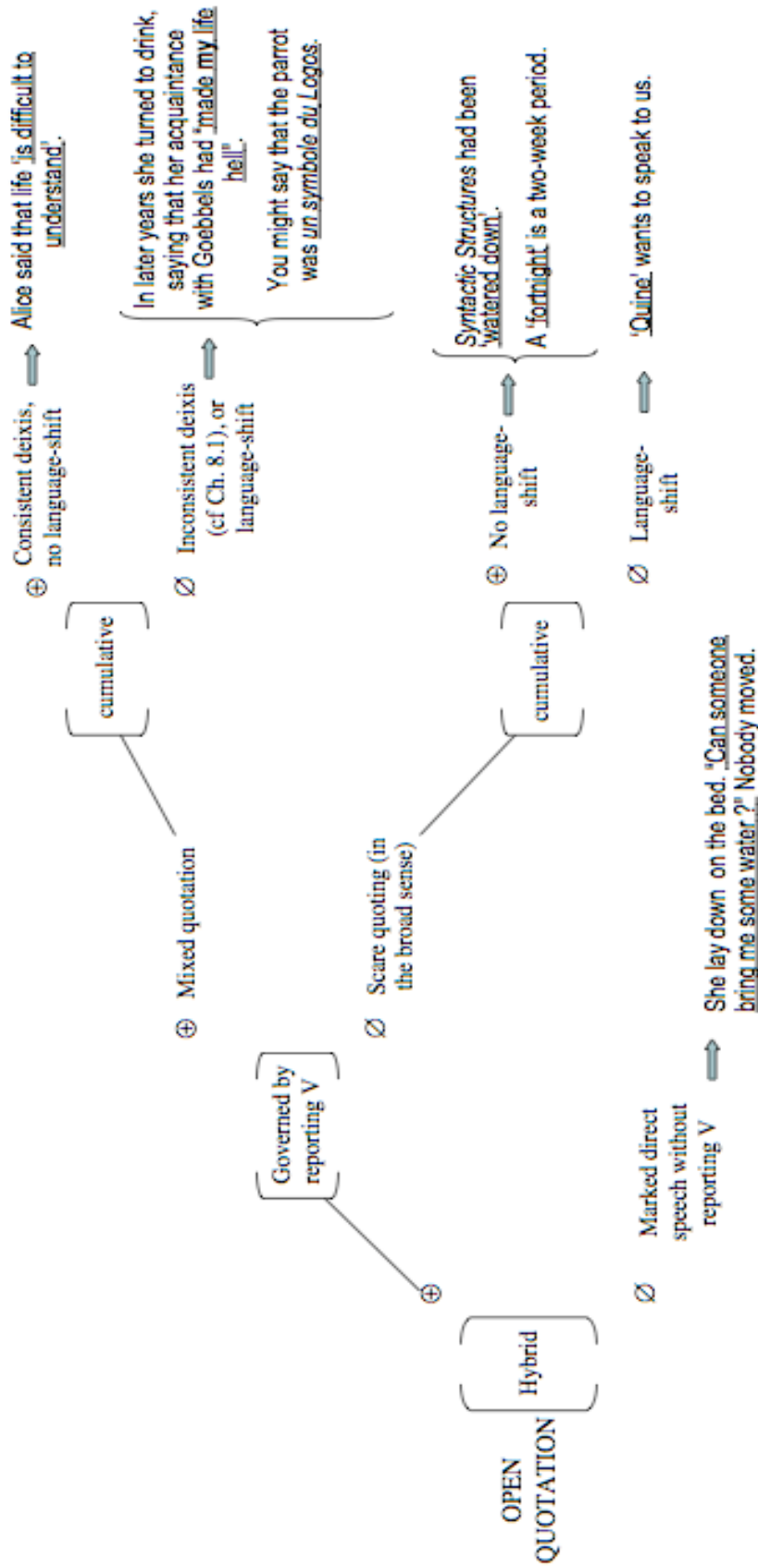


CHART 3 : RECRUITED MENTION

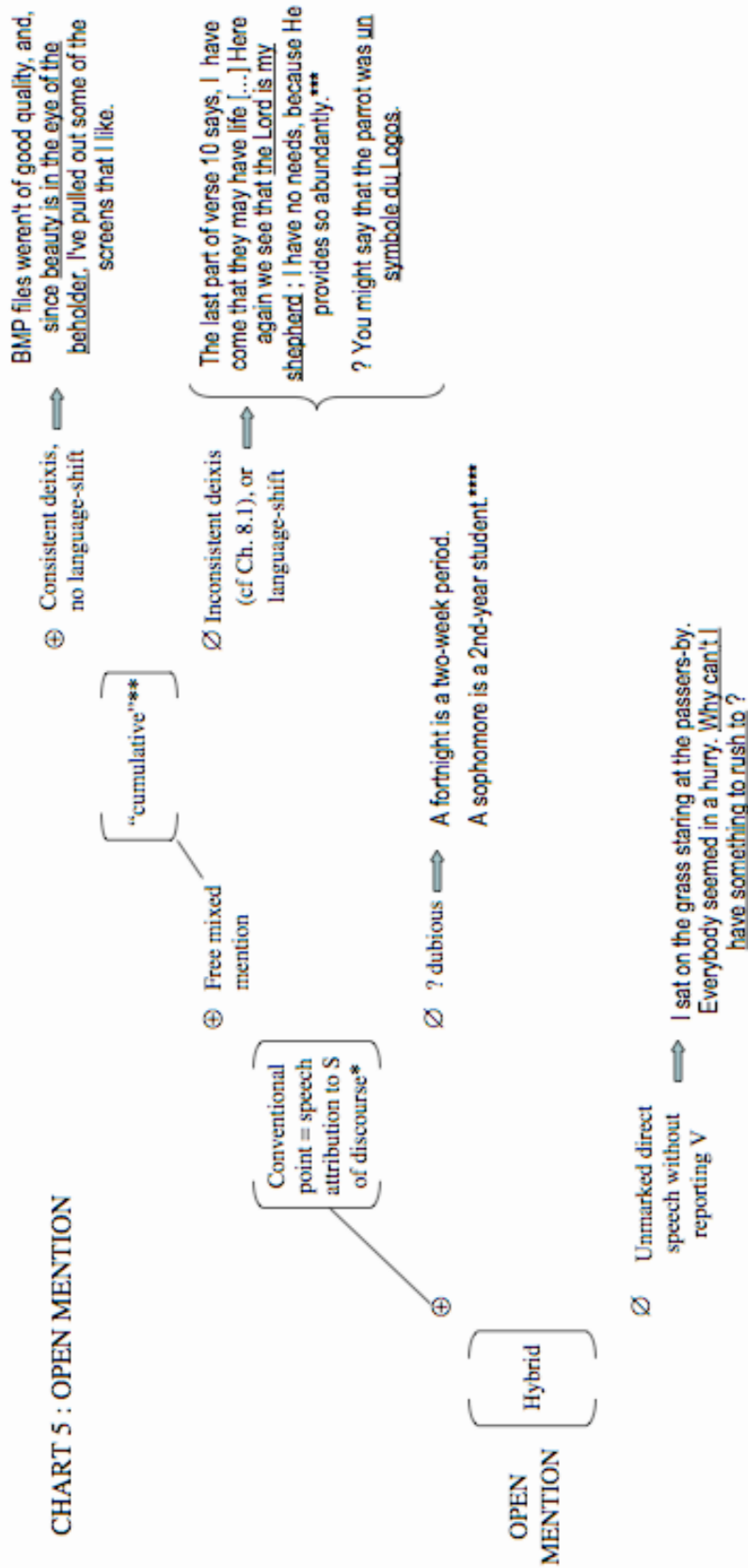




CHART 4 : OPEN QUOTATION



## CHART 5 : OPEN MENTION



\* The criterion 'reporting V' does not work here. The essence of free mixed mention is precisely that it is not introduced by a reporting V and yet supports inferences about a previous (or distinct) utterer.

\*\* The term is inappropriate here because some examples of free mixed mention precisely 'violate' the principle of non-cumulativeness.

\*\*\* The example with inconsistent deixis comes from ([www.bibrytr.com/psalm23.htm](http://www.bibrytr.com/psalm23.htm)).

\*\*\*\* As regards hybrid cases governed by a reporting V, there is obviously no scare quoting without quoting devices. As for cases of 'flat open mention', i.e. equational statements à la Jakobson, it is a moot point whether they are hybrids at all. (See Introduction)

## CHAPTER 7: Charting the metalinguistic domain: topography

Chapter 6 has supplied an overview of the various manifestations of metalanguage, especially in discourse. The present chapter is an attempt at dealing with the position of a metalanguage (in its various manifestations) in the broader context of its correlative natural language, and with respect to a putative object language. In 7.1, I examine to what extent natural metalanguage conforms (or fails to conform) to the picture of logical metalanguages drawn in Chapter 1. In 7.2, I explore the metalinguistic lexicon. In particular, 7.2.1 offers an appraisal of the penetration of autonymy into that lexicon, and gauges whether autonoms can always be told apart from meta-words; while 7.2.2 considers the possibility of a homogeneous lexical or grammatical treatment of autonoms: the question is asked whether they are part of the lexicon or are mere non-lexical ‘objects’ instead. These two options are examined in the light of the theories of quotation set out in Chapters 2, 4 and 5, and against the background of an important theoretical concern: which conception of the metalinguistic component of a natural language ensures the feasibility of a theory of that language ?

### 7.1. Metalanguage and object language (and natural language ?): 2 or 3 terms ?

Let us first recapitulate the main aspects of the relationship between metalanguage and object language (henceforth  $L_m$  and  $L_o$ ) in formal semantics:

- (i) Both  $L_m$  and  $L_o$  are languages in their own right. That is, they possess a lexicon of their own and there are formation rules determining their well-formed formulas.
- (ii)  $L_o$  is contained within its own  $L_m$ . Still, the degree and nature of the overlap is specified unambiguously: every element and every formula/sentence of the object language occurs in the metalanguage in the form of both a translation (which may leave the form unchanged) and a name. The name and translation are the constituents that jointly occur in Tarski’s T-biconditionals.
- (iii) In spite of feature (ii),  $L_m$  and  $L_o$  occur at distinct levels in a hierarchy of languages. They are clearly separated from each other in the sense that it is always possible to determine if a sentence belongs to  $L_o$  or  $L_m$ .
- (iv)  $L_m$  is usually built to describe *one*  $L_o$ , namely its own.

The reason why the boundaries and relations are so definite is that formalised languages and their metalanguages are designed in such a way as to display the desirable features just

recapitulated. In particular, the logician stipulates explicitly what the building blocks of his languages and their combinatorial capabilities are.

### 7.1.1. Natural languages

Contrary to formalised languages, natural languages are given rather than constructed. It is true that linguists impose a certain amount of normativity on languages, for instance by creating such useful fictions as the English language,<sup>338</sup> and by going on the generalised assumption that grammatical utterances can be told apart from ungrammatical ones. Even so, their theories aim at a substantial degree of descriptive accuracy, and that should be enough to distinguish the linguist's work from the logician's. However significant the issue of the normativity of linguistics, I cannot venture any further into it here.

Now the fact that English, French or Chinese are so-called 'natural' languages has several major consequences. Those implications that have a bearing on the study of metalanguage will be appraised here with respect to the four characteristics of logical languages delineated above. It is best to begin with a batch of examples:

- (1) Giovanni loves Maria.
- (2) *Love* is an English verb.
- (3) *John loves Mary* is an acceptable English sentence.
- (4) Every language has a grammar and a lexicon.
- (5) It is incorrect to say, 'Him saw her' (Droste 1983: 687)
- (6) It is nonsense to say, 'Wbnjnmrtk' (ibid.)

I believe it is safe to assume that all of these sequences are English sentences and that a vast majority of native speakers would bear out this judgment. This means, for instance, that the presence of foreign proper names does not disrupt the Englishness of a sentence (ex. (1)), and that neither does the quotation of an ungrammatical utterance or even of a non-linguistic one (ex. (5), (6)).

It is equally safe to assume that the first of these sentences 'is about' a situation in the world, whereas the next five 'are about' language. Therefore, if (2) to (6) are English sentences just as well as (1) is, then it must be inferred that metalinguistic sentences make up a subset of all English sentences; in other words, a natural language contains its own metalanguage.

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<sup>338</sup> To be perfectly accurate, the English language is a fiction as a naturalistic object, but, of course, it may not be as a historical, political or sociological one.

This conclusion is accepted by a majority of writers, and has prompted many of them to regard natural metalanguage not as a language in the strict sense but as a particular use of the language, a position that is evident in Roman Jakobson's works, but also in writings by Zellig Harris, Josette Rey-Debove, Greimas & Courtés, or Flip G. Droste.<sup>339</sup>

Whether one adopts this position or not depends on one's own definition of a language. If the definition is a purely formal one to the effect that a language is a set of well-formed formulas or sentences, then there is no reason not to regard, say, the English metalanguage as a language. The fact that there does not as yet exist a grammar that has demonstrated its ability to account for (i.e. generate and analyse) the English metalanguage is no more and no less a problem than the unavailability so far of a grammar that accounts for the whole of the English language. Now, if one understands *language* in the sense « natural language », then clearly a natural metalanguage is not such a language since it lacks the defining characteristic of being able to talk about 'everything' (what Tarski called its universality, cf Chapter 2.2).<sup>340</sup> Remember too that this makes natural metalanguage different from the logician's metalanguage, which must be able to talk about language and the world, as is manifest in Tarski's disquotational truth-sentences.

To sum up, a natural metalanguage differs markedly both from a natural language and from a logician's metalanguage. It can nevertheless be treated as a language if the term is taken in the logician's metaphorical sense of « set of well-formed formulas ». This conclusion partly takes care of feature (i) of the logician's metalanguage. Some light has been thrown on feature (ii) too: I have shown that, be it as a 'use' or as a language, the English metalanguage is contained in the English (natural) language. That is, the situation looks like the reverse of that which obtains in formal semantics.

### 7.1.2. The English metalanguage as included in the English language

As usual, reality is slightly more complex: in the previous paragraph, the term *natural language* (henceforth *Ln*), has been given the same role as that played by *Lo* in the recapitulation of the situation in formal semantics. Yet, it is not at all clear that, in natural languages, *Ln* and *Lo* are

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<sup>339</sup> Jakobson (e.g. 1981a, 1985) regards metalanguage as one of the six main functions of verbal communication; Harris (1968: 152; 1988: 34-35; 1991: 274-78) considers the metalanguage to be a 'sublanguage' in terms both of specific grammatical constraints and of its subject-matter; Greimas & Courtés (1979) write, for example, that "certain areas within natural languages must be regarded as metalinguistic or rather metasemiotic with respect to the semiotics they talk about" (1979: 226; emphasis mine); Droste's views (1983: *passim*, 1989a: 21, 1989b: 930) are developed below.

<sup>340</sup> More hyperbolically, Droste (1989b: 931) talks about natural language's ability to "describe anything, also the indescribable".

the same objects. I therefore suggest operating with three terms, *Ln*, *Lm*, and *Lo*, at least provisionally. We shall see later if  $L_n = L_o$ .

Though I have just suggested that *Lm* should be regarded as a use or a subset of *Ln*, it appears that not everyone agrees on this apparently risk-free position. Many are the language scholars who can be understood as holding that a natural language and its metalanguage are the same thing; that is, that the relationship that obtains between them is one of identity rather than inclusion. Witness Anscombe, who takes for granted “every language’s inherent ability to be its own metalanguage” (1985a: 6); or this passage by Hjelmslev:

By virtue of its universalism, an ordinary language can be used as the metalanguage to describe itself as an object-language: for example, a Danish grammar can be written in Danish. Usually, however, there will need to be some changes in the *usage* of the ordinary language, notably the introduction of a number of new signs, those which are called ‘technical terms’ or ‘specialist expressions’. (1966: 175)

How exactly does Hjelmslev set out the relations between the natural language *Ln* and its *Lm* and *Lo*? His statement can be construed as meaning that, in the case at hand,  $L_n = L_m = L_o$ . The same equation should presumably be accepted by the following writers, already mentioned in Chapter 1.2: Grelling, Carnap, Honderich, Bach, Flew, etc. Still, it is not clear if all those writers are using *language* in any strict sense, or, instead, as a loose synonym of *talk* or *discourse*. In particular, the allusion to a grammar in the Hjelmslev citation seems to indicate that *language* is to be understood as « discourse ».

It is that sort of imprecision that prompted Flip G. Droste to try and clarify the relations between *Ln*, *Lm* and *Lo*. I have already pointed out that Droste looks upon *Lm* as a particular use of *Ln*. What of *Lo*? Though it is tempting to equate *Lo* with *Ln*, Droste warns against making this move. Instead, the nature of *Lo* is defined in terms of a set of elements of *Lm*, namely the proper names that refer to something linguistic (essentially the same as Tarski’s ‘quotation-mark names’). Of this set, Droste says the following: “the proper names constitute a lexicon which is part of *Lm* or, rather, is essential to the creation of the special use *Lm*” (1983: 696).<sup>341</sup> To which he adds: “And the items of this lexicon refer to entities which, taken together, define the set *Lo* exhaustively. [new §] The *Lo* element [e.g. the referent of ‘*Love*’ in (2)] is an autonym of the *Ln* element but under no condition whatsoever should it be identified with it” (1983: 696-97).

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<sup>341</sup> It is not clear where Droste situates this lexicon: is it part of the *Ln* lexicon? A remark in a subsequent paper seems to confirm this interpretation: “Metareference and metaphor expand the set of lexical items to an infinite set” (1989b: 935). In this passage, Droste is speaking about the lexicon at large. I return to these issues in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2.

Several remarks are in order. First, in order to dispel confusion, it must be made clear that Droste uses the term *autonym* differently from both Carnap and Rey-Debove. Whereas Rey-Debove's autonym is an  $E_1 (E_1 (C_1))$ -sign, Droste's is apparently the  $E_1 (C_1)$ -sign designated by it.<sup>342</sup> And whereas Carnap's autonym is a name for itself, Droste's is only the referent of that name. I will therefore not adopt Droste's confusing use of the term, and will stick to the phrase *Lo element* in the discussion below. Second, it is not obvious why Droste should warn against confusing Lo elements with Ln elements. Granted, not all the referents of quoted sequences are elements of Ln. Quotations may also, as Droste points out, designate 'quasi-expressions' (cf examples (5) and (6) above). It is therefore correct to say that Lo cannot be the same thing as Ln. However, on Droste's account (and on anybody else's), Lo also contains "linguistic elements such as sentences, words, morphemes, etc." (1983: 697). Are these not Ln elements either? No, says Droste: "The Lo elements, finally, refer to Ln expressions or to things which are in the complement set of Ln (where Ln is defined as a set of sentences)" (1983: 697; my emphasis). In other words, one ends up with the following picture: quotation-mark names refer to Lo elements, (some of) which in turn refer to Ln elements (while the rest refer to elements from other languages, or to 'quasi-expressions'). Applied to examples (2) and (3) above, this means that the italicised autonyms in those sentences do not refer to Ln sequences but to Lo elements, say *love* and *John loves Mary*, which elements in turn refer to the English word *love* and the English sentence *John loves Mary*.

The postulation of a double layer of reference is not very convincing. For one thing, it is not economical. For another, it endows elements that do not occur in an utterance, namely Lo elements, with the ability to refer. If, as many scholars have advocated, reference is a speech act that relies on a particular use of certain expressions in an utterance-context, then the view cannot be countenanced that Lo elements, which stand outside the utterance, have the power to refer.

All in all, Droste's sketch also leads to something like the paradox that was pointed out in relation to Quine's classic version of the use-mention distinction (see first objection, chapter 2.1.2). On both accounts, the impression emerges that, in using quotation, one does not in fact speak about what one could be expecting and expected to speak about. On Quine's theory, a 'quoter' turned out to be talking about an orthographic accident rather than a full-fledged

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<sup>342</sup> This is only an early approximation. As we can infer from the citation, Droste's autonym, though it is not the quotation-mark name that occurs in an utterance (but rather its referent), is nevertheless not an element of Ln. Droste ends up with a three-tiered picture, where the quotation name designates an autonym which (in relevant cases) designates an Ln element. Therefore, one might venture that Droste's autonym is an  $E_1 (E_1 (C_1))$ -sign after all, but then one should also accept that his quotation-mark name is a more complex  $E_1 (E_1 (E_1 (C_1)))$ -sign.

linguistic entity; on Droste's, the same quoter is not talking about an Ln element but an Lo element. Access to the intended referents is only gained indirectly, secondarily, as can be seen in the short analysis of (2) and (3) above.

### 7.1.3. Rectifying the picture

As it stands, Droste's account does not make the grade. But it is worth building upon its initial intuition that there is no identity between the natural language, its related metalanguage and the latter's object language. I therefore propose the following rectification, whose first two features draw upon Droste's original outline:

- Lm (as a set of sentences) is included in Ln.
- Lo is the set of referents (or signifieds) of the autonyms (in Rey-Debove's sense) that can occur in Lm utterances. Lo is not a language (cf Droste 1983: 690), but a kind of heterogeneous list of suitable referents for autonyms of Lm.
- There is a non-empty intersection between Lo and Ln, but this intersection has a peculiar nature. Besides all the utterances of Ln, it also contains the whole Ln lexicon (whether that be morphemes and phrases, or words and phrases). In addition to that, any possible fragment of an Ln string, self-contained or not, is also part of Lo. To give but a few examples (with Ln = English): sub-morphemic or non-morphemic strings like *-chine* (as in *machine*) or *-ervation* (as in *preservation, conservation, etc.*),<sup>343</sup> supra-morphemic units, be they semantically complete (*new boy in town*) or incomplete (*a play and not being quite*).
- Lo, however, extends far beyond Ln (and possible combinations in Ln), as it includes:
  - Impossible Ln strings: *Him saw her* in example (5);
  - Morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, etc. from any other natural language, actual or imaginary:

(7) She gave me the name of *Gildrig*, which the family took up, and afterwards the whole kingdom. The word imports what the Latins call *nanunculus*, the Italians *homunceletino*, and the English *mannikin*. (Swift 1960: 108)

This category includes strings that comply with English phonotactic rules but are not attested in the productions of native speakers (I discuss pseudo-linguistic items shortly). EFL-students are very adept at creating possible but as yet unrecorded English words (or strings of words):

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<sup>343</sup> These are different from autonyms of real morphemes, as we find in *Vasectomy. It's the -ectomy that puts me off* (Barnes 2001: 109).



*constatate*, *factures* (for *bills*), *tenniswomen*, *medecin* (for *doctor*), etc.;<sup>344</sup> a group literary and artistic very influential. Arbitrary creations like *brillig*, *slithy*, *toves*, *gimble*, *outgrabe*, etc. from Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* also belong here;

- Arbitrary sub- or supra-morphemic strings from any natural language;
- Strings that are impossible in any natural language [if these exist];
- What might be called 'non-words' relative to English, such as *Wbnjnmrtk* in example (6) above. These are different from items like *constatate* or *brillig* in the sense that they violate the phonotactic rules of English. There could even be absolute non-words, in the sense that, although made of existing phonemes, they do not conform to the phonotactic rules of any natural language;
- Finally, one might want to add quotations of non-linguistic noises or symbols, as in:

(8) M pushes the penis on a gilt cherub which is flying up the mirror frame, and the whole edifice slides back with a great "**gzzhhd**". (*NS*, 20/12/99: 6)

(9) **PA-PA-PA-PA PUM PUM PUM** went Sir Jack as Woodie, cap under arm, opened the limo door, '*Pum pa-pa-pa-pa pumm pumm pumm*. Recognize it, Woodie ?' (Barnes 1999: 40)

(10) Gillian marks up the newspaper every morning. She has a red pen and puts ☆s by stories she thinks I might find interesting or amusing. (Barnes 2001: 187)

Yet, although these sequences are mentioned or quoted, and must therefore be allowed for in any theory of mention and quotation, they are not, strictly speaking, metalinguistic. A parallel can be noted between, on the one hand, the relation in which these reflexive sequences stand to genuine metalinguistic autonyms, and, on the other, the relation in which metasemiotic lexemes like *gesture* or *figure* stand to meta-words (cf footnote 280 in Chapter 6.1.1).

#### 7.1.4. Linguistic, pseudo-linguistic and non-linguistics elements

As we have just seen, Lo is made up of heterogeneous elements. These can perhaps be divided into linguistic, pseudo-linguistic and non-linguistic items. On a strict interpretation of the term *metalexicon*, it would seem that only those Lm elements that refer to the linguistic component of Lo should be tested for membership. The others, namely autonyms of pseudo- and non-linguistic objects, could not, strictly speaking, be members of a metalinguistic lexicon.

Let us begin with those items that deserve the label 'linguistic': this term should be defined independently of any particular language: a linguistic item is any string that exists in the lexicon or can be generated by the grammar of any given language, known or unknown. (Bennett's

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<sup>344</sup> Naturally, such unrealised strings in English may be genuine French words (at least in their written form).

Martian language (cf Chapter 2.2), if it exists, is accordingly made up of linguistic items). The fact that *linguistic* is defined relative to no particular language implies that English autonyms of, say, the Esperanto sentence, *Ĉar el la komunaj posedajhoj de la homaro, neniu estas tiel vere ghenerale kaj internacia kiel la scienco* (from Crystal 1997b: 356-57), is an autonym of a linguistic sequence. By contrast, in the present state of our knowledge, an autonym of Harris's *slept the a the* (1991: 31) is not.

As far as I can see, the term 'pseudo-linguistic' can only be defined meaningfully relative to a particular language. This means that, for the purposes of this dissertation, *pseudo-linguistic* will be synonymous with *pseudo-English*. I will describe as 'pseudo-English' those (pseudo-)morphemes that comply with the phonotactic rules of the language, and those (pseudo-)words, -phrases, -clauses and -sentences that comply with the morphological and syntactic rules of the language. On such a definition, Lewis's Carroll '*Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe* (from his *Jabberwocky*) is pseudo-English. By the same token, Henri Michaux's *Il l'emparouille et l'endosque contre terre; Il le rague et le roupète jusqu'à son drôle* (from his *Qui je fus*) is pseudo-French. Pseudo-linguistic sequences are always language-specific. Autonyms of pseudo-linguistic sequences are not infrequent:

(11) "Nothing much, to be honest. Nothing helpful. I was just wondering what "**Feminian**" means."

"... ?"

"I wonder if it's a real geological term, or if Kipling just made it up. It sounds so close to "feminine" that I suppose it must be real, but I've never found it in a dictionary [...]" (Barnes 1982: 119)

(12) Beneath the window is a bilingual rubbish bin with a spelling mistake. The top line says PAPIERS (how official the French sounds: 'Driving licence! Identity card!' it seems to command). The English translation underneath reads LITTERS. What a difference a single consonant makes. (Barnes 1985: 82-83)

Neither *Feminian* nor *litters* are linguistic items in English: the first is not recorded in any of the major dictionaries I have consulted,<sup>345</sup> and the second, at the present time, can only be used as an uncountable noun. However, given an expansion of the English lexicon and an alteration in grammatical status (a different exploitation of the grammatical potential), both pseudo-words would become actual linguistic items. That is all it takes for a pseudo-English item to become an English linguistic item.

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<sup>345</sup> *OED*, *WEB3rd*, *RHD*, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, and even Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*.

It is not unreasonable to assume that all lexical and grammatical innovations begin as pseudo-elements, in the sense of « possible but not yet acceptable ». Some of them retain that status, while others end up being accepted as part of the relevant language. Thus, the plural *researches*, once pseudo-English, on the definition above, is now recorded in many dictionaries and grammars, a situation which reflects its incorporation into actual English.

The previous paragraph does not just supply a possible description of pseudo-linguistic strings. It also adumbrates that the boundary between pseudo-English and actual English is fuzzy. One source of fuzziness is the fact that the object *English* is no more than a useful theoretical fiction. It might perhaps be more accurate to write that, at a certain moment in time, some of what I have called ‘pseudo-English’ sequences are genuine members or products of the lexicons or grammars of some idiolects, but still fall outside too many such lexicons or grammars to be regarded as English in the standard collective sense of the term.

The intersection between pseudo-English (or pseudo-Chinese, etc.) and linguistic items need not be empty. In language contact, interference is rife: the creations of Belgian students of English (*constatate*, *factures*, *tenniswomen*, *medecin*) are often pseudo-English strings with a linguistic existence elsewhere (in this case, *factures* and *tenniswomen* exist in the written system of French).

As for the term ‘non-linguistic’, it will be used in connection with representations of noises or sounds or ‘things’ that are not intended to be articulated expressions of meaning. This means that I regard the mentioned sequences in examples (8) and (9) as non-linguistic.<sup>346</sup> But, as can readily be seen, the expressions that mention them are like autonyms in all respects other than the type of object denoted. This means that, though they could not strictly be part of the metalinguistic lexicon, they are relevant data for a theory of mention and quotation.

There remain a number of moot points, however. For instance, what are we to do with sequences such as *Him saw her* and *slept the a the*? They are neither pseudo-English nor linguistic (at least, as far as present linguistic knowledge extends). Yet they appear ‘less non-linguistic’ than the noises or the music quoted in (8) and (9). A similar question arises with strings like *Wbnjnmrtk* (cf (6)), which seem to defy the phonotactic laws of any natural language: is *Wbnjnmrtk*, for all that, a non-linguistic object? My answer to these questions draws its inspiration from Bennett’s criticism of theoretical ‘parochialism’ (1988: 413-14). For example, since there is no theoretical restriction against Harris’s *slept the a the* occurring in Martian, this

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<sup>346</sup> It is unclear whether the case of mention in (10) is to be regarded as articulated meaning within the framework of a larger system.

utterance would count as pseudo-linguistic in English. The same policy will be applied to sub- and non-morphemic strings like *-chine* and *-ervation*, and to semantically and syntactically incomplete supra-morphemic strings like *a play and not being quite*. Only those sequences that are produced to denote objects (e.g. noises or drawings) that are not meant to convey articulated meaning will be considered non-linguistic and, therefore, not possibly among the building blocks of Lm.

#### 7.1.5. Intermediate recap

All in all, Lo is a peculiar collection of objects whose core is a linguistic component but whose periphery also includes a variety of pseudo- and non-linguistic entities. A direct consequence of this is that the building-blocks<sup>347</sup> of Lm are themselves largely ‘cross-linguistic’: if a language can depict the various objects listed above (= Lo), then it can also use all of the autonyms that serve that purpose.<sup>348</sup> This entails a potentially puzzling situation in which Ln (as a set of sentences) contains Lm, but in which the building blocks of Lm (i.e. autonyms) constitute a sort of pan-linguistic reservoir that vastly exceeds the specific Ln lexicon. Nevertheless, in the presentation just given, I do not think that this ‘mutual’ inclusion really constitutes a paradox. If the two levels, sentences and autonyms, are clearly distinguished, the picture I have outlined remains consistent.

Returning to features (i) to (iv) at the outset of 7.1, it can be seen that our sketch of the relationships between Ln, Lm, and Lo also provides a comment on characteristic (iv) of the logician’s metalanguage. Whereas the latter is usually tailored to the description of a particular formal system (or a family of formal systems), it appears that every natural language can talk about all natural languages, actual or virtual, and all possible arrangements of strings in any of those languages.

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<sup>347</sup> I am intentionally using this word instead of *lexeme* or *lexical units* because I do not want to have to decide at this stage whether autonyms are in the lexicon or not. The issue of the ‘autonymous lexicon’ is dealt with subsequently.

<sup>348</sup> Rey-Debove’s account of the versatility of autonymy (1978: 75-84) is the most thorough. But authors since the middle ages have underlined the wide range of objects that can be turned into autonyms (be used ‘materially’): words from any part of speech (not just nouns) (Ockham 1951, 1974: I, 67); clauses and sentences (Ockham, *ibid.*; Buridan [3.2.11-12], in King 1985: 120); even meaningless written or spoken sequences like ‘bu’ or ‘buba’ (Buridan [3.2.17], in King 1985: 121; Ferrer 1977: 163-64). More recently, let us point out Harris (1968: 11fn), who includes any sound or noise; Droste (1989a, 1989b) who extends quotability to the ‘indescribable’; Saka (1998: 133), who includes “non-linguistic vocalizations and imprints”; Lepore (1999: 693-94).

### 7.1.6. Metalinguisticity and metalinguistic levels

At this stage, only the third feature, namely the hierarchy of language-levels, still remains to be addressed. To begin with, it must be understood that a neat hierarchy of language-levels is not a requisite in the case of natural languages. For one thing, there is no need to avoid the paradoxes of self-reference. It is an aspect of the versatility of ordinary languages that they are able to generate ambiguous or contradictory utterances of any kind. To this difference in expressive potential, there corresponds a difference in the goals pursued by logicians and linguists: whereas the former seek to make clear the conditions under which a sentence or proposition is true, the latter are preoccupied with matters of grammatical or semantic acceptability.<sup>349</sup>

This does not mean that there is no point in asking if natural languages exhibit something like language levels in the logician's sense. We saw in Chapter 2 that quotation was iterable or recursive, in three senses of the word. Something like recursiveness is also recognised by e.g. Rey-Debove (1978: 42-45, 114), or Droste, who establishes it by means of the following pair of examples:

(13) 'John' is a proper name.

(14) "'John' is a proper name' is a correct English sentence. (1989b: 931; also 1989a: 20)

Whereas (13) is a sentence of the first-order metalanguage ( $L_{m_1}$ ) – it can be uttered to state something about the linguistic object 'John' – (14) is a sentence of the second-order metalanguage ( $L_{m_2}$ ) – it can be uttered to state something about the metalinguistic object "'John' is a proper name'.

Since there are theoretically no restrictions on recursion, there exists a potential infinity of meta-levels. Moreover, it may seem that each metalinguistic level possesses a metalanguage that is external to it: it is always an  $L_{m_{i+1}}$  sequence that is going to be used to 'say something about' an  $L_{m_i}$  string. Yet, as Harris has shown, this similarity should not conceal one major difference: though the metalanguages of the various meta-levels are external to their particular object-language, they are nevertheless all included within  $L_n$ . And  $L_n$ , contrary to what prevails in the logician's model, contains its metalanguage; in other words,  $L_n$ 's metalanguage, which is made

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<sup>349</sup> Cf Droste (1986: 761): "In normal conversation [...] the number of statements that can be defined truth-conditionally is far lower than the number of half-truths, suggestions, suppositions, and the like. As a consequence, truth as a parameter is less important in natural language and its use than in languagelike systems such as mathematics or propositional logic". A similar point is made by Rey-Debove (1978: *passim*).

up of the potential infinity of smaller meta-levels just described, is internal to it (cf Harris 1991: 274-78).<sup>350</sup>

At this stage, a major restriction needs to be introduced. The fairly neat picture of meta-levels just sketched is valid for occurrences that are, so to speak, maximally metalinguistic. But what of utterances that display a lower degree of metalinguisticity? As we saw in 6.1.1, not all meta-words are maximally metalinguistic; there exists a continuum of metalinguistic density. This continuum is reproduced at the sentence-level. But at that level, the meta-density of meta-words is not the only source of variable density.

