

21. Fictive interaction.

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1. Introduction

Cognitive Linguistics rests on the assumption that language is the result of overall cognitive processes, and reflects both human cognition and our most basic experiences. This view originally led to the almost exclusive focus on our sensorimotor life, within an understanding of our body as a solitary biological organism moving in space (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999, Talmy [1996] 2000). Critical as embodiment certainly is to our conceptualization of experience and language, such an approach should not undermine the role of social interaction as an essential and unavoidable aspect of human existence: we are born and raised into a world of conversational participants, who are – throughout our lives – an intricate part of our direct everyday environment. Indeed, interaction is the first communicative form mastered by human babies (Trevarthen 1979), children acquire language in conversation (Bruner 1983, E. Clark 2003), and language as a system emerged as an oral means of face-to-face communication and has been used exclusively in sequential interaction for most of its history. Critically, conversation is also the canonical form of verbal communication (H.H. Clark 1996), probably present in all languages and cultures (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), and is thus likely a fundamental part of what makes us human (Levinson 2006). Conversation is furthermore the context in which language becomes meaningful, both for children (E. V. Clark 2003) and for

adults (Bakhtin [1979] 1986, Goodwin 1995). If we assume that language mirrors our most basic human experiences, it is not far-fetched to hypothesize that the structure of language reflects its interactional dimension, an idea that is in fact far from new (Voloshinov [1929] 1986, Vygotsky [1934] 1962, Bakhtin [1975] 1981). A substantial amount of work within Cognitive Linguistics has recently extended the original idea of language as modelled by both cognition and physical and physiological experience to cover the social and communicative dimensions as factors that also frame grammar (Pascual 2002, Verhagen 2005, Pascual 2006b, 2014) as well as semiotics (P. Aa. Brandt 2004, Zlatev 2007, Zlatev et al. 2008, Sinha 2009, Oakley 2009, 2014).

In this chapter we will try to show how Talmy's ([1996] 2000) notion of fictivity, an ontological realm between reality and fiction, but which appears fundamental in the conceptualization of both the real and the unreal, can also be communicative in nature (Pascual 2006b). Specifically, we present the premise that there is a conversational basis for language, which serves to partly structure cognition, discourse, and grammar. Stemming from this tenet, we discuss the notion of *fictive interaction* or "FI" (Pascual 2002, 2006b, 2014), namely the use of the template of face-to-face interaction as a cognitive domain that partially models: (i) thought (e.g. talking to oneself); (ii) the conceptualization of experience (e.g. "A long walk is the answer to headache"); (iii) discourse organization (e.g. monologues structured as dialogues, Pascual 2006a, Xiang and Pascual 2016); and (iv) the language system and its use (e.g. rhetorical questions).

In language, fictive interaction may occur at different levels: (i) the inter-sentence (e.g. "*Any questions? Call us*"); (ii) the sentence (Langacker's 1999 "virtual speech acts" e.g. "*Why bother?*"); (iii) the clause (e.g. "They felt, *Oh no!*"); (iv) the phrase (e.g. "the attitude of *yes, I can do it*"); (v) the word (e.g. "*forget-me-nots*"); and in some languages even (vi) the morpheme

(e.g. direct speech infix marking future tense in Aikanã, van der Voort 2013, 2016, see section 4.1).

2. The conversational conceptualization of reality

Various scholars have postulated that the structure of thought mirrors the turn-taking pattern of ordinary intersubjective conversation (cf. Voloshinov [1929] 1986, Vygotsky [1934] 1962, Bakhtin [1975] 1981; see overview in Melser 2004). We talk to ourselves as well as to imaginary friends, animals, or inanimate entities, and often speak about our thoughts and opinions in terms of an inner dialogue or argument between different versions of ourselves (Pang 2005). Similarly, the frame of the conversation may model the conceptualization of experience as a non-actual kind of interaction (Cooren 2010, 2012, Cooren and Sandler 2014). We commonly construe voting as speaking (Coulson and Oakley 2006); an artwork as ‘interacting’ with its artist or viewers (Sullivan 2009, 2016); and evidence as ‘telling’ something to those who draw the inference (Coulson and Pascual 2006, Pascual 2008a, 2008b). Consider this example about a piece of scientific evidence:

(1) I, strongly, strongly, believe that there was a period before the Big Bang, that the singularity was eliminated . . . To me the singularity is not an indication that there was a first moment of time, but that general relativity is an incomplete theory. It’s general relativity shouting at us,

screaming at us, *I am not the end, there is more to understand*. (Prof. Smolen, BBC Horizon, documentary ‘What Happened Before The Big Bang’, 2015, 22:36 min.)¹

Theories may thus be conceptualized as conversational participants, fictively telling scholars where to look next. Moreover, the human body may not just be a source domain for a great number of conceptual metaphors (see e.g. Gibbs, this volume), but it may also be a target domain, construed as a conversational partner, as in these common expressions in Catalan:

(2) a. El cos diu prou.

Lit. ‘The/My/Your body says stop.

‘X [the owner of the ‘speaking’ body] is exhausted.’

b. Córrer/marxar comes ajudeu-me.

Lit. ‘to run/leave legs, help me’

‘to run away very quickly and desperately’

c. Menjar a cor què vols, cor què desitges.

Lit. ‘to eat at heart, what do you want[?], heart, what do you wish[?]’

‘to eat as much as one wants/voraciously/very eagerly/indulgently’

Here, a given physical state (fatigue) or action (running and eating fast) is presented by either one’s body demonstrating that state through an order to bring it to a halt in (2a) or by addressing a body part associated with the action referred to with an imperative – to one’s legs for running in (2b) or a question – to one’s heart for willingness to eat in (2c).

¹ Thanks to Sergey Sandler for drawing our attention to this example.

Even the unequivocally physical experience of dance is typically construed and spoken about in communicative terms, as “a conversation between body and soul,” a “dialogue between dancers,” or a means to “tell a story” to an audience. Amateur as well as professional dancers and choreographers often define dance as “physical dialogue” or “dialogue of movement,” which uses “corporeal body languages and vocabularies,” “messages” consisting of “words,” used more or less “eloquently” to produce “questions,” “responses”, or “contradictions” (Pascual and Brandt 2015). In this case, the socio-communicative domain conceptually structures the physical domain (dance as conversation versus conversation as dance). The very idea of conversation being so basic to human existence as to model physical experiences challenges the prevailing paradigm in Cognitive Linguistics, according to which the physical domain is the constitutional ground for the social, mental, and communicative domains (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sweetser 1990). The speech-act domain is at least as central to cognition (and thus the conceptualization of experience, language, and language use) as the physical and epistemic domains (see also P. Aa. Brandt 2004, Oakley 2009, 2014, Kövecses 2015).

3. Fictive interaction as discourse structuring device

Let us begin by considering this example from Al Gore’s documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* (Turner 2010: 110):

(3) Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, “*What were our parents thinking? Why didn’t they wake up when they had the chance?*” We have to hear that question from them now.

In this example, Gore's argument is presented through the image of yet to be born generations in collective excoriation in the form of a rhetorical question. The audience is construed as coerced bystanders of this self-flagellation. Gore's imagined dialogue between future and present generations is but one of innumerable examples of fictive interaction as a discursive strategy. It is a prevailing technique across cultures and historical time, from the ancient Chinese text Zhuangzi (4th c. B.C), in which fictional characters, animals, nature, and even abstract concepts engage in philosophical debates (Xiang 2016), to Plato's dialogues (4th c. B.C), such as Xenophon's conversations with Socrates (Bakhtin [1975] 1981, [1979] 1986), not to mention Aesop's fables, and many passages from the Hebrew Bible.

Intersubjective structures such as fictive questions followed by their corresponding answers may also be used to organize a string of discourse. Take this example from Zhuangzi (see also Xiang and Pascual 2016).

(4) 道行之而成，物谓之而然。恶乎然？然于然。恶乎不然？不然于不然。物固有所然，物固有所可。无物不然，无物不可。

'Dao operates, and the given results follow; things receive names and are what they are. *Why are they so?* They are said to be so! *Why are they not so?* They are said to be not so! Things are so by themselves and have possibilities by themselves.' (Lin translation, 1942)²

² Thanks to Mingjan Wesley Xiang for this example.

