

Experimental Studies of Free Indirect Discourse

Block III: Some Empirical Evidence for FID Effects

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Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) I

- Bray, Joe (2007): The 'dual voice' of free indirect discourse: a reading experiment. *Language and Literature*, 16(1), 37-52.
- Exp. 1: participants (N=32, undergraduate students of University of Stirling) read a short passage from two novels (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Marchmont*) (supposedly) containing FID and were then asked to answer a multiple-choice question concerning that passage.

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) II

- The hypothesis:

My concern was therefore to test two interrelated questions. First, whether readers do, as Fludernik suggests, experience a ‘dual voice’ when reading passages of free indirect discourse, and second, whether their identification of point of view is influenced by the succeeding co-text; by what comes after an ambiguous passage. I designed an experiment that asked subjects to attribute point of view in two ambiguous passages of fictional narrative. I was interested in what led the subjects to their assessments as much as in the assessments themselves, and hence asked them to elaborate briefly on the reasons for their choices. As will become apparent below, these subjective responses were both varied and provocative, offering support for Stockwell’s (2002: 2) observation that ‘it is in the detail of readings that all the interest and fascination lies’.

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) III

- The experimental text:

instructions (see Appendix). They were then all asked to read the example quoted earlier from *Pride and Prejudice*, which was presented as follows:

[Elizabeth has just heard about her sister Lydia's elopement with Wickham]
(1) She had never perceived, while the regiment was in Hertfordshire, that Lydia had any partiality for him; but she was convinced that Lydia had wanted only encouragement to attach herself to any body. (2) Sometimes one officer, sometimes another, had been her favourite, as their attentions raised them in her opinion. (3) Her affections had been continually fluctuating, but never without an object. (4) The mischief of neglect and mistaken indulgence towards such a girl! – oh! how acutely did she now feel it.

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) IV

- The task:

Below the passage, the subjects were asked the following questions:

1. Whose voice is represented *in sentence 4* here?
 - (a) Elizabeth's alone
 - (b) The narrator's alone
 - (c) Both Elizabeth's and the narrator's
 - (d) It is impossible to decide
2. Which features of language led you to select (a), (b), (c) or (d)?

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) V

- The result for Exp.1:

The responses to question 1 were as follows:

- (a) Elizabeth's alone: 14
- (b) The narrator's alone: 4
- (c) Both Elizabeth's and the narrator's: 14
- (d) It is impossible to decide: 0

The first thing to notice is that fewer than half of the respondents claimed to hear a 'dual voice' in sentence 4. An equal number said they heard Elizabeth's 'voice' alone, while 4 subjects said they heard only the narrator. The responses to question 2 were equally varied. Of those who thought they heard a 'dual voice' in sentence 4 and answered (c), one subject wrote that 'Elizabeth is the subject, all the observations are from her point of view but written from the outside',

- Exp. 2: "Manipulation" of FID; same 32 participants, split into two groups with different texts and different task assignments:

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) VI

- The experimental text in version –FID:

Subjects were then asked to read a second passage from Charlotte Smith's *Marchmont* (1989 [1796]), for reasons that will be explained later. Half (16) were given the following paragraph:

- (1) He [Marchmont] had evaded all explanation on money matters: but there was every reason to suppose he was but slenderly supplied with the means of existence; and it appeared very uncertain, whether on his reaching France it would be possible to make his way across the whole kingdom to the southern coast, where, not far from Toulon, his relation the Baron de Lavergnac resided.
- (2) If he did reach that side of France, from all present intelligence there was too much cause to apprehend that Monsieur de Lavergnac was involved in the general ruin that menaced the royal party, to which he decidedly belonged.

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) VII

- The experimental task in version –FID:

This group was then asked the following questions:

1. Whose point of view is represented in this paragraph?¹³
 - (a) A character's alone
 - (b) The narrator's alone
 - (c) Both a character's and the narrator's
 - (d) It is impossible to decide
2. Which features of language led you to select (a), (b), (c) or (d)?