Any scholar looking into the metalinguistic density of sentences must first make clear how s/he finds the logically prior differentiation between metalinguistic and non-metalinguistic sentences. Such a distinction may be based on two kinds of criteria, formal or pragmatic. The two authors who have defended the idea of a continuum, Rey-Debove and Droste, have precisely chosen a different criterion to establish metalinguisticity. Let me first deal with Droste, then return to Rey-Debove.

Droste defines metalinguisticity in pragmatic terms. There are no purely linguistic items whose occurrence can, of itself, give rise to a metalinguistic utterance. Meta-words do not as much as come up in Droste's discussion: if a sentence (cf ex (4) above) includes meta-words but no quotation-mark names, it does not rate as metalinguistic. Although this means that Droste (1983: 682) makes the presence of quotation-mark names a necessary condition for an utterance to be metalinguistic, even that presence is not a sufficient condition. This can be illustrated with these three examples of Droste's (1983: 683):

(15) 'Your witness', he said.

(16) He said, 'Your NitWess'.

(17) He did not say, 'Your witness', he said, 'Your NitWess'.

Whereas Rey-Debove, for example, would consider all three metalinguistic, Droste judges that only (17) is clearly so, because "[i]t is the exterior aspect of language, its phonetic structure, which is being discussed" (ibid.).<sup>351</sup> Though (16) looks similar to (17), Droste hesitates as to how it should be classified: apparently, the sentence leaves open the possibility that the quotation is

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<sup>350</sup> In a way, this account provides one more argument in favour of the thesis that natural languages are denumerably infinite sets of sentences.

<sup>351</sup> It should be clear by now that this – reference to linguistic form – is a condition that I do not regard as compulsory. The same remark applies to Droste's argument in the next paragraph. Droste, it must be said, also provides a broader criterion: to be truly metalinguistic, an utterance should "have language as its domain of research" – this seems to apply to the linguist – or "try to qualify aspects of natural language" (1983: 683).

not intended as a comment on somebody's pronunciation, but merely, say, as an instance of mimicry. Finally, though he says nothing explicit about (15), we may surmise that he does not regard it as metalinguistic: elsewhere, he classifies the sentence *Say 'Daddy'*, as uttered by a mother to her very young child, as 'natural' instead of metalinguistic. For Droste, therefore, not every utterance about language is part of the metalanguage; only those involving a direct and conscious comment on a particular language should properly be termed metalinguistic.

A direct consequence of this is that some instantiations (utterance-tokens) of a given sentence may be metalinguistic whereas others are not at all. So, for instance:

(18) He said, 'Au revoir'

will rate as metalinguistic if the quotation "refers only to the spoken sound chain", because it was the speaker's intention to "communicate a funny-sounding thing, a kind of greeting he is not familiar with". But it will not if the intention was to "refer to the greeting itself, i.e. to the message implied in the quotation" (1983: 694). In Recanati's parlance, (18) rates as metalinguistic if the autonym in it has a distal target, if it aims at mimicking something.

There is no basic problem with founding the metalinguistic vs non-metalinguistic divide on the pragmatic criterion of the speaker's intentions. But, since Droste does endorse the idea of a continuum, how can intentions account for various degrees of metalinguisticity ?

More and more one wonders whether the parameters 'natural' and 'metalinguistic' are mutually exclusive; here, as with 'grammatical' and 'ungrammatical', we may have to accept certain degrees of use and 'more or less' standards. (1983: 683; also 1983: 686)

The polar extremes can easily be told apart: the speaker either wants to 'qualify an aspect of natural language' or does not. In the first case, the utterance is metalinguistic, in the second it is not. But what of the intermediate degrees ? Can you have 'half a mind' to make a comment on language or language use ? Droste does not explicitate his views, but perhaps what he is thinking of are cases where speakers produce utterances with several simultaneous intentions in mind. Puns might be a case in point. Because they are first and foremost meant to be humorous, puns would be less metalinguistic than examples (13), (14), (17), which are unambiguously and solely about language. I am not sure this is a fair reflection of Droste's position, but it is the only way in which I can make sense of his "hypothesis that there is a hierarchy of intermediate levels between metalinguistic and natural use" (1983: 685).<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Droste's focus on intentions is fully compatible with Jakobson – who writes that 'metalingual' utterances "have direct reference to the linguistic code and its constituents" (1985d: 157; my emphasis) – and such psycholinguists as

Rey-Debove's starting point is different from Droste's. She takes it that, if a sentence contains a meta-word and/or an autonym, it is to some degree metalinguistic. This position defines a formal criterion for the meta vs non-meta opposition. Even so, two factors are going to influence metalinguisticity judgments: (i) if the sentence contains only (a) meta-word(s), the very density of the term(s) in question will be of paramount importance; (ii) in all cases, the grammatical position and function of the meta-word(s) and or autonym(s) is also going to prove significant.

Factor (i) must be dealt with in reference with what we saw in 6.1. There, Rey-Debove was seen to identify a continuum already in the lexicon. If the signified of a given sign includes a sign (or a class of signs), it is metalinguistic. However, this signified sign (or class of signs) may occur at various levels of inclusion within the overall signified; hence no definite boundary between the metalinguistic and the non-metalinguistic can be drawn, unless one is willing to make an arbitrary decision on a threshold of metalinguisticity. A similar situation obtains for sentences containing one or more meta-words: the fact that the signified of the word *book* includes [+ language] does not obviously turn a sequence like *She was dusting the books with a feather duster* into a metalinguistic sentence (cf Rey-Debove 1978: 165).

Factor (ii) is examined at some length by Rey-Debove (ibid.: 165-70). To avoid complications, I shall investigate the metalinguisticity judgement as it applies to clauses rather than sentences. Indeed, within a complex sentence that is not 'about' language may be embedded an unreservedly metalinguistic clause, as in *I don't like his matiness, if 'matiness' is the right word*.

Let us now consider three basic situations in simple NP-VP strings, as illustrated by these examples inspired by Rey-Debove:

- (19) A linguistic sign has a meaning / *Never* has a meaning.
- (20) Language changes over time / *Smashing* is old-fashioned.
- (21) Albert is talking

In (19), both the subject and the predicate are highly metalinguistic. In (20), only the subject is, while the predicate is neutral (it can also be applied to a non-meta subject, as in *Woollen caps are old-fashioned*). In (21), only the predicate is metalinguistic. Rey-Debove suggests that

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Gombert – who states that the psycholinguist regards as 'metalinguistic' only those "cognitive processes aimed at the conscious management of (reflection on or monitoring of) either language objects as such or their use" (1990: 15; my emphasis).



sentences like (19) are more metalinguistically dense than the other two sorts.<sup>353</sup> But more importantly, perhaps, she stresses that the universe of discourse of the grammatical subject is a determining factor in deciding on a degree of metalinguisticity. Both (19) and (20) are about language in a way that (21) is not.

Rey-Debove also hints at interesting implications for the passive transformation. It appears that the latter alters metalinguistic density, with *A gardener wrote this poem* being less metalinguistically dense than *This poem was written by a gardener*, because the passive transform has its (slightly) metalinguistic word in the subject position. Therefore, she concludes, the passive transformation is not sense-preserving when the grammatical subject and object<sup>354</sup> belong to a different ‘semiotic’, because it brings about a shift in the universe of discourse.

Related to the passive transformation are pairs of sentences containing verbs of opposite or complementary meaning, such as:

(22) Certain kinds of seats are called *armchairs*

(23) *Armchair* designates certain kinds of seats. (adapted from Rey-Debove 1978: 167)

(23), whose subject is an autonym (and, therefore, whose subject of discourse is language), is more metalinguistic than (22), which is primarily about items of furniture. Hence, even though these two sentences might by and large be deemed synonymous, they are semantically different in terms of their universe of discourse.

The factors reviewed so far are those that have the most definite impact on metalinguistic density. This holds for examples such as (19) to (23), namely sentences containing meta-words and/or autonyms (i.e. ‘pure’ quotation or direct speech). It is equally valid with respect to the hybrid cases, which have yet to be discussed in terms of meta-density.

I shall consider two categories of hybrids, mixed quotation and scare quoting. As regards sentences involving the former, a modicum of meta-density is always contributed by a metalinguistic verb (since mixed quotation, being a mixture of direct and indirect speech, necessarily rests upon a reporting verb). As for the latter, the sequence enclosed in quotation marks – which also functions non-quotationally (simultaneous use and mention) – is often the only metalinguistic ingredient. Let us take again example (26) from Chapter 6 (renumbered as (24)):

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<sup>353</sup> *Ceteris paribus*, i.e. assuming the meta-density of the individual lexemes involved in the sentence remains constant.

<sup>354</sup> Rey-Debove (1978: 167) writes *predicate*, but the predicate here, which includes the verb *to write*, is metalinguistic to some degree.

(24) Already Mr Scargill is threatening ‘industrial action’ – which of course means *inaction*, in anybody else’s books [...]. (Coe 1995: 73)

The metalinguistic density of the main clause in (24) is very low indeed, because its universe of discourse is ‘the world’, not language.<sup>355</sup> The impact of the demonstration is not very significant; less so than the impact of a genuine autonym, as an autonym exclusively denotes language. Of course, a sentence incorporating scare quoting can also be about a linguistic object (e.g. *Her ‘sentences’ are always too long*), in which case its metalinguistic density is high (but the contribution of the sequence in scare quotes remains very slight).

It is hard to offer a satisfactory assessment of the relative metalinguistic impact of the various factors identified, the main hindrance being the fact that several of these factors are likely to crop up at the same time. What is one to do with the following pair of sentences ?

(25) She told everyone that Lucy had gone over the top

(26) The ‘gunman’ could not remember the name of his target.

Neither is essentially metalinguistic; density is low. But they both display at least a minimal degree of metalinguisticity, (25) because its main verb is a meta-word (the reporting verb *told*) and commands indirect discourse; (26) owing to scare quoting and a metalinguistic direct object (*name*). Yet, when all is said and done, there is no way these two sentences can be ranked in terms of meta-density. In the end, the best that can be said is that some basic patterns can be distinguished, where metalinguisticity judgments are fairly reliable. This is the case, notably, when the subject of discourse is unequivocally linguistic. When one ventures beyond this elementary situation, however, especially when scare quoting and weakly metalinguistic items occur in the sentence, judgments become rather haphazard. Eventually, only one certainty remains: there is a whole continuum between fully metalinguistic and fully mundane sentences, and it will take a clever linguist to say where, along that continuum, one moves from one domain into the other.<sup>356,357</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> By contrast, the parenthetical clause is much more metalinguistic, with both its subject and object denoting something linguistic. Example (24) includes a shift from a mundane to a linguistic universe of discourse.

<sup>356</sup> As Rey-Debove notes, this fuzziness is not proper to metalinguisticity. It affects any semantic question of the type, “to what extent does a sentence talk about medicine, jealousy, etc.” (1997: 341).

<sup>357</sup> Remember also from Chapter 1, that some logicians and mathematically-minded philosophers hold the view that there are sentences that cannot be ascribed to any particular language-level (cf Parsons, as discussed in Putnam 1990). The latter situation, however, applies with respect to strict hierarchies of languages, not to natural languages.

### 7.1.7. Summing up

Though several additional issues could have been addressed here,<sup>358</sup> I believe it is time to move forward and determine what impact the meta/non-meta continuum has on our assessment of how much natural languages conform to formalised ones (esp. features (ii) and (iii)). It is evident that variations in the metalinguistic density of sentences compound the difficulties observed earlier with respect to a systematic separation of  $L_m$  from its complementary set in  $L_n$ . As with the varying metalinguisticity of lexical items, these variations make any such separation dependent on an arbitrary decision. Such a decision may be suited to the purposes of a particular linguistic study, but it has no strong theoretical foundations. As regards feature (iii), namely the existence of a hierarchy of language levels, it can be seen that the fuzziness observed applies not just to  $L_m$  as a whole, but also to all the  $L_{m_i}$ 's that together make up  $L_m$ . The obstacle to a systematic separation of meta- (or meta-meta- etc.) sentences from non-metalinguistic ones recurs at every level in the hierarchy. This, however, does not suffice to refute the existence of a hierarchy of levels: whatever its metalinguistic density, if a sentence is judged metalinguistic, then its meta-level is determined by the level to which the meta-words or autonyms belong: I may want to claim that *Autonyms are numerous in discourse* is more metalinguistically dense than *I don't like autonyms*; but both sentences, if they are recognised as metalinguistic at all, belong to the meta-meta-level (because, unlike *verb* or *preposition*, *autonym* is a noun for signs of signs rather than a noun for signs).

All in all, natural languages conform to formalised ones only very partially. Let me recap the main differences. First, any valid description of natural languages necessitates three terms rather than two:  $L_n \neq L_o \neq L_m$ . Second,  $L_m$  is a language only in the metaphorical sense that this term has in logic. Third,  $L_m$ , defined as a set of sentences, does not include, but is included in  $L_n$ . Fourth, there is no criterion, other than arbitrary, that allows telling meta-utterances apart from non-meta-utterances: that is because  $L_m$  is a fuzzy set, for both lexical and syntactic reasons. Fifth, though a hierarchy of levels must be acknowledged, it is not as neat as in logic, since it is also subject to the fuzziness resulting from variations in metalinguistic density. Sixth,  $L_o$ , which is not a language in any relevant sense but rather a list of items, vastly exceeds the lexicon of  $L_n$ . This is due to the fact that 'just about anything' can be mentioned or quoted.

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<sup>358</sup> Some of them are touched upon by Rey-Debove (1978: 165-70).

## 7.2. What is the metalexicon ?

Though the comparison undertaken under 7.1 has brought out several important characteristics of natural metalanguage, there are still questions pending. In particular, no definite characterisation has been provided for the metalinguistic lexicon (henceforth *metalexicon*): how large is it, and what kinds of units does it contain ?

How much have we learned so far about the metalexicon ? The first thing is that, if there is a metalexicon at all, then it must contain all of the ‘meta-words’ in the  $L_n$  lexicon. This simple statement nevertheless raises questions: we saw in 6.1.1 that (i) meta-words are subject to polysemy, and that not all their senses need be metalinguistic; (ii) even adopting a monosemous perspective (one sense per lexeme), one is faced with the issue of metalinguistic density and the resulting impossibility of drawing a non-arbitrary line between meta-words and non-meta-words. This means that, whatever else it contains, the metalexicon will be a fuzzy set.

If this were where it stopped, however, the situation would still be quite straightforward: if the metalexicon is the set of meta-words, it is trivially a subset of the  $L_n$  lexicon. As such, it is no more and no less fuzzy than any other subset defined by a particular object or a particular meaning component (say, zoology, warfare, or rock’n’roll): *Crane* is polysemous, and only one of its senses belongs to the ‘zoolexicon’. How about *lick* ? is it part of the rock’n’roll lexicon (cf *guitar lick*) ? What about *gig* or *concert* (also in the ‘Jazz lexicon’) ? The list of examples would be tiresomely long, and the question would not get us anywhere.<sup>359</sup>

For all that, there are, however, other candidates for membership to the metalexicon: autonyms. Remember Droste’s statement: “the proper names [i.e. our autonyms] constitute a lexicon which is part of  $L_m$  or, rather, is essential to the creation of the special use  $L_m$ ” (1983: 696). This lexicon, as far as I got the drift of his argument, was part of the  $L_n$  lexicon. Remember also the remarks about the vastness of  $L_o$ . If  $L_o$  extends far beyond the boundaries of a single  $L_n$ , say  $L_1$ , how does  $L_1$  manage to talk about all the elements of  $L_o$  ? By using autonyms. But are these autonyms therefore part of its metalexicon (and, hence, of the  $L_1$  lexicon) ? If they are, then the lexicon is in danger of falling prey to uncontrollable inflation. And, of course, a very large lexicon, if it turned out to be infinite, would pose a serious threat to the feasibility of a finite linguistic description of any  $L_n$ . In other words, it might question the legitimacy of a substantial part of the research carried out in linguistics.

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<sup>359</sup> Rey-Debove recurrently underlines that meta-words function just like mundane words “and differ only by the semantic field they create (language vs world)” (1976: 226).

The significance of these questions is to some extent a function of the kind of theory of autonymy that one endorses. There are theories, Rey-Debove's or the Name account, for example, that seem to tie you down to the lexical inclusion of autonyms: an autonym is a name or a common noun, i.e. a lexical item. Such a theory has its work cut out, because it seems inevitable that it leads to including the infinite number of autonyms in the metalexicon of the language under consideration. The Demonstrative and Identity accounts, which grant no lexical status to autonyms, seem to occupy a more comfortable position.

All these theoretical ramifications will be examined in due course. In the meantime, though, I would like to devote my attention to a few studies that have dealt with the traces that autonymy may leave in the lexicon. This ostensible digression is an essential component of any comprehensive attempt at what, for want of a better term, I have called a 'topography' of metalanguage. Moreover, its empirical analysis of a lot of examples eventually yields some results that might prove useful in the complex theoretical disquisitions that follow it.

### 7.2.1. The impact of autonymy on the lexicon

The relationship between the lexicon and autonymy has not received the attention of many linguists. Notable exceptions include Jespersen (1961); Benveniste (1966); Rey-Debove (1975, 1978); Droste (1983); Anscombre (1985b); Larcher (1985); Ducrot & Schaeffer (1995). The problem can be approached from two main angles. One may inquire whether, and to what extent, an autonym can pass into the vocabulary of a language. This corresponds to a diachronic perspective. On the other hand, one can also adopt a synchronic perspective and ask the question whether certain lexemes are considered, currently and by a majority of native speakers, to be connected with autonyms.

If, like Emile Benveniste or Josette Rey-Debove, one selects the diachronic angle, then the central difficulty consists in establishing the genetic relatedness between an autonym and the lexeme putatively derived from it. This is a central problem for any study in historical linguistics or etymology, but, in the case under consideration, it is compounded by the fact that the phenomenon to which I will refer to as 'de-autonymous' lexicalisation<sup>360</sup> has rarely been taken into consideration by lexicographers. As a consequence, a linguist cannot rely on existing

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<sup>360</sup> As one says 'deverbal', 'de-adjectival', etc. I have preferred this term to Rey-Debove's 'autonyme lexicalisé' (1978: 157-62).

reference works to supply him/her with a picture of the penetration of autonymy into the lexicon.<sup>361</sup>

It goes without saying that the synchronic approach avoids the obstacle just mentioned. Synchronically, the relationship between autonymy and the lexicon can be dealt with in terms of a single question: “What are the lexemes that native speakers regard as being connected with or derived from an autonym?”. Though more manageable than its diachronic counterpart, this question is not easily answered. Usual problems are the definitions of some terms of art (like *native speaker*, or *linguistic community*), and the fact that naïve informants have no intuitive grasp of such notions as autonymy.

#### 7.2.1.1. Anscombe on synchronic and diachronic ‘délocutivité’ (henceforth *delocutiveness*)

The French linguist Jean-Claude Anscombe has devoted several papers to delocutiveness, a phenomenon that has a lot in common with de-autonymisation. I take Anscombe (1985b) to be a reliable summary of his main positions. The concept of delocutiveness was first used by Emile Benveniste (1966), who originally reserved it for a category of verbs ostensibly derived from nouns, but actually originating in the formulaic utterance of a noun (which formulas Benveniste called ‘locutions’). For this reason, Benveniste refused to treat them as standard denominals and coined his term ‘delocutive’. His initial example is that of the Latin verb *salutare*, which, Benveniste says, is derived from the formula *salus!* (1966: 277-78) rather than simply from the inert lexeme *salus*. That *salutare* is not a plain denominal, he adds, should be evident from the fact that it must be paraphrased not as *to perform a salus* (which would be its meaning were it a regular denominal) but as *to say ‘salus’*. Both Rey-Debove (1975) and Anscombe (1985b) have criticised Benveniste’s account as vague, confused, and sometimes downright incorrect, but the significance of his fundamental insight – that some verbs derive from a formulaic use rather than a plain vocabulary word – is indisputable.<sup>362</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> None of the etymological dictionaries consulted mention the process of de-autonymisation (by any of its names...) as a source of neology (see Onions 1966; Klein 1966-67). Symptomatically, reference books on the science of lexicography do not record this process either (Hartmann & James 1998; Gaudin & Guespin 2000). Neither do Quirk et al. (1985), though they provide an extensive survey of word-formation in English. The two major historical dictionaries of the English language, the *OED* and *WEB3rd*, occasionally point out that a given lexeme is derived from an autonym (what they call ‘the utterance of a word or phrase’). The *OED*, in particular, proves quite hospitable to autonyms and their derivatives, but it does so in a disorderly fashion. This question is resumed towards the end of 6.2.1.

<sup>362</sup> Lyons (1977: 739-43) is the only discussion of delocutives I am aware of by an English-speaking linguist. Lyons notes a close connection with performative verbs.

Benveniste's delocutives all qualify as de-autonyms in the sense that will be specified below. This situation prompted Rey-Debove (1975), to propose an extension and reinterpretation of delocutives as 'autonomous denominals'. She made the claim that, had Benveniste sensed the connection between delocutiveness and autonymy, his account would have been more consistent and comprehensive, and fully usable. Like Rey-Debove, Anscombe (1985b) offers to reconsider and extend Benveniste's original framework. The result is a more comprehensive and deep-going treatment of the phenomenon than either Benveniste or Rey-Debove provided. Yet, Anscombe chooses to keep delocutiveness separate from autonymy, because he regards the formulaic dimension of delocutiveness as his central concern.<sup>363</sup> The emphasis on formulas results in a different map of the domain which I am trying to chart, a map that excludes such interesting de-autonyms as *an if, a but, a maybe*, for example. The main difference between de-autonyms and delocutives can be characterised as follows: a delocutive is a lexeme (mostly a verb) whose content (meaning) includes an autonym as performing an illocutionary act. A 'formula' can therefore be outlined roughly as a short, usually verbless, formulaic utterance with illocutionary force. The notion of de-autonomous lexicalisation is meant to cover a wider range of cases: a de-autonym is a lexeme whose content includes an autonym (in whatever capacity). All in all, delocutives form a subset of de-autonyms.<sup>364</sup>

Since my primary preoccupation is with autonymy in general, I am not going to adopt Anscombe's framework and develop his remarkable insights. I will nevertheless briefly sketch the distinction he draws between diachronic and synchronic delocutives (see Anscombe 1985b: 12-14), as it throws some useful light on our initial methodological question.

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<sup>363</sup> Not that Anscombe is not aware of a connection: in the end, he discerns three phenomena: delocutiveness, mention and 'citativity', on the basis of three different senses of the verb *dire*. For example, he states that, by and large, verbs or verbal phrases of mention (*dire « bonjour »*) report only a locutionary act, whereas delocutives (*dire bonjour*) do an illocutionary act. Finally, the intermediate category of citative verbs are like mentioning verbs but meet the extra requirement that the word they are derived from is understood to be used as a term of address; for instance, *dire tu* is citative because it entails that *tu* is the term used to address the addressee. Ducrot & Schaeffer (1995: 609-10) differentiate between citative and non-citative delocutives, but on the basis of a very different criterion. They illustrate non-citative delocutives with *remercier* in the sense « dismiss, fire »: this *remercier* is delocutive because you can dismiss someone by saying *Madame X, nous vous remercions des services que vous nous avez rendus*, i.e. a sentence which contains an occurrence of *remercier* in its basic sense of « to express gratitude to ». Still, it is non-citative because the use of this *remercier* in the formula used for dismissal is purely optional. In Anscombe's scheme, it would rate as a delocutive tout court.

<sup>364</sup> I find a parallel between this position and Larcher (1985), who points out that, in various languages, quite a few de-autonyms (which are 'delocutives' in his terminology) support either a locutionary or an illocutionary interpretation (cf 1985: 105), an observation which prompts him to distance himself from Anscombe's requirement that delocutives should have an illocutionary reading. Larcher's eventual conclusion is that a delocutive may entertain a variety of relationships with the locution or formula from which it is derived.

A lexeme (*Lex*) combines a signifier (*E*) and a content (*C*).<sup>365</sup> Lexical delocutiveness – there are other forms of delocutiveness, which I will not touch upon here – is a relation that holds between *Lex*<sub>1</sub> and *Lex*<sub>2</sub>, and can be defined as follows:

1. *Lex*<sub>2</sub> is a synchronic lexical delocutive of *Lex*<sub>1</sub> at time *T* if:

- *Lex*<sub>1</sub> is a formula.
- *E*<sub>2</sub> is derived morphologically from *E*<sub>1</sub>. (the derivation may be an incorrect reconstruction)
- Speakers understand *C*<sub>2</sub> in terms of *C*<sub>1</sub>.
- *Lex*<sub>2</sub> denotes objects, properties, relations or actions linked to the illocutionary act performed by certain utterances of *Lex*<sub>1</sub>. The link may be straightforward or not. For indirectness, Anscombe gives the example of the nouns *m'as-tu-vu* and *sauve-qui-peut* (in the sense of « panic, stampede »), of which the following offer a parallel: first, the countable noun *don't care* (see *OED*, IV, 954, col. 3)<sup>366</sup> means « a reckless or unconcerned person whose behaviour is typically embodied in the kind of assertive illocutionary act that he or she can perform by uttering (*I don't care!*) »; second, the noun *an I.O.U.*, means « a written promise that you will pay back some money, which is a promise that can also be accomplished by the utterance of *I owe you* followed by the mention of a sum of money ».

And now the diachronic relationship:

1. *Lex*<sub>2</sub> is a diachronic lexical delocutive of *Lex*<sub>1</sub> if:

- *Lex*<sub>2</sub> appeared after *Lex*<sub>1</sub>.
- At the time it first appeared, *Lex*<sub>2</sub> was a synchronic delocutive of *Lex*<sub>1</sub>.

Synchronic and diachronic lexical delocutiveness are largely independent concepts. The only interconnection resides in the requirement that a diachronic delocutive must, at some time, have been a synchronic delocutive. Apart from that, one may encounter synchronic delocutives that never were etymologically derived from a formula. All it takes is for the linguistic intuition of native speakers to have been misguided in such a way that it has created a link where there never was one historically (Anscombe 1985b: 13 discusses *À bon entendeur, salut*). This is similar to what happens in ‘folk etymology’, with creations that ‘remotivate’ an otherwise foreign and arbitrary-looking item; e.g. *sparrow-grass* (for *asparagus*), *crayfish* (from *écrevisse*), or *woodchuck*, *bridegroom*, *cockroach*, etc. (See Crystal 1995: 139 and Trask 2000: 124, for some detail). One may also find diachronic delocutives that are no longer synchronic. All it takes, in the language-state under synchronic scrutiny, is the disappearance of the formula *Lex*<sub>1</sub> that was

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<sup>365</sup> I have adapted Anscombe’s own terms and abbreviations to fit the conventions of this dissertation.

<sup>366</sup> Given the vast amount of information supplied somewhat pell-mell on a single page of the *OED*, I have preferred to make references unusually explicit.



at the root of the delocutive (Anscombe gives the example of French *ergoter*, from the no longer extant formula *ergo*).

#### 7.2.1.2. Which perspective for de-autonymisation ?

Both a synchronic and a diachronic approach are viable options, but the choice of one over the other will necessarily result in a different representation of de-autonomous derivation. Just as with delocutives, there may be diachronic de-autonyms that are not synchronic ones, and vice-versa. In spite of this mismatch, I have chosen to derive the greatest possible benefit from both approaches.<sup>367</sup> My starting-point is a diachronic question: what are the various destinies that an autonym can meet with in the lexicon ? There seem to be four, which can be broken down as follows: an autonym (i) can yield a lexeme whose citation-form is identical with it,<sup>368</sup> and whose signified includes the original autonym; (ii) can go through derivation or compounding and survive as an autonomous morpheme in the resulting lexeme; (iii) can exist temporarily as a virtual member of the lexicon, as it were, without eventually finding its permanent abode there; (iv) may, exceptionally, enter it as an unadulterated autonym. Of those four destinies, only the last mentioned can attest to the presence of genuine autonymy in the lexicon. This being the most extreme case, it will also be dealt with last in this section.

It must be understood that the present subchapter is not an exercise in historical lexicography. Therefore, numerous attempted derivations are bound to remain conjectural. Though the evidence for those derivations may exist somewhere, in a dictionary or a paper I have not consulted, I cannot carry out the exhaustive lexicographical investigation that would be necessary to dig it up. It is as a partial remedy for this fault that I have chosen to bring (a revision of) the synchronic approach into the picture. Let us look at a possible example (adapted from Rey-Debove 1978: 160):

(27) Why is he going back ? [interrogative adverb: « for what reason ? »]

(28) This *why* makes no sense; he should have written *how* [autonym « word *why* »]

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<sup>367</sup> I initially assumed that there was something more gratifying about the diachronic perspective: the results it yields (if any) provide a true picture of the impact of autonymy on the lexicon and of the role of autonyms in lexical innovation. I assumed that such was not the case with the synchronic approach, since it must sometimes depend on historically incorrect reconstructions. That was until I thought of the sensible objection that what a synchronic account provides is also a true picture, albeit one of the psychological reality constituted by a speaker's lexical competence. The same kind of stand-off prevails in other areas of linguistic inquiry; it is familiar to those who seek to inventory homonymy and polysemy in the vocabulary of a language: there too, the two approaches sketch different maps of the lexicon.

<sup>368</sup> i.e. if it undergoes a word-formation process, this can only be conversion (or zero-derivation), namely the "process whereby an item is adapted [...] to a new word class without the addition of an affix" (Quirk et al. 1985: 1558).

(29) What I'm interested in is the *why*, not the *where* or the *when* [lexical noun: « the reason »]

Our candidate de-autonyms are *why*, *where*, *when* in (29). However, I have no direct evidence that *why* in (29) derives from an autonym; i.e. that the transition from the stage represented by (27) to that represented by (29) necessarily involves the autonymous stage in (28). What can possibly be done? For my present purposes, I can see only one way out of this quandary: falling back on synchronic evidence. Now synchronic evidence itself is hard to get by. Clearly, it falls beyond the scope of the present study to check with a representative number of English-speaking informants that they 'sense' a direct connection between the *whys* in (28) and (29), or, to use Anscombe's terms, that they understand *why*<sub>11</sub> in terms of *why*<sub>10</sub>. I have therefore decided to relax the constraints somewhat and settled for the following adjustment: the question whether *why*<sub>11</sub> is understood in terms of *why*<sub>10</sub> is rephrased as the question whether the definition of a putative de-autonymous item includes, or may include, a morphologically related autonym. In so doing, I am not sure I am acting any differently than Anscombe did in his 1985b paper, or than a significant proportion of linguists when they make claims about native speakers' competence. Moreover, the compromise I advocate is similar to Rey-Debove's tentative response to the obstacles she encountered in her own derivations.<sup>369</sup>

I believe that my decision to avail myself of both the diachronic standpoint and the synchronic one does not ultimately invite serious objections. The diachronic perspective provides me with a starting-point and a useful framework for my analysis (the fate of autonyms in the lexicon); the synchronic one (in its looser revised form) spares me the trouble of remaining hopelessly stuck at any point in the development. In the end, the probable mismatches between the 'maps' that result from applying each method do not, as far as I can see, generate any substantial confusion. In those few instances where the mismatches were deemed significant enough, I have been careful to point them out and offer a comment. Now that the necessary methodological precautions have been taken, we can begin our review of the four 'destinies' of autonyms in the lexicon.

(i) 'Form-preserving' lexicalisations

I have divided this potentially abundant category into four subcategories. What they all have in common is that (a) a case can be made that they derive from autonyms; (b) the derived lexicalisation has undergone no formal alteration. The first three subcategories fall beyond the

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<sup>369</sup> See Rey-Debove (1978: 161), even though she does not herself discuss the present difficulties in terms of the diachrony-synchrony opposition.

compass of delocutiveness as covered by Anscombe.<sup>370</sup> They consist of de-autonomous nouns, which are grouped on the basis of the syntactic role played by the autonym from which they are assumed to derive. The fourth subcategory largely overlaps with Anscombe's delocutives, as it comprises verbs denoting the act of uttering the autonym from which they have been converted.

Before I tackle each group separately, I wish to deal with a set of features shared by the first three (the 'de-autonomous nominalisations'). These features consistently give rise to the same difficulty: where does one draw the line between autonymy as a discourse phenomenon and the products of its lexicalisation? For the following development, I shall rely on examples (27) to (29) above, and concentrate on the various occurrences of *why*.

*Why*<sub>11</sub> is different from both the adverb in (27) and the plain autonym in (28):

\* In contrast to (27), it has a very distinctive grammatical make-up:

- it has apparently undergone conversion from adverb to common noun.
- that it is a bona fide noun is confirmed by its ability to take a plural marker *-s*, as in the collocation *the whys and wherefores*.
- it is accompanied by a central determiner,<sup>371</sup> like all dyed-in-the-wool countable common nouns.

\* In contrast to (28), it is a lexeme, in this sense at least that it has been granted an entry of its own in dictionaries of English.

Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that *why*<sub>11</sub> is a de-autonomous noun. In order to be able to make this assumption, I have implicitly relied on an intuitive grasp of what separates autonoms from their lexicalisations. But can this intuition be objectified? It is not clear that the three grammatical features just highlighted (conversion, plural *-s*, determiner) suffice to this end. If *why*<sub>11</sub> really is a de-autonym, then it must be assumed that conversion already took place when the adverb *why*<sub>9</sub> was 'autonymised'. This seems to indicate that *why*<sub>11</sub>, which is a common noun, is likely to derive from a [Dem]<sub>N</sub>-autonym (as in (28)) rather than a [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>-autonym (which performs a sort of unorthodox conversion from, in this case, adverb to NP). Now, as we saw in Chapter 5, [Dem]<sub>N</sub>-autonyms are perfectly compatible with the plural marker and with a determiner. A case in point is (28) above, but many other illustrations are found in Chapters 4 and 6. I reproduce two below:

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<sup>370</sup> There is an analogy between these lexicalisations and the conversion of proper nouns into common nouns, as in *Your dad is a real Napoleon*. I shall nevertheless refrain from inferring that this analogy substantiates the claims of the Name Theory of autonymy.

<sup>371</sup> See Quirk et al. (1985: 253-56) for a definition. Roughly, central determiners comprise articles, demonstratives and possessives.

(30) His own papers were works of art on which he laboured with loving care for many hours, tinkering and polishing, weighing every word, deftly manipulating *eithers* and *ors*, judiciously balancing [...]. (Lodge 1978: 18)

(31) [...] Mr. Beavis began to tell them about the etymology of the word “primrose.” “*Primerole* in Middle English,” he explained. “**The ‘rose’** crept in by mistake.” They stared at him uncomprehendingly. “A mere popular blunder,” [...]. (Huxley 1954: 66)

I assume that the autonoms in (28), (30), (31), are active (not lexicalised). Yet, their grammatical behaviour is the same as that of *why*<sub>11</sub>. This means that, however considerable the grammatical distance between a de-autonomous noun and its corresponding homonym (*why*<sub>9</sub>), grammar does not suffice to distinguish a de-autonym from what I take to be unadulterated autonoms in (28), (30) and (31). At best, the three grammatical characteristics distinguished above are necessary conditions for de-autonomous nouns, but they are not in themselves sufficient.

