

**Abstract**

Direct quotes represent the point of view of the speaker, while indirect quotes represent that of the reporter (Suñer, 2000). However, in newspapers, the reporter's perspective becomes evident through the selection of reporting verbs in any quotes. I analyzed 92 quotes from 2 newspapers classifying them into different sections.

I first categorized the reporting verbs; most of them were of saying although there were many judgement value verbs. I also classified the quoted people according to Ariel's accessibility theory, finding in the international sections that most of them were highly accessible. Then, I analyzed the tenses of the reporting verbs and the mixed quotations.

In short, I give evidence of the use of quotes in newspapers to express the informant's perspective instead of the speaker's through the quotations used, the reporting verbs and their tenses, the accessibility of the quoted person and the selected words in mixed quotations.

*Key words: direct style, indirect style, mixed quotation, communication verbs.*

## Reporting Verbs in Spanish and French Press: Informant's or Speaker's Perspective?

### Introduction

The most frequent quotation procedures are the direct and indirect styles. Both of them are characterized as representations of the discourse. However, they rarely reproduce faithfully the original text since although they can exactly reproduce its content, the context is unrepeatable. According to Suñer (2000) the difference between direct and indirect quotes is the point of view of the utterance: "Direct quotes represent the view of the speaker who is uttering the quote, while indirect quotes present the point of view of the one who is doing the reporting." (p.3) That is, speaker vs. reporter's perspective. However, in newspapers, despite the use of quotation marks, the narrator's perspective becomes evident through the selection of reporting verbs. In fact, although, apparently, in the direct quotes the point of view of the quoted person is respected by the use of quotation marks, the partiality of the narrator is evident with the lexical presuppositions used in these verbs.

### Methodology and Hypotheses

Based on Jacobs' assumption (1999) that the narrator puts his opinions in other people's mouths to make them more authoritative and believable, I analyzed 92 quotes (direct, indirect and mixed) from two international newspapers with similar leftist ideologies: *El País* (Spanish) and *Le Figaro* (French) in three different sections: international, national and sports during a period of two days: September 26-27, 2002). Within these 92 quotes, 26 are indirect, 33 are direct and 33 are mixed.

Before starting with the analysis, it is necessary to redefine the key words of this paper: direct style, indirect style, mixed quote and communication verbs.

According to Reyes (1998), the direct style is presented as the juxtaposition of two segments: the quotation frame and the quote itself. The quote is distinguished from the frame by the intonation or the pauses, and, typographically, using quotation marks or hyphens.

In the indirect style, the quote is introduced by a communication verb and, generally, by the conjunction "that".

A mixed quote is the mixture of the direct and indirect style.

A communication verb is the one that expresses the verbal activities of the human beings. Its primordial intention is to transmit some information and it can introduce quotes. Now that these terms have been defined, I will formulate a series of hypotheses that I will verify through my analysis:

1. Indirect quotes appear in a greater proportion than direct quotes since the indirect style is preferred when, as Reyes (1998) points out, the text is more oriented to describe factual contents than affective ones, as is the case of journalistic discourse. On the other hand, she argues that the indirect style, as it neutralizes the intonation of others' discourses, reduces the drama in the text and pays more attention to what was said than to how it was said, which is actually the aim of journalistic language.

Taking into account these factors, my prediction is that indirect quotes will be more frequent in the international and national sections where the aim is to inform the reader about the events in current politics.

2. The verbs that dominate in both direct and indirect quotes are verbs of saying, above all, the verb "to say" although there are also evaluative verbs in all of them.
3. The quoted people have some position or authority. Politicians and famous people are usually quoted directly by their name. According to Ariel's accessibility theory, people who are more known by their social roles are at the highest part of the scale as is the case of politicians. When the person is not well known, his/her name usually appears followed by his/her occupation (in a lower scale in the accessibility hierarchy) and if he/she is anonymous, just his/her occupation.
4. These introductory verbs occur at a greater extent in the past tense, since the quotes were said in a past period of time.
5. Mixed quotations occur at a greater proportion than any others and, the quoted text is usually a single word (noun or adjective) rather than complete subordinate clauses.

