Metalanguage and subjectivity in indirect reports

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Abstract

Indirect reporting is a complicated language game which is influenced by social, philosophical and linguistic idiosyncrasies (for example, issues such as power relations, sense and reference, evidentials, opacity, etc.). Invariably, there has been some controversy over how much freedom the indirect reporter is permitted when reporting original utterances. In this regard, some authors (e.g. Capone, 2018) support pragmatic opacity where a certain degree of flexibility and variability is warranted depending on the context of the utterance. In this study, we analyse Persian and English sentences to demonstrate how, in indirect reporting, reporters can manipulate the original utterances. Previous research (e.g. Nodoushan, 2018) has revealed that Persian reported speech does not allow linguistic manipulation. This study attempts to show that Persian reporters, just like English speakers, are able to indicate their divergence from the original utterances in indirect reporting. The metalanguage comments in the Persian indirect reports highlighted situations where reporters monitored (i.e. self-regulated) themselves by changing the verbs of saying (e.g. 'said', 'claimed', etc.), assessing the appropriateness of the discourse and communicating uncertainty. We also discuss a number of examples where there was disagreement in the Persian indirect reports (the original speakers did not accept the report to be genuine) because the practice of samesaying (similarity of content) was not being strictly adhered to. We conclude that indirect reports allow for several forms of manipulation for different purposes, whereby the reporter can make use of syntactic strategies to monitor the discourse (i.e. manipulating the original utterance). Moreover, reports can sometimes be influenced by interpreted information (which may be incorrect) which can cast doubt on fair paraphrasing and the practice of samesaying.
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1. Introduction

Indirect reporting (e.g. John said that his teacher was a nice guy) is a complicated social event that reports an interpreted utterance and reveals some characteristics of the context of the utterance (Capone, 2016). Indirect reporting is a complex praxis/event as it is conceptualised on the basis of both pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Although indirect reporting is a pragmalinguistic practice (in that it normally deals with illocutionary

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meaning[1]), it is also a sociopragmatic practice since it takes into account the ''assessment of participants' social distance, the language community's social rules and appropriateness norms,[2] discourse practices, and accepted behaviours'' (Marmaridou, 2011:77). Although the main aim of an indirect report is to allow the hearer to grasp an event which is removed in both space and time from the current linguistic face-to-face encounter, this aim is often accompanied by other goals, such as avoiding a situation in which the hearer is offended by the original speaker's words and, thus, the purpose of the transformation may be to ameliorate the utterance's dynamics, thereby removing any potential conflict. We admit that this is, nonetheless, a situation which ought to be avoided, that is, a transformation for which only the reporter is responsible and for which s/he takes responsibility; nevertheless, ethical considerations encourage the reporter not to create unwanted conflict, or to change the facts for no valid reason.

The context of the utterance, as well as the reporter's interpretation of the utterance (this interpretation is in line with the concept of polyphony, i.e., the mixture of voices), allows the reporter to have some freedom over the production of the indirect report. As a result, it can be difficult to distinguish which parts have been added or changed based on the interpreted information (see also Landeweerd and Vet, 1996).[3] Having said that, in addition to general pragmatics principles, both the reporter and the original speaker can use reflexive comments to provide additional information (these comments show that the speaker is using his/her own sentences to provide the additional meaning). This additional information can provide the hearer with the tools for determining which linguistic parts have been manipulated or transformed by the reporter, and which are pertinent to the original speaker (in other words, which forms it was his/her intention to use). As a result, the reflexive use of language by the reporter can be of great assistance in revealing the changes that have been made to the indirect reports.

In line with the reflexive use of language, we used Persian data to highlight examples of subjectivity within indirect reports. Previously, the literature indicated that Persian indirect reports do not allow subjective manipulation (for example, see Nodoushan, 2018), an issue which we will also deal with in this study. Persian language is heavily influenced by cultural schemas such as *shekasteh-nafsi* (modesty) and *adab-va-ehteram* (courtesy and respect) (see Morady Moghaddam, 2017; Sharifian, 2005).[4] These cultural schemas can contribute to the subjectivity of indirect reports. In this study, we intend to show that Persian indirect reporting allows for subjective manipulation (i.e. changes in the report to convey a specific intention), and that there are a set of linguistic devices available which enable reporters to do so. Furthermore, we intend to analyse the metalanguage comments (the reflexive use of language) in Persian indirect reports which indicate that reporters are monitoring themselves by manipulating the verbs of saying (e.g. various versions of the word 'said'), assessing the appropriateness of the discourse and communicating uncertainty. We also discuss a number of cases where disagreement is manifested within Persian indirect reports, indicating that the practice of samesaying is not being strictly adhered to. In Section 2, we discuss the relationship between reflexivity and indirect reports. In Section 3, the Paraphrasis/Form Principle (PFP) and its relationship with subjectivity in indirect reports are elaborated upon (the PFP appears to be a perfect starting point for understanding the nature of subjectivity in indirect reports). In Section 4, we investigate how previous research has conceptualised the nature of subjectivity in Persian indirect reports, and the

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[1] The question as to whether an indirect utterance reports locutionary or illocutionary meaning is most interesting. As an interim reply, it could be said that an utterance can be reported by making reference to illocutionary import (which requires a certain degree of interpretation of the illocutionary meaning, that is, the contextualisation of the utterance). We are not saying that illocutionary meaning covers all forms of contextualisation, but we believe that an indirect reporter has the ability to convey the implicit meaning s/he has obtained from the context. However, in some cases where the reporter is unsure about the interpretation of the utterance (in that contextual clues and cues are insufficient for interpretative work to be conducted), s/he can resort to the option of reporting the literal meaning of the utterance. The hearer is, thus, encouraged to do what the speaker was unable to, that is, to engage in interpretative work that has, as an end result, the calculation of illocutionary meaning. In other words, an interpretative problem is revealed to the hearer.

[2] This can be readily observed when slurs or other offensive or taboo words are mentioned in indirect reports (see Anderson and Lepore, 2013). In fact, it is a conundrum whether these words should even be mentioned or used. Indirect reports are notorious for using these words (or there could be a unusual combination of mention and use); however, this is not sufficient reason to bracket taboo words and slurs and let them escape the reporter's attention. Somehow, the reporter must take responsibility for these words, in that, if s/he does not distance her/himself sufficiently from them, s/he appears to be an accomplice of the original speaker, and s/he is providing a bad example if these words are proffered in public or in the mass media.

[3] However, in some cases, it is possible to distinguish between the thought components that can be attributed to the reporter and those that can be attributed to the original speaker. The hearer, in fact, can engage in rational guesswork and, on the basis of his/her experience of past interactions with either the reporter or the original speaker, can say something like, ''These words are not X's, because he would never say something like that'', or s/he can say, ''But X never said something like this before. This is not her language''. We can make suppositions about the type of words that the original speaker (or the reporter) can or cannot use.

[4] Sharifian (2005) mentions that Persian speakers are more likely to deny or downplay a compliment in order to show modesty. Courtesy and respect are also pertinent to the Iranian cultural concept which dictates that a person should treat others (usually strangers) better than himself/herself.

methodology of the study is also presented. Section 5 considers the analysis of naturally occurring Persian data and how subjectivity is presented in this language. In Section 6, we discuss some challenging issues regarding the PFP and, finally, in Section 7 we present our concluding remarks.

