

# Between Narrative and Dialogue: Syntactical Features of Signalling Speech in Narrative in Modern Welsh

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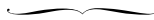
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## Abstract

Dialogue is a key element in narration: be it a fairy tale, a short story or a novel, the characters usually *speak*. In literary text, dialogue and narrative are closely interwoven.

**Some syntactical features of the interface between narrative and dialogue in Modern Literary Welsh will be examined in this paper, on the basis of ‘*Te yn y Grug*’ (1959) by Kate Roberts (1891–1985).** This text-linguistic domain is hitherto unexplored in Welsh.

Narrative and dialogue (*Erzählen* and *Besprechen* in WEINRICH (1971); *histoire* and *discours* in BENVENISTE (1971)) are two principal and complex *textemes* (that is, signalled and bounded units manifesting distinctive and complete (sub-)systems of grammar). Studying the mutual connections between them is of great importance to both general linguistics and our understanding of the text-grammatical system of Welsh (and of ‘*Te yn y Grug*’ in particular).



*Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, ‘and what is the use of a book,’ thought Alice, ‘without pictures or conversation?’*

— Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Down the Rabbit-Hole

# 0 Introduction

Good afternoon.

## 0.1 Topic and methodology

In the next thirty minutes I will **describe** some of my **findings** concerning certain linguistic constructions in *Te yn y Grug* (1959) by Kate Roberts (1891–1985), a collection of eight short stories, beautifully portraying the childhood of a little girl in Sir Caernarfon.

The research I will present here is a part of an ongoing research on the grammar of Kate Roberts at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which is led by Prof. Ariel Shisha-Halevy. Look at the final page of the handout for a bibliography.

The linguistic system that is the focus of this paper is that of **signalling speech** in narrative; that is, the devices used for indicating that a character in the story speaks and what she or he says. As we will see, these devices are purely of **linguistic** nature: they have a well-defined formal **signifier** and a corresponding **signified**. My basic work hypothesis is that difference in **form** must imply difference in **function** (that is, in ‘meaning’), unless a true free variation or a complementary distribution are shown. This approach is deeply rooted in the structural-semiological tradition of descriptive linguistic analysis.

The scope and means of this study are of a **macro-syntactic** order. A traditional ‘**sentence grammar**’ cannot help us understand the sub-systems in question which are **textual** by nature, as we will see. A **text-linguistic** approach, however, is well suited for decoding the system that is manifested in the text.

Narrative and dialogue are two principal and complex **textemes**. A texteme is a subtextual signalled and bounded unit manifesting a **distinctive and complete (sub-)system of grammar**. In literary text, these two textemes are closely interwoven. In this paper I will present some syntactical features of the **interface** between them. By this I hope to offer a better, more sensitive, understanding of the text which can benefit not only linguistics but also readers.

## 0.2 Structure

As you can see in the handout, this paper is divided into two parts:

- In the first one, I will survey the syntactical patterns in which speech appears in the text. **Three different patterns** emerge; I will describe their **formal properties** (that is, their signifier (*signifiant*)), present the **functional distinction** between them (that is, their signified (*signifié*)) and give **examples** for each one of them.
- In the second part, I will attempt a **closer examination** of one of these patterns, describing the **distribution** between a use of a **positive** verb of speaking (*verbum dicendi*) and the **lack thereof**.

## Structure

0. Introduction
1. Speech and narrativity:
  - (a) The information structure of signalling speech
  - (b) Three patterns (A, B and C):
    - i. Their formal properties (*signifiant*)
    - ii. The functional distinction between them (*signifié*)
    - iii. Examples from the text
2. Focus on pattern A: a positive *verbum dicendi* (verb of speaking) versus the lack thereof.

## 1 Speech and narrativity

### 1.1 The information structure of signalling speech

Now we proceed to the first part of the paper: ‘speech and narrativity’.

I will now discuss the information structure of *inquit* formulae. *Inquit* formulae are constructions that anchor speech in a text. An example for an *inquit* formula in English would be “...” he said.’ (see point @).

I quoted text speaker *verbum dicendi*  
‘...’ he said .

To discuss the information structure of *inquit* formulae I will use the terms ‘theme’ and ‘rheme’.

The **theme** is the information-basis segment for which the point, the new information, is made and this new information is the **rheme**.

II SHISHA-HALEVY (1995, p. 215):

**Theme:** one of the two main constituents of the basic information structure of the clause: the information-basis segment (given presupposed or taken for granted) in the clause extent for the point (message) made in it. The theme is constituent that least advances the communication made by the clause.

**Rheme:** one of the two main constituents of the basic information structure of the nexal clause: the constituent that conveys new information about the theme.

The information structure of *inquit* formulae is interesting. Normally, the verb is the rheme of a verbal nexus, unless it is marked as a theme. With verbs of speaking (*verba dicendi*) in narrative, the normal situation is different: the new information is not the fact that the character speaks, but the words that are spoken.

