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Teaching Direct and Reported Speech from a Critical Language Awareness (CLA) Perspective

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Introduction

During presidential elections in the USA the following reports appeared in the media (Bell, 1991, p. 207).

> 'I can win this thing on my own', Mondale declared. (*U.S. News*)
> Reporters overheard Mondale muttering, 'It looks like I'm going to have to win this thing on my own'. (*World Report*)

These two very different versions of Mondale's words demonstrate that all representation of speech is a construction and a re-shaping of what was said. The use of inverted commas and direct speech suggest that this is not the case and that the reporter is faithfully repeating the speaker's actual words. The different Mondale quotes throw this into question. How is the reader to know which version to believe? Why would readers question either, if they had not seen both? Even where quoting is accurate, one should assume that reporters select which bit of what was said to highlight and that they frame the quotes in different ways. Mondale 'declares' and Mondale 'mutters' convey different impressions of the man's competence and authority.

All texts work to position readers—this is part of their communicative function. There would be no point in writing or speaking if we did not wish to be heard and believed. But writers are not always in control of the positions they produce, as they draw on discourses that are available to them in the social contexts in which they work. Janks (1996) has shown how advertisers, constructing a pension advertisement for domestic workers, produce a hybrid text simultaneously drawing on both the new South African discourses of workers' rights and the old apartheid discourses of paternalism. And readers do not always behave as ideal readers, who submit to textual positioning. Instead, they bring their own positions and histories to the reading process. It is therefore important to recognise that the production and reception of texts is socially conditioned (Fairclough, 1989) and to remember that different texts serve different interests. Education which provides students with a critical awareness of language should enable them to understand *how* a text is working to position readers and who benefits from such positioning.

The work of Fairclough (1989, 1995) provides a useful theoretical framework for

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critical discourse analysis. He uses social theory to develop a notion of discourse as social practice rather than as text.

> What precisely does this imply? Firstly that language is part of society, and not somehow external to it. Secondly, that language is a social process. And thirdly, that language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic) parts of society. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 22)

This three part conceptualisation of discourse forms the basis of his three part model of discourse analysis. His model consists of three inter related processes of analysis tied to the three inter related dimensions of discourse. These three dimensions of discourse are:

(1) the object of analysis (language, including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts);
(2) the processes by means of which the object is produced (written, spoken, designed) as well as how it is received (read, listened to, viewed) by human subjects;
(3) the socio-historical conditions which govern these processes.

According to Fairclough each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis:

(1) text analysis (description);
(2) processing analysis (interpretation);
(3) social analysis (explanation).

What is useful about this approach is that it enables analysts to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic and visual selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing, their layout and so on. However, it requires them to recognise the historical determination of these selections and to understand that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance. This is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained.

In this paper we will report on a particular set of related linguistic signifiers that are used to represent speech and how we set up a research project to teach direct and indirect speech from a CLA perspective.

Background to the Research

In the classroom, direct speech and indirect speech are taught and revised with little variation and little relevance to their use in real life discourse. It is just something that the students have to know so that they can produce correct written work. While quoting is often connected to writing reports, few students see links between this and other written genres such as the literary essay, where they have to quote from primary texts. The social and ideological effects of speech representation (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 54–69) are not evident in current classroom practice nor in any of the classroom materials used in South African schools that we examined.

The lexicalisation of speech reporting as 'direct' or 'indirect' hides the control that the reporter has to select what to quote, how much to quote, who to quote or how to frame and sequence what is quoted. In free indirect speech, which is 'an intermediate between direct and indirect speech' (Halliday, 1985, p. 261) it is even

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possible for reporters to blur the boundaries between their own voice and the voices of those they are reporting. Free indirect speech operates along a continuum between two defined extremes (Jones quoted in McKenzie, 1987 p. 3), where in some instances it is closer to direct and in other instances to indirect speech. The change from direct to indirect speech requires a number of grammatical transformations which create distance in time, place and person. This gives indirect speech a formal register. Free indirect speech is free to effect as many or as few of these transformations as the reporter chooses. The more transformations it includes, the closer the free indirect speech is to indirect speech; the fewer transformations, the closer the free indirect speech is to direct speech. Free indirect speech is not even taught in schools. For the rest of this paper we will use the abbreviations DS, IS and FIS for direct speech, indirect speech and free indirect speech respectively.

