

# On the (Complicated) Relationship Between Direct and Indirect Reports

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## 1 Introduction

The issue of (direct and indirect) reports is magisterially summed up in Keith Allan (2016a):

Essentially a report is X's re-presentation to Y of what Z said. Because X is not identical with Z, what Z said is necessarily transmuted by X. X may use a different medium (e.g. written in place of spoken); X will have a different voice; and X will re-present what Z said, more often than not using different lexis and grammar, even when attempting a verbatim quote. X may have misheard or misinterpreted Z's utterance: she may add an affective gloss. All of these distinguish X's report  $\rho$  from Z's utterance  $v$  in both form and content, which renders every report "indirect" to some extent; there are different degrees of indirectness, but a truly indirect report utilises pragmatic enrichment, e.g. when Z's utterance *It's never stopped raining since we arrived* is reported as *Z complained about the terrible weather there* or *I won easily* is reported as a boast, mistake, or lie.

Although for Allan there is not a clear-cut distinction between direct and indirect reports, he assumes that if there is something to distinguish them, it is the indirect reports' reliance on explicatures (explicatures do not appear (or it is best to say, are not explicated) in direct reports). In this paper, we shall discuss a number of related issues on the basis of this presupposition – although at some point we discuss a(n allegedly) grammatical difference between direct and indirect reports – one which is not accepted by Allan (p.c.) and which my other considerations also lead me to be suspicious of.

The issue of indirect reports is fairly complicated, one of the basic assumptions presupposed (or assumed) by most scholars working on indirect reports is that they are different (in many respects, even if in the end the difference could only be a

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matter of degree) from direct reports.<sup>1</sup> One way to characterize this difference is to say that its main ingredient is accuracy or the lack of it (greater or less granularity, in the terminology of Holt 2016). Indirect reports seem to allow the speaker (and prepare the hearer) for a lower degree of accuracy than direct reports. Direct reports, we may assume, but this is a fiction to be dispelled in the course of this paper, report verbatim what a speaker said. They more or less report the same things as indirect reports, but they are required in different contexts. Direct reports seem to prevent the reporter from manipulating the content of the report – interpolations are banned, or so it might appear ‘prima facie’ (however, we should soon insist on the difference between strict and loose direct reports). But there are many ways to manipulate the content of a direct report without giving rise to criticism. Suppose Speaker A said ‘p’ and then ‘q’. The direct reporter may make an innocent change, by inverting the order of the utterances. He could report: A said q; p. This is a ‘prima facie’ innocent change but it shows how easily we can inject our voice even into a direct report. As Grice was well aware, the report may be misleading, because it conveys different implicatures (in Capone 2008, I actually thought that some of these inferences were properly called ‘explicatures’). A probably has a reason to say p before q. Perhaps the reason is that q explains p or elaborates on p. If the order is changed, the perlocutionary effects are different (Allan 2016a writes of ‘rearrangements’). Now, although this case can be clearly deepened further, all I need it for is to show that some small differences in the message reported may account for big differences in interpretation. So, it is possible for the speaker to add some interpolations in direct reports too, although we expect that such interpolations should be more substantial in indirect reports. In indirect reports, the speaker may change the words to some extent and thus one of the tasks of the hearer (of an indirect report) is to reconstruct what was actually said on the basis of what was reported (eliminating possible transformations which altered the content too much). So the reporter’s problem is obviously the reverse of the hearer’s problem. The reporter needs to move from the words uttered to an indirect report which more or less summarizes the content of those words (an author who explicitly uses the term ‘summary’ (or ‘gloss’) for indirect reports exhibiting less granularity is Holt (2016)); the hearer has to move from the words of the indirect report to the words of the reported speaker, often having to infer that (some of) these words belong to the reporting speaker and not to the reported speaker or vice-versa that these words belong to the reported speaker and not to the reporting speaker. Although ‘prima facie’ indirect reports might appear simple, in fact they are rather complicated language games (see Capone and Salmani

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<sup>1</sup>With some exceptions, such as Saka (2005) and Keith Allan (p.c.), who reiterates what he expressed in Allan (2016a, b). Allan has not been able to find any significant difference between direct and indirect reports. He also thinks that indirect reports could admit interjections as parts of mixed-quoted segments. Also see Coulmas (1986, 5) who says “What appears to be simply the alternative to direct discourse is thus a complex assembly of ways of reporting another’s speech or certain aspects thereof (. . .) make indirect speech a versatile mode of speech reporting ranging from faithfully adapting the linguistic form of the reported utterance to the deictic centre of the report situation to a summarizing paraphrase of an utterance irrespective of its linguistic form”.

Nodoushan 2015 for the view that indirect reports are language games), where both the speaker and the hearer have to adhere to a social praxis, which consists in a number of constraints (to be spelled out later on). In this paper, we try to understand why direct and indirect reports are different language games, even if apparently the rules for the two practices are not completely different. Intuitively, it is the context in which the activity is embedded that shapes the structure of the activity. So we hope to be able to deepen the differences between the two practices by focusing on the contexts and the purposes which accompany them. (The purpose to which the indirect report is put allows us to infer the direction of the changes made by the reporter).

## 2 Opacity

Let us start the comparison between direct and indirect reports by examining the notion of opacity. Opacity is a characteristic of verbatim direct reports, which may be somehow extended to indirect reports and to belief reports (which, as we shall see, are a variety of indirect reports). (The Davidsonian approach to opacity in indirect reports was to see it as a consequence of seeing the indirect report as a direct report in disguise – Davidson (1968) certainly has the merit of having pointed out the connections between direct and indirect reports and to have pointed to the phenomenon of voicing in indirect reports (although he never explicitly wrote about the polyphonic dimension of indirect reports)).