III Rheme Theme Rheme (cont.)  
‘.....’ **MEDDAI** hi. ‘.....’

Crosslinguistically, *verba dicendi*, literally meaning in Latin ‘**words** of speaking’, tend to show some **semi-** or **quasi-verbal** characteristics. I will now examine a partial selection of them:

1. They are normally thematic, whereas verbs are normally rhematic.

2. In Welsh and some other languages, they are commutable with non-verbal elements. See ex. 1 for an example of ‘*oddi wrth*’ and ex. 2 for an example of nominal predication.

A note.

All of the translations given in the handout are taken from Joseph P. Clancy’s translation (ROBERTS (1991)).

1 Gofid:

[...] Aeth at y tân o lech i lwyn, eistedd ar y stôl a beichio crio. [...] She went to the fire furtively, sat on the stool, and burst out crying.

‘Taw â chlegar,’ **ODDI WRTH** ei thad. [...] ‘Stop squawking,’ **FROM** her father. [...]

2 Te yn y Grug:

‘Sut ydych chi’n gwbod mai i’r mynydd ydan ni’n mynd?’ [...] ‘How do you know that we’re going to the mountain?’ **WAS BEGW’S QUESTION.**

**OEED CWESTIWN BEGW.**

3. *Inquit* formulae tend to be **frozen** and **grammaticalised**, and in many languages there exists a single unmarked *inquit* formula.

For a survey of the grammaticalisation of *verba dicendi* in another language family, see CHAPPELL (2008).

4. In Welsh, the most common *verba dicendi* — *meddai* and *ebe* — are ‘defective’ in morphology: *ebe* has no inflexion at all, and *meddai* has a very limited one. Cf. Latin ‘*inquit*’ and English ‘*quoth*’.

The fact that *meddai* shows imperfect-like morphology is interesting, as the imperfect is used in many languages for description and exposition, which are **thematic** uses that do not advance the plot. See ROSÉN (1980) for such an analysis in a Latin corpus.

5. In many languages there is a tendency to use ‘empty’ or ‘light’ verbs as *verba dicendi* in colloquial speech; e.g. English ‘to go’, French ‘*faire*’ (‘to make, to do’), Hebrew ‘*laasót*’ (also meaning ‘to make, to do’).

English ‘like’ and ‘all’ are also used in such constructions.

6. FLEISCHMAN (1990, §3.11) says that in certain styles of non-standard English (which dialects?), self-quoting is marked by 'I says' or 'says I'. 'says' does not agree in person with I as verbs do.
7. Crosslinguistically, *Verba dicendi* treat their complement differently than 'normal' verbs. See MUNRO (1982).

All these and many other properties of **semi-** or **quasi-verbality** lead to the conclusion that in narrative *verba dicendi* are basically a **device** used by the author to indicate the **identity** of the speaker and to **anchor** the speech into the text. This is comparable with the norm of indicating speech in **plays** (see point @), in which actually no **verb** is used.

IV ¶ SPEAKER (MODE OF SPEAKING and/OR CO-INCIDENTAL ACTION): UTTERANCE ¶

## 1.2 Patterns of signalling speech

### 1.2.1 Formal properties

Now we proceed to the part 'patterns of signalling speech', beginning with the formal properties of the patterns.

In *Te yn y Grug* three, and **only** three, syntactical patterns are used for signalling speech, hereinafter simply referred to as 'pattern A', '-B' and '-C'.

Let us now survey the formal properties of these patterns:

- V
- A.  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} A+: \text{¶ '...,' [VERBUM DICENDI] ([SPEAKER]). ('...')} \text{¶} \\ A-: \text{¶ '...'} \text{¶} \end{array} \right.$
  - B. ... [A SENTENCE WITH A VERBUM DICENDI]: ¶  
¶ '...,' ¶
  - C. ... [A SENTENCE WITH A VERBUM DICENDI AND A QUOTATION]. ...

- A. The **first pattern**, A, is by far the **most common** one. It is set in a **separated paragraph** (which is graphically indicated here by the pilcrow symbol), and **begins with a quoted text**.

It has **two sub-patterns**: A+ contains an **explicit *verbum dicendi***, while A– contains the quotation **alone**, marked as such only by **typography**. It is on the **difference** between these two sub-patterns that the **second part** of the paper will focus.

3 Pattern A+: *Dieithrio* (⊂ ex. 10):

Wedi gorffen bwyta, cododd pawb.

After they finished eating, everybody got up.

‘*Diolch i chi,*’ **MEDDAI** Lisi Jên reit ffwr-bwt.

‘*Thank you,*’ Lisi Jên **SAID**, quite brusquely.