2. Reflexivity and indirect reports

Reflexivity[5] appears through the use of expressed or manifested contextual cues where metapragmatic expressions are adopted to ''include monitoring, commenting on, or assessing the appropriateness of one's own or another speaker's discourse, expressing a negative or positive attitude towards a portion or aspect of the discourse, [...] and negotiating potentially problematic stances'' (Blackwell, 2016:619). Reflexivity refers to the use of linguistic elements that describe and expand on the language being used by the speaker, in order to clarify some issues or to implicate additional information. Therefore, reflexivity is a form of language monitoring. Metapragmatic is a term closely related to *metalinguistic* which was introduced by Jakobson (1960) and defined by Gumperz (1982:77) as ''a class of verbal signs [...] that serve to relate what is said on any particular time-bound occasion to knowledge acquired through past experience.'' Reflexive utterances can help individuals discover logophoric expressions, so that it is possible to determine how an individual's point of view is being represented (Speas, 2004). Metalanguage directs us towards the concept of 'reflexivity' (both metapragmatics and metalanguage embrace reflexivity), where it is argued that verbal interaction can guide the hearer towards a correct interpretation during the social interaction (Gal, 2009). Likewise, Mey (2001) demonstrates that reflexivity takes into consideration ''the way language is able to reflect on itself, make statements about itself, question itself, improve itself, quote itself and so on'' (Mey, 2001:177).

The praxis of reflexivity can help the hearer correctly interpret the report. Through the use of reflexivity, individuals can manipulate the original utterance, report sentences, describe speech events and direct the hearer towards the correct understanding of their utterances (Lucy, 1993). Furthermore, Lucy (1993) refers to utterances such as 'he said [that] I got a great haircut' and 'Tom complimented me today' as a form of reflexive practice (uttering one and implicitly rendering the other). A simple example of how metapragmatic clues are employed in an indirect report is the use of irony. Traditionally, irony has not been addressed in the literature on indirect reports, probably because it rather complicates the issue by introducing implicatures that require interpretation during the production of an indirect report in that a portion or segment of the text needs to be linked to a particular message by providing (linguistic or paralinguistic) clues (see Goffman, 1981 on footing), such as a smile or some other indication that the utterance, or part of it, is not to be taken at face value. Consider, ''John said you must leave''. As it stands, the utterance counts as a piece of knowledge that the hearer was instructed by John to leave (presumably in a moment of anger), either directly or indirectly (presumably the point of the utterance is to transmit the instruction to the hearer through an intermediary (the speaker/reporter)). However, when it is proffered in a context where John tells X (the addressee) every other day to leave but then changes his mind, and in which the word 'leave' is perceived in conjunction with the speaker's or reporter's smile (smiling could imply that the speaker was not serious when s/he said that X should leave, and the reporter can interpret this implication and then convey this knowledge through the report), the utterance then counts as an ironic attempt to tell the hearer that, yes, these were more or less the words that John uttered, but his intentions did not correspond with these words.[6]

Let us now discuss another example of reflexivity in indirect reports. Although this paper is primarily concerned with the situation in Persian, we will begin with some English examples to demonstrate the types of clues that can be used to bracket segments of the text and demonstrate that an egocentric perspective is being adopted.

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[5] Indirect reporting is a complicated language game (see Kecskes, 2016) that is influenced by (complex) online cognitive processing (e.g. appraising an event as it occurs) and social awareness (Capone, 2018, 2019). In this regard, reporters can resort to different reflective practices to show how they are manipulating the original utterance. Although the logical (i.e. fair) practice of indirect reporting forces reporters to paraphrase the original utterances as closely as possible, in the language game of indirect reporting this praxis may not be adhered to because of the sociocognitive idiosyncrasies of the situation (the reporter may not remember the exact words, s/he may strategically change or add some parts to convey a particular implicature, etc.). In any case, it should be noted that the same thought can be paraphrased in rather different ways provided that distortion is not introduced. The alternatives for a particular thought may be numerous and, in many cases, they are treated for what they are, that is, different stylistic ways of expressing the same thought. The original hearer may be happy with a paraphrase even if the style is slightly different from that of the original speaker's, for example, if some words are missing, if some points are adequately summed up or if some parts have been pragmatically expanded upon to create a better understanding of the thought being conveyed (as some words may be cryptic and the speaker adds some words of his/her own to fill a certain lacuna). He will only be unhappy if the distortion deliberately changes the thought (and affects it in ways that are not accepted by the original speaker or by an impartial judge) and depicts a personality which differs from that of the original speaker.

[6] In this regard, the speaker's reflexive intention is to direct the hearer's attention towards recognising utterance U where, in uttering U, the speaker wishes to convey a particular effect to the hearer (see Allan, 2006, 2016).

Table 1
Facework observed in the Persian verbs of saying.

Verbs of saying	Literal meaning	Facework	Frequency[a]
goft	Said	Neutral	15
gofti:d/goftænd	You/they said	Upgrading	20
mi:ge/mi:goft	Says/was saying	Neutral	4
mi:gi:d/mi:gæn	You/they are saying	Upgrading	18
færmu:di:d/færmu:dænd	You/they (respectfully) said	Upgrading	29
mi:færmɒ:ji:d/mi:færmɒ:jænd	You/they are (respectfully) saying	Upgrading	9
mætræh kærd (i:d/ænd/æm)	Brought up	Neutral	2
eʔlɒ:m kærd (i:d/ænd/æm)	Announced	Neutral	2
eʃɒ:re kærd (i:d/ænd/æm)	Pointed out	Neutral	8
ærz kærdæm	Said (with modesty)	Downgrading	10

[a] The listed frequencies can help readers discover how often Persian speakers use polite verbs of saying. It might be interesting for international readers to recognise that Persian allows its speakers to use various verbs of saying that portray politeness in their reports (we were unable to find any other language which was similar to Persian in this regard). For example, in English, 'say', or a derivative of 'say', is the common verb of saying. However, in Persian, different verbs of saying are employed. Their rate of occurrence can also highlight an interesting pattern. When speaking on behalf of themselves, Persian speakers generally use neutral or downgrading verbs of saying, but tend to use upgrading verbs when reporting on other people.

Consider:

Mum said that you (Angela) do not want to clean the house.
John said that my sister (Angela) is lazy.
John said that Enzo (my sister's husband) is lazy.

In the parentheses, we have provided alternatives for an NP (a proper name). The use of the proper name appears to *reflect* an unmarked situation that makes reference to a communicative situation and some generalisations about the use of NPs in the discourse. Capone (2019) argues that, given a number of alternatives for an NP, one should use the alternative that reflects the closest relationship between the speaker and the referent being discussed. Thus, it is inappropriate to use 'Angela' where the hearer can be referred to by using 'You', given that the pronominal appears to reveal or presuppose the communicative situation (the speaker is addressing someone who is the recipient and a possible interlocutor) in a way that the use of a different NP would not. If someone refers to his sister when speaking to another person, and they are not in her presence, he should use 'my sister' because this avoids any ambiguity, and also reflects the closest relationship between the speaker and the referent being discussed. Hence 'Angela' is not used.[7] Of course, in situations where the hearer is unaware of the relationship between the reporter and the reported speaker, the reporter can use 'Angela' instead of 'my sister' to create a strategic distance through the use of a conversational implicature, because this distance could be advantageous to the reporter, or the reported speaker, or even both. In the next example, given that 'My sister's husband' attests to a distancing that is not normally intended, it is avoided.