This research project was designed to investigate what students already knew about the reporting of speech, to design and present a CLA approach to the teaching of reported speech and to examine whether or not this changed students' literacy practices.

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Overview of the Research Project

Wilkinson & Janks designed a teaching programme for Wilkinson to use in her classroom. Wilkinson chose two groups of Grade 11 students whose average age was between 16 and 17 years. The co-educational classes were made up of mainly white, middle class, above averagely intelligent students who spoke English as their main language.

The research process relied on comparing data obtained before the research intervention with data obtained afterwards. The before and after data were obtained in two ways: from responses to a questionnaire and from the students' analysis of a text. The post research questionnaire was changed minimally to include FIS and to ascertain responses to the intervention. The intervention consisted of eight carefully sequenced activities designed as a whole to develop students' critical awareness of language.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire included the following questions.

(1) What do you know about direct and indirect speech?
(2) When were you first taught direct and indirect speech?
(3) How many times have you been taught the rules for changing direct speech into indirect speech and vice versa?
(4) Explain how you have been taught direct and indirect speech:
    (4.1) were you taught the rules?
    (4.2) were you given examples of direct speech to change to indirect speech? and the other way around?
    (4.3) were you given comics?
    (4.4) were you taught in any other ways?
(5) List all the rules that you remember for changing direct into indirect speech.
(6) When is direct speech usually used?
(7) When is indirect speech usually used?

(8) Do you use direct speech in your own writing? If you do, say in what circumstances.
(9) Do you use indirect speech in your own writing? If you do, say in what circumstances.
(10) Do you notice direct speech when reading? If so, when?
(11) Do you notice indirect speech when reading? If so, when?
(12) Were you taught direct speech and indirect speech together or separately?
(13) In real life, when would you change direct speech into indirect speech? Give examples.
(14) In real life, when would you change indirect speech into direct speech? Give examples.
(15) If you use direct and indirect speech do you consciously apply the rules?
(16) How do you think these rules originated?
(17) Do you think it is necessary or unnecessary for students to learn direct and indirect speech. Explain your answer?
(18) Do you think it is necessary or unnecessary for students to be taught direct and indirect speech? Explain your answer.
(19) How do you think direct and indirect speech should be taught?
(20) Have you thought of any of the above questions before?

The results produced by the analysis of the data were not very different from what we had predicted. All the students had been taught DS and IS previously, some as many as four times. Despite this the students could remember few of the rules. The teaching methods they encountered tended to be rule-based and these rules were then used either for traditional transformation exercises or for more communicative activities, such as role playing and dialogues. Their experience remains classroom-based and there is little evidence in the data of their consciously using this knowledge elsewhere. They could give a range of classroom examples for the use of DS and IS, but were less able to explain their everyday use. None of the students could articulate the different effects produced by the reporter's choice of DS or IS.

The Text Analysis

Students were given a text about an issue that affected their community, which included extensive speech reporting in all its various forms. They were given an open-ended question to answer: what can you say about the use of direct and indirect speech in this text? Many students were unsure of what to make of the task. They wrote very little and their confusion was shown in vague comments such as

> The use of direct speech has been well used and in the appropriate places. Indirect speech makes up most of the article and has been used extremely well.

Students could not even agree on the quantity of DS and IS. Some said 'mostly direct speech is used', others claimed 'there is a greater use of indirect speech'. A further view held that the article was 'split pretty much evenly between direct and indirect speech'.