Another argument that could be adduced for a clear-cut distinction, namely the existence of an entry in the dictionary, needs to be handled with caution. In itself, the dictionary entry offers insufficient support. After all, languages are dynamic structures, and dictionaries are only incomplete and delayed attempts at cataloguing their lexicons. It is therefore likely that some genuine de-autonomous nouns fail to appear in dictionaries. More importantly, as we shall see under (iv), there are dictionaries (chief among which the *OED*) that list items that have all the appearances of unadulterated autonoms. We shall have to assess then whether such oddities result from poor lexicographical methodology or not.

Still, lexicography may help. A rule of thumb can be formulated, according to which a de-autonym is a lexeme whose definition includes (or may include) an autonym but is not maximally reflexive. On this criterion, whereas an autonym is a  $E_1 (E_1 (C_1))$ -sign, its related de-autonym is rather a  $E_1 (E_x (C_x))$ -sign, i.e. one which, like all meta-words, exhibits some metalinguistic density but not maximal reflexivity. This process, Rey-Debove calls the ‘banalisation’ (neutralisation) of autonoms.

Let us try to apply this to examples (28) and (29). As regards (29), its meaning was initially framed as « the reason », but it can also be formulated as « the answer to a question initiated by the adverb *why* ». Both definitions indicate that *why*<sub>11</sub> is different from a maximally reflexive autonym. The same applies to *when* and *where* in (29) as well.

Thus, it seems that we have eventually hit upon a useful test for the differentiation between autonoms and their lexicalised derivatives. Even so, not all of the obstacles have been cleared. Take, for instance, this other sense of the substantivised *why*, as in *She could supply the ready ‘because’ to many of the old philosopher’s ‘whys’* (*OED*, XX, 307, col. 2). The *OED* defines

such an occurrence as “A question beginning (or consisting of) the word ‘why?’”, a definition which it completes with “a question as to the reason of something; hence, a problem, an enigma” (ibid.). Just as with *why*<sub>11</sub>, there is reflexivity or there is none, depending on which part of the definition is under the spotlight. Yet, it is hard to deny that the example from the *OED* ‘feels’ more autonymous than (29), an impression perhaps borne out by the use of quotation marks and by the fact that it is not inconceivable that the philosopher’s question might have boiled down to nothing more than repeated utterances of *why?*. This once again points to the fact that the boundary between a de-autonym and an active autonym may have to remain ill-defined. As we shall see, it is not unreasonable to posit the existence of a continuum from purely autonymous (at the left end) to partly autonymous to fully de-autonymised (at the right end). The *why* in the *OED*’s example would fall somewhere close to the autonymous pole, while *why*<sub>11</sub> would be located closer to the lexicalised end. The central criterion for the allocation of a position along the continuum could be the degree of reflexivity of the item under investigation:

- if it admits only of a maximally reflexive reading, it is an unadulterated autonym (cf *why*<sub>10</sub>)
- if it admits of (at least) two readings, one of which is fully reflexive, it falls somewhat to the right of the autonymous pole (cf *the philosopher’s ‘whys’*)
- if it admits of no maximally reflexive reading (but licenses a definition containing a formally related autonym), it is a de-autonym (cf *why*<sub>11</sub>).

The picture could be further refined by giving due consideration to grammatical status (NP or noun) and such signals as quotation marks, but these never bring more than additional evidence, they are not of themselves decisive factors.<sup>372</sup> I shall make reference to this notion of a continuum at several points in the rest of 7.2, while remaining open to a reappraisal of its validity, should an argument pro or contra come up in the discussion.

A review of the four subcategories under (i).

( $\alpha$ ) Among Rey-Debove’s examples of hypothetical de-autonymous lexicalisations, one finds an interesting subgroup of nouns that may all somehow be assumed to result from the object-position in the structure *dire* + *x*, with ‘*x*’ standing for an autonym. They are nominalisations of expressions that can singlehandedly form complete utterances, and can therefore be assimilated to what Anscombe calls formulas (see 1985b: 11-12 for details). This means that *dire* (or *say*) is to be taken in the sense of « to perform an illocutionary act » rather than simply « to utter one or

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<sup>372</sup> By way of a reminder: there are many genuine autonyms not signalled by quotation devices (Cf Saka’s mention of ordinary items); and there are genuine autonyms, [Dem]<sub>N</sub>, that function as nouns, not as NPs.

more vocal sounds ». It is all the more surprising, therefore, that Anscombe should not mention these as obvious cases of delocutiveness in his 1985b paper. Among these nouns, there are such very robust examples as *un merci*, *un bravo*, *un mea culpa*.<sup>373</sup> The English equivalent of the first of these, *a thank-you*, is described by the *OED* as having originally been a phrase uttered as a token of one's gratitude (as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> c.). The converted noun, first attested three centuries later, is defined as "An utterance of this phrase. Also, an unspoken expression of thanks" (XVII, 866, col. 3). Among the illustrations supplied, one finds *He looked even extremely gratified ... & bowed expressively a thank you* and *We had not said nearly enough 'thank-yous'*. The first is situated at the less autonymous end of our hypothetical continuum, while the latter would be located around the intermediate position identified above. Indeed, it is equally possible for the referent of *'thank-yous'* to have been utterances of the very phrase, though without -s (close to a maximally reflexive reading) or to have been utterances with a like contextual meaning (e.g. *I'm so grateful that...; Thanks so much for...*). As regards *bravo*, it too receives a twofold definition, reflexive ("an exclamation of *bravo!*") and non-reflexive ("a cheer") (II, 498, col. 2). Intriguingly, one of the examples for *bravo* as an interjection (not the substantive) actually includes a bona fide autonym: *His 'bravo' was decisive*, thus testifying to the hesitations of lexicographers when confronted with the autonoms of short utterances possessing illocutionary force. Incidentally, several such oddities will be examined when we tackle case (iv). Finally, as far as *mea culpa* is concerned, the *OED* symptomatically files its uses as an interjection and a converted substantive under a single entry (IX, 510, col. 2).

There are more nouns that presumably stem from the utterance of interjections (*a good-bye*, *a hello*) and, more generally, from utterances that are short sentence-fragments (*a yes*, *a no*, *a maybe*, *a how are you ?*, *a whadyacallit*, *a whatchamacallit*, *a whatsit*, etc.; Rey-Debove 1975: 248 mentions *un au revoir*, *le qu'en-dira-t-on*). As was observed previously, examples of these seem to be strung along a continuum:

— intermediate position (either autonym of de-autonym):

Not even a **hello**, **how are you**, my, how well you're looking ? (BNC JY8 3741)<sup>374</sup>

[...] hand-shakings and "**How are you's**" (George Eliot; quoted in Jespersen 1961: 31 [II, 2.48])

There was a chorus of nervous '**yesses**', and one or two cheerful ones. (BNC HTH 3042)

— nearer the non-autonymous pole:

<sup>373</sup> For the sake of clarity (avoiding confusion with active autonoms), de-autonymous nouns will be quoted with a determiner.

<sup>374</sup> In 7.2.1.2, have chosen not to number those numerous examples that are not referred to individually in the text.

Herr Nordern waved a **goodbye** and walked along the familiar road to the S-Bahn station. (BNC A7A 2399)

He smiles a **hello**, but his eyes only touch mine briefly, a disquieting sign. (BNC CA9 468)

There are too many **maybes** in the City, too many dreams within Dreams. (BNC GVL 969)

To break up old associations and **what-do-you-callem**s of that kind (Jespersen 1961: 31 [II, 2.47])

Some cases can hardly be located along the continuum with any certainty. In the following example, it would take access to at least the co-text to make a decision:

If you are going to launch yourself publicly into this great conspiracy theory, you will have a very sceptical audience who will want more than a few '**maybes**'. (BNC FR1 763)

The maximally reflexive reading is less likely than for the three examples in the intermediate position, but cannot, however, be entirely ruled out.

(β) Other likely de-autonomous nouns are obtained not from entire utterances (i.e. not from formulas) but from key segments of utterances. These can be described as contributing a logical meaning to an utterance. Among them, one finds adverbs, for instance the words *why*, *when* and *where* in (29), or *maybe* in the following example:

Maybe she wasn't such a nice girl. Maybe that old lady that Nash killed was somebody's loving granny. Maybe [...], and maybe [...].

Lee balled his fists. 'You got any other **maybes**?' (Ellroy 1987: 92)

Here, *maybes* probably stands for sentences beginning with *maybe* rather than just the repeated occurrences of the word itself. A similar account holds for nominal forms of *but*, *and*, *if*, and more infrequently *or* and *because*. Occurrences of these lexicalisations usually refer to longer stretches of discourse including one of these conjunctions. Note also that the plural forms of these lexicalisations are often coordinated:

If his parents had not separated, and if they had remained living in Rustenburg (two big **ifs**, not necessarily related), it is likely that we should never have heard of John Cranko. (BNC ASC 308)

'The Pole should be achieved around January 4 – although there are obviously **ifs and buts** before then.' (BNC CBC 2605)

'**NO BUTS, MAYBES, IFS OR BECAUSES**,' shouted the Headmaster. (BNC AMB 371)

The above examples must be contrasted with the genuine (fully reflexive) autonym in the following:

The “and then” reading of both **ands** in the first sentence can be shown to be systematically “read in” to conjoined reports of events by a pragmatic principle [...]. (BNC J2K 216)

(γ) Another noteworthy variety of lexicalised autonym consists of nominalisations of the personal pronouns of English. Almost all English personal pronouns have substantivised uses, many of which are recorded in dictionaries.<sup>375</sup> The following list provides an illustration for each of them:

The **‘I’** of the story // Man is not an independent unit; a self-centred, self-sustaining *I*. (*OED*, VII, 591, col. 1)

Haunted and blinded by some shadow of his own little **Me**. (*OED*, IX, 510, col. 1)

Take this journal for example – I’ve no intention of letting anybody else read it, but I can only write it as if it’s addressed to a **“you”**. I’ve no idea who “you” is. (Lodge 1996: 22)

That’s for thy selfe to breed another **thee**. (*OED*, XVII, 885, col. 3)

Because the **Thou** [...] is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded. (*OED*, XVII, 981, col. 3)

‘It isn’t a **he**, it’s a **she**,’ answered the girl. (BNC FRE 319)

Mr. Fitz Partington shall introduce him –It ain’t a **him**, it’s a **her**. (Jespersen 1961: 216 [II 8.41])

‘Oh dear,’ said Mr Mullin. ‘You see, I thought you were one of us.’

— ‘Perhaps I’ve known too many **us-es** in my lifetime.’ (Barnes 1999: 246)

In all of these examples, the highlighted words stand for a person or persons who could be designated by means of the corresponding pronoun. Thus, a him is a person you could refer to by means of the pronoun *him*. Unsurprisingly, there are other, more autonymous, uses. Rather more surprising is the fact that extreme cases of autonymous use should sometimes be recorded in dictionaries. This issue is examined in section (iv).

(δ) A final category of lexicalised autonym I wish to bring up under (i) is that of verbs converted from interjections (and sometimes from fragments of utterances), and whose meaning can be captured by the formula *to say*: ‘*x*’, with *say* meaning « to perform an illocutionary act » and with ‘*x*’ standing for the autonymous direct object of such an utterance. (Some of them, those that admit of a transitive use, additionally conform to the pattern *to call s.o. or sth ‘x’*, i.e. that of ‘citative’ verbs in Anscombe’s terminology). Subgroup δ includes quite a few of the delocutives originally discussed by Benveniste (the others are found under case (ii)), notably his English examples: *to hail*, *to encore*, *to okay*, *to yes* and *to welcome* (1966: 281-82). Other examples can be gleaned in the *OED*, which has entries notably for the verbs *to thee*, *to thou*

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<sup>375</sup> This category is less alive in French, especially as regards the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.



(usually in the combination *to thee and thou*), *to you*, *to if* (restricted to the form *iffing*), *to but* (archaic), *to yes*, *to bravo*, etc.<sup>376</sup>. Here are some illustrations:

I started **yessing** them the next day and it began beautifully. (Ellison 1965: 413)

In “Stars” there is a line “O'er the tumultuous snow”; while in my very first poem “My Butterfly,” I was even guilty of “**theeing**” and “**thouing**,” a crime I have not committed since. (Mertins 1966: 197)

Dear Sir: Re Canon Pulford’s timely letter concerning ‘**youing**’ God . Having being brought up to pray Biblically [...], I look upon the modern arbitrary trend in English-speaking countries with great disdain. ([www.evangelica.de/Letters to the Editor/On Youing God.htm](http://www.evangelica.de/Letters_to_the_Editor/On_Youing_God.htm))

He was **bravoed** and applauded. (*OED*, II, 498, col. 2)

### (ii) Autonyms as morphemes of larger lexical units

The phenomenon to be described in this section does not essentially differ from that reviewed under (i). However, the instances that fall under (ii) are further removed from autonyms in the sense that they have been embedded within larger lexemes. As a result, in contrast to what was repeatedly observed in the case of (i $\alpha$ ), (i $\beta$ ), (i $\gamma$ ), the resulting words cannot be confused with unadulterated autonyms. Case (ii) does not therefore raise the question of the continuum between maximally reflexive autonymy and autonym-based lexicalisation.

Most of Benveniste’s initial examples pertain to case (ii) because they are taken from Latin and French, i.e. languages whose verbal morphology is much richer than English. All the same, as we saw above, he does mention several English delocutive verbs, all of which, being cases of conversion, fall under (i $\delta$ ). The difference between (i $\delta$ ) and (ii), i.e. between the respective products of conversion and affixation, is not theoretically important. The fact that English has no marker for the infinitive is a mere historical contingency.

At an early stage in this subchapter, we saw how Benveniste proposed to account for Latin *salutare*. The suggested account was exactly the same as we proposed above for *to yes* or *to bravo*. The other examples in Latin, and analogous ones in French, such as *remercier* and

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<sup>376</sup> There is an astonishing wealth of similar verbs recorded in dictionaries (esp. the *OED*, which proves particularly hospitable to presumable de-autonyms). Here is a non-exhaustive list that shows the ease with which just about any utterance can be converted into a verb: *to damn* (in the sense “to curse, swear at (using the word ‘damn’)”, IV, 229, col. 1), *to darling*, *to dear* (also *to dear sir* and *dear cousin*), *to don’t* (as in *Don’t be always don’ting*, IV, 954, col. 2), *to goodnight*, *to good-morrow*, *to he* (as in *I must he and him him now, for he has lost his dignity with me*, VII, 35, col. 2), *to hello*, *to honey* (given as obsolete by *OED* but found through the Google search engine), *to hurrah* (*hurray*), *to lady*, *to mama*, *to Mister*, *to nay*, *to no*, *to no-ball* (in cricket, “to condemn as a no-ball”, X, 449, col. 1; i.e., of an umpire, to exclaim *no ball!*), *to sir*, *to what-the-hell*, *to yes-sir*. Some of these verbs are citative (e.g. *to darling*, *to sir*). More such verbs are mentioned in relation to virtual lexicalisations under point (iii) below.

*saluer*,<sup>377</sup> are of the same ilk: in all of these, the utterance of a noun (i.e. this noun as the object of a verb of saying: as an autonym), has become the root of a verb whose meaning is « to say: *x* ». As Lyons (1977: 739ff) and Anscombe (1985b: 12ff) remark, Benveniste fails to distinguish between several senses of the verb *to say*. That is why he also records *tutoyer* and *vouvoyer* as delocutives even though these are not speech-act verbs.<sup>378</sup> Rather, the content of each of these verbs includes an utterance (of *tu* or *vous*) that is not used to perform an illocutionary act but to address another person. In any case, what each content does include – and that is what matters most to the present purposes – is an autonym.<sup>379</sup> It is easy to understand why Rey-Debove claimed that substituting *autonym* for *locution* made Benveniste’s account more consistent.

Next to verbs, case (ii) also covers other lexical categories. Let us start with nouns. Rey-Debove (1975) mentions *j’menfoutiste* (« the person who says *j’m’en fous* ») and *béni-oui-oui*, a plural noun meaning « those who always say *oui oui* ». Similar examples can be found in English too: Rey-Debove (1978: 162) suggests that *teenager* contains the autonymous morpheme *teen*, as the word denotes adolescents whose age is designated by a word that ends in *-teen*.<sup>380</sup> Relying on entries found in the *OED* and *WEB3rd*, one can also mention the following nouns: *a yes-man* (*yes-girl*, *yes-woman*), *a nay-sayer*, *a hello girl* (« female telephone operator »), *an if-clause*, *a that-clause* (and many such grammatical labels).

Next to verbs and nouns, Ducrot & Schaeffer (1995: 609-11) discuss a delocutive adjective *puto/puta* in Brazilian Portuguese and the adverb *diablement* in French. The latter, whose usual role consists in intensifying adjectives, can be argued to occur in situations in which using the oath *Diable!* would be suitable. So, for instance, *Elle est diablement bien roulée* can be uttered in a context in which the utterance of the interjection is also appropriate: the sentence could be paraphrased as *She’s got such a good figure you feel like letting out a ‘Diable!’*. As can be

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<sup>377</sup> Other alleged examples in French are *bisser* (« to encore »), *sacrer* (in the old-fashioned sense of « to swear ») and *pester* (« to exclaim *peste!* »). There can be English verbs in (ii) too. The one example I have in mind is *to nay-say*, i.e. an example of compounding.

<sup>378</sup> Not, that is to say, in their ordinary use. But let us look at the related English verb *to thou* (from (iα)). There is no way of saying *I Thou thee that ...* For all that, it is not inconceivable to think of *I (hereby) thou thee, thou traitor* as a declarative speech act instituting a reality (in the present case, a relationship). I owe this insight to Jean-Pierre van Noppen.

<sup>379</sup> French *zézayer*, a verb meaning « to pronounce /z/ instead of /ʒ/, to lisp » is another similar example. Note, however, that Anscombe would keep *tutoyer* and *zézayer* apart, as only the former can be labelled as citative.

<sup>380</sup> As a loan-word in French, *teenager* has nothing to do with autonymy; it is a borrowing in the same way as *basket-ball*, *skater* or *software*.

understood from the description of this last example, certain cases of delocutiveness seem to stretch the notion of de-autonymous derivation to extremes.<sup>381</sup>

(iii) Virtual autonym-based lexicalisations

This category does not result from a mechanism different from those brought to light under (i) and (ii). It is distinguished simply by the fact that its members are momentary creations that have not been able to settle in the lexicon (yet): they are so-called ‘nonce words’. The boundaries of this category necessarily fluctuate, and the examples I have chosen to illustrate it may be found to be partly arbitrary. This is a direct consequence of the mismatch pointed out earlier between an ever-changing lexical component of language and the frozen picture supplied by dictionaries.

The first recorded examples I am aware of can be found in Jespersen (1961; originally 1913). Jespersen, however, included a lot of different phenomena under what he called ‘quotation-nouns’ or ‘quotation-substantives’ (1961: 213-15). It is left to the reader to differentiate between genuine autonyms (as in *the second ruin might easily be misread as run*), likely lexicalised autonyms (as in *the pupils had said their “Good-nights”*), sequences that are less clearly related to autonymous derivations (as in *I don’t care a damn (or a hang); it’s a toss-up; it’s dog eat dog in our business*), and, finally, what I am tempted to regard as temporary lexicalisations of autonyms. Here are illustrations of the latter: if no precise source is mentioned, they are borrowed from Jespersen (1961: 31 [II, 2.47-48]):

— Like (i $\alpha$ ):

Proud of his “**Hear him!**” (Byron)

One “**I’m sorry for you!**” weighs more than ten “**I told you so’s!**” (newspaper)

He timed his nods and yesses and ‘**Indeeds!**’ on an entirely mathematical basis, interspersing them with a sort of pucker-cum-squint that could be mild disagreement or the preface to some statement of his own. (BNC ASS 1507)

— Like either (i $\alpha$ ) or (i $\beta$ ) – i.e. it is unclear whether the boldtype sequences stand for complete or incomplete utterances:

the expense of ten thousand *said I’s*, and *said he’s*, and *he told me’s*, and *I told him’s*, and the like (Defoe)

“*I am afraid.*” “I don’t want any ‘**I’m afruids**’.” (Arnold Bennett)

— Like (i $\beta$ ):

The “**Shall-Nots**” [sic] of the Bible.

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<sup>381</sup> As for Anscombe, he also mentions a delocutive adverb, the Spanish *Quizás* (« maybe »), from the old formula ¿*Qui sabe ?* (« Who knows ? »).

[These reports'] indelible conclusions and unshakeable certainties have become the New Determinism, laying down the law with its secular **Thou Shalts**. (*The Independent, Thursday Review*, 15/03/2001: 5)

— Like (iδ) or (ii):

I don't know what we talked about; I smiled; the same old smile; I 'yes'd' and 'no'd' and '**really'd**', till I thought he must discover that I was listening to the band. (*OED*, XX, 733, col. 2)

Their two graces do so dear-cousin and **royal-cousin** him. (*OED*, IV, 301, col. 2)<sup>382</sup>

"I'll **exquisite day** you, buddy, if you don't get down off that bag this minute. And I mean it," Mr. McArdle said. [...] (Salinger 1968: 158)

[the addressee, a young kid, is pretending he has just sailed past the *Queen Mary*] "I'll **Queen Mary** you, buddy, if you don't get off that bag this minute," his father said. (Salinger 1968: 161)

[...] my mate Chris was genuinely impressed when Dale Winton said "hello darling" and kissed me, and I didn't bother to explain that dear old Dale kisses and **hello-darlings** almost everyone. (*The Independent, Thursday Review*, 15/03/2001: 4)

Among the last batch, we find a fairly productive process whereby the term by which you address someone can be turned into a verb, on the same 'citative' pattern as the transitive verbs *to thee*, *to thou*, *to you*, *to he*, etc. or *to dear*, *to darling*, *to honey*, *to sir* pointed out under (iδ). As usual, the inclusion of some delocutives in dictionaries but not others (e.g. *to baby*, *to sweetheart*, *to sonny*) is apparently no more than a matter of chance. Note that any proper name or nickname is capable of being turned into a temporary citative verb, especially in the context *Don't x me*, with 'x' standing in for *Jimmy*, *Miss Molly*, and so on.<sup>383</sup>

There is a particular variety of hyphenated strings that deserve a special mention in this section. These are especially common in certain kinds of journalistic and novelistic writing:

(32) Barry gives a **what-can-you-do-with-this-guy** shrug and walks out. (Hornby 1995: 61)<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Note, regarding this and the previous example, the choice made in the *OED* to record the verbs *to yes*, *to no*, *to dear-cousin*, but not the structurally identical *to really* and *to royal-cousin*. Such a choice is arbitrary, but inevitable too. The same remark applies to an earlier illustration of *to he* in the *OED*. The concurrent *to him* receives no entry. It is intriguing to note that quite a few of the examples under (Iδ) are presented in the *OED* as 'nonce uses' or 'nonce words': clearly, lexicographers may sometimes have trouble determining what is and what is not stabilised in the lexicon.

<sup>383</sup> I used the Google search engine on the Internet: almost every search term I entered turned up trumps. The following are possible values for *x* in the formula *don't x me!*: *babe*, *babs*, *dad*, *daddy*, *dude*, *father*, *Jim*, *John*, *Liz*, *man*, *Milady*, *m'Lady*, *mommy*, *Mrs*, *mummy*, *my love*, *pal*, *sir*, *son*, *Will*, *Your Highness*, *Your Honor* (but not *Your Honour*).

<sup>384</sup> The novelist Nick Hornby is an inexhaustible source for such examples (all from the same novel): *a let's-be-grown-up-about-life's-imperfectibility sort of conversation*; *an irritating well-fancy-that smile*; *this irritating oh-Rob-I-need-time stuff*; *the get-away-that's-my-favourite-Hitchcock-film-too part of sex*; *a whiny, how-come-you've-got-yourself-into-this-mess speech*; *can't-be-bothered-to-have-it-cut long dark hair*.

(33) But now suppose I shift into the fictional, play acting **let's-pretend** mode of discourse. (Searle 1969: 78)

(34) Hillary went all **don't-you-talk-to-your-father-like-that-ish** and then got back to her article. (Fry 2001: 5)

(35) [*Casino* is] the nearest that recent US cinema has come to producing a **“how-we-live-today”** statement of the Zola school. (*NS*, 20/12/99: 107)

All of these examples (those in the footnote too) contain an utterance, often a complete sentence, that has been hyphenated and is used attributively to modify a noun. In my random corpus, only one example, the third one quoted above, displays a different grammatical behaviour (predicative use, in which case the addition of an adjectival suffix was deemed suitable). The choice of the modified head does not seem to be subject to any severe constraints, as this noun can be countable or uncountable, and can denote very different kinds of entities, from utterances to facial expressions to movements of the body to such concrete things as hair: all it takes is for the denoted entity to be regarded as capable of signalling something. As regards the hyphenated strings, they often provide information on the content (or meaning, or implications) of the object denoted by the head noun: in example (32), the shrug means or implies the same as an utterance of *what can you do with this guy?* In (34), Hillary's facial expression – which is not as such mentioned, but is none the less implied – means the same as an utterance of *don't you talk to your father like that*. (Most examples in the footnote are similar in kind). Although slightly different, (33) is also to be understood in terms of a situation in which the hyphenated string would have been uttered: the mode of discourse alluded to is that which would be introduced by, or result from, an utterance of *Let's pretend!* As for (35), this example is deviant in the sense that the hyphenated string does not match a complete utterance.<sup>385</sup> But it is probable that hearers who seek to interpret the hyphenated string will need to reconstruct a whole utterance, *this-is-how-we-live-today*, and understand it as summarising the purpose of the film: *Casino* is meant to be a realistic depiction of contemporary life in the U.S. It is as if *Casino* 'said about itself', "This is how we live today".

To close this subsection, let me point out that some de-autonomous hyphenated strings are so standard that they are recorded in dictionaries. Such, for instance, are the nouns *come-all-ye/you* (i.e. ballads beginning with that invitation), *a take-heed* (when denoting a warning), *a come-hither* (also used attributively before *look*, etc.); or the adjectives *take-it-or-leave-it* (e.g. *a take-*

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<sup>385</sup> Another example is Hornby's *It's not an ooh-I-shouldn't-really-but-I-quite-fancy-a-pint sort of weakness; it's an inability-to-say-no sort of weakness* (1995: 179). To conform to the general pattern, the highlighted string should have been *I-can't-say-no*.

*it-or-leave-it attitude*), *devil-may-care* (cf *OED*, IV, 573, col. 1; Onions 1966: 262) and its less common slang synonym *what-the-hell* (as in *In cooking you've got to have a what-the-hell attitude*; *OED*, XX, 194, col. 3). *Devil-may-care* has provided a stem for further derivatives: *devil-may-careness*, *-ish*, *-ishness*, and *-ism*. It is clear that, from a diachronic point of view, these are not de-autonyms; they merely use a de-autonym as their stem. However, our revised version of the test for synchronic de-autonymous derivation would produce the opposite answer, since it is possible to define the content of *devil-may-careness*, for instance, as « the attitude of someone reckless who, in the face of danger, always seems to be exclaiming *The devil-may-care!* »: the mere presence of the autonym in the definition turns the lexeme into a synchronic de-autonym.<sup>386</sup>

While we are considering lexicalised hyphenated strings, perhaps the adjective *holier-than-thou* results from de-autonymisation as well, but none of the dictionaries consulted (even etymological dictionaries like Klein 1966-67 and Onions 1966) is of any assistance on this score. One also finds, in some English-French dictionaries, the phrases *I-couldn't-care-less* and *I-don't-give-a-damn*, which, when applied to attitudes, are synonyms of the French adjectives *je-m'en-fichiste* and *je-m'en-foutiste*.

Perhaps such lexemes as *also-ran*, *free-for-all*, *has-been*, *haves and have-nots*, *a might-have-been* (cf *Everlasting consideration of might-have-beens* (Kipling; cited by Jespersen 1961: 31)), *wannabe*, etc. can also be regarded as originating in autonyms. An *also-ran* is a competitor or a horse, etc. that is ranked under the heading *also ran*, or of whom/which it can be said that “it/he/she also ran”. A *free-for-all* is an argument or fight (or any situation in which there is something to win) in which everybody joins, and which is not subject to particular rules; i.e. a situation which can be described or initiated by an utterance of “this is free for all”. A *has-been* is a person who used to but no longer is successful, skilled, etc., i.e. someone of whom it might be said that he or she “has been great, etc.”. At all events, these reconstructions are not altogether convincing, and doubt may linger regarding the de-autonymous nature of the lexemes under consideration. In this respect, clearly, a diachronic confirmation or invalidation would prove invaluable.

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<sup>386</sup> Similar comments hold good for other derivations from de-autonyms, such as *nay-saying*, *yes-sirring*, *don't-carism*.

#### (iv) Genuine autonyms in the lexicon

There is, according to Rey-Debove, only one class of words that could lay claim to the dual status of autonym and lexeme: the names of letters, in those languages that have adopted an alphabetical system of writing.<sup>387</sup> Although it is easy to accept that they are part of the lexicon, given the role they play in the teaching of writing and reading skills, names of letters have not been neutralised; that is, they have not been deprived of the motivation that results from a maximum degree of reflexivity, at least in their written form. Names of letters can be represented by the formula  $E_1 (E_1)$ ,<sup>388</sup> which reflects the fact that they have essentially the semantics of an autonym. On the other hand, Rey-Debove argues, they also closely resemble meta-words, i.e. coded names of linguistic units.<sup>389</sup> Their grammatical behaviour tends to conform to that of words like *preposition* or *adverb*: they often occur as part of an NP with a determiner, as in *The word consensus[...] is spelt with **an s** because it is derived in the same way as consent [...]* (BNC FRA 912); they may be free of any quoting device; finally, in French, elision often occurs in front of a name of letter whose pronunciation begins with a vowel sound: *l'e muet*.

However, just as for the grammatical features of nouns like *why*, these characteristics are not sufficient to typify a homogeneous category. Rey-Debove herself acknowledges that names of letters sometimes behave grammatically like autonomous NPs, rather than plain metalinguistic nouns: examples abound, notably in reference guides on language and in students' grammars: *Foundations of English Grammar* (Dekeyser et al. 1999) italicises every name of letter, and so does *Practical English Usage* (Swan 1995). Fluctuations can be illustrated by the next trio of examples:

(36) The doubling of *c* is *k*: *picnicked, panicky*, etc. (Dekeyser et al. 1999: 396)

(37) The so-called 'silent' *e* of verbs such as *like, live, name, size*, etc. is often retained before the suffix *-able* [...]. (ibid.: 397)

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<sup>387</sup> A quick warning: it is important not to confuse these with names of sounds. The latter are not recorded in dictionaries – there are no entries for *a* *j* or *an* *æ*. Although that is an inconsistency, they are usually not considered to be part of a language's lexicon.

<sup>388</sup> The absence of  $C_1$  in the signified is easily explained by the fact that a letter, being a sub-morphemic unit, has no meaning. The presence of an identical signifier  $E_1$  as part of the signified is, according to Rey-Debove, enough to confirm its autonomous status. Note that the autonomous dimension of names of letters is relative. It is strongest in writing, provided the name... consists of a single letter. For instance, granting that both forms exist in English, *an alpha* is less reflexive than *an  $\alpha$* , since only the second is identical with its signified (= «  $\alpha$  »). In speech, the determining factor is whether there is a close match between the spoken form of the name and the main phoneme conventionally associated with the letter in question. On this criterion, *an o* is perhaps more reflexive than *a b* [bi:], which in turn is more reflexive than *an h* ([ɛtʃ]), whose pronunciation has nothing in common with the usual realisation of *h*, i.e. [h].

<sup>389</sup> In later writings, Rey-Debove (1997: 358, 366) will write more squarely that names of letters are not autonyms. This I interpret as both a convenient shortcut and a way of highlighting their status as meta-words.

(38) In bases ending in *-ie*, the *ie* is replaced by *y* before the *-ing* inflection. (Quirk & Greenbaum 1980: 30)

In (36), the names of letters carry the same typographical marking as the [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>-autonyms that follow (italics), while in (37) the presence of a determiner + modifier brings the name of letter closer to a metalinguistic noun (even though it occurs in italics just like the [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>-autonyms of the sentence). In (38), we have the paradoxical situation in which a digraph <ie> is preceded by a determiner while the actual name <y> is not, as if the former were less autonomous than the latter.

All in all, names of letters prove to be a very hybrid category indeed. In spite of that, I believe Rey-Debove's initial intuition to be founded. There is ultimately an important difference between the name of a letter and the nominalisations under (i $\alpha$ ), (i $\beta$ ), (i $\gamma$ ). Although the empirical data point up a continuum of uses from less lexicalised (signalled, for instance, by quoting devices and the absence of elision) to more lexicalised (elision, determiners, plural ending, no meta-markers), names of letters retain maximal reflexivity at any time, which means that they are always located near the autonomous pole of our continuum. In contrast, *hello*, *why* or *he* may occur with hardly any trace of their autonomous origin. This alone makes names of letters a distinct category in its own right.

We are not yet quite done with autonyms in the lexicon. I pointed out earlier that lexicographers tended to waver when confronted with autonyms. Let me expand on the matter here. There are dictionaries which appear to reserve entries for fully reflexive autonyms (other than names of letters). Here as elsewhere in this subchapter, the renowned *OED* exhibits a marked penchant for autonymy. Perhaps the most striking examples are that of *but* and *if*. Under (i $\beta$ ), we dealt with a nominalised *but* whose meaning was something like « an expression of condition or doubt ». Here is the *OED*'s definition for the noun *but*: « The conjunction but (sense 25), used as a name for itself; hence a verbal objection presented » (II, 705, col. 1; emphasis mine). The noun *if* is treated likewise: « The conditional conjunction [...] used as a name for itself; hence, a condition, a supposition » (VII, 635, col. 2; ditto).<sup>390</sup>

On what grounds do I claim that these are definitions of autonyms? In order to answer this question, I must first dispel an ambiguity in the word *definition* itself. I assume that two sorts of definitions can be given. The first are definitions in the widespread 'ordinary' sense (which is the one adopted in many reference works, e.g. Hartmann & James 1998; Gaudin & Guespin 2000):

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<sup>390</sup> In the next development, I shall focus only on the underlined (i.e. reflexive) parts of these definitions.



they answer the questions *What is x ?* or *What is an x ?*. In this sense, a definition is the same thing as a ‘definiens’. In the second sense, by contrast, a definition is an equation between a ‘definiendum’ and a ‘definiens’; in other words, it includes the sequence whose meaning is explained.<sup>391</sup>

One might venture that, in the first sense, what a definition defines is an object (the denotatum of the word under scrutiny); whereas, in the second sense, it defines a lexeme. Let us take the example of the word *foot*. Its definition will take either of the following forms:

the lower extremity of the leg below the ankle. (*COD*<sub>8</sub>: 458)

the noun *foot*, which means « the lower extremity of the leg below the ankle »

The first is indeed a structured description of a foot (i.e. of such an ‘object’ in the world), while the second is a reasoned description of the word *foot*, a description that can be equated with a segment of a dictionary entry such that it includes the headword.

