

*Represented discourse, resonance and stance in joking interaction in Mexican Spanish*. Minerva Oropeza-Escobar. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, 204. 2011. 271 págs.

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As stated by the author, *Represented discourse, resonance and stance in joking interaction in Mexican Spanish* “deals with the interaction among resonance, represented discourse and joking in everyday conversation in Mexican Spanish... [since] no study has addressed the connections among all three thus far” (p. 1). The book addresses resonance involving represented discourse and how “represented discourse accomplishes the role of acting as resource of resonance, in addition to other resources identified so far” and the author claims that “represented discourse is not only a resource of resonance, but also a frame for resonance” (*Íbid.*).

In Chapter 1 (“Introduction”, pp. 1-24), Oropeza-Escobar stresses the role of shared knowledge in generating meaningful instances of represented discourse (p. 2) and also the role of repetition and verbal humor in shaping interaction and maintaining cohesion. She also aims to broaden the scope of Du Bois’ theory of dialogic syntax by commenting on the specific role of represented discourse in dialogic syntax and by studying how resonance is expressed in a language, Spanish, which had not been studied before from this theoretical framework. Finally, “given that the connections and interplay between resonance and stance-taking are approached, and the specificities of each of them identified and discussed, the contributions of the present study are not only relevant to resonance theory, but also to the relatively new and burgeoning field of stance studies” (*Íbid.*).

The author then reviews relevant issues and theoretical approaches (p. 3ff) on represented discourse, resonance, and conversational joking, including reviews of dialogicality and repetition. From page 8 onwards she focuses on represented discourse itself (also called direct reported speech, direct speech or constructed dialogue), which has been addressed from different perspectives. As such, the term entails the analysis of intertextuality and ideology. The author stresses that “in resonating, represented discourse keeps features not only of the real or imagined discourse being represented, but also of the represented discourse with which it resonates. Those features convey point of view, genre, and participation frame-

work. At the same time, by using represented discourse to engage in a resonance relationship, the participants not only evaluate an object—for example, the wording or attitude of the reported speaker—, but also align with each other, whether convergently or divergently” (p. 8).

The author then introduces humor in conversation (p. 11ff). She comments on the importance of shared knowledge in humorous interactions (*i.e.*, knowledge on situational settings and social contexts, as well as cultural and more specific group-level background), and also on the role of involvement in the organization and dynamics of the interaction. In this sense “the way represented discourse is shaped responds to the speaker’s interactional needs in the ongoing interaction, rather than to a commitment to fidelity and accuracy” (p. 13).

Next, she focuses on *dialogic syntax theory* (Du Bois, 2007). This theory “stresses the intersubjective and collaborative nature of discourse, and proposes a reorganization of linguistic theory, so as to incorporate not only what has traditionally been understood as the concern of linguistics, that is, syntactically independent utterances produced by individual speakers, but also utterances seen as the result of the collaboration of the participants in an interaction” (p. 13). The author’s contribution in this book is to discuss this theory as a resource for resonance, “involving both the specific linguistic elements put into play by the participants in the very moment of the linguistic interaction (dynamic resonance) as well as the linguistic resources already available to the participants as members of a linguistic and cultural community (structural resonance)” (p. 15). Her concern is “to demonstrate that direct represented discourse is sensitive to resonance. That is, that the use of represented discourse by one participant invites its use by others” (*Íbid.*). She also stresses that represented discourse plays a role of frame for resonance, which means that the linguistic elements are also available for resonance: “resonance involves lexical items, syntactic configurations, and also the features that linguistically express the point of view from which represented discourse is constructed by the participants... reframing represented discourse crucially involves the participation framework of the actual or pretended represented discourse, in such a way that the participants in an interaction, in reporting or pretending to report another’s discourse, convey features of the interactional frame and of the participant role configuration characteristic of the ‘original’ context” (*Íbid.*).

The author then comments on general information about the participants who generated the corpus of interactions plus the settings of these interactions.

Afterwards, she comments on theoretical issues involving resonance, represented discourse, joking and conversation, as well as their mutual relationships. Special emphasis is placed on what counts as joking and what does not, and on the specificity of joking interaction.