In (4) the author takes the role of both questioner and answerer, thereby voicing and responding to doubts or objections that may arise in the mind of potential readers, who may be vastly distant in time and space. Such dialogic structures, for which (4) epitomizes their use as a general argumentative strategy, are found in a large number of other influential ancient texts in different languages, such as the Bible (Miller [1996] 2003), the Quran (Badarneh 2003), the Soliloquies by Augustine of Hippo (cf. Bakhtin [1963] 1984), and Medieval witchcraft pamphlets (Chaemsaitong 2013, 2016). Non-genuine question-answer pairs and similar interactional structures further appear to be often used to structure more recent written texts and oral monologues, such as contemporary philosophical discourse (L. Brandt 2008, 2013, Oakley 2009: ch 3; Turner 2010); modern public discourse (Fairclough 1994, Vis, Sanders, and Sporren 2012); classroom discourse (L. Brandt 2008, Oakley 2009: ch 3, Oakley and P.Aa. Brandt 2009); and legal argumentation (Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2014, Chaemsaitong 2014, 2015, Oakley and Tobin 2014). In sum, the pervasive presence of dialogism in written as well as oral communication across time, culture, and languages suggests that some normative model of turn-taking is itself a generalized mental operation on a par with bodily experience.

3.1. Unmarked or obligatory fictive question-answer pairs

English fictive question-answer pairs may express topicalization (Li and Thompson 1976), as well as focus or conditionality (see overview in Pascual 2014: ch. 2). Examples are:

(5) a. Ages 6 to 12? I'm a killer. (President Obama, *Rolling Stone* interview, 25 October 2012)

b. ...*You want me to go to the Waverly ballroom? ... Do you know what I'll get for it? I'll get heartache, that's what I'll get! I'll get a **big night** of heartache!* (*Marty*, teleplay by Paddy Chayefsky, 1953)

c. *You have enemies?* Good. That means you've stood up for something in your life (quote from Winston Churchill)

We find similar correlation of interrogative and topic, as in (5a), focus, as in (5b), and conditionals, as in (5c), in many other Indo-European languages, as well in Mandarin Chinese and Korean. More interestingly, fictive question-answer pairs seem to be even the default or the only grammatical means to express these meanings in some languages without a written code (Pascual 2014: ch. 2), like the Papuan language Hua (Haiman 1978). It seems that in a large number of unrelated signed languages (which lack a written code but are generally used by literate signers), a question-answer scenario is also sufficiently entrenched as a representational resource for managing a wide range of other speech acts, thereby modelling information structure (Jarque 2016). Indeed, signed languages tend to use a non-actual interrogative mood as the most unmarked structure for topicalization, focalization, conditionality, connectivity, and relativization (Jarque 2016).

A similar pattern as the one used by signed languages for relativization (see Jarque 2016), can also be observed in Latin (Lehmann 2008: 9):

(6) *Cave tu idem faxis alii quod servi solent!*

beware you.NOM.SG ACC.SG.N:same do:PRF.SBJ:2SG other:NOM.PL REL:ACC.SG.N
slave:NOM.PL use:3PL

Lit. ‘Don’t you do the same, *what do others do?*’

‘Don’t you do the same that the other slaves tend to do!’

In (6), the wh-interrogative “*idem faxis alii*” (‘*what do others do?*’) constitutes a restrictive relative clause, indicating that the canonical declarative relative clause is modeled by an underlying question-answer structure. At the very least, this suggests that questions are not simple derivatives of declaratives (which was the basis of early transformational grammars). Rather, the unmarked question-answer structure of the above example suggests that the workings of a default interactional template between two persons with unequal access to shareable information comprises a conceptual primitive of language structure, use, and acquisition. It should be noted that there are similarities between wh-questions and relative clauses in more unrelated languages (see overview in Pascual 2014). In fact, interrogative markers are one of the most common sources for relative markers in the languages of the world (Heine and Kuteva 2002).