Let us now focus on the concept of indirect reporting. How does the hearer know which alternative is being used and whether the name that was given was actually used in the conversation being reported? The hearer is clearly assisted by

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[7] One of the reviewers argued that the above example involving John and Angela required further elaboration. The reviewer queried why the name 'Angela' could not be used. The reviewer also emphasised that such examples need to be contextualised; which address form to use partly depends on whether the addressee knows the person being referred to. Thus, the reviewer asked whether the rule stipulating that ''the NP used should reflect the closest relationship between the speaker and the referent being discussed'' should not depend on the context. The reviewer clearly places much emphasis on contextualisation, and so we are prepared to concede that contextualisation could make a difference. The use of a proper name, like Angela, particularly if it is bound to an antecedent like 'My sister', can clearly be used, provided that the hearers know that Angela is the speaker's sister. Nevertheless, we argue that it is preferable to use those terms that make a relationship explicit, given that they serve to unequivocally identify the referent (of course, we agree with the reviewer that contextual parameters play a crucial role in the interpretation of utterances). The use of a proper name like 'Angela' does not prevent the hearer from identifying the wrong referent, particularly if strong presuppositions and shared knowledge about the speaker's use of the term do not exist. In other words, for the speaker to use a proper name like Angela, some conditions should be in force: the hearer should unambiguously identify the referent and the hearer should be familiar with a rule of use according to which the name has to be interpreted, in deference to the way it is used by the other speakers. However, obtaining this rule of use might be a matter of inference, whereas the use of a relationship/kinship term provides a concept which serves to establish the referent through the satisfaction of a condition that is imposed by a Fregean mode of presentation. In Gricean terms, the use of a kinship term appears to us to be more informative than the use of a proper name.

the same principle which was used for coding the information, that is, the NP which was used should reflect the closest relationship between the speaker and the referent being discussed. However, in this case, the speaker is not the original speaker but the reporter. Nevertheless, since the reporter is familiar with this principle, presumably he will use it to encode information about the referent, and will also reason that the hearer is interested in knowing what the referent was called during the original conversation. Transforming how the referent is referred to would appear to cause confusion, since the hearer has little chance of knowing what is the closest relationship between the speaker and the referent. By implementing such a transformation, the reporter is depriving the hearer of useful sources of information and must have a cogent reason for doing so. There are a number of metalinguistic devices that are available to hearers which can assist their understanding of the polyphony of indirect reports – clues might be provided such as giggling, the raising of eyebrows, hesitators (which can aid the detection of lies), explicit markers ('he used the literal words: . . .'), and so forth.

3. Paraphrasis/Form Principle

Of particular interest to our discussion regarding the subjectivity of indirect reports is the Paraphrasis/Form Principle (PFP), which was proposed by Capone (2016). Let us begin with a definition of the PFP as detailed in Capone (2016:64):

> 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.

Based on the PFP, Capone states that "my form/style principle predicts that forms should be as close as possible to those of the original utterances" (2016:188).[8] Although the principle presents a logical (and, to some extent, ideal) way of conceptualising indirect reporting, some researchers, such as Wayne Davis (2005), have objected to the PFP on the grounds that it is possible to breach 'the soul of the agreement', despite the paraphrase being fair and not objected to by the original speaker. The 'soul of the agreement' refers to the fact that the reporter should consider the ethics of paraphrasing, regardless of whether the original speaker judges the paraphrase to be fair and satisfactory. In this regard, changing 'the first black person' to 'the first nigger' is an incorrect paraphrase (Davis, 2005) and is not in line with the soul of the PFP, notwithstanding the fact that the original speaker considers the transformation to be fair.

In brief, Capone's reply to Davis is to add the concept of an *impartial judge*, which appears to be needed to ensure that the interpretation is less subjective. Thus, even in those exceptional circumstances where the speaker approves the distortion which has been caused by the reporting praxis employed by the reporter, this distortion might not be approved by an impartial judge. Basically, the objection is determined by a case like the following situation. The original speaker makes a comment (a textual sequence X), and then the reporter transforms the message into a racist remark. If the speaker is not racist, s/he would disapprove of the paraphrase. However, if the speaker is racist, s/he would approve of the paraphrase. Yet, it should be noted that, as the original speaker did not proffer a racist remark, it can be deduced that s/he did not want to make such a remark (at least in public). Thus, s/he should, at least in practice, show some disapproval of the words that the reporter has attributed to her/him in the indirect report. But s/he might secretly approve of the report. This is the reason why the concept of an impartial judge is sensible and proves to be very useful. Therefore, it is inappropriate to attribute a racist remark to a speaker who did not proffer one in the first place. For the time being, this appears to be a plausible solution. Now let us turn to the generalisation that the logic underlying the PFP might be too forceful. Perhaps it is just a matter of content, but how can we express content without using words? An objection to Capone's generalisation appears to be problematic. Therefore, perhaps the best way to resolve this *impasse* is to recognise that we need to modify the PFP (the reason for this modification is to ensure that the principle is more comprehensive):

> The form/style principle predicts that forms should be as close as possible to those of the original utterances, UNLESS there is a reason for departing from this principle.[9]

Besides the aforementioned issue, it is sometimes unclear how the PFP takes the strategic moments that arise during an interaction into consideration. Take the following situation as an example. Mary said the following to Fred, about John, in a moment of anger:

(1) That bastard makes me so nervous.

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[8] Of course, we agree that the speaker might well approve of the report, even if the report is not in the closest possible form.

[9] This qualification can be helpful. The PFP should be considered to be the default threshold when the practice of indirect reporting is regarded as being a close mimic of the original utterance. However, in some instances, the reporter refuses to respect the PFP since s/he wishes to achieve another goal (fair paraphrasing is no longer the main goal).

The PFP urges us to report Mary's utterance as closely as possible, and thus the offensive word 'bastard' has to be transferred to the indirect report to fairly describe what Mary thinks of John. However, when Fred is reporting this utterance to John he might say: 'Mary said that you make her so nervous' (rather than 'she said that you are a bastard who makes her so nervous'), thereby withholding some information from the hearer (according to Dynel [2018:3], "people do not need to tell one another everything they believe"). This information is withheld because Fred has judged Mary's insulting comment to have been spoken in a moment of anger (or as an unintended offence), and she might later regret having said those words. However, Allan warns us that "[t]here is a problem that offense may be caused unintentionally and we need to accept that an unintended offense can be almost as hurtful as intended offense" (Allan, 2016:225). In this regard, Fred might deviate from reporting Mary's offensive word. On the other hand, however, the PFP urges Fred to be fair by adhering to the words that were actually used by Mary. Fred is trying to be strategic and, thus, might delete the offensive word 'bastard' because Mary would be grateful for his actions once her anger subsides. This observation appears to confirm the preceding remark that reporters are supposed to adhere to the original speaker's words, UNLESS there is a reason to deviate from the PFP; politeness is one such valid reason for doing so. But, in actual fact, there could be two reasons here for deviating from the PFP: either the reporter wants to be polite and not offend the hearer, or the reporter wants to help/ protect the reported speaker by recognising that the words may have been uttered in a moment of anger and do not represent the reported speaker's opinion of the hearer. The reported speaker might well have a positive opinion of the hearer, despite the form and content of the remark. Thus, it would also be a distortion to report on a remark that has been made in a moment of anger and which could be interpreted as attesting to a personal trait of the reported speaker's character. Therefore, either politeness or a strategic reason could account for the deviation.

