

Wording, Meaning, and Linguistic Ideology

Two seemingly disparate areas of English language structure—the grammar of reported speech and of textual cohesion—are functionally related in that both entail a distinction between “wording” and “meaning.” This is consistent with the Western ideological disjunction between language and reality, talk and action. Neither these language structures nor this linguistic ideology are found among the Ngarinyin people of northwestern Australia, suggesting a Whorfian hypothesis about their possible interrelationship.

IN COMMON WITH WHORF (1956), I BELIEVE THAT THE BEST WAY to study the relationship between language structure and other aspects of social life is by looking for what he called “fashions of speaking”: global complexes of features that “cut across the typical grammatical classifications, so that such a ‘fashion’ may include lexical, morphological, syntactic and otherwise systemically diverse means coordinated in a certain frame of consistency” (Whorf 1956:158).

To what did Whorf seek to relate such “fashions”? Most of the research that has been done on the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been about language and *perception* or “cognitive processing” (cf. Lucy 1985). For present purposes, a better reading of Whorf is the revisionist one in Silverstein (1979), which takes him to be addressing himself to the Boasian problem of the relation between language as “primary ethnological phenomenon” and the “secondary rationalizations” in terms of which speakers of the language understand it to operate (Boas 1974:23ff.).

Accordingly, I am looking here for possible links between language structure and what Silverstein calls “linguistic ideology”—shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world. My examples are from English and Ungarinyin, an Aboriginal language spoken by the Ngarinyin people of northwestern Australia.

For each language, I examine two seemingly quite disparate areas of language structure: (1) the grammar of “reported speech” (Voloshinov 1973) and (2) anaphoric pronouns, ellipsis, and other devices used to create cohesive text. I argue that the differences between Ungarinyin and English in each of these two areas are related to differences in the other—that is, “coordinated in a certain frame of consistency.” I then discuss possible relationships between these two “fashions of speaking” and aspects of Standard Average European (“SAE”) versus Ngarinyin “common sense”—namely, the presence or absence of a sharp dichotomy between words and “things,” talk and action.

The Grammar of Reported Speech

English has a grammatical opposition between direct and indirect discourse.¹ Concerning the formal realization of this opposition, linguists (e.g., Jespersen 1929:290ff.; Partee 1973; Halliday 1985:228ff.; Coulmas 1986) agree that in indirect as opposed to direct discourse, person, spatial deixis, tense, and mode are “shifted” so as to anchor them with respect to the speech situation in which the utterance is “reported,” and interrogative or imperative sentences are shifted into declaratives, with complement clauses

marked by *if*, *whether*, *to*, and so on. Clause linkage between “reporting” and “reported” clauses in indirect discourse is typically hypotactic (as in example 2 below), whereas with direct discourse it is paratactic or formally unmarked.

As to function, linguists as diverse as those cited above agree that the indirect/direct opposition has something to do with the representation of semantic content alone versus the representation of a particular lexico-grammatical encoding of that content—or, more precisely, semantic content alone versus encoding *plus* content. Consider, for example:

1. a. It doesn't work; it's broken. You'll have to get it repaired.
- b. What did he say?
- c. He said “It doesn't work; it's broken. You'll have to get it repaired.”

The direct discourse in c seems to represent a as an encoded locution, inviting the inference that these were the exact words used in a, or at least bear a noteworthy resemblance to them. Indirect discourse, as in, for example, 2 (in place of 1c),

2. He claims that it needs mending.

is used for:

reporting the gist of what was said, and the wording may be quite different from the original. . . . This is not to suggest, of course, that when a speaker uses the paratactic, ‘direct’ form he is always repeating the exact words; far from it. But the idealized function of the paratactic structure is to represent the wording; whereas with hypotaxis the idealized function is to represent the sense, or gist. [Halliday 1985:232]

Some linguists (e.g., Longacre 1976; Koontz 1977; Larson 1978; Ebert 1986; Haberland 1986; Tannen 1986) have challenged the view that direct discourse is frequently, or even ideally, used to reproduce or represent an “exact wording.” It has been widely noted that use of direct discourse makes the report or narrative more “vivid,” “dramatic,” or “theatrical” (Labov 1972; Wierzbicka 1974; Longacre 1976; Ochs 1979; Chafe 1982), and this has sometimes been claimed to be its essential function (Longacre 1976) or “meaning” (Wierzbicka 1974).

Here it is sufficient to accept what all these analyses have in common, namely, that all reported speech implicates two analytically distinct speech situations—the “projecting” and the “projected”—and that in languages that distinguish direct discourse from indirect, or a range of possibilities between these two poles, the more “direct” varieties import features of the projected speech situation into the projecting one, to a greater extent than do the “indirect” ones. The imported features generally include at least *some* lexico-grammatical ones, namely the indexical specifications for person, tense, deixis, and so on, since these are the minimal features by which speech situations (whether “real” or “imaginary”) are constituted. The imported features can never include all those of some presumed “original” speech situation, since the prosodic ones can never be precisely reproduced.² But they generally include *some* code features: direct discourse, to a greater extent than indirect, invites us to focus on the way in which it is encoded.

