

Mixed viewpoint constructions. Or are they?

Barbara Dancygier & Lieven Vandelanotte
University of British Columbia & University of Namur/University of Leuven

This paper considers the question whether the use of speech and thought representation (STR) in discourse can be analyzed in terms of constructions, and if so, how. It will be shown that the data can best be represented through a multi-layered framework which starts with a description of a basic and restricted set of low-level constructions (tense, pronouns, and adverbials) and then considers them in the context of STR types. Such a framework is most effective in multiple viewpoint representation – the core of STR meaning.

Drawing on Dancygier's (2012) analysis of viewpoint phenomena in stories and Vandelanotte's (2009) work on STR constructions, we will discuss cases of mixed viewpoint, as in free indirect thought (e.g. the underlined part of 1 below) and related forms (as in 2), using STR forms as a special test case for the idea that constructions emerge from the smallest, most concrete level and propagate composite meanings all the way up to broader discourse levels. We believe the notion of *constructional compositionality* (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005, Dancygier 2012) offers a sound basis for a non-trivial 'constructional' understanding of the viewpoint facts observed. For example, the first question in (1) incorporates the viewpoint of the narrator while being constructionally immersed in the viewpoint of the character in the textworld. The viewpoints of narrator, character (James) and a further embedded represented speaker (James's father) are profiled in the discourse of the text, but the ways in which they are represented in the sentence requires considering various levels of interpretation and the deictic restrictions these levels impose. The proposed interpretation will respond to the broad notion of 'discourse constructions/patterns' as used by Östman (e.g. 2005) and to comments of other construction grammarians who are skeptical about the 'construction' status of STR examples. We will also draw comparisons with Croft's (2001) Radical Construction Grammar approach.

- (1) James kept dreading the moment when he would look up and speak sharply to him about something or other. Why were they lagging about here? he would demand, or something quite unreasonable like that. And if he does, James thought, then I shall take a knife and strike him to the heart. (Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*)
- (2) Did I really know the road? Ralph asked me. Were the muleteers to be trusted? Would there be beds and eatable food when we arrived? (Gerald Brennan, *South from Granada*)

Importantly, the argument will also rely on the diachronic perspective. Earlier mixed viewpoint examples such as (3-4) differ from contemporary standards in English in incremental ways: aside from the style which would feel stilted in a contemporary narrative, they use quotation marks as markers of discourse from a different narrative viewpoint, while using pronouns in multi-viewpointed ways, similar to (1-2).

- (3) The orator bustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired "On which side he voted?" Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising, on tiptoe, inquired in his ear "Whether he was Federal or Democrat?" (Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle")
- (4) "Since the idea had been started in the very quarter which ought to dictate, he had no scruple," he said, "in confessing his judgement to be entirely on that side..." (Jane Austen, *Persuasion*)

Narrative viewpoint is here represented in more explicit ways, which employ different constructional features (including punctuation, but also patterns of clause embedding). In this sense, despite a range of formal variation (in comparison to undisputed 'constructions') STR patterns can be argued to display constructionalization (in the sense of Noël 2007). This approach helps explain the role lower-level formal choices play in the emergence of more complex patterns and accounts for the formal variability STR patterns display in actual discourse. It also feeds into broader considerations on the birth and growth of the novel as a genre, and on the formal changes accompanying the process.

References

- Croft, William. 2001. *Radical Construction Grammar*. Oxford: OUP.
- Dancygier, Barbara and Eve Sweetser. 2005. *Mental Spaces in Grammar*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Dancygier, Barbara. 2012. *The Language of Stories: A Cognitive Approach*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Noël, Dirk. 2007. Diachronic construction grammar and grammaticalization theory. *Functions of Language* 14: 177–202.
- Östman, Jan-Ola. 2005. Construction Discourse: A prolegomenon. In Jan-Ola Östman and Mirjam Fried (eds.), *Construction Grammars*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. 121–144.
- Vandelanotte, Lieven. 2009. *Speech and Thought Representation in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.