It is not always possible to tell what is subjective in indirect reports. For instance, is it a fair paraphrase if the reporter changes the sequence of sentences, thus rearranging the intended sequence? As stated by Capone (2016), the mutability of a sequence of sentences (or 'rearrangements', borrowing the word from Keith Allan) can change the meaning of a sequence of utterances (Capone refers to this as an *innocent change*). According to Allan (2016), although this transformation is not considered to be a seismic shift, rearrangements can represent both the individuals' intentions and the alteration of meaning, based on a 'possible world semantics'. Therefore, in line with Allan (2016), the sentence "it might be raining. It does not rain" is different in meaning from "It does not rain. It might be raining"[10] (examples from Gochet, 2011:249).

The PFP appears to be a perfect starting point for understanding the nature of subjectivity in indirect reports. By 'subjectivity' we mean that there may be some latitude in the interpretation of an indirect report that allows for the reporter's egocentric and logophoric perspective. Capone (2016) has discussed the degree of flexibility in indirect reports, where the reporting speaker has the upper hand in changing the wording of the original utterance, insofar as s/he is faithful to the reported speaker's utterances as well as considering the original speaker's positive face. Having said that, subjectivity cannot be limited to facework and euphemisms are intended to make the utterances more detailed and attuned to the situation. The immediacy of indirect reports and the need for faster cognitive processes in face-to-face interactions might force the reporting speaker to deviate from fully adhering to the PFP. In indirect reports, the reporting speaker has more freedom (in comparison with the reporter of a direct quotation) in manipulating the original utterances (he has exactly the same rights as the speaker, and can adjust his speech to the situation, by rephrasing the utterance in appropriate and rhetorically satisfactory ways). In addition, the reporting speaker is influenced by the (cognitive and social) dynamics of the situation. What is most important is that the hearer has easy access to these transformations and recognises them as such, by using contextual clues delivered through a rapid system of recognition.

4. The current study: rationale and methodology

Indirect reporting in Persian is a somewhat neglected area of investigation. One reason for this might be the rather complicated philosophical issues that are attached to the concept of indirect reporting. Another reason could be that indirect reporting is a relatively new area of investigation and, until recently, few studies had been conducted in this field. Whatever the reason, to the best of our knowledge, only two research articles have been published in this area (Capone and Nodoushan, 2014; Nodoushan, 2018, but see also Morady Moghaddam, 2019). In each of these articles, cultural-specific issues regarding Persian indirect reports are discussed, with a focus on the syntactic features of indirect reporting and how these can be accounted for by concepts such as samesaying and the Paraphrasis/Form Principle. Regarding subjectivity, Capone and Nodoushan (2014) argue that Persian indirect reports do not allow subjective manipulation of the

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[10] Based on updated semantics, "It does not rain. It might be raining" is incorrect because it reduces the set of possibilities; therefore, 'it does not rain' does not provide a correct path for the sentence 'it might be raining'. Whereas in the sentence, "it might be raining. It does not rain", "the might-sentence acts as a test which has to be passed successfully for the sentence 'It does not rain' to perform the expected update" (Gochet, 2011:250).

original speaker's utterances (*samesaying*[11] is flawless in Persian indirect reports).[12] They also argue that Persian does not permit the reporter to manipulate the pragmatic force of utterances (Capone and Nodoushan [2014:35] argue that Persian speakers "are not allowed to transform the report in such a way as to change its pragmatic force").[13] In the same vein, Nodoushan (2018) states that Persian indirect reports are monophonic and do not permit the reporter's voice to be included.

In the current study, by using authentic interactions, we intend to analyse examples of subjectivity in Persian indirect reports to determine whether the reports are monophonic or whether they allow manipulation and polyphony. Incidentally, we remind readers that the issue of indirect reporting has attracted the attention of linguists because it has allowed discussions regarding dialogicity and polyphony to be held within the same (apparently non-dialogic) utterance. It would appear that indirect reports entail a dialogue between at least two speakers, and allow numerous voices to be heard/perceived within the same utterance. This is a substantial step forwards regarding the view held of human language that sentences/utterances are merely performing the function of articulating thoughts. If formalistic approaches to language stress the function that language performs when articulating thoughts, it is the responsibility of communication theorists and linguists who care about the notion of communication to rebut or expand on this rather restrictive claim. Indirect reporting would appear to militate in favour of a theory of language in which dialogicity is central. Thus, it would be unfortunate to revert to a view of indirect reporting which does not achieve its full potential because it has been based on data derived from only a single language.

In this study, by using evidence from Persian, we analysed the metalanguage comments in indirect reports, whereby reporters indicate that they are monitoring themselves by manipulating the verbs of saying (e.g. 'said'), assessing the appropriateness of the discourse and communicating uncertainty. The morphological/syntactic means behind the reflexive practice (the praxis of reflecting on how language is used and on the clues that help us interpret a textual sequence with respect to the speaker's projected [expressed] interpretation) were clearly observed and analysed. In this regard, we resorted to using Persian data that was derived from naturally occurring special news interviews (these interviews were taken from an Iranian TV series called 'Goft-o Gu:-je Vi:ʒe-je Xæbær-i:' these are archived in 'http://www.telewebion.com/program/5094'). In each interview, a host and either one or two expert guests present their opinions about a particular topic (all the guests and the host are native Persian speakers). Due to the interactive nature of the interviews, the original speaker might be present when an expert or the host reports on what s/he has said. In this regard, two scenarios are therefore available: 1) 'eyewitness-to-eyewitness', where the original speaker is present when the report is uttered; and 2) 'eyewitness-to-outsider', where the original speaker is absent at the time of the report. In total, we were able to gather 117 indirect reports from the interviews that we observed.

5. Analysis

In this section, we will discuss how the praxis of Persian indirect reports is influenced by subjectivity. For the sake of clarity, we will subdivide our discussion in order to focus attention on those issues where subjectivity was observed in the use of metalinguistic comments, namely in the verbs of saying, assessing the appropriateness of the discourse and communicating uncertainty. We should mention that when we use the term 'subjectivity', we are focusing on the contextual clues that are likely to convey control over the discourse to the reporter (where the reporter is monitoring himself/herself). We will also discuss cases of subjectivity where the practice of samesaying is not strictly adhered to, thus leading to conflict. Pronouns, adverbials and changing the tense of verbs were not considered to be relevant, and hence were not examined in this study.

5.1. Verbs of saying

In Persian, the most common verb of saying is 'goft' ('said' in English). Persian has other verbs of saying that demonstrate the uniqueness of the Persian language. Before discussing the issue any further, let us look at the following indirect reports (we have used the International Phonetic Alphabet [IPA] to transcribe Persian phonetic symbols. Refer to 'https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Persian' for further information and examples):

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[11] In this case, we adopt a Davidsonian approach to this notion. In line with (Sennet, 2013: 194), "It is fairly natural to say that P samesays an utterance of Q iff P and Q are synonymous. Alternatively, one might claim that P samesays an utterance of Q iff P and Q translate one another."