To the best of my knowledge, no such difference is built into the grammar of Ungarinyin. In the thousands of pages of text that have been recorded in this language (of many different genres, including narrative, procedural, and conversational), there is, as far as I can tell, no evidence for a formal opposition between direct discourse and any other, less direct variety. All explicitly “reported” speech is reported in a form that, from the SAE viewpoint, looks like direct quotation.³ The reporting, or projecting clause occurs immediately after the projected material, and consists of an inflected form of the verb *-ma-* plus all the other elements of a normal intransitive clause (cf. Rumsey 1982a:157–166). There are several examples in text 3,⁴ which I have adapted from Coate (1966, lines 171–175).⁵ The context for this excerpt is as follows. An Aboriginal magician has just given powers of clairvoyance to another man by installing within him a “third eye.” The initiate then looks off in the distance to the “different country” referred to in 3a, and sees and hears the conversation referred to in 3b, to which the magician directs his attention, beginning in 3c.

3. a. *ngurri-nangga dambun mara andon*
 different country see 3pl.ob.-1sg.sub.-*wu*-pres.
 [in a] different country he sees them
- b. *wurla-wurla budmana*
 talk 3pl.sub.-*ma*-pres.-pauc.
 Some of them talk.
- c. *garri, ya ya*
 “oh, ah yes”
- d. *ama ari jirri amiyimbun-ngarri*
 masc.sub.-*ma*-pres. man that masc.ob.-3sg.sub.-‘show to’-pres.-s.c.
 says the man who shows him.
- e. *di au di ni umindarndu*
 then o.k. that (w-class) remember imp.-w-class ob.-*minda*-3pl. obl.
 Then “o.k. now, remember what they said
- f. *yanga-yangad mindimu li binjiyo*
 boggy there look 3pl.ob.-2sg.sub.-fut.-*wu*
 you will see them at that boggy place
- g. *jigalwa garra e*
 liar maybe masc.sub.-*yi*-pres.
 ‘maybe he’s a liar’
- h. *nyin-gumara*
 2sg.sub.-irr.-*ma*-1sg.obl.
 you might say about me”
- i. *amenangga*
 masc. sub.-*ma*-pres.3sg.obl.
 he says to him.

A simple example of “reported speech” is line c, which is “framed” by the *ma* clause in d. Line h likewise frames g. The framing clause in i provides a more complex example, since it frames all of lines e–h, which include within them the embedded “report” of lines g–h. Using standard bracket notation to show these embeddings (where all material enclosed within a single set of brackets is attributed to a speech situation projected in the immediately following line), the framing relations across all of 3 can be represented as follows:

a b [c] d [e f [g] h] i.

Within the framed, projected speech clauses, all the indexical categories (person, tense, spatial deixis, etc.) are implemented exactly as they would have been within the speech situation of the reported utterance, just as is true of direct discourse in languages that distinguish it formally from indirect. But it would be misleading to say that Ungarinyin has direct discourse and lacks indirect. They are simply not distinguished. Thus, when offering translations of English sentences with indirect discourse, Anglophone Ngarinyin informants always do it as in text 3. And unlike at least some registers in English, where the use of a form like 3g projects not only a propositional content, but also aspects of its “wording,” the use of these apparent quotations in Ungarinyin invites no inference specifically about wording.

These same clauses with the verb *-ma-*, used to frame reported speech as above, are also used to project thoughts and intentions, which, again, occur *only* in what, from the SAE viewpoint, looks like a form of direct quotation. Thus, for example, it is nowhere explicitly signaled that 3g is being used to represent a *locution*. It could equally be just the thought, opinion, or judgment that the speaker of 3h—the magician—may be a liar.

The *-ma-* framing clause is also used to attribute intentionality in Ungarinyin. In this function, it is combined with a preceding, projected clause, which also includes a *-ma-*verb, in the future “tense” or optative mode (cf. Rumsey 1982a:87–89, 95–96, 157–166). Examples are 4 and 5.

4. *wurru miyangga* *budmarangarrugu*
 w-class ob.-3pl.sub-fut.-'recognize' 3pl.sub.-*ma*-past-1pl.inc.obl.
 They wanted us to recognize it. (literally: "They will recognize it" they said/did with regard to us.)
5. *wijiga* *daabi-gu* *ngiya* *nyinmerri*
 QUESTION Derby-dat. 1sg.-sub.-fut.-'go' 2sg.sub.-*ma*-pres.cont.
 Do you want to go to Derby? (lit.: Are you doing "I will go to Derby"?)

This *ma*- construction also has functions that shade into the range of "causative" relations (Rumsey 1982a:160–166). Thus, a sentence such as 4 could sometimes appropriately be glossed as "They made us recognize it" or "They caused us to recognize it."

The intentional and causative uses of this construction are standard and textually frequent. Indeed, there are, as far as I know, no distinct verbs of "wanting" or "causing" that can take infinitive or clausal complements, such as "He wanted to go" or "They made us recognize it" (cf. Coate and Elkin 1974), and sentences with the *ma*- verb are regularly used by Anglophone Ngarinyin informants to translate such sentences.

Needless to say, these intentional and causative uses of apparent "quotation" in no way entail the attribution of a *wording*, per se.⁶

Discourse Cohesion

My second point of contrast between English and Ungarinyin concerns devices for creating what Halliday and Hasan call "cohesion"—a property that distinguishes connected texts from random collections of sentences (Halliday and Hasan 1976:1). I will use Halliday and Hasan's analytical framework, not because it is faultless, but because it provides the most comprehensive description of cohesive ties in English (cf. Note 8).

Halliday and Hasan use the term *reference* in a quite different way than most other linguists (or philosophers)—not for the relation between words and their extralinguistic "objects," but for a relation between two elements in a text, mostly relations of the kind that in the transformational literature are treated as *co*-reference between anaphor and antecedent (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1985:73–74).

