

In a Manner of Speaking

Most people most of the time give the impression while speaking that they speak in their own voice—their normal voice—to the point that we are scarcely conscious of hearing in their speech anything special, anything that might stand out as noteworthy, a distinctive quality of voice. People just talk. It's no particular way of speaking. But some people sometimes do take on a special manner of speaking, with interesting consequences. If we perceive that a speaker employs some distinctive quality in their speech, we hear it as introducing an element of significance, one which is likely to prove relevant to the framing and interpretation of the utterance at hand. One thing that makes it interesting to take note of the manner of speech chosen for a particular utterance is that the manner always comes as an accompaniment, a second channel of vocal information riding along on the main channel of the spoken word. The manner modifies the message, as it were. We hear one voicestream, but it carries two layers of meaning. A single utterance is characterized simultaneously by the words in their sequence and the distinctive manner in which they are spoken. It is the second layer of voice that specifically concerns us here.

If we hope to understand the way of using special voices, to learn to hear the significance of manners of speaking, we need to know how to observe when, how and why speakers use the potential of their voices in special ways. This will only have meaning if we attend equally to the consequences which the vocal shaping yields, in the domains of meaning and interaction.

At the most basic level, this study requires us first to be able to locate and describe the various manners of speaking. Beyond this, we must be able to situate them in relation to the other aspects of speaking, as they unfold simultaneously in the flux of discourse.

This implies that we should develop tools for representing the phenomena in question. How to proceed? The speaker's freedom to speak in a distinctive manner seems at first to vary in unpredictable ways, unlimited in its diversity and open-ended in its typology. While the first impression is indeed thus, closer examination suggests that there are ways to bring this complexity into the realm of the apprehensible—what can be pointed to, categorized, represented.

Notation

The analytical objective demands notations sufficient to the task at hand. Notations are required that will allow the words and the manner in which they were spoken to be represented clearly, efficiently, and in correlation with each other. A special manner may extend over an indefinite region of the voicestream, so the symbols for representing it must be equally flexible in their application. And given that the number of manners that speakers may invoke is open-ended in principle, it is necessary that the notational conventions be generative, allowing for the innovation of new categories and new symbols as the situation demands.

The most effective way to notate manner of speaking involves a pair of symbols, written so as to bracket the start and end of the feature in question. To make clear that the manner notation is not to be read as words spoken, by convention the manner is written in capital letters and enclosed in angle brackets.

For example, the phenomenon of *vox*, which is when a speaker adopts the “voice of another,” is written as follows: <VOX> *words* </VOX>. Note that the notations for the *start* and *end* of the indicated manner differ slightly: the end notation is written with a slash character immediately following the left angle bracket.

(1) (*Cuz* SBC006)

ALINA; Nothing was gonna help her.
 No makeup,
 no nothing.
 Cause she's the little <VOX> **girl,**
 and he's the older man,
 and he's taking care of me </VOX>.

(2) (*Conceptual Pesticides* SBC003) (Simplified transcription)

ROY;	There's a bad smell in here,	
MARILYN;	There is?	+3
ROY;	No it's the smell of fish.	+4
	<SING> The smell,	
	of fish,	+2
	is in,	
	the fridge </SING>.	
MARILYN;	(LAUGH)::	+1
	<VOX> Oh God </VOX>.	
PETE;	(LAUGH)::	

While the array of manner categories is diverse and in principle open-ended, there are some manners that recur with a relatively high frequency. It is useful to standardize the notation used for such high-frequency manner phenomena. Table 1 presents frequency counts for the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, which gives a good indication of how often these are likely to be encountered by transcribers.

Scope

The scope of a manner notation (like <SING> *words* </SING>) is to be read as applying to the stream of speech of one particular speaker, the speaker in whose labeled turn the manner notation first appears. The manner notation does not apply to any other speakers who may happen to speak in the same stretch of conversation. In the following example, only one speaker begins to sing, the other does not:

1	490.647	492.087	BRETT;	Approximately: here,
2	492.053	494.881		... <SING> Du du du: ,
3	494.881	495.728		du du du du.
4	495.728	497.557	FRANK;	And staff meeting tomorrow after school,
5	497.540	498.574	BRETT;	Duh da-duh: ,
6	499.454	501.317		[hm hm hm hm hm hm </SING>].

Here, Brett's turn begins in a normal speaking voice with the words *Approximately here*, but he soon starts to sing beginning with the first syllables uttered in line 2 (*du du du*), as marked by the

onset marker <SING> placed before them. Brett's singing continues until line 6, where its termination is marked by </SING> at the end of the line. Note that it is only necessary to use a single pair of brackets indicate the singing, one bracket at the start and one at the end. But the bracketed notation for singing does not apply to Frank, whose words *And staff meeting tomorrow after school* in line 4 are spoken in a normal, not a singing, voice.