Some students could identify DS and IS. Only a few could comment on their effects. One student argued that DS 'adds a lot of truth to the article' and 'it makes you believe it, as it is straight from the person's mouth'. Another student maintained

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that 'direct speech is the best option when speaking about controversial issues, so that what the leaders or parties say is not warped or misinterpreted'. IS was also seen to be neutral in that 'the indirect speech is used to tell us the facts' or, from a different student, IS is used 'to show an objectiveness towards the person who has commented'.

The pre-intervention data showed clearly that for students both DS and IS had been naturalised as a 'true' record of what was said and that they had not learnt to see either direct or indirect quotes as representations.

The Intervention: the programme of classroom activities

The programme consisted of eight activities, some of which took more than one lesson.

Activity 1

Students were asked to analyse the ways in which different textbooks dealt with DS and IS. To help them do this and to enable the construction of a comparative table, students were given a set of guiding questions to answer. Different groups of students worked on different textbooks and then reported their findings to one another. This activity had the added advantage of constructing students as critics of textbooks and not as passive receivers of them.

Activity 2

Students were given a list of the different rules for converting DS to IS, which they then evaluated with reference to the textbook they had studied. They made suggestions for extending the list. In this way a composite set of rules based on a wide range of textbooks was compiled.

Activity 3

Students were then given text-based exercises in which it was not possible to obey the rules for converting DS to IS without distorting the meaning. The aim of this activity was to destabilise the rules and to help students understand that language rules are generalisations based on common patterns but that they are not fixed and in the case of speech reporting have to change in relation to the context. This activity paves the way for a CLA perspective.

In case readers are not familiar with the concept of FIS, we have included an example. In one of the texts, a satirical comic strip, the domestic worker when confronted with all the chores she is expected to perform asks her employer what she and the grandmother have to do. 'What do the two of you do?' The reported speech needs to be, 'Eve asked what the two of them *do*', not 'Eve asked what the two of them *did*', to preserve the habitual nature of their actions. In some contexts, to preserve the sense of the original utterance, the rules need to be broken. In other contexts rules are broken to make the report less formal. As soon as reporters follow only some of the rules for conversion they are using FIS, which is situated on the continuum between IS and DS. FIS also gives the reporter greater leeway to insert his or her own voice.

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Activity 4

Wilkinson gave a mini-lecture on CLA and the reporting of speech. This included explanations of FIS, a discussion of how speech can be framed to condition the reader's reception of it, and the influence exerted by the choice of the reporting verb. Students were also shown how scare quotes can be used to distance the reporter from somebody else's words. In addition, the practice of paraphrasing someone's words and attributing this reporter-constructed gist to the speaker was also demonstrated. For example, when F.W. de Klerk gave a weak apology for his government's policy of apartheid the *Weekly Mail and Guardian* ran a cover story with the headline 'FW says: "Ag, I'm sort of sorry" ' (23–29 August 1996).

Activity 5

Students were asked to identify DS, IS and FIS in a number of extracts about the ousting of Francois Pienaar from the South African rugby team. As in previous activities, texts pertaining to topical issues were selected so that students could see the relevance of the representation of speech to daily discursive practices. In addition, students were asked to consider the effects of the choice of DS, IS and FIS.

The selection of what to actually quote out of everything that was said was also illustrated. Here is what Mordt (one of the selectors) is said to have said, according to two different newspapers.

> 'You will have to speak to the coach, Andre Markgraaff', was all he would say when asked whether the decision to drop Pienaar was unanimous among the three selectors. (*Star*, 16 October, 1996)

> In the wake of the Pienaar axing Mordt summed it up better than anyone else. 'The coach gets what he wants,' was his cryptic comment. And while it would be criminal to put words into Mordt's mouth, it must be added that the coach will probably get what he deserves. (*Weekly Mail and Guardian*, 18 October 1996)

The *Weekly Mail and Guardian* text is also a good example of how framing works. The reader is told to respect Mordt's summing up. The reporter also decodes Mordt's comment and puts words into his mouth, even while denying that he is doing so.

Activity 6

The students were asked to analyse the use of DS, IS and FIS in the text in Fig. 1, take from the *Saturday Star*, 24 August 1996. By this stage we expected students to be capable of the following insights relating to speech reporting which we have summarised in Table I. We have not commented on other linguistic features which work to position the text.