"Reference" in Halliday and Hasan's sense is:

a relationship in meaning. When a reference item is used anaphorically, it sets up a semantic [or, as many linguists would say, "pragmatic"] relationship with something in the preceding text; and this enables the reference item to be interpreted, as either identical with the referent or in some way contrasting with it.⁷ [Halliday 1985:295–296]

Another kind of text-forming relation in English is what Halliday and Hasan call "ellipsis." It is formally distinct from "reference" in that it is realized by zero, and functionally distinct in that "unlike reference, which is itself a semantic relation, ellipsis sets up a relationship that is not semantic, but lexico-grammatical—a relationship in the wording rather than directly in the meaning" (Halliday 1985:296). For example, in

6. a. Raylene told her very best friends.
- b. Then Bruce told his.
- c. Then Bruce told them.

lines 6a and 6b cohere as text, partly by virtue of the relationship between "very best friends" in 6a and the *absence* of anything after "his" in 6b. We interpret 6b, not by direct recourse to an earlier "meaning" (or by any knowledge of a referent) but by recourse to a wording, namely "very best friends," which we plug into the gap after "his" in 6b.

The functional difference between "ellipsis" and "reference" can be seen by contrasting 6b and 6c as alternative sequels to 6a. "Them" is a "reference item," which in 6c is interpreted, not by recourse to the wording "very best friends" in 6a, but by recourse to what Halliday and Hasan would call its "meaning," namely, the identity of the people in question. The "ellipsis" version, 6b, tells us nothing at all about whether the identity of those people is the same or different as between 6a and 6b, but specifies that the wording "very best friends" appropriately describes those people in relation to Bruce in 6b.

Conversely, the use of a "reference" item instead of "ellipsis," signals in 6c that the people in question are the same as between 6a and 6c, but does not specify whether the wording "very best friends" can also be applied to them in relation to Bruce.

"Ellipsis" in Halliday and Hasan's sense is not to be equated with more general uses of the term, for example, that of Shopen (1973:64), for whom it includes any instance "when propositions are not fully realized in the grammatical forms of the utterances." Rather, it is a text-internal form of linkage, more like what in other frameworks is called "deletion," "zero anaphora," or "null anaphora."

"Ellipsis" is not the only English text-forming device that works by recourse to wording. So also do some of our English pro-forms, including "one" and "do," as used in the following examples from Halliday and Hasan (1976:89):

7. a. My axe is too blunt. I must get a sharper one.
- b. You think Joan already knows? —I think everybody does.

In 7a, the second sentence is interpreted by construing *one* as standing in for the word *axe* from the first (without implying co-reference between the two: indeed, in this example the two axes must be different ones). Likewise, in 7b, *does* stands in for the word *knows* (or *do* for *know*, with repeated inflectional suffix). Halliday and Hasan call the pro-forms that typically work this way (i.e., by recourse to a wording) *substitutes*: "A substitute is a sort of counter which is used in place of the repetition of a particular item" (Halliday and Hasan 1976:89).

"Substitution" and "ellipsis" comprise a functionally unified domain in English, which is formally integrated too, in that the two occur largely in complementary distribution, depending on the syntactic environment (Halliday 1985:297ff.).

The main points from Halliday and Hasan's work on English that are relevant to my comparison with Ungarinyin are (1) their functional distinction between "reference" and "substitution"/"ellipsis," and (2) their demonstration that these two sorts of functional relationship are systematically associated with two distinct sets of formal devices in English. Although I have drawn on Halliday and Hasan's work to establish these facts about English, I do not think the validity of my comparison depends on any particular theory of grammar. Linguists as remote from Halliday's functional grammar as Hankamer and Sag (1976) and Grinder and Postal (1971) have made what are, for my purposes, usable approximations of the same distinctions—the former in terms of "deep anaphora" versus "surface anaphora," and the latter in terms of "identity of sense anaphora" versus "identity of reference anaphora" (cf. Huddleston 1978). All of these ways of drawing the relevant distinction—including Halliday and Hasan's—have certain problems with them, and fail with respect to certain kinds of counterexamples, as Halliday and Hasan (1976:88) themselves concede.⁸ All that matters here is that the "wording/meaning" version of the distinction provides a good first approximation of descriptive adequacy. That is, if one tabulates the cohesive ties in actual English text, the great majority of occurring reference items, substitutes, and types of formal ellipsis (as per the table in Halliday and Hasan 1976:333–336) function in a way that is readily comprehended within Halliday and Hasan's (1976) account of them.⁹

By contrast, if one examines the use of pro-forms and ellipsis in Ungarinyin, it seems impossible to draw any distinction between cohesive devices that typically realize identity of wording versus identity of "meaning" or reference (in the non-Halliday and Hasan sense). Textual cohesion in Ungarinyin is effected mainly by pronominal elements, including extensive verbal cross-reference, as exemplified in every one of the Ungarinyin utterances cited here (cf. Rumsey 1982a:74–86). To Europeans, Ungarinyin discourse seems highly elliptical in that, for example, one or more of the entities that are cross-referenced on the verb are usually not referred to by any other element within the clause. But this is not "ellipsis" in Halliday and Hasan's functional sense, since the pronominal elements on the verb do "refer" to these participants, without recourse to any other "wording" by which those participants may have been referred to in any other clauses.