Meddyliodd Begw oddi wrth ei hosgo fod Winni am wneud araith broffwydol cyn ymadael, [...]

Begw thought from her bearing that Winni meant to make a prophetic speech before leaving, [...]

4 Pattern A–: *Y Pistyll* (⊃ ex. 26; Begw’s father asks her mother):

‘A mi fyddi di hefyd gei di weld. Ust, gwranddo. Dyma fo ar y gair.’

And you will be too, you’ll see. Shush, listen. Here he is this minute.

‘*A sut mae Begw heno?*’

‘*And how is Begw tonight?*’

‘*Newydd gael pwl eto,*’ ebe’r fam yn ddistaw.

‘*Just had an attack again,*’ her mother said quietly.

B. The second pattern, B, consists of a sentence with a *verbum dicendi* in the end of a paragraph, and a quoted text in a separated paragraph after it. This pattern, therefore, spans two paragraphs: its first part is attached to a previous paragraph, and the second one is set in its own paragraph.

5 Pattern B: *Dianc i Lundain* (⊃ ex. 11):

[...] Aethai hithau i’r siamber gefn i strancio, ac wrth weld na thalai hynny aeth at ei dol i chwilio am gysur, a daliai’r ddol honno gerfydd ei choes yn awr wrth edrych i fyny ac i lawr y ffordd i chwilio am ryw gysur arall.

[...] She’d gone to the back bedroom to act up, and on seeing that that didn’t pay, went to her doll to look for comfort, and she was holding the doll by her leg now as she looked up and down the road in search of some further comfort.

Yna gwelodd rywbeth tebyg i frân fawr yn dyfod wrth y capel. **Gwnaeth y frân lwybr syth at Begw A DWEUD:**

Then she saw something like a great crow coming by the chapel. **The crow made a straight path to Begw and SAID:**

*‘R ydw i’n dengid go iawn y tro yma. ‘R ydw i wedi dŵad i ben ‘y nhennyn. Tyd, Begw, mi awn ni.’*

Rhoes Begw luch i’r ddol dros ben gwyl ardd, a neidiodd i law Winni Ffinni Hadog, [...]

*‘I’m escaping for real this time. I’ve come to the end of my tether. Come, Begw, we’ll go.’*

Begw gave the doll a toss over the garden wall, and leapt to the hand of Winni Ffinni Hadog, [...]

C. The third pattern, C, is ‘planted’ in the running text of a paragraph. It does not begin with a quotation (as pattern A does) and does not spread over two paragraphs (as pattern B does). There are relatively few instances of this pattern in the text.

6 Pattern C: Gofid (=ex. 13):

Pan gododd, nid oedd Sgiatan o gwmpas yn unlle, **ac er GWEIDDI** ‘Pws, Pws’, **ni ddaeth o unman**. Toc, mentrodd agor y drws cefn a dyna lle’r oedd Sgiatan — nid ar garreg y drws yn codi ei chynffon ac yn barod i’w rhwbio ei hun yn ei choesau, ond yn gorwedd mewn crwc o ddŵr, ei phedair coes wedi ymestyn allan [...]

When she got up, Sgiatan wasn’t anywhere around, **and though she’d SHOUTED** ‘Puss, Puss’, **she didn’t come out from anywhere**. Presently, she ventured to open the back door and there was Sgiatan—not on the doorstep raising her tail and ready to rub herself on her legs, but lying in a bucket of water, her four legs stretched out [...]

A prominent characteristic of the formal properties of these three patterns is that typography plays a major rôle in their definition. Typographical devices should be considered equal among other linguistic devices in **written** language, just as intonation and pauses are in the **spoken** one.

### 1.2.2 Functional distinction

Now, in describing the functional distinction between these patterns I will use the term ‘**staging**’, from the **cinematic** and **theatrical** meta-language. In many cases cinematic and theatrical terms and metaphors are extremely useful in describing



narrative grammars: films and plays tend to present **explicitly** what stories present **implicitly**.

So, I hope to show that the function of our three patterns is that of **staging** the scene in different ways. **Staging** plays a major part in building the **textual** and **textural** structure of narratives.

The difference between the three patterns is the rôle of the speech in the scene. It is summarised in point @.

- A. The **first pattern** is **unmarked**. Using the cinematic metaphor, this pattern is merely used for **'passing the microphone'** or **'-the camera'** from one character to another, without any special marking. The act of the character's speech is not encoded, not **signalled**, as an **event**.
- B. The **second pattern**, however, is **marked**. This pattern is used in order to mark the **speaking** as a narrative **event**. As we'll see, the exact semantics of the speaking being marked as such may vary according to the context in the story; generally, it is a salience of the **act** of speaking or of the **identity of the speaker**.