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) VIII

- The additional experimental text in version +FID:

The other 16 were given both this first paragraph and the short paragraph below, which follows it in the original text:

(3) With all these apprehensions continually present to her, Althea now tasted no more peace than when she knew Marchmont to be within a hundred paces of her, and to be in momentary danger of being dragged away to end his life in prison.

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) IX

- The experimental task in version +FID:

This group was then asked the following questions:

1. Whose point of view is represented *in the first paragraph* here?
 - (a) Althea's alone
 - (b) The narrator's alone
 - (c) Both Althea's and the narrator's
 - (d) It is impossible to decide
2. Which features of language led you to select (a), (b), (c) or (d)?

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) X

- The result for Exp.2:
 - Those with 1 paragraph only:
 - (a) A character's point of view alone: 1
 - (b) The narrator's alone: 9
 - (c) Both a character's and the narrator's: 3
 - (d) It is impossible to decide: 3
 - Those with both paragraphs:
 - (a) Althea's point of view alone: 4
 - (b) The narrator's alone: 4
 - (c) Both Althea's and the narrator's: 6
 - (d) It is impossible to decide: 2

Off-line experiments: Bray (2007) XI

Q: What do these data tell us about the interpretation of FID?
How *general* are they?

Off-line experiments: Kotovych et al. (2007), Exp.3 I

- Kotovych, Maria, Peter Dixon, Marisa Bortolussi, and Mark Holden (2011): Textual determinants of a component of literary identification. *Scientific Study of Literature* 1(2), 260-291.
- Experiments dealing with the notion of *identification*; interesting for us is Exp. 3, manipulating FID (Exp.s 1+2 deal with the effects of so-called “narratorial implicatures” on identification/transparency).
- The hypothesis:

Off-line experiments: Kotovych et al. (2007), Exp.3 II

- “We hypothesize that the transparency of a character in a third-person narrative can be enhanced when there is a close association between the narrator and the character. In such cases, the reader may not clearly distinguish between the mental state and disposition of the narrator and those of the character and, as a consequence, attribute knowledge and experience not only to the narrator but to the character as well.” (p.280)

Off-line experiments: Kotovych et al. (2007), Exp.3 III

- “There are a variety of narrative techniques that might produce such an association between the narrator and a character, but we argue that a potent one is the use of free-indirect speech and thought. In particular, we hypothesize that the extended use of free-indirect speech in a narrative makes the character more transparent, just as they might make the narrator in a first-person narrative.” (ibid.)
- Experimental task in Experiment 3: rate 75 (!) statements on a 5-point Likert scale labeled from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'
- Rather than copying all the passages from their article, we might as well look at the original.

Off-line experiments: Kotovych et al. (2007), Exp.3 IV

- Conclusion:

“The results demonstrate that the thoughts and behavior of a character are judged as more transparent when that character is associated with the narrator through the use of free-indirect speech.” (p.285)

Off-line experiments: Kotovych et al. (2007), Exp.3 V

- More specifically, the authors conclude that “[. . .] this result involves two mechanisms: First, the reader’s knowledge and experience are attributed to the narrator in generating narratorial implicatures, and second, an association between the narrator and the character leads the reader to attribute this knowledge and experience to the character as well. As result, the readers rate the character higher in transparency.” (ibid.)

Q: Do you agree with the conclusion given by the authors? Why (not)?

Off-line experiments: Cohen & Kaiser (2012) I

- Cohen, Alexa, and Elsi Kaiser (2012): In someone else's shoes: A psycholinguistic investigation of FID and Perspective Taking. Talk held at the conference "Quotation: Perspectives from Philosophy and Linguistics. Ruhr-Uni Bochum, Sept. 2012. Abstract available at <http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/phil-lang/quotation/mam/pdf/kaisercohen.pdf>
- 36 participants read 46 short texts (16 experimental items, 30 fillers) of the following form:

Off-line experiments: Cohen & Kaiser (2012) II

(4a) *Plain*: Mary looked woefully at Elizabeth. She was sick. (she=Mary/Elizabeth)

(4b) *FID*: Mary looked woefully at Elizabeth. Poor girl; she was sick. (she=Elizabeth?)