Indeed, one cannot assume when conversing in Ungarinyin that an entity referred to only by verbal cross-reference in a particular clause is one that has been, or shortly will be, referred to in the text by some other, more explicit "wording." For example, in text 3 above, previously unmentioned participants are introduced in line a as the 3pl. cross-referenced object of a verb "to see." These mystery participants are referred to again by the subject prefix in line b, the oblique suffix in e, and the transitive object prefix in f. This is followed in the full text (Coate 1966:113) by another episode in which the magician and the initiate sleep, dream, and go to a bough shade, from which they fly through the air, back to the "boggy place" referred to in text 3 (line f). When the two of them get there, their presence is remarked upon by some people who are there (whom we assume are the same as the "mystery participants" referred to throughout 3, because of the link provided by *yanga-yangad*, 'boggy place'). In the clause that frames their remarks, the mystery participants are for the first time referred to by something other than a pronominal affix, namely the noun *rai*, which finally specifies that they are the *rai* spirit beings whom the story is about. Though formally elliptical in containing no explicit reference to the *rai*, none of the preceding clauses can be said to make use of functional "ellipsis" in Halliday and Hasan's sense, because nothing in the text tells us to look for a particular *wording* as a way of identifying something that has been "left out." In this respect, the device works like pronominal "reference" in English, though the discourse style is radically different in that English speakers do not typically introduce new participants with third-person pronouns, or suspend explicit participant identification over such a long stretch of text. It also differs from ellipsis in English, in that the latter, where it points to a "wording," almost always points us *backward* to one that has already occurred.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine how ellipsis of the English sort could exist in Ungarinyin at the level of the noun phrase, because none of the word classes that enter into it are incapable of standing by themselves as full noun phrases. Consider 8:

8. a. Do you want a big piece of brisket?
b. Small will do for me, thanks.

This is an example of formal (and functional) ellipsis in English. When hearing it, one knows to fill in the words "a _____ piece of brisket" because "small," as a primary adjective, cannot stand by itself as a full noun phrase in English. Now consider 9, from a story about a European "bushman" by Campbell Alanbara.

9. a. *ngala birri warda-ga binjon ngumenangga*
meat b-class like-int. b-class ob.-2sg.sub.-wu-pres. 1sg.sub-ma-past-3sg.obl.
"Do you want some meat?" I said to him.
b. *ya burdu janunguli amara*
o.k. small 1sg.ob-2sg.sub.-fut.-'give to' masc.sub.-ma-past
"Yes, you might give me a small piece" he said.

Just as in the English example (8), the word *burdu* in 9b is interpreted in relation to *ngala* 'meat' in 9a. But unlike in English, there is nothing about the form of 9b alone that tells one to retrieve a particular *wording* from 9a. For *burdu* can stand on its own to mean 'small piece', 'small thing', 'child', and so on. Thus, unlike 8b, 9b would be a perfectly grammatical reply to someone who is butchering a carcass and asks "Do you want some of this?" (*warda-ga binjon*).

Space limitations preclude a fuller discussion here of the differences between the Ungarinyin and English noun phrase (but see Rumsey 1982a:31–74, 135–142). Suffice it to say that, in the above respect and others, Ungarinyin behaves similarly to other Australian languages for which these patterns have recently been extensively discussed under the typological rubric "non-configurational languages."¹⁰ My *burdu*/small example should be enough to suggest that, while "configurationality" may not necessarily be a sufficient condition for the presence of "ellipsis"/"substitution" of the Halliday and Hasan sort, it is probably a necessary condition.

Now consider *verbal* ellipsis. In English we have a compounding, auxiliary verb system, which permits a wide range of grammatical ellipses, as in example 10.

10. Speaker A: I couldn't have been sleeping.

Speaker B: You certainly could (have (been)).

If omitted by Speaker B, the words *sleeping*, *been sleeping*, or *have been sleeping* can all be precisely restored by recourse to Speaker A's wording.

Compare Ungarinyin. The Ungarinyin verb complex (Rumsey 1982a:74–122) consists of up to two words: a non-finite verbal word followed by an inflected auxiliary. Further modal qualification can be realized by a clause-initial mode particle (Rumsey 1982a:166–176), as in 11a.

11. a. Speaker A: *biyarra wul ngan-gumerri*
 might be sleep 1sg.sub.-irr.-ma-past-cont.
 I might have been sleeping
- b. Speaker B: **biyarra nyin-gumerri*
 might be 2sg.sub.-irr.-ma-past-cont.
- c. Speaker B: **biyarra*
 might be

Unlike with the Ungarinyin noun phrase, the elements that fill the first two of these three positions (as in 11a) never occur in isolation. Mode particles occur only in construction with inflected verbs, which must moreover be of certain specified modes. *Biyarra*, for example, occurs only with irrealis verbs. Non-finite verbal words, such as *wul* in this example, occur only with an immediately following inflected auxiliary verb (or with the dative postposition in non-finite purposive clauses, as per Rumsey 1982a:155–156). Given these restrictions, and the fact that most of the “auxiliary” verbs can also stand alone as “simple verbs” in other contexts (Rumsey 1982a:74ff.), it would be logically possible for Ungarinyin to have a text-forming device that operated like the English verbal ellipsis exemplified in 10. But it doesn't. Both 11b and 11c, even in this context, are totally ungrammatical.¹¹

To sum up this second part of my comparison, Halliday and Hasan's functional distinction between “reference” and “ellipsis”/“substitution,” which is well motivated for English,¹² would seem to have no systematic formal realization in Ungarinyin.¹³

Linguistic Ideology

Having compared English and Ungarinyin with respect to two aspects of language structure—the grammar of reported speech and of textual cohesion—I turn now to aspects of linguistic ideology that can be related to those linguistic differences.