Consider the following direct report:

(1) Mary said ‘You are an idiot’

The speaker of (1) uses some modes of presentation like ‘You’ and ‘idiot’ and if one replaces those words, the result may be unsatisfactory, for various reasons. The corresponding indirect report ‘Mary said that John is a handicapped person’ is unsatisfactory, first of all because the report now uses the proper name ‘John’ instead of the mode of presentation ‘you’ (the second person pronoun ‘you’ has no implication that the speaker knows the addressee by name, as in ‘Can you move your car a bit’ said to a stranger clearly proves that ‘you’ does not imply knowledge of the addressee’s name).<sup>2</sup> It is also unsatisfactory because the speaker meant to insult John, rather than describing or characterizing him, whereas the replacement of ‘idiot’ (which is normally used to insult) with ‘handicapped person’ seems to involve a transition from an insult to a description or characterization (and the transformation is clearly more evident when the insult is paraphrased through an indirect report, as now we are no longer in a position to know whether Mary is speaking face to face to John (in which case ‘idiot’ is more insulting) or whether

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<sup>2</sup>Although unsatisfactory, the transformation in an indirect report has the advantage of helping the hearers identify the referent, while the pronoun ‘you’ clearly is not of much help, given that anyone at all could be addressed by the second person pronominal ‘you’.

she is speaking of John with a friend. We immediately see that an indirect report is less fine-grained than a direct report (Mary said to John: 'You are an idiot'), and it involves indirection not only in so far as it does not quote a verbatim utterance but because it invariably involves a less fine-grained picture of the situation and the loss of detail has the effect of mitigating the import of the words. (Of course another tactic is available to the indirect reporter, as she could provide a less fine-grained report by focusing on the offence, as in 'Mary offended John' or 'Mary insulted John'. Such tactics focus on the speech act uttered, rather than on the words, and seem to encapsulate interpretation of the words (Mary might have said: 'you are an idiot' smiling (as a joke) in which case it would not be correct to report the utterance as if it counted as an insult). (In Oxford I overheard various times young students saying to one another 'You bastard' (the utterance got my attention because you would never say that in Italian unless you want to be punched). How could one report such utterances? 'X said that the bastard VPs' is clearly not an adequate indirect report and certainly 'bastard' could not be heard as a quoted segment, because there is no way to distinguish between a serious and non-serious use, once the segment is quoted (unless a bit of the original context is provided, a possibility which ought not to be excluded). A segment of speech may be mixed-quoted (or mixed-reported) only when it is possible to recognize whether it was uttered with a serious or non-serious intention. If such a recognition is not possible, given the clues available, then the quotation will lead to obscurity and a violation of a Gricean maxim (perspicuity: in this case, avoid unwanted ambiguities).

But opacity is strictly the consequence of a view of 'said' which amounts to interpreting 'said' as 'exactly said'. So opacity needs to be qualified as being the result of interpretation of the verb 'say', as surely there can be no opacity if we know that the report, despite the fact that it is direct, is not exactly a verbatim report. The report can fail to be a verbatim report either because we inject something into the utterance or because we eliminate some constituent of it.

Indirect reports and belief reports (a sub-case of indirect reports) seem to behave differently with respect to opacity. Opacity here is more the result of the application of pragmatic principles, than the application of semantics, although the basic principles are semantic. The idea is that if a report does not contain a word actually used in mental or actual speech by the subject (the original speaker), he would object to its being used in the report. Suppose John believes 'Mary is at the cinema' and I report 'John believes that the Queen is at the cinema' and there is no evidence that John knows that Mary is the Queen, then I have clearly not reported something he believes but a proposition which happens to be coextensive with the proposition which he believes. John may not assent to the report of his belief that the Queen is at the cinema. In other words, substitutions in both belief reports and in indirect reports in general cannot be made, without creating a problem, as the reported speaker may not approve the report. However, according to some authors (see Soames 1988, 1989), this is not due to semantics, but to pragmatics. In other words, although the practice of substituting a coextensive NP in a belief report or indirect report in general is not deviant from a semantic point of view, it is not acceptable due to pragmatics, given that the reporter implicates, by using a certain sentence, that

the original speaker or the subject of the belief believes the proposition under the mode of presentation offered by the sentence used, given that he could have used different modes of presentation, but did not use them. In direct reports (especially those which are verbatim) it is clearly semantics that is involved in opacity, as the quotation marks usually are taken to indicate that the words in quotation marks were uttered verbatim (without modification or without much modification). This is semantic opacity – but notice that this view is correct or close to correct only if we accept that quotation marks are conventional semantic indicators that the sentence or words they bracket are verbatim reports. As I said, this view is not devoid of problems, because we notice that there is some latitude in the semantics of ‘say’, as sometimes it means ‘say more or less’, some other times it means ‘say exactly’. Even ‘say’ is a context-sensitive expression and we should decide whether we have two verbs ‘say1’ and ‘say2’ or whether we have only ‘say’, which can be weakened or reinforced (another problem is to establish whether the weaker or the stronger meaning is associated with the semantics of ‘say’, while the other meaning can be obtained (for free) by subtracting or adding features in a context of utterance). This would be a case in which pragmatics is allied with parsimony (see Jaszcolt 1999), given that on the basis of the same lexical entry, two meanings (or shadows of meaning) are constructed.

## ***2.1 Transformations in Direct and Indirect Reports***

In this section, I shall argue that both direct and indirect reports can undergo drastic transformations (in the sense that in reporting the original utterance some element of the utterance is lost and some element accrues to it; in other words, a report is sometimes less fine-grained, some other times more fine-grained). If this thesis proves correct, then we should seek the difference between direct and indirect reports elsewhere – or we have to say that the difference is one of degree and not of substance.

