

Introduction

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RÉSUMÉ

La classification au niveau syntaxique et pragmatique du discours direct, par rapport au discours indirect, est claire et relativement peu problématique. Pourtant, dans certains textes médiévaux, le discours change de manière soudaine du discours indirect au discours direct, et vice-versa, à l'intérieur d'un même acte de parole. Ce phénomène est appelé *slipping* (« dérapage / glissement / écart ») en linguistique. En réunissant un cycle de travaux portant sur le *slipping* tel qu'il apparaît dans plusieurs langues celtes, germaniques, ainsi qu'en latin médiéval, ce livre se propose d'examiner non seulement les conséquences grammaticales du *slipping* ainsi que ses fonctions éventuelles au niveau du texte et du discours, mais il se propose également d'aboutir à certaines synergies trans-linguistiques.

Normally the classification of direct as opposed to indirect speech is clear and relatively straight-forward. In some texts, however, be they classical, medieval or modern, there are sudden changes from indirect to direct discourse, or vice versa, in a single speech act – a phenomenon often referred to in the linguistic literature as « slipping ». In many Indo-European languages, but of course not exclusively so¹, such shifts are marked grammatically, affecting person, demonstratives and other deictics as well as tense, mood and word-order. In some cases of slipping, there may be several of these grammatical features present, in others only one, perhaps two. It is therefore not always easy to determine, at a specific point in a given discourse passage, when and where the transition from indirect to direct discourse took place. Particularly in literary stylistics, the term Free Indirect Speech (FID) is commonly used for a kind of « intermediary stage » between indirect and direct speech ; FID is marked by the lack of an introductory speech tag and the use of proximal deictics (such as *this*, *here*, *now*) normally associated with direct speech (see Leech & Short 1981, pp. 318-36 ; Wales 1989, pp. 189-92). Most languages and texts investigated in this volume, however, have only examples of indirect speech which *are* introduced

¹ See for example Widmer & Widmer (2005) for Finno-Ugric.

by a speech tag – with one possible exception, namely Anglo-Saxon legislative documents.

In some texts the transition may occur abruptly and completely within a short sentence, in others we find a slow, gradual, often partial transition from one mode of speech to the other ; a kind of « slipping by stages ». It is therefore not surprising that slipping has traditionally been associated with lively, dramatic, speech-based or speech-imitating narrative styles. As the contributions in this volume show, however, the matter is more complicated than that and slipping does occur, and perform important functions, in other genres and text-types as well. In legal prose, for example, slipping may optionally highlight the most important words to be used verbatim in a legal procedure, or it may simply be used pragmatically as a reflection of the extralinguistic circumstances in which medieval law was codified and disseminated.

Most previous studies, supported by the findings in this volume, also indicate that the shift tends to go predominantly one way, namely from indirect to direct speech when, as the text progresses, the introductory matrix clause (introducing the dependent statements, commands, questions, etc.) is left further and further behind. Distance from the matrix clause, and therefore the length of the discourse passage, may indeed be an environment that favours slipping, albeit a kind of slipping by accident or, in Richman's (1986) terminology, « inadvertent slipping » (in French : *slipping par inadvertance*) ; one explanation for this type of slipping may well lie in the psychology of text production. « Inadvertent slipping », Richman has contrasted with « artful slipping » (in French : *slipping par effet de style*), a device used deliberately in order to control and adjust meaning and foreground certain aspects, deeds or characters referred to in a text. This distinction, while useful and valid in some cases, may be very difficult to make in others as an instance of slipping can appear « artful » to us, the readers, but may in fact be nothing more than « inadvertent » – triggered, for example, by auctorial or scribal confusion and/or, in the case of translations, Latin influence, particularly *dicere quia*. Possible examples of inadvertent slipping in translations therefore require further scrutiny with respect to the actual translation procedures and their implications.

