

# QUOTATION MARKS AS MONSTERS, OR THE OTHER WAY AROUND?

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Mixed quotation exhibits characteristics of both *mention* and *use*. Some even go so far as to claim it can be described wholly in terms of the pragmatics of language *use*. Thus, it may be argued that the observed shifting of indexicals under all quotation shows that a monstrous operator is involved. I will argue the opposite: a proper semantic account of quotation can be used to exorcize Schlenker's monsters from semantic theory.

Natural languages provide various, more or less opaque, ways to report another person's speech act. The extremes on the opacity-transparency scale are direct and indirect discourse. Direct discourse is most faithful to the original utterance, (1a), while an indirect discourse report preserves only the proposition originally expressed, typically adapting various words in the process, (1b):

(1) a. Bush said: "The terrorists misestimated me"  
b. Bush said that the terrorists underestimated him

A third, and very common way to report something like this slip of the tongue is *mixed quotation*, i.e. an indirect report of which certain parts are quoted verbatim:

(2) Bush said the terrorists "misunderestimated me"

In this paper I develop a semantics of (mixed) quotation and show how it can be used to analyze shifted indexicality.

## 1. Quotation and the use-mention distinction

Philosophers since the Middle Ages distinguish two fundamental language modalities: *use* and *mention*, exemplified by the subject terms of *I am a person* and *'I' is a letter*. Direct discourse is commonly treated as a kind of mention: the reporter uses the quotation marking to *mention*, i.e. refer to Bush's utterance rather than *use* the sentence to express a proposition herself.<sup>145</sup> Indirect discourse on the other hand is usually analyzed wholly in terms of *use*. More specifically, it is analyzed on a par with

attitude reports, as an intensional semantic operator:  $\text{SAY}_x \varphi \approx x$  uttered something that expressed proposition  $\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket$  (Kaplan 1989):

(3)  $\llbracket \text{SAY}_x \varphi \rrbracket_w^c = 1$  iff there is a character  $X \in (\{0, 1\}^W)^C$  (of a sentence) uttered by  $x$  in context  $c' = \langle w, x, t \rangle$  with  $X(c') = \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket^c$

### 1.1. Quotation as mention

I argue against the above mentioned strict dichotomy (quotation = mention; indirect discourse = use), but first, let's consider some characteristics that do clearly separate quotation from indirect discourse: (i) quoted errors/ungrammaticalities do not affect the overall acceptability of the report; (ii) quoted indexicals retain their original form; and (iii) quotation blocks quantifying in and wh-extraction. These facts are easily explained on the classical Quine/Tarski/Geach/Kaplan analyses of quotation as mention, which state that the function of quotation marks is to form a name (or description) to refer to the enclosed expression.<sup>1</sup>

A closer look at the data reveals that the distinction isn't as clear-cut. For instance, some features, such as the language, are easily adapted to the report situation, even in quotation, while indexicals sometimes retain their original form even in indirect discourse. This last is known as *shifted indexicality*, a phenomenon that has recently led to a substantial overhaul of the previously intensional semantics of indirect discourse (e.g. as given in (3)), arguing that monstrous operators (i.e. object language context quantifiers) are needed:

(4) a. John<sub>i</sub> said that I<sub>i</sub> am a hero [lit. translation from Amharic, Schlenker 2003]  
 b.  $\text{SAY}_j^* \lambda c[\text{hero}(i(c), c)]$   
 c.  $\llbracket (4b) \rrbracket^{c_0} = 1$  iff for all contexts  $c$  compatible with John's original speech act in  $c_0$ : the speaker of  $c$  is a hero in  $c$

I argue below that this is not necessary:<sup>2</sup> shifted indexicality is really mixed quotation (but mixed quotation is not pure mention).

### 1.2. Quotation as use

That quotation in general cannot be described as mere mention, is further corroborated by the fact that (iv) anaphoric and elliptical dependencies occur between quoted

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Oshima (2006) for an overview of mention-like characteristics of quotation, plus a more recent defense of the strict use-mention dichotomy in natural language reporting.