For a survey of the term 'event' see FLEISCHMAN (1990, p. 433, <sup>sub verbo</sup> s.v. )

- C. The **third pattern** is also **marked**. This pattern is of a different kind than A and B: while speech that is marked by these two constitutes a part of a dialogue, this pattern is non-dialogic; exclamations and sounds, when used outside a dialogue, are signalled in this pattern, as we'll see later in the examples.

VI	Pattern A	Pattern B	Pattern C
	unmarked	marked	marked
	'passing the microphone'	the speaking is an event	not a part of a dialogue

Let's have a look at the second table (point @): both pattern A and -B are dialogic, while the third one is not. The difference between the two first patterns is that the second one constitutes an integral part of the narrative while the first one does not.

VII	Pattern A	Pattern B	Pattern C
	-narrative	+narrative	+narrative
	+dialogue	+dialogue	-dialogue

The lack of a ‘–narrative’ ‘–dialogue’ pattern is unsurprising: such utterances have no place in the kind of text in question.

For the sake of clarity, let us go over, again, the simple examples given in exx. 3–6:

- Exx. 3 and 4 (the two subpatterns of A: A+ and A–) are regular lines in dialogues.
- In ex. 5 (pattern B) the speech is an event.
- In ex. 6 (pattern C) Begw does not participate in a dialogue while calling ‘*pws, pws*’.

## 1.3 Examples

Let’s have a look at some examples from the text.

### 1.3.1 Pattern A

The vast majority of quotations in the text are in pattern A. When Kate Roberts isn’t marking speech as special she’s using this pattern.

Looking at ex. 7, we can see that normal conversations are signalled by a series of instances of Pattern A: each line in the dialogue is set in its own paragraph and begins with a quoted text.

7 *Diethrio:*

*‘Mae gynnoch chi ryw  
oglau da iawn, Winni,’  
**OEDD CYFARCHIAD ELIN GRUFFYDD,**  
er mwyn cuddio’r chwithigrwydd, a  
rhag sylwi ar yr ôl crio ar Winni – crio  
glân y tro hwn.*

*‘Meistres roth sent ar fy hances boced i,’  
**MEDDAI** hithau, ‘ac ylwch, mae hi wedi  
rhoi ruban coch imi glymu fy ngwallt i fynd  
efo fy nghap i, a mi ges i swllt gin Mistar i  
dalu fy mrêc.’*

*‘You smell very nice, Winni,’  
**WAS ELIN GRUFFYDD’S GREETING,**  
to conceal the awkwardness, and to  
avoid taking notice of the traces of  
crying on Winni—clean crying, this  
time.*

*‘Mistress put scent on my pocket  
handkerchief,’ she **SAID,** ‘and look,  
she gave me a red ribbon for tying my hair  
back that goes with my cap, and I had a  
shilling from Mister to pay for my brake.’*

*'Da iawn. Ydach chi'n meddwl y liciwch chi'ch lle?'*

*'Gna, am wn i, cystal ag y licia i unman. Mi fuo bron i mi â marw gin hiraeth yr wsnos yma. 'R oedd o yn fy mygu fi wrth fynd i 'ngwely.'*

*'R un fath mae pawb, Winni, mae o'r un fath â thorri ceffyl, rhaid peidio â rhoi i mewn.'*

*'Hiraeth am Sionyn oedd arna i,' **MEDDAI** gan ddechrau snwffian.*

*'Oedd o'n falch o'ch gweld chi?' **GOFYNNODD** Begw.*

*'Mi'r oedd o'n swil i gychwyn, yn cuddio'i wyneb ym marclod i fam, ond mi fynnodd gael i de ar fy nglin i.'*

[...]

*'Very good. Do you like your place?'*

*'Yes, I suppose, as well as I like anywhere. I was almost dying with homesickness this week. It choked me when I went to bed.'*

*'Everybody's the same way, Winni, it's the same as breaking a horse, you mustn't give in.'*

*'I was homesick for Sionyn,' she **SAID**, beginning to sniffle.*

*'Was he glad to see you?' Begw **ASKED**.*

*'He was shy at the start, hiding his face in his mother's apron, but he insisted on having his tea on my knee.'*

[...]

### 1.3.2 Pattern B

Let us now move on to **examples** of the **second pattern**, which spans **two paragraphs** and signals the speaking as a narrative **event**.

8

*Nadolig y Cerdyn* (Nanw Siôn destroys Begw's romantic dream of *Nadolig hen ffasiwn* ('Old fashioned Christmas')):

*Ni fedrai Begw **DDWEUD** gair. Yr oedd wedi cael ei thwylo ar hyd yr amser. Wedi gweld rhyw fyd rhamantus ymhell yn ôl lle'r oedd plant bach yn cael Nadolig gwyn bob blwyddyn. **MENTRODD** toc.*

*'Wel, mae 'u celwydd nhw wedi dŵad yn wir y tro yma beth bynnag, ac ella mai rŵan 'r ydan ni'n dechra cael Nadolig hen ffasiwn.'*

*Begw couldn't **SAY** a word. She'd been deceived all the time. Had seen a romantic world long ago where little children had a white Christmas every year. **Presently she VENTURED:***

*'Well, their lie has come true this time anyway, and maybe now is when we start having an old-fashioned Christmas.'*

Begw's ability or inability to **speak** is referred to in the narrative.