Alongside the Western dualism of form and content (Whorf 1956:140–142, 152–156; Reddy 1979), another tenet of our linguistic ideology is the dualism of words and things; talk versus action; real world events versus ways of talking about them. Words in this view are not things, but only stand for things. They are mere symbols or signs, the purpose of which is to talk about a reality that lies beyond them and apart from them.

I would not claim that this ideology has a total stranglehold on Western consciousness, or that it is not contradicted by aspects of people's everyday experience or opposed by other ideologies at work within the same social field. But I would argue, based on evidence of the sort I will introduce below, that it is currently a *dominant* ideology, in that it is underwritten by our most powerful and prestigious social institutions—the courts, legislative bodies, print media, schools and universities. It is firmly installed as a tenet of what Jane Hill (personal communication, 1988) refers to as the “‘high culture’ of our own speech community.”

By contrast, among the Ngarinyin and (neighboring and partly overlapping) Bunuba speech communities, people's “secondary rationalizations” about language do not typically assume a sharp dichotomy between talk and action, “things in the world” and ways

of talking about them. Here, just as Haviland has found to be true among the Guugu Yimidhirr some 2,500 km away, it is generally true that when people “theorize and talk about language, they concentrate on its social aspects. . . . [W]ords are not simply linguistic units. They belong to people (their rightful users), and they have striking social properties, rendering them appropriate or inappropriate to different circumstances” (Haviland 1979:209). In northwestern Australia as in the northeast, where Haviland has worked, a particularly striking example of the “social properties” of words among the oldest speakers of these languages is the existence of a distinct set of words, and in the Bunuba case, grammatical inflections, which were traditionally prescribed for use between a man and his mother-in-law (Rumsey 1982b) or brother-in-law (Haviland 1979), or in the mere presence of his mother-in-law (Dixon 1971). These “mother-in-law” registers are widely attested across Aboriginal Australia (see Rumsey 1982b for references), and seem everywhere to have provided a means of paraphrasing nearly everything that could be said in the “everyday” version of the language (usually with only partial replacement of “everyday” lexicon). But what is relevant to note here is that when talking in their own terms about language, speakers of these languages do *not* talk as though a mother-in-law form and an everyday one have the same “meaning” or could be used to say “the same thing.”

This is also true of what we linguists are inclined to see as equivalent, paraphrase forms, even within the “everyday” register. For instance, I once asked a Ngarinyin man for the meaning of *baba*, which I had heard him use, apparently as a term of address. I later realized that it was the “vocative” kin term for *mamingi* ‘my mother’s father’, ‘my mother’s brother’s son’, and so on (cf. Scheffler 1978:388ff., Rumsey 1981). But what this man said in order to explain its “meaning” was “Baba, that like a *jannguli* [‘give me’], give me tobacco, or thing like that.” What he was giving me was obviously not what we would think of as the sense, or possible reference of the term, but rather, a locution that makes explicit the pragmatic function of this term of address within a typical context of use—*mamingi* being someone from whom I am entitled to demand things. Of course it was possible in time for this man to learn my language game of glossing on the basis of *referential* function as distinct from other pragmatic ones, just as it was possible in time for me to come to a better understanding of his. But in order to do so, both of us had to put aside our everyday, commonsense way of talking about language.

An example of the close connection in Ngarinyin linguistic ideology between words and their referents can be seen in attitudes toward the use of personal names. The animating force behind the existence of each corporeal Ngarinyin person is a preexisting, eternal spirit whose primordial form was that of an animal, plant, or other object that is said to have brought that person into the world by entering his or her mother during her gestation. The identity of the spirit is revealed to the baby’s father in a dream, along with a personal name associated with that spirit. But this name remains largely a secret and is almost never used. Living people are most often addressed and referred to by kinship terms, but where a personal name is used, it is an English one, a nickname acquired later on, or a name that very obliquely alludes to the event of spiritual conception. After a person has died, none of these names may be used to refer to him or her, at least not until many years later. Even then, the preferred means is not with any of the names used during the person’s lifetime, but by an expression identifying him or her by the place at which he or she died.

Now all of this is not without some parallels in Western bourgeois society. One thinks, for example, of our proverbial reluctance to use the word “cancer” where it is suspected—as though mere use of the word could invoke the thing. There is a basic difference, however, in that we feel sheepish, not only about the thing, but also about our reluctance to talk about it “in so many words.” We feel that, as “modern, rational” people, we really *ought* to be able to. For aren’t words “mere words,” in no way consubstantial with the thing itself?

Nothing could be further from Australian Aboriginal ways of talking about the matter. Among them, even when people do actually refer to the dead by name, they sheepishly add that they should not have done so. Or, more frequently, they preface the reference with an apology "Sorry, but I'll have to call 'im," or the like. This in deference to the still-dominant *Aboriginal* ideology which was well described in W. E. H. Stanner's classic (1935) article on Aboriginal modes of reference and address: "native statements suggest that names are thought to partake of the personality they designate. . . . [N]ames are not symbols so much as verbal projections of an identity which is well known in the flesh" (Stanner 1935:301).