First of all, we need to be aware that in some cases (rare though they are) a direct report sounds very much like an indirect report. It may even be a consequence of conventions that such direct reports are interpreted as indirect reports, that is to say they are not to be taken verbatim, although ‘prima facie’ they look like direct reports. One example that comes to mind is: He said Good Bye (it is interesting that the Italian translation means more than the report of a greeting, and often implies the sudden interruption of an interaction due to a disagreement (or an argument)).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Another example similar to ‘He said Goodbye’, is the Italian utterance ‘Gli ho detto vaffanculo’ (I said to him Go to hell), which although it looks like a direct report (apparently quoting the words said) need not be a direct report, as the hearer imagines that the speaker may have proffered different words (a longer utterance, possibly). This looks like a summary. Another way of summing up the situation would be: ‘L’ho mandato affanculo’. Although this does not make reference to any words or utterances, it sums up the situation when we make clear to someone else that we no

With this example, there is no implication that ‘Good Bye’ is all that the speaker said, but this is a narrative way of saying (a summary, in other words) that the interaction came to a halt. In English, ‘he said Goodbye’ can also mean that there is a ceremony in which some people give their last greeting to a deceased. In this case it is not a Goodbye utterance but it may be a sequence of utterances or a sequence of utterances by (possibly) different speakers (They said Goodbye). Furthermore, such an idiom places emphasis on the speech act rather than on the words, it works like a summary, even if it appears that it is quoted speech. Here there is an element of convention. However, in some cases it is not convention but context that will allow us to detect an indirect report on hearing a direct report. Consider the following:

(2) Mum said: Mary must have a bath (said to a 5 years old daughter)<sup>4</sup>

Here the father is dramatizing the mother’s words to have a greater impact on the daughter but there is no reason to expect that this is a verbatim quote; perhaps the mother said ‘Do not forget Mary’s bath’. Here there may be an element of convention too, as the father does not expect his daughter to take him literally (it may be a consequence of adult-child interaction that different conventions are used, with quotations used as indirect reports).

It might be of interest to collect examples involving this kind of transformation, but this is not the main point of the section. The main point of the section is that the border between direct and indirect reports has been corroded.

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longer want to have intercourse with them. This is clearly a summary of what was said and of the (perlocutionary) effects of what was said.

<sup>4</sup>When I re-read this part of the paper, I realized there is an ambiguity (if no colon is inserted), as one does not know whether a direct or an indirect report is issued. Davidson was probably right in his intuition that opacity in indirect reports comes from a structure like: Mum said that: Mary must have a bath. I assume that in oral speech, there are ways to distinguish between the direct report structure and the indirect report structure, as with quotation there must be a pause. We wonder whether the pause is a pronominal in disguise (an implicit pronominal like ‘that’) followed by a colon. This issue cannot be settled here, but surely there is something in the Davidsonian intuition and what matters most some pragmatics is needed to resolve the ambiguity indirect report/direct report in some cases, even if, unless we interpret quotation as strict or pure (involving quotation marks and an expression which is literally quoted), there would be no need to resolve such an ambiguity, because there would be trivial differences between direct and indirect reports. As far as I know the only obstacles that stands in the way of a conflation between direct and indirect reports is a) that sometimes quotation must be interpreted as strict quotation (Mary said exactly that: . . .) and that direct quotation, but not indirect quotation, does admit the insertion of discourse markers. But of course, this obstacle can be overcome if one admits mixed quotation in indirect reports: He said that oh yes he was happy to accept the professorship. At least in spoken utterances, scholars have envisaged the possibility of mixed quotation in indirect reports (or mixed indirect reports), and thus a small step forward would possibly be to admit that discourse markers and interjections can appear in indirect reports too (He said that, Oh làlà, he was finally in love). (Of course a non-negligible problem is to attribute the interjection to a speaker or to another, given that the indirect report conflates the reporter and the reported speakers’ voices). This problem will be discussed later and I will say that considerations on explicatures can explain why interjections seem not to appear in indirect reports (or are considered illicit there).

Now we shall be concerned with the transformations we can notice in direct reports. Surely we do not expect the direct reports to be exhaustive. Even if an utterance were to be taken as a verbatim report, there is no implication that this is all that was said, but only that what is reported is relevant to the conversational needs at hand. By reporting an utterance, the speaker hopes to provide useful information to the addressee. There is no need to report parts of the utterance which are not of use to the addressee and, thus, no implication that what was reported was everything that was said.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps it was only a selection of what was said. Of course, if the speaker made a selection of utterances to report, it is possible that he decided not to report something which could be of relevance to the addressee, but which was not congruent with the speaker's purpose. Thus there is no point in assuming that the speaker made no manipulation of the utterances he reported.

## 2.2 *Elimination*

One reason why 'elimination' seems to us to be an essential transformation is that we cannot possibly report everything that a speaker said and, thus, we have to make a selection or possibly select only an utterance out of many that she proffered (originally, elimination was discussed by Wieland (2013) in a very interesting paper on indirect reports (though she did not say anything on direct reports) and taken up and critically discussed by Capone (2013a, b)). Relevance may be an element in our choice – as we discard those utterances which are not relevant to our purpose. Elimination is an important transformation, although we qua hearers are not able to see the boundaries of the utterance and imagine what was adjacent to those utterances. However, the reported speaker can sometimes complain 'But this is not everything I said' or 'this is only part of what I said', with the implication that the reporter deleted materials which could have been useful in establishing whether the reported speaker was guilty of something (in case the report is used as part of an accusation). I do not easily forget the event in which, in the course of a meeting of the college council, the Dean said, as a way of making an example, "Suppose I say that Professor Buccheri is an idiot". As you can very well imagine, the Professor in question complained violently although the word 'idiot' was only used as part of a supposition. The truth is that careful though you might be to bracket (or frame, to use a Goffmanian expression) an epithet as part of a quotation, attributing an epithet to someone is insulting (or so it is perceived). So, I quite agree that Professor Buccheri had reasons to complain, but what followed the complaint was not quite