The convention whereby a manner notation applies only to the stream of speech of the speaker within whose labeled turn it is written is based on the reality that in general, each speaker chooses their own manner of speaking. Moreover, the speaker's manner may continue for several lines and even several turns. Other speakers in the same stretch of speech (i.e. those who may interrupt with simultaneous speech, or exchange turns) are not particularly likely to choose the same manner of speaking as the first speaker.

Of course there are occasions when several people do choose the same manner at the same time, as for example in choral singing. In such cases, it is necessary to indicate the manner (e.g. singing) for each participant individually. In the following example, Kendra begins singing and then Marci joins her, while Wendy continues using an ordinary speaking voice:

KENDRA: <☺><SING> My mama loves me cause she [spanks me= </☺>],
WENDY: [That's why I take] [2all my al_] __
KENDRA: [2Woo][3_oo,
MARCI: [2<SING> Woo][3_oo,
(H) .. woo_oo </SING>3].
KENDRA: (H) .. woo_oo </SING>3].
KENDRA: .. (H) [4@@@]
WENDY: [4All of our] alterations go to Edna,
MARCI: (H)

Table 1. *Manner Categories by Frequency.* Frequency counts for Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, Parts 1 & 2. (Counts are based on the published Linguistic Data Consortium version, which use “DT1” [Du Bois et al. 1993] format.)

((NB: <@> (laughter) is treated elsewhere.))

<u>DT 1</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>DT 2</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
<X>	510	#	<#>
<VOX>	248	« »	<VOX>
<Q>	134	<Q>	“ ”
<WH>	81	☼	<WHISPER>
<P>	66	°	<P>
<HI>	49	↑	<HI>
<MRC>	36	<MARCATO>	
<READ>	33	<READ>	
<SM>	33	<☺>	<SMILE>
<L2>	32	<L2>	<L2=SPANISH>
<SING>	26	<SING>	
<FOOD>	20	<EAT>	
<%>	21	<%>	
<F>	19	<F>	

<PAR>	13	<PAREN>
<YWN>	12	<YAWN>
 	6	<BREATHY>
<A>	5	<ALLEGRO>
<SHOUT>	3	<SHOUT>
<SMOKING>	2	<SMOKE>
<ACC>	1	<ACCELERANDO>
<CRY>	1	<CRY>
<TALK>	1	<TALK>
<HUMMING>	1	<HUM>
<DRINKING>	1	<DRINK>
<ACCENT>	1	<VOX>
<SLUR>	1	<SLUR>

Open-Class Categories

Manner: Voice

laugh voice	<@>	</@>	
smile voice	<☺>	</☺>	marks smiling during word (for seven+ words)
smile voice	☺ you're ☺ kidding		smile symbol marks smiling during word
smile voice	<SMILE>	</SMILE>	alternate
voice of another	<VOX>	</VOX>	
voice of another (alt.)	«	»	
voice of another (specify)	<VOX=DUMB>		
quotation quality	<QUOTE>		
whisper	<α>		
whisper	<WHISPER>		alternate
breathy	<BREATHY>		
creaky	<%>		
yawning	<YAWN>		
reading	<READ>		
singing	<SING>		
shouting	<SHOUT>		
crying	<CRY>		
humming	<HUM>		
slurred speech	<SLUR>		

Manner: Prosody

forte, loud	<F>
piano, attenuated	<P>
piano, attenuated (alt.)	<°>
high pitch (region)	<HI>
low pitch (region)	<LO>
wide pitch	<WIDE>
narrow pitch	<NARROW>
marcato speech	<MARCATO>
fast speech	<ALLEGRO>
slow speech	<LENTO>
increasingly fast speech	<ACCELERANDO>
increasingly slow speech	<RALENTANDO>
parenthetical intonation	<PAREN>

***Manner:
Miscellaneous***

unintelligible speech	<#>	
code-switch/2nd language	<L2>	
code-switch (lg. specified)	<L2=DUTCH>	alternate notation
code-switch (lg. specified)	<LANGUAGE=DUTCH>	alternate notation
affect	<AFFECT>	
affect, specified	<AFFECT=SAD>	sad, angry, disgust, fear, happy
eating, food in mouth	<EAT>	
drinking	<DRINK>	
smoking	<SMOKE>	
talking on telephone (alt.)	<TEL>	
media speech (alternate)	<MEDIA>	