9 *Ymwelydd i De* (Begw is eagerly waiting for Winni to come):

<p>Toc clywsant sŵn clocsiâu ar lechi'r drws, ac yr oedd mam Begw yno o'i blaen <u>YN DWEUD</u>:</p>	<p>Presently they heard the sound of clogs on the doorstep, and Begw's mother was there before her, <u>SAYING</u>:</p>
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<p>'Dowch i mewn, Winni,' yn groesawus.</p>	<p>'Come in, Winni,' welcomingly.</p>
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This is my favourite example. Begw is eagerly waiting for Winni to come, but it is **her mother** that greets her first, **saying** 'Dowch i mewn, Winni'. If ex. 8 was an example for a salience of the **act** of speaking, this one is for a salience of the **identity of the speaker**.

10 *Ymwelydd i De* (Lisi Jên came; they began eating):

<p>Wedi gorffen bwyta, cododd pawb.</p>	<p>After they finished eating, everybody got up.</p>
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<p>'Diolch i chi,' meddai Lisi Jên reit ffwr-bwt.</p>	<p>'Thank you,' Lisi Jên said, quite brusquely.</p>
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<p>Meddylodd Begw oddi wrth ei hosgo fod Winni am wneud araith broffwydol cyn ymadael, ond y cwbl a <u>DDYWEDODD</u> oedd:</p>	<p>Begw thought from her bearing that Winni meant to make a prophetic speech before leaving, but all that she <u>SAID</u> was:</p>
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<p>'Diolch yn fawr i chi, Elin Gruffydd, dyna'r pryd gora' ges i 'rioed. Mi fydd yn rhaid iddo fo 'neud imi am hir.'</p>	<p>'Thank you very much, Elin Gruffydd, that was the best meal I ever had. It will have to do us for a long while.'</p>
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<p><u>DYWEDODD</u> hyn gan edrych ar ei llysfam [...]</p>	<p>She <u>SAID</u> this looking at her stepmother [...]</p>
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Speaking so that Lisi Jên would hear is a deliberate **action** made by Winni. That Winni is **speaking** briefly and plainly is against Begw's expectation of what she would say by leaving; an expectation that is given in the narrative. This is one example, among many others, for Kate Roberts' telling the story through Begw's eyes. Another device for that is, of course, the **free indirect discourse** (see BANFIELD (1982)).

11 *Dianc i Lundain:*

Yna gwelodd rywbeth tebyg i frân fawr yn dyfod wrth y capel. **Gwnaeth y frân lwybr syth at Begw A DWEUD:**

*‘R ydw i’n dengid go iawn y tro yma. ‘R ydw i wedi dŵad i ben ‘y nhennyn. Tyd, Begw, mi awn ni.’*

Then she saw something like a great crow coming by the chapel. **The crow made a straight path to Begw and SAID:**

*‘I’m escaping for real this time. I’ve come to the end of my tether. Come, Begw, we’ll go.’*

an animal is **speaking**, and this, of course, is noteworthy.

The ‘PRETERITE + *a*+INFINITIVE’ construction occurs here (*‘gwnaeth... a dweud’*; lit. ‘she made ... and to say’). According to SHISHA-HALEVY (1997), the infinitive in this construction is the semantic core, or ‘main event’, in it, with the inflected verb being preparatory.

This strengthens my claim: two different signs indicate the importance of the event of speaking.

12 *Dianc i Lundain* (Begw and Winni are looking on the lake, after they’ve been walking for a while):

**Troes Begw o’r diwedd, ac yn sydyn GWAEDDODD:**

*‘Dyna hi.’*

*‘Beth eto?’*

*‘Y lôn bost.’*

**Begw turned at last and suddenly SHOUTED:**

*‘There it is.’*

*‘What now?’*

*‘The post road.’*

The **event** of finding the post road, which influences the rest of the story, is indicated by Begw’s **cry** ‘*Dyna hi*’, in pattern B.

A note about rhymes.

Four rhymes appear in *Te yn y Grug*, all of which are presented in pattern B. The mutual relation between narratives and verses in Welsh is yet to be investigated.

### 1.3.3 Pattern C

Let us now **conclude** this part by surveying **examples** for the **third pattern**. Speech that is introduced by this pattern does **not**, as claimed above, constitute **a part of a dialogue**. The **eight** following examples are **all** of the examples for this pattern in the corpus.