The two definitions cited above for *but* and *if* (i.e. the sequences occurring inside the double quotation marks) are definitions in the first sense. If, however, we wish to construct definitions in the second sense, namely definitions of lexemes (or *signs*, or *words*), we obtain the following formulations:

the noun *but*, which means « the conjunction *but*, which means “(sense 25)” »

the noun *if*, which means « the conditional conjunction *if*, which means “ ... ” »<sup>392</sup>

Now it is easy to see that both these definitions are patterned on the formula for autonymy put forward by Rey-Debove. Both lexemes are  $E_1$  ( $E_1$  ( $C_1$ ))-signs. The dictionary, therefore, does record autonyms.

Next to the nouns *but* and *if* (in the relevant sense), the *OED* may be claimed to record other autonyms. For some of these at least, I assume my claim to be uncontroversial. We saw in (iγ) that the *OED* recorded allegedly de-autonymous senses of substantivised personal pronouns, on the pattern of « the person (or persons) that can be referred to or addressed by the pronoun in question ». But it supplies some of these nominalisations with an additional autonymous sense. Thus, for instance, the noun *thou* has a second sense, “the word itself” (XVII, 981, col. 3). If we reconstruct the full-length definition, we get: « The word *thou*, which means “the word *thou*,

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<sup>391</sup> Read Auroux (1979: 5-8).

<sup>392</sup> I am aware of the partial inadequacy of the second *means* in each definition: it is difficult to say that a grammatical word means this or that. Rather, dictionaries offer a description of the function or use of grammatical words. I do not believe this impairs the present argument in any significant way.

which etc.” »), i.e. an autonym. The same can be done with the definitions for *thee*, *us*, *you*, and even *I*, one of whose nominal senses is “the pronoun regarded as a word” (VII, 591, col. 1). Curiously, and rather inconsequently, no such senses are recorded for *he*, *her*, *him*, *she* or *we*.

There is another group of (senses of)<sup>393</sup> lexemes that can perhaps be regarded as autonyms in the dictionary. In (iα), we discussed a series of alleged de-autonomous nouns, all of which could occur as direct object of the verb *to say* in its illocutionary sense. In the *OED*, many of these substantives receive a hybrid definition, partly reflexive, then partly not. I already gave the example of *thank-you* and *bravo*; here is the definition (narrow sense) of the substantivised *good-bye*: “a saying ‘good-bye’; a parting greeting” (VI, 675, col. 3), and of *nay*: “an utterance of the word ‘nay’; a negative reply or vote (*U.S.*); a denial, refusal, or prohibition” (X, 262, col. 2). Similar definitions are supplied for the nouns *damn*, *no*, *yes*, *yes-sir*, and probably several others as well.<sup>394</sup>

These definitions differ from the previous batch we examined in one important respect. The generic or superordinate term that heads the definition does not designate a unit of the lexicon, but an instantiation thereof (*a saying, utterance, exclamation*).<sup>395</sup> I none the less believe that these entries too are entries for autonomous senses. An autonym, as we have repeatedly been able to observe, can refer to a variety of objects, notably other tokens of the same type. In the present case, we are dealing with autonyms of interjections (or one-word sentences), objects that can hardly be viewed as anything else than products of utterances. This ties in with the fact that these autonyms are to be understood as the direct objects of illocutionary *to say*, which can only be complemented by words designating tokens (i.e. sequences in use).

What I have just been able to establish is the presence of unadulterated autonyms in the dictionary. Yet, as I warned at the outset, the dictionary is only an imperfect reflection of the lexicon. Hence the question: what do these findings tell us about the penetration of autonymy into the lexicon?

We must preserve our earlier distinction between names of letters and the rest. The former are not problematic, in the sense that their occurrence in dictionaries can safely be assumed to be a

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<sup>393</sup> This is a qualification that might occur elsewhere: points are often made about one sense only of a lexeme. The issue already cropped up in Chapter 5, in the discussion of metalinguistic density.

<sup>394</sup> Substantivised *hello* receives no definition (!) in the *OED* but the examples illustrating the word indicate that it is to be treated likewise, as they include both full autonyms and de-autonomous nouns.

<sup>395</sup> Rather unexpectedly, the substantivised *hurrah* is defined thus in the *OED*: “a name for this shout” (VII, 505, col. 2), rather than as “an utterance of *hurrah*”.

direct reflection of their presence in the lexicon. The inclusion of the other autonyms is more debatable. I can see two ways of treating the data concerning this second category in the *OED*. First, its (erratic) inclusion could be put down to the lexicographers' whims and waywardness. After all, the 1989 *OED* reproduces entries the first of which were published as early as 1884, a time when lexicographical systematicity was not high on the agenda. It is interesting to make a comparison with more recent undertakings like *Webster's 3rd*, whose preface announces that it is "a completely new work, redesigned, restyled, and reset. Every line of it is new" (1981, vol. 1: 4a). Here, none of the autonyms listed above is granted an entry, with the sole exception of *damn*: "the utterance of the word *damn* as a curse". Since entries in *WEB3rd* exhibit a much more systematic make-up, the dictionary can be deemed to offer a more reliable picture of English vocabulary. If we therefore take our bearings from *WEB3rd*, we will conclude that genuine autonyms are not part of a language's lexicon (except for names of letters ... and the name of the curse *damn!*).<sup>396</sup>

All the same, a doubt still lingers. Though the compilers of the *OED* clearly had their quirks, these may nevertheless have been rooted in a commendable intuition. The body of data which a lexicographer sifts through will necessarily include 100% autonyms (basic cases of mention or quotation) just as well as allegedly de-autonymous lexemes like *an if* (« a supposition ») and *a but* (« an objection »). However, as we have seen, it is at times not clear whether one is dealing with a 'one-off' autonym or with its neutralised derivative. Hence the idea of the continuum that was tentatively illustrated under (iα). A lexicographer may, with some reason, hold the view that it is the same item (i.e. instantiations of the same expression) that occurs at either end of the continuum. For example, s/he may assume that one and the same lexeme *yes* is tokened in both the following sentences: *There was a chorus of nervous 'yesses'* and *Well, he nodded, but I'm not sure that meant a yes*. If that is agreed, then it becomes necessary to define the item under consideration in such a way as to cover its uses anywhere along the continuum. Hence such 'hybrid' definitions as are offered for *thank-you*, *bravo*, *but* and *if* (all of which are quoted earlier under 7.2.1). Though hybrid, these definitions are consistent with the examples selected as relevant by the *OED*'s compilers, and which, in the case of hypothetical de-autonymous lexemes,

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<sup>396</sup> Note that *COD*<sub>8</sub>, which also claims to be a "completely redesigned edition" (1990: vii), none the less records the following autonyms: '*bravo*', '*goodbye*', '*hello*', '*nay*', '*no*', '*yes*'. *COD*<sub>10</sub>, however, which is presented as an even more innovative edition, has almost blotted out any vestiges of autonymy, except for *a goodbye*, defined as "an instance of saying 'goodbye'; a parting" (1999: 611). Perhaps this sole remnant is enough to testify to the difficulty inherent in any attempt to do away completely with autonymy in the dictionary.

often include authentic autonyms (cf the remarks about *bravo* and *mea culpa* at the close of the 1st § under (i $\alpha$ )).

### 7.2.1.3. Conclusion to 7.2.1

It should be possible to derive a series of interesting lexicographical consequences from the work done over the last twenty pages or so. For example, one might seek to establish a typology of de-autonyms on the basis of a small number of ‘meaning-formulas’, such as *to say ‘x’*, *to call s.o./sth x*, *a y which includes or consists of ‘x’*, where ‘x’ is a variable ranging over (initial) autonyms, while y stands for names of speech acts, etc. This, however, is not my central preoccupation, and I will be content with highlighting those results that throw some light on the issue we set out with, namely the make-up of the metalexicon. Though interesting in its own right, category (iii) is hardly relevant in this respect, because it contains no items that are part of the English lexicon with any degree of certitude. Category (ii) makes no new contribution because its membership consists of items that are formally different from the autonyms on which they are hypothetically based: all representatives of the category are simply meta-words. Many of the items illustrating category (i), seen from one angle, bring nothing new either; they too are just a subset of meta-words. Since we already knew that meta-words must be included in the metalexicon – that was our only certainty at the beginning of 7.2 – this observation is unlikely to be a major breakthrough. Yet, seen from another angle, (i $\alpha$ ) and (i $\beta$ ) do make an important contribution. Indeed, our scrutiny of these de-autonymous nouns indicates that there is no clear-cut separation between autonyms and meta-words. This does not mean that there is no difference, rather that the sets of autonyms and of meta-words overlap to some extent: it seems that tokens of certain expressions occur now as autonyms, now as plain meta-words.

Let us now go over the list of items whose tokens were found to occur at various positions along the continuum between autonymy and complete de-autonymy. Among the words under (i $\alpha$ ), one finds:

– a set of names of specific speech acts: *a thank-you*, *a bravo*, *a goodbye*, *a hello*, *a how-are-you*, *a damn*.

– a set of names for underdetermined assertions: *a yes*, *a no*, *an aye*, *a nay*, *a maybe*.

Note that the remaining subset, with a *whadyacallit* and *such*, never stands on the borderline between autonymy and non-autonymy. Most of the time, these words, though they are derived from the accomplishment of a speech act (a request for information), are neutral words capable of designating any sort of entity (object, living being, emotion, etc.): they are not meta-words (or,

at any rate, their metalinguistic density is very low indeed). Of course, they can also be mentioned or quoted, in which case they are turned into full-fledged autonyms, but never do they display the same kind of fuzziness as the two subsets listed above.

As regards the items under (iβ), they are all capable of denoting speech acts, sometimes mental acts too: *a why* (*where, when, how*) denotes either a question as to the reason or cause (place, time, manner) of something or an answer to that question. It is only in the former sense that these items can be borderline cases. When *the why*<sup>397</sup> refers to an answer, it cannot be taken for an autonym (probably because *why* on its own cannot constitute a full answer to a question). *An if*, though it may perhaps be regarded as non-metalinguistic sometimes (meaning = « a condition », « a specific mental act: supposition »), usually refers to the assertion of a condition or a supposition. The same applies, mutatis mutandis, to the substantivised *but, because, and, or*. Yet, among these items, only those that can occur as complete utterances have possible borderline realisations between autonymy and meta-word. This means that *and* and *or* do not lend themselves to the sort of indeterminacy that may affect the nouns *why* (etc.), *if, but, because*.<sup>398</sup> *An and either* denotes an expression of condition or doubt or the word *and*, but in no sentential context are both possibilities present (as a look at the example in *OED*, I, 450, col. 1-2, confirms). Likewise with *or*.

I am tempted to conclude that the items found in the overlapping area between strict autonyms and strict meta-words are words that are, by themselves, capable of denoting speech acts and of performing them. To this group can be added the first category examined under (iv), i.e. names of letters, with the interesting difference that these are inherently hybrid, whereas only some tokens of the previous batch occupy an intermediate position on the continuum. A further look at (iv) confirms these findings: the unadulterated autonyms listed by the *OED* nearly all co-exist with a de-autonomous meta-word that denotes a speech act. There is one set of exceptions, though: those substantivised pronouns listed under (iv), for some of which the dictionary records an autonymous sense. I have no sensible explanation for the latter decision, except perhaps the

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<sup>397</sup> In this sense, it usually occurs with the definite article.

<sup>398</sup> One might wish to look at markers of quotation for additional evidence that native speakers (writers) feel that they are using an autonym. As it turns out, this move is not particularly fruitful. First, it is clear that quoting devices are much less prevalent in (iα), (iβ) than in their short-lived counterparts under (iii). This probably means that we are dealing primarily with scare quoting rather than the marking of plain autonymy. Note that, when quoting devices are used under (iα) and (iβ), there seems to be some correlation with location nearer the autonymous pole. Correlations can be observed too, in a somewhat trivial way, when the item under consideration is attached to a metalinguistic predicate.

fact that these frequent substantivisations may sometimes leave room for confusion between word and object (?).

In a sense, this conclusion does not do full justice to delocutiveness. Indeed, it is arguable that many of our borderline cases are delocutives (an obvious exception being names of letters, a less obvious one names of assertions such as *a yes*, *a maybe*), as one look at the definitions reproduced in 7.2.1.1 should make plain enough. Still, it appears that students of delocutiveness, though they explicitly point out that there is no initial restriction on word class, have been concerned mainly with verbs, and these are of no relevance to our present metalexical concerns. Had they been more preoccupied with delocutive nouns, then delocutiveness would have been granted greater prominence in these concluding statements.

Let me finally point out the following interesting consequence: the present findings are grist to the mill of those who feel that the metalexicon forms a more linguistically relevant sublexicon than that of zoology or rock'n'roll. We saw that, grammatically speaking, meta-words were nothing special. We saw too that the semantic component [+ LANGUAGE] at the heart of the set of meta-words was not in itself more interesting than, say, [+ ANIMAL] (for the sublexicon of zoology). Now, however, we have a stronger justification: there is a connection between the dull world of meta-words and the unquestionably fascinating world of autonyms: some items seem to have one foot in each, so to say.

## 7.2.2. Towards a homogeneous account of all autonyms

### 7.2.2.1. Placing all autonyms in the lexicon

In this section, I examine the consequences of locating all autonyms in the lexicon. It will appear that some of the claims made are difficult to evaluate, partly because they reach a very high level of technical refinement, but also because they are perhaps not formulated in the best possible manner. In a way, my goal in the following pages is to state the issues at stake, rather than trying at all costs to provide a definitive solution. I hope to be able to show that, if a satisfactory answer is ever to be sketched, a broader view will have to be adopted, one that does not take for granted the lexical status of proper nouns, common nouns, etc. For it is my impression that, if autonyms raise genuine lexical problems, they may not be the only category of linguistic items to do so.

Now the very question of the incorporation of autonyms into the lexicon may sound rather odd, considering that autonyms are widely thought to be a discourse phenomenon, a position that

I have fully endorsed until now. As far as I can see, the question is nevertheless justified for the following two reasons. To begin with, we have just seen that some autonoms are recorded as lexical items in some dictionaries. More to the point, perhaps, we have been led to conclude that the line is not easy to draw between meta-words and autonoms: some autonoms (all of them [Dem]<sub>N</sub>) seem to be tokens of a noun that also has de-autonomous tokens. It is not illegitimate to strive for a homogeneous treatment of autonoms and, accordingly, to inquire whether we would not be well-advised to regard all of them as somehow part of the lexicon. Moreover, this concern for homogeneity comes together with the need to look into a number of warnings issued in connection with the Name Theory (and other theories that attribute a nominal nature to autonoms). Several authors note that ‘nominal’ theories turn autonoms into lexical units, and that this may cause substantial lexical inflation. Some have warned of a possible duplication of the lexicon – Christensen (1967: 359) about the Name Theory, Saka (1998: 116) about Geach’s variant of the Description Theory, Rey-Debove about her own ‘Common-Noun’ Theory (1978: 29). Some have gone even further and suggested that the upshot might be an infinite lexicon – that problem is touched upon by Washington (1992: 601-02), and dealt with in detail by Richard (1986) and Lepore (1999).<sup>399</sup>

#### Conditions for the validity of the warnings

Two conditions must be satisfied for these warnings to be meaningful: (i) it must indeed be true that there are an infinity of autonoms; (ii) it must be the case that names,<sup>400</sup> in general, belong to the lexicon: if names are outside the lexicon, then autonoms-as-names cannot cause any lexical inflation. Let me address these two conditions successively:

(i) Number of autonoms: as we saw earlier in this chapter, Lo, i.e. the set of quotable or mentionable (henceforth, *autonymisable*) items, is infinitely large. This means that the set of autonoms is itself potentially infinite. Note that this is the case even if the non-linguistic component of Lo is dismissed as irrelevant and only the linguistic component is considered:

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<sup>399</sup> It would be easy to dismiss these cautionary statements as irrelevant, given that they are raised in connection with theories two of which have been shown to be deficient on several other counts (cf Chapter 2). I none the less believe that they are worth pursuing, if only because they have not always been formulated in a satisfactory way – as I shall try to show – and deserve a more appropriate treatment.

<sup>400</sup> Whereas philosophers usually talk about *names* or *proper names*, linguists tend to use the term *proper nouns*. Not everybody agrees that *proper noun* is synonymous with *name*. For instance, Quirk et al. (1985: 288) regard proper nouns as a subset of proper names, whereas Katz (2001: 156) regards proper nouns as including both proper and ‘improper’ names (like *Jack the Ripper*, or *Superman*, *Batman* – i.e. compounds with some degree of compositionality). For the sake of convenience, I shall treat proper nouns and names alike, and will often use the abbreviation *proper N* as a designation for both.

given that sentences can be quoted or mentioned, the number of autonymisable linguistic sequences is by definition infinite.<sup>401</sup>

(ii) Are proper Ns in the lexicon?: there seems to be a widespread consensus among grammarians and syntacticians that they are. This, at least, is the position that transpires from expositions of traditional grammar, where proper Ns are treated as a major subdivision of the word class of nouns, it being understood that all the members of the various word classes together form the lexicon (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 288-97). It is, just as implicitly, the dominant view in more state-of-the-art theorising, notably in the Chomsky-inspired frameworks: the lexicon is a component of any model of a speaker's competence, and it includes proper Ns (with *John* and *Bill* topping the frequency list). This view is standard and is taken for granted by the best recent handbooks of linguistics (e.g. Fromkin's excellent *Linguistics*, 2000: 26, 33, 95).<sup>402</sup>

Still, some writers have expressed reservations about proper Ns' membership of the lexicon. The semantic outlook of proper Ns is very different from that of common nouns (and indeed from that of all 'content' words or 'open-class' items). Paul Ziff (1960: 86) writes bluntly that "[p]roper names are generally not words": somebody who does not know a single word of Chinese may know the proper N *Hsieh Ho*. If words are words of a particular language – which is what they should be – does that mean that the person who thought she knew no Chinese was wrong? Such a suggestion sounds absurd. Alain Rey (1977: 73) remarks that proper Ns form the most open class of the lexicon, one that does not lend itself to a description in terms of a linguistic structure. In a later contribution (in Sebeok 1986: 451), he comments that, if the lexicon is understood as the set of all morphemes (rather than words) in a language, then it is not clear that proper Ns belong there – they are not morphemes in the sense of being minimal meaning-carrying units. These views are shared by Josette Rey-Debove, who writes that "the class of proper nouns is indeterminate and outside of the code (they are cross-linguistic [interlinguistiques] items that do not belong to lexical competence)" (1997: 308, also 1978: 138-39).<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Another cause of infinitude under the Name Theory is the fact that it allows for a recursive application of quoting devices: any autonym can theoretically be mentioned by means of a higher-order autonym, and so on ad infinitum. Granted, this possibility is hardly ever realised in practice beyond the level of the meta-metalanguage.

<sup>402</sup> It is also true of most recent dictionaries or encyclopedias of the discipline, where proper Ns are treated explicitly or implicitly as just a subclass of nouns in the lexicon (Dubois et al. 1994; Bußmann 1996; Brown & Miller 1999). One often finds such formulations as: *in some languages, proper names are...*, *in German, proper names may be preceded...*, etc.

<sup>403</sup> For Rey-Debove, *outside the code* means *outside the lexicon*, for the lexicon of an ideal speaker is assumed to include only coded items (those that have received a conventional linguistic meaning). The idea that names are



Although settling the question is beyond my abilities, I will adopt the position that proper Ns are lexical items, for the following reasons. First, the few objections pointed out above appear to hinge on the notion that proper Ns are devoid of sense (linguistic conventional meaning). It is legitimate to assume that the strength of these objections would be reduced if it could be shown that some sense can be ascribed to proper Ns. It is precisely in support of one such conception that I shall argue in a subsequent section. Second, some writers have pointed out the difficulties involved in separating common from proper Ns. As Quirk et al. indicate,

[...] a number of common nouns with unique denotation are close to proper nouns, and are sometimes spelled with a capital letter, *e.g.*:

*Fate, Fortune, Heaven, Hell, Nature, Paradise, Earth* (Quirk et al. 1985: 288; see also Dubois et al. 1994: 325)

These difficulties suggest that excluding proper Ns from the lexicon may require a somewhat arbitrary decision.<sup>404</sup> Since I also have no idea where proper Ns should be located other than in the lexicon, I will adopt what looks to me like the most sensible position, namely treating proper Ns as lexical items.<sup>405</sup>

### The trouble with infinity

Now that I am more or less satisfied that the two conditions are met, I can turn to the question why an infinite lexicon should be a problem. One answer that springs to mind is that it clashes with standard conceptions of grammatical theory: a modern grammar is designed as a model of linguistic competence. Since a speaker's competence is lodged in their brains, its components (basically, a lexicon and a set of generative rules) can only be finite. This means that the various components of the grammar (a lexicon, a set of grammatical rules and a number of symbols for syntactic categories) must itself be finite, failing which it cannot be an adequate model of competence.

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cross-linguistic is also found in Wren (1989: 366), who writes that “[n]ames are in, or potentially are in, every language”.

<sup>404</sup> There are other sources of fuzziness. In Brown & Miller (1999: 311-12), A. Lehrer remarks that in European languages personal names (a subset of proper Ns) “have no meaning”, but she then points out that in other languages, i.e. Chinese, personal names may be taken from the general vocabulary. She also points out that some languages sometimes use definite articles in front of personal names (e.g. German) or pluralise family names (e.g. English). In many languages there are also productive rules for converting proper Ns into common Ns (e.g. *un vrai Napoléon, a secondhand Buffalo Bill*).

<sup>405</sup> Note that, even if I placed proper Ns outside the lexicon, there would still be a good reason to pursue the matter of the inflationary threat posed by autonyms: the conclusion reached at the end of 7.2.1 that at least some autonyms appear to belong to the lexicon (or to be instantiations of lexemes – meta-words – included in it).

This picture can be refined a little when one realises that the components of the model need not so much be finite as “recursive with finite generators”, as Harris (1968: 10) puts it. In other words, one or the other component of the grammar may be infinite provided it can be generated by a finite number of means. For our present purposes, an infinite lexicon is only a problem if it cannot be specified recursively by applying a finite number of rules to a finite number of ‘primitive items’.

Before I consider whether autonoms can be specified recursively, I wish to extend the scope of the problem somewhat. We have seen that something like ‘wide-ranging autonymisability’, the ability to quote or mention a great variety of objects, lies at the root of the infinity of the set of autonoms. My impression is that wide-ranging autonymisability should not be regarded as the sole possible source of uncontrollable lexical inflation: just as there are countless autonymisable things, there are countless nameable things too. The world of experience is indefinitely divisible and categorisable, and there is no theoretical prescription that I know of against naming the infinity of nameable things.<sup>406</sup> To give but one extreme example – but then we are busy with theoretical possibilities – an admirer of Zeno of Elea can choose to call her armchair *Rosie* and then its bottom half *Rosie One* and its top half *Rosie Minus One*, then proceed to divide her halves into further halves and name them in the same fashion ad infinitum. There do not seem to be any theoretical constraints against that, only performance-related limitations. This means that the idea of attributing a name to every autonymisable object, if it poses a theoretical problem at all, raises a challenge that is perhaps no different from that raised by ‘universal nameability’. Yet, I am not aware of arguments in the literature to the effect that, owing to the existence of proper Ns, building a grammar of English or any other language is impossible in principle. We shall try to see later if that is a regrettable omission.

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<sup>406</sup> There are literary precedents: the short story “Funes ou la mémoire” by Jorge Luis Borges (I do not have the English text) presents a character who wants to endow the infinite set of natural numbers with a proper name, and who “had trouble understanding that the generic symbol *dog* could encompass so many dissimilar individuals of diverse shapes; it bothered him that the dog of three o’clock and fourteen minutes (seen in profile) should have the same name as the dog of a quarter past three (seen face on)” (1983: 117; my translation from the French). In *City of Glass*, the first short novel of his *New York Trilogy*, Paul Auster has a similar ‘Adamic’ character who, deeply dissatisfied with the inability of words (nouns, especially) to permit a faithful depiction of the world, launches into a quixotic effort to give a particular name to every state of every object:

‘Each day I go out with my bag and collect objects that seem worthy of investigation. My samples now number in the hundreds – from the chipped to the smashed, from the dented to the squashed, from the pulverized to the putrid.’

‘What do you do with these things?’

‘I give them names.’

‘Names?’

‘I invent new words that will correspond to the things.’ (1987: 78)

But let us now have a look at Mark Richard's attempt to show that the infinite autonomous lexicon (the set of 'quotation names' postulated by his Tarskian theory) can be specified recursively. Richard's set of primitive items is made up of letters, punctuation signs and spaces, mathematical symbols, etc. These items provide the input to two rules of concatenation that output quotation names:

(A) For any expression  $e$ ,  $lq$  followed by  $e$  followed by  $rq$  is a term.

(B) For any expression  $e$ ,  $lq$  followed by  $e$  followed by  $rq$  denotes  $e$ . (Richard 1986: 398)

In these formulas,  $e$  stands for any combination of primitive items,  $lq$  is the name for left quote mark, and  $rq$  for the right quote mark. Note that (A) and (B) seem to define two notions of specifiability, one for autonyms as forms, the other for autonyms as lexemes. If Richard is right, that is, if his two rules are sufficient to ensure the specification of the whole subclass of autonyms, then the infinite numbers postulated by nominal theories eventually turn out to be no obstacle to devising grammatical accounts for languages that possess autonyms-as-names.

One might be tempted to say that Richard's solution lays itself open to the parochialism objection that Bennett raised against the Description Theory. But I do not think that that is the case. Concatenation, which is the main ingredient of Richard's lexical rules, merely has a notational import; it is not meant to reflect the manner in which autonyms are grasped by interpreters. In particular, Richard's account is compatible with the possibility that specific autonyms might be apprehended holistically. This means that, if Richard's attempt is satisfactory from a technical point of view, then there is no reason to assume that it fails in a more philosophical respect.

Yet, there is at least one writer who thinks that Richard's solution is technically flawed, and therefore does not make the grade. Ernest Lepore has devoted a whole paper (Lepore 1999) to showing why he does not believe that Richard's attempt is successful and why the only alternative consists in placing quoted sequences out of the mentioning sentence, from both a syntactic and a semantic point of view. As Lepore sees it, the weakness in Richard's reasoning resides in the belief that all autonyms can be generated on the basis of a finite set of primitive items. The unboundedness of autonymy, Lepore argues, cannot be systematically predicted by 'alphabets', however numerous (e.g. Greek, Cyrillic, Zapf Dingbats, etc.). I reproduce an earlier example:

(10) Gillian marks up the newspaper every morning. She has a red pen and puts ☆s by stories she thinks I might find interesting or amusing.

One could nevertheless retort that more items could still be added to the set of primitive terms without it becoming infinite. But Lepore remarks that any squiggle, whatever its shape (or any sound) is autonymisable, without it being clear that it could always be ascribed to a recognisable type. Hence, the impossibility of specifying the lexicon with finite means.

Although Lepore's argument looks very strong, there are writers who would be unwilling to endorse it. For example, Gómez-Torrente (though he does not allude to Lepore (1999)) does not think it a 'crippling problem' for a recursive semantic theory "to secure in the metatheory names for all possible expressions (and not just expressions nameable by spelling and concatenation). [...] One might find designators for all quotable expressions in a suitable geometrical theory of possible inscriptions (for example), and suitable principles as well" (2001: 152 n20).

At this level of complexity, I must acknowledge that I feel incompetent to settle the issue. Besides, the disagreement between Richard and Gómez-Torrente, on the one hand, and Lepore, on the other, appears to be chiefly a technical notational issue. I am therefore not sure that we are still discussing something that is relevant to the study of natural languages.

In spite of the inconclusiveness of the previous development, I still wish to proceed with my initial plan, which was to try and establish if there were differences in terms of specifiability between autonoms and proper Ns. After all, perhaps autonoms can be generated with a finite number of means (if Richard and Gómez-Torrente are right). It would be ironical to find out that proper Ns cannot. The tables would somehow have been turned on the critics of the Name Theory. However, in order to answer that question, we need to equip ourselves with a more refined theory of proper Ns. This is the task that I address myself to in the next section.

### Current theories of proper Ns

Considering my sketchy knowledge of the issue and the restricted space available, I will be content with a succinct overview of existing theories.<sup>407</sup> According to Katz, the better part of the twentieth century was dominated by the 'description' theories inspired by Gottlob Frege. Frege's account was devised as an answer to the following observations: substitution *salva veritate* of co-extensional proper Ns fails in certain opaque contexts (*Winnie believes that **Stendhal** wrote 'Le rouge et le noir'* does not entail *Winnie believes that **Henri Beyle** wrote 'Le rouge et le noir'*) and co-extensional names behave oddly in identity statements (whereas *Stendhal is Stendhal* is a

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<sup>407</sup> I take my bearings from the encyclopædic articles by Searle (1967) and Forbes (1998), from Recanati (1993), and from excellent recent papers by Justice (2001), Katz (2001) and Pelczar (2001), as well as a less satisfactory paper by Reimer (2001), who none the less has the merit of trying to account for difficult phenomena within a radical 'Millian' scheme.

tautology, the referentially equivalent *Stendhal is Henri Beyle* is informative). Frege assumed that these findings could only be explained if proper Ns were assumed to possess a descriptive content (a sense) over and above their reference, which sense was conceived as a ‘mode of presentation’ of the reference.

The descriptivists’ dominance came to an end when Saul Kripke published *Naming and Necessity*, in which he convincingly rebutted the Fregean account. Kripke’s main argument was that names cannot have senses (cannot be like definite descriptions) as they behave like the rigid designators of logic. I reproduce Graeme Forbes’s accessible presentation of the latter notion:

In thinking about or describing other ways things could have gone (other possible worlds) we use a proper name such as ‘Aristotle’ consistently to denote the same person; this makes proper names rigid designators. But we use definite descriptions such as ‘the pupil of Plato who tutored Alexander’ differently. With respect to the actual world, this description picks out Aristotle; with respect to a possible world where someone else is the one and only pupil of Plato who tutored Alexander, the description picks out that other person, not Aristotle; and with respect to a possible world where either Plato or Alexander does not exist, the description fails to pick out anyone, even if Aristotle does exist. (1998: 753)

Kripke therefore advocated a theory of proper Ns on which they have no descriptive content, only reference. Thus, he rehabilitated what had been the standard account prior to Frege, i.e. Millianism (after John Stuart Mill).<sup>408</sup> The chief asset of a Millian account is that it captures the fact that “a name is simply a label for a thing that does not designate it in virtue of properties that the thing exhibits” (Justice 2001: 351; also Pelczar 2001: 140): proper Ns do not have a descriptive content in the same way that words like *tiger* or *red* have: whereas my knowledge of the meaning of the word *tiger* should enable me to distinguish an individual tiger from an elephant or a lion, no such knowledge can help me distinguish a Christina from a Celia or a Delia. Millian accounts are often described as ‘direct-reference’ theories of names.

At this stage, we might think the problem solved: revised Millian theories have superseded Fregean theories. Yet, it appears that the former still face difficulties with substitutivity in opaque and intensional contexts (and also with so-called ‘empty’ or ‘bearerless’ names like *Spiderman*, which do not have a referent in the actual world). There have been attempts at

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<sup>408</sup> Kripke’s theory is more complex than Mill’s, since it explains speaker’s competence in using proper Ns as the result of a historical or causal chain. Pelczar outlines the theory as follows: “names refer to their bearers by virtue of relating to them through a chain of events, beginning with an initial “baptism” or dubbing of the referent with the name, then proceeding through a series of transmissions of the name from one speaker to another [...], and terminating in a given use of the name” (2001: 137). The causal chain account has found its way into theories that are more or less remote from Kripke’s (e.g. Katz, Justice).

addressing these difficulties within a strict Millian perspective. A recent one, by Reimer (2001), though not without merit, proves to be quite laborious and ad hoc.

We therefore find ourselves in something of a quandary: how can the apparently incompatible constraints highlighted above (the need for some sort of sense vs rigid designation) be satisfied by a single theory? A solution has been put forward by several writers who have suggested that, although Kripke's arguments demolished Frege's theory, it did not prove that all descriptive accounts were false (e.g. Justice 2001: 352ff; Katz 2001: 138f). These writers all subscribe to one or the other version of the 'metalinguistic' view of proper Ns, according to which a proper N has a sense, but a sense that boils down to a metalinguistic instruction of the form: « the one who/that which is the (a) bearer of *N* », with the variable *N* ranging over the set of proper Ns in the language.<sup>409</sup>

Where disagreements between upholders of the metalinguistic doctrine emerge is on the manner in which they individuate proper Ns. Let me state the problem. A Fregean seems tied to the notion that a name is ambiguous in multiple ways. The name *George* means « Ali's best friend », « Georgina's psychotherapist », « the best-looking shop assistant at Harrods' », etc. This view, however, is inconsistent with names being rigid designators. A Millian, by contrast, lends towards a homonymy view of names. Since a name has no sense, only a reference, what a Fregean takes to be the name *George* is in effect *n* homonymous names *George*, with '*n*' being the number of distinct entities that are bearers of *George*. In other words, the number of homonyms is determined by the number of bearers of a formally identical label.<sup>410</sup>

The arguments against the homonymy view are less categorical than against multiple ambiguity. Katz argues that the homonymy postulated by Millians is deviant: in the case of proper Ns, there is no etymological, syntactic, phonetic or meaning difference between two *John Smith*'s, as opposed to the situation that prevails between *bare* and *bear*, or *bear* (noun for a large mammal) and *bear* (verb, « to stand »).<sup>411</sup> But this does not prove the homonymy view to be wrong. As a matter of fact, as John Justice has shown, this doctrine is compatible with at least one version of the metalinguistic account.

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<sup>409</sup> Technically speaking, the preceding formula should be enclosed in so-called 'corner-quotes', i.e. markers of quotation that do not turn variables into constants. (See Chapter 4.3.2.3)

<sup>410</sup> Katz has this neat formula: "Whereas classical descriptivists proliferate sense for referentially equivocal names, Kripke proliferates names themselves" (2001: 150).

<sup>411</sup> I assume that, when he mentioned phonetic dissimilarities, Katz had homographs in mind.

Recanati and Katz's originality resides in the fact that they avoid the dilemma between homonymy and multiple ambiguity. On their 'indexical'<sup>412</sup> approach, the conventional linguistic meaning (the character) of a proper N is comparable to that of an indexical pronoun like *I* or *this*. As a type (read *expression*), a proper N has a sense, the metalinguistic instruction mentioned above, whereas, as a token, it picks out a referent in the situation of utterance. The assignment of reference is performed according to a 'name-convention', which is social in nature rather than linguistic (cf Recanati 1993: 138ff; Katz 2001: 155fn makes a related point).

Therefore, on the version offered by Katz and Recanati, a proper N like *George* is neither ambiguous nor homonymous with a multitude of other *George*'s: it has a single conventional meaning (in the system), but multiple bearers (in various contexts). Referential equivocality is not a problem for a linguistic theory of proper Ns, because the relationship between a name and its bearer is a matter of social conventions. As a consequence, all that a competent speaker of English needs to know (to be competent) is that a proper N is a referential expression with a bearer (which is what understanding the metalinguistic instruction is all about). Knowing who or what the bearer is falls beyond linguistic competence.<sup>413</sup>

#### Theories of proper Ns, finitude and recursive specifiability

I shall now examine whether the impact of proper Ns on the size of the lexicon is assessed differently according to the theory (indexical vs homonymy) that is adopted.<sup>414</sup> In the following analysis, I distinguish between forms and lexemes.