[12] Capone and Nodoushan (2014:35) state that "in Persian, whatever fills the 'quotative slot' after 'ke' (or is wrapped inside 'giume' following a colon) is a demonstration of the original speaker's assertions."

[13] Of course, Capone and Nodoushan argue that by using 'topicalisation', the reporter can change the original speaker's statements. Having said that, topicalisation can alter the meaning of utterances (Allan, 2016), but the authors did not provide examples to illustrate how the reporter can use topicalisation in naturally occurring interactions.

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(2) buːʃ goft-eʃ ke hærk-iː bɒː mɒː niːst, ælæj-he mɒːst.
     Bush said that a person who is not with us, is against us.
     (*Context: Investigating the new policies of the USA and their consequences*)

(3) dær bæxʃ-e qæbl-iː goftiːd moxɒːlef-iːd.
     In the previous section, you said you disagree.
     (*Context: Investigating the Sixth Plan in the Parliament: attaching Free Zones to the Ministry of Economy*)

(4) ɒːqɒː-je . . . miːfærmɒːjænd ke iːn meqdɒːr monɒːseb bærɒːje ʃerkæte buːrsiːst.
     Mr . . . said that this amount is suitable for an exchange company.
     (*Context: The ambiguities of Justice Shares*)

(5) ærz kærdæm mohem-tæriːn dærxɒːst-e mærdom tuː iːn æjɒːm æmniːjæt-e omuːm-iː æst.
     I said the most important request from people is public security these days.
     (*Context: The security of roads during holidays*)

Examples (2)–(5) show that Persian reporters monitor themselves by changing the verb of saying from 'goft' (meaning 'said', which is a neutral way of starting a *that*-clause) to 'færmuːdiːd', 'goftænd', 'goftiːd' and 'ærz kærdæm' (all these verbs are different manifestations of the verb 'said') in line with Persian cultural schemas of *shekasteh-nafsi* (modesty) and *adab-va-ehteram* (courtesy and respect). In (2), the reporter uses the neutral verb of saying, i.e. 'goft' ('said'). This verb does not provide any additional information and is considered to be the most common verb of saying. However, in examples (3)–(5), the three verbs of saying, namely 'goftiːd', 'miːfærmɒːjænd' and 'ærz kærdæm' (all mean 'said', but with varying degrees of illocutionary force) are not neutral and convey facework in line with modesty and courtesy schemas. Verbs such as 'goftiːd' and 'miːfærmɒːjænd' are face-giving, in that they give credit to, and show respect for, the original speaker. The facework performed in examples (3) and (4) is merely a matter of changing the verb of saying from the more neutral 'goft' to the face-giving verbs 'goftiːd' and 'miːfærmɒːjænd', as no other part of these utterances can show respect for the original speaker. Therefore, the verbs of saying that are used in examples (3) and (4) indicate that the reporter is not just paraphrasing the original utterance, but is also acknowledging that the original speaker is a respected person. This is important to note because, if the purpose of an indirect report is to provide knowledge that can be used by the hearer, it is then obvious that the original speaker needs to be able to answer questions about how this knowledge was obtained (we remind readers that 'say' can be considered to be, to some extent, a verb of knowledge, because the information provided by the utterance will be converted into knowledge by the hearer). Thus, the fact that the hearer of the indirect report recognises that the reported speaker is respected has important implications: this predicts whether s/he will be able to answer questions about how that knowledge was obtained, and what type of evidence was taken into account when the knowledge was provided (by the utterance).

In example (5), another interesting Persian verb of saying is observed. Instead of saying 'goft' or employing a face-giving verb of saying (such as 'goftiːd' or 'miːfærmɒːjænd'), the reporter uses a 'downgrading' verb of saying ('ærz kærdæm') in line with the Persian cultural schema of modesty (*shekasteh-nafsi*). (This is to be expected, since the speaker is speaking about himself. This could be regarded as an example of false modesty; the hearer is encouraged by modesty norms to discard this downgrading effect, instead replacing it, at the very least, with a neutral effect). The schema of *shekasteh-nafsi* (see Sharifian, 2005) encourages Persian speakers to treat others better than themselves. The verb 'ærz kærdæm' indicates inferiority on the part of the reporter. That being the case, this verb is not being used seriously but can still convey important information. As reported by Dynel (2017:85), "[n]on-seriousness is thus taken to denote a variety of communicative activities falling into what is nicely captured in the philosophy of fiction as 'games of make-believe.'" Interestingly, Dynel (2017) states that there is a close connection between seriousness and playfulness. The term 'play' indicates "(a) that the messages or signals exchanged in play are in a certain sense untrue or not meant; and (b) that that which is denoted by these signals is nonexistent" (Bateson, 1972:177–193).

The insincerity of the verbs of saying in examples (2)–(5) can originate from "the speaker's overt pretence [which is] dependent on (easily recognisable) untruth, not only the speaker's untruthfulness, which need not always be easily understandable without the necessary context and/or insight into the speaker's mental states" (Dynel, 2017:93). The same 'games of make-believe' are applicable to the facework observed in (3) and (4). However, there is an important difference between the form of facework that is observed in (3) and (4), and that witnessed in (5). In (3) and (4), the reporter is referring to the words and utterances which have been spoken by another person, where the focus of attention is removed from the reporter (in this case, we have other-regulatory verbs of saying such as 'goftiːd' and 'miːfærmɒːjænd'). In (5), however, the focus of attention is on the reporter himself (in this example, the reporter and the original speaker are the

same person). When referring to himself, the reporter uses downgrading verbs of saying ('æɾz kærdæm'), a praxis which is self-regulatory (representing a modesty verb) rather than other-regulatory. A possible explanation for this is that the reporting speaker is indicating that he will not be able to provide sufficient evidence to support his remark that p (considering that the report is concerned with what the reporter/speaker has said).

We can examine this situation in a structural way by using Goffman's theory of footing. When a speaker reports what he himself has said in the past, the speaker is not only someone who voices what someone (else) has said (a type of animator, in Goffman's terminology), but is also someone who presents himself as the principal – that is, a person who takes responsibility for what he has said. But, by using a verb which expresses modesty, he appears to be rejecting his role as the principal – and this is sufficient for the hearer to expect that, when asked how he had found the information that p, and questioned about the evidence he had in making his claim, he might be unable to provide the required evidence. Of course, he should be able to provide evidence for the content of the indirect report 'I said that p', given that he had said it and should certainly remember it. The question arises only in connection with the information that 'p'. It looks as if he now, on reflection, wishes to either partially or fully withdraw the claim that p, which is implicit in the indirect report. He might choose to do this because he is either not reassured by the evidence that p, or because 'p' was heard being spoken by someone else, and when one examines the sources of information in the conversational chain, the last source might be found to be unreliable. However, when the speaker said 'p', he must have believed that the source of the information was reliable and, so, perhaps he has changed his mind. Nevertheless, either the verb of modesty is used because any claim made in the first person involves some degree of modesty (but we should then find similar cases in Persian) or the form of modesty used is linked with the dynamics of the indirect report. If we can exclude when someone says in Persian, 'I am happy', that s/he is also using some form of modesty, then we have a cogent case for considering these examples of self-reports as situations in which the reporter/speaker has changed his/her mind about the last source of information in the chain. (Of course, we agree that one can show modesty when manifesting one's own opinions, while at the same time firmly believing in the latter, but in this case modesty is a strategy that helps the reporter to reject his/her role as the principal.) This appears to be a reflexive process in which the indirect report is judged not to be particularly efficient, from a practical point of view, because even if what has been reported is, strictly speaking, true, there is now a focus on the information that p, and this contributes to the inefficiency of the indirect report. Somehow, this reflexive process directs the hearer's attention towards the effects generated by the indirect report – the transmission of information is a collateral effect of an indirect report, and it is this process which is jeopardised in this case.