- Exx. 13 (*pws, pws*), 14 (*by*), 15 (*ha, ha*) and 16 (*o*) are **mimetic** by nature. There is no discourse here, only sounds.  
‘pws’ in ex. 13 is treated as a sound, not as a word meaning ‘a kitty’.
- Exx. 17 (*nos dawch*) and 18 (*wel O!*) are **exclamative**. ‘y gryduras ffeind’ in ex. 18 is marked as an exclamation by the ‘y’ which is **not** the definite article, although translated as such by Clancy.
- Exx. 19 and 20 both have ‘*lle mae Begw?*’: in ex. 19 it occurs in a description, and in ex. 20 in the course of events. In both cases, there is no discourse; Bilw’s question is not answered and it is more of an ‘act of kindness’ on his side rather than a true question (although he asks it ‘as if he’d been searching the earth before finding her’...).

13 *Gofid* (Begw is looking after the lost Sgiatan):

Pan gododd, nid oedd Sgiatan o gwmpas yn unlle, **ac er GWEIDDI** ‘Pws, Pws’, **ni ddaeth o unman**. Toc, mentrodd agor y drws cefn a dyna lle’r oedd Sgiatan [...]

When she got up, Sgiatan wasn’t anywhere around, **and though she’d SHOUTED ‘Puss, Puss’, she didn’t come out from anywhere**. Presently, she ventured to open the back door and there was Sgiatan [...]

14 *Marwolaeth Stori* (A description of Dafydd Siôn):

[...] Weithiau, fe edrychai drwyddi heb na gwên na gwg ar ei wyneb, **dim ond edrych arni a rhoi pwniad yn ei brest**, **A CHWYRNU** ‘By’ fel pe bai’n ceisio ei dychryn. [...]

[...] At times, he’d look through her without a smile or a frown on his face, **just look at her and give her a nudge on the chest, and SNARL ‘Buh’ as if he were trying to frighten her**. [...]

15 *Marwolaeth Stori* (Begw is in bed):

Ni fedrai gysgu. **Deuai sŵn y siarad o’r gegin fel sŵn gwenyn yn yr haf, ac ambell ‘Ha, ha’ ODDI WRTH Bilw yn ei ganol.** She couldn’t sleep. **The sound of the talk was coming from the kitchen like the sound of bees in summer, with an occasional ‘Ha, ha’ FROM Bilw in the middle of it.**

16 *Dianc i Lundain* (Winni says she once prayed ‘like the devil’):

**Dychrynodd Begw, A GOLLWNG ‘O’ ofnus ALLAN.** Begw was horrified, and **LET OUT a timid ‘Oh’.**

17 *Marwolaeth Stori* (Begw’s mother putting her to bed):

**Cusanodd ei mam a GWAEDDODD ‘Nos dawch’ ar y lleill.** She kissed her mother and **CALLED ‘Good night’ to the others.**

18 *Nadolig y Cerdyn* (Nanw Siôn is going over the things Elin Gruffydd sent):

**Datbaciwyd y fasedg, a Nanw Siôn YN DWEUD, ‘Wel O!’ am bob dim a dynnai allan. ‘Y gryduras ffeind.’** The basket was unpacked, with Nanw Siôn **SAYING ‘Well! Oh!’ about everything that came out. ‘The kind creature.’**

19 *Marwolaeth Stori* (A description of Bilw):

[...] ac yr oedd Bilw yn dyfod yno—Bilw na byddai byth yn edrych yn gas, Bilw a chwarddai o hyd, **Bilw a DDYWEDAI: ‘Lle mae Begw?’ fel pe buasai wedi chwilio’r ddaear cyn dyfod o hyd iddi. [...]** [...] and Bilw was coming there—Bilw who never looked mean, Bilw who was always laughing, **Bilw who’d SAY ‘Where’s Begw?’ as if he’d been searching the earth before finding her. [...]**

20 *Marwolaeth Stori*:

Ond y munud hwnnw dyna'r gwynt yn chwibanu yn y drws a Bilw yn sefyll yn y cysgodion ac YN GOFYN: 'Sut ydach chi heno? Lle mae Begw?' A hithau'n rhedeg a'i dynnu at y setl. [...]

But at that moment, there was the wind whistling at the door and Bilw standing in the shadows and ASKING: 'How are you tonight? Where's Begw?' And she ran and pulled him to the settle. [...]

To conclude the first part, we've seen the form of the three patterns in which speech appears in the text, have described their usage and have given examples for each one of them.

## 2 A positive *verbum dicendi* versus the lack thereof

Now we move on to the second part, which describes the distribution between a positive *verbum dicendi* and the lack thereof.

Let us recall that pattern A has two sub-patterns. The first one, in which a positive *verbum dicendi* does occur, is indicated by 'A+' and the second one, in which it does not, by 'A-'.

