Deborah Schiffrin: *In Other Words.*
Variation in Reference and Narrative
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1. Overview

It is not that easy to settle one's theoretical standpoint when making an investigation into structures and functions of discourse. Some approaches start from and put more focus on formalization or generalization of what constitute discourse. Others regard data-grounded explanation as more important. Macro analysis directed at generalization requires experiential supports from observations by micro analysis in order to be qualified as persuasive. Similarly, minute examinations, if stated and presented only as they are, would end in plain case studies without theoretical design. In a sense, there have been requirements from totally opposite sides for exploration and explanation of how language works in discourse.

Among many approaches which have struggled their ways to such discourse analyses, *In other words* is one of the well-balanced, extensive studies which meets the requirement basically based on variation analysis, originated in the studies of Labov (1963, 1966, 1972) about variants in the discourses and narrative structures, and represented in Schifflin (1981, 1987, 1994). It gives collective inquiry into several types of "recurrence in second position" with the data extracted in the book which is adopted from a Holocaust

survivor's narrative repeated 4 times with rather long intervals and repetition in the face-to-face talk in sociolinguistic interviews. The goal is to clarify what kinds of linguistic forms are selected when placed as second time reference and how they function according to the social interaction situation.

2. Referrals and Narratives — Two Main Arenas

While the book is about "different ways of saying the same thing," *In other words* is roughly divided into two parts. It is because the book highlights two important phenomena: variation in referrals and narratives. A speaker makes a referral and then redoes that referral, or tells a story and then replays that story. The second position referrals and the second position narratives ought to have certain formulation according to their roles and functions. These two are the subjects of the study in the book and they are examined in the light of speaker's discourse design realized as continuous reformulation of shared knowledge. Still, it should be noted that the main focus of the book is on forms and functions of language designed for discourse along with direction of studies displayed in Ochs, Sheglof and Thompson (1996), not on interaction itself.

From Chapter 1 through Chapter 5, referrals are focused. Four major topics about referrals arise: problematic referrals, anticipating referrals, reactive and proactive prototype and referring sequences as a bridge to narrative. As has been argued in many studies, the referrals, the relationship between referring expressions and referents relies upon a speaker, a hearer, text and context. Thus, it is shown how these factors affect the recurrence.

Chapter 6, 7 and 8 is about narrative. Three major themes are evoked: reframing experience, retelling stories and analyses of referrals and narratives brought together. Again the interrelation effects which concern a speaker, a hearer, text and context including social factors are stressed in the study of narratives. This is because narratives are framed in the particular context where the purpose, manner, content, location, and participants (people

involved) are the keys to variation of speech.

To be cast in another way, the recurrences emerge in the second position as the forms of repairing, repeating, paraphrasing, altering, reframing, repaying and restructuring. So let us sketch out the outlines of each chapter briefly.

2.1 Referrals

First, the four types of repair by a speaker for a problematic referring expression have been discussed in chapter 1. By the word "problematic," it is meant that the speaker and/or the hearer cannot indicate/obtain complete understanding of a particular referring expression in the speaker's conversational turn. Then some solution must be introduced by the speaker. The solutions are:

(1) Type 1 Continue referring expression and continue referent

Type 2 Change referring expression and change referent

Type 3 Change referring expression but continue referent

Type 4 Continue referring expression but change referent

Also from quantitative analysis of the data it is shown that pronoun repairs are more likely to be (grammatical) subjects regardless of their problem type and that TYPE 1 repairs appear more often than Type 2 and 3 in turn-initial utterances. Also noted is that Type 4 is so rare. The observations are directly related to the problems with pronouns as for the speaker's assessment of what a hearer will be able to identify.

Next, Chapter 3 is about article switches and article repetitions. As article are forward looking and thus considered as projecting information status of an upcoming referent, they contribute to minimization: "mean more by saying less", the idea recently built by pragmatics research (Blackwell 2003, for example). The link from one referring expression to the referent can owe much to the distinction a/the, as is known. Taking an example, article switching (or repetition) will make contribution for discourse processing and its modification strategy just like in (2).

(2)   Zelda: (a) He's **the family d-** he's *a doctor around here*

(b) and when-   we just start-y- =

Henry (c)   neighborhood doctor.

Zelda (d) = everybody used t' to t'him.

(e) And so we did too.

Debby (f) Yeh. Do you go to *the same doctor* Irene?

(g) *The neighborhood doctor?*

Irene: (h) Yeh I use *a neighborhood doctor,*

(i) but it's not *the same doctor.*

Again with statistic data analysis, it is shown how problematic referrals involving articles can help to clarify the process through which the speaker designs referrals for others.

This minimization fails in some cases. So remedies are introduced in Chapter 4 by redistribution of information from a noun to less densely packed sentences and text. It is a reactive strategy for resolving problems of the referring expression and could also serve as a proactive strategy for referrals. Among such strategies, two prototype constructions have been examined. *There is X* type and *They have X.* Differences of these two are examined in the light of what kind of link it provides in the text.

(2)   *The street keeper's box   they had breadboxes* on the wall

(3)   All *the neighbors/viewers   there was so many people* up there

Then, Chapter 5, based on the narrative about the concentration camp and a face-to-face talk in sociolinguistic interview, explores what kind of constraints on "next-mention" work within these two genres as strategies of sequential choice. Four elements, recency, potential ambiguity, topicality and boundaries, are introduced so as to maintain the sequence of the story world, used to design what comes when and how in the sequences of discourse.