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<sup>412</sup> In the following, I shall use Recanati's label *indexical* in opposition to *homonymy*. This is a matter of convenience, not a theoretical necessity: Justice's account is indexical and homonymy-friendly.

<sup>413</sup> Note that the metalinguistic view of proper Ns offers an elegant explanation of why *Socrates is called 'Socrates'* is a 'trifling' statement to make (cf footnote 55 in Chapter 2, and end of Chapter 3.2). If the linguistic meaning of *Socrates* is something like « the individual called *Socrates* », then the statement above can be rewritten as *The individual called 'Socrates' is called 'Socrates'*, an obvious logical truth.

<sup>414</sup> If the nature of my enquiry were different, I could have focused on some further respects in which the assets and liabilities of each view could be brought to light. For example, Recanati himself suggests that the linguist's conception of the relationship between competence and language may affect his/her assessment of the two views. In a nutshell, Recanati distinguishes three main such conceptions: a linguist may be dealing with an "individual's (partial) command of the communal language", e.g. English, Chinese, German, in the standard sense, with an "individual's mastery of her own idiolect", or with "the collective mastery of the communal language" (1993: 145). It appears that the first perspective favours the indexical view: there are, in English, a lot of proper Ns whose referents are unknown to each speaker of the language, although speakers do know that the referent of an unfamiliar name must be the bearer of that name. It would be untenable to claim that each speaker's competence in the language at large involves knowledge of the bearers of all the proper Ns in the language, knowledge, for instance, of the 3<sup>10</sup> bearers of the homonymous names *George*. At that rate, no actual individual would ever be a competent speaker. When, however, one adopts the second perspective, the odds seem to be in favour of the homonymy view: each speaker fully masters the proper Ns that are part of his/her idiolect, and this includes knowledge of their bearers: Maggie Reilly knows who the three Georges in her life are. According to the third perspective, which is a generalisation of the first, the community (which I understand as 'the ideal speaker-hearer') knows the bearers of all the proper Ns in the communal language, a position that is once again congruent with the homonymy view.

## Forms

In the natural languages as we know them, the proper Ns of, say,  $L_1$  are finite strings of letters or phonemes that are part of the orthographic and phonological systems specific to  $L_1$ . With proper Ns perhaps more frequently than with other word classes, one or the other foreign element can be added to the basic building blocks.<sup>415</sup> In the end, however, the number of letters/phonemes remains finite. Therefore, since proper Ns are finite combinations of a finite number of elements, there can only be a finite number of forms for proper Ns. On this account, therefore, there is no need to even raise the issue of recursive specifiability.

Although the above is a reliable depiction of the empirical situation in natural languages, we must push our inquiry further and also consider theoretical possibilities, for otherwise (i.e. if the analysis is carried out in purely empirical terms) all the issues that we are looking into right now hardly even make sense.<sup>416</sup> Granted, standard grammatical theories do not allow for infinite strings in the lexicon (as opposed to infinitely long sentences). But consider again my Zeno-inspired example about the infinitely segmentable chair. As far as I know, there exists no

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As Recanati remarks, it is impossible to tell who is right without first deciding on the type of language that is suitable for linguistic enquiry. Recanati is concerned with the communal language, though he is aware that, as a result of the integration of linguistics within the ‘cognitive sciences’, a lot of recent theorising in linguistics is concerned with idiolects. The principal advocate of the latter approach is probably Noam Chomsky. His recent term for an idiolect is *I-language*, with *I* standing for *individual, internalised, intensional*. In Chomsky’s framework, an I-language is a state of a speaker’s brain, an instantiation of the language faculty every human being is born with (originally set at the initial state, or ‘Universal Grammar’). The I-language corresponds closely to Chomsky’s former ‘competence’ (in the sense « grammatical competence » rather than « pragmatic competence »). I-languages are opposed to ‘E-languages’, with *E* for *externalised*, i.e. the ‘public’ or ‘communal’ languages of common-sense understanding. Chomsky argues quite convincingly that the latter are cultural artifacts that are not fit for ‘naturalistic inquiry’, and should not, therefore, be chosen as the objects of a science of linguistics (e.g. 1986: 15-19; 2000: 72-73, 99-100, 155-58).

This being said, there is no denying the unmistakable social dimension in the ‘setting of parameters’ that the acquisition of language involves: no language is acquired if the faculty of language is not presented with data (i.e. expressions, sentences) of a particular language, dialect, etc. There should therefore be a reflection of this contextual factor in the study of I-languages. Recanati suggests that Chomsky himself (cf 1986: 18) agrees that “a person’s idiolect may include many terms which the person does not fully master” (Recanati 1993: 151). From this, Recanati infers that a Chomskyan I-language is not just made up of items that are fully known and mastered: a speaker is also aware of certain items (especially lexical units) that are used around him/her in the speech community [the kind of terminology of which Chomsky disapproves] but which s/he does not fully know. This, according to Recanati, is how Chomsky’s theory would account for the fact that I partially understand the proper N *Garth Knox* even if I do not know (have never seen, met, talked to) its bearer. Recanati concludes that, even adopting an idiolectal standpoint, the indexical view may still be valid: since an I-language encompasses names whose use the speaker does not fully command, an internalist à la Chomsky may agree with Recanati that what is fundamentally linguistic about proper Ns is the knowledge of the general convention for proper Ns, not the specific name-conventions.

<sup>415</sup> Most of the time, however, signs from foreign writing systems are transliterated, and foreign pronunciation is adapted to the phonology of the host-language.

<sup>416</sup> It is in theory that the number of autonymisable entities (and consequently of autonyms) is infinite; just as it is in theory that the set of sentences of a natural language is denumerably infinite. This theoretical rather than empirical nature has not prevented the last mentioned result from being regarded as a central principle of contemporary linguistics.



theoretical preclusion against names including a whole numeral. If such a way of building names is accepted, it easily allows generating an infinity of forms for proper Ns.<sup>417</sup> As a consequence, the lexicon would include an infinity of forms, regardless of which view, indexical or homonymous, is taken of proper Ns.<sup>418</sup>

Now, even if the notion of an infinite set of forms for proper Ns is accepted, this set is quite likely to be recursively specifiable. I do not think it a major problem to come up with a rule for the generation of names like *Rosie One* and *Rosie Minus One*: one can take Richard's rule (A), augment it with a constraint on length, and concatenate the product of (A), i.e. an 'ordinary' finite name, with any whole number (preceded or not by *Minus*).

### Lexemes

The indexical and homonymy views define different conceptions of the relationship between form and lexeme. According to the former, each form is matched with one and only one lexeme. Moreover, since the conventional linguistic meaning of each proper N is modelled on the formula, "the one who/that which is the (a) bearer of *N*", in which the only unknown quantity is the form itself, there is no difficulty in specifying recursively that whole subclass of lexemes: as soon as the forms can be specified, their senses automatically follow. The situation is very different on the homonymy view (except perhaps on Justice's metalinguistic version): each form can be matched with any number of lexemes. Given that the meaning of each lexeme requires a separate stipulation (the attribution of a name-convention) and that these stipulations are not modelled on a single rule, I do not see how the homonymy view could provide a recursive specification of the set of proper Ns as lexemes. As a consequence, it cannot offer an account of the learnability of proper Ns either. Note that this situation does not follow from the (perhaps questionable) decision to postulate an infinity of proper-N forms. One could even imagine a language in which there are only two such forms, say *Charles* and *Diana*: this would not prevent the set of proper-N lexemes to be potentially infinite since there could be infinitely many homonyms based on each form. On the homonymy view, it is the infinite number of nameable entities that is decisive. Since each name of a nameable entity is a different lexeme from all the

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<sup>417</sup> There is some empirical evidence in support of this position. Think of names of kings and queens, like *Louis XVI* or *Elisabeth II*. Consider also the 1976 sci-fi film *Logan's Run*, in which individuals all bear names with a numerical index, such as *Logan 5*, *Francis 8*, *Jessica 6*, reflecting the number of times that they have been 'renewed'. If time is infinite ( ??? ), we have the seeds here of an infinite set of proper Ns.

<sup>418</sup> Does the assumption of an infinity of forms require the possibility of infinitely long names ? I am not sure I can answer this question. If the name made up of *Rosie* + an infinite whole number is infinitely long, then the name of 'the infinite number' must itself be of infinite length. But I am not sure it even makes sense to talk of 'the infinite number'.

other names, whether equiform or not, the number of possible forms is only of secondary importance.

#### The implications

The previous discussion seems to plead for the indexical view, which is the only one that is in a position to account for the learnability of proper Ns. My feeling is that this conclusion is valid irrespective of which conception of the relationship between competence and language is adopted (cf footnote 414 above), even that of the I-language: just as any speaker can generate an infinity of sentences, s/he can generate an infinity of forms for proper Ns (if the Zeno-like examples hold water). But, on the homonymy view, s/he cannot ascribe a meaning to this potential infinity of forms using finite means.

It would be rash, however, to conclude that this proves the superiority of the indexical view. Let me explain why. I remarked earlier that it was legitimate to assume a theoretical infinity of proper Ns, on the grounds that there are indefinite numbers of nameable entities. This remark can actually be extended to all the so-called ‘open’ word classes: it is not difficult to imagine countless ‘categories’ in the world that can receive a label (a common noun), or countless actions, events, states that can also be ‘named’ by means of verbs. Likewise for adjectives. Now nobody has ever claimed that a natural language included an infinity of common nouns or verbs or adjectives. Yet, there are no more theoretical grounds for dismissing this assumption than there are to reject the postulate of an infinite number of proper Ns.

This raises a serious theoretical difficulty: whereas we have just seen that proper Ns can be specified recursively as lexemes (on the indexical view), there seems to be no such possibility for common Ns, verbs or adjectives, unless one reduces their meaning too to a metalinguistic instruction. The latter move, however, seems absurd, precisely because common Ns, verbs and adjectives differ from proper Ns in that their descriptive content allows the identification of the categories, actions, events, etc. that they denote. Thus, the reasons I have advanced for preferring the indexical view are not beyond dispute. After all, no one has ever required that common Ns, verbs and adjectives should be recursively specifiable as lexemes. So why should this be a determining factor in the case of proper Ns ?

Perhaps the difficulties we have just encountered stem from the extremely theoretical nature of the issues under discussion. Still, if theoretical possibilities are taken seriously, one is led to adopt something like the positions I have developed. But, at the same time, these positions do not clearly capture the ‘actual’ circumstances of natural languages. I am not sure where this

unfortunate discrepancy between the theoretical and the empirical stems from. A very tentative suggestion is that there may be a basic problem with the definition of *language*. It would perhaps be worth approaching the issue of lexical inflation in terms of several separate definitions of language (cf footnote 414) to see if such an analysis yields distinct answers. It might appear that writers disagree because they are not talking about the same thing. This, however, is a lead that I am not going to follow up here.

#### Intermediate recap

In section 7.2.2, I have tried to assess the theoretical consequences of the inclusion of autonoms into the metalexicon of a natural language. My feeling was that some of the results of section 7.2.1 naturally led to this issue. Besides, quite a few writers had had something to say about autonoms in the lexicon, a situation which I regarded as an additional reason for tackling the question. However, I was not sure that the problem had been formulated in quite the right way and was fully intelligible as it stood. That is why I inquired into the conditions of validity of the claim that ‘nominal’ theories of autonoms (especially the Name account) would lead to a non-denumerably infinite lexicon, something unacceptable to any sensible linguist. I initially came across two problems. The first was that there was no absolute consensus as to whether proper Ns are members of the lexicon. The second was that, if they are, then they might seem to raise the same apparently insoluble problem highlighted in connection with autonoms.

If it was accepted that proper Ns are lexical items and cause the same kind of lexical inflation as autonoms, then the question to ask was whether these two categories of items differed in terms of recursive specifiability. After all, it might well turn out that one of the sets – say, proper Ns – would prove to be specifiable while the other – say, autonoms – did not. Such a result would have vindicated all the whistle-blowing mentioned in the previous paragraph. I started with Richard’s attempt to demonstrate the recursive specifiability of the autonomous lexicon. In the course of my presentation, I thought it judicious to distinguish between two kinds of specifiability, that of forms and that of lexemes. As I understood it, Richard’s view was that the infinite set of autonoms was specifiable on both counts. I then brought up Lepore’s contention that Richard had been short-sighted and that, since just about anything can be quoted – in other words, because *Lo* is non-denumerably infinite – there could never be any recursive specification of the autonomous set. As a counterpoint, I added Gómez-Torrente’s cheering comment that rules of concatenation could make way for more powerful means, so that specifiability was actually not an issue.

At that stage, I felt out of my depth, and utterly unable to make an informed decision. The question arose whether the whole controversy did not, in the end, amount to a mere notational issue. Whatever the answer, I thought it wiser to finish the work I had set about doing, and so I turned my attention to proper Ns. It was apparent that the judgment on the feasibility of a recursive generation of the set of proper Ns would ultimately depend on the theory of proper Ns that was adopted. That is why I briefly looked into the dominant contemporary theories of the field. I selected two accounts that I tested for their ability to specify the set of proper Ns. The result was that the ‘indexical’ and ‘homonymy’ views did equally well on the generation of forms but diverged on the generation of lexemes, which proved possible on the indexical but not on the homonymy view.

This, to say the least, was an unexpected result. I had started out with the assumptions that autonoms-as-lexemes might be theoretically untenable, only to conclude that proper Ns were even more so. However, as soon as this result was put into perspective, its significance dwindled considerably. On the criterion that I had isolated, all open classes of the lexicon would suddenly pose insurmountable theoretical problems. I concluded that further clarification of the issues was needed.

#### 7.2.2.2. Autonoms as building-blocks in non-nominal theories

Now that we have examined the ‘topographical’ consequences of adopting a ‘nominal’ theory of autonoms, I would like to consider what the respective positions of Demonstrative and Identity Theorists must be on the same issue. Dealing with the former is easy: Davidson and his followers regard (the interior of) autonoms as syntactically and semantically inert, so much so that the displayed token loses the trappings of a linguistic object:

[w]hat I propose is that those words within quotation marks are not, from a semantical point of view, part of the sentence at all. It is in fact confusing to speak of them as words. (Davidson 1979: 37; my emphasis)

The quoted material figures there [in the utterance ‘*Barcelona*’ has nine letters] simply as a token, it is “a mere thing”. (García-Carpintero 1994: 261)

Since it is the quotation marks that contribute to the sentence-meaning, not the displayed ‘thing’, the Demonstrativist owes us no account, lexical or syntactic, of these tokens.

The situation is different for Identity Theorists. Their standard claim is that the same string is both used and mentioned (cf Chapter 2.4). This has been interpreted in either of two ways by the

few critics who have touched upon this issue. As we saw in 2.4, Sørensen construes the Identity Theory as requiring that an autonym should have a dual grammatical ‘nature’: that of the mentioned expression (noun, verb, adverb, and so on) and that required by the syntactic position of the autonym in the mentioning sentence. Sørensen thinks that that must be a noun, but I understand him as meaning an NP. If Sørensen’s construal of the Identity Theory is correct, then it would be difficult indeed to construct a grammar that is compatible with it.<sup>419</sup> We saw also that Reimer interpreted the Identity claim slightly differently. On her reading, the claim was that the autonym retains its original grammatical nature. Therefore, she framed the grammatical problem of the Identity Theorist as consisting in devising a grammar in which, say, adverbs can be subjects (*‘Happily’ is a nice word*), prepositions can be objects (*I’ve always hated ‘without’*), and so forth. This, she assumed, must surely be unfeasible.

It is true that adverbs, prepositions, verbs (and sentences, bits of words, etc.) cannot usually function as subjects, objects, subject or object complements, or objects of prepositions in English sentences. But, strictly speaking, neither can a noun. To put it in a nutshell, the link between word classes (grammatical ‘natures’) and sentence functions is not direct: it is mediated and articulated by phrases: (i) phrases receive their qualifier (*verb, noun, adjective*, and so on) from grammatical natures – a ‘noun phrase’ is one whose head is a noun, etc.; (ii) phrases are used to fulfil functions – a noun phrase can occupy the position of subject, object, and so on.

Let us focus on the subject position (which is the only one considered by Reimer). Grammarians would say that it must be occupied by a nominal constituent, either an NP or NP-equivalent (typically, so-called ‘nominal’ clauses): as explained above, NPs are usually headed by a pronoun or a noun. The latter may be a bona fide noun like *Seoul, pyjamas* or *hydrogen*. But one sometimes also has to do with nouns converted from other word classes. Standard examples

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<sup>419</sup> Sørensen’s account echoes a dialogue between Adeodatus and Augustine in the latter’s *De magistro*:

AUGUSTINE: Utter a few conjunctions for me, any you like.

ADEODATUS: ‘And’, ‘too’, ‘but’, ‘also’ [*Et, que, at, atque*].

AUGUSTINE: Don’t you think that all these you have said are names ?

ADEODATUS: Not at all.

AUGUSTINE: But at least you think that I spoke correctly to you in saying ‘All these you have said’.

ADEODATUS: Quite correctly; and now I understand to my surprise that you have shown that I did utter names; for otherwise one could not rightly say of these, ‘All these’. (*De magistro*, V, 13; quoted in Kirwan, 1989: 50-51)

Augustine’s reasoning goes like this: the basic assumption is that pronouns replace nouns or names (the Latin text does not make a distinction). Since the pronoun *these* replaces *and, too*, etc., it follows that *and, too*, etc. are names. Augustine (1941, 1948: V, 16) also appeals to the logical rule “that every complete sentence contains a name and a verb” (Kirwan, 1989: 51). He asks what the subjects (i.e. necessarily names) are in a sentence like *‘If’ is satisfactory, ‘because’ is not*. Master and pupil eventually agree that in these contexts *if* and *because* must have been used as names too. In conclusion, Augustine’s assumption is that an autonymous sign, if it is not initially a name or noun (e.g. *if* or *because*), belongs to two parts of speech at the same time.

are adverbs like *now* or *tomorrow*, for which some dictionaries actually record a correlated nominal sense,<sup>420</sup> as in *Tomorrow is another day*, or:

- (39) ‘Could I see you ?’  
‘What, now ?’  
‘**Now** would be great.’ (Lodge 1978: 65)

But there are also instances where conversion into a noun is not part of what is acknowledged as standard English by dictionaries, as with *later* and *before* in the next pair of examples:

- (40) Later – and **later** came all too soon – a terrible feeling entered her life, a feeling she did not yet have words to describe. (Barnes 1999: 15)  
(41) [...] partly because he hadn’t done anything before (but then, **before** hadn’t worked out so brilliantly, so maybe he shouldn’t use **before** as any kind of example). (Hornby 2000: 212)

This shows how elusive the limit is between stored lexical knowledge and ‘one-off’ discourse phenomenon: *now* is recorded as a noun in the lexicon, but *before* supposedly only exists as an NP in the context of an utterance. As often, the boundary is an arbitrary one.<sup>421</sup>

The fact that discourse can create NPs from adverbs, etc. could be exploited by the Identity Theorist to support the claim that autonymisation, in a like manner, automatically transforms the sequence involved, regardless of word class, into a nominal constituent of the sentence. Hence, the grammaticality of the sentence is preserved. This, for instance, seems to be the position advocated by the Identity Theorist Washington (1998: 550), who explains that quotation is a leveller: whatever the standard use of the expression mentioned, “when quoted, expressions of all categories become mentioning expressions”, i.e., in his parlance, referential expressions. This can be translated into syntactician’s talk as meaning that autonymisation produces NPs.<sup>422</sup>

If one draws the grammatical consequences from Washington’s considerations, it is possible to imagine a set of context-free phrase-structure rules that rewrite NPs in a variety of ways. Here is a simplified sketch:

- NP ⇒ Det + N
- NP ⇒ Det + Mod + N
- NP ⇒ N<sub>proper</sub>
- NP ⇒ N<sub>uncountable</sub>
- NP ⇒ Prep
- NP ⇒ V

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<sup>420</sup> This is the case in the *OED* and *WEB3rd*.

<sup>421</sup> See Quirk et al. (1985: 658 note a, 736-37 note a, b) for further examples.

<sup>422</sup> As is often the case in the literature, [Dem]<sub>N</sub> is left out of consideration.

NP ⇒ Conj  
NP ⇒ Adj  
NP ⇒ Interj  
NP ⇒ S  
etc.

Naturally, there must also be a statement of the conditions under which these new rewriting rules can apply; otherwise the grammar will generate such strings as *Hey killed going to*. Moreover, a parallel set of rules must be devised for [Dem]<sub>N</sub>. But it is not certain that a finite list can be provided of all those items that turn into Ns or NPs when autonymised. What ‘lexical’ class do the autonoms in boldface belong to in the following example ? (cf also examples (19) and (48) in Chapter 6)

(42) His concentration was such that any **ums** and **ers** and buts he looked on as cues to change the subject entirely. (Hornby 2000: 157-58)

Add to this the possibility of mentioning or quoting sequences from other languages, existing or not, plus all sorts of noises, and it appears that compiling a comprehensive list of rewrite rules may be unfeasible after all.

Yet, this does not prove that Washington cannot get out of trouble. Indeed, it is reasonable to understand his reflections as converging with Recanati’s notion of linguistic recruitment. Nothing prevents the Identity Theorist from acknowledging a demonstrative dimension in autonymy (many do, as I pointed out in 2.4). If s/he does, then the addition of a pair of rewrite rules may suffice:

NP ⇒ [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>  
N ⇒ [Dem]<sub>N</sub>

#### ‘Things’ as syntactic constituents

Identity Theorists can also try a different tack, one which opens a Pandora’s box of intriguing issues. They can make a move that closely resembles the Demonstrativists’ move and choose to regard autonoms not as full-fledged linguistic units (belonging to a particular word class, etc.) but as ‘mere things’. Unlike the Davidsonians, however, Identity Theorists cannot place the displayed token outside the mentioning sentence, lest they should abandon the very idea of identity (the same ‘object’ is mentioned and used). This means that they find themselves under

an obligation to provide some sort of grammatical account of the presence of ‘things’ in sentences.

At the end of Chapter 2.4, I wrote that most language scholars agreed that “the entities that a sentence talks about do not occur in it, only designations of these entities do”. This point of view was also aptly captured by the statement that the grammatical subject is not the subject of discourse of an utterance.

Now I also suggested that some writers took issue with this guiding principle. Let me expand on this. First, there are minor deviances, such as are found in Carnap (1937: 156), or Reichenbach (1947: 10), which is especially whimsical:

Since the name of a given object may be chosen arbitrarily, it is quite possible to take as a name for the thing, the thing itself, or, as a name for a kind of thing, the things of this kind. We can, for instance, adopt the rule that, instead of the word ‘match’, a match shall always be placed on the paper. (Carnap)

[...] thus we might, whenever we write something about sand, put some sand in the place otherwise occupied by the word ‘sand’. In order to indicate that this is not an undesired sand spot on our paper, but a part of our language and the name of sand, we should have to put quotes left and right of the sand spot. Unfortunately, such a practice, although perhaps suitable for sand, would often lead to serious difficulties, for instance if we wanted to use this method for denoting lions and tigers.<sup>423</sup> (Reichenbach)

Note that both writers still assume that they are dealing with names, not fully non-linguistic entities. Others have adopted a more contentious stance. Searle (1969: 76), for instance, mocks Tarski’s prescription that “in any utterance we make about an object it is the name of the object which must be employed, and not the object itself” (1944: 344). Taking his cue from Carnap’s example of the match, Recanati (1979: 70) claims that “[t]he only objects that we *must* represent

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<sup>423</sup> Reichenbach thus seems to provide an indirect explanation for the invention of writing systems! Still on a lighter recreational note, I cannot resist quoting this passage from Jonathan Swift’s satire on the flying island of Laputa. Whereas Carnap and Reichenbach focused on written discourse, Swift does on speech:

“We next went to the school of languages, where three professors sat in consultation upon improving that of their own country. [...]

The other project was a scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health as well as brevity. For it is plain that every word we speak is in some degree a diminution of our lungs by corrosion, and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. An expedient was therefore offered, that since words are only names for *things*, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on. And this invention would certainly have taken place, to the great ease as well as health of the subject, if the women, in conjunction with the vulgar and the illiterate, had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues, after the manner of their ancestors; such constant irreconcilable enemies to science are the common people.” (Swift 1960: 203)



if we want to talk about them are those that cannot be introduced, in the flesh [*en chair ou en os*], into discourse; for all the other objects, it is legitimately possible to present them or produce them rather than represent them” (original emphasis). Christensen, unsurprisingly, speaks the same language as Searle and Recanati:

The logician is apt to think that if we want to say something about an object we must use a name or a description of that object, but this is apparently a prejudice for which we can find no support. It does not seem to hold true without qualification regarding objects in general, and it is certainly untrue with respect to linguistic expressions. (1967: 360)

I shall assume, on the basis of the previous references, that some Identity Theorists defend the opinion that ‘things’ can be constituents of utterances.

How are we to make sense of this claim? Let me say from the outset that it is not difficult to admit the occasional occurrence of non-linguistic material in linguistic utterances. Witness Searle’s famous example of the song of a bird: “an ornithologist might say ‘The sound made by the California Jay is ...’ And what completes the sentence is a sound, not a proper name of a sound” (1969: 76). Many more examples could be found, which make this fact incontrovertible: speakers regularly refer to objects in discourse by presenting these very objects instead of using their names.

Relative to this, two positions can be adopted. On the first, one assumes that only strings of linguistic units can be labelled grammatical. Accordingly, no utterance containing a mere thing can ever be a grammatical sentence. But this inevitably implies that utterances including autonyms are ungrammatical as a matter of principle.<sup>424</sup>

If grammaticality judgments are used as indicators of the native-speaker’s competence, the last mentioned position seems hardly tenable at all, as many autonym-containing utterances are regarded as grammatical by native speakers. If some are ungrammatical, that is not on account of the autonyms in them. As Lyons (1995: 240) maintains, a fair number of the daily utterances of native speakers are ungrammatical in the technical sense, regardless of their subject-matter. The sensible starting-point therefore seems to be that an adequate grammar of English should be capable of generating and analysing autonym-containing sentences. There is also a theoretical necessity at stake: as Rey-Debove remarks, if autonymous utterances were necessarily ungrammatical, then much of the linguist’s own discourse, the consistency of his/her linguistic theories, would itself be under threat: “if we cannot decide upon the grammaticality and

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<sup>424</sup> This, for example, is how Gómez-Torrente reads Searle’s version of the Identity Theory: Searle’s account forces him to consider autonym-containing utterances to be ungrammatical (cf 2001: 149 note 8).

semanticity of metalinguistic sentences, it is the meaningfulness [‘significance’] of linguistics that is put into question” (1978: 3).

Yet, if autonyms are things just as much as the song of the California Jay or Carnap’s match, then there are no grounds on which to exclude ‘thing-containing’ sentences from the grammar of English. Any adequate model of it will have to account for utterance-tokens that include ‘mere things’ (provided these tokens are not deficient in other respects). To my knowledge, the question whether a grammatical theory of any language should or could account for object-containing sentences has hardly ever been raised. The only counterexample I am aware of is McCawley (1992: 8-9 note 10), and even he goes no further than framing the problem.<sup>425</sup> In a discussion of direct speech, McCawley begins by stating that a verb like *say* can take objects that are “something in a foreign language [...] or even something consisting of non-speech sounds”:

(70) John said, (imitation of camel belching).

I do not take up here the interesting but difficult problem of deciding whether quotations involving sounds which the human vocal organs are incapable of producing (for example, a chord played FFF by a quartet of trombones) are to be considered ungrammatical or simply grammatical but non-occurring for performance reasons. This problem is of importance because it has bearing on the question of whether the (infinite) set of grammatical sentences in a language is denumerable or non-denumerable. (1992: 8-9 note 10)

McCawley’s comment is restricted to ‘things’ occurring in direct reports. Moreover, his concern seems to be with unutterable sequences, though it is not absolutely clear what counts as unutterable: is the camel’s belch such a sequence, or only the chord? For my part, I shall assume that there is no substantive difference between these two cases: neither sound can be reproduced to perfection by the human vocal organs, but both can be imitated. If there is a difference, then it will be a matter of degree: perhaps we are better equipped to mimic the camel’s bad manners than musical instruments, but not even that is clear.

So, I understand McCawley’s problem as essentially the same that occupied us in the previous couple of pages: I will therefore make no distinction, subsequently, between instances of autonymy (on the Identity Theorist’s account) and other kinds of objects (Carnap’s match, Reichenbach’s handful of sand). McCawley apparently has two possible accounts in mind. On the first, any sentence containing non-linguistic sounds<sup>426</sup> is judged to be ungrammatical. This, as

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<sup>425</sup> I owe this reference to Marc Dominicy.

<sup>426</sup> I assume McCawley’s *sounds* can be extended to written and gestural signs (for the written system of a natural language and for sign-languages, respectively).

I have already hinted, is a worst-case scenario that is best avoided, because it does not tally with speakers' intuitions (cf sentence (6) at the beginning of this chapter, and also (8), (9) and (10)). McCawley's alternative is that the autonymisation (of something non-linguistic) does not occur, because of limitations in our performance systems. I am not quite sure what to make of this suggestion. Take Reichenbach's idea that producing a tiger or a lion may prove difficult in discourse: that is a limitation of our performance systems (though not clearly our linguistic ones). But then, take his example of the handful of sand, or take Searle's California Jay, or the mention of noises, music, songs of birds: these objects and these mentions do occur. Limited performance does play a role, most evidently in mentions of non-linguistic sounds, as what speakers produce is sometimes only a poor imitation of the 'real thing'. But that does not prevent a sequence from occurring, and a sentence from being uttered which is not obviously ungrammatical.

Let us take stock: the claim that autonoms are mere things forces the Identity Theory to put together a grammatical explanation on which utterances containing such written or spoken sequences as the (imitation of the) song of a bird, an F-chord, a few bars of music, or a hiss, and even a match or some sand, are not ungrammatical in principle. Besides, there is a lexical corollary to this grammatical problem: it may seem reasonable to assume that all the constituents, all the building blocks of sentences of L1 must be catalogued in the lexicon of L1. Supposing that those building blocks comprise any object imaginable, then the lexicon of L1 is non-denumerably infinite and linguistic theory is in deep trouble.

At this stage, it may be extremely tempting to dismiss altogether the claim that autonoms are things. Still, there is another avenue that can be explored. Perhaps object-containing utterances do not contain just that. Is the match in Carnap's example just a match, and the handful of sand in Reichenbach's example just a handful of sand? By the same token, is Searle's song of the California Jay just a song? On a radical interpretation, they are, simply because they are not 'linguistic'. But nothing seems to tie us down to such a radical interpretation. When Searle and Recanati (1979)<sup>427</sup> assert that an autonym loses its ability to refer normally, they mean that it does not occur in its normal linguistic capacity. An autonym has lost its conventional meaning (or left it aside); it is no longer a symbol, in Peirce's sense. Does it, for all that, become a non-linguistic something? Though Searle and Recanati (1979) offer no clarification on that point, their position leaves room for the following construal: the autonym does not refer (not even to

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<sup>427</sup> I insist that the present discussion reflects Recanati's standpoint at the time of *La transparence et l'énonciation*.

itself, according to Searle); still, it presents itself, and in doing so it is an icon. An icon is another, albeit non-conventional, variety of sign. It is not a mere thing. Moreover, when the autonym is enclosed in quotation marks (or set off by a special intonation, or finger-dance quotes), the icon is also an index, since the marks signal the fact that the sequence in question is to be regarded as being presented or displayed.<sup>428</sup>

Just as autonoms remain signs, even on the Identity Theory, so do other things occurring in discourse: they inevitably behave like signs, though not like symbols. The non-linguistic object occurring in an utterance can, as an icon, stand for (rather than *refer to*, if that is an exclusive property of linguistic symbols) other similar icons, or even for its type. Let me give a few examples: the ornithologist's imitation of the song of the California Jay does not stand for itself in any strict sense; it stands for the 'real' song of the bird (understood as a type rather than a particular token).<sup>429</sup> Or let us imagine that I have just come home from shopping and that, to inform my partner of all the goodies I have bought, I utter:

(43) You're gonna love this! I bought ..., I bought four ..., I got the last ..., etc.

One can imagine, in place of the three dots, my displaying a large tub of ice cream, then a bowl of chocolate mousse from Marcolini, then a bottle of Sauternes, etc. In this case, concrete objects clearly play a role in an utterance, albeit as signs of something. My displaying of the tub of ice cream does not necessarily stand for just that one tub: perhaps I have bought several. Likewise with the bowls of mousse and the bottle. Things never enter discourse as mere things; they are always presented (brandished, pointed at, winked at, shaken the head at, etc.). Note, finally, that the intrusion of things in natural-language utterances even has a minimally conventional, i.e. symbolic, dimension: the requirement that the presentation or demonstration should precisely be understood as a presentation or demonstration, and not, say, as a nervous tick.

This, as my reader will probably have guessed by now, is where the connection with Recanati's version of the Demonstrative account becomes obvious. The Identity Theorist who holds autonoms to be things is necessarily led to adopt a theory like Recanati's recent proposal, on which not only autonoms but all sorts of 'things' as well, enter discourse as demonstrations. Like autonoms, many demonstrations of objects are recruited linguistically. As we have seen before, a linguist equipped with the notion of linguistic recruitment has no difficulty in devising

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<sup>428</sup> This, as I noted earlier, is where the Identity Theory converges with Demonstrative accounts.

<sup>429</sup> Recanati (2001: 648-49) borrows an interesting example from Laurence Horn in which the demonstration (i.e. the playing) of a musical passage is recruited as a referring NP.

a grammatical account of autonymy. All s/he needs to do is to postulate the existence of two new types of linguistic entities, [Dem]<sub>NP</sub> and [Dem]<sub>N</sub>, and two rewrite rules for NP and N respectively. These are also the instruments that make possible a description of how ‘things’ can be incorporated into grammatical linguistic utterances.

[Let me note incidentally that demonstrations of ‘things’ can enter discourse in other capacities than as NPs or Ns. In this respect, they are like metalinguistic demonstrations, which, as we are now well aware, can also occur in ‘open’ positions. But there is a major difference too: whereas open metalinguistic demonstrations affect segments that are used at the same time as they are demonstrated, it is not clear that there can be open demonstrations of non-linguistic things. That is because, being non-linguistic in the first place, these things can simply not be used linguistically. Hence, no possibility of simultaneous use and mention. Let us have a quick look at two examples:

(44) And then she [imitation of someone running away]

(45) Of course he made a point of looking very [imitation of humility]

In (44), the demonstration stands in for the VP *ran away* (it could also substitute for the V *ran* if, for instance, it was followed by the words *right into the street*. In (45), it stands in for the adjective *humble* (it could also substitute for an adjective phrase if, for instance, *very* was left out). Two interesting questions that I make out (but will not be able to address in these pages) are: (i) should we regard these demonstrations as recruited? (ii) is mimicry always involved when the non-linguistic demonstration is not an N or NP, as for example in (44) and (45)?]

