Syposium

The Conversation Frame:
Forms and Functions of Fictive Interaction
Co-organizers: Todd Oakley, Esther Pascual, Sergeiy Sandler

Case Western Reserve University, 2-3April 2015

[http://cognitivescience.case.edu/colloquia/]

Thurs April 2: (9am-3pm: CogSci Forum)

- 9:00 - 9:10: Welcoming words – Esther Pascual

- 9:10 - 10:00 – Esther Pascual
        "Fictive interaction and the conversation frame: An overview"

- 10:00 - 10:50 – Ana Margarida Abrantes
        "Fictive interaction and gesture"

- 10:50 - 11:10 – Coffee break

- 11:10 - 12:00 – Stef Spronck
        "Evidential fictive interaction: Find the missing persons (based on examples
        from Russian and Ungarinyin)"

12:00 - 12:50 – Gusztav Demeter
        "On discourse-motivated 'sorries': Fictive apologies in English, Hungarian,
        and Romanian"

- 12:50 - 3:00pm – Lunch break

- 3:00 -3:50 pm – Paula Rebelo Fonseca and Pilar Alonso Rodríguez
        "Fictive Interaction in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*"

- 3:50 - 4:40 pm – Sergeiy Sandler
        "'In the beginning there was conversation': Fictive interaction in the Hebrew
        bible"

- 4:40 - 5:00 pm – Coffee break

- 5:00 - 5:50pm – General discussion
                Moderator: Mingjian (Wesley) Xiang

- 7:00 pm. – Dinner

<u>Fri April 3</u>: Crawford 618

- 9:00 - 9:50 – Linshuang Yao

    "Emoting via fictive interaction: The Chinese way in judicial procedures"

- 9:50 - 10:40 – Christine Versluis

    "'Ta-daa!': The fictive cartoon. How to tell a story when you are aphasic"

- 10:40 -11:00 – Coffee break

- 11:00 -11:50 – Mark Turner and Cristóbal Pagán Cánovas

     "Generic integration templates for fictive communication"

- 11:50 - 12:40 – Maria Josep Jarque & Esther Pascual

    "Pragmaticalization of fictive questions to focus constructions in Catalan Sign Language"

- 12:40 – 2:40 pm – Lunch break

- 2:40 – 3:30 pm– Minjian Xiang

    "Who's reading: Rhetorical questions as intersubjective mixed viewpoint constructions in an Old Chinese text"

- 3:30-4:20 pm. – Aline Dornelas and Esther Pascual

    "Fictive reported speech as communicative strategy by autistic and typically developing children"

- 4:20-4:40 pm – Coffee break

- 4:40-5:30 pm. - Closing discussion:

    Discussant: Todd Oakley, Moderator: Sergeiy Sandler

- 7:00 pm. – Dinner

Abstracts

Fictive interaction and the conversation frame: An overview

Esther Pascual

In this talk I will define the notion of *fictive interaction* as the use of the conversation frame in order to structure cognition, discourse, and grammar (Pascual 2002, 2006b, 2014). I discuss how thought (e.g. talking to oneself) and the conceptualization of experience (e.g. "A good walk is the *answer* to headache") are partly modeled by the pattern of conversation, and present the kinds of fictive interaction for different functions and on different levels: (i) the discourse (e.g. overt monologues structured as dialogues), and (ii) the language system and its use, at different grammatical levels: (iii) the inter-sentence ("*Any questions? Call us*"); (iv) the sentence ("*Why bother?"*); (v) the clause ("They felt, *augh!*"); (vi) the phrase ("the attitude of *yes, I can*"); (vii) the word ("*forget-me-not*s"); and (viii) the morpheme ("*Idontknow*sexual").

I also provide a list of its defining characteristics (conversational features, non-actual and non-token interpretation, metonymy), and explain what makes this ubiquitous phenomenon, widespread across languages, discourse genres, and sociolinguistic groups, worth studying, and what its theoretical implications are. In the talk I will provide an overview of earlier work on fictive interaction by myself and others, and briefly refer to talks to be presented at the workshop.

Fictive interaction and gesture

Ana Margarida Abrantes

This presentation starts from two departing observations. On the one hand work on fictive interaction in European Portuguese is relatively scarce and a systematic account of constructions of fictive interaction at various levels of linguistic description is yet to be undertaken. On the other hand, embedded interactions aimed at representing non-interactive or non-factive referents are conveyed not only by linguistic constructions, but likewise by gesture, entailing a range of proxemic behaviours: from dynamic bodily movements to voice pitch and tone. There is thus a

bodily dimension of fictive interaction, which is manifested in communicative gesture. This gestural modality involved in fictive interaction can encode a range of information. Gesture may encode a metonymic reference to the speaker, a differentiation of viewpoint or a distinction of time. Moreover, gesture renders more visible the enactment of an interaction.