VIII Pattern A { Pattern A+: ¶ '...', [VERBUM DICENDI] ([SPEAKER]). ('...') ¶  
 Pattern A-: ¶ '...' ¶

### 2.1 The distribution between A+ and A-

Now, the fundamental principle of the distribution between A+ and A- is that the use of *verba dicendi* in the text is **minimal**: unless there is a cause to use A+, A- is used. In other words, A- is the default. Ambiguity concerning the identity of the speaker is the main cause for using a *verbum dicendi*, that serves as a formal anchor for indicating the speaker.

This fundamental principle has **several exceptions**, and has to be **refined**, but these exceptions are **very few** comparing to the **hundreds** of examples which the principle **does** describe perfectly.



As one would expect from this principle, answers are normally signalled by A–, and so it is when the speaker is indicated in an event preceding the speech.

When the quoted text is not merely spoken, but shouted, sung, etc., A+ is used, as expected, with a specific lexeme for the *verbum dicendi*.

Expanding the **parallelism** between **pattern A** and the norm of indicating speech in **plays**, we can compare the lexemic specification of the mode of speaking in **spoken narratives** with the first slot in round brackets in **plays**.

IX ¶ SPEAKER (**MODE OF SPEAKING** and/or CO-INCIDENTAL ACTION): UTTERANCE ¶

### 2.1.1 Interruptions

When a character interrupts the speech of another character, or when a character joins a conversation, A+ is used. See exx. 21–25. This is, of course, congruent with the general principle.

21 Y Pistyll (Robin and his mother are speaking about Mr Huws and the fact he beat Wil y Fedw. Each line in the dialogue is marked by a lack of *verbum dicendi*. The mother says—):

‘Mi ’nath yn iawn.’

‘He did the right thing.’

‘Hwre! Da iawn, Mr Huws!’ **EBE** Begw.

‘Hooray! Well done, Mr. Huws!’ Begw  
**SAID.**

22 Marwolaeth Stori (Dafydd Siôn was telling a story; Begw, who knows the story, interrupts him—):

‘Rydach chi wedi anghofio dweud sut oedd  
Gwen,’ meddai Begw.

‘You’ve forgotten to say how Gwen was,’  
Begw **SAID.**

23 Marwolaeth Stori (Dafydd Siôn continues the story and then Begw interrupts him again by telling what happens next, in first person):

‘Dyma fi’n clywed sŵn meddal ffrwd,’  
**MEDDAI** Begw.

‘Then I hear the soft sound of a brook,’  
Begw **SAID.**

24 Ymwelydd i De (Winni comes to Begw's house):

'Dew, mae gynnoch chi le glân yma,' 'God, you have a clean place here,' she  
meddai. 'Mae'n tŷ ni fel stabal.' said. 'Our house is like a stable.'

'Well i chi ddŵad at y bwrdd rŵan,' 'You'd better come to the table now,'  
**MEDDAI** mam Begw gan dorri ar ei Begw's mother **SAID**, interrupting her.  
thraws.

25 Nadolig y Cerdyn (Nanw Siôn is lamenting her loneliness):

'[...]. Dynas fel fi sy'n hel meddylia, am na [...] A woman like me begins brooding,  
fedr cath na llygod mo'ch ateb chi—.' because a cat or mice can't answer you—.'

'Pam na brynwch chi boli parrot?' 'Why don't you buy a poll-parrot?' **BEGW**  
**GOFYNNAI** Begw. asked.

### 2.1.2 Adverbial expansion

There are no examples of A– with adverbial expansions: the distinction A+:A– is neutralized in this environment. I will now give three examples out of many.

26 Y Pistyll (Begw's father asks—):

'A sut mae Begw heno?' 'And how is Begw tonight?'

'Newydd gael pwl eto,' **EBE**'r fam 'Just had an attack again,' her mother  
**YN DDISTAW**. **SAID QUIETLY**.

is an example for 'yn + lenited adjective' adverbial phrase.

27 Te yn y Grug:

'Welis i 'rioed hogia drwg,' **MEDDAI** mam 'I've never seen wicked boys,' Begw's  
Begw **FEL PETAI** Robin ei mab yn angel. mother **SAID, AS IF** her son Robin were  
an angel.

is an example for '*fel petai*'.

28 Dieithrio:

'Hiraeth am Sionyn oedd arna i,' MEDDAI 'I was homesick for Sionyn,' she SAID,  
GAN DDECHRAU snwffian. BEGINNING to sniffle.

is an example for **converbial** expansion, which its form in Welsh is a preposition + infinitive construction. It is noteworthy that almost all of the converbs expanding *verba dicendi* have '*gan*' for preposition and some have '*dan*' and negative '*heb*'.

Converbial expansions are comparable with the 'co-incident action' slot in the norm of indicating speech in plays.