Qualitative research on language pathology offers further evidence for the claim that the frame of the conversation may be projected onto the ongoing discourse, thereby serving to structure it. It is for example not unusual for individuals suffering from Broca’s aphasia to use the question-answer template for topicalization, focalization, and conditionality (e.g. Beeke, Maxim, and Wilkinson 2007). Take this exchange between patient and researcher (Versluis and Kleppa [2008] 2016: 331):

(7) Patient: E::::h muito calo::r?

‘hmmm *very hot?*’

Interviewer: Mh!

Patient: À noite!

‘At night!’

Interviewer: Ah, tá. À noite faz muito calor, lá? Ah! Quando faz muito calor de dia, o senhor anda à noite?

‘All right. At night is it very hot there? Ah! When it is hot during the day, you walk at night?’

Patient: À noite.

‘At night.’

In this short piece of dialogue, the patient presents a conditional through a question-answer structure, as is clear in the interviewer’s paraphrase. Thus, when grammar and vocabulary fail, speakers with Broca’s aphasia tend to rely heavily on the scaffolding of face-of-face conversation, namely paralinguistic information as well as the interlocutor’s contributions, as compensatory strategy. Since speakers with Broca’s aphasia have their communicative competence intact (intonation, gesture, turn-taking), despite often severe grammar and vocabulary difficulties, they organize their discourse through the conversational frame, partly using the communicative performance of their interlocutors as part of their discourse.

3.2. Sentential fictive interaction

Fictive interaction is evident at the sentential level of speech acts (Langacker 1999), such as greetings, assertions and negations, apologies, commands, as well as in a range of instances typically analyzed under the aegis of politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987).

3.2.1. Fictive greetings

Conventional means of opening and closing encounters (the prototypical conversational feature) is a natural way of framing a situation that is not, in itself, an actual conversation.

Consider this popular 1957 song originally written by The Everly Brothers, which ranked 210th on Rolling Stone magazine's list of 'The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time':

(8) *Bye bye love / Bye bye happiness / Hello loneliness / I think I'm-a gonna cry-y*

Bye bye love / Bye bye sweet caress / Hello emptiness / I feel like I could die

Bye bye my love goodbye [...] Goodbye to romance that might have been . . . Bye bye love / Bye bye happiness / Hello loneliness / I think I'm-a gonna cry-y / Bye bye love / Bye bye sweet caress / Hello emptiness / I feel like I could die / Bye bye my love goodbye

Here, a romantic break-up and the heartache it entails is not presented in spatial terms as ego inhabiting a given container (being *in* versus *out* of love or a relationship) or as a journey from one state/space to another, but in interactional terms. Naturally, as opposed to the narrator's lover in "Bye bye my love, goodbye," caresses, romance, or inner feelings cannot be actual addressees of an interaction. That non-verbal entities can fictively greet as well as receive greetings, is illustrated by an ad from the Dutch travel agency D-reizen: "*July says hello! Say hello July and hello vacation*" ("Juli zegt hallo! Zeg hallo juli en hallo vakantie" in the original).

It should be pointed out that in different languages, greetings –as well as politeness markers (‘please,’ ‘thank you’), for that matter – are used fictively to express strong irritation, disagreement, or anger (Pascual 2014: 44), as in “*Hello! You play to win the game!*”

3.2.2. Fictive apologies

It is not uncommon for non-actual apologies to be addressed to inanimate entities, as in this newspaper headline on the astronomical demotion of Pluto from planet to planetoid:

(9) *So sorry, Pluto, you are not a real planet.* (www.nwitimes.com, 25 August 2006)

The journalist ‘apologizing’ to Pluto in (10) is naturally not deluded enough to think that a celestial body can have knowledge of and care about how inhabitants of another celestial body categorize it, let alone that it can factually engage in conversation. The fictive apology is merely a discourse strategy, which was apparently considered an effective and appealing means of presenting the news, since it appeared in slightly different versions in different media and blogs. As Demeter (2011, 2016) shows in two large corpus studies, fictive apologies are not only the work of humorous journalism (see also Pascual 2014: 43), but also occur in serious discourses, such as quality periodicals and parliamentary debates, and in as diverse languages as English, Romanian, and Hungarian.

