

BOOK NOTES

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ELIZABETH HOLT & REBECCA CLIFT (eds.), *Reporting talk: Reported speech in interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xi, 287. Hb \$105.

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This is a collection of conversation analytic studies on reported speech. In chapter 1, the editors categorize existing work on reported speech into those that address its form, authenticity, and function, respectively. They also provide a brief introduction to conversation analysis (CA), noting that CA has engendered findings that confirm, extend, or contradict prior research on reported speech. In chapter 2, Charles Goodwin shows how the aphasia patient Chil is able to “incorporate and claim authorship” to others’ talk (p. 46) with a severely limited vocabulary. The author argues that both Goffman’s framework of footing and Vološinov’s analysis of reported speech are incapable of explicating the complexity of Chil’s embodied participation. In chapter 3, Elizabeth Holt describes the phenomenon of “enactments” in telephone conversations – “animated” reported speech mostly used in hypothetical scenarios. These “enactments” are typically found in already-established reporting frames, not introduced by any verb of saying, and done collaboratively as joke expansions. Also using data from telephone conversations, Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen in chapter 4 focuses on reported speech in non-narrative contexts, showing that non-narrative quoting is maximally one TCU (turn constructional unit) long, often produced as a follow-up to (i) strengthen a prior assessing action or (ii) account for a prior disaffiliative action. The theme of non-narrative reported speech is continued in chapter 5, where Rebecca Clift examines its use in the environment of competitive assessments to claim epistemic authority. In chapter 6, Markku Haakana turns to the study of reported THOUGHT in complaint stories, which works as silent criticism of the antagonist’s reported speech, thereby painting a multilayered picture of what transpired both above and below the conversational surface. In chapter 7, based on stories from weekly meetings of troubled youth in a day center, John Rae & Joanne Kerby show how a descriptive gloss can create a context that frames the ensuing direct report speech (DRS) as deceptive. In chapter 8, Renata Galatolo demonstrates that DRS, often found in the expansion of answers in legal testimonies, makes it possible for witnesses to provide evidence for their assertions and to accomplish implicit moral work (express opinions), which they are not allowed to do explicitly. In chapter 9, Steven Clayman calls attention to the practice of “speaking on behalf of the public” used by journalists in broadcast news interviews to (i) manage shifting participation frameworks in opening and resumptive questions, and (ii) neutralize and legitimize not only sensitive and aggressive questions but also their own defensive moves. The volume ends with Robin Wooffitt’s chapter on mediums’ use of reported speech, located in the third position after some exploratory claim has been confirmed by the sitter, to attribute the confirmed information to the spirit. The author shows that this sequential structure is oriented to even when the medium’s initial assessment turns out to be problematic, which is then accounted for in the third-position reported speech. Collectively, the chapters showcase CA’s capacity to illuminate the versatility of reported speech as a resource in both ordinary and institutional contexts.

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