#### Conclusion to 7.2.2.2

My discussion of the Identity views on where to situate autonyms in a natural language has yielded the following results. First, it has strengthened my conviction that a strict Identity Theory of autonymy is untenable. Identity in the narrow sense must be sacrificed if some interesting assumptions of the theory – e.g. that autonyms are things – are to remain valid, i.e. explainable within the framework of standard linguistic theory. Second, we have had a confirmation of the possible convergence between the Identity and Demonstrative accounts. Third, in connection with the previous point, we have once again had the opportunity to appreciate the versatility of Recanati’s theory of metalinguistic demonstration. In the two cases in which we seemed to have reached a theoretical deadlock (devising grammatical rules for all autonymisable entities and providing a grammatical account of things intruding into discourse), Recanati’s ideas were the key to an elegant and convincing solution. In particular, we have seen that linguistic recruitment is a powerful explanatory (and technical) tool, whose application can be extended to objects other than linguistic sequences. In addition to this, it also seems as if the distinction between mere iconicity and mimicry could also be brought to bear on non-linguistic demonstrations. I

regard these extensions of the theory of metalinguistic demonstrations as a significant contribution of the present section.

### 7. 3. Overall conclusion

In Chapter 7, I have attempted to answer a series of ‘topographical’ questions. First, I showed how the metalanguage of a natural language differs from that of a formal logical system (7.1). In particular, I highlighted the need to distinguish three components rather than two: the natural language  $L_n$ , its metalanguage  $L_m$ , and the building blocks of the latter,  $L_o$ . Another major difference that came out is the inherent fuzziness of natural metalanguage, both at the level of the lexicon – meta-words blend into mundane words – and discourse – utterances display varying degrees of metalinguisticity. After this, I embarked upon the main task for this chapter, namely a characterisation of the metalexicon (7.2). My intention was primarily to determine whether there was nothing more to it than meta-words. If the answer turned out to be a “Yes”, then the metalexicon would prove a very dull object indeed, a mere component of the general lexicon on a par with myriad other sublexicons. The angle I chose to explore this question was an assessment of the impact of autonymy on the lexicon (7.2.1). As could be predicted, it emerged that quite a few autonoms had been ‘neutralised’ (i.e. deprived of their high degree of reflexivity) and turned into metalinguistic words. However, a more intriguing result came to light in the process: lexicographers (some more than others) appeared to have some difficulty in dealing with autonoms. In particular, they had trouble rejecting all of them outside the lexicon, the *OED* compilers proving the most reticent in that respect. It would have been easy to dismiss this last result as no more than a symptom of lexicographical inconsistency. Still, I judged that the *OED* compilers might not be so misguided after all, and concluded that some  $[Dem]_N$ -autonoms – essentially speech-act names that can be used on their own to perform a speech act – were probably instantiations of the same expression that also had de-autonymised realisations. I took this intriguing result as my cue for tackling the next issue, the possibly curious question whether one would not be well-advised to locate all autonoms in the lexicon (7.2.2). I also had other motivations. In particular, I had noticed in the literature a substantial number of warnings against including autonoms in the lexicon. In their less radical form, these warnings pointed the finger at an unnecessary duplication of the lexicon; in their more radical form, they claimed that such a move would lead to an infinite lexicon, which, moreover, could not be specified with a finite number of means. If the more radical claim was founded, then it became essential to locate autonoms outside the lexicon, for otherwise the very possibility of devising a grammatical theory

of a natural language was jeopardised. In the end, I found it necessary to set this question in a broader context, and notably to make a comparison with proper Ns. The result was inconclusive: I could not ultimately determine whether incorporating autonoms in the lexicon was theoretically unjustifiable or not. What I could not fail to appreciate, however, was that the writers who had raised the issue had been somewhat blinkered, in this sense that they had omitted to notice that similar (though perhaps not identical) difficulties arose in connection with other categories of linguistic units. At this stage, there still was no certainty as to 'where autonoms were'. That is why I turned to the 'non-nominal' theories of autonymy, those that put autonoms out of the lexicon, to see what they would have to say on the subject. The Demonstrative accounts had a ready answer: autonoms are not a genuine component of an utterance, only quotation marks are. The Identity Theory, on the other hand, owed us a syntactic explanation of autonoms. This could take two forms: a substantial overhaul of the rewrite rules for English, or the development of a 'grammar for things'. Interestingly, it emerged that, for either option to be successful, the Identity Theory must be altered so as to incorporate Recanati's idea of the linguistic recruitment of demonstrations. In other words, it appeared that an Identity account could only work if it became a modified Demonstrative Theory.

## CHAPTER 8: Forms of world/language hybridity

Quite a few things have been said about hybridity in previous chapters. In Chapter 2, with examples (7), (18) and (29), we saw that hybridity rendered the Name Theory empirically inadequate, and that it posed similar problems for the Description and Demonstrative accounts. The illustrations given were instances either of mixed quotation or of scare quoting. They clearly involved simultaneous use and mention of a given linguistic sequence. In the same chapter, we also briefly examined two examples, (19) and (20), which seemed to involve something like a shift, roughly between an ‘antecedent’ and its pro-form, from reference to the world to reference to language. In Chapter 4, I used hybrids to confirm that any theory that required its quotations/mentions to be NPs was bound to be unable to account for a considerable part of the data. In Chapter 5, Recanati’s theory was shown to offer a solution precisely to that problem: by dissociating metalinguistic demonstration from reference, Recanati was able to build a theory that by far exceeded all its predecessors in terms of empirical adequacy. What is more, it managed to do so while retaining a largely homogeneous account for all instances of mention and quotation. In particular, in 5.4, I introduced Recanati’s distinction between cumulative and non-cumulative hybrids, and hinted at how these could be handled with an appropriate apparatus of shifts in the context of utterance. In Chapter 6, I showed that, next to scare and mixed quoting, it was necessary to recognise the existence of ‘free mixed mention’ as well (cf 6.2.2.4). I also made a distinction between those meaning-related aspects of hybrids that pertained to disambiguation and those that did to interpretation proper. Besides, I returned to utterance-internal shifts from ordinary use to mention (examples (24), (26)).

In the present chapter, I wish to tie up some of the loose ends left from previous encounters with hybridity. In 8.1, I shall focus on occurrences which, at first sight, appear to combine ordinary use and mention within a single linguistic sequence, basically scare quoting and mixed mention/quotation; whereas, in 8.2, I will turn my attention to that looser form of hybridity whereby an utterance involves a shift from a non-linguistic to a linguistic universe of discourse (and perhaps conversely),<sup>430</sup> although no single sequence can be said to point at language and the world at the same time.

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<sup>430</sup> This radical separation between language and ‘the world’ is made only for convenience’ sake. Clearly, language and linguistic productions are part of the world.



All in all, it will appear that world/language hybridity is a widespread phenomenon, one, moreover, that presents a challenge to anyone wishing to work out a comprehensive theory of metalinguistic use. Among the most central problems are (i) questions concerning what counts as a mentioning intention or not (in other words, how close must the resemblance be between a displayed token and the target it is meant to depict?), and (ii) issues to do with grammaticality: in particular, some hybrids in the narrow sense raise tricky questions regarding the grammatical or ungrammatical status of the utterance in which they occur. As usual, these questions require decisions concerning one's definition of language and of the sort of competence that linguistic theory is supposed to account for. As for the looser hybrids, they also face linguists with some interesting problems of syntactic analysis.

### 8.1. Hybridity within a single sequence

In this section, I look at forms of hybridity in the narrow sense; i.e. those sequences that simultaneously bear upon 'the world' and language within a single utterance. So far, we have distinguished two categories of metalinguistic demonstrations all of whose instantiations involve such hybridity, i.e. scare quoting and mixed mention/quotation. Since such hybrids are about two universes of discourse at the same time, it is only to be expected that their meaning should be paraphrasable by a pair of sentences the first of which includes a given sequence as used while the second includes it as mentioned.<sup>431</sup> Let us have a few examples:

(1) She took me to the "in" Hollywood restaurants and pointed out the important producers and agents.  
(Lodge 1996: 50)

(1<sub>1</sub>) USE: She took me to the in Hollywood restaurants and pointed out the important producers and agents.

MENTION: Some people (the woman referred to, people in L.A., etc.) use the word *in* (to mean « fashionable »).

(2) Sometimes [the director] decides he needs to change a shot, or insert a new one, but it's striking how seldom he has to do this. He's already "seen" the entire show in his head, shot by shot. (Lodge 1996: 76).

(2<sub>1</sub>) He's already seen the entire show in his head, shot by shot.

The use of *seen* in this context is somewhat peculiar (e.g. it is a metaphor, it is the director's way of putting it, and so forth)

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<sup>431</sup> One such paraphrase was examined, and some of its shortcomings alluded to, at the end of Chapter 2.3 (cf example (3) below). However, I shall at least temporarily assume that these reformulations capture the meaning of hybrid metalinguistic demonstrations, even though they cannot perhaps underlie a sound theory of them. In any case, I return to this issue later in the chapter.

(3) Gerald said that he would “consider running for the Presidency”.

(3<sub>1</sub>) Gerald said { that he would consider running for the Presidency.  
                                  { *consider running for the Presidency.*

(4) At a fatal accident inquiry in Lerwick, Sheriff Colin Scott Mackenzie agreed with the procurator fiscal Roderick Urquhart’s assessment that the “hard-man culture” of the fishing industry had probably cost Wilson his life. (*New Statesman*, 20/12/99: 93)

(4<sub>1</sub>) [...] Roderick Urquhart’s assessment that the hard-man culture of the fishing industry had probably cost Wilson his life.

Roderick Urquhart used the phrase *hard-man culture* to characterise the fishing industry.

The phrase *hard-man culture* can be used to characterise the fishing industry.

As can be seen, the mentioning component of the twofold paraphrase varies and can actually not always be determined out of context. There is indeterminacy when the point of the metalinguistic demonstration is not conventionally ‘encoded’ and contextual information must therefore be resorted to in order to identify it. In (1) and (2), basic illustrations of scare quoting, nothing at the sentence-level tells us precisely how the metalinguistic demonstration is to be interpreted, apart from the fact that there is ‘something’ about the quoted sequence, i.e. that it is being demonstrated for some purpose. In (3), an example of mixed quotation, there is a conventionalised quotational point, namely suggesting to the reader that the subject of discourse (here, Gerald) used something like the very words between quote marks (cf 6.2.3.4). Therefore, the metalinguistic component of the paraphrase need not be tentative, as in (1) and (2). I believe that (4) is ambiguous between scare quoting and mixed quotation. Indeed, the quoted sequence occurs as part of a subordinate clause that could also have been the direct object of a reporting verb.<sup>432</sup> This might suggest that (4) shares a quotational point with (3). However, although that is indeed a likely reading, it is not decisive, inasmuch as it does not rule out an interpretation according to which the reporter (the journalist) is distancing him/herself from an expression used by certain people (perhaps not by procurator fiscal Roderick Urquhart) to describe the culture of the fishing industry. The possibility of this other reading indicates that (4) can be understood also as exhibiting scare quoting rather than mixed quotation.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> Although *assess* itself is not properly speaking a reporting V, many deverbal Ns that could be substituted for *assessment* in (4) are derived from reporting Vs (*judgment, statement, comment, observation, claim, etc.*). These deverbal Ns can govern an indirect-speech clause.

<sup>433</sup> Both interpretations make the demonstrated sequence in (4) a cumulative hybrid, but only the first one, if it is correct, includes pragmatic enrichment of the truth-conditions. Only on that interpretation would (4) be regarded as false if it turned out that Roderick Urquhart had not in fact used the quoted words.

My main motive for looking at examples (1) to (4) was to show that hybrid cases often lend themselves to a twofold reformulation based on the use, then the mention, of the demonstrated sequence. Such a possibility might be viewed as encouraging the adoption of the following equation: the hybridity of a demonstrated linguistic sequence is the same as its simultaneous use and mention. Yet, however wide the validity of the equation, it does not unequivocally hold in all circumstances. It is my purpose in the following pages to examine several kinds of intriguing examples that challenge the validity of the equation. I shall begin with scare-quoted utterances and then tackle mixed quotation. When that has been done, I shall devote another section to what may be described as a conflict in deixis, a phenomenon that essentially affects mixed quotation (but perhaps also scare quoting).

### 8.1.1. Problems with scare quoting

#### 8.1.1.1. Non-cumulative instances

I shall not dwell on this category which has already been discussed at some length in Chapters 5 and 6. Let me simply restate the problem with sentences like

(5) ‘Quine’ wants to speak to us,

when interpreted as including a language-shift. A basic twofold paraphrase would look something like this:

(5<sub>1</sub>) Quine wants to speak to us.

James uses *Quine* to refer to Tim McPherson.

It is clear that the ordinary-use line is truth-conditionally inadequate: the utterer of (5) never intended to say anything about the real Quine’s plans to speak to a group that included her. Therefore, it cannot be claimed in any straightforward way that the word *Quine* in (5) is used at the same time as it is mentioned. The suggestion that it is used deviantly would not do either, because the oddity is only accessed once the metalinguistic demonstration has been identified: the deviant use results from the mention rather than being simultaneous to it.

#### 8.1.1.2. Demonstration of a pseudo-English sequence (esp. a foreign one)

I propose to have a look at a fairly large number of examples before trying to frame the various issues at stake. Note that, in the following, I shall also treat as instances of scare quoting

a number of sequences that bear other metalinguistic markers, in particular italics, a decision that is justified shortly. Here are the first examples:

- (6) [...] politicians, with their speeches on “la fracture sociale”, will simply promise reforms and still more laws. (*TLS*, 03/05/02: 12)
- (7) [...] how much they are able to rebuild alliances with the disparate factions of the “gauche plurielle”, the current governing coalition [...] (*TLS*, 03/05/02: 13)
- (8) You recall that I was *un peu* hyper about the wallpaper ? Afear’d o’ reading the runes, of being panicked by a recurring pattern of madeleines, if you follow my *piste*. (Barnes 2001: 190)
- (9) The young Gide believed in *dénuement*, in stripping life down to its spiritual and sensory essentials. (*New Yorker*, 09/08/99: 77)
- (10) She followed me out to the car, screeching like a crow. In the middle of the main street. Top of her voice, accusations of, as they say, a personal and professional nature, *mit* everyone looking. (Barnes 1992: 271)

I am well aware that italics are conventionally used to single out foreign words and expressions, and that some writers would probably claim that this mere typographical convention does not square with the basic idea behind scare quoting, i.e. something like “a warning to the reader that there is something unusual or dubious (in the opinion of the writer) about the quoted word or phrase” (McArthur 1992: 839; already cited in Chapter 2). It is true that scare quotes might feel odd as a substitute for italics in some instances, e.g. (8) and (10), an observation that seems to point to a difference in the function fulfilled by each typographical marker.<sup>434</sup> However, as I indicated in Chapter 6.2.3.4, I believe that the reasons why scare quotes are used vary widely from one instance to the next, and that the ‘distancing effect’ often associated with scare quotes is just another word for the demonstration of a linguistic sequence (or its ‘opacification’). When italics are used, as in (8) to (10), it is my feeling that a demonstration is performed, the point of which is something like informing the reader that (the writer is aware that) the expression used is not an orthodox English lexeme. Its value is more or less « as the French say » or « as the Germans say », etc. One might object that some expressions that were borrowed from a foreign

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<sup>434</sup> This impression is supported by the fact that some writers make a carefully distinct use of the two markers:

(a) This generalization about the way the ‘mechanism’ of *la langue* operates has extensive implications. (Harris 1987: 130)

(b) So it is hardly surprising that, whatever one takes *langue* to be, the ‘remainder’, *parole*, should turn out to comprise a heterogeneous collection of very diverse kinds of things. (Holdcroft 1991: 45)

In (a), the scare quotes mean « as Saussure says », the italics something like « as the French say ». In (b), the italics have the same value, but scare quoting is used more broadly by the writer to distance himself from a lexical choice. However, in spite of the different paraphrases, both the italics and the scare quotes are used in (a) and (b) to demonstrate a particular linguistic sequence, and this similarity is far more important than the difference in details.

language continue to be presented in italics even when they have been adopted by speakers of the host-language as ‘standard’ lexemes:

(11) [...] how an unexpected discovery on a Federal building site on Broadway became a political *cause célèbre* [...]. (TLS, 28/06/02: 10)

(12) We are about to enter the lair of Stuart’s *bête noire*, genetic modification, which does not seem to me as *noire* as it’s painted. (Barnes 2001: 185)<sup>435</sup>

Here as elsewhere, the English lexicon turns out to be an elusive object, and dictionaries make different decisions as to which items belong to English and which do not. If we are to believe most of the standard dictionaries of English (including some aimed at EFL learners), *cause célèbre* and *bête noire* are English lexical items.<sup>436</sup> This, then, would seem to make the paraphrase *as the French say* inappropriate. Still, the italics must have been used with some purpose in mind, and this purpose, I suggest, can only be linked to a demonstration of the italicised sequence. Perhaps the meaning of the italics in (11) and (12) is not exactly « as the French say », but it must still be something along the lines of « as the *x* say », with ‘*x*’ standing for e.g. *those who love to sound erudite* or *those who love their French* or *those who, like us, are well-educated*. That is why I choose to regard the italics in (8) to (12) as pragmatic indicators fulfilling essentially the same function as quote marks, and therefore see no reason not to treat these instances in the same way as I do unambivalent scare quoting.

Now the point of the examples above is to show that the type of twofold paraphrase that worked for (1) to (4) does not work for (6) to (12) in at least one significant respect: the ordinary-use line appears not to be a grammatical utterance. Let me give two illustrations:

(7<sub>1</sub>) \*[...] how much they are able to rebuild alliances with the disparate factions of the gauche plurielle, the current governing coalition [...]

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<sup>435</sup> No doubt the second italicised sequence – ‘*noire*’ – cannot be regarded as a naturalised loan-word. It is similar in kind to the italicised bits in (8) to (10).

<sup>436</sup> The two phrases in italics occur in *COD*<sub>8</sub>, *COD*<sub>10</sub>, *RHD*, *WEB3rd*, *OED* and the *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (1979). Note, however, that, in contrast to most dictionaries, both headwords in *COD*<sub>8</sub> are in italics, while only the headword for *bête noire* is in the *Collins Dictionary* (*cause célèbre* is listed in standard type and not singled out as ‘French’), and that the *OED* gives these two items as ‘French’. By way of comparison, an item like *succès de scandale* (as in “Damned by the Bibliothèque des Chemins de Fer, it was a guaranteed *succès de scandale*” (TLS, 28/06/02: 24)) does not occur in the *Collins Dictionary* and is italicised not only in *COD*<sub>8</sub> but also in *RHD* (where it is additionally given as ‘French’). And the adjective *faux* (as in “The reflection on the novel within the novel so beloved of twentieth-century fiction is anticipated in this *faux* debut which resembles a literary treatise” (TLS, 28/06/02: 24)) is only recorded in *COD*<sub>10</sub> and *RHD* (no italics!). The only conclusion that can be drawn is that some borrowed items ‘feel’ more foreign than others, but that there is no absolute certainty as to those that have been naturalised and those that have not. Besides, even the least foreign ones (according to the dictionaries) usually occur in a special type, indicating a need to make clear the writer’s recognition of the unusualness of the item used.

(8<sub>1</sub>) \*You recall that I was un peu hyper about the wallpaper.<sup>437</sup>

This apparent ungrammaticality seems to signal that, when foreign (or other pseudo-English) sequences are scare-quoted, they are not simultaneously used in any simple sense of this term (as they were in (1) to (4)). It is therefore tempting to dismiss the equation between simultaneity and hybridity put forward a little above. However, I will delay making a final decision on this issue until I have examined a batch of examples involving pseudo-English sequences in mixed quotation

### 8.1.2. Problems with mixed quotation

#### 8.1.2.1. Demonstration of a pseudo-English sequence

It is less easy to come upon unequivocal pseudo-English sequences in mixed quotation than in scare quoting (if my extension to italicised sequences is accepted), but there are a few examples mentioned in the literature. Clark & Gerrig (1990: 791) have this passage from Charles Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*:

(13) To which Mr. Bailey modestly replied that he hoped he knowed wot o'clock it wos in ginerel.  
(already cited in 5.4)

Recanati adds this further illustration in French:

(14) Une vieille femme ... vint au seuil et me demanda *qué que j'voulais*, d'une voix traînante et hargneuse. (Barvey d'Aurevilly, *L'Ensorcelée*)

Although Recanati treats both examples under the heading of 'mixed quotation', I have some doubts about their membership. Let us begin with (14): in order to be a mixed quotation (in C&L's original sense), the demonstrated sequence should display the deixis of direct discourse. That is certainly not the case here, since the words used by the old hag must have been *qué qu'tu veux* or *qué qu'vous voulez*. In other words, the deictics in the italicised string are the way they would have been in indirect speech. As for (13), my hunch is that it also complies with the deixis of indirect speech (although this would ideally require checking with Dickens's text). It is likely, but not certain, that Mr. Bailey's reported words would have been: *I hope he knows wot o'clock*

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<sup>437</sup> I realise that I may have adopted a more prescriptive stance here than I have done elsewhere in the dissertation. This stance, however, is an attempt to reflect the fact that foreign words (pseudo-words) are almost systematically highlighted by English writers, a decision which presumably testifies to an effort to make them more acceptable (less unacceptable) than utterances deprived of any marking. Note that Recanati judges similar examples to be ungrammatical as well (cf 2000: 204, 289). I soon return to the question whether the same utterances with quoting devices are grammatical or not.

*it is in general*. The demonstrated strings in (13) and (14) are similar in some respects to free indirect discourse (backshifting of tense, adjustment of personal pronouns to the reporter’s context), but unlike it in others (especially their being under the scope of verbs of saying or of thinking (cf Quirk et al 1985: 1032), and the presence of a first-person pronoun in (14)).<sup>438</sup> In any case, they differ from the examples of free indirect discourse provided by Banfield (1993: passim), Lee (1993: 383), and Rosier (1999: passim). Free indirect discourse opens a window into the ‘mind’ of another character than the narrator; the reader gets access to thoughts that are beyond an external narrator’s powers of observation. In (13) and (14), the point of view remains that of the reporting utterer. Perhaps, therefore, these examples include a category of metalinguistic demonstration that is *sui generis*, or perhaps Recanati is right after all to classify them under mixed quotation.<sup>439</sup> Most important, however, is probably the fact that the relevant sequences exhibit a certain degree of hybridity: they are used and demonstrated at the same time. The main difference with mixed quotation in the strict sense is that the resemblance between the displayed token and the depicted target (or one of the targets, namely the ‘original’ utterance) is less patent here. (13) and (14) are in some essential respects comparable to the example of irony without language-shift that I gave in Chapter 6 – (33), *What lovely weather!*. They are also, because of incomplete formal resemblance, very close to example (54) in the same chapter, which I tentatively classified as an instance of free mixed mention – *So ended the attempts of these poor, yearning, tired huddled masses to gain asylum in the US*. That example was no more perfectly iconic than (13) or (14), but was ‘free’ in the sense that the demonstrated sequence was not governed by a reporting verb.

All the same, there exist unequivocal examples of mixed quotation with pseudo-English intruders. Cappelen & Lepore have this one:

(15) Nicola said that Alice is a “philosopher” (1997a: 436)

As for unqualified instances of mixed quotation of a foreign sequence, they did not prove easy to find, but I nevertheless came up with the following:

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<sup>438</sup> Though Recanati (2000: 230, 333 note 7) has two examples with a 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun interpreted with respect to the reportee’s context.

<sup>439</sup> A move that requires a new, looser, definition of the notion. This is a move that Recanati is ready to make, since he explicitly endorses Rob Stainton’s view that mixed quotation is basically “equivalent to indirect quotation—give or take some mimicry” (Stainton 1999: 275 [“Remarks on the Syntax and Semantics of Mixed Quotation”, in K. Murasugi & R. Stainton (eds.), *Philosophy and Linguistics*, Boulder, Westview Press, pp. 259-78]; cited in Recanati 2001a: 658fn). On this definition, there is no particular constraint on the deixis of the demonstrated sequence.

(16) If you were a French academic, you might say that [the parrot] was *un symbole du Logos*. Being English, I hasten back to the corporeal [...]. (Barnes 1985: 18)

(17) Foucault writes that “le vrai sens historique reconnaît que nous vivons, sans repères ni coordonnées originaires, dans des myriades d'événements perdus” and argues strongly against the imposition of a logic and teleology on history.

[www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP197mpeg.html](http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP197mpeg.html) [from a paper by an Australian academic named Mark Pegrum]

(18) Victor Frankenstein is a much darker figure [...]. Trousson writes that:

Le Prométhée de Mary Shelley est l'antique Titan Créateur, mais aussi le Prométhée malfaisant [...]. ([www.tccc.cc.nc.us/swood/finalcopy.pdf](http://www.tccc.cc.nc.us/swood/finalcopy.pdf))<sup>440</sup>

Other examples deserve to be mentioned too, even though their status as mixed quotations is not beyond question:

(19) [...] she made two excuses, first for her husband, who, as she said, happened that very morning to *shnuwnh*. (Swift 1960: 296)

(20) [...] and the example of Parisian aristocratic life when, so he argues, “les loisirs de la vie privée” were elevated to the level of “un grand art de vivre”. (TLS, 03/05/02: 8)

(21) [Robbe-Grillet] describes himself in his introduction as “volontiers professeur de moi-même”. (TLS, 03/0502: 9)

(22) French historians following in Paxton's wake have increasingly been concerned to depict Vichy as a part of a “guerre franco-française”. (TLS, 03/05/02: 7)

(23) Barthes described the book as “un choc historique” and “un repère nouveau et un départ pour l'écriture”. (TLS, 03/05/02: 9)

(24) “I've tried to find someone,” says the ever-cheerful Mrs Fereira, who is universally acknowledged in our street as *une perle rare* and [...]. (*Guardian Weekly*, 04-10/07/02: 11)

(25) [...] even if the indifference of millions results in such signs of foreign influence being viewed as “très cool”. (TLS, 03/05/02: 8)

In (19) and (20), we have reporting verbs in comment clauses. Hence, even though we are not, strictly speaking, dealing with a mixture of direct and indirect speech (the reporting V does not introduce a complement clause in the O<sub>d</sub> slot), we understand a quotational point here to be the attribution of the demonstrated passage to the referent of the subject of the reporting V. In (21) to (25), there are no reporting Vs, but verbs that are nevertheless often used to introduce ‘the words of others’. Hence, in (21) to (24), the demonstrated sequences can be ascribed, respectively, to

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<sup>440</sup> I used the Google search engine, typed in *Barthes writes that*, and subsequently replaced *Barthes* with *Kristeva*, *Foucault*, *Derrida*, *Lyotard*, *Lacan*, *Irigaray*. (17) and (18) are the only instances involving the mixed quotation of foreign words that came up (with (18) being a fluke), thus showing that such structures are fairly rare. An interesting observation that I was able to make at the same time is that there are far more occurrences of mixed quotation after *Barthes said that*, etc. than there are of plain indirect speech. This indicates that, at least as far as ‘great names’ are concerned, mixed quotation is by no means a marginal phenomenon.



Robbe-Grillet, French historians, Barthes, the people living in the same street as the journalist. In (25), a contextual inference allows determining that the utterers of *très cool* are French speakers in general.

Finally, there are instances that clearly involve the mention of someone else's words, even though they exhibit no verbs used to present 'the words of others':

(26) When the first flush of Émilie's affair with Henry has passed, she becomes "plus absolue et plus dure même dans la tendresse. Henry de jour en jour se sentait dominé par elle." (*TLS*, 03/05/02: 3)

(27) They would spend evenings carousing, but also [...] sampling delicacies in French and Italian restaurants, the Irishman liking to turn a small bit of food around in his mouth "de la même façon qu'il retenait les mots, pour en méditer le goût". (*TLS*, 03/05/02: 11)

(28) [Each tablet in the war cemetery] would commemorate Monsieur Un Tel, *lâchement assassiné par les Allemands*, or *tué*, or *fusillé*, and then an insulting modern date: 1943, 1944, 1945. (Barnes 1996: 105)

In (26), which comes from an article about Gustave Flaubert, an elementary contextual inference is all that is needed to understand that the demonstrated passage is to be attributed to the great French novelist. In (27), the same operation ascribes the quoted words to the French translator Georges Belmont. Likewise with (28), where the italicised sequences are ascribed to some memorial tablet in the cemetery.

Examples (19) to (28) exhibit a gradual transition from dyed-in-the-wool mixed quotation to freer then downright 'free' mixed quotation.<sup>441</sup> Another way of making the same point is to say that these examples are poised between mixed and scare quoting, which hints that the line between those two categories cannot be drawn as definitely as it usually is (and as I have done until now). Be that as it may, all the utterances which I have chosen to list under mixed quotation in this section display the same characteristic already pointed out in connection with examples (6) to (12): the ordinary-use line of the twofold paraphrase is, on the face of it, ungrammatical. Let me give just one example:

(16<sub>1</sub>) \*If you were a French academic, you might say that the parrot was un symbole du Logos.

Just as for (7<sub>1</sub>) and (8<sub>1</sub>), the judgment of ungrammaticality is a direct consequence of the assumption that an English speaker's competence is a monolingual competence. As far as I can see, such an assumption is widespread in studies that attempt to offer a description and/or

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<sup>441</sup> *Quotation* rather than *mention*, simply because of the presence of explicit quoting devices. Note that it could be said that the last few examples are closer to a mixture of ordinary use with direct speech than to a mixture of indirect speech with direct speech (which is what canonical mixed quotation is).

explanation of syntactic phenomena in specific languages. However, the question then immediately arises whether it would be warranted to assume that the mere presence of pragmatic indicators like italics or quote marks is likely to alter a grammaticality judgment. The answer is “No”. As a result, we have to admit that most of the examples under 8.1.1.2 and 8.1.2.1 are ungrammatical too.

### The monolingual hypothesis

It is interesting to take a closer look at what Rey-Debove has to say on the subject. She adopts a ‘lexical’ point of view according to which “a sentence is unacceptable in  $L_1$  if the words that make it up do not all belong to the lexicon of  $L_1$ ” (1978: 282). However, she immediately adds that this demand is purely theoretical and that its acceptance means, for instance, “that a language can only develop thanks to unacceptable utterances. All the processes of language change, notably neology and borrowing, clash with the norm set by the theory” (ibid.). It is only when a new item has been naturalised that the sentence that contains it can be regarded as grammatical, as is the case with (11) and (12), in which *cause célèbre* and *bête noire* are English lexemes.<sup>442</sup>

Now it also seems to me that the adoption of something like the monolingual perspective might render all instances of code-switching ungrammatical as well. Although I am scarcely aware of any of the literature on the grammaticality of ‘code-switched’ utterances, I do know that there are linguists who firmly believe that intrasentential code-switching (or, at least, certain forms of it) is rule-governed and therefore susceptible of a formal description.<sup>443</sup> In the one study that I have looked at more closely (Joshi 1985), the author illustrates a series of constraints on the acceptability of utterances mixing English and the Indian language Marathi and produced by balanced bilinguals. Since I do not wish to go into the particulars of Joshi’s analysis, I will content myself with highlighting those of his findings that have relevance to the points at issue in the present section. Joshi argues that code-switched utterances are consistently judged by his informants to ‘come from’ one of the two languages (even though they are not sentences in either, cf 1985: 192). The language of ‘origin’ is termed the ‘matrix language’, while the one to which the ‘intrusive’ items belong is called the ‘embedded language’. Joshi actually conveys his

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<sup>442</sup> See Rey-Debove (1978: 281-86) for details.

<sup>443</sup> In the mid-eighties, both Woolford (1983: 520) and Joshi (1985: 190) offered that code-switching had been widely studied in a sociolinguistic perspective, but hardly at all from a syntactic or formal viewpoint. Perhaps that was because, as Hudson puts it, code-switching (which he calls ‘code-mixing’) “is one of the most dramatic challenges to familiar assumptions about grammars” (1995: 1515).

amazement that bilingual code-switchers should “have fairly consistent judgments about the “acceptability” of mixed utterances” (1985: 190).<sup>444</sup> These observations already point to a similarity and a discrepancy with the examples listed under 8.1.1.2 and 8.1.2.1. All of those would, I believe, be judged to ‘come from’ English (except for (14), which would consistently be assigned to French). In other words, standard English is the matrix language, while French (or German or a dialect of English) is the embedded language. So much for the similarities. As regards the differences, or rather the difference, it resides in the fact that the utterers of these examples are not clearly balanced bilinguals who engage in spontaneous rule-governed productions and would express anything like stable grammaticality judgments about these utterances. Since the speakers that Joshi was interested in are balanced bilinguals, it was reasonable for him to assume that the “[p]roduction or comprehension of utterances with intrasentential code switching is part of [their] linguistic competence” (1985: 190). Since a grammatical theory is supposed to be a theory of speaker competence, this provides a powerful justification for attempting a grammatical account of code-switched utterances.<sup>445</sup> It is not possible to make such a convincing case for examples (6) to (28). As a matter of fact, Joshi stresses that “[i]ntrasentential code switching is sharply distinguished from other interferences, such as borrowing, learned use of words, and filling lexical gaps, all of which could be exhibited by monolingual speakers” (ibid.; emphasis mine). Many of the examples in my corpus are uttered by learned show-offs or are instances of gap-filling. It often appears as though the switch to the embedded language is not spontaneous, but rather carefully planned and dictated by the will to display a certain ethos to one’s readership.<sup>446</sup>

As it turns out, the kind of hybridity illustrated in 8.1.1.2 and 8.1.2.1 has some connection to code-switching, but does not enjoy its status as a spontaneous production rooted in the particular competence of certain bilinguals. Such reserved considerations mean that I cannot be positive that our examples should be regarded as grammatical sentences (English or cross-linguistic). Still, I believe that the issue cannot be sorted out without a clear definition of the relationship between competence and language. It is apparent that what Rey-Debove has in mind is an ideal

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<sup>444</sup> Joshi carefully points out that some linguists are reluctant to embrace the idea of regularity in code-switching and of stable grammaticality judgments (cf 1985: 204 note 6). In his more recent overview of the topic, Hudson, who relies on other studies than Joshi’s, none the less stresses bilingual speakers’ ability to pass judgment on the ‘relative acceptability’ of code-switched utterances (cf 1995: 1515).

<sup>445</sup> This account does not amount to a grammar proper, because Marathi-English is not strictly speaking another language. (See Joshi 1985: 192, 199 for some details). The same position is adopted by Woolford (1983: 522).

<sup>446</sup> Moreover, the examples are all written occurrences, whereas spontaneous code-switching is a strictly spoken phenomenon.

speaker-hearer's mastery of the communal language (cf footnote 414, previous chapter). It is this emphasis on the communal language that demands the monolingual hypothesis. By contrast, an internalist perspective à la Chomsky does not appear to require the same constraint. Nothing in principle forces one to hold that the 'I-language' that an internalist linguistic theory is supposed to describe – i.e. a given state of someone's faculty of language – may not include words and grammatical features from more than one communal language.<sup>447</sup> This is almost certainly true of code-switching bilinguals, but perhaps also of the utterers of examples (6) to (28). If such a position is embraced, then the twofold paraphrases of these examples are acceptable after all, so that the equation between hybridity and simultaneous use and mention remains valid throughout.<sup>448</sup> However, as we shall see presently, there are more problems on the horizon.