3.3.3. Fictive affirmations/negations

Similar to the examples above, many non-conversational situations are often framed as “disagreeable” with one party negating the intentions of another, as in:

(10) I’m having a bad hair day; I tried to curl it this morning, and it just said “*No.*”

Consider also the text in the commemorative card from old Belgium Queen Fabiola’s Funeral that reads (in four languages):

(11) Always *say Yes to God*

This is an example of the subscript that often appears imbedded in an encouraging command and is frequently employed in argumentation and marketing in which deciding, taking a stand, or committing oneself to or against something is framed in terms of an implicit proposition to which one responds with a yes/no answer (Brandt and Pascual 2016).

3.2.4. Fictive commands

Yet another common occurrence of sentential FI is an apparent command to non-specific agents capable of inducing some affective state. Consider this headline from an advertorial encouraging travel lovers to continue flying despite recent terrorist attacks:

(12) *Take That, Terrorism! 7 Ways to Travel Without Fear* (YahooTravel, 20 November, 2015, <https://www.yahoo.com/travel/by-wendy-perrin-the-terrorist-attacks-in-paris-063849605.html>)

Here, the headline exclamation, a fictive enunciation addressed at terrorism in general (as opposed to some specific terrorist group) puts the reader in the position of being able to ‘tell terrorists off’. While it is commonplace to expect certain speech acts to change social reality through performatives with the proper illocutionary force, we can also fictively construe root actions and events as preventative or at least empowering. In this case, the proposed seven ‘ways to travel without fear’ result in a speech act with the illocutionary force of defying terrorism. Other fictive commands have become conventionalized, like the “Call me crazy/biased, but” construction (Pascual 2002: 180-182, 2014: 42).

Fictive commands, just as fictive apologies, greetings, assertions or negations, may also be used as head nouns or be embedded in a grammatical constituent, as in the “*Sorry I’m Not Sorry*” sweaters or t-shirts, brands like “*Tousle Me Softly*” products, Herbal Essences’ “*Hello Hydration*” collection, or its equivalent counterpart, the “*Bye Bye Dry*” skin protectant cream (cf. Brandt and Pascual 2016). This is the topic of the next section.

4. Fictive interaction as intra-sentential grammatical constituent

Direct speech may be used fictively as a means to express a large number of meanings, typically mental or emotional states (Pascual 2002, 2006b, 2014). Consider the attested examples in (13), from Mandarin, Polish, Hebrew, and Dutch:

(13) a. 看完保证让你大呼过瘾的影史最强科幻片

(<http://mt.sohu.com/20150723/n417393929.shtml>)

Lit. ‘The best Sci-fi movie in film history that surely will make you shout/say “(this is) so satisfying”’.³

b. Wszystko jest nie tak, człowiek boi się jej o cokolwiek zapytać, bo zaraz lodowe spojrzenie typu “jestem tobą rozczarowana”.

Lit. ‘Everything is wrong, you are afraid to ask about anything because you may immediately get the ice-cold look of the type “you disappoint me”.’ (Królak 2008: 93, 2016: 242)

c. כַּמּוּת [kamut]

Lit. *how-much/how-many-ness*’ [from ‘כמה’ [kama]: ‘how many’/‘how much’]
‘quantity’

d. Tien regels voor een ‘ja-maar’-vrij-leven

‘Ten rules for a ‘yes-but’-free-life’ (subtitle of the book *Ja-maar, wat als alles lukt?*], ‘Yes-but, what if everything works out?’, by Berthold Gunster, Amsterdam: Bruna, 2009)

These examples illustrate the use of a fictive enunciation (a declarative in 13a, 13b, and 13d, it being an answer to a previous fictive turn in (13d), and a question, rhetorical or information-seeking in (13c), filling the grammatical slots of a clause, phrase, the lexical item, and a morpheme, respectively.

