

The acoustic profile of pure quotation

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Use vs. mention



Expressions can be used ordinarily (with their usual denotation) or mentioned (used metalinguistically)

the capital of France.



Paris is

a two-syllable word.

/ˈpæ.rɪs/

An expression used metalinguistically is called a ‘pure quotation’.



≠ direct quotation (direct speech), mixed quotation, scare quoting ...

Prototypical pragmatics and syntax

- pragmatic point: talking about a linguistic entity, usually in order to ascribe some property to it
(↔ e.g., attributing an utterance to some speaker, or distancing oneself from a lexical choice)



- **syntax**: occurs as NP-like argument in phrase or clause structure

Subject: *We broke even* has the structure S-P-PC^s.

Predicative comp: My name is **Stuart**.

Object: Frege himself employs ‘**True**’ and ‘**False**’ just this way.

Comp. of prep.: The complement of *than* expresses the value of the predicand.

Appositive: The adjective *new*, the verb *advancing*, and the noun *sociology* require a following head.



In specialised discourse, generally marked:

- by quotes (single or double inverted commas)

Frege himself employs ‘**True**’ and ‘**False**’ just this way.

As an English speaker, I know that “**oculist**” is exactly synonymous with “**eye doctor**”.

- by italics

We regard *my* and *mine* as variants of the genitive case.

In non-specialised discourse, less systematically marked:

Stuart’s my Christian name. My full name is **Stuart Hughes**.

When marks are left out, the mentioning use must be inferred via context.



Do quotes have an acoustic counterpart?

Are quotes pronounced depending on the context?

What does this tell us about the semantic-pragmatic status of quotes?



1. Semantics and pragmatic aspects of quotation
2. Acoustics of quotes in name-informing and pure quotation
3. Conclusion and summary

Semantic and pragmatic aspects of quotation



- Quotes have a pragmatic function
They create markedness and indicate deviation from standard use
- Quotes are a device to talk about an expression's linguistic dimension
They are used to indicate a mentioning use
- Their graphemic correlate is optional



Quotational readings may emerge

- contextually, as with scare quotation (irony)

What “beautiful” weather for a picnic!

Scare-quotational reading produced by situational incongruity



Quotational readings may emerge

- lexically, as with name-informing quotation

*One calls **this disease** “sepsis”.*

$\lambda y \lambda n \lambda x [\text{CALL}(x, y, \text{NAME}(\text{“}n\text{”}, y))]$



*The doctor diagnosed a **so-called** “sepsis”.*

... $[\text{CALL}(x, y, \text{NAME}(\text{“}n\text{”}, y))]$



Quotational readings may emerge

- compositionally, derived from the sentence meaning

“Peace” is a noun.

Pure-quotational reading determined by the copular predicative



The optionality of graphemic quotes raises the question on what linguistic level quotational readings emerge

- Is the mentioning use of an expression acoustically encoded?
- If so, does the encoding of an expression's mentioning use depend on the context in which the expression occurs?



Three theoretical alternatives

1. Quotes are not acoustically encoded at all.

→ They are a non-linguistic communicative device used optionally.

2. Quotes are consistently encoded acoustically.

→ They are a material part of the utterance they occur in.

3. The acoustic correlate of quotes is encoded depending on the context (mentioning vs. non-mentioning).

→ If not, this would support a pragmatic view towards quotes. It treats quotes as “non-semantic”, i.e., as not being a part of the utterance’s semantic-compositional structure, and, instead, as triggering pragmatic inferencing.

Acoustics of quotation



Schlechtweg, M., & Härtl, H. (2020). Do we pronounce quotation? An analysis of name-informing and non-name-informing contexts. *Language and Speech* 63(4). 769–798.

Focus on name informing quotation

Example:

*Viele Mönche tragen die **sogenannte** / **wohlbekannte Kutte** / „**Kutte**“ täglich von morgens bis abends.*

‘Many monks wear the **so-called** / **well-known robe** / “**robe**” everyday from morning to night.’

Major finding: Quoted („*Kutte*“) materials are longer than non-quoted materials (*Kutte*). The primary location of this effect is between the first and second quotes (i.e., on the target word), but the syllable after the second quotes is also clearly affected.



Focus on pure quotation

Most students recognize that peace is a must.
Most students recognize that “peace” is a must.

Denotation

Most students recognize that peace is a noun.
Most students recognize that “peace” is a noun.

Pure quotation

Current study



12 native speakers of English
6 female, 6 male
Academic background

16 monosyllabic English test nouns plus the verb *is* embedded in 16 different sentences

Each sentence in 4 conditions
Denotation, no quotes
Denotation, quotes
Pure quotation, no quotes
Pure quotation, quotes

768 test cases (12 x 16 x 4)



Reading study

Conditions counterbalanced within and across subjects

Exclusion of sound files (4 %) due to technical problems and slips of the tongue

Remaining sound files segmented automatically using the online MAUS tool



Consideration of the word before the quotes, the word within the quotes, and the word after the quotes

Most students recognize that “peace” is a noun.

Response variables

Duration of Word1, Word2, and Word3 (in s)

$F0_{\max}$ of vowel of Word1, Word2, and Word3 (in Hz)

Intensity_{max} of vowel of Word1, Word2, and Word3 (in dB)

Exclusion of data points plus/minus 2.5 standard deviations from the overall mean

Log transformation (to the base 10) of response variables



Descriptive analysis (e.g., means, standard deviations)

Linear mixed effects models in R using the lme4 package

Fixed effects

TYPE (Denotation / Pure quotation)

QUOTES (Yes / No)

(plus their interaction)

Random effects

Intercepts for SUBJECT and ITEM

Slopes for both SUBJECT and ITEM by both TYPE and QUOTES in initial model (but simplified during model fitting process due to issues)



Mean values of Word1

Most students recognize that “peace” is a noun.

	Denotation No quotes	Denotation Quotes	Pure quotation No quotes	Pure quotation Quotes
Word duration	0.176	0.183	0.176	0.185
F0 _{max} vowel	155	153	155	150
Int _{max} vowel	49.7	50	49.8	50.3

No significances.



Mean values of Word2

Most students recognize that “peace” is a noun.

	Denotation No quotes	Denotation Quotes	Pure quotation No quotes	Pure quotation Quotes
Word duration	0.374	0.421	0.391	0.427
F0 _{max} vowel	160	166	160	163
Int _{max} vowel	52.3	52.9	52.3	52.6

Words with quotes longer than words without quotes (0.424 vs.0.382).

Words longer in pure quotation than in denotation (0.409 vs. 0.398).

In gray: No significances.



Mean values of Word3

Most students recognize that “peace” is a noun.

	Denotation No quotes	Denotation Quotes	Pure quotation No quotes	Pure quotation Quotes
Word duration	0.137	0.134	0.137	0.135
F0 _{max} vowel	156	154	150	151
Int _{max} vowel	46.5	46.8	47.2	46.3

No significances.



	Schlechtweg & Härtl 2020	Current study
Language	German	English
Type of quotation	Name-informing	Pure
Total number of cases	256 (Study 1) 512 (Study 2)	768
Analysis	Manual	Automatic
No interaction	Yes (Study 2)	Yes
Clear effect of quotes	Yes	Yes
Quotes = Lengthening	Yes	Yes



- Quotes are consistently encoded, irrespective of where they occur
- Quotes are not systematically articulated in pure-quotational constructions which do not contain quotes
- The articulation of quotes is optional in quotational constructions, which supports a pragmatic view towards quotes

Thank you.

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