The first metalinguistic comments on « slipping », as far as we know, are to be found in *On the Sublime*, a 1st century A.D. Greek treatise of rhetoric and literary criticism wrongly attributed to Cassius Longinus (Cancik & Schneider 2000, pp. 513-16). In *On the Sublime*, the author, often referred to as Pseudo-Longinus, saw slipping as « an effective rhetorical device [...] to suggest an outburst of emotion » (Wales 1989, p. 189) and placed it in the larger context of « interchange of persons [which] produces a vivid impression » (Roberts 1899, § xxvi) :

There is a further case in which a writer, when regulating something about a person, suddenly breaks off and converts himself into that selfsame person. This species of figure is a kind of outburst of passion :

Then with a far-right shout to the Trojans Hector cried,
Bidding them rush on the ships, bidding leave the spoils blood-dyed —

« And whom so I mark from the galleys aloof on the farther side,
I will surely devise his death. » (Iliad xv.346, at Perseus)

The poet assigns the task of narration, as is fit, to himself, but the abrupt threat he suddenly, with no note of warning, attributes to the angered chief. [...] The swift transition of the narrative has outstripped the swift transitions of the narrator. (Roberts 1899, § xxvii ; inverted commas ours)

Indeed, as several contributors to this volume demonstrate, slipping is found across many genres and text-types, albeit at a relatively low overall frequency and not in all the texts that were investigated. Slipping is thus an optional (rhetorical) tool, but where it does occur it can be extremely effective – quite independently of whether we label it artful or inadvertent. In the Old Norse sagas and the Old Saxon *Heliand*, however, a relatively high occurrence of slipping was noted. Why this should be so, is difficult to say with certainty. In the case of the former, slipping may have become a formative part of the sagas' narrative style, in the latter it may have been linked to possible modes of performance.

This volume brings together contributions on slipping in several medieval Celtic and Germanic languages as well as medieval Latin. Individual contributions largely fall into two categories – namely large surveys (for Medieval Welsh, Irish, Medieval Latin, Middle High German, and one of the contributions on Old Norse) or the investigation of a particular genre or a particular text (for Old Saxon, Old English, early Middle English, early Modern High and Low German, and the second part of the Old Norse article) – depending on the research literature already available for the language in question as well as a researcher's field and interest. The approaches taken vary greatly, ranging from linguistic and philological to narratological and *textkritisch*. All contributors, however, discuss the grammatical consequences of slipping and the possible functions of slipping ; they have further provided plenty of examples to illustrate the various points they make. It is therefore hoped that the nine articles in this volume will not only lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon of slipping in the individual languages, genres and texts discussed but will also allow the reader to see certain cross-linguistic synergies and differences. For example, all studies here show a kind of functional core of slipping, namely foregrounding and emphasis of important characters or events when used deliberately ; it remained an optional device, however. Inadvertent slipping by its very nature does not necessarily exhibit the same correlation between form and function, even though, in the eyes of a modern reader, it may arguably still perform some of the functions of artful slipping. Similarly, various structural core features have emerged : the sequence indirect-direct is by far the most frequent ; the appropriate changes in verb forms, deictics and sometimes also word-order ; and a semantic coherence between indirect and direct speech which may be formally marked by some kind of syntactic connector or link. Less consistent in the texts and languages here analysed is, for example, the insertion of a second speech tag, which is relatively rare in some traditions (e.g. Middle Welsh) but the norm in others (e.g. medieval Latin), or a kind of « double slipping » from indirect to direct back to indirect (e.g. Old English, Middle English and Irish). The

findings of this volume therefore argue for a very general cross-linguistic definition of slipping with language-specific modifications around a cluster of prototypical functional as well as structural features.

Publishing in three languages is not an easy feat, and the editors would like to thank the many people who were involved at different stages : in particular Sylvie Ramel, who very competently translated the two « English » papers into French, as well as Didier Maillat, Nicolas Meylan, Fabienne Michelet, Pierre-Eric Monnin, Lucy Perry, and Ilona Sigrist who all generously gave of their time and, with their advice and suggestions, helped to make this a better book. Above all, however, we would like to thank the *Faculté des Lettres* and the *Institut de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage* of the University of Lausanne for their generous financial support ; without them, neither the *Colloque*, held in Lausanne in June 2004, nor this volume of the *Cahiers de l'ILSL* would have been possible.

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