One hypothesis is that fictive interaction is indicative of an underlying theatrical mode of thought and conceptualization. The gestural dimension contributes to the definition and differentiation of the shared imaginary space in which the interaction exists and unfolds, as embedded in the actual interaction. Gesture allows interlocutors to keep track of actual and invoked interactional spaces, as well as of the complex enunciation structure of embedding and embedded exchanges.

To illustrate these hypotheses, some examples of fictive interaction from different TV genres (US and Portugal) will be analyzed and compared for the effects they produce in the actual interaction and the process of meaning construction.

On discourse-motivated 'sorries': Fictive apologies in English, Hungarian, and Romanian
Gusztav Demeter

Traditional approaches to the study of conversation implied that all participants are present in the interaction. Such approaches viewed the conversation as face-to-face interaction (Goffman 1959) based on turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), with participants speaking one at a time. However, cognitive approaches to discourse have shown that participants are not always actual, but can also be virtual (Langacker 1999), and can therefore participate in fictive interactions (Pascual 2002, 2006). In line with such approaches, speech acts can also occur in fictive interactions as fictive speech acts (Pascual 2002; Demeter 2011; Pascual 2014). This presentation discusses the forms and functions of fictive apologies as a manifestation of fictive interaction with examples from three languages: English, Hungarian, and Romanian.

The analysis is carried out from a usage-based perspective with examples from several corpora containing both spoken and written discourse. In terms of form, fictive apologies are instantiations of a construction containing an explicit expression of apology and a noun of address, which marks the fictive interaction in the

conversation frame and a role shift from bystander or audience to addressee. To illustrate the phenomenon of a fictive apology, consider this example from an editorial on environmental issues published before a world climate conference in 2009: "Hansen and his team have shown that we could actually burn most of the oil in our wells (but sorry Canada, not the tar sands)" (Davies 2008). In this example, the apology is addressed to Canada, which is not an actual participant in the conversation between the writer and the reader, but rather a fictive one. In turn, the reader becomes what Goffman (1963) termed a bystander. Both the pragmatic offense and the apology are therefore fictive, as well. Fictive apologies perform multiple functions, such as disagreement, irony, refusal, accusation, humorous insult, and empathy. This presentation reports on the first extended study of fictive apologies that contributes to a more integrated account of the conversation frame.

Fictive Interaction in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*

Paula Rebelo Fonseca and Pilar Alonso Rodríguez

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart is an American late night satirical news program that uses a number discourse conventions to mock political actors and obtain a humorous reaction from the audience (Baym 2005). In this paper, we analyze how the host widely uses a cognitive strategy to do this, *fictive interaction* (Pascual 2002, 2006) within a Cognitive Linguistics perspective (Fauconnier and Turner 1998). The episode about the first debate of the 2012 US presidential election was chosen due to the numerous fictive interactions that occur between Jon Stewart and President Barack Obama. This fictivity is used to present the host's opinions, beliefs and perspectives camouflaged in humor in order to show viewers that the President could and should have done better.

Evidential fictive interaction: Find the missing persons (based on examples from Russian and Ungarinyin)

Stef Spronck

Cross-linguistically, direct speech constructions show a remarkable range of functions. In some languages these constructions conventionalise to express meanings that lie far beyond that of attributing speech to some discourse entity, marking, e.g. the beginning of some event, causation or future tense. In this paper I argue, however, that the range of meanings conventionalised direct speech constructions may exhibit in the languages of the world is not boundless and that they share one fundamental property: they necessarily index some type of discourse entity.

Extending Roman Jakobson's schematic representation of verbal categories, I present a framework within which these discourse entities can be made explicit. Based on examples of sentential fictive interaction in Russian and the Australian Aboriginal language Ungarinyin, both of a subtype that I label 'evidential fictive interaction', I illustrate the similarities and differences between direct speech constructions in the two languages within the proposed framework.

I also suggest that the representation of direct speech constructions put forward in this paper provides a grammatical framework that may be used to further analyse and classify examples of sentential fictive interaction cross-linguistically.

'In the beginning there was conversation': Fictive interaction in the Hebrew bible

Sergeiy Sandler

Modern public discourse and the speech of contemporary youth appear to be particularly 'conversational', regularly using interactional structures such as the *like* construction ("It was like *Why not?*") (Fairclough 1994; Streeck 2002). While acknowledging that some specific conversational constructions may be novel or occur more frequently in certain contexts, I suggest that the use of the basic frame of the conversation in order to structure language and discourse is overarching and widespread across genres and sociolinguistic groups (Pascual 2006, 2014).