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<sup>5</sup>I distinctly remember deleting from my academic quotations those parts which I deemed to be irrelevant to the purpose of the quotation (using (...) to mark the deletion transformation). Of course, in the written mode of communication one can signal slots, where the inverse transformation can be effected, but in the oral mode of communication it is not possible to insert such empty slots and thus the hearer is not encouraged to reconstruct the deleted part.

correct. In fact, in order to express this complaint formally, the professor in question needed the minutes of the meeting and such a report was very partial, both in the sense that it only partially reported the Dean's words and in the sense that it was written in favor of professor Buccheri. It was clear, after the Dean compelled us all to read and approve the report (or withdraw approval), that much of what had happened had disappeared and that the only event on which the minutes focused was the utterance mentioning Buccheri's name. In this way, the Dean appeared to be a very crazy person who wanted to insult the Professor – it was not any longer evident that Buccheri's name appeared in the course of making the example and that the utterance was a temporary hitch (a momentary impasse), some unintended offence. (The Dean showed that she was not sensitive to some social constraints which should have prevented her from associating the name of someone who was present at the meeting with the epithet 'idiot' even if as part of an example). So, from this discussion we can evince that ELIMINATION is a powerful rhetorical strategy which always has some perlocutionary function.

Another type of elimination is what can be called ELIMINATION UNDER ENTAILMENT (see Wieland 2013 for discussion of this transformation in connection with indirect reports and Capone 2013a for criticism). This too looks like a simple and innocent sort of elimination, although we had better ask, why should the speaker want to eliminate a constituent? Elimination under entailment is the practice of eliminating some constituent which might be deemed superfluous or redundant or irrelevant to the purpose of the citation. Suppose Mary says: John, who has always spoken in defense of freedom, yesterday attacked freedom of speech, saying that nowadays people can say all sorts of offensive things. Now it is clear that the previous utterance entails  $\rightarrow$  John yesterday attacked freedom of speech, saying that nowadays people can say all sorts of offensive things. Under entailment we could make one further deletion, given that the utterance thus obtained entails  $\rightarrow$  John yesterday attacked freedom of speech. And now we could also make one further deletion, since the utterance now obtained entails the following  $\rightarrow$  John attacked freedom of speech. It is clear that all these deletions may be oriented towards a purpose, which may lie not in brevity, but in some possibly opaque and to some extent unpredictable perlocutionary purpose. By deleting 'yesterday' the speaker may give the impression that this attitude is not limited to a short period of John's life and by deleting 'saying that nowadays people can say all sorts of things', the speaker may eliminate a reason for John's position (thus, John may look a more dogmatic person than he is or his remark may have greater generality, since having deleted this constituent, John may be taken to be opposed to freedom of speech for the wrong kind of reason (for all we know he may want to prevent anyone from speaking, even those who say things that are right; instead John only wants to prevent fools from speaking)). By deleting the constituent 'who has always spoken in defense of freedom', the speaker is characterizing John as someone who has always held the position that freedom of speech should be attacked, when instead the speaker explicitly says that this attitude is a fairly recent one and that he used to think otherwise. Furthermore, the speaker is now deliberately avoiding giving the impression (given by the original utterance) that there is a contrast between what



John used to think in the past and what he thinks now (with the implication that there was a point at which he changed his mind). So now it should be clear to the speaker that the perlocutionary effects of the report orient the possible transformations and eliminations from a verbatim report.

That verbatim reports do not exist or are very rare is something that emerges from the literature on quotation and on indirect reports. Saka (2005), for example, says that quotation is rarely verbatim and Keith Allan (2016a, b) says that reports (whether direct or indirect) at least may involve a reshuffling or reordering of the events reported.

### 2.3 *Expansions*

Intuitively, indirect reports are more susceptible of being expanded. It may be possible to add materials in an indirect report, without drastically altering the content of the original utterance. Indirect reports often reveal the reporter's interpretation work. He wants to make sense of an utterance, not just report it. Thus we expect that he may reveal the explicatures and the implicatures of the original utterance, in a way that the original utterance did not (see Keith Allan 2016a for the basic idea that indirect reports may semanticize pragmatic aspects of the original utterance). The indirect reporter may furthermore be sensitive to possible contradictions in the original utterance and eliminate them by offering an interpretation that reconciles the readings of the various sentences in the utterance (thus she will work on the assumption that the original speaker is rational and could not have said things that contradict each other; therefore alternative interpretations have to be sought beyond the literal meaning of the sentences) (Dascal 2003). The reporter may also report qualities of the utterance such as the voice (he said that in a soft voice; or, he said that shouting; he shouted that . . .). And finally he may intercept sincerity or falsity (he was not sincere when he said that; I could see it in his eyes; when I looked at him, he diverted his eyes). The speaker can also intercept sarcasm or metaphoric meaning (thus an indirect report may also be indirect in the sense that it will typically go beyond the literal meaning to capture metaphoric meanings<sup>6</sup>). Appositions can be added to clarify the referent of an NP in addition to the possibility of replacing an NP with a coextensive one. Appositions can also be added at the sentential level to clarify the meaning of an utterance (He said that p, by which he meant that q). What is most interesting is that the reporter can also draw inferences of a non-linguistic type, especially of the deductive type. In other words, the reported speaker could focus on the consequences of what the original speaker said; by drawing the

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<sup>6</sup>The social practice of indirect reporting presumably involves constraints such as the following:

Do not (indirectly) report the literal meaning of an utterance if you know that the utterance had a non-literal meaning (according to the speaker's intentions) unless you know that the hearer has clues which will allow her to reconstruct the intended meaning.

obvious consequences of what the speaker said, he may say something that praises the speaker or something that criticizes her (in case the obvious consequences were negative and did not occur to the original speaker).