A cross-linguistic study based on bibliographic study and the examination of a self-gathered database involving a total of 73 languages, both spoken and signed, found no single language without fictive speech as grammatical construction (Pascual 2014: ch. 4). Across languages, fictive direct speech typically serves to express: mental and emotional states, states of affairs,

³ Thanks to Mingjan Wesley Xiang for this example.

purpose, causation (Pascual 2002, 2014), and in some cases even evidentiality or future tense (e.g. “The sky says *I rain*” for “It will rain” in Wari’, Everett 2011). Little as it has been studied, this constitutes a productive, ubiquitous construction in a vast number of languages of the world (Pascual 2006b, 2014), and one that is frequently used as communicative strategy in language pathology (Versluis and Kleppa [2008] 2016). There are naturally important differences between the manifestation of fictive interaction constructions in different languages. For instance, direct speech compounds and modifier-noun combinations such as “*Not happy? Money back! guarantee*” or “*Hi honey, I’m home happiness*” are possible and frequently used in Germanic languages, but are relatively rare in Mandarin Chinese (Xiang p.c.) and can only appear as phrases or clauses in Romance or Slavic languages.

Intra-sentential fictive interaction is widespread across different sociolinguistic groups, being used professionally by the greatest writers (e.g. Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Derrida or Szymborska, see Pascual and Sandler 2016), to the most prominent linguists (e.g. Chomsky, Langacker, see Pascual 2006b), or orators (e.g. Clinton, Obama, see Pascual 2014), as well as by the modern youth (Streeck 2002). Furthermore, fictive speech is used as effective communicative strategy in very different genres and settings, including but not restricted to: marketing (Brandt and Pascual 2016); legal argumentation (Pascual 2002, 2006a, 2014); journalistic discourse (Królak 2008, Demeter 2011, 2016, Chaemsathong 2014); or political argumentation (Coulson and Oakley 2006, Cienki and Giansante 2014). Fictive direct speech also seems to be preferred to indirect speech or descriptive alternatives by adults with Broca’s aphasia (Bánrétí 2010, Versluis and Kleppa [2008] 2016) and by children suffering from autism (Dornelas and Pascual 2016). In language pathology, non-quotational speech is often used in conversation as an adaptation

strategy to compensate for poor grammar and word-finding difficulties, as a means to express needs, describe mental and emotional states, and refer to individuals and things.

4.1. Grammaticalized fictive speech

Similar to what we discussed regarding fictive question-answer pairs in section 3.1, there also seem to be differences in degree of grammaticalization of fictive speech related to orality. Intra-sentential fictive speech appears fully grammaticalized in many unrelated languages with no or a poorly used writing system, often being the only or the most unmarked construction for expressing certain meanings (Pascual 2014: ch. 4, Dąbrowska 2015). In particular, fictive speech is frequently unmarked in signed languages (Jarque and Pascual 2016) and obligatory for certain meanings in a large number of unrelated languages without (widespread) writing (e.g. Spronck 2016, van der Voort 2016).

Take the following examples, illustrating the use of fictive direct speech to express mental and emotional states, and causation in Kombai (Papuan) and Manambu (Australian), respectively:

(14) a. Kharabumano khe fenemora ma-khe-y-e-ne

be.astonished.3PL.NF he how do.3SG.NF-Q-TR-CONN-say.SG

Lit. They were astonished: *how does he do this?*

‘They were astonished because of the things he did.’

b. asayik wa-ku gra-na

father+ DAT say- COMPLE:SS cry-ACT.FOC+3FEM.SGSUBJ.N

Lit. ‘Having said [the baby] ‘*because of father*’ she is crying.’

‘She is crying because of her father.’ (Aikhenvald 2008: 391)

With respect to (14a), Kombai uses the verb “say” to cover a wide range of situations about reasons. De Vries, concludes that in languages such as Kombai and Kwaza (Brazil), “fictive interaction constructions with direct speech have become unmarked and are obligatory in certain domains, fully integrated in the grammar, used by all speakers in all contexts, and highly frequent” (2010: 35). The presentation of emotional and mental states (including intentions, attempts, as well as reasons or purposes) through a fictive enunciation, is very common cross-linguistically. In some languages of the world, states of affairs are also most frequently or invariably expressed through fictive speech, either addressed at the discourse topic, as in the following example from Wari’ (Chapacura-Wanham) or ascribed to the interlocutor as a commentary about the discourse topic, as in the example below from Kwaza (isolate):

(15) a. Om ca pi ra na ne Mapco

not:exist agr:n:real.pst/prs finish 2sg:real.fut consent 3n corn

Lit. ‘The corn does not consent (when it is told) “*Be finished*”’

‘The corn will never finish’/‘There is a lot of corn’ (Everett [2003] 2008: 395)

b. eromutsa-xa-’te-xa-ta ’nāi-xa-re

wrist-2-purp-2-csolike-2-int

Lit. ‘Is it for you_I to (say) “*you_J wear it on the wrist*”?’