<sup>2</sup>Another way to avoid monsters *a priori* is to say that anything that can be bound is *ipso facto* not an indexical. Thus, English *I*, which remains unaffected by any embedding is indexical, but Amharic *I*, which differs from its English counterpart only with respect to embeddings in indirect speech reports, is not. However, Amharic *I* does not simply pick out any salient speaker, and it cannot be bound under extensional quantification. This remains unexplained on the 'a priori account', while both the monster account and the quotational account to be presented here offer a principled explanation of this special status of reportative embeddings.

and non-quoted phrases; and (v) from quotations we often infer the corresponding indirect version where the words are *used*, e.g. (2) |= (1b). For mixed quotation Davidson gave a final argument: (vi) mentioning turns an expression of any type into a name (for that expression), but a name simply doesn't fit the grammatical position of the quotation in (2). Especially the last two arguments have led to the opposite idea of analyzing (mixed) quotation wholly in terms of the pragmatics of language use (e.g. Recanati 2001). Note that on a quotation-as-use view, the behavior of indexicals in mixed quotation (cf. (2)) shows that we're dealing with genuine monsters. What's more, as pointed out below, even on Potts' (2007) hybrid use-mention account, monsters seem unavoidable.

## 2. A hybrid use-mention analysis of quotation

As (i)-(iii) indicate mention, and (iv)-(vi) use, we need a truly hybrid account. My proposal is based on Potts (2007) and Geurts&Maier (2005). It extends DRT with Van der Sandt's (1992) theory of presupposition-as-anaphora (with which I assume minimal familiarity) and with a logic of mentioning. This last extension requires the addition of linguistic items to the domain of semantic interpretation. I introduce a new type  $u$  (in addition to the usual  $e$  and  $t$ ) and corresponding domain  $D_u$ . Now, (Quinean) quotation marks turn a linguistic entity of any type into one of type  $u$ :

(5) a.  $D_u = \{\text{misunderestimated me, I, the terrorists misunderstood me...}\}$   
b. If  $\sigma \in D_u$  then  $\lceil \sigma \rceil$  is an expression of type  $u$  and  $\llbracket \lceil \sigma \rceil \rrbracket = \sigma$

This captures mentioning. Then we add a predicate for *using an expression to refer to something*:

(6)  $\llbracket \text{say}(x, \lceil \sigma \rceil, P) \rrbracket = 1$  iff the syntactic category of  $\sigma$  matches the semantic type of  $P$  and  $x$  utters  $\sigma$  to express  $\llbracket P \rrbracket$

In cases of normal language use  $\llbracket \sigma \rrbracket = \llbracket P \rrbracket$  but we do not require that  $\sigma$  be grammatically well-formed or interpretable as such.<sup>3</sup> Instead of computing *the* semantic value of the quoted expression, we now need to know what  $x$  means with her use of the expression. The idea is to leave the third component,  $P$ , open to presuppositional (i.e. contextually and pragmatically driven) resolution:

(7) Bush said that the terrorists had  $\partial$ [the property he pronounced as “misunderestimated me”]  $\partial = \text{presupposition marker}$   

$$\left[ x \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{bush}(x) \\ \text{SAY}_x \left[ y \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{terrorists}(y) P(y) \\ \partial [P | \text{say}(x, \lceil \text{misunderestimated me} \rceil, P)] \end{array} \right. \right] \end{array} \right. \right]$$

<sup>3</sup>We do however require that  $\sigma$  has a syntactic category corresponding to a semantic type. Maier (2007) proposes an extension to the current account to deal with the apparent counterexamples to this constraint.

Assuming a minimal context, the presupposition  $P$  will be accommodated globally:

(8) 
$$\left[ x P \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{bush}(x), \text{say}(x, \neg \text{misunderestimated me}, P) \\ \text{SAY}_x[y | \text{terrorists}(y) P(y)] \end{array} \right. \right]$$
  
 $\approx$  Bush uttered “misunderestimated me” to express a property  $P$  and said that the terrorists have that property

In a more realistic context we might be able to infer what property  $P$  Bush intended to express: misunderstanding him or underestimating him, or perhaps something still different.

The above derivation demonstrates how to handle (i) quoted errors, and (ii) indexicality. It’s worth noting that both (i) and (ii) are problematic for Potts’ (2007) closely related rival account of (mixed) quotation. Interestingly, as discussed in my (2007), (ii) may in fact be fixed in a Pottsonian framework by adding monstrous operators to the quotational machinery. The current proposal on the other hand achieves quotational shifting (and error neutralization) through pragmatics, without monsters. This is crucial, because the next section takes it one step further (or turns it around, as the title of the paper has it), analyzing Amharic shifting in terms of quotation.

The other use and mention characteristics, (iii)-(vi), are also taken care of. Of these, (iv) requires some additional assumptions that fall outside the scope of the current paper (but see again Maier 2007).