## 2.4 *Interjections in Indirect Reports*

It appears that in English indirect reports do not admit interjections or discourse markers (Mayes 1990; Hassler 2002; Wilkins 1995; Holt 2016). Our expectation is that direct reports should admit interjections and discourse markers. If this is true, then we expect there to be a distinction between direct and indirect reports (what we have said so far, if anything, militates in favor of a conflation of direct and indirect reports). The distinction, however, is not neat. In fact there is the theoretical possibility of having mixed reports in English and in other languages – thus if anything we would expect indirect reports to admit interjections and other discourse markers even if it should be taken for granted that, if such elements appear, they are understood as enveloped in quotation marks. (The fact that interjections in indirect reports are not attested need not amount to saying that they are ungrammatical; they could be dispreferred for a pragmatic reason (a plausible one could be that it is difficult to establish whether the interjection belongs to the original speaker or to the reporting speaker). The literature is silent on the possibility of interpreting interjections in indirect reports as mixed quotations, and thus I take this to be a controversial point (but not a completely outlandish position). What is less controversial is the fact that free indirect reports can contain interjections, expressive and discourse markers (see Blakemore 2013 for serious work on this).<sup>7</sup> This could be taken as evidence that there should be the theoretical possibility of having mixed indirect reports admitting interjections. After all, free indirect reports involve explicatures specifying the ‘He said that’ or ‘He thought that’ constituent and once the complete explicature is reconstructed, we return to the problematic utterance ‘John said that oh he was very surprised’. At this point we have two options: (a) say that indirect reports too admit interjections, although there is clearly the preference for expressing interjections in explicit direct reports, which explains why such reports of the mixed type are not attested (contrary to ordinary mixed reports); (b) say that there is a difference between the explicature and the explicated utterance and that what is illicit at the level of the explicit utterance is licit at the level of the explicature (thus free indirect reports (with interjections) which are reconstructed on the basis of an explicature are licit (the case of free indirect reports), while ordinary (explicit) indirect reports with interjections are not licit). The reason for this is that (or should be that) although the explicature provides lexical materials ordered in a syntactic fashion, the syntax reconstructed is invisible to grammatical

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<sup>7</sup>An example could be the following:

Mary thought she was happy. Oh làlà, the love of her life had arrived.

processes. Thus the reconstructed semantico/syntactic constituents are visible from a semantic point of view but are invisible to grammatical constraints (one of these is that interjections cannot be inserted in indirect reports). And now if this option is adopted (but it is not yet clear what (all) the consequences of adopting this option can be), we can explain why mixed indirect reports containing interjections are not possible. After all, even mixed indirect reports rely on explicatures. Consider the following example:

(3) John said that ‘that bastard’ does not deserve our trust

By using the mixed quotation, the speaker is distancing himself from the expressed proposition (a modal effect is being somehow conveyed, like lowering the speaker’s commitment to the expressed proposition). In order to achieve this, we need some kind of pragmatic/syntactic reconstruction:

John said that the person whom he referred to by the words ‘that bastard’ does not deserve our trust.

The explicature involves addition of a syntactic structure. Now consider again:

(4) John said that oh he was so surprised

This can have the following explicature:

John said that he was so surprised, which he expressed by using the interjection ‘Oh’.

But this is clearly uninterpretable: as far as we know John could have produced the ungrammatical ‘I am oh so surprised’ or ‘I am so surprised, oh’. Given the impossibility of assigning one single interpretation to the explicature, this is ill-formed.

I should conclude this section on interjections on a positive note. For those who believe that the difference between direct and indirect reports is only a matter of degree, interjections should not count as an obstacle (to conflation) because one could hold the same position as Keith Allan does expressed in an important personal communication:

I should have added that if you can’t indirectly report an interjection (which you can), then you can’t indirectly report a speech defect, a cough, laughter, etc. etc. either. Of course it IS possible to report all of these along with comments on the way the speaker looks.

There is something of considerable theoretical importance in these considerations. Once we accept the theoretical possibility of quoting fragments of speech or the possibility that fragments of the that-clauses of indirect reports can be interpreted this way, then one has to think hard to explain why some types of constituents can occur while others cannot. It is possible that it is not grammaticality in itself that is involved in the fact that interjections appear to be banned in indirect reports, but that some considerations concerning ambiguity and the difficulty in attributing the interjection to the reporter or to the reported speaker prevail. But should not one say that the same considerations that are applicable to interjections should be applicable to other quoted expressions? Without explicit quotation marks, how can we distinguish between the speaker’s voice and the reported person’s voice?

This is clearly a matter of pragmatics, and while the possibility of interpretative ambiguity looms large, there is always the theoretical possibility of distinguishing between voices. In another paper (Capone 2010b), I argued at length that we need something, This is what I called the Paraphrasis/Form Principle (some constraint on interpretation or some principle specific to indirect reports) which allows us to segregate the reported speaker's from the reporting speaker's voice.

### 2.4.1 Paraphrasis/Form Principle

The *that*-clause embedded in the verb 'say' is a paraphrasis of what Y said, and meets the following constraints:

Should Y hear what X said he (Y) had said, he would not take issue with it, as to content, but would approve of it as a fair paraphrasis of his original utterance. Furthermore, he would not object to vocalizing the assertion made out of the words following the complementizer 'that' on account of its form/style. (Capone 2013a, p. 174).

In a different paper (Capone 2015), I specifically discuss a number of objections leveled by Wayne Davis (in personal communication) to my principle. Since there are ways to surmount those objections, I need not mention them here. However, I need to stress that the Paraphrasis/Form principle clearly has some work to do in the case of interjections and it easily attributes them to the reported speaker (and not to the reporting speaker) by default.

There are some residual problems for a view that allows interjections as quotations in *that*-clauses of indirect reports. How can we explain the fact that the following report seems to be out?