(5a) *Plain*: Luke glanced at Tom warily. He'd put toothpaste in the shampoo bottle again. (he=Luke/Tom)

(5a) *FID*: Luke glanced at Tom warily. He'd probably put toothpaste in the shampoo bottle again. (he=Tom?)

- Thus, FID was operationalised in two ways: by adding an evaluative and by adding an epistemic modal adverb. (These were tested *between items*.)
- Two experimental tasks: anaphor resolution judgment on a 5-point Likert scale (Mary 1 2 3 4 5 Elisabeth; DV1), and relation between FID sensitivity and spatial perspective-taking capacities (performance on the Spatial Orientation Task (Hegarty & Waller, 2004); correlative measure DV2).

Off-line experiments: Cohen & Kaiser (2012) III

- Spatial (mental) rotation task:

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M. Hegarty, D. Waller / Intelligence 32 (2004) 175–191

Imagine you are at the **stop sign** and facing the **house**.
Point to the **traffic light**.

Off-line experiments: Cohen & Kaiser (2012) IV

- Results DV1: both types of FID cue types had a reliable ($p < .05$) effect on anaphor resolution judgments, with evaluatives exhibiting a somewhat stronger effect (interaction CUE TYPE \times FID $p < .05$).
- Results DV2: a FID sensitivity score was computed by subtracting scores for the -FID from the +FID score; the results was correlated with the score for the Spatial Orientation Task. Interestingly, sensitivity to evaluatives correlates with spatial orientation performance ($p < .05$), whereas sensitivity to epistemic modals does not ($p > .7$).

Off-line experiments: Cohen & Kaiser (2012) V

- Conclusion: “A person’s willingness to interpret evaluative adjectives as reflecting the opinion/beliefs of a character in the narrative seems to be related to the ease with which that person is able to conceptualize different perspectives/orientations in space. However, the absence of a correlation for adverbs of possibility suggests that spatial perspective-taking mechanisms are not recruited when processing adverb cues. These findings are compatible with our prediction that perspective-taking abilities correlate with sensitivity to evaluative adjective cues, but not adverbials of possibility.”

On-line experiments: László (1986) I

- László, János (1986): Same Story with Different Point of View. SPIEL 5 (1), 1-22.
- The hypothesis:

Present study aims at the investigation of the effects which alternating point of view in a literary text exerts on the processing and mental representation of this text, and brings out some evidences in support of the suggestion that the point of view is an important source of generating mental models, and these models, beyond the propositional representation, preserve analogous information in some form.

On-line experiments: László (1986) II

- Text: A story (“The Nazis” by Ferenc Sántha), about 5 pages long; modified in one version to change the perspective from that of the interrogated shepherd to a “neutral” one; i.e. all references to the perceptions and mental states of the interrogated victim are deleted.
- 30 high school students took part; half of them read the “neutral” version, half of them the other one.
- Procedure: segment-wise self-paced reading (non-cumulative moving window), programmed on a C64 (!). Participants were instructed to read carefully, and were administered a memory test and an imagery task afterwards.

On-line experiments: László (1986) III

- DV1: reading time (divided by no. of syllables of the segment).
- Result: no sign. effect of version.
- Memory task (speeded probe verification): 14 sentences, 7 from each version, were presented to the participants after the reading task. They had to indicate whether they thought they had read that sentence in that form or not.
- DV2 and 3: % correct identification of same/different sentences, decision latencies

On-line experiments: László (1986) IV

- Results:

8 László/Same story with different point of view

Table 1

	"Same"	"Different"
APV-Group	71%	72%
OPV-Group	65%	63%

The two way analysis of variance showed a significant main effect for groups (ANOVA $F(1,28) = 2,25, p < 0.05.$)

On-line experiments: László (1986) V

- Decision latencies did not show any effect.
- Imagery task: participants were given cue phrases to imagine certain situations from the text, and asked to press a button when they completed imagining the scene cued by the phrase. Results for DV4: imagery latencies:

On-line experiments: László (1986) VI

- Results:

MEANS OF IMAGERY RT (IN SECONDS) IN THE TWO GROUPS

Cue-phrases	Outside point of view			
	APV-Group	OPV-Group	t-Test	Significance
1. The chopping of wood	4.15	6.37	-1.57	n.s.
2. The hoof-beats	4.32	5.55	-1.17	n.s.
3. The bow of the old man	4.04	5.34	-1.00	n.s.
4. The armed man presses his boots under the chin of the child	6.67	10.19	-1.51	n.s.
5. The armed man puts the truncheon under the chin of the old man	5.52	7.14	-1.54	n.s.
Mean	4.94	6.92	-1.25	n.s.