Examples (2)–(5) clearly indicate that Persian speakers continually monitor themselves in their reports. The subjectivity available to reporters enables them to consider facework in their reports (by employing either self- or other-regulatory verbs of saying). In this regard, the verbs of saying in (2)–(5) are not just different ways of expressing the same thing, but are instead verbs loaded with additional information (showing modesty or respect). To provide a clear picture of the different verbs of saying in Persian (the verbs can be neutral, show modesty or give face), Table 1 details all the verbs of saying that were observed in our Persian data (we collected 117 indirect reports from the special news interviews). These verbs of saying are categorised based on how they manipulate facework (either neutral, downgrading or upgrading):

Table 1 presents some rather interesting information because it highlights how face is manipulated by specific verbs of saying in Persian. As the table reveals, Persian speakers are inclined to give face to the original speaker by using upgrading verbs of saying instead of more neutral ones (although one can argue that drawing such a general conclusion based exclusively on data which has been taken from such a formal interview context is problematic, although the data demonstrated that, in formal contexts, a more polite verb of saying is favoured by the reporter). In this case, Persian speakers primarily employed 'færmu:di:d' and 'færmu:dænd' (although the reporter is referring to one individual, he uses third person plural verbs to show respect for the original speaker) as upgrading verbs of saying (*n* = 29). In total, Persian speakers used upgrading verbs 76 times (compared with 31 neutral verbs and 10 downgrading verbs). Because of their ability to introduce an indirect report, we considered 'mætræh kærd', 'eʔlɒ:m kærd' and 'eʃɒ:re kærd' to be verbs of saying.

5.2. Assessing the appropriateness of the discourse

In addition to changing the verbs of saying, Persian speakers demonstrated reflexivity by challenging the appropriateness of the report. In this sense, the report acts as an enquiry for further information. In the following examples, subjectivity is displayed through the use of interrogative devices such as prosody and syntactic markers:

(6) ʃomɒ: mi:gi:d mɒ: bɒ:jæd beri:m be sæmt-e reqɒ:bæt-i: kærdæn-e bɒ:zɒ:r?
    You say we should move towards a competitive market?
    (*Context: Tariffs on automobile import; a support or a disaster for national Industry?*)

(7) tæʔrefe ro ʃɒmɒː miːgiːd jæʔniː riːjɒːzæt-e?
     You say the tariff is, that is, austerity?
     (*Context: Tariffs on automobile import; a support or a disaster for national industry?*)

(8) ægær ozɒːʔ xuːbe, iːndʒuːr ke ɒːqɒːje . . . miːgæn, ke æl-hæmdolelɒːh.
     If the condition is good, as Mr . . . says, then thank God.
     (*Context: Separating the Ministry of Commerce from the Ministry of Industry and Mining*)

(9) miːgæn ʃærɒːjet-e mɒː, ʃærɒːjet-e . . ., ɒːre?
     He says our condition, is the condition of . . ., yes?
     (*Context: Separating the Ministry of Commerce from the Ministry of Industry and Mining*)

In the above examples, the reporter monitors the report by challenging the appropriateness of the discourse. In (6), the reporter changes the tone of the report from an assertive to an interrogative one, indicating that he is asking the original speaker to confirm or deny the sincerity of the report.[14] As argued by Capone (2016), one should not report sentences that are ambiguous (e.g. 'ironic' sentences can be ambiguous since the hearer might not understand the illocutionary force of the utterance, and hence may interpret the report incorrectly). In that case, the hearer would be unable to distinguish between the intermingled voices (and perspectives). However, in (6)–(9), since the original speaker is present during the interaction, the interrogative tone of the reports does not create a problem for the hearer (the original speaker is present and can clarify the issue).

The reporter can use either prosody to challenge the appropriateness of the report (such as in [6]) or syntactic markers to invite the original speaker or the hearer to provide further information. In (7)–(9), the reporters use markers such as 'jæʔniː' ('that is'), 'ægær' ('if') and the interrogative 'ɒːre' ('yes?') to negotiate potentially problematic stances. These markers guide listeners to the correct interpretation of the report by creating a context in which the original speaker and the reporter can discuss the report in order to clarify matters, both for themselves and the hearer. Examples (6)–(9) present us with a rather puzzling issue. In the above examples, the marker of enquiry sometimes comes within the *that*-clause (such as in [7] and [8]) but sometimes includes the whole report (such as in [6] and [9]). In (7) and (8), the markers 'ægær' and 'jæʔniː' are produced in such a way as to appear related to the original speaker (they are embedded within the *that*-clause [the complementiser *that* is sometimes deleted in Persian indirect reports]). In these cases, the reporters who produce 'ægær' and 'jæʔniː' create ambiguity, because it appears that these words are part of the original utterance. However, in (6) and (9), the reporters remain outside the report, and distinguish between their voice and that of the original speaker.

5.3. Communicating uncertainty

Instead of explicitly challenging the appropriateness of the discourse, the reporter sometimes employs popping-out expressions[15] to communicate uncertainty. The popping-out marker can either be located within the report or remain outside the *that*-clause. Consider the following examples:

(10) iːʃuːn færmuːdænd ke særmɒːje-gozɒːriː: xɒːredʒiː ke dær bærnɒːme uːmæd-e **ʃɒːjæd** qejre vɒːqeʔiː-je.
     He said that foreign investment that is included in the programme is **perhaps** unreal.
     (*Context: The focus of the Sixth Plan to overcome unemployment*)

(11) miːfærmɒːjiːd ke **ælɒːn** bædæne-je vezɒːræt-e bɒːzærgɒːn-iː, iːmiːdro, iːrɒːn xodro, **tʃiː, tʃiː, tʃiː**,. . .
     You say that **now** the body of the Ministry of Commerce, IMIDRO, Iran Xodro, **blah, blah, blah**, . . .
     (*Context: Separating the Ministry of Commerce from the Ministry of Industry and Mining*)

(12) eʃɒːre-jiː dɒːʃt-iːd be iːnke, **be hær hɒːl**, niːruː-je monɒːseb væ montæbeq bɒː estɒːndɒːrd-hɒː bɒːjæd dær ɒːmuːzeʃ-o pærværeʃ xedmæt bokone.