(5) John said that But he was relieved that he no longer had to work

even with the interpretation:

John said that "But" he was relieved that he no longer had to work.<sup>8</sup>

There may be grammatical reasons – rather than semantic reasons for this – given that both 'that' and 'but' serve to connect sentences (and we may assume that only a connector at a time is allowed to link two sentences, not to mention the fact that 'that' is a connective associated with subordination while 'but' is a connective associated with coordination). Someone with a pragmatic mind might reply that, after all, 'But' can also be considered a discourse marker (see Schiffrin 1987) and under such an interpretation it is not a connective. Yet, one might easily reply that even if 'But' can be used as a discourse marker, this function does not erase its function as connective (as it is able to connect two sentences by distinct speakers),

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<sup>8</sup>I was surprised to read that Alessandra Giorgi (p.c.) finds that under the appropriate intonation (5) could be found acceptable. I must register her different opinion.

which shows why it cannot be compatible with ‘that’. At this point people like Keith Allan might accept this explanation but still claim that it is only a grammatical explanation which certainly does not extend to all interjections, as we can find other interjections which do not have the status of sentential connectives (even if they are discourse markers). Thus Allan could be forced to accept that in some cases interjections or discourse markers are not allowed in that-clauses of indirect reports, but that this is not the general case, as in the general case it is possible to hear the interjections as merely quoted segments of the (mixed) indirect report. For the time being we might be happy with this explanation, which certainly has the merit of not making a difference (from a syntactico/semantic point of view) between indirect reports and free indirect reports. Alternatively, one might disagree with Allan and insist that there is a difference between indirect reports and free indirect reports and that in indirect reports the main problem with interjections is that (a) it is not clear whether they should be assigned to the reporter or to the original utterance; (b) even if we assign an explicature that encapsulates the quoted item, such an explicature cannot formally capture the position of the interjection in the corresponding direct report and therefore indeterminacy results, which of course would defeat the purpose of the explicature. This section, we are afraid, does not end with firm conclusions.

## 2.5 *Pronominals*

Direct and indirect reports show a different behavior in connection with pronominals. Pronominals, as is pretty obvious, require a context which determines their interpretation (the pronominal is saturated in context). But pronominals within quotations clearly need to be saturated by the context of the original utterance, whereas pronominals of indirect reports need to be saturated by the context of the report (see Holt 2016). Consider this example:

(6) John said that he (pointing to Fred) is so clever.

Clearly the hearer of the report need not search the context of the original utterance in order to assign a referent to ‘he’ (and even if he wanted to, he could not do this, as only the reporter knows (if he remembers well) the context of the original utterance and although the reporter could furnish part of the context (in a narration prior to the indirect report<sup>9</sup>), one usually does not expect him to do so). Of course he could do so, but then how would the hearer decide whether the referent comes from the context of the original utterance or from that of the narration? This is something of a puzzle, one that clearly cannot be resolved on every occasion of utterance. I suggest that the hearer knows in advance whether the referent should come from the context of the report or from the context of the original utterance. Let us for a

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<sup>9</sup>See Holt (2016) for indirect reports that precede direct reports (to provide circumstantial information). Something similar could happen with indirect reports.

minute suppose that the truth is that the hearer expects the referent to come from the context of the report, for some reason. One such reason might be that the reporter has summed up, as part of the indirect report (or as a preliminary to the indirect report) the context (or part of it) of the original utterance. (However, if the narrator has not provided a narration that sets up the context of the original utterance, there is nothing to search for there (the context of the indirect report)). Another reason might be that the reporter is accompanying the utterance (of the report) with some gestures (in correspondence with the pronominals), thus indicating that the context of utterance will provide the referents and in particular certain objects demonstrated (by movements of the eyes or of some finger (the gesture of pointing)). Another possibility is that pronominals are used anaphorically to refer back to previous NPs – in which case there is no question of searching the context of the original utterance, as the report itself may promote some NP as the antecedent of the anaphor. In this case, pragmatic principles of anaphora suffice (see Huang 1994, 2015). Now let us move back to pronominals in direct reports. Clearly a verbatim report may be indifferent to the issue whether the hearer of the report will recover the referent. The hearer may simply hold the pronominal in his mind until he finds the referent (notice that this way of thinking supports a minimalist view of what is said). Of course, within quotation, there can be anaphoric relations and thus what has been said before may become a context for the pronominal used. Notice, however, that especially in the written mode of communication, one can use brackets to specify in them the referent of a quoted item. I suppose that nothing prevents the speaker from doing the same in oral communication and add some interpolations clarifying/specifying the referent. However, I suppose that the speaker should qualify the message in such a way that his voice is heard as distinct from that of the reported person.

## 2.6 *Ungrammaticality*

Occasional errors are eliminated by the reporter both in direct and indirect reports. In direct reports the Principle of Charity prevails – we avoid presenting other people's errors unless they are relevant to the discussion at hand. Thus, If have to write a report on a paper and want to justify my rejection, I can use bits of the paper to show that it cannot be published. I report the text not to report the content but to justify my negative decision. The report here focuses exclusively on the grammar or on the style. Suppose, however, I want to quote Lyons or Levinson, in a scientific paper, and notice that a comma is missing or that an -s (the third person morph) is missing. Unless I want the hearer to focus on this error, I will pretend that the error did not occur – thus I rectify the error. It would be interesting to study written interviews published by newspapers to see if errors are corrected. From what I see, this is the ordinary practice (see Lehrer 1989, for a detailed paper on this). The reason is pretty obvious. Focusing on the errors would amount to discrediting the people whose words we value as informative. Furthermore, the errors (as I said) would be too much of a distraction for readers, while journalists or reporters want

their readers to concentrate on the facts. I assume that the direction of the corrections attests to (a) the existence of a Principle of Charity; (b) to the fact that the face of the interviewer is protected; (c) (and most important point), focusing on the style or on the bad grammar would be a distraction, while the reporter wants readers to concentrate on the facts.