### **Discussion**

This is the percentage of quotes of each type that we can find in every section of every newspaper:

[Insert Table 1]

Contrary to my first hypothesis, I found more direct and mixed quotations than indirect ones. Dividing this into sections: In *Le Figaro* as well as in *El País*, direct quotations are the most frequent in the sports sections, not having hardly any of another kind. This is probably due to the fact that the informant has direct access to the quoted people but not so in the national or international sections. In addition, as Reyes (1998) says, "the direct style makes the narration more dramatic, incorporating others' voices" (my translation, p. 28) and sports are part of people's hobbies; this is, where the arisen emotions play the most important role; much more than the facts themselves. Notice the following example where the chosen verb is one of emotion *rompe a llorar de emoción* (bursts into tears of emotion):

(1) *Juan Antonio Flecha, su compañero de habitación, que aguanta tirando de Blanco hasta Tornavacas, y luego aguanta al Heras despendolado, y llega, cruza la meta, y rompe a llorar de emoción: “Ha sido como si hubiese ganado yo.”*

Juan Antonio Flecha, his roommate, who keeps leading Blanco all the way to Tornavacas, and then exhausted continues leading Heras, and arrives, crosses the finish line and bursts into tears of emotion: “It was as if I had won.” (9/27)

The verbs of communication seem to show the point of view of the person quoting instead of the quoted one. This is what Clark and Gerrig (1990, p. 767) called “selective depiction” (the selection by the informant of what aspects to demonstrate). In the national section, both newspapers coincide in the supremacy of mixed quotations where the journalist mixes the content of some public figures’ statements with their own words in order to emphasize some of them. This selection of the quoted words is in the hands of the narrator. In the international section, however, in *Le Figaro* there are more indirect quotes (what I predicted in my first hypothesis) whereas in *El País* there are more direct quotes, although the difference does not seem to be significant. Notice, nonetheless, that direct quotes are sometimes used by the narrator to distance the quoted words from himself since, as Clark and Gerrig (1990) point out, many attitudes that are inappropriate for speakers themselves to express are acceptable in the mouth of others. This distance is emphasized with the use of the evaluative verb *alarmó* (alarmed):

(2) *Los estrategas de Bush improvisaron en unas horas un acto en los jardines de la Casa Blanca en que el presidente se rodeó de congresistas republicanos y demócratas y procuró echar tierra sobre una frase que pronunció el martes y que, además de enfurecer a la oposición, alarmó a numerosos electores: “A los demócratas del Senado no les preocupa la seguridad de los estadounidenses.”*

Bush’s strategists improvised in a few hours an act in the gardens of the White House in which the President surrounded himself with republican and democratic congressmen and tried to minimize the importance of his statement from the previous Tuesday, which, in addition to angering the opposition, alarmed many electors: “The Senate’s democrats do not care about U.S. citizens’ security”.

As far as the percentage of different kinds of introductory verbs that occur in the indirect and direct quotes of each newspaper, I used a categorization based on that proposed by Suñer (2000), Maldonado (1991) and Reyes (1998):

[Insert Table 2]

Most of the verbs introducing quotes in both newspapers are declarative verbs as I assumed in my second hypothesis. The verb *decir* (to say) occurs above all in direct quotes (especially in *El País*) as well as in spoken language according to the study conducted by Cameron (1998), although the verb *declarar* (to declare) is frequently used in both newspapers, above all in the international and national sections. Finally, in the national section of *El País*, verbs of opinion are often used. Those that occur to a lesser extent are those of emotion and authority; they only occur in the direct quotes of *El País*, showing that even in the direct quotes the point of view of the informant is present in some way. This is also evident in evaluative verbs, which are usually negative, in order to reinforce the criticisms and accusations that politicians sling at each other. In my opinion, and according to Table 2, the only verbs that are apparently more neutral are the verbs of saying; the rest shows some kind of lexical presupposition (opinion, petition, certainty, promise...). In the case of the indirect quotes in *El País*, the most frequent ones are those of petition. In those of *Le Figaro*, the verbs of saying occur to the same extent as the verbs of prospective value.