‘Is it a wristwatch?’ (van der Voort 2002: 318)

Examples (15a) and (15b), show fictive interaction constructions can profile the speaker (fictive speech ascribed to a pre-linguistic baby to present the baby's reasons for crying), the addressee (the inanimate corn refusing to obey an order to stop growing as a way to present its abundance), or the topic (what one would say about a watch as a means of categorizing it). That is to say, the conversational frame may be universal among languages and may be used to expressed different meanings and functions in different grammatical positions, but the particular facets of the frame vary greatly from one language or context to the other.

Fictive speech may also structure evidentiality marking in signed languages (Jarque and Pascual 2015) as well as spoken languages (Spronck 2016). Perhaps more spectacularly, fictive speech may serve to express future tense, as in the unrelated languages of the Amazon Wari' (Everett [2003] 2008, 2011) and Aikanã, an isolate language of the Rondonia area (van der Voort 2016). Consider this example from the latter:

(16) Hari-t Σ a-re-mia-ẽ

[bathe-1p-FUT-2p-DEC]

Lit. 'You people (say): "we will take a bath".'

'You people will take a bath.' (van der Voort 2009, 2016)

In Aikanã the future tense is marked by pronominal reduplication, just as actual quotation and the expression of intentionality. Apparently, this structure is so ingrained in the language that it also appears in the syntax of the Brazilian Portuguese spoken by the Aikanã (van der Voort 2016). At an even further stage of grammaticalization are common instances of wh-question

markers for relative or conditional pronouns (e.g. ‘whether’), questions for indefinite pronouns, certain discourse markers or phrases (e.g. Korean ‘n-ka when-(be)-prs-q’, lit. ‘*when is it?*’ for ‘some time’, Rhee 2004: 411–420); or verbs of communication grammaticalized into a complementizer or auxiliary verb (Güldeman and von Stechow 2002). Significantly, all these are fairly to very common cross-linguistically. To sum up, the conversation frame does not only serve to model information structure at the level of discourse, but can play a role in the formation of core grammatical and lexical categories.

4.2. Is fictive speech always constructed speech?

Tannen (1986) focuses considerable attention on instances of what she calls “constructed speech”, that is instances of “demonstrations” (à la Clark and Gerrig 1990) used for hypothetical or counterfactual quotes, pieces of speech that never occurred or would never occur, as well as for the presentation of mental and emotional states through a direct speech not representing a previously produced utterance. Much less attention has been paid to verbatim speech used fictively, namely the use of literal quotations from previous discourse for more than making mental contact with prior discourse. Take the following extract from an autobiographical novel:

(17) A woman in a Disneyland sweatshirt stood in the doorway taking pictures of my sink, and I intentionally bumped her arm so that the prints would come out blurry and undesirable.

“Hey!” she said.

“Oh, ‘Hey’ yourself.” I was in a fever, and the only thing that mattered was this apartment.

(*Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*, by David Sedaris, New York and Boston: Back Bay Books, 2004, p. 173)

In (17), the literal repetition of an utterance in the preceding turn appears embedded in a construction with a different communicative function, now functioning as a comment on it (cf.