In direct reports, it is clear that if an error is injected into the text, the reported speaker is responsible for it (albeit in the case of negligible mistakes one may stop to wonder whether the error should be attributed to the reporter (a misprint, for example)). If there are serious mistakes, then the journalist, who is normally in charge of good grammar, is not held responsible. However, things may be somewhat different for indirect reports. In indirect reports, it is never clear whether the error belongs to the reporter or to the reported speaker. Presumably, the reporter should be in charge of good grammar and we might reason that the main voice is that of the reporter (thus errors should be assigned to him). However, if mixed indirect reporting, as many argue, is a reality, it should be possible to quote segments of speech and thus part of the utterance may contain ungrammaticality.

## 2.7 *Summaries*

Another non-negligible difference between direct and indirect reports is that indirect reports sometimes work like summaries. Consider the following examples:

(7) He told me to go to New York

(8) He promised to come with me

These indirect reports are more like summaries and they identify the speech act proffered in the original utterance. They do not only describe the words, but they describe the illocutionary point. This is clearly not possible with direct reports, unless one replaces the verb 'say' with a description of the speech act, as in the following cases:

(9) He made the request: 'Go to New York now and interview M. Johnson'.

(10) He promised: 'I will certainly come with you'

These are cases where narration and direct speech coexist, although, I should say, they are bit strained – they are not impossibilities but surely not standard ways of reporting things.

## 2.8 *Reference to Sexual Organs*

One may think that quotations may be freer (than indirect reports) in reporting utterances which make reference to sexual organs (one of the strictest taboos in current society, despite sexual liberation). Quotation envelops the taboo word and

seems to assign responsibility to the quoted person. But it is like using a folder with Windows seven: if you hide a obscene photograph in a folder, it is still visible. You need to embed the folder into another folder, to hide the obscenity. But unlike folders in Windows seven, regardless of how many embeddings in quotation marks you use (X said that: X said that: X said that: p), the nudity still emerges. Taboo words cannot be cured by quotation and the reporter is always complicit (to some extent). I remember the silence I obtained at the Intercultural Pragmatics conference in Malta when I used as an example (to exemplify the kind of phenomena I am discussing now) the following:

(11) My colleague said that Berlusconi has a small dick.

I apologize with the readers of this article, but it shows the truth of what I am saying. Given that the reporter runs the risk of becoming complicit, he should minimally provide a bit of context in order to introduce the example. Notice that (strict) direct reports tolerate no substitutions, while indirect reports are freer in the sense that the indirect reporter can use substitutions of the items to be shunned (in that they are taboo words). So at least a difference emerges between direct and indirect reports. Indirect reporters have a way to avoid taboo words which is not available to direct reporters. Another strategy would be to distance oneself from the reported item, by adding something, in terms of sentential apposition (John said: shit, which he should not have said). However, sometimes the reporter and the reported speaker decide that the obscene word is needed (sometimes we all agree they are appropriate); in this case, the speaker may have ways to let the hearer know that he agrees with what the speaker said, that he shares his perspective (and he did well to say that!).

## 2.9 *Voice*

Indirect reports are cases of polyphonic language games – very often the hearer is assigned responsibility for deciding which portion of utterance belongs to which voice. The problem of distinguishing voices besets (or characterizes) indirect reports and makes them more interesting. The task of establishing whether a segment of the indirect report is in fact a quotation is a non-trivial one and is often illuminated by pragmatics. Of course, sometimes we are able to recognize a certain speaker's voice in an indirect report (we say, this is not the reporter's voice, he never uses such a language; or, more specifically, we can say: I recognize John's voice; this is the way he speaks (meaning, this is the style he uses). However, there may be ways to differentiate voices, in the oral language (the problem does not arise in the written mode of communication because here the writer can use quotation marks, which obviously set the quoted text apart from the indirectly reported text). My idea is that quotation, in oral language, correlates with an intonational pattern which is specific to quotation or, in any case, sufficiently different from the one used in the indirect report in general: even subtle differences in voice can signal a distinction. What is



sufficient is that here should be a contrast, even in quality of the voice (softer; less soft, for example).

Direct reports – despite the various transformations they can undergo – are not polyphonic or are not polyphonic to the same extent as indirect reports – they do not hide slots for different voices (although a speaker in directly reporting may resort to sentential apposition), to make comments (John said ‘I am completely honest’, which is obviously false). There may be complications for direct reports: they admit interjections, but then should the interjections always be attributed to the quoted speaker or could they also – at least sometimes – be attributed to the reporter’s voice? Consider the following:

(12) John said I am completely ah ah ah honest.

I deliberately avoided punctuation because I want you to consider it, by a stretch of the imagination, at least for a moment, as a spoken utterance. While, due to quotation marks, interpretation is easy in the case of the written utterance, things are more complicated in the case of the oral utterance. We need to segment discourse – and we want to know whether ‘ah ah’ (a brief laughter) belongs to the reported speaker or to the reporter. Here one might assume that the laughter cannot belong to the reported speaker, because it runs the risk of undermining his credibility. Thus, it can be taken as a comment by the reporter, who, for a minute, is not only a reporter, but someone who makes comments or assessments. The laughter plays the same role of a sentential apposition: ‘which is not true, of course’.

## 2.10 *The use of Clitics*

Before concluding this paper, I want to provide a section on Italian clitics, which I have studied in combination with propositional attitudes (Capone 2013b). Verbs of saying, if we follow Jaszczolt (p.c.) are not to be assimilated to propositional attitudes. I agree and disagree with that. When we utter something like ‘Mary said that John is crazy’, there is the implicature (or explicature?) that Mary believes what she says and, thus, she believes that Mary is crazy (after all, ordinary people say things which they believe to be true, with the exception of liars). Certainly things change with direct quotation. In ‘John said: I love Mary’ one needs a bit of context to judge whether John really believes he loves Mary. Could not John, in fact, be an actor performing on the stage? In such a case, his words would be devoid of intentionality. John, in such a case, is only the animator of the message, he is not the author let alone the principal (in Goffman’s (1981) terms) (the perennial notion of footing comes up again and again). So in a sense Jaszczolt is right, in another sense (in which we consider explicatures as part of the content of the utterance) she cannot be completely right. The notion of footing clearly seems to divide neatly direct from indirect reports, as indirect reports seem to imply a different footing.