How might these aspects of linguistic ideology be related to differences of language structure? It seems to me that in both the English case and the Ngarinyin one, the two aspects of linguistic structure I have reviewed—the nature of cohesive devices and ways of representing speech or thought—fit together as aspects of one of Whorf's consistent "fashions of speaking" (cf. also Reddy 1979, Martin 1987). They are related in that a single functional opposition underlies the formal oppositions within both areas of English grammar, namely, the opposition between indirect and direct discourse and that between "reference" and "substitution"/"ellipsis." This functional opposition has to do with the representation of discourse as "meaning" versus "wording" (or meaning *via* a particular wording). The grammatical centrality of this opposition in English is consistent with the separation in our linguistic ideology between words and things, speech and actions, and with our focus on the referential-propositional function of language as its most central one. Note that the identity of meaning signaled by the use of indirect discourse or cohesive "reference" is identity of referential/propositional meaning and not any other kind of pragmatic equivalence. The former lies within a functional plane on which our dominant ideology focuses, to the exclusion of other pragmatic functions. Ungarinyin speakers are not in the same way predisposed to isolate the referential/propositional function from other ones, and talk in terms of identity of meaning apart from identity of wording. This is not to say that they pay no attention to how things are worded. On the contrary, Australian Aborigines in general are renowned for their institutionalization of elaborate, alternative lexical sets such as the affine avoidance styles discussed above, the esoteric vocabulary of initiated males and widows (Dixon 1980:ch. 3). The point is that Aboriginal linguistic ideology does not valorize wording as something *distinct* from meaning, since the choice among lexico-grammatical alternatives is usually or always a *meaningful* choice, even where the alternative wordings express what appears to be the same propositional "meaning." For example, *mamingi* ('my mother's father', etc.) and the corresponding vocative form *baba* may refer to the same people, but the pragmatic functions of the two are hardly identical, as illustrated above (cf. Bean 1978). Similarly, the "mother-in-law," everyday, and esoteric words for "hill kangaroo" may all be used to refer to the same thing, but Aboriginal informants do not readily assent to those words having the same "meaning," for they are not predisposed to abstract a purely referential meaning away from the other (status-marking, etc.) meanings that are implemented by the lexical alternation. In other words, wording in this view is not *opposed* to "meaning," but is included as one of its dimensions. Similarly, if Ngarinyin people use what looks to us like direct quotation to represent linguistic acts in a nonverbatim way, this is not because of any insensitivity to subtleties of wording. Rather, in the absence of any presumption that their wording is directly reproducing that of another utterance, they make sophisticated use of lexical alternations as one of the available resources for *dramatizing* the speech act or mental process that is being represented, even across (and beyond) the full range of contexts where English-speakers would use indirect discourse (cf. Larson 1978; Wierzbicka 1974; Haberland 1986; Tannen 1986). Thus, in contexts where the English-speaker typically "objectifies" these acts with one of a number of speech act or mental process verbs, most of which can be complemented only by indirect discourse (Austin 1975; Silverstein 1979:210–216), the Ungarinyin speaker *enacts* them, drawing upon the dramatic

possibilities not only of "wording," but of intonation, gesture, and the full range of expressive dimensions from which one distances oneself by the use of indirect discourse.

Conclusion

I have argued that two seemingly disparate aspects of Ungarinyin and English grammar are related to each other and to aspects of Aboriginal and SAE linguistic ideology. If I am right, then what should we be able to conclude about languages and linguistic ideologies elsewhere? First, although my argument about linguistic structure has drawn equally upon data from English and Ungarinyin, the two "fashions of speaking" that emerge from the comparison are not equally specific. As with many such comparisons, or putative accounts of "the other," it tells us far more about "our" system than about "theirs." For "ours" is characterized positively, by the co-occurrence of two kinds of grammatical distinctions—between direct and indirect discourse and between "reference" and "substitution"/"ellipsis"—"theirs" negatively, only by the absence of these distinctions. Likewise, my discussion of dominant linguistic ideologies has characterized "ours" much more specifically than "theirs"—by the presence versus absence of a strongly valorized distinction between "words" and "things," speech and action. It is no doubt just the presence of such a distinction within our own dominant ideology—and the various challenges to it by writers such as Whorf (1956), Austin (1975), Foucault (1972), and Derrida (1976)—that motivates us to ask whether it is present elsewhere. But one should not expect by doing so to reveal much that is distinctive about other societies except in relation to our own. Thus it is perhaps not surprising that what I have reported above concerning Australian Aboriginal linguistic ideology—the emphasis on language as a form of action—is in broad agreement with recent findings concerning peoples as otherwise diverse as the Kuna (Sherzer 1983), Mexicanos (Hill and Hill 1986), and the Huli of Papua New Guinea (Goldman 1983).

Given these differences in specificity, any generalizations we try to draw from my findings above will probably be more informative if they concern interrelationships between the kinds of systems I have characterized positively, that is, those which have the sorts of distinctions I have been discussing rather than those which lack them. Accordingly, I propose the following tentative hypothesis:

Linguistic ideologies in which there is a strongly valorized distinction between speech and action, words and "things," are most likely to develop in conjunction with languages in which there are formal distinctions between (1) direct and indirect discourse; and (2) "reference" and "ellipsis/substitution" in the sense of Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Several caveats are in order about this formulation in order to prevent misunderstandings such as have already arisen about earlier versions of this article. First, note once again that the relevant "fashion of speaking" cannot be specified by the presence (or absence) of (1) or (2) alone. My argument is Whorfian in that I am concerned not with isolated grammatical (much less lexical) features, but with coordinated complexes of them. Second, note again that (2) is formulated in terms of the descriptive framework developed in Halliday and Hasan (1976), and that the words in quotation marks must be read accordingly. Finally, note that I have spoken of a certain kind of ideology developing "in conjunction with" certain kinds of language structures. This raises an issue that I have not yet dealt with, but want to treat in conclusion, namely, what is the nature of this "conjunction"? Do the language structures determine the linguistic ideology or vice versa?

