

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

## Personal details

NAME Júda Ronén  
AFFILIATION The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
The Department of Linguistics  
EMAIL jehuda.ronen@mail.huji.ac.il

## 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			
	nucleus	speaker	addressee	modification
'Oedd arnat ti ddim eisio mynd i ddanfon Winni?'	meddai	ei mam	wrth Begw	wedi iddynt fynd.
'Didn't you want to go see Winni off?'	said	her mother	to Begw	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.