I used the clitic ‘lo’ in previous papers (simplifying a bit the discussion), to show that in combination with verbs of propositional attitude (‘sapere’, ‘capire’, ‘sentire’

etc.) it introduces a speaker/hearer presupposition (a presupposition shared by both the speaker and the hearer). Now if there are different ways of considering ‘say’, and of attributing to say1 lack of propositional attitude and to say2 a propositional attitude content, we should expect that the clitic ‘lo’ which correlates (a) with propositional attitudes and (b) with speaker/hearer presuppositions should not be able to come up in direct reports, while it can be found in indirect reports. And this is exactly what happens.

- (13) A: Giovanni ha detto ‘Maria è cretina’  
 \* B: Sì, anche Mario lo ha detto ‘Maria è cretina’<sup>10</sup>  
 (A: John said ‘Mary is an idiot’  
 B: Yes, Mario too it said ‘Mary is an idiot’ (lit.))
- (14) A: Giovanni ha detto che Maria è cretina  
 B: Sì anche Mario lo ha detto che Maria è cretina.  
 (A: John said that Mary is an idiot.  
 B: Yes, Mario too it said that Mary is an idiot (lit.))

The difference between (13) and (14) seems to support the difference between say1 and say2, say1 being dissociated from propositional attitudes and say2 being associated with propositional attitudes. It appears that in (14) what Giovanni said has been added as a presupposition (given that such proposition was not challenged, it was somehow accommodated), and thus B is able to take up the presupposition by means of the clitic ‘lo’.

## 2.11 *Future Topics*

The considerations I have provided so far on the relationship between direct and indirect reports are necessarily provisional. We have more or less built a platform from which we can study the issue. Something which the paper does not do – as it is objectively difficult to do – is to examine the relationship between direct reports and the original utterances or between the indirect reports and the original utterances, to see the transformations and rhetorical effects that go hand in hand with manufacturing a direct or indirect report. It is impossible or almost impossible to do all this with spoken conversation, but this should be possible in connection with citations and indirect reports in academic texts. But this is a topic for the future. Another topic for the future is to study the interpretation of utterances adjacent to utterances which are clearly labeled as indirect reports by a verb of saying (and a that-clause), which are only implicitly (and ambiguously) indirect reports. Holt (2016) has examined some such cases and has pointed out an ambiguity, as they

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<sup>10</sup>But the sentence improves if a demonstrative is inserted: ‘Anche Mario lo ha detto questo ‘Maria è cretina’.

could easily be seen as reporting contextual and circumstantial information which is to be used in the interpretation of the indirect report. A sketch of how we should proceed with these cases is to consider them possibly free indirect reports. Since free indirect reports should be supported by contextual information that allows the insertion of a 'X said that' constituent in terms of free enrichment, it is easy to see how such interpretation can be aborted in case contextual factors militate in favor of a circumstantial reading of the report. But as I said, this is a topic for the future, although it clear involves the consideration of pragmatic inferences in determining whether an utterance is to count as a (free) indirect report or not.

Another topic to investigate in the future is implicit indirect reports, like the following:

- (15) Allan has not been able to find any significant difference between direct and indirect reports. He also thinks that indirect reports could admit interjections as parts of mixed-quoted segments.

Contextual clues lead us to consider 'Allan has not been able to find any significant difference between direct and indirect reports' an indirect report. We might reason: how do we know that Allan has not been able to find any significant difference? Presumably we know this because he said that in a paper or a book; thus the speaker is implicitly categorized as a reporter and, in particular, as an indirect reporter. We can reason in a similar way with 'He also thinks that . . .'. How do we know that thinks that . . .? Presumably because he said that in a book or a paper, thus the speaker is telling us that he said that and is implicitly qualifying himself as a reporter. Analogous considerations apply to an example by Holt (2016) ('apparently she doesn't like them'). Holt seems to contrast an expression like 'apparently she doesn't like them' with an expression like 'she said she doesn't like them'. She comes close to implicit indirect reports, in this example, although she does not care to draw some obvious consequences. Of course, a reader might now object: how do you distinguish between free indirect reports and implicit indirect reports? The question is an important one. One answer might be that, after all, we may not want to distinguish them. Another answer is that it appears that in free indirect reports the freely indirect report follows an utterance which explicitly uses the verb 'say' or 'think'. Implicit indirect reports need no such verbs. In any case, it ought to be said that both implicit indirect reports and free indirect reports need pragmatic interpretation and, in particular, an implicature.

### 3 Conclusion

There are still some controversial points which this paper has not been able to resolve. The considerations by Allan and by Giorgi, seem to prove that indirect reports can admit interjections and discourse markers – in this respect they are similar to direct reports. But if they are similar to direct reports, what does the difference between direct and indirect reports boil down to? And is this difference

so crucial, after all? Could we not just ignore it? But now there are other questions. Suppose that, for a minute, we completely conflate direct and indirect reports. Does then claiming that there are mixed indirect reports make any sense? It is more reasonable and more interesting to discuss the phenomenon of mixed indirect reports under the presuppositions that there are pure quotations (or pure direct reports), unless charges of circularity are raised. The considerations by Giorgi that with certain intonational contours discourse markers like BUT can be inserted in that-clauses of indirect reports does not amount to accepting that there is no significant difference between direct and indirect reports, because she assumes that insertion of BUT with the wrong type of intonation into that-clauses of indirect reports is nevertheless banned. Thus the difference between direct and indirect reports is vindicated – and this is enough to avoid the charge of circularity in the treatment of mixed indirect reports.

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