2. 2   Narrative

Chapter 6 has focused on analyses of the ways how sequences of clauses are brought together in a narrative. Just as referring expressions can be redone,

narratives can be replayed. The data cited in this chapter and the following chapters, is extracted from four different oral history interviews in 1982, 1984, 1995a, and 1995b (twice in 1995). To be more precise, it is one single story retold by one speaker, a Holocaust survivor. Linguistic traces are explored to show that the stories are retold incorporating different experiential sources. For example, as changes in referring expressions (ex. German Wehrmacht → army personnel), pronouns (ex. group of Jews → us), verbal expressions (ex. will take → would take), manner adverbials (ex. ϕ → very), choice of conjunctions (ex. if → when) and so on. Reframing experiences is observed here by incorporating others' experience and it is pointed out that this reframing is often seen in public memorial and sometimes in private lives and life stories. It is also argued this is controversial since it always evokes the matter of rights, privileges and responsibilities of the use of experiences which cannot be free from causing transformation from the original one.

Chapter 7 is about changes in structures and evaluations of the repeated stories. Three phases in the single story of Holocaust survival are referred: the plan, anticipation and the capture. According to the author's observation, the story tends to be told based on its theme at the first time. But in repetition it began to shift to the one based on progressive time order. It is a shift from stanza to linear in the author's term. This is shown as a shift from dependent to independent, the addition of event clauses, the appearance of temporal juncture. At the same time the change in evaluation is noted through these structural changes so that it shifts towards external evaluation of the credibility, plausibility and necessity of the plan. The effect of linearization is to maintain and intensify suspense. It is done by both reframing and retelling.

The goal of Chapter 8 is examination of recurrent referrals within recurrent narratives. The analyses in the preceding chapters are brought together for both retold capture (Holocaust) stories and replayed face-to-face stories. Striking linguistic similarities found here in these two narratives

completely different in many phases shed the light on how people make use of recurrence strategies for referrals and narratives when they design a speech for others. Highlighted is the analysis of collective "we" as referring expression and expectation/structure formulation as narrative designs.

3. In Other Words: Strategies for "Saying It Again"

The last chapter is marked in the sense that the author practices "second telling strategies" found and explored in her own study, applying them to her own theoretical achievement itself. The observations in the previous chapters in the book are retold and re-structured in linear order and evaluated again so as to assure the adequacy of exploration in the study. They are induced to an answer to the familiar linguistic question what is new and what is old and how forms are used to realize those distinct aspects. That is to say, how and why referrals are to be redone while narratives are to be replayed.

Although the theme in this book deals with is a classic one traced back to the basic semantic issue such as referring expressions and their referents, the approach is innovative one with a viewpoint in the light of social context and speaker – hearer interaction. The analysis is primarily concerned with linguistic traces in overt realized forms and framed in word- to -world relation including speaker and audience setting concerning studies of both referrals and narrative. As such, words or realized specific linguistic forms as variants are focused and examined as primary subjects of study. This is the point where the study has diverged from the studies of repairs in Conversational Analysis such as Shegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977). However, the procedure and method of the study is not apart from world or contextual aspects: who is speaking to whom where, when and how. This attitude of the approach based on real spontaneous speech data contribute much to clarify how language is preformed since it is in this sort of natural speech that functions of many linguistic forms are used in reality.

At the same time, it does not remain as simple case studies of arbitrary

selected spontaneous conversations and story-telling. It contains an axis for generalization and formulation, which is essential to an explicit theoretical achievement in linguistics and in any qualitative research project which sometimes tends to result in mere "case presentation." The axis, or the aim is explicit: formulation of redoing referrals is targeted because they constitute one essential part of language role – naming. Generalization of replaying narrative is focused because it works as one essential part of language function – sharing event or experience. Thus these two topics chosen are familiar, nonetheless not banal by any means just because of this distinct directionality for research goals. In this sense this study differs from the one about discourse variations (patterns) represented in Gumpertz (1982) or the one about whole speech event analysis represented in Hymes (1972).

Another remarkable point is that a quantitative approach serves as complimentary or supplementary study of referrals. This quantitative research in almost all chapters combined with qualitative analysis also supports this verification process above. The way the figurative support is used may not be strictly called as statistic approach by its strict definition. Still the figures clearly give the persuasive picture to the analysis developed here. Note that the explanation counts as persuasive all the more because it is based on both qualitative and quantitative inquiries. It is data-grounded and starts from minute examination of the extract, not from artificial speech composed with intention, but from real, spontaneous discourse.

In other words is undoubtedly one outstanding mile stone work in the field of study on variation in discourse with its synthetic value. It is true that there might be more to be explored. Though preceding studies about the topic of each chapter are examined minutely and weaved synthetically at each best point, there may be a need for further investigation in the book. To take one example, one may be concerned with use of specific linguistic forms (words) in narrative. The observations in the former chapters about referrals (for one instance, referral anticipation) may be related and positioned from several more points in the analysis of narrative organization. Others may be still

more interested in stance and effects of the recipient responses. For investigation of multi-storied entire picture of discourse strategies, incorporating re-action from the recipient is essential factor not to be overlooked. So there remains much to be examined. It would be more extensive work with both qualitative and quantitative investigation of hearer effects on variation or recurrence. Still, these are not considered as deficiency of the book. Rather, they are possibilities of further studies joined by many scholars. In that sense this book is an inspiration for anyone who is interested in how discourse is designed and performed.

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