#### 8.1.2.2. Translational mixed quotation

In a reply to Cappelen & Lepore (1997a), Savas Tsohatzidis brings up this example:

(29) Descartes said that man "is a thinking substance". (1998: 662)

This, he regards as expressing a true proposition about Descartes' views. However, if (29) is paraphrased as a pair of sentences as we have done before, the following problem arises: Descartes did not produce a token of *is a thinking substance*, since he was writing in Latin, not English. What Descartes said was *est res cogitans*.

Tsohatzidis is using this example to attack C&L's personal version of simultaneous use and mention in mixed quotation. C&L explain mixed quotation as involving two relations which, borrowing terms from Davidson, they call 'same-saying' and 'same-tokening'.<sup>449</sup> Here is the logical form that C&L would ascribe to (3):

$\exists u$  (Says ( $g$ ,  $u$ ) & SS ( $u$ , that) & ST ( $u$ , these)). He would consider running for the Presidency,

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<sup>447</sup> Witness this admittedly complex statement:

Even to speak of Peter as having the I-language L is a severe simplification; the state of any person's faculty of language is some jumble [...]. Peter is said to be multilingual when the differences among his languages happen to interest us for one or another reason; from another point of view, everyone is multiply multilingual. (Chomsky 2000: 169)

<sup>448</sup> I suppose that Recanati's language-shifts could be appealed to for a partial account of their grammaticality: these shifts are recognised pre-interpretatively, i.e. before a sentence is identified and its grammatical and semantic analysis can begin: if the various parts of the sentence are tagged for a language, then grammaticality judgments for each tagged segment will be made in terms of the grammar of the relevant language. Still, there remains the question as to which grammar is used to accept or reject a shift at any particular place in the sentence. As far as I can see, the pre-interpretative tagging does not help predict which transitions are grammatical and which are not.

<sup>449</sup> The second of these has already been discussed in 4.3.3.3.

The letters ‘g’ and ‘u’ stand for *Gerald* and *utterance* respectively. The abbreviations *SS* and *ST* stand for the relations of ‘same-saying’ and ‘same-tokening’. Adapting C&L’s explanation of another example (1997a: 445), it can be said that *that* is accompanied by a demonstration of the token of *He would consider running for the Presidency*, and *these* by a demonstration of *consider running for the Presidency*.<sup>450</sup>

This means that the ordinary-use line of (3<sub>1</sub>) reflects a same-saying relation, while the mention line reflects a same-tokening relation. I shall not directly try to give a precise definition of these relations, as I will be content with indicating that same-saying is typically found in indirect speech and same-tokening in direct speech. It is no surprise that C&L should assume both relations to be at play in mixed quotation, given that they understand it to be a mixture of direct and indirect speech.<sup>451</sup>

When applied to (29), C&L’s formulation yields this:

∃u (Says (*d*, *u*) & SS (*u*, that) & ST (*u*, these)). Man is a thinking substance. (Tsohatzidis 1998: 662)

In other words, the utterance same-says *Man is a thinking substance* – which is correct – and same-tokens *is a thinking substance* – which, in Tsohatzidis’s view, is not: it is simply not true that *is a thinking substance* and *est res cogitans* are in a same-tokening relationship. For C&L’s formulation to be true, Tsohatzidis suggests, Descartes should have been writing in English.

The argument looks very strong. And indeed, on the conception of types and tokens developed in Chapter 4, according to which the type-token relation is essentially a matter of formal identity, it would be contradictory to assert that *is a thinking substance* can same-token *est res cogitans*. C&L’s reply is, at first, very tentative: they point out that they “did not claim that every usage can be accounted for by a single theory” (1998: 665), and admit that there may need to be a separate treatment for ‘translational’ mixed quotes, two concessions that have an air of backing down about them. Nevertheless, they suggest that a unified account might accommodate Tsohatzidis’s examples, provided the same-tokening relation is re-examined: “there should be placed no a priori constraints on what can same-token what. [...] We see no principled objection to saying that in some contexts same-tokening can rely on translation” (1998: 665).

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<sup>450</sup> C&L do not justify the use of the predicate *Says* in the present instead of the past tense. I do not, however, regard this as a genuine problem.

<sup>451</sup> As C&L’s analysis is based on two interpretations of the verb *say* (or similar reporting Vs), it cannot apply to utterances where no such V occurs, notably instances of scare quoting (though, as we have seen, the boundaries between scare quoting and mixed quotation are not clear-cut).

I must confess that I am ambivalent about what to think of this suggestion. In Chapter 4.3.3.3, I criticised same-tokening because it seemed incompatible with a correct picture of the reference of autonyms. In the course of my argument, I worked out two ways in which same-tokening could be understood, a looser and a stricter variant.<sup>452</sup> I could not be positive which one C&L had in mind, although in the context of that discussion it initially appeared that it could hardly be the looser one, as it was incapable of supporting their claim of referential uniformity. Still, that looser variant seems more likely to conform to the reality of metalinguistic demonstrations, precisely because it is consistent with the observation that metalinguistic demonstrations depict a wide variety of targets (due to the fact that the depictive properties of a demonstration are themselves very diverse). In terms of descriptive accuracy, therefore, the looser variant is superior to the stricter one. As a matter of fact, it is very similar to iconicity as Recanati understands it: both same-tokening and iconicity are extremely flexible and adaptable (perhaps too much so, some would say).<sup>453</sup> However, Recanati's notion has a major advantage over C&L's same-tokening: it provides a criterion – a demonstrated property – according to which one can determine (predict) which target(s) is/are depicted (i.e. in what sense the displayed token is an icon of its target). In this respect, Recanati's iconicity has an explanatory power that is completely absent from C&L's account. As I said in 4.3.3.3, C&L deny that it is incumbent on their semantic theory to determine 'in terms of what' two strings can be said to same-token each other. This means that, on the only interpretation of same-tokening that is empirically plausible – the looser one – the notion remains entirely descriptive. As such, it simply signals C&L's recognition of the complexity of metalinguistic demonstrations, but offers no prospect of explaining that complexity.

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<sup>452</sup> On the looser one, the same-tokening relation is entirely context-dependent; autonyms can designate different classes of tokens from one context to the next. On the stricter one, the same-tokening relation includes a context-independent formal parameter: all equiform autonyms same-token each other and therefore necessarily refer to one and the same class of tokens.

<sup>453</sup> But this flexibility is a necessity. Take this example:

[...] un fait c'est, avant tout, quelque chose qui « a lieu », ou qui « est le cas », selon l'expression anglaise. (Recanati 1979: 153)

This is not a very odd utterance, in spite of the fact that the writer explicitly introduces an English expression ... in French. Furthermore, a flexible notion of iconicity is needed too if one is to account for many direct speech reports and even flat mentions. Here are just two examples:

[the cartoon] shows a cavernous view of the mouth of a man being attended by his dentist. The man's tongue is a simple, U.S. Treasury hundred-dollar bill, and the dentist is saying, sadly, in French, "I think we can save the molar, but I'm afraid that tongue will have to come out". It was an enormous favourite of mine. (Salinger 1968: 127)

Peru is so rich that in Spain and France they still use an 18th century expression – "worth as much as Peru" – to express the notion of wealth and opulence. (*Time*, 28/9/92) [Note, in addition, the inaccuracy of the metalinguistic comment]

My reader may remember too that we examined autonyms that refer to non-equiform tokens and types in subsection (iii) of 4.3.3.3.

As a conclusion, I believe that Tsohatzidis's objection can be obviated, provided one understands the same-tokening relation in a loose sense, i.e. one that makes it equivalent to Recanati's iconicity.

### 8.1.2.3. Contradictory mixed quotation

Tsohatzidis, however, also mounts an attack against the same-saying relation postulated by C&L. In order to do this, he resorts to such examples as:

(30) Alice said that these very healthy people “are in very bad health”. (1998: 663)

Tsohatzidis suggests that, for a sentence like this to be true, there need be no assumption that Alice uttered a contradiction, namely “the view that a very healthy person is a person in very bad health” (ibid.). Yet, he goes on, that is precisely what is predicted by C&L's account:

$\exists u$  (Says ( $a, u$ ) & SS ( $u, \text{that}$ ) & ST ( $u, \text{these}$ )). These very healthy people are in very bad health.

Since C&L's paraphrase assumes that the utterance same-says everything that is governed by the reporting V, it appears to force the conclusion that Alice contradicted herself. C&L's response is that Tsohatzidis has completely misunderstood the SS relation. On their view, same-saying requires no identity in content. This argument is developed at length in Cappelen & Lepore (1997b).<sup>454</sup> C&L believe that it is unwarranted to demand that an indirect report should have the same semantic content as the utterance it reports: many reports that are judged to be true by native speakers are different in content from the reported utterance. Here are a couple of examples from C&L (1997b):

(31) Pointing at a pink car, A asks, “Do you like that car ?”

B replies, “I hate pink cars.”

A, pointing at that same car, reports, “B said he doesn't like that car.”

(32) Michael said, “Names are not rigid designators.”

Michael said that Kripke is wrong about names.

C&L claim that the indirect reports in (31) and (32) are (i) acceptable and (ii) different in terms of their semantic content. I see no grounds on which to disagree with them. From this, they infer that the contextual value of the same-saying relation cannot be decided a priori within semantic

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<sup>454</sup> Unfortunately, I only had access to an on-line version of C&L's paper, which means that I cannot refer to the page numbers of the version published in *Mind and Language*.

theory: it is often necessary to rely on contextual pragmatic considerations to judge whether an indirect report is correct or not:

the lesson to be learned from closely attending to our actual practice of indirect reporting is that those features which are relevant and those which are not is not determinable *a priori*. (1997b)

It seems difficult not to grant C&L that point. Not doing so would mean dismissing as inaccurate vast numbers of perfectly acceptable speech reports. The consequence, however, is that one must once again be satisfied with a semantic notion that is quite vague. In the end, it becomes difficult to decide whether the very adaptable notions of iconicity (for the mention line) and same-saying (for the ordinary-use line) still support the claim that the hybridity of mixed quotation (and mention) equals simultaneous use and mention. In any case, the equation cannot be adhered to without reservations: in many instances, the demonstrated sequence is not used and mentioned in the most straightforward sense of these words. Besides, as we saw in 8.1.1.1, non-cumulative scare quoting seems to present an insuperable counterexample to the equation. One must therefore conclude that there is more to hybridity than simultaneity of use and mention.

### 8.1.3. Conflicts in deixis

There is another variety of hybrids whose existence proves incompatible with the equation between hybridity and simultaneous use and mention, even though the demonstrated sequences do not contain language-shifts, pseudo-English ‘intruders’, translated reports or contradictions. These are instances – mainly of mixed quotation, though, once again, there are some doubts about membership in several cases – which mix two levels of deixis. The co-presence of those two levels is not remarkable in itself: it is systematically found in utterances including a direct speech report. What is noteworthy, however, is that, in the cases to be analysed below, the speech reports are not grammatically separate from the mentioning utterance, the way they are when grammatically recruited as an NP or N. In [Dem]<sub>NP</sub>- or [Dem]<sub>N</sub>-direct speech, the speech report’s own grammar does not mix with that of the surrounding utterance: the grammatical analysis of that utterance treats the speech report as a separate nominal constituent. Such is not the case in the following example:

(33) Berman, himself an immigrant from St Petersburg [...] says he’s fulfilling his “duty to our children” by opening the schools. (*Newsweek*, 02/04/01: 75)

In ordinary circumstances, the possessive *our* should be assumed to point at the same situation of utterance as that which saw the assertion of (33). In other words, it should refer to a group of



people including the *Newsweek* journalist who wrote the piece from which (33) is excerpted. In actual fact, it does not: *our* refers to a community of parents including Berman (the utterer of the demonstrated words), namely immigrant parents from Russia. In Recanati's terms, the quote marks have been used to effect a shift in the situation of utterance. This situation-shift, however, cannot be reflected by means of the sort of twofold paraphrase discussed previously:

(33<sub>1</sub>) Berman says { he's fulfilling his duty to our children by opening the schools.  
"duty to our children".

Although the ordinary-use line of (33<sub>1</sub>) is grammatical, it underlies the assertion of a proposition that is different from that expressed by (33).

This phenomenon, which might be termed 'inconsistent deixis', is widespread in certain varieties of English, notably journalistic writing. In the following pages, I review the various sorts of deictics that can be involved in blends of this sort. First, as we have just seen, there are possessive determiners. All the examples that I have come across involve a first-person determiner, *our*, as in (33), or *my*, as in:

(34) In later years [Lida Baarová] turned to drink, saying that her acquaintance with Goebbels had "made **my** life hell". (*Guardian*, 09/11/00: 10)

We also have personal pronouns, both in subject and in object position (once again the 1<sup>st</sup> person forms are massively predominant):

(35) [Hillary] Clinton held a news conference shortly after Giuliani's, saying she had called him "to wish him well, to tell him that **I** knew this was a difficult decision, and **I** certainly hope and pray – and **I** know all New Yorkers do – that he will have a full and speedy recovery". (*Guardian Weekly*, 25-31/05/00: 29)

(36) EU spokeswoman Beate Gminder said late Tuesday that "**we** are going to closely examine" the U.S. move, but that it is "too soon to assess it". (*Wall Street Journal Europe*, 14/03/01: 1)<sup>455</sup>

(37) Wright won't disclose how much the Nike deal is worth, saying only that "they treat **me** well". (*The Face*, Sept 93: 55)

Then we have adverbials or modifiers of place and time: adverbs (38), NPs with deictic adjectives (39), prepositional phrases (40):

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<sup>455</sup> Lack of time and space prevents me from addressing the reasons for resorting to inconsistent deixis. I none the less wish to make a suggestion in connection with (36): using *we* is more economical than *she and ...*, e.g. *she and the U.S. government*. Less taxing also on the writer, who does not have to come up with an appropriate description of the other people who, together with Gminder, make up this *we*. Note, however, that such an explanation does not hold universally: it would not have been any more difficult to use plain indirect speech in (37), for instance (but of course, there, we have a 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun).

(38) Like Luther, [Lucian Freud] seems to attest that “**Here** I stand, I can do no other.” (*New Statesman & Society*, 17/09/93: 33)

(39) “It’s picking up,” said Nick Angilletta, [...]. “I think that people still are unsure, and they’re waiting for a few days of stabilized markets before they really step in.” They are also, he said, “waiting for **next week**’s Fed meeting and hoping for some positive earnings”. (*Wall Street Journal Europe*, 14/03/01: 16)

*Next week*, being deictic, is used in a non-ordinary way in this example. More precisely, it denotes the week after the sentence quoted was uttered, not the week after which it was quoted in the newspaper. (These may be identical, but that would be a pure accident).

(40) The Agriculture Minister, Jean Glavany, said yesterday that “vaccination is not on the agenda **for the time being**”. (*The Independent*, 15/03/01: 5)

The fact that the period of time denoted by *for the time being* may include the day of reporting is, strictly speaking, contingent. However, it may have helped in making this mixed quotation more easily acceptable.

Finally, and less obtrusively, verb forms too can be involved in inconsistent deixis:

(41) Bloomfield’s presidential address to the Linguistic Society of America in 1935 prophesied that “within the next generations” the terminology of mentalism and animism “**will** be discarded, much as we have discarded Ptolemaic astronomy”. (Jakobson 1985e: 275)

(42) Nicholas Campbell QC, for the prosecution at Hull Crown Court, also put it to Mr Bowyer that he “**enjoyed**” kicking and punching Sarfraz Najeib, a student, during the assault in Mill Hill, Leeds, in January last year. (*The Independent*, 15/03/01: 6)

(43) The footballer admitted that he “**made** mistakes” in a police interview several days after the attack but said it was because he was “not very clever”. (*The Independent*, 15/03/01: 6)

(44) A few months later, [Robin Page] told the countryside rally in Hyde Park that this was “the first time I **have** ever been to London and met normal people”. (*Guardian, Europe G2*, 14/03/01: 5)

(45) Naturally [John Lennon] was expelled and sent to art school, “so I **can** fail there as well”. (*Guardian Weekly*, 2-8/11/2000: 13)

In (41), indirect discourse would require *would* instead of *will*: it might, however, be argued that *will* has been retained because Bloomfield’s prophecy was meant to be valid for a period of time including the moment when Jakobson reported it (the late 1950s). In other words, Bloomfield’s prophecy was perhaps still ‘about the future’ at the time Jakobson commented on it. Slightly more straightforward are (42) and (43), where the verb in the quoted sequence stands for a form in another grammatical person: 3<sup>rd</sup> for 2<sup>nd</sup> in the first example, and 3<sup>rd</sup> for 1<sup>st</sup> in the second. In a language with less eroded verbal morphology (e.g. French), the difference would come out very

clearly. Finally, as regards (44) and (45), the present tense has been retained where the deixis of the reporting utterance would have called for a past tense.<sup>456</sup>

Conflicts in deixis come in so many forms that they go beyond what many scholars had thought possible. For example, Cappelen & Lepore (1997a: 431fn) agree with an anonymous referee's suggestion that "absence of agreement in inflection is acceptable in direct but *not* in mixed quotation". Clark & Gerrig had made this earlier statement:

Pronouns sometimes remain unaccommodated in incorporated quotations like this, but tense, aspect, and mood rarely do, probably because unaltered they would be confusing. (1990: 790fn)

The term *incorporated* is used by Clark & Gerrig to denote scare and mixed quoting. What examples (41) to (45) indicate is that person may fail to agree and that tense can 'remain unaccommodated' in mixed quotation in English. (44) and (45), in particular, are problematic examples: not only is the ordinary-use component of their associated paraphrase semantically incorrect – as it is for most examples under 8.1.3, but the question arises whether they are not also ungrammatical utterances, as they fail to comply with constraints on the sequence of tenses. Perhaps the grammarian can take some solace in the fact that conflicts in deixis of the kind reviewed here are a strictly written phenomenon: a grammar of spoken English would not have to account for them.

#### 8.1.4. Intermediate conclusion

All in all, the various examples reviewed in 8.1 have shown that world/language hybridity does not always lend itself to a straightforward account in terms of simultaneous use and mention. In particular, we have seen that the intrusion of foreign sequences or pseudo-words requires an extension of the standard monolingual conception of grammaticality (as does code-switching); that the mixed quotation of translated strings demands that mention (construed as C&L's same-tokening) should be understood with an open mind, as being based on some form of resemblance (iconicity), not narrowly as being based on formal identity; that in contradictory mixed quoting the demonstrated sequence cannot simply be said to be used: rather, it same-says (in a broad sense; i.e. with no requirement of identity in content) the target of the demonstration. Finally, with non-cumulative scare quoting (where the ordinary-use line is semantically faulty) and with inconsistent deixis (in relation to which the ordinary-use line is semantically incorrect, and

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<sup>456</sup> I believe inconsistent deixis to be less widespread in French than in English. Still, Rosier provides three unequivocal illustrations (1999: 218; examples (9), (10), (11)), all of which involve a first-person singular pronoun; e.g. *Très vite, on lui conseille de « me spécialiser dans le vêtement ».*

sometimes even ungrammatical), we are led to conclude that no extension or broadening of the concepts of use and mention can help preserve the validity of the equation between hybridity and simultaneous use and mention.

## 8.2. Shifts in the universe of discourse

In this final section of the dissertation, I continue my exploration of some forms of world/language hybridity. Although the looser form to be examined below is less spectacular than the examples under 8.1, it is no less interesting, because its ubiquity emphasises how smoothly and easily speakers are willing to cross from a non-linguistic into a linguistic universe of discourse (the reverse path proves less well-trodden). Perhaps, I will suggest, this is indicative of something about human cognitive mechanisms.

### 8.2.1. Giorgione

I shall begin with a discussion of Quine's famous example:

(46) Giorgione was **so called** because of his size, (1952: 77, 1953: 139)<sup>457</sup>

Several writers have understood this sentence as involving both the mention and the use of the word *Giorgione* (e.g. Recanati 1979: 83; Rey-Debove 1978: 254; Saka 1998: 115; Audi 1999: 888).<sup>458</sup> Rey-Debove, in particular, treats (46) as a typical instance of autonymous connotation (cf Chapter 6.1.3), every bit as much as scare quoting and mixed quotation/mention. As far as I can judge, this simultaneity reading was not originally shared by Quine, who did not go any further than to claim that (46) as a whole utterance refers both to 'the world' and to language. Here is Quine's precise formulation:

[...] it is a statement about a man and not merely about his name. It was the man, not his name, that was called so and so because of his size. Nevertheless, the failure of substitutivity shows that the occurrence of the personal name in [(46)] is not *purely* referential. (1953: 140)<sup>459</sup>

Saying that an expression is not purely referential implies that it occurs in an opaque context (in Quine's subsequent terminology): truth-preserving substitution by another expression of identical reference is blocked. To gain a clearer understanding of this point, it is useful to compare (46) with

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<sup>457</sup> I have removed the hyphen from Quine's spelling *so-called*.

<sup>458</sup> But not Recanati (2000).

<sup>459</sup> Quine (1952: 78) has *designative* instead of *referential*, but the intended meaning is exactly the same.

(47) Barbarelli was **so called** because of his size.

The latter sentence is clearly false. What it basically lacks is the Italian augmentative suffix – *one*, which, when attached to the first name *Giorgio*, makes (46) a true sentence. This difference in truth-value occurs in spite of the fact that *Giorgione* and *Barbarelli* are co-extensive.

It is tempting to attribute the failure of substitution *salva veritate* to the simultaneous use and mention of *Giorgione*, as the abovementioned authors have readily done, assuming that the subject functions referentially and reflexively at the same time. Note that, although Quine (1952, 1953) was content with pointing out that the whole utterance is connected with a twofold universe of discourse, he seems to have altered his views afterwards: Quine (1960: 153) says in so many words that we are dealing with a two-role subject, i.e. one that plays a referential and a non-referential role.<sup>460</sup>

Still, there is an alternative analysis that deserves to be explored: failure of substitutivity may have resulted not from simultaneous use and mention but from a shift in reference (in universe of discourse) between an antecedent and its pro-form. The writers who subscribe to the simultaneity analysis hardly have anything to say about *so* in (46), the form that substitutes for the NP-complement of *is called*. It is not unreasonable to regard *so* as being the sole bearer of metalinguistic reference in (46) – it refers to the word *Giorgione*<sup>461</sup> – while *Giorgione* itself simply refers to the individual bearer of the name. In the terms of medieval logic, *Giorgione* could be said to occur with personal supposition.<sup>462</sup>

Though we are going to see shortly that the limit between this second reading and the first is not always watertight, I shall, at least temporarily, adopt the position that examples like (46) involve no simultaneous use and mention (and therefore scarcely fit into Rey-Debove's autonomous connotation as originally defined). To back up my argument, I shall appeal to a distinction that was already made in connection with examples (71) to (73) in Chapter 4. Take:

(48) I have no words with which to thank **my wife Elke-Edda. The writing of this thesis** has been as much of an ordeal for **her** as **it** has for me [...]. (Ross 1986: xvi)

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<sup>460</sup> True to his logicist viewpoint, Quine did not choose to follow up the observation that natural-language sentences cannot be classified into two non-overlapping sets, those about the world and those about language (cf Recanati 1979: 82-83). Rather than working out the implications of (46), Quine proposed rewriting it as:

Giorgione was called 'Giorgione' because of his size (1952: 78, 1953: 140), where the first occurrence of *Giorgione* is purely referential – substitution by means of Barbarelli does not alter the truth-value or the meaning of the sentence – and the second is not, since, on Quine's account, it is a mere fragment of a metalinguistic name: when combined with the inverted commas, it becomes the name of a name.

<sup>461</sup> Not a form-token of it in any particular utterance of (46), rather the expression *Giorgione*.

<sup>462</sup> This analysis is shared by Cappelen & Lepore (1999: 748) and Recanati (2000: 140-43).

The *her* that occurs in the second sentence ‘refers’ (is anaphorically related) to the NP *my wife Elke-Edda* in the first. At the same time, it refers to (designates) the same individual as its antecedent does: the two NPs are co-referential.<sup>463</sup> The same analysis applies to *the writing of this thesis* and *it*, which are also co-referential. In the previous explanation, I have used the term *refer* in two senses. These are often found side-by-side in works on language, as illustrated by the pair, *The phrase ‘those trees’ refers to a few oak trees that the speaker is pointing at* vs *The pronoun refers anaphorically to its antecedent*. For the sake of clarity, I shall reserve *refer* and its derivatives for the first case (semantic reference) and *substitutes for* (or *stands for* or *repeats*, as the case may be), for the second – exit ‘grammatical reference’.

Now, unlike what we observed in (48), there are instances where apparent anaphoric relations do not go hand in hand with co-reference. Witness,

- (49) The man who gave **his paycheck** to his wife was wiser than the man who gave **it** to his mistress.  
(Karttunen 1969, as quoted in Langacker 1996: 375)

Grammatically, the pronoun *it* stands for *his paycheck*, but the two NPs refer to different paychecks.<sup>464</sup>

Essentially the same situation obtains in (46). *So* is used pronominally as a pro-form for *Giorgione*, but the two are not co-referential, since they each refer to a different universe of discourse. My contention is that the failure of substitution *salva veritate* is caused not by the hybridity of *Giorgione* but by the fact that *so* refers to an item iconically related to its antecedent. If that antecedent is duly replaced by a co-referential expression; e.g. *Barbarelli*, the reference of *so* is automatically affected, and therefore the truth-conditions of (46) are too. I hold this to be a better explanation than the one based on simultaneity.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> When grammarians write that co-referential expressions are expressions that have the same set of referents, they use *refer* and its derivatives in a broader sense than semanticists or pragmaticists often do. For instance, they may perceive co-reference between a genuine referring expression and what is, strictly speaking, a descriptive expression, as in *I bought a dozen books and then forgot these little treasures for the next three months*, where the first NP is certainly not referential in the strict sense. For the sake of convenience, I shall go along with this usage.

<sup>464</sup> I cannot look into the question whether such an example illustrates anaphora or deixis. Note, however, that Langacker (1996: 375-76) favours anaphora, with co-reference occurring on the ‘type plane’ rather than the ‘instance plane’: both NPs refer to the same type of object, not to the same token. (See also Lyons 1977: 673f for some details and a pro-deixis position).

<sup>465</sup> I had not yet read Recanati’s ‘new’ analysis of *Giorgione* when I wrote this. I now realise (a little late) how close (and clearer) it is.

### 8.2.2. Shifts in the universe of discourse: the various patterns

In the pages that follow, I wish to extend the previous analysis to a variety of instances that have at times received an interpretation in terms of simultaneity. I am thinking especially of numerous illustrations of Rey-Debove's autonomous connotation.<sup>466</sup> What they all have in common is (i) the presence of a 'pro-form' or of a repetition of a sequence in ordinary use (often an NP); (ii) the fact that this pro-form or repetition is an argument of a metalinguistic predicate (verb, noun, or adjective); (iii) the fact that the pro-form or repetition mentions a linguistic object that is iconically related to the 'antecedent' in ordinary use.

Some linguists would take the view that the shift in the universe of discourse that takes place in these instances affects anaphoric relations (e.g. Ross 1970, who talks of 'metalinguistic anaphora'). I think it more correct, however, to view the relation that exists between the two sequences involved as being deictic in character. Anaphora is usually defined in terms of co-reference,<sup>467</sup> so that it proves hardly suitable for the description of referential shifts. I am therefore inclined to agree with Lyons that the instances that I am looking at in 8.2 pertain to 'textual deixis':

Demonstrative pronouns and other deictic expressions may be used to refer to linguistic entities of various kinds (forms, parts of forms, lexemes, expressions, text-sentences, and so on) in the co-text of the utterance. (1977: 667).

Still, my endorsement of textual deixis is not without reservations. The first intriguing example I wish to bring up is given by Lyons himself:

(50) (X says) That's a rhinoceros (and Y responds) A what ? Spell **it** for me. (1977: 667)

Although Lyons does not think twice about calling *it* a deictic, I remain under the impression that *it* is first and foremost an anaphoric pronoun. Whereas I can easily think of deictic uses for *he* or *she* (e.g. *And who'll pay for this ? – SHE will* [accompanied by pointing]), I have more trouble finding similar examples with *it*, probably because English has *this* and *that* (cf ?? *And what did you buy ? – I bought IT* [pointing at a bottle]); the following is probably better: ? *And what saved*

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<sup>466</sup> In her imposing (1995) study, Authier-Revuz provides a near-exhaustive review of the forms of 'autonomous modalisation' (her extension and reformulation of autonomous connotation) in French, an undertaking that I do not in any way intend to emulate here. Authier-Revuz is not interested in the question whether her impressive corpus massively displays simultaneity or referential shifts instead, but the corpus in itself is an eye-opener, so varied are the forms of hybridity that she brings up.

<sup>467</sup> Co-reference can be complete (direct) or only partial (indirect):

Alec bought a **new bicycle** but found that **the frame** was scratched. (Quirk et al. 1985: 267)  
And, for some writers, it can be a matter of types just as well as tokens (cf footnote 464).

*your life ? IT did* [pointing at a Swiss army knife]). More arresting perhaps are these examples that were cited in Chapter 6.2.2.1:

(51) Yes, everything went swimmingly, **which** is a very peculiar adverb to apply to a social event, considering how most human beings swim. (Barnes 2001: 70-71)

(52) [In a right-wing column] Already Mr Scargill is threatening ‘industrial action’ – **which** of course means *inaction*, in anybody else’s books – if he and his comrades aren’t showered with yet another round of pay rises and perks. (Coe 1995: 73)

“Relative pronouns,” writes Lyons, “unlike demonstratives, are restricted to anaphoric function” (1977: 659). Are we then dealing with a freakish deictic *which* ? This is a question I am unable to answer, my competence in these matters being too limited. What is certain, though, is that the debate on anaphora vs deixis cannot do without a scrutiny of the data provided by shifts in the universe of discourse.<sup>468</sup>

#### 8.2.2.1. Pronominally used adverbs as arguments of a metalinguistic verb

Some face-value adverbs, when endowed with a pronoun-like role, can underlie a shift in the universe of discourse when they pattern with a metalinguistic verb. Next to *so* (mainly in the expressions *so(-)called*, *so to speak* and *so to say*), the most frequent is no doubt *as*. Quite a few of Rey-Debove’s illustrations of autonymous connotation are signalled by a comment clause introduced by *comme*. I give one of her examples, plus an analogous English one:

(53) C’est un marginal, **comme on appelle** aujourd’hui l’inadapté social (Rey-Debove 1978: 253)

(54) A shadow passed over the professor’s face (**as we say** in our extravagant way) when he saw the shop was no longer open. (Golding 1985: 51)

The meta-verbs that can be used in a sub-clause initiated by *as* to effect utterance-internal shifts in the universe of discourse are: *say*, *put*, *call*, *refer to*, *have (+ it)*, *go*, etc.<sup>469</sup> About (53), Rey-Debove writes that *marginal* both denotes a person (it is used) and connotes the word *marginal* (it is mentioned), after which she offers that the deep structure of the signified of *marginal* in (53) is « Un marginal qui est dit (appelé) *marginal* » (1978: 253), confirming the simultaneity reading.

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<sup>468</sup> In (52), the shift is perhaps from denoting the world and language to referring to language only, as *industrial action* already occurs in inverted commas. I return to this complication under 8.2.2.5.

<sup>469</sup> *Have it* takes a metalinguistic subject-NP headed by *slogan*, *journalese*, *cliché*, *title*, etc., while *go* is built with *phrase*, *saying*, *euphemism*, *question*, etc.:

[...] getting the bugs out, getting the problems out or debugging **as the jargon has it** [...]. (BNC KRH 3396)  
You have to cut your cloth, **as the saying goes**. (BNC ECX 1108)



Although it is true that, on top of being used transparently, *marginal* in (53) ends up being considered as the word it is, Rey-Debove's error lies in her neglect of *comme*. From a syntactic point of view, *appeler* takes an ordinary (non-metalinguistic)  $O_d$  and a metalinguistic object complement ( $C_o$ ). The  $C_o$ -slot is precisely what *comme* fills, which bears out that *comme* refers to language. As for *marginal*, it functions as the subject complement ( $C_s$ ) of *est*. Since this verb is used with a non-metalinguistic subject, it is more than likely, through logical concord, that the  $C_s$  too is non-metalinguistic. This means, I believe, that *marginal* is merely used. Though there is a mention of *marginal* in (53), that mention is carried not by *marginal* itself but by *comme*:<sup>470</sup> there is, therefore, no simultaneous use and mention of a single sequence in (53).

A similar analysis can be supplied for (54), and for other examples involving different metalinguistic verbs. It can also be applied to the following utterance, in which *How ?* is used as an interrogative equivalent of *as*:

(55) You wish his books were a bit more cheerful, a bit more ... **how would you put it**, life-enhancing ? (Barnes 1985: 132-33)

The interrogative adverb is used metalinguistically (it is related to a linguistic universe of discourse) to point at *life-enhancing*.

#### 8.2.2.2. *That* and *what* constructions

(56) He loved her, among other reasons, because he so violently loathed that ghastly degenerate (**that was the word**) Beppo Bowles [...]. (Huxley 1954: 122)

(57) It means nothing to you, I suppose, he said, it was just a, **what do they call it**, a one-night-stand. (Lodge 1989: 297)

(58) [...] there are kids' things all over [the sofa], but the foot **or whatever you bloody well want to call it** is still there, just there in the corner of my eye ... (Barnes 2001: 153)

(59) [...] the belief that exists among the leadership of Sinn Fein-IRA that a sharp, savage campaign – **those were the adjectives** used in the Dublin press – in England would break the Government's will. [www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960219/debtext/60219-27.htm](http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960219/debtext/60219-27.htm)

Like *so*, *as* and *how* in 8.2.2.1, it is *that*, *what* and *those* that mention a linguistic string here, not *degenerate*, *one-night-stand* or *sharp* and *savage*, all of which have their ordinary meaning in relation to a mundane universe of discourse. The same, I suggest, is true of elliptical instances which can be reconstructed as resulting from the deletion of *that/what* + *copular verb*, e.g.:

<sup>470</sup> Recanati (2000: 137) rightly talks of 'heteronymous' mention as opposed to autonymous mention.

(60) I mean, we almost always make love in the same way – same amount of time, same length of (**horrid word**) foreplay, same position, or positions. (Barnes 2001: 62-63)

Naturally, one needs to assume that the bearer of metalinguistic reference is an implicit demonstrative subject, a move that some are perhaps not ready to make.

There are many cases in which the metalinguistic comment that triggers a shift and the demonstrative that acts as a substitute occur in another sentence. In those cases, Rey-Debove is somewhat reluctant to acknowledge autonomous connotation. She talks of the “limits of the procedure” (1978: 257) and adds that one may hesitate between autonomous connotation and a mere rhetorical figure. There were two relevant examples in 4.3.3.3, but they were scrutinised from another angle (the kind of reference). Here are two more:

(61) ‘Yes, Laura,’ said Robyn patiently. ‘As long as you show you’re aware of the *aporia*.’