As per Boas (1974:30), Whorf (1956:156–158), Bourdieu (1977:20), and Silverstein (1979, 1985), I expect this relationship in general to be a dialectical rather than a uni-directional one. I agree with Boas that the extent to which the influence runs one way or the other in any given case is an open question, on which empirical evidence can and should be brought to bear. I will now attempt to do so with respect to one aspect of the structures and ideologies considered above.

In discussing the function of direct discourse in languages that distinguish it from indirect, I noted a disagreement among various linguists concerning the extent to which it commits its user to his or her report's being an exact reproduction of the wording of some other (real or imagined) utterance. This is most strongly denied by those linguists whose judgments on the matter were based on examination of extensive conversational texts (Tannen 1986; Haberland 1986). In view of their impressive evidence, one wonders how anyone could claim otherwise. The matter can perhaps best be clarified in light of Halliday's (1985:232) formulation, quoted above, that direct discourse is by no means always used for "repeating the exact words," but that this is its "idealized function." We have only to add that this "idealized function" does not just belong to the language system as a matter of "unconscious patterning" or "primary ethnological phenomena" (per Boas 1974). Rather, it is a matter of overt moral and ideological evaluation in our everyday discourse about language use. Consider the following Australian example from a brochure entitled "A Guide for Witnesses," published by the New South Wales Attorney General's Department:

If you are asked to tell the court about a conversation you heard which is relevant to the case, you must always tell the words spoken to you just as they were said, e.g., if the person asked you the time, you *do not* say "She asked me the time." Instead you should say—"She said 'What's the time?'" Always try to use the exact words if possible.

The courtroom situation is, of course, a very special one, in which language use is explicitly focused upon, to a far greater extent than in most everyday conversations. It is especially in just such contexts that linguistic ideology can be brought to bear upon language in such a way as to influence its structure. This is what happens when witnesses are successfully constrained by the above directive: a grammatical category whose erstwhile function is to signal that some (largely unspecified) encoding features of the reported utterance are being imported from another speech situation now becomes "literalized" in such a way as to specify that the reported utterance reproduces *all* lexico-grammatical features of the original, at just the level of delicacy that is captured by our graphemic writing system (cf. Note 2). It is debatable whether this effect can be seen as a "change in progress," since the "exact wording" function of reported speech is fully established (at least as an "ideal") within certain contemporary linguistic registers, including not only courtroom speech, but many (perhaps most) of the uses of written English, especially when it is being used to quote another *written* utterance. (Think, for example of the rigor with which this ideal is enforced upon writers of undergraduate essays, and, for that matter, scholarly articles.)

But, whatever their present trajectory might be, it is evident that the SAE languages in general have undergone a change over the last 1,000 years whereby our formal means for distinguishing direct from indirect discourse (and a profusion of intermediate varieties) have become much more explicit and elaborate (Voloshinov 1973:115–159; Banfield 1978). That development has provided necessary means for the "exact wording" function of direct discourse. But it was not the only motivating factor for the establishment or expansion of that function. That expansion has also been conditioned by aspects of SAE linguistic ideology insofar as this ideology has figured in interventions such as those exemplified above. Space restrictions preclude discussion here of the various factors *other than* language structure that condition such interventions, and the form of our dominant ideologies, linguistic and otherwise. Minimally, alphabetic writing, and perhaps print technology, are necessary if not sufficient, conditions (cf. Note 2; Ong 1982). Other related developments include the rise of capitalism and bureaucracy (Weber 1958, 1978), modern experimental science, and associated "technologies of the body" as per Foucault (1972, 1975, 1979, 1980). An adequate discussion of these matters would have to consider, for each social formation, whose *interests* are served by the linguistic ideology's taking the form that it does, thus relating Silverstein's use of "ideology" to its more usual Marxian or Mannheimian senses. But what is relevant for my present argument is that the linguistic ideology as Boasian "secondary rationalization" has at least in part been

fed by aspects of the “unconscious patterning” of SAE linguistic systems per se. One of these features is the presence of at least a rudimentary formal opposition between direct and indirect discourse from ancient times. The other is the formal distinction between “reference” and “ellipsis”/“substitution” (see Rumsey 1988:29–31 for evidence concerning ideological interventions into the latter).

In short, language structure and linguistic ideology are not entirely independent of each other, nor is either determined entirely by the other. Instead the structure provides formal categories of a kind that are particularly conducive to “misrecognition” (Bourdieu 1977) in terms of our ideologically enforced disjunction between things in the real world and ways of talking about them. And partly as a result of that misrecognition, might not the linguistic system gradually change so as to approximate that for which it was misrecognized?

For a satisfactory answer to that question, far more evidence needs to be brought to bear on it than I have been able to adduce here. The same is true of my hypothesis as such, and of the prior question of whether it makes sense to pose it as a generalization about “languages” and “ideologies” at all. One might instead be dealing with a historical development that has occurred only once, originally in the West among speakers of Indo-European languages, and spread from there. It will suffice for now if I have provided terms in which these questions can be pursued.