Regarding quoted people, in both newspapers and in the different sections, they are people or institutions with certain political or judicial power. As I mentioned in my third hypothesis, they appear directly by their name if they are well-known like Presidents or other political leaders. The informant is not explicit, he does not have to give any extra explanations, since the person occupies the highest rank in the hierarchy of accessibility according to Schrifin (1994). So, we can assume that the reader knows who he is talking about; named after their job if they are not very well known to the reader or if they have not been mentioned previously, or just by their occupation if they are unknown to the reader:

(3) *Selon le ministre britannique, au terminal de Coquelles, les passages son tombés de 800 par mois a un ou deux par mois, et a Frethum, d'environ 70 par jour a un par jour.*

According to the British minister, in the terminal of Coquelles, the flight tickets fell from 800 per month to one or two per month, and in Frethum, from around 70 per day to one per day.

Even in some cases, in the lowest rank of the hierarchy of accessibility, the quotes of people irrelevant to the reader occur in the third person plural:

(4) *“El aumento no es consecuencia, bajo nuestro punto de vista, del incremento de la inseguridad, sino fruto del crecimiento económico, ya que la gente tiene más bienes a conservar, hay más viviendas unifamiliares y, por ello, los ciudadanos demandan más seguridad”, agregan las citadas fuentes.*

“The increase is not a consequence, from our point of view, of the increment of insecurity, but rather the fruit of economic growth, since people have more goods to keep, there are more single-family homes and that is why citizens demand more security”, added the quoted sources.

Contrary to what Zelizer (1989) argued about news-quotes being generally anonymous and collective, I found these to be minimal above all in the international section since most of the quoted people were usually very well known politicians (highly accessible) like in (2). This is probably due to the fact that at that time the war in Iraq was the most frequent topic in this section and the American and Iraqi political leaders were internationally highly accessible and therefore they were mentioned by their name.

Referring to verbal tenses, although my fourth hypothesis is correct in the fact that there are more tenses in the past than in the present, there are some nuances: the verbal tenses in which the verbs introducing quotes take place do not coincide in both newspapers. In *El País* in the international and sports section there are more verbs in past tenses, usually without any temporal reference. This might be because the narrator does not consider it relevant to indicate that information, or because it is unknown to him. Within these past tenses, the preterite tense is the most frequent, although in some cases, present perfect is used instead, when the action is finished but the time in which it took place is a recent one (very common in some Spanish dialects):

(5) *La Casa Blanca ha pedido a los dirigentes de la oposición a Hussein que inicien el reclutamiento de voluntarios y que velen para que en la fuerza estén representados los tres grupos religiosos y étnicos de Irak: suníes, shiíes y kurdos.*

The White House has requested the opposition leaders against Hussein to start with the recruitment of volunteers and to pray so that the force of the three religious and ethnic groups of Iraq, Sunites, Shiites and Kurds, are represented.

In the direct quotations in the sports section of *El País*, the use of present tense has a specific purpose: to make readers participants in these events as if they were taking place before their eyes, and the use of a direct quotation here makes the situation more realistic. "Since direct speech requires the reporter-speaker, it is a natural vehicle for vivid and dramatic representation." (Coulmas, 1986, p.40). He also claimed that "direct quotes express the reporter-speaker's involvement in the event he/she is reporting." (p.41). On the other hand, in the national section there are more present tenses when they are verbs of opinion (as these verbs do not express any events, they do not require any temporal specification) or present perfect with verbs of petition. In *Le Figaro*, however, both in the international and in the sports section there are more or less the same number of quotes in the present as in the past since in French, the present tense can be used to indicate past in more contexts than in Spanish (the so called historical present); in contrast, in the national section there are more past tenses.