To explore this, I study an ancient and extremely influential religious text, the Hebrew bible. The Hebrew bible shows a highly conversational structure, in the vast

occurrence of: (i) non-information seeking questions; (ii) the verbal root ' אמר ' (*amar*), 'to say'; and (iii) direct rather than indirect speech (Rendsburg 1990; Miller 2003). I will discuss examples of such frequent structures as: (i) 'conversations' with one's mind or parts of one's body (e.g. "God <u>said</u> to his heart,…"); and (ii) the presentation of non-reported speech—ascribed to God, a person or group, and even an action—in order to introduce actual or putative intentions, hopes, motives, or states of affairs (e.g. "Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, to <u>say</u> *let the Hebrews hear*", 1Sam 13:3). Special emphasis will be laid on the grammaticalized form of the complementizer לאמר (*lemor*), from the infinitive of the speaking verb אמר (*amar*) (Miller 2003). This complementizer introduces what is in effect the *meaning* of a particular action, presented through direct speech (e.g. "And the officers […] were beaten to say [*lemor*] *Wherefore have ye not…?*", Exod 5:14).

Biblical Hebrew, so I shall argue, exemplifies a cultural model of meaning that has been neglected in most philosophical and linguistic accounts of meaning, a model that connects meaning with making an utterance, a model that does not seek to reduce linguistic meaning to allegedly "simpler" notions, but instead considers a communicative linguistic act as the basic paradigm and model for meaningfulness in general.

Emoting via Fictive Interaction: The Chinese Way in Judicial Procedures
Linshuang Yao

Based on ethnographic data and the study of case files from 9 cases, this study deals with fictive interaction used to express and arouse emotions in criminal procedures in mainland China. We examine forms and functions of different fictive interaction instances in different legal settings   used by people with different identities. The focus is on the use of the conversation frame in: (i) fictive conversations with silent individuals in and outside the courtroom; (ii) fictive enunciation defining non-conversational entities or processes; and (iii) the "speech" of material evidence, the deceased victim, or her corpse.

Research results reveal that suspects, defendants and witnesses most frequently used fictive conversation with the silent individuals in monologues to express or arouse emotion for their own benefits. Procurators allow the material evidence to

speak, and the living to speak for the deceased victim, but they do not do that in formal settings. None of the investigators or the judges used FI strategies in our data.

We conclude that: (i) The majority of the linguistic forms of fictive interaction may be used as emotional strategies to serve people's goals by different people in different settings. (ii) its frequency of occurrence, type and linguistic form depends not only on features of Chinese language, but also on contextual factors, namely: (i) the factual interactional structure (question-answer session or free narration phase), (ii) the mode of communication (oral/written), and (iii) individual difference in terms of identity and emotional quotient. Interlocutors follow a goal oriented conceptual integration process with the goal as the overarching guiding principle, and linguistic, cultural and judicial characteristics as different elements in the ground space to be foregrounded or filtered.

FRIDAY APRIL 3RD

'Ta-daa!": The fictive comic. Imaginative storytelling with aphasia.

Christine Versluis

Ron (age 31) is an aphasic speaker. Since he had a stroke his capacity to use language is limited. Particularly he has a slow rate of speech, word-finding difficulties, and his utterances lack grammatical elaboration and function words. I present Ron's personal story about the event of his stroke, which shows a highly strategic use of interactive structure. I explore the assumption that his story is actually structured like a comic with FI-structures setting up a sequence of fictive frames. This strategy enables Ron to represent an evaluative perspective and conceptualize the past event on a fairly abstract level despite his aphasic condition.

Generic integration templates for fictive communication
Mark Turner and Cristóbal Pagán Cánovas

In this talk we seek to show that the human mind can create blended discourse, or fictive communication, because it is able to do advanced conceptual blending. Thanks to advanced blending, human beings can integrate unrelated experiences and concepts into new mental wholes with novel properties. We analyze how instances of fictive

communication are made possible by generic templates for conceptual blending. Fictive communication is a blending pattern combining several generic templates, most of which were not originated in relation to discourse. Fictive communication inherits the whole structure of fictive interaction, which involves fictivity, compression patterns, and an interaction frame that includes counterfactuality. Complex, classic blended joint attention is added, and the interaction frame selected is the one for communication.

Pragmaticalization of fictive questions to focus constructions in Catalan Sign Language

Maria Josep Jarque & Esther Pascual

This paper deals with the multifunctional use of the question-answer sequence, which constitutes a prototypical conversational and intersubjective structure, in Catalan Sign Language. In a large number of languages, spoken and signed, polar and content questions, and their subsequent answers, is used for the expression of non-information-seeking functions, namely topicality, conditionality, focus, connection, and relativization. Specifically, we examine fictive questions to express focus in own-data from informational and opinion TV and vlogs addressed to the Catalan Sign Language community and produced by native signers. The analysis shows that this sequence has been grammaticalized and constitutes the unmarked or by-default option to encode these linguistic functions. We argue that the pattern is a highly schematic symbolic unit and that the specific linguistic constructions, which are instances of fictive interaction, form a complex network.

