

What's reported in reported speech?

In this presentation I will suggest, using the data of naturally-occurring English conversation, that reported speech can be a stance marker: a non-grammaticalised form of evidentiality. Non-narrative reported speech is found to be one of a variety of resources with which speakers lay claim to epistemic priority vis-à-vis recipients: a way of 'getting there first'. What's reported is thus revealed to be exquisitely formulated to do the work of pulling rank, chronologically: it is shaped by its current sequential context rather than the context from which it purportedly came. Reported speech is not identifiable as a stance marker independently of the sequential context in which it appears; sequential position is shown to be central in providing at once a constraint on what can be said and a resource to exploit in saying it. Resources dependent on sequential position to index a speaker's stance are deemed to be *interactional* evidentials to distinguish them from the well-documented stand-alone evidentials. Interactional and stand-alone evidentials, as forms of deixis, are directed to the orientations of epistemic authority and accountability respectively; their distinct means of marking evidentiality are grounded in the motivation to be explicit with regard to accountability and inexplicit with regard to authority.