You mentioned that, **in any case**, qualified and according-to-standards forces should be employed by the Ministry of Education.
(*Context: A hundred day performance of the Ministry of Education*)

(13) uːn qæblæn goft-e buːd ke dær bærxiː mævɒːred, **be noʔiː**, movɒːfeqe bærdʒɒːm hæst.
He had already said that in some cases, **to some degree**, he agrees with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.
(*Context: Dismissing the US Minister of Foreign Affairs and its consequences*)

In examples (10)–(13), some popping-out expressions have appeared in the *that*-clause of the reports. In (10), the word 'ʃɒːjæd' ('perhaps') is problematic in that the hearer cannot easily tell whether the marker is related to the original speaker's utterance or is something that the reporter has added to the report based on his interpretation of the original utterance. In (11), we are faced with an even more complicated situation. The reporter has used two ambiguous words after the *that*-clause: 'ælɒːn' ('now') and 'tʃiː, tʃiː, tʃiː' ('blah, blah, blah'). The first word, 'ælɒːn', appears to be meaningless and not in context. It seems that the reporter has deliberately added this to the beginning of the *that*-clause to buy him some time, thus giving him an opportunity to remember the other parts of the original utterance (the reporter postpones an event for which he is not ready). The other marker in this report, 'tʃiː, tʃiː, tʃiː', indicates that the reporter has difficulty remembering the original words and utterances, hence justifying our argument regarding the word 'ælɒːn'. Of course, 'tʃiː, tʃiː, tʃiː' can also reveal that the reporter is not interested in quoting certain parts of the source message. Having said that, there is some degree of ambiguity as to whether the marker of uncertainty should be assigned to the reporter's inability to remember the words or to the original speaker. In (12) and (13), the same scenario holds true. The two markers 'be hær hɒːl' ('in any case') and 'be noʔiː' ('to some degree') provide metalinguistic clues that might indicate that the reporter is either unwilling to produce some parts of the original utterance or s/he cannot remember the specific information. These two phrases are included in the *that*-clause of the sentences and create ambiguity for the hearer when deciphering the information.

The markers that are highlighted in the above examples are 'quasi-quotational devices'. In line with Saka (2017), these devices can appear within quotation marks, and can alert the hearer that the expression is not being quoted verbatim. It is unclear why reporters employ such quasi-quotational devices, but Saka mentions the following reasons to account for the appearance of these devices in indirect reports:

> . . . to harmonize the syntax of the source with that of the matrix report (especially in mixed quotation); to abbreviate the source's message for the sake of brevity; to elide distracting bits of the source message for the sake of foregrounding others; to clarify the source; to interpolate editorial comments about the source; to save someone from embarrassment; to keep from getting in trouble; and to communicate a partial message when in ignorance of the whole (due to obscurity in the original source, forgetfulness on the reporter's part, or other failure). (Saka, 2017:45)

The popping-out devices employed in (10)–(13) not only highlight obscurity in the original source or forgetfulness on the part of the reporter, but also create a problem of *designation* (choosing someone to take responsibility for such devices). It is not evident to the hearer (it is a Herculean task for the hearer, according to Capone [2016]) whether s/he should consider the markers to be part of the original speaker's utterances or something that is generated by the reporter as a sign of quasi-quotation. As argued by Capone (2016), the reporting speaker should provide clear clues and cues to help the hearer separate the intermingled voices. These cues and clues can be both verbal and nonverbal, but the preference is given to verbally communicating the ambiguous parts (Sperber and Wilson [1986] argue that nonverbal communication is less certain than verbal communication). Capone rightly mentions that one should not report in such a way that an extra cognitive load is placed on the hearer during the process of uncoupling the voices. However, in everyday interactions, the reporter can intentionally blend voices to convey a specific effect to the hearer. In this regard, background knowledge and familiarity with the reporter/speaker can help the hearer to differentiate between the voices.

As in the case of popping-out expressions, interjections can also be problematic when they appear in the *that*-clause of the report. In this regard, Allan (2016) states that interjections do not create serious problems in indirect reports, while Capone (2016) explains that the problem of attribution makes the reporting of interjections perplexing. Capone states that it is better to use interjections in direct reporting to obviate the problem of attribution; however, Allan argues that interjections can be used in indirect reporting without creating confusion. Considering their multiple meanings, interjections can be rather problematic when the reporter uses them indirectly. In this case, the reporter should first interpret the meaning of the interjection (based on his/her familiarity with the original speaker and sufficient contextual clues) and then report the interpreted meaning to the hearer, otherwise the hearer will be confused as to: (a) whom the interjection should be attributed; and (b) what the meaning of the interjection is. Consider the following example:

(14) John said, ''Ah, Mitra is not a good teacher''.

As the interjection in (14) is being directly reported, it is obvious to whom 'ah' should be ascribed. However, in (14), the meaning of 'ah' is unclear for the hearer because 'ah' can have different meanings based on the context and the speaker's intention. Therefore, if one intends to indirectly report (14), three scenarios arise based on the different meanings of 'ah':

a) John said that *he was surprised* that Mitra was not a good teacher.
b) John said that *he was aware* that Mitra was not a good teacher.
c) John said that *he was sad* that Mitra was not a good teacher.

Regarding the different interpretations of 'ah' when (14) is being indirectly reported, we can argue that Capone has been correct to highlight that interjections can be particularly problematic if one tries to interpret them when they appear in direct quotations. Interjections can be attributed to the original speaker if they are directly quoted (of course, the quote should be fair), while it is not always possible to solve the problem of attribution when interjections are indirectly reported (this same problem can also exist for the aforementioned popping-out expressions). That being the case, we can claim that, in indirect reports, an interpreted utterance or phrase should be attributed to the reporting speaker since s/he has had direct contact with the original speaker and has observed all the contextual clues relevant to the interjections.

5.4. Subjectivity and disagreement

Not all subjective manipulations are in line with the Paraphrasis/Form Principle. In the case of 'eyewitness-to-eyewitness' scenarios where the original speaker is present during the report, the original speaker can disagree with the illocutionary force of the utterance on the basis of it being a faulty interpretation. Research on disagreement in indirect reporting is limited, yet the issue of 'disagreement' is a crucially important topic in indirect reporting, as it demonstrates whether the practice of samesaying has been implemented correctly or whether the report is fair based on the hearer's judgement. Disagreement is defined as ''if you think belief B is true and I don't – I either think B is false or I have withheld judgement on B – then we disagree'' (Frances, 2014:18). Disagreement in indirect reporting can be of several types depending on the locus of the disagreement (where the dispute happens). Sometimes the report does not adhere to the practice of flawless samesaying and the practice of subjectivity is beyond the perspective of the original speaker. As a result, the original speaker or hearer disagrees with the sincerity of the report because they do not consider it to be fair/genuine. Consider the following example:

(15) A: She said that the morning star is the evening star.
      B: She didn't say such a thing.