Who's reading? Rhetorical questions as intersubjective mixed viewpoint constructions in an Old Chinese Text

Mingjian Xiang

This paper deals with rhetorical questions in the entire *Zhuangzi*. This text is highly interactionally structured, with a large number of non-information seeking questions, such as rhetorical questions used for rhetorical purposes (Xiang & Pascual 2014). Rhetorical questions have interrogative syntax, but the illocutionary force of a strong

assertion of the opposite polarity from what is presented as being 'asked' (Sadock 1974; Han 2002). As in English, yes-no questions in Classical Chinese can be used as rhetorical questions in certain contexts, lacking grammatical marking and thus being entirely context-dependent. Moreover, there are eight different grammatical indicators (particles, pronouns and lexical items) of rhetorical question usage in Old Chinese texts (Pulleyblank 1995). These are distinguished according to the positive and/or negative polarity of the answer expected. For instance, they may also indicate whether the rhetorical question in general appear with an adjective or is used adverbially (e.g. "You haven't had it in yourself yet, *how can you expect to care for the behaviors of a tyrant?*", ch. 4 Wang 1999: 49) or whether the rhetorical question is used to present either a comment (e.g. "'But that's all that can be said for it. *How would you succeed in making a new man of him?*", ch. 4 Graham [1981] 2001: 68) or a comparison (e.g. "Even the sages cannot resist the temptations of gains and fames; so *how can you?*', ch. 2 Wang 1999: 51).

My corpus search suggests that there are 405 instances of rhetorical questions in the entirely *Zhuangzi* text (Xiang & Pascual 2014).These questions should produce either affirmative or negative answers in the reader's mind, thereby involving a fictive type of interaction with the addressee (cf. Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2014). I regard rhetorical questions as intersubjective constructions (Verhagen 2005, 2008), which do not just involve a conceptual blend of question and assertion but also a viewpoint blend (Dancygier & Sweetser 2012) of the assumed reader's perspective and that of the writer's. Moreover, there are also multiple viewpoint blending chains in *Zhuangzi* when a rhetorical question is produced by a character in the text (e.g. a talking shrine oak tree), which is meant to be conceptually integrated with the writer (Xiang forth.).

Fictive reported speech as communicative strategy by autistic and typically developing children

Aline Dornelas and Esther Pascual

An important feature of language in Autistic Spectrum Disorder is echolalia, consisting of the literal repetition of previously produced speech. Studies have characterized echolalia as a functional adaptive strategy in autism (see Saad & Goldfeld 2009 for a review). However, little is known about the communicative functions of echolalia in autistic conversation, as only few qualitative studies have

been carried out to date. We understand functional echolalia as a communicative strategy involving fictive interaction, that is, the use of face-to-face conversation as a frame to structure cognition, discourse and language (Pascual 2002, 2006). Autistic children mostly use literal quotations as fictive interaction constructions. They also use non-literal fictive reported speech, such as paraphrases and even creative speech, as a communicative strategy. In a previous study on the fictive use of literal speech by Brazilian children with autism (Dornelas & Pascual, forth.), we showed that fictive reported speech seems to be divided into three types, depending on the origin of the direct speech constituent:

(i)   Social communicative event: e.g. 'Desculpa' [*Pardon me*] (to evoke a prior scenario when the speaking child was accidentally hurt by the therapist, rather than the child causing the hitting);

(ii)   Cultural knowledge: e.g. 'Representa a sua voz, é a sua vez!' [*It represents your voice, it's your time!*] (to refer to a political party);

(iii)   Specific prior interaction: e.g. 'Você quer fugir Branca de Neve?' [*Do you want to run away Snow White?*] (paraphrasing the hunter character's speech in the Snow White movie as a means to refer to him).

The present study compares the use of fictive interaction constructions by Brazilian children with autism and typically developing children. To this aim, we collected a 23-hour audio-visual corpus of naturalistic conversations, of five children with autism (from 4 to 12 years of age), and a control group of five typically developing children (matching chronological ages) in semi-spontaneous interactions with adults.

Both groups produced creative (i.e. entirely constructed) as well as non-creative (i.e. literal) direct speech used fictively. Autistic children mostly used non-creative instances and the control group produced more creative fictive interaction instances. In total, the autistic children group produced almost twice as many fictive reported speeches than the control group. The qualitative analysis shows that while autistic children use this type of reported speech as a fundamental communicative strategy to handle their language difficulties in ordinary conversation, typically developing children use fictive interaction as a pragmatic option, in order to create humor, make discourse more interesting or clear, or as a means to express complex mental states.