Chapter 2 (“Joking in ordinary conversation”, pp. 25-74) is actually devoted to this issue, together with the role of the cultural and group-specific knowledge in humorous interaction, as well as the degree of intimacy it presupposes and creates among the members of the joking group. Specifically, this chapter is devoted to “(a) how joking is carried out both in ordinary conversation in general, and in Spanish ordinary conversation in particular as attested by my data; (b) how joking is framed in conversational interaction and (c) how joking in ordinary conversation can become, over time, a customary activity and develop a special kind of relationship and a particular discourse dynamics” (p. 25). The chapter is filled with transcriptions of interactions which, indeed, clarify the task at hand.

Initially, the notion of “activity” is suggested as a key element that helps us understand joking interactions as co-constructed and also important as guidance for interactants and as source of recurrent patterns of interaction. Then, joking is presented as involving certain conventions or maxims which are systematically flouted (in the Gricean sense). Besides, politeness is also at stake: “although joking can be seemingly disrespectful and aggressive, the underlying relationship is one of friendliness, intimacy and solidarity” (p. 74).

The author also addresses the embodiment of joking in typical instances such as punning, telling funny stories, exaggerating, and appealing to intertextuality, among others, and how each of this forms can either set up or help sustain joking interaction. Embedding a participation framework is another resource studied. It allows speakers to jump from serious to joking talk, affecting the course of the joking interaction at different levels.

Finally, the scenario of customary joking relationship is analysed, in which joking becomes the main goal of the interaction, thus binding interlocutors by exploiting every element in the verbal or situational context in order to generate humor.

Chapter 3 (“Resonance”, pp. 75-102) is devoted to discussing resonance in the frame of *dialogic syntax* (Du Bois, 2001) and also situated in the broader theoretical frame of dialogicality (Linell, 1998). The author reviews the forms of resonance proposed by dialogic syntax theory, namely “(a) dynamic resonance, which although relying on available linguistic resources, emerges in the heat of

the interaction and creates new semantic or grammatical categories; and (b) structural resonance, which relies to a higher degree on preexisting linguistic devices” (p. 101).

Sequentiality is analysed in some detail, since utterances are partly dialogical by making references to the previous context and partly by being themselves preliminary context for subsequent interactions. Besides, within resonance there seems to be no specific author of the utterances, and “the engagement that formally links the linguistic forms of different speakers (resonance) is seen as an achievement rather than as an automatic result, since formal engagement does not always occur” (p. 22).

After laying the theoretical foundations of the book, the author then discusses in Chapter 4 (“Represented discourse”, pp. 103-160) the characteristics of resonance involving represented discourse, which entails the analysis of intertextuality, linguistic context, grammatical relations and point of view. Other interconnected features of represented discourse discussed are double-voicing and evaluation.

The starting point in the chapter is the characterization of represented discourse as an intertextual resource of resonance at the broadest level of analysis, *e.g.* discourse genres such as jokes, stories, proverbs and sayings. But the author claims that a second layer of analysis is needed to fully understand the dynamics of represented discourse linked by a resonance relationship, namely one which views represented discourse as a context or frame for resonance. Within this layer, resonance is identified among the linguistic resources framed by represented discourse, and the author puts more emphasis on those that “(a) shape the point of view from which represented discourse is constructed, (b) cue the embedding of participation frameworks, and (c) convey the genre properties of the discourse represented” (p. 157). Another issue addressed in this chapter is the dialogic nature of resonance involving represented discourse. Lastly, the chapter also studies the role of shared knowledge in resonance involving represented discourse.

Chapter 5 (“Resonance, stance and represented discourse in joking interaction”, pp. 161-246) addresses “the links between (a) stance and conversation; (b) stance and joking; (c) stance and represented discourse, and (d) stance and resonance, with a special focus on resonance involving represented discourse” (p. 161). All that is framed in the peculiar resources that Mexican Spanish speakers put into play in taking a stance (ranging from lexicalized evaluative means to resources that speakers collaboratively construct throughout the interaction). The

main conclusions are that resonance can, on the one hand, “involve linguistic means at different levels, from phonology to morphology, to syntax and semantics, including the use of idiomatic expressions and the creative manipulation of lexical items. On the other hand, it occurs in any kind of interaction, whether serious or humorous, formal or informal, and regardless of whether the interactants align convergently or divergently” (p. 244).

The book is well written and filled with transcripts that help the reader get an overall picture of the main underlying theses of the book. Since I am not familiar with the theoretical framework used in the book, reading it was a bit uphill at times, but eventually I got the full grasp of the main points of the book and became fully aware of a new angle from which joking can be studied.

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