Short form/Long form: by Category

<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Short Form</i>	<i>Long Form</i>
[Manner]		
laugh voice	<@>	<MANNER=LAUGH>
laugh voice	@word @word	<MANNER=LAUGH>
smile voice	<☺>	<MANNER=SMILE>
smile voice	☺ word ☺ word	<MANNER=SMILE>
smile voice	<SMILE>	<MANNER=SMILE>
whisper	<∞>	<MANNER=WHISPER>
whisper	<WHISPER>	<MANNER=WHISPER>
breathy	<BREATHY>	<MANNER=BREATHY>
creaky	<%>	<MANNER=CREAKY>
yawning	<YAWN>	<MANNER=YAWN>
reading	<READ>	<MANNER=READ>
singing	<SING>	<MANNER=SING>
shouting	<SHOUT>	<MANNER=SHOUT>
crying	<CRY>	<MANNER=CRY>
humming	<HUM>	<MANNER=HUM>
slurred speech	<SLUR>	<MANNER=SLUR>
[Vox]		
voice of another, unspecified	<VOX>	<VOX>
voice of another (alternate)	« »	<VOX>
voice of another, specified	<VOX=DUMB>	<VOX=DUMB>
voice of another, specified	<VOX=WHINE>	<VOX=WHINE>
voice of another, specified	<VOX=CHILD>	<VOX=CHILD>
voice of another, specified	<VOX=FLIRT>	<VOX=FLIRT>
quotation quality	<QUOTE>	<VOX=QUOTE>
[Prosody]		
forte, loud	<F>	<AMPLITUDE=FORTE>
piano, attenuated	<P>	<AMPLITUDE=PIANO>
piano, attenuated (alt.)	<°>	<AMPLITUDE=PIANO>
high pitch (region)	<HI>	<PITCH=HIGH>

Meaning

low pitch (region)
wide pitch
narrow pitch
fast speech
slow speech
increasingly fast speech
increasingly slow speech
marcato speech
parenthetical intonation

Short Form

<LO>
<WIDE>
<NARROW>
<ALLEGRO>
<LENTO>
<ACCELERANDO>
<RALENTANDO>
<MARCATO>
<PAREN>

Long Form

<PITCH=LOW>
<PITCH=WIDE>
<PITCH=NARROW>
<RHYTHM=ALLEGRO>
<RHYTHM=LENTO>
<RHYTHM=ACCELERANDO>
<RHYTHM=RALENTANDO>
<RHYTHM=MARCATO>
<PROSODY=PAREN>

[Affect]

affect, unspecified
affect, specified
affect, specified
affect, specified
affect, specified
affect, specified

<AFFECT>
<SAD>
<ANGRY>
<DISGUST>
<FEAR>
<HAPPY>

<AFFECT>
<AFFECT=SAD>
<AFFECT=ANGRY>
<AFFECT=DISGUST>
<AFFECT=FEAR>
<AFFECT=HAPPY>

Co-action

eating, food in mouth
drinking
smoking
beating (e.g. tap on table)

<EAT>
<DRINK>
<SMOKE>
<ACT=BEAT>

<MOUTH=EAT>
<MOUTH=DRINK>
<MOUTH=SMOKE>
<HAND=BEAT>

Frame

talking on telephone (alt.)
media speech (alternate)

<TEL>
<MEDIA>

<FRAME=TELEPHONE>
<FRAME=MEDIA>

Metatranscription

unintelligible speech
code-switch/2nd language
code-switch (lg. specified)

<#>
<L2>
<L2=DUTCH>

<META=UNINTELLIGIBLE>
<LANGUAGE=SWITCH>
<LANGUAGE=DUTCH>

Table 2. Co-Action Categories by Frequency. Frequency counts for Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, Parts 1-4. (Counts are based on the published Linguistic Data Consortium version, which use “DT1” [Du Bois et al. 1993] format.) [Some notations are consolidated, e.g. SINGING and SING.]

DT1	N	DT2
<<POUND>>	22	⊗ ((strike surface))
<<THUMP>>	12	⊗
<<TAP>>	1	⊗
<>	1	⊗
<<PAT>>	1	⊗
<<SNAP>>	6	<Ⓟ=SNAP> words Ⓟ words </Ⓟ=SNAP>
<<CLAP>>	5	<Ⓟ=CLAP> words Ⓟ words </Ⓟ=CLAP>
<<SLAPPING>>	3	<Ⓟ=SLAP> words Ⓟ words </Ⓟ=SLAP>
<<MIC>>	7	<ACT=MIC-MOVE>
<<PAPER>>	7	<ACT=PAPER-MOVE>
<<WRITING>>	2	<ACT=WRITE>
<<ERASER>>	1	<ACT=ERASE>
<<STAPLE>>	1	<ACT=STAPLE>
<<FOOTSTEPS>>	1	<ACT=STEP>
<<STOMPING>>	1	<ACT=STOMP>
<<BANG-GLASSES>>	1	<ACT=BANG-GLASSES>
<<WATER-IN-SINK>>	2	<NOISE=WATER>
<<WATER-DISHES>>	2	<NOISE=WATER+DISHES>
<<RUMBLING...>>	1	<NOISE=RUMBLE>
<<MACHINE...>>	1	<NOISE=MACHINE>
=====		
<<WHISTLE>>	4	
<<SING>>	2	
<<SOB>>	1	
'<<COUGHING>>	1	
<<LAUGHTER>>	1	
<<MURMUR>>	1	
<<VOMIT-SOUND>>	1	
<<TALK>>	1	
=====		
<<DOGS_BARKING>>	1	

[Relation to literature]

Bateson on frames, metamessage

Paralanguage: Hockett, Trager, McQuown, Birdwhistell

First five minutes

Goffman on footing

Chuck Goodwin

Streeck

Kendon

Ekman

Bakhtin: Multivocality

etc.