X ¶ SPEAKER (MODE OF SPEAKING and/or CO-INCIDENTAL ACTION): UTTERANCE ¶

## 2.2 Dialogues of two characters and of more than two

In dialogues of two characters there is no need to indicate the identity of the speakers after the initial identification in the beginning of the dialogue. I'll give two examples for long conversations between two characters:

The first one is in *Ymwelydd i De*, where Begw and her mother converse for <sup>fifty nine</sup> 59 paragraphs (more than three and a half pages), and there are only two occurrences of *verba dicendi* in this dialogue:

29 *Ymwelydd i De* (the absolute beginning of the story):

'Ydach chi'n licio Winni, MAM? MEDDAI 'Do you like Winni, MAM? BEGW SAID, a  
BEGW ymhen ychydig ddyddiau wedi'r few days after that strange tea party  
te parti rhyfedd hwnnw ar ben y up on the mountain.  
mynydd.

One is at the absolute beginning of the story, to introduce the participants in the dialogue.

30

*Ymwelydd i De* (Begw asks her mother why do they try to be like Mrs Huws):

'Go drapia,' **MEDDAI**'r fam, 'dyna chdi wedi gneud imi blannu'r nodwydd yma yn fy mys.' 'Dart it,' her mother said, 'there you've made me plant this needle in my finger.'

The second one is right after Begw's mother's **cry** which is, in terms of cohesion, a **delimiter**, after which a *verbum dicendi* is needed in order to **re-link** the conversation again. For an examination of **juncture features** in Welsh, see SHISHA-HALEVY (2003).

Another example of the same kind is ex. 31.

31

*Te yn y Grug* (Winni and Begw are talking. Winni says her mother was a fool):

'Bedi lembo?'

'What's "numbskull"?''

'Dyn chwarter call yn meddwl i fod o'n gallach na neb. Tasa fo'n gall, fasa fo ddim wedi priodi'r cownslar dynas acw.'

'A dimwitted man who thinks he has more sense than anyone. If he'd had sense, he wouldn't have married her nibs there.'

'Nid y hi ydy'ch mam chi felly?'

'She isn't your mother then?'

'Naci, mae fy mam i wedi marw, a'i ail wraig o ydy hon. Ffŵl oedd fy mam inna hefyd. Ffŵl diniwad wrth gwrs.'

'No, my mother's dead, and this one's his second wife. My mother was a fool as well. An innocent fool, of course.'

'O,' **MEDDAI** Begw, 'bedach chi'n deud peth fel yna am ych mam?'

'Oh,' Begw said, 'why are you saying a thing like that about your mother?'

The second example for a long conversation between two characters is that of Begw and Winni in *Dianc i Lundain*. This conversation is a little more than 100 paragraphs long (that is 8 pages!), and shows no *verbum dicendi* that is not obligatory due to an adverbial expansion or after a short interruption of the conversation.

In dialogues of more than two characters, the use of *verba dicendi* is obligatory. When they are not used, it is a signal that the conversation is now carried out by only two participants, as it happens in several cases in the text. This is generally congruent with LONGACRE (1994).

### 3 Further research

In this short paper I've touched only some aspects of this fascinating sub-domain of narrative grammar. There's much more to be researched. I've collected in the handout some issues I find especially interesting, and would be happy to discuss them and to hear your comments and ideas.

1. The difference between the various *verba dicendi*; especially between *ebe* and *meddai*. The relationship between *ebe* and *meddai* is extremely interesting in both synchronic and diachronic perspectives.
2. The use of non-verbal elements anchoring speech, such as 'oddi wrth' (e.g. ex. 1) and nominal predication constructions (e.g. ex. 2).
3. The location of a *verbum dicendi* when inserted in the midst of the quoted text ('.....', *meddai Begw.* '.....'). Prosody, of course, plays here a major role.
4. The use of 'indirect speech' in narrative (not occurring in *Te yn y Grug*).
5. Direct address in terms of textual cohesion.
6. Mutual references between the events in the narrative and the conversation in the dialogue.
7. Extending the corpus to other writings of Kate Roberts and the writings of other authors.

### 4 Conclusion

To conclude:

- We have seen that speech is signalled in the text in **three** distinctive patterns and that each of them is used in order to **stage** the scene differently.
- After that, we have seen that the use of positive *verba dicendi* in the text is **minimal**, and have described the 'triggers' for their usage.

I will now conclude with Kate Roberts' words, written in a letter she wrote to Saunders Lewis in 1933 (SAUNDERS and ROBERTS (1992, KR to SL, 2/2/33, No. 75, p. 99)):

Byddaf yn hoffi medru 'I will like being able  
dehongli cystrawen yn to interpret syntax  
fathemategol hollol. mathematically completely.'

I hope that in this short paper I've succeeded in advancing this 'mathematical' interpretation of syntax.

*Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi!*



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