Much of the disagreement observed in Persian indirect reports is similar to example (15). As this example demonstrates, the hearer/original speaker clearly disagrees with the report, believing it to be inappropriate. In this case, the hearer challenges the sincerity of the report. In this regard, the following example is one such case that was observed in our data transcriptions (R = reporter; S = original speaker):

(16) R: færmu:d-e bu:di:d jek mi:lju:n tomæn hær metr kɒ:heʃ dɒ:ʃt-e dær tehrɒ:n.
          You said it has been decreased by one million Toman in each metre in Tehran.
      S: mæn tʃeni:n ʔærz nækærd-æm. væli: dær mædʒmu:ʔ mi:ʃe goft æz sɒ:l-e 1392 be bæʔd mi:tu:næm
          ʔærz bokonæm ke mɒ: æfzɒ:jeʃ-e qejmæt-e mæhsu:s dær qejmæt-e mæskæn nædɒ:ʃti:m.
          I didn't say such a thing. But, overall, it is possible to say that from 1392 onwards I can say that we
          didn't have a tangible increase in the housing price.
          (*Context: Strategies to save housing from stagnation*)

In (16), the original speaker is present when the report is produced. The speaker clearly disagrees with the sincerity of the report when s/he utters 'mæn tʃeni:n ʔærz nækærd-æm' ('I didn't say such a thing'). In these cases, the practice of samesaying is not being strictly adhered to (previous research on Persian indirect reports has shown that samesaying is flawless). In this regard, the following is another example taken from our data:

(17) R: dær bæxʃ-e qæbl-i: goft-i:d moxɒ:lef-i:d.
          In the previous section, you said that you disagree.
      S: næ, mæn ʔærz kærd-æm mætlu:b væ mætlu:b-tær æst.

No, I said desirable and more desirable.
(*Context: Investigating the Sixth Plan in the Parliament: attaching Free Zones to the Ministry of Economy*)

The sincerity of the report is not always the reason for the dispute between the reporter and the original speaker. The report can be sincere, but the logic underlying the report may be the bone of contention. Consider the following example:

(18) A: She said that the evening star can be observed in the morning.
      B: No. The evening star is not observable in the morning.

In (18), the hearer does not have a problem with the sincerity of the report, but shows disagreement with the logic behind the utterance in (18A). We observed examples of Persian indirect reports, such as in (19) below, where the original speaker does not disagree with the sincerity of the report, but does not accept the logic behind it. As a result, the original speaker corrects the offending logic by guiding the reporter towards a specific aspect of the original utterance that has been missed in the report. Therefore, the report in (19) is not insincere, as is the case in examples (16) and (17), but, in this particular situation, does not report the logical point that the original speaker has in mind:

(19) R: væli: ælɒːn miːgiːd tæfɒːvot-e ʧændɒːn-i: nemiːkone.
          But now you are saying there is no difference.
      S: mæn eʔteqɒːdæm iːne ke xejli: bæd næʃuːd-e.
          I believe that it is not very bad.
          (*Context: Investigating the Sixth Plan in the Parliament: attaching Free Zones to the Ministry of Economy*)

6. Returning to the PFP

The subjectivity observed in Persian quasi-quotations challenges the assumption which underlies the PFP. Capone (2016) argues that his Paraphrasis Rule assimilates the concept that "[t]he point of indirect discourse might be fairly taken to be to introduce and produce a given utterance that gives the content of the original speaker's utterance" (Burge, 1986:196). The PFP appears to stress that what comes after the complementiser *that* is attributable to the reported speaker (and not the reporting speaker). However, examples (10)–(13) have indicated that there is unresolved ambiguity in the case of 'quasi-quotational devices'. It is unclear how the PFP will deal with these devices when the contextual clues cannot guide the hearer towards attributing them to either the reporter or the original speaker.[16]

The quasi-quotational devices and markers which challenge the appropriateness of reports indicate that we cannot always consider indirect reports to be a fair paraphrase of the original utterances. The subjectivity which is available to reporters allows them to include markers of uncertainty or obscurity where it is not obvious whether these markers should be assigned to the reporter or the original speaker. On this account, the practice of samesaying cannot be flawless in Persian indirect reports. It is quite possible that the uncertainty which is presented in cases of quasi-quotation originate from the reporters' incorrect interpretation of the original utterance (refer to our discussion on subjectivity and disagreement). In this regard, Wettstein (2016: 407) argues that "[o]ur belief reporting practices have evolved to serve social, communicative ends that, for all one knows ahead of time, do not include getting the propositional content well formulated philosophically apt as that would be." Having said that, the issue being raised here regarding the subjective interpretation of the reports is not problematic for the PFP.[17] The PFP presents a logical mentality that should be respected during the practice of indirect reporting (the practice would go awry without the PFP). According to Capone (2016), one should not report utterances in a way that creates ambiguity for the hearer. The PFP indicates that the reporter should employ contextual clues and cues to separate his/her voice from that of the original speaker. Although, having said that, the reporter can consciously or unconsciously ignore adding relevant clues (to help the hearer distinguish between the voices) and, in this way, the PFP fails to be correctly observed. Therefore, the PFP presents an ideal situation that can be flouted depending on the sociocognitive factors which underlie the context of the indirect report.

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[16] We have no intention of generalising our data to address universal issues, but we are confident that, within our data, there are a number of examples that can challenge the PFP, particularly with regard to the premise that 'indirect reports are/or should be a fair paraphrase of the original utterances'. Our work has demonstrated that we cannot always consider indirect reports to be a fair paraphrase of the original utterances.

[17] Our study highlighted situations where the PFP was challenged. However, our intention is not to call for the PFP to be rejected. The PFP is a maxim that can be flouted in certain contexts, such as informal interactions.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyse Persian indirect reporting to determine the subjectivity and reflexivity in indirect reports (popping-out expressions and the various verbs of saying). In this regard, Persian indirect reports closely adhered to the concept of polyphony (simultaneity of voices) where samesaying was influenced by the existence of different voices (and not just the voice of the original speaker). Through the use of pragmatic opacity, reporters are allowed to perform a certain degree of transformation in line with Capone's Paraphrasis/Form Principle. Yet, the data used in this study showed that reporters can deviate from this principle and change the original speaker's perspective when reporting the original utterances. The data also highlighted that the problem of attribution in indirect reports is not easily resolved, particularly when the indirect reporter uses popping-out expressions (such as 'blah, blah, blah') or interjections (such as 'ah') that can be loaded with different interpretations. In this case, our discussion shows that cross-cultural studies regarding indirect reporting can prove useful in shedding light on the different aspects of indirect reporting. For example, the authentic Persian data used in this study enabled us to determine how 'politeness' (as an instance of subjectivity) can be manipulated during indirect reporting, an area of investigation that is in its infancy and requires careful attention and analysis to ascertain how it is conceptualised in different languages.

All things considered, the examples of subjectivity and monitoring that were observed in this study demonstrate that indirect reports allow different manipulations to be made, including when the report does not consider the original speaker's perspective (thus challenging the Paraphrasis/Form Principle), or when the verb of saying is modified to target politeness (a characteristic that might only be relevant to Persian). The praxis of indirect reporting is a complex language game where the reporter can add his/her voice in line with the dynamics of the situation. In this case, we are still some distance away from a complete picture of the processes that are behind indirect reporting. A case in point is the reason why the reporter deviates from the original speaker's perspective and what is his/her intention for doing so. Furthermore, we are unsure whether the uncertainty that has been created by the reporter is related to social factors or the reporter's cognitive abilities (such as 'remembering' the original utterances). These, and many other relevant questions, require further investigation to determine the cross-cultural issues that influence the praxis of indirect reporting. In this study, we have observed how Persian has provided its users with various syntactic features for addressing the issues of politeness, subjectivity and uncertainty in indirect reports.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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