On-line experiments: László (1986) VII

	Inside point of view			
	APV- Group	OPV- Group	t-Test	Signif- icance
6. The boots of the old man	3.96	7.28	-2.03	0.06
7. The grass under the horses that the old man sees	5.56	7.77	-1.69	n.s.
8. The hoof of the horse	3.86	4.75	-1.00	n.s.
9. The riding boots of the armed man	3.77	5.96	-1.95	0.07
10. The breeches of the armed man	4.62	5.63	-0.93	n.s.
11. The feelings of the old man while being interrogated	6.60	11.06	-2.38	0.03
12. The grass seen by the child	4.78	4.86	-0.10	n.s.
13. The shoes of the child	4.41	3.89	0.78	n.s.
14. The child's desire to lift his eye-lids	5.82	8.40	-2.16	0.04
15. The riding boots of the armed man that the child sees	5.33	11.15	-1.25	n.s.
16. The closed eyes of the child	3.14	4.68	-2.17	0.04
17. The feelings of the child while being made to obey	6.74	7.59	-0.60	n.s.
Mean	4.86	6.92	-2.25	0.01
Total mean	4.90	6.92	-1.96	0.06

On-line experiments: László (1986) VIII

- Conclusion: no on-line effect of point of view on reading times, but significant effects for some off-line measures, including recall of verbatim information.

On-line experiments: O'Brien & Albrecht (1992), Exp.3 I

- Experiment on spatial perspective taking ('come inside' from a protagonist's perspective who is either located inside (consistent) or outside a building (inconsistent)).
- Sample item:

On-line experiments: O'Brien & Albrecht (1992), Exp.3 II

Table 3

Example Passage From Experiments 2 and 3

As Kim stood (inside/outside) the health club she felt a rush of excitement. [Workouts always made her feel better. Today she was particularly looking forward to the exercise class because it had been a long, hard day at work. Her boss had just been fired and she had to fill in for him on top of her own work.] She was getting anxious to start and was glad when she saw the instructor come in the door of the club. Kim really liked her instructor. Her enthusiasm and energy were contagious. Did Kim like her exercise instructor?

Note. The consistent and inconsistent conditions were created by using the words inside the parentheses to the left and right of the slash, respectively. The distant conditions were created by including the information within the brackets. The second location sentence is underlined.

On-line experiments: O'Brien & Albrecht (1992), Exp.3 III

- N=40 undergrad students; 20 items (10 per condition). DV: mean reading times per target sentence
- Hypothesis: if the “identificational” passage is included, reading times for inconsistent condition should go up.
- Results (ignore the “close” vs. “distant” factor!):

On-line experiments: O'Brien & Albrecht (1992), Exp.3 IV

Table 4
*Reading Times (in Milliseconds) for the Critical Lines as a
 Function of Consistency and Location in
 Experiments 2 and 3*

Passage condition	Location of critical line		
	Close	Distant	
	Experiment 2		} sig
Consistent (C)	2.377	2.234	
Inconsistent (I)	2.326	2.197	
I - C	-51	-37	
	Experiment 3		} sig
Consistent (C)	2.212	2.101	
Inconsistent (I)	2.425	2.243	
I - C	213	142	

On-line experiments: O'Brien & Albrecht (1992), Exp.3 V

- “Identification”—though admittedly not induced by FID—helps with detecting spatial perspective inconsistencies. The perspective of the protagonist is not adopted unless the text induces such a strategy.

On-line experiments: Weskott et al. (2012) I

- Oh, what a pity, we've run out of time. Come to our talk on Friday!

Thanks!

Slides are online now under
<http://weskott.textstrukturen.uni-goettingen.de/>