### 3. Shifted indexicals as mixed quotations

We’re interested here in the indexicals. On the current analysis, a mixed quoted first person, like the one in (2), comes out as referring to whatever the reportee intended to refer to when she originally used it. This means that a mixed quoted  $I$  will always refer to the reported speaker herself. But this is exactly what Schlenker’s Amharic  $I$  supposedly does, so I propose to analyze the Amharic  $I$  of (4) and its kin as mixed quoted, i.e. an accurate English gloss of the famous Amharic report would be (9):

(9) John said that “I” am a hero

$$\left[ x \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{john}(x) \\ \text{SAY}_x \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{hero}(y) \\ \partial[y | \text{say}(x, \neg I, y)] \end{array} \right] \end{array} \right. \right] \rightsquigarrow \left[ x y \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{john}(x), \text{say}(x, \neg I, y) \\ \text{SAY}_x[\text{hero}(y)] \end{array} \right. \right]$$

Now, it’s safe to assume that John used the word  $I$  to refer to himself, so  $x = y$ , which gets us the right truth conditions:

$$\rightsquigarrow \left[ x \left| \begin{array}{l} \text{john}(x), \text{say}(x, \neg I, x) \\ \text{SAY}_x[\text{hero}(x)] \end{array} \right. \right]$$

Before addressing a number of *prima facie* objections, let’s take stock: instead of monsters (Schlenker 2003; Anand and Nevins 2004), complicated feature dele-

<sup>148</sup>

tion mechanisms (von Stechow 2002), or presupposed acquaintance relations plus introspection (Maier 2006), I now propose to analyze Amharic *I* in terms of an independently motivated, presuppositional, hybrid use-mention logic. The fact that only reportative contexts (not other intensional or extensional quantifiers, cf. fn. 2) can shift indexicals follows immediately from the inherently reportative nature of quotation.

I envisage three possible objections: (i) Amharic *I* cannot be quoted, since there are no quotation marks; (ii) a closer look at the morphology reveals that Amharic *I* is not even a word, it's a verb inflection, and surely we can't quote just an ending? (iii) the reference of a shifted indexical has become a purely pragmatic affair in the sense that extraordinary discourse contexts may make it refer to anything.

Ad (i), note that quotation marking does not coincide with quotation marks or fin-gerdance quotes. There are well-known constructions, even in English, that are completely unmarked, intonationally and orthographically, yet contain quotation marks semantically, e.g. *my name is Emar*. So, although in typical examples of mixed quo-tation (e.g. (2)) we mark the quoted words quite clearly, this may be just a means to draw attention to the peculiar or offensive choice of words in the original, and/or to emphasize the fact that these are not *your* words (i.e. your responsibility), but the other person's.

Objection (ii) can be brought out even clearer by the following example:

(10) aløttazzəzəññ alə  
*1.sg-will-not-obey-1.sg 3.sg.m-past-say*  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> would not obey me<sub>j</sub>’ [Amharic, Leslau 1995:779]

The complement in this Amharic speech report is a single word, literally meaning *I will not obey me*. Embedded in the report however, the first *I* (the subject) is interpreted as shifted, referring to the reported speaker, while the second rigidly refers to the reporter. The quotational account must therefore assume a logical form in which the morpheme corresponding to the subject is quoted while the other first person morpheme within the same word is not. Now, even if in written English quotation marks do not usually occur inside words, this is not really a problem, as we already noted that overtly written or spoken quotation marking need not coincide with semantic quotation. As remarked in section 2, in the hybrid account anything that corresponds to a semantic type, i.e. any morpheme, can in principle be quoted.<sup>4</sup>

Ad (iii), I concede that the current approach differs considerably from earlier accounts of shifted indexicality in this respect. On my account, a shifty Amharic *I*, i.e. a quoted *I*, refers to *the individual the reported speaker intended to refer to with her use of I*. Now, in most cases, people use first person pronouns correctly,

<sup>4</sup>In fact, as pointed out to me by Ede Zimmermann, the theory would even allow us to quote submorphemic constituents of words, as in *John said the ~~big~~ag 'mites' were falling down*. This should be fine because, as argued by Artstein (2002), although *mites* on its own is meaningless, it does contribute to the meaning of the whole word in a compositional fashion.

i.e. to refer to themselves, and our predictions coincide with e.g. Schlenker's. But one can imagine extraordinary speakers and contexts in which *I* is used to refer to something else, in the same way that Bush in (2) managed to use a non-word to mean *underestimate*. When one wants to report such a context in Amharic, the quotational account predicts that a shifted/quoted *I* would be able to pick up the reference originally intended (if those intentions are available in the common ground of the report situation), while Schlenker and the related semantic accounts would have it refer to the reported speaker regardless of her original intentions. Unfortunately, having no data on this matter, these diverging predictions currently serve merely to point out the difference between the pragmatic quotational account and the semantic monster accounts.

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