‘How d’you spell **that**?’ (Lodge 1989: 338)

(62) “You’ve got Internal Derangement of the Knee. **That**’s what the orthopaedic surgeons call it amongst themselves. Internal Derangement of the Knee. I.D.K. I Don’t Know.” (Lodge 1996: 13)

Rey-Debove’s embarrassment is comprehensible: it is awkward to claim that *aporia* and *Internal Derangement of the Knee* connote their ordinary homonymous counterparts across sentential boundaries. It is only at the cost of a laborious explanation that she can eventually justify her choice in favour of autonomous connotation. This, I believe, only confirms the weaknesses of the simultaneity account. Things are a lot simpler if one assumes instead that the process consists in a shift from the mundane to the linguistic.<sup>471</sup>

### 8.2.2.3. NPs headed by an autonym or meta-noun

There are quite a few instances of shifts underlain by a mere repetition of an item or by an NP that describes that item. Here are illustrations of both patterns. Note that all four exemplify a shift across sentential boundaries. This is probably no more than an accident; there seems to be no constraint against intra-sentential shifts of the sort found below:

(63) He kept his hands in the side pockets of his belted grey suit. That was a belt round his pocket.

And **belt** was also to give a fellow a belt. (Joyce 1960: 9)

(64) [...] Nothing had prepared me for such sudden, austere beauty.

‘**Austere beauty**’: why did I use that phrase, though? (Coe 1995: 272-73)

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<sup>471</sup> As a matter of fact, Rey-Debove herself suggests that much as she talks of ‘unfaithful anaphora’ (i.e. at a different level of reference) (1978: 257).

(65) [...] the theorems are to be derived from the postulates by the methods of formal logic. If **the last phrase** is left unanalyzed, formal logic being presupposed as already known, we shall say that the development is by the *informal axiomatic method*. (Church 1956: 57)

(66) ‘What do *you* think of Sir Jack ?’

[...]

‘I think of him as a family man.’

‘Funny, I’ve always considered **that phrase** an oxymoron.’ (Barnes 1999: 64)

In (63), the first *belt* is used ordinarily, while the second points at the first and is clearly an autonym.<sup>472</sup> In (64), the situation that obtains between the two tokens of *austere beauty* is the same.<sup>473</sup> Then there is a pro-form of the second *austere beauty* – *that phrase* – but it does not shift reference from the world to language, since the second token is already an autonym. Precisely such a shift can be observed in (65) and (66) with the very similar NPs *the last phrase* and *that phrase*.

As I hinted in my discussion of examples (67) to (69) in Chapter 4.3.3.3, complications arise when the grammatical links connect sequences one (or both) of which occur(s) as part of a direct speech report. In (66), *that phrase* in the response of the second speaker (S<sub>2</sub>) substitutes for *family man* in the first speaker’s (S<sub>1</sub>) comment. But does the latter phrase denote the world or language? As indicated in 4.3.3.3, the answer depends on which level of analysis is selected as relevant, that of the original speech event(s) or that of the reporter (narrator). In (66), the narrator is reporting a conversation. At his/her level, *family man* is just a fragment of a report that denotes an utterance (S<sub>1</sub>’s). Strictly speaking, the fragment does not bear upon the world – in this case a fictional world, but never mind. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, is true of *that phrase*, which does not, strictly speaking, denote something linguistic, since it is no more than a fragment of a report (that does denote language). This means that, from the narrator’s perspective, it is unwarranted to claim that there is a shift.

Let us now turn to the level of the original speech events. There, S<sub>1</sub> uses *family man* in connection with the extralinguistic reality of the novel, so to speak (i.e. a sort of mundane universe of discourse). S<sub>2</sub>, who uses *that phrase* to refer to a linguistic expression, does shift reference from the (fictional) world to language.

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<sup>472</sup> It does not, however, refer to that token. Rather, it refers to the lexeme that is iconically related to that token. Let me add that the strangeness of the example probably stems from the fact that the second and third sentences are fragments of free indirect discourse, and that the person whose stream of consciousness the reader is connected to is a fairly young child.

<sup>473</sup> Except that, strictly speaking, the repetition does not refer, as it is not recruited syntactically as an NP.

I would propose a similar analysis for those instances in which only the antecedent occurs in a direct speech report. I repeat example (73) from Chapter 4:

(67) ‘I’m good at spotting people who don’t belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against *them*.’

*Them*, it appeared, meant the Party, and above all the Inner Party [...]. (Orwell 1954: 100)

If I focus on the reporter’s level, I must conclude that no shift has taken place. If, by contrast, I look at *them* as it occurred in the original speech event, I must conclude that it denoted a group of individuals in the (fictional) world, and that there has indeed been a shift between the two tokens of *them*.

#### 8.2.2.4. Non-finite comment clauses

(68) So his theory, apart from being demonstrably absurd, is, **to use a less technical phrase**, a bit fucking rich coming from him. (Barnes 2001: 147)

(69) “It’s very sweet of you, Louise,” I said, “and don’t think that I wouldn’t like to go to bed with you, because I would. But, **to coin a phrase**, I love my wife.” (Lodge 1996: 51)

(70) ‘I’ll leave you in Robyn’s capable hands, then, Mr Wilcox. **Metaphorically speaking**, of course. Ha, Ha!’ (Lodge 1989: 332)

The first two examples are similar to (65) and (66). There is a difference, though: the metalinguistic NPs of (68) and (69) are governed by the V of an adverbial comment clause. But no case for simultaneity can be made on the basis of this. The NPs *a less technical phrase* and *a phrase* occupy the second argument position of *use* and *coin*, which is indeed reserved for a mentioning expression. Since these Vs take no other metalinguistic argument, there is no need to look elsewhere for a mentioned sequence. (70) is even more clear-cut, since its verb, being intransitive, takes no second argument at all.

#### 8.2.2.5. A brief recap

The various patterns reviewed can be seen to fall into two categories. In the first, we have metalinguistic comment disjuncts, whose syntactic role in the sentence is comparable to that of adverbs like e.g. *literally: so to speak/say* and the *as* + meta-verb clauses in 8.2.2.1, plus the non-finite clauses in 8.2.2.4. Their internal syntactic structure does not affect the structure of the superordinate clause. Disjuncts are never compulsory constituents of a sentence, they are “peripheral to the clause to which they are attached” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1070). It would be odd indeed to contend that a constituent of the superordinate clause is actually the metalinguistic argument of a verb in the peripheral comment clause, and therefore mentions itself. In the second

category, we find examples (basically 8.2.2.2 and 8.2.2.3, plus (55)) that are even more peripheral to the clause that contains the ‘antecedent’. Either the pro-form and meta-predicate occur in a parenthetical that is not even part of the syntactic structure (= is not even a constituent) of the clause into which, so to speak, it intrudes, or they occur in a distinct sentence. Hence, given the degree of syntactic autonomy of the metalinguistic comment clause, the simultaneity analysis seems very unconvincing indeed.

#### 8.2.2.5. Simultaneity after all ?

There are, however, a few problem cases, which may seem to threaten the analysis offered so far in 8.2. To begin with, it is quite common for a metalinguistic comment clause to be combined with scare quoting:

(71) Robyn had a reputation in the family for being strong-willed, or, **as her brother** Basil less flatteringly **put it**, ‘bossy’. (Lodge 1989: 55)

(72) Not even the lexicon of a language can, **according to Humboldt**, be regarded as a “fertig daliegende Masse” (Chomsky, in Rey-Debove 1978: 255)

The challenge, however, is not very serious. As regards (71), my suggestion is that, similarly to previous examples, it too exhibits a shift in the universe of discourse. The quoting devices are just a redundant addition, albeit one that also endows *bossy* with a mentioning capacity. (72) is slightly more complicated, because the metalinguistic comment does not require the occurrence of a string that refers to linguistic forms as much as to linguistic meaning (a proposition). In this respect, *according to* is comparable to a predicate governing indirect discourse. In (72), however, the fact that part of the ‘reported proposition’ is in German is evidence that some of the forms used by Humboldt are reproduced as well. As a result, the quote marks are redundant, just as they are in (71). By contrast, they would not be in a more everyday example like *According to the killer, Gypsy was attacking his dog*, where they are necessary to effect simultaneous use and mention.

Now there are also more problematic instances than (71) and (72). In the next few paragraphs, I shall be looking at three of those, for which I will sketch only tentative accounts. My analyses have a somewhat inchoate air to them, but I felt it would be unfair not to include examples that may seem to contradict the general drift of my argument in 8.2:

(73) Of course, beyond the, **shall we say**, physiological plane nothing happened at all. (Golding 1985: 48)

The difference between (73) and the examples in 8.2.2.1, 8.2.2.2 and 8.2.2.4 is that it contains no mentioning pro-form in its comment clause, so that one has the impression that *physiological plane* does duty both as a constituent of the host-clause and as the autonomous  $O_d$  of *say* in the comment clause. This, at least, is what can be observed at the surface of things. However, I gather that a defender of the pro-shift analysis could build a case for his position by arguing that *shall we say* is an intrusive comment clause which, just like those under 8.2.2.2, is not syntactically part of the structure of the host-clause, and that it is therefore unlikely that *say* would pick its  $O_d$  in this other clause. As an alternative, s/he could then argue that *shall we say* is elliptical for *shall we say physiological plane ?*, on which basis it is possible to contend that *physiological plane* occurred once in each of the two clauses which have been merged to form (73), and that one such occurrence was left out (e.g. for stylistic reasons) when the comment clause was inserted into the host-clause.

Although this sort of account does not seem unwarranted to me, endorsing it comes at a price, for most cases of simultaneity, including all the examples in 8.1, could presumably be construed similarly as a mere surface phenomenon – whatever that means. It always seems possible to come up with a derivation from two (or more) ‘base sentences’ – one with the relevant string in ordinary use, the other with the equiform string in mention – which, through a series of transformations (reductions), eventually yields the utterance with suspected simultaneous use and mention. For example, the twofold paraphrases examined under 8.1 could be taken to represent a deep or initial structure, and serve as a basis for such a derivation. Note that an account along those lines is suggested in Zellig Harris’s various remarks on the syntax of metalinguistic sentences, especially his brief discussion of *He is of the ‘intelligentsia’* (1968: 125fn), which he derives from the initial pair of base sentences *He is of X. X is called the intelligentsia* (see De Brabanter 2001: 62-63 for some details). I suspect that such an analysis could be extended to other, more complex, instances of simultaneity. The important question, however, is whether it really explains the grammar of simultaneous use and mention or rather explains it away. Some writers would probably reject Harris’s account on the grounds that it fails to comply with what Jackendoff has called the ‘Grammatical Constraint’, i.e. the methodological principle according to which the language scientist should “attempt to minimize the differences of semantic and syntactic structure” (Jackendoff; as cited in Recanati 2000: 28). In the present case, the Harrissian analysis posits two different sentences, with two occurrences of a specific string, whereas semantic analysis points towards a single string playing a double role. Perhaps

that is a good enough reason to accept that (73) contains a genuine case of simultaneous use and mention. Yet, I must admit to my inability to settle that issue.<sup>474</sup>

Another difficult example is:

(74) My life, that life, that long and lengthening trail of—of **what** ? (Golding 1985: 47)

What is supposed to follow the preposition *of* is an uncountable singular or countable plural NP denoting the world (e.g. *disaster* or *disasters*). In other words, the initial expectation is that *what* is such an NP. At the same time, the question mark leaves no doubt that the narrator is grappling for the right word, so that *what* has metalinguistic – though not autonymous – reference. Is *what* therefore related to two universes of discourse ?

Although one may intuitively want to hold that *what* straddles the world/language divide, another analysis can be put forward, one that posits a (sort of) shift in reference from the world to language. This analysis becomes possible if (74) is judged to be semantically ill-formed (and perhaps even ungrammatical, given that it starts out as an affirmative and ends up as an interrogative sentence). If one gives up the idea that (74) is well-formed, one can also dispense with the initial constraint on the universe of discourse to which the object of *of* is related. In other words, (74) can then be assumed to involve a shift in reference. This shift, however, has a strange look to it, because the metalinguistic pro-form *what* (if that is what it is) substitutes for something that was never uttered (*disaster* or *disasters*).

Perhaps the oddness of the shift speaks against the above analysis. In any case, the fact that this analysis is possible if (74) is ill-formed does not entail that it is necessary, let alone accurate. I must say that I have some trouble abandoning the idea that *what* also denotes something outside language.

There is a last problem case that I wish to discuss, though it is perhaps not a serious challenge:

(75) It was the sort of line he was peddling when he stole my wife and I suspected it was bollocks at the time, and now I know it's absolute bollocks **not to mention** boastful bollocks. (Barnes 2001: 160)

This example would face the analyst with a genuine obstacle only if *mention* in *not to mention* were regarded as a verb in its own right. Such a decision would seem to make *boastful bollocks*

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<sup>474</sup> In her analysis of several analogous examples, Authier-Revuz (1995: 106-07) suggests that there is superimposition of the (homonymous) autonym upon the mundane string. She accordingly holds that the two-level string in question plays a syntactic role in two different constructions. This account seems to acknowledge both something like simultaneity (superimposition) and reduction from two base sentences. I think Authier-Revuz's description intuitively correct, but it does not tell us how utterances like (73) must be analysed syntactically.

an expression both used and mentioned. I do not think, however, that this is the right analysis: if *mention* is well and truly a verb, then *not to mention boastful bollocks* is a clause. Yet, there seems to be no way such a clause can be accommodated by a meaningful syntactic analysis of (75). Better, I believe, is to treat *not to mention* as a single unit that functions as a ‘quasi-coordinator’ (cf Quirk et al. 1985: 982-83). On this interpretation, *boastful bollocks* is not the metalinguistic  $O_d$  of *mention*. Instead, it is the mundane subject complement of an ellipsed *to be* in a coordinate clause introduced by a quasi-coordinator which is essentially similar to *and even*. In other words, there is neither simultaneity nor a shift involved in (75).

### 8.2.3. World-to-language shifts: some conclusions

In spite of the few examples examined in the last section, this sub-chapter has shown that many hybrids can best be explained in terms of a shift from one universe of discourse to the other. The phenomenon is very widespread, and indeed is already ‘foreseen’ by the language system itself. In English and in several other languages, there exists in the lexicon a set of specialised metalinguistic deictics in addition to those, like *this*, *that*, *following*, *next*, or *previous*, which can be used indifferently to point at extralinguistic or linguistic objects. Among those specialised deictics, one finds *the latter*, *the aforementioned*, *respectively*, etc. Note, however, that they are used essentially for locating relevant strings in a written text, hardly ever in speech.

Now, although all of 8.2 has been devoted to shifts, nothing has been said about the reverse transition from the linguistic to the mundane plane. The reason is that there are very few such instances. I have found only one clear-cut case, and it does feel odd. But before quoting it, I wish to explain why a whole category of occurrences does not, in spite of appearances, fall into the present category. What I have in mind are examples like the next two:

(76) Jones said “Smith rules the moon”, and he does

(77) Jones said “cholesterol is good for your body”, but it isn’t. (both already cited under point (iv) of Chapter 2.1.2.2)

It may look as if there are shifts from language to the world between *Smith* and *he*, and *cholesterol* and *it*, respectively. Yet, although the first word in each pair occurs within a piece of direct speech, it does not, properly speaking, denote something linguistic, whether the examples are analysed at the level of the reporter (*Smith* and *cholesterol* are mere non-referential fragments of a longer sequence that refers to an utterance-token) or at that of the original utterers (*Smith* and *cholesterol* both denote non-linguistic objects, every bit as much as their pro-forms do).

In the end, my only unquestionable example of the reverse shift is:



(78) Now what is the meaning of this word *retreat* and why is **it** allowed on all hands<sup>475</sup> to be a most salutary practice for all who desire to lead before God and in the eyes of men a truly Christian life ?  
(Joyce 1960: 109)

Clearly, a word cannot be a salutary practice. The latter predicate forces us to interpret *it*, i.e. the pro-form substituting for the autonym '*retreat*', as designating a period of prayer and religious study rather than a linguistic expression.

Before moving on to the overall conclusions of this chapter, I would like, briefly, to point to a kinship between world-to-language shifts and other related phenomena that have been more widely studied in the linguistics literature. What they have in common is that they involve two items (usually NPs) connected through a grammatical relationship roughly characterisable as 'substitution' (be it anaphoric or deictic) but which are not co-referential in any straightforward sense. I have already alluded to Langacker's proposed analysis for example (49), which is a case of 'sloppy identity' (1996: 375), another example being *Jeff closed his eyes, and Bill closed them too*: identity is 'sloppy' because it does not obtain between the actual referents of *his eyes* and *them*, but is rather a matter of the type of situation denoted (in this case, X CLOSING X'S EYES). I see a connection too with many of the utterances examined by Gilles Fauconnier in his *Espaces mentaux*, f.i. *La gagnante est blonde, mais Georges croit qu'elle est rousse* (1984: 59) or *Lisa sourit sur la photo, bien qu'elle soit déprimée depuis plusieurs mois* (1984: 25). In the first case, *la gagnante* refers to a different woman from *elle*, the referent of which pronoun is wrongly assumed by Georges to have won the contest. In the second, *Lisa* refers to the image of a woman in a photograph, while *elle* does to the real-life *Lisa*. So, once again, we have a case of dissociation between grammatical and semantic relations. Fauconnier, however, chooses not to deal with these examples in terms of reference or co-reference, but rather in terms of the mental constructions accompanying the unfolding of discourse in the minds of speakers and which, Fauconnier insists, "are not representations of reality, or of partial 'possible worlds'" (1984:193). It is possible that approaching world-to-language shifts in terms not of reference but of mental spaces would prove extremely fruitful. This, however, is something that I have not had the opportunity to attempt within the framework of this dissertation.

The third and final related phenomenon that I wish to mention is known as 'associative anaphora'. On a broad definition – the anaphor is linked to an antecedent but is not co-referent with it – it would not be impossible to classify the shifts just studied under associative anaphora.

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<sup>475</sup> The expression *on all hands* means « from every quarter ». Therefore, the coordinate clause must be understood as *Why is it agreed by everyone to be ....*

On a narrower and, according to Kleiber (2001), more useful definition, the associative-anaphoric relation is subjected to further constraints; notably, it is established between an antecedent-NP (definite or indefinite) and a definite NP, as in *The police searched the car. The wheels were full of mud* (translated from Kleiber 2001: 9). There are interesting similarities with the shifts in 8.2: (i) it appears that associative anaphora is massively one-directional, roughly from the whole to a part (large place-small place, institution-function, event-agent/patient, etc.); (ii) the pro-form and the antecedent are not co-referential; (iii) the associative anaphors refer to objects that have not been mentioned explicitly in the previous co-text.<sup>476</sup> All the same, there are significant differences as well. In particular, unlike with the shifts, the referents of associative anaphors are presented as if they were already known, i.e. by means of a definite NP.<sup>477</sup> It is also interesting to note that Kleiber's anaphors usually do not allow replacement of the definite article by a demonstrative: such a substitution does not work in the example above, and neither does it work in *We arrived at a village. The church had been erected on top of a hill*. Since demonstratives are very frequent in the shifts that we have examined, this difference might be taken as further evidence that world-to-language shifts rest on deictic rather than anaphoric relations.

### 8.3. Overall conclusion

The most important fact to come out of Chapter 8 is the very extent and commonplaceness of world/language hybridity. Many are the utterances (8.2) or segments of utterances (8.1) that are in relation to those two universes of discourse at the same time. The pervasiveness of hybridity causes us to relativise the impermeability of the boundary between the extralinguistic and the linguistic planes, confirming incidentally the inadequacy of any account that radically separates between the use and the mention of an expression. It also bears out something like the hypothesis of the dual destiny of signs formulated by Recanati (1979; cf end of Chapter 2.1.2.3) as well as Saka's assumption of multiple deferred ostensions. It appears that linguistic strings are always capable of transparent and/or opaque employment: while they directly ostend their denotation

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<sup>476</sup> The wheels of the car have not been mentioned as such. By the same token, the referent of my metalinguistic pro-forms has not been mentioned explicitly either. True, it (or rather an icon of it) has been used in the (usually) previous co-text, but that is not the same thing.

<sup>477</sup> If we look at the examples of shifts where the pro-form is a full-blown NP, only one is introduced by a definite article (65). Moreover, it is not clear that that article is autonomous, i.e. is not rather part of the deictic expression *the last*.

(when they have one...), they deferringly ostend various aspects of their being linguistic signs (form, expression, grammatical function, etc.). The ease with which speakers shift from the mundane to the linguistic plane could be explained as follows: whenever we talk about the extralinguistic world, (some of) the linguistic features of the words we use are ostended deferringly, a statement which can also be understood as implying that these features are ‘highly activated’, as psycholinguists would put it, which means that they can easily be foregrounded in the rest of the utterance or even a subsequent utterance. Hence, perhaps, the unobtrusiveness, the ordinariness of world-to-language shifts. As a matter of fact, it is not impossible to account for the comparatively rare shifts from the world to language in the same terms. One might hypothesise that, when a string is mentioned, its denotation needs to be blocked out for the deferred (secondary) ostensions to supersede the direct (primary) ostension. The extra effort required to reactivate the link to the denotation might explain the low frequency of the reverse shifts.

## CONCLUSION

After years of engagement with a subject and some major changes of direction, drawing general conclusions is no easy task. I have nevertheless attempted (i) to sum up what may have been my personal contribution to the study of metalinguistic discourse ; (ii) to venture some comments on what my preoccupation with metalanguage has taught me both about the workings of language in general and the study of linguistic phenomena ; (iii) to make some final remarks concerning the writing of this thesis and the kind of research that could now be undertaken in its wake.

### What does this dissertation contribute ?

#### As regards metalanguage and metalinguistic discourse proper

If this thesis makes any contribution to the study of metalanguage, or of language at large, it is more in terms of the questions it explores (and sometimes even brings up – e.g. “does ‘nameability’ generate an infinite lexicon?”) than the answers it provides. In the following paragraphs, I will none the less attempt a brief recapitulation of my main findings as regards the three chief subcategories of natural metalanguage.

#### (i) Metalanguage in the system :

I think that I have been able to confirm the impossibility of separating the metalexicon from the rest of the lexicon — a result that was already fairly well-established — but also to highlight the theoretical difficulties besetting any attempt at drawing a definite line between meta-words *stricto sensu* and autonyms (cf Chapter 7). In other words, discourse leaks into the system, given that some lexemes (essentially names of speech acts) seem to be able to be instantiated sometimes as strict meta-words and at other times as autonyms. Hence, the suggestion that a number of autonyms have ‘made it into’ the established lexicon.

#### (ii) Autonyms at large :

I think that the most interesting result I have come up with concerns two of the characteristics of autonyms that any valid theory should be able to account for. What I have in mind are a pair of controversial properties, namely recursiveness and variability in reference. In Chapter 2, I suggested that mention and quotation were iterable, and that this iterability should best be understood as subsuming three distinct phenomena — typographical, compositional, and referential recursiveness — not all of which are manifested by every single autonym. I showed

that, whereas typographical recursiveness worked ‘inwards’, Russian-doll-style, compositional and referential recursiveness worked ‘outwards’. Moreover, the latter two proved crucial if one wanted to avoid the unpalatable conclusion that quoting/mentioning boils down to talking about inert, ‘linguistically dead’ objects.

As regards referential diversity, it was dealt with at length in Chapter 4, in which I hope I was successful in showing that the opposite view, namely ‘referential homogeneity’, is ultimately untenable. My line of reasoning was both empirical and theoretical. I first relied on the presentation of a wide range of utterances containing autonyms of which it seemed sensible to assume that they designated objects of various kinds. In particular, to try and show that the proponents of homogeneity were wrong in assuming systematic reference to types or to classes, I brought up a series of autonyms that appeared to refer to individual form-tokens. However, it still proved possible (though not very convincing, I believe) to counter that diversity was no more than apparent and could actually be explained in terms of a single principle, for instance, same-tokening. That is why I resorted to an additional theoretical argument, namely the fact that the acceptance of referential recursiveness entailed the recognition of the possibility for some autonyms to refer to individual tokens. In so doing, I tried to establish the existence of ‘reference to particulars’ next to the ‘generic reference’ posited by advocates of the homogeneity thesis.

(iii) Hybrids, mixed uses :

I cannot in this regard lay claim to any novel theoretical insight. The essential elements for the comprehension of hybrids were already present in various publications by Rey-Debove, Cappelen & Lepore, and especially Recanati (2000) and (2001a). If I have managed to contribute anything at all, it is in terms of the attention that I have devoted to certain forms of hybridity that had not been widely discussed in the literature, in particular those varieties that include pseudo-English or foreign sequences ; inconsistent deixis ; translated passages ; ‘contradictions’ ; all of which came under scrutiny in Chapter 8. A review of these forms makes it clear, I believe, that the equation between hybridity and simultaneous use and mention is untenable, or, at the very least, requires an open-minded understanding of the concept of ‘mention’.

(iv) Autonyms and hybrids (= metalinguistic demonstrations in general) :

Faced with the diversity of metalinguistic demonstrations, I felt the need for a reasoned typology. As I explain in Chapter 6, I eventually opted for what I called an ‘interpreter’s typology’. The aim was to bring together all the classificatory variables previously made out by scholars working on mention and quotation. I reflected that the interpreter’s point of view

provided a sound rationale for a typology at the same time as it supplied a yardstick for determining which characteristics of metalinguistic demonstrations could count as relevant typological criteria : a useful distinctive characteristic was one that could be shown to ‘make a difference’ for the interpreter. It is with that idea in mind that I began to look for conventional markers of various aspects of the meaning of metalinguistic demonstrations. At the end of this process, I found several facts to be particularly striking. First, I was impressed by the amount of interpretative processing that is carried out at a pre-semantic level, i.e. as part of disambiguation. Second, it appeared clearly that pre-semantic processes appealed to exactly the same cognitive mechanisms and tapped into the same sources of information as interpretative processes in the narrow sense (i.e. subsequent to the disambiguation of the sentence). These two observations, I believe, shed an interesting light on the theory of the interpretation of utterances presented in the third chapter. Finally, I also found out that some significant aspects of the pictorial meaning of metalinguistic demonstrations, aspects which, as a rule, pertain to the most pragmatic layers of interpretation and should accordingly require inferential processing, could often be ‘decoded’ out of context. I did not conclude that the importance of pragmatic processing is overrated in comparison to semantic processing, but I could not fail to notice that the findings of Chapter 6 underlined the need to give due consideration to the purely semantic dimension of interpretation.

### More general considerations

#### (i) Grammaticality

Grammaticality has ultimately proved to be one of the central issues in this dissertation. This, in a way, is hardly surprising, given that the peculiar morphosyntactic behaviour of some metalinguistic expressions was emphasised as early as the Introduction; given also that the notion of grammaticality is central to a considerable amount of linguistic theorising. However, since my angle was chiefly semantic and pragmatic, I had not imagined that grammaticality would play the prominent role that it eventually did.

Let me now review the various issues with respect to which grammaticality emerged as a key notion. Logicians and philosophers (see Chapter 1) were initially concerned with truth-theories and the consistency of formalised systems — problems to which they have, I believe, brought satisfactory solutions in the twentieth century — and they had little trouble with grammaticality since they could decide ‘by decree’ which string was well-formed and which was not. Things changed dramatically when the study of metalanguage became less prescriptive and more

descriptive. There appeared the requirement for a theory of quotation to be ‘empirically adequate’, i.e. to be able to predict which real-life metalinguistic utterances were grammatical and to supply a correct analysis for them. In the course of the twentieth century, we notice a gradual widening of the accepted set of grammatical utterances, something that goes hand in hand with increased demands of empirical adequacy.

The various theories presented in Chapter 2 (and also, to a lesser extent in Chapters 4 and 5) all displayed some lacuna or other in terms of empirical adequacy; in other words, they were all incapable of accounting for all of those metalinguistic utterances that can be judged to be genuinely grammatical. To give but one example, the Name, Description and Demonstrative Theories proved unable to offer a satisfactory account of scare quoting and mixed quotation : their understanding of quotations (or quotation-marks) as singular terms led to the postulation of impossible grammatical structures. We also observed that, when in trouble, some authors resorted to judgments of ungrammaticality (some of them dubious, I should say) in order to dispose of embarrassing data (cf various comments on the unacceptability of mention-without-quotes). The adoption of a largely Recanati-inspired framework in Chapter 5 allowed us to reach a high degree of empirical adequacy, but, where problems remain with the theory, they usually have something to do with grammaticality : Chapter 8 gave us an opportunity to address some issues that stem from inconsistent deixis in mixed quotation and from a specific type of language-shift (the occurrence of pseudo- or foreign words) in scare quoting and mixed quotation. But, in spite of some difficulties, Recanati’s theory of quotation stands up. Thus, we saw in Chapter 7 how it provided an elegant explanation for the grammaticality of utterances containing ‘mere things’.

Metalinguistic discourse forces language scholars to broaden their horizons. It is in their confrontation with metalanguage that they are led to take up such serious theoretical challenges as are presented by utterances that include foreign sequences or non-linguistic objects, occurrences that they would otherwise probably ignore. This situation has provided a counterweight to a tendency in this dissertation to be essentially preoccupied with traditional pursuits of logicians and philosophers of language, notably truth and truth-conditions, a tendency which was a natural offshoot of my having to struggle with a substantial body of literature in logic and the philosophy of language. Through the important linguistic questions that it raises, metalinguistic discourse has allowed me to strike some sort of balance between a philosophical and a more linguistic approach to my subject matter.

## (ii) Iconicity

It is also through the study of natural metalanguage that one can become aware of the importance of iconic signs in verbal communication. Linguistics usually sets great store by the conventionality of language use, and rightly so. However, a proper appraisal of metalinguistic discourse restores the balance somewhat between conventional and iconic signs. Iconicity is the keystone to an understanding of reflexive metalinguistic demonstrations.<sup>478</sup> Although their meaning also has conventional aspects (cf quoting devices, the compositional meaning of e.g. direct speech and open mention/quotation), it is first and foremost pictorial, i.e. primarily a matter of iconicity.

Iconicity, however, is a difficult concept to manipulate. In Chapter 2, where we first become acquainted with the notion of ‘mention’, iconicity is initially understood as a relationship that obtains between two objects (tokens, types, expressions) that are formally the same. But, as the analysis proceeds, mention gradually loses its rigidity, and, in subsequent chapters, its definition is gradually relaxed, from strict equiformity to loose resemblance (cf free indirect discourse, irony, some cases of free mixed mention). Indeed, one can infer from the linguistic data examined that an iconic relation is something that is contextually determined: an accurate description of the cognitive mechanisms underlying the recognition of such a relation appears to demand a flexible concept. This flexibility, however, brings problems in its wake: if iconicity (resemblance) is always partly negotiable in context, can limits be set to it? Is it not always possible to make out some resemblance between two objects? These questions, which concern the nature and the boundaries of linguistic reflexivity, go beyond the goals of this dissertation, but it would be interesting to see to what extent psychology can enlighten us on the subject.

## Some final remarks

I would now like to offer a few comments on the writing of this thesis and on some prospects for further research. As I explained in the introduction, this thesis started out as a vague project to understand why some metalinguistic utterances eluded translation. It then went through various stages in the course of which I became acquainted with the writings of scholars working in different disciplines or schools of thought, some of whom seemed barely aware of the existence of the others. In the end, egged on by the quality of the papers published in the philosophy of language, I opted for an approach to the subject that owed a great deal to the questions and

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<sup>478</sup> Although I have been less careful elsewhere, I add *reflexive* here to exclude metalinguistic demonstrations by means of descriptive phrases like *that sentence*, *the first word in this text*, etc.



methods that prevail in that field. Yet, being a philologist and linguist by training, I remained interested in a number of issues that have not necessarily attracted much philosophical attention. I am thinking in particular of my reluctance to discard the lexical (system-level) aspects of metalanguage, which may seem here and there to disrupt a general argument that centres on discourse-level metalinguistic phenomena (essentially, reflexive metalinguistic demonstrations). I have a vague sense that some of my readers might feel uncomfortable about the almost lexicographical inquiry carried out in Chapter 7, all the more because, after initially stating that meta-words *stricto sensu* were not in themselves interesting, I ended up devoting forty or so pages to them. However, I believe the digression to have been only apparent. My motive for dwelling on meta-words in Chapter 7 was that I sensed an intriguing connection between them and autonoms, and suspected that there was accordingly some overlap between the lexicon and utterance-level phenomena; something which, I thought, was intriguing enough in itself. Moreover, it is this seeming lexicographical study that provided me with an opportunity to look into two problems which I regarded as linguistically extremely challenging : how to deal with infinity within a finite system, and how to incorporate ‘foreign bodies’, namely ‘things’, into a linguistic description of language.

The preceding justification does not mean that I can lay claim to having produced a completely coherent piece of work. I wished at times that I could have written a collection of loosely connected essays rather than having to spell out each time why a given chapter was the natural continuation of the previous one (which is tough when such is not the case). I have none the less tried to show by means of cross-references how the various topics that I surveyed could be seen to fit into a fairly coherent whole.

My very last considerations will be devoted to prospects for further research. My general impression is that the most promising field of investigation is constituted by the various kinds of hybrids that emerged in the course of this dissertation. For instance, I have scarcely said anything about irony and metalinguistic negation, two phenomena which, I think, would lend themselves to a fruitful study based on the framework set out in Chapter 5. Similarly, our understanding of the kind of ‘deviant’ hybrids surveyed in Chapter 8.1 would profit considerably from a more thorough exploitation of the notions and instruments supplied by Recanati’s theory of quotation. All of this could, in turn, serve to improve the interpreter’s typology devised in Chapter 6. As for the looser hybrids of 8.2, it is evident that more work should be done to map the similarities and differences with other varieties of anaphoric or deictic relations without co-reference.

Finally, there is one topic that has received no attention whatsoever in the present thesis, although it was at one stage destined to become its crowning piece, namely wordplay. The metalinguistic dimension of wordplay has been highlighted by numerous authors (see Attardo 1994 for some details). There is some consensus that it involves something like simultaneous use and mention, and should accordingly rate as a variety of world/language hybrid. A few years ago, I embarked on a study of wordplay that was to be informed by a variant of Rey-Debove's autonymic connotation ('metalinguistic connotation') and by Gricean pragmatics. I took some tentative steps into this area in previous papers (cf De Brabanter 2000, 2002), but these were not entirely satisfactory. However, with the work carried out in preparation for this dissertation and with the framework developed in it, I believe that there are now vast opportunities for a fruitful study of wordplay.

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*Time (International)*

*TLS= The Times Literary Supplement*

*The Wall Street Journal Europe*

### 3. BNC corpus

I have found many examples using the search engine of the website of the British National Corpus : <http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html>. All of these have references starting with *BNC* followed by three letters and three or four figures.

### 4. Internet

I have used the Internet as a source of examples, mainly via the Google search engine. Reference is systematically made to the URL of the webpage from which the example is borrowed.

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