To conclude, in the case of mixed quotations, they are not the most frequent as I assumed in my fifth hypothesis, but there are the same number of direct quotes. As Reyes (1998) argued "The incursion of direct quotes within the indirect style is very frequent in the press language, where one is interested in stressing some expressions

by reproducing them literally” (my translation, p. 23). This selection of certain lexicon or a part of a sentence in order to do a demonstration is another case of selective depiction. However, I was right in the second part of this hypothesis concerning the words that occur within quotation marks: in *El País* in the international section, the most common type of mixed quotations are words in isolation and in the national one, subordinate clauses (verb and complements). On the other hand, in *Le Figaro* in all of the sections, most of the mixed quotes are isolated words. Within these words, the most used category is that of the adjectives or noun and adjectives together; whereas in *El País* the majority are just nouns. Usually, when the mixed quotation is just a noun, it is because either a negative presupposition has been added to this word by the narrator or by the user of that word as in the following example:

(6) *La oposición demócrata, deseosa de que se hable de la mala situación económica, del aumento de la pobreza y de la muy discutible gestión gubernamental, acusó ayer a Bush y Cheney de cometer “una bajeza” al proclamar en sus mítines que cada voto emitido a favor de los republicanos contribuiría a aumentar la seguridad de Estados Unidos.*

The democratic opposition, wishing that someone would speak up about the bad economic situation, the increase of poverty and the very debatable government management, accused Bush and Cheney yesterday of doing “something despicable” by proclaiming in their meetings that each vote in favor of the republicans would contribute to increasing the security of the United States.

Finally, not all quotes are introduced by verbs. In *Le Figaro*, there are also some cases of freestanding quotes (as Clark and Gerrig called them); quotes not introduced by a verb but, for example, by a prepositional phrase as in the following example:

(7) *Dans la bouche d’Al Gore, c’est plutôt la Maison-Blanche qui pratique l’opportunisme.*

In Al Gore’s words, it is above all the White House that practices opportunism.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, in the sports sections in both newspapers the direct quotes are most prevalent whereas in the national sections mixed quotations are the most abundant. In the international sections there are some differences though: in *Le Figaro*, there are more indirect quotes and in *El País* more direct ones. The majority of verbs introducing quotes are verbs of saying (especially in the direct quotes). On the other hand, the less frequent verbs are those of emotion or authority. Concerning the quoted people, the most known are called directly by their name, and each time in a more explicit way if they are less known, except for those not known at all, who occur in the third person plural. Regarding the verbal tenses, the most frequent are the past ones and, finally, the mixed quotes occur to the same extent as direct quotes, but they are generally just lexicon (nouns in *El País* and nouns and adjectives in *Le Figaro*). In future research, it would be interesting to delve deeper into mixed quotations analyzing them from a

pragmatic point of view in order to categorize them according to the negative or positive influence they contain. In this paper, I tried to give evidence of the use of quotes in newspapers to express the informant's particular perspective instead of the speaker's through the quotations used, the reporting verbs and their tenses, the accessibility of the quoted person and the selected words in mixed quotations.

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Table 1:

	<i>EL PAIS</i>			<i>LE FIGARO</i>		
	International	National	Sports	International	National	Sports
Dir. N%	42.3	5.5	100	31.5	35	66.6
Indir N%	30.7	33.3	0	36.8	25	0
Mix. N%	26.9	61.1	0	31.5	40	33.3

Table 2:

	<i>EL PAIS</i>		<i>LE FIGARO</i>	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
<u>Communicative verbs: %</u>	88.8	100	100	100
<i>Declaratives (of saying) %</i>	66.6	20	80	30
<i>Negative judgement value%</i>	5.5	6.6	0	10
<i>Petition %</i>	0	46.6	0	0
<i>Prospective value %</i>	0	6.6	0	30
<i>Retrospective value %</i>	0	0	0	20
<i>Opinion %</i>	0	20	0	0
<i>Adding information %</i>	11.1	0	0	0
<i>Certainty %</i>	5.5	0	6.6	10
<i>Perception %</i>	0	0	6.6	0
<i>Promise %</i>	0	0	6.6	0
<u><i>Emotion %</i></u>	5.5	0	0	0
<u><i>Authority %</i></u>	5.5	0	0	0