Activity 7

Having worked together with Wilkinson on this text, students were invited to find their own texts to analyse. All the students were able to find texts which illustrated a variety of speech reporting. They were also able to distinguish between DS, IS and FIS. Many, but not all, of the students were able to provide some analytic interpret-

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ation. With hindsight, we believe that a checklist of analytic questions would have been helpful. The list could have included sets of questions such as

(1) *Who speaks?*
Who is quoted in DS?
Who is quoted in IS?
Who is quoted in FIS?
Why?
(2) *Frequency and prominence of the speakers' voices*
Who is quoted first?
Who is quoted last?
Who is quoted the most?
Why?
(3) *Silence?*
Who is not quoted who might have been?
(4) *Accuracy of the speech representation*
Is it possible that someone has been misquoted?
(5) *Effect of reporting verbs*
What reporting verbs have been used?
What effects do they have?
(6) *Scare quotes*
Are there any scare quotes?
What effect does their use have?

Activity 8

Wilkinson recorded and transcribed a talk show programme on the topic of Rave culture. Students were then divided into six groups, with four students per group in order to write a report of the show. In three groups students were asked to background the issues of drugs, parental involvement and commercialism. In the other three groups students were asked to foreground these. Both groups had to rely on the same transcript, and the exercise demonstrated clearly how the position different students were developing led them to use quotes from the transcript in different ways.

The Results of the Intervention

Following the eight activities students were again asked to fill in the questionnaire and to re do the original text analysis.

Students showed that they were beginning to grasp the concepts which underpinned the programme of activities. This is how they expressed this understanding of speech reporting.

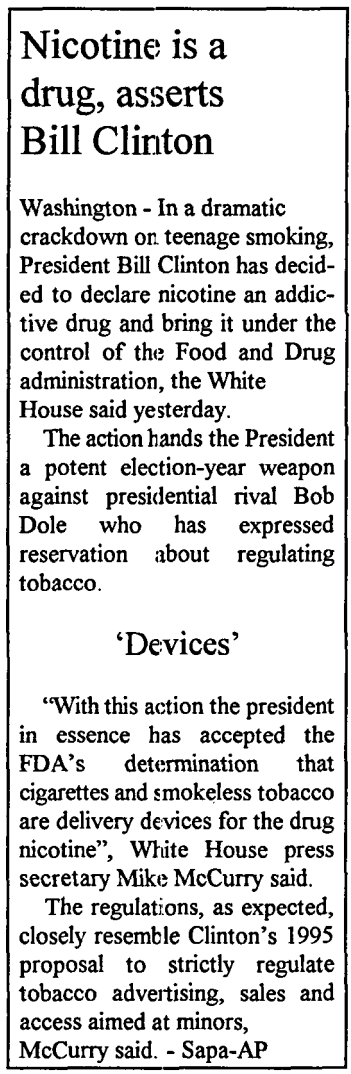
- It is reporting speech from a third person point of view.
- This is when the words spoken are not reproduced exactly but the gist of the speaker is given.
- It is a report on what someone had said ... often in the reporter's own voice.

They also showed a grasp of the new concept of FIS

- This is when direct speech and indirect speech has something missing which means it is neither one of these.

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Nicotine is a drug, asserts Bill Clinton

Washington - In a dramatic crackdown on teenage smoking, President Bill Clinton has decided to declare nicotine an addictive drug and bring it under the control of the Food and Drug administration, the White House said yesterday.

The action hands the President a potent election-year weapon against presidential rival Bob Dole who has expressed reservation about regulating tobacco.

'Devices'

"With this action the president in essence has accepted the FDA's determination that cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are delivery devices for the drug nicotine", White House press secretary Mike McCurry said.

The regulations, as expected, closely resemble Clinton's 1995 proposal to strictly regulate tobacco advertising, sales and access aimed at minors, McCurry said. - Sapa-AP

FIG. 1.

