

A proposal for a paper at the XVIIth International Congress of Celtic Studies

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Paper

TITLE The author as a weaver:
The grammatical make-up of the interface between narrative and dialogue in Welsh
TYPE 20-minute paper
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Abstract

Texts are complex entities, made of more elementary components which are connected together like intertwining threads that make a textile. Indeed, the word *text* (from Latin *textus* ‘that which is woven’) shares an etymological link with *textile*. Different types of texts are made of different types of textual components.

This paper focusses on the grammatical features of the meeting point of two main, interwoven components of short stories: reported speech (most commonly, dialogue between characters), and the narration in which it is embedded. The linguistic manifestation of this interface is known as a *quotative index* (other terms for the same notion include *formula of quotation*, *dialogue tag* and *inquit formula*), as demonstrated in the following example (TG, ch. 7, p. 83):

quote	quotative index			
<i>‘Oedd arnat ti ddim eisio mynd i ddanfon Winni?’</i> <i>‘Didn’t you want to go see Winni off?’</i>	nucleus <i>meddai</i> said	speaker <i>ei mam</i> her mother	addressee <i>wrth Begw</i> to Begw	modification <i>wedi iddynt fynd.</i> after they’d gone.

The data used for this paper — two collections of short stories by Kate Roberts, *Te yn y Grug* and *Haul a Drycin* — exhibit interesting systematic text-grammatical patterns. Three syntactic configurations of *quotative indexes* are attested, with distinct textual signifieds: the choice between the three signals the function of the reported quote within the narrative. The configurations differ also with respect to the internal structural behaviour of the core constituents of the quotative indexes (*nucleus*, *speaker*, *addressee* and *modification*). Furthermore, the system that governs the distribution between overt and zero quotative indexes shows sensitivity to pragmatic developments in the fictional dialogue.

Uncovering these text-linguistic systems of narrative can contribute to our understanding of Welsh narrative grammar and, more generally, the ways an author utilises language for weaving intricate texts.