Notes

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¹“Direct” and “indirect” are polar types between which we can locate intermediate varieties, such as “free indirect discourse” (Voloshinov 1973; Banfield 1973). These are irrelevant to my argument here, since it concerns the presence or absence of this opposition, rather than its possible elaboration within languages that have it.

²Our illusion that we can “quote” an utterance exactly owes much to the influence of graphemic writing, which *does* permit us to reproduce “literally” (“to the letter”) long stretches of itself, and which predisposes us to focus on a dimension of “wording” as distinct from both discrete, propositional “meaning” and the other “pragmatic” or “interpersonal” meanings that are conveyed by prosodic and sub-phonemic features of speech (as per Woodbury 1987, Halliday 1985). See Ong (1982:57–77) and Goody (1987:86–96) regarding the close connection between the development of writing and metalinguistic concepts concerning what counts as “exact repetition.”

³Ungarinyin is not unique in this respect. The same has been reported for Aguaruna (Larson 1978); Navajo, Amharic (Li 1986:39); Chamling, Nepali (Ebert 1986); and, in Australia, Dyirbal (Dixon 1987), Mangarayi (Merlan 1982:1–5), Ngalakan (Merlan 1983:151), and Nunggubuyu (Heath 1984:559). Alpher (1986) finds such an opposition in Yir-Yiront, but it does not seem fully grammaticalized, as none of his examples of “indirect discourse” occurs in a clause that is formally marked as reported speech (cf. McGregor 1984:334–335).

⁴Ungarinyin spellings here are in the practical orthography of Dixon (1980), except that I use *ng* for the velar nasal and *n-g* for apico-alveolar nasal followed by velar stop. Grammatical abbreviations used are:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| cont. continuative | masc. masculine (a-class) | s.c. subordinate clause |
| dat. dative | ob. object | sg. singular |
| fut. future | obl. oblique cross-reference | sub. subject |
| imp. imperative | pauc. paucal | 1 first person |
| int. interrogative | pl. plural | 2 second person |
| irr. irrealis | pres. present | 3 third person |

⁵Some of my phonemic renderings of Ungarinyin words differ slightly from Coate’s, as do some of my glosses, which, however, are consistent with his analysis elsewhere. For instance, the verbs

in lines h and i both include oblique pronominal suffixes (-*ra* and -*nangga*, respectively), which are analyzed as such in Coate and Oates (1970), though not taken account of in the glosses of these lines in Coate (1966). None of these discrepancies concerns points that are crucial to the argument of this article.

⁶See Larson (1978: ch. 4) for a similar range of functions served by reported speech in a Peruvian language that also lacks a direct/indirect opposition.

⁷For present purposes, we can ignore the possibility of *contrasting* "referents," as these are only found (according to Halliday and Hasan) in the grammatical comparative construction. In common with many languages, Ungarinyin has no such constructions, and the English one does not figure in my argument here.

⁸See Rumsey (1988:14–15) and Huddleston (1978). For reviews of more recent literature on "anaphora" within post-Chomskian syntactic analysis, and further proposals about how to handle it, see Reinhart (1983) and Aoun (1985). Though admirably rigorous in its treatment of sentence structure, this general framework is less useful for the analysis of textual cohesion than is Halliday and Hasan's, because it stops at the boundaries of the sentence (cf. Reinhart 1983:157).

⁹For some sample texts, see Halliday (1985:346–371), and Halliday and Hasan (1976:340–355; 1985).

¹⁰For full details concerning similarly "loose" noun phrase structure in Warlpiri, see Hale (1981, 1982, 1983), who has related them to a number of other facts about the language—including "free" word order within the sentence, discontinuous constituent structure, and extensive use of "null anaphora"—which together characterize it as a "non-configurational language," in contrast to "configurational" languages such as English. Hale's work has provided a major stimulus for further studies of Warlpiri (Nash 1980; Simpson 1983; Simpson and Bresnan 1983), and of other languages in Australia and elsewhere (e.g., Blake 1983, Heath 1986, Jelinek 1984). Whatever their own theoretical bent, Australianists who have applied Hale's typological criteria to other Aboriginal languages have agreed that the languages are strongly "non-configurational" in Hale's terms (or, in Blake's, have "flat syntax").

¹¹For further (non-)examples see Coate (1966), where the non-finite verbal words (always followed by an auxiliary) are easily recognizable as such, by interlinear literal glosses such as, in lines 1–5: 'designed he did it', 'find we do them', 'sit he does', and so on. One can find many examples in the text of sequences of two or three clauses including identical (i.e., repeated) non-finite verbal words that would have been good candidates for ellipsis were it grammatically possible: see lines 23–24, 71–72, 92–93, 134–135, 184, 185, 197, 206–208, 235–236, 250–251, 256–258, 318–319, 320–321, 350, 366.

¹²This is doubted by a referee for this article, who raises the problem of "ellipsis not controlled by antecedents" and "third person pronouns interpretable pragmatically" (by which I presume is meant "by recourse to something other than the linguistic context"). But in evaluating Halliday and Hasan's claims it is important to do so in their own terms, bearing in mind their very special use of the terms "reference" and "ellipsis" (as developed above), which exclude both these sorts of cases. The relevant empirical question for the Halliday and Hasan analysis is: Given the occurring "reference items" and "substitutes"/"ellipses" which *are* interpreted endophorically, to what extent is it by recourse to "wording" versus "meaning," respectively?

¹³See also Rumsey (1988) for a minor qualification and a third major point of comparison, omitted here on account of length.

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