Pascual 2002: 203, 219). Consider now:

- (18) a. As for the Brazil pictures, to quote Dorothy in “The Wizard of Oz”: *Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas any more!*:-) (personal email, 9 March 2015)
- b. The ‘*I do*’ fear: Dealing with commitment phobia (<http://www.shaaditimes.com/love/gender-relations/commitment-phobia-050920/1>)

The expression “*Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas any more*” in (18a) comes from a particular utterance in a work of fiction and has now become part of popular American culture to express vertiginous experiences. This fictional quotation even appears conventionalized as entry in an urban dictionary to define an unusual situation or state of affairs. The “‘*I do*’ fear” nominal in (18b) is a creative one, emerging from a formulaic expression associated with the wedding ritual, which serves to set up the whole marital status (compare with “*I do* ring”, “*I do* couple”, “*I do* dress”, “*I do* kiss”, etc., Pascual, Królak, and Janssen 2013: 354, Pascual 2014: 78, 79). Interestingly, children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder often use verbatim or paraphrased repetitions of previous interactions (or socio-communicative formulae) as communicative strategy. Consider this piece of dialogue between a Brazilian twelve-year-old boy with severe autism and his therapist, playing a game in which the child needs to choose pictures of people and objects in a map of a city (Dornelas and Pascual 2016: 350–351):

(19) Child: Sino!

‘Bell!’

Therapist: O sino fica aonde?

‘Where is the bell supposed to be?’

Child: Respeitáve::l público (.) Com vocês o [melhor] tocador de sino de todos os tempo::s

‘Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls! With you is the best bell player of all times!’

Therapist: Ele trabalha no circo?

‘Does he work in the circus?’

Child: Sim!

‘Yes!’

In order to explain that he wants to place the picture of a bell in a circus, the child enacts a fictive circus director introducing such a bell as in a circus act. The vocative “Respeitável público!” is only used in the context of the introductory speech of Portuguese-speaking circus directors, and is thus far from being a constructed instance, just as the “*the best X of all times!*” part of the schema. Its close socio-cultural association with the speech of circus directors is what renders it suitable as metonymic means of setting up the entire circus frame. In all these cases an enunciation serves to express or refer to a non-conversational message or reality, while this not being an instance of creative or “constructed” speech.

5. Conclusions

In this chapter, we provide evidence to suggest that fictivity, originally solely applied to conceptual phenomena modelled by the physical world, as in fictive motion and change (see overview in Chapter 29, this volume), may also reflect intersubjectivity, going above and beyond

Langacker's (1999) 'virtual speech acts' to cover all levels of discourse and grammar, and being widespread across languages —spoken and signed— genres, and sociolinguistic groups. We hope to have shown that the conversation conceptualization of reality forms a pervasive means of structuring language at several layers of analysis. Not only is it a widespread rhetorical strategy for structuring whole chunks of discourse, it also serves as a pervasive technique for expression at the sentential, intra-sentential, and morphological layers, thereby implicating that fictive interaction is a motivating force behind basic linguistic issues of topicalization, focalization, and even grammatical tense.

More specifically, we argue that fictive interaction: (i) is a productive construction, highly widespread across different language families and modalities; (ii) is frequently used for a great number of meanings or functions in a wide range of genres and by speakers from different sociolinguistic backgrounds; and (iii) may be used as a communicative strategy by professionals in written and oral communication, as well as by speakers with language impairments in everyday conversation. In sum, fictive interaction may be a universal and effective construction reflecting the interactional nature of language. More generally, fictive interaction captures the socio-cognitive and communicative facets of grammar, and should be regarded as a basic schema that influences the lexicon and grammar of any given language in multiple and predictable ways. We conclude that language does not just reflect cognition and embodiment, as assumed in Cognitive Linguistics, but also emerges from and reflects discourse (Givón 1979, Tomasello 2003, Rhee 2004), or more specifically, talk-in-interaction (Janssen 2007, Pascual 2014, Pascual and Sandler 2016).

Language—from semiotics to grammar to discourse structure—mirrors the fact that human beings are ultra-social, gregarious primates that regularly interact and communicate with family, friends, enemies, and strangers, an unprecedented set of behaviors among biological agents (Seabright 2010). Language is thus a communication system that enables us to maintain interaction and constantly align with our addressee(s), since a conversational turn typically responds to some prior turn and anticipates a response based on the assumed knowledge and communicative intentions of the addressee(s). This primordial facet of language, and the conversational form it takes, becomes a model that partly serves to structure cognition, grammar, and discourse in fundamental ways.

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