- This is when a person is quoted without quotation marks, leaving room for the writer to expand and add his own opinion.
- This is what reporters usually allow you to think the reporter said but ... it can change the whole meaning.

It is interesting to note that despite the recency of their experience of the programme there was only a fair improvement in students' knowledge of the rules. We are not sure how to interpret this finding, as students made strong claims for how they felt their own reading and writing practices had been affected by what they had done. (See questions 8–11 in the Questionnaire.)

- I will be more aware as to how the writer is trying to influence what I think.

TABLE I.

Text	Analysis
Nicotine is a drug, asserts Bill Clinton	FIS, which is close to DS, is used. The strong reporting verb, 'asserts', suggests power. Does Clinton actually say this? It is not clear.
Washington—In a dramatic crackdown on teenage smoking	The reporter frames this with the word 'dramatic'. This suggests that the announcement is unexpected and sensational.
President Bill Clinton has decided to declare nicotine an addictive drug and bring it under the control of the Food and Drug administration, the White House said yesterday.	The speaker is framed by his title of rank. Has he actually made this declaration or just decided to do so? 'Declare' is a strong reporting verb. This whole sentence is in FIS and is attributed to the White House, not to the President.
The action hands the President a potent election-year weapon against	These are the reporter's words which frame the declaration as both 'potent' and a 'weapon'.
Presidential rival Bob Dole	Dole is named in terms of his relation to Clinton, not as the leader of the Republican party.
Who has expressed reservations about regulating tobacco	FIS is used to report the gist of Dole's position. No actual words are reported. It is not in fact clear whether or not he said anything at all. The use of 'expressed' is used to suggest that speech is being reported. It is a neutral reporting word like 'said'. The opposition is not quoted directly. The boundary between what Dole actually said and his generally assumed position is unclear.
'Devices'	Scare quotes are used to signal that this is not the reporter's word.
'With this action the president has in essence accepted the FDA's determination that cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are delivery devices for the drug nicotine', White House press secretary Mike McCurry said.	This is the DS of a spokesperson for Clinton. This puts the quote at one remove from the President, in case there is a negative reaction.
The regulations, as expected, closely resemble Clinton's *1995 proposal* to strictly regulate tobacco advertising, sales and access aimed at *minors* McCurry said.	This is FIS and it is difficult to separate the reporter's voice from that of McCurry. Clinton's representative speaks first, last and most. His voice is given the floor by the reporter. The pro-tobacco voice is silenced in the report

- I will look carefully at what I read, who is quoted directly and indirectly.
- Now we will question whose side this is on and vice versa.
- You will question the validity of the indirect speech and the free indirect statements and ask yourself whether the reporting verb alters your opinion.

In answer to question 19 (How do you think DS and IS should be taught?) students commented favourably on the methods used in this programme.

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- The same way that you taught us.
- The way we have just studied it is best.

In response to a new question asking them what they had learnt overall, students in general said that they had learnt the rules, learnt them for a real purpose and that they were aware of how a text positions a reader. In particular, one student maintained that DS, IS and FIS 'can alter one's thoughts and point of view' and another said that s/he had learnt

> how to apply DS, IS and FIS onto today's world and how to realise that we can teach ourselves if we are pointed in the right direction.

In examining students' text analyses we noted a marked improvement in their ability to read reported speech critically, the second time around. Many more students could now identify and interpret the use of DS, IS and FIS. They were able to give textual evidence of the reporter's voice intruding and of how the quantity of speech reported was used to favour a particular side in the dispute reported in the text. They were also able to show some understanding etc. of the role of sequencing in speech representation and could give examples of one speech undermining another.

While we do not wish to claim that every student achieved full understanding of speech reporting as demonstrated in both their ability to read (text analysis) and to write (Activity 8), there was sufficient difference in enough students for us to believe that it is possible to teach DS, IS and FIS in such a way that students understand the meaning potential of these linguistic signifiers and their effects in the world outside the classroom. We have, of course, selected those student quotations which demonstrate this.

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