

Expressing evidentiality through prosody? Prosodic voicing in reported speech in Spanish colloquial conversations

Maria Estellés-Arguedas *



University of Valencia, Department of Spanish Literature and Linguistics, Blasco Ibáñez 32, 3rd Floor, 46010 Valencia, Spain

Abstract

The present paper attempts to establish the evidential character of the special prosodic configuration associated with direct reported discourse (DRD). A variety of expressive meanings have been commonly attributed to this marked prosodic configuration of DRD (such as expression of stance, emotion, mimicking, alignment). However, the concurrence of pragmatic/expressive meanings together with evidentiality is very frequent in 'non-evidential' languages like Spanish. Therefore, we argue that the prosody in DRD also signals 'reported' or 'quoted' discourse and, therefore, the presence of evidentiality. To provide evidence for this latter claim, 449 instances of DRD have been extracted from a corpus of (Iberian) Spanish colloquial conversations containing c. 150,000 words, and their prosodic behaviour has been observed. The data reveals a marked prosody in the majority of DRD instances in our corpus. Especial attention has been paid to the examples of DRD with no explicit introductory marks (e.g. *verba dicendi*), since 100% of them are prosodically marked. Here, the marked prosody is the only indicator of the source of information. Consequently, it stops being a redundant trait (concomitant to the presence of introductory verbs or marks): it becomes prominent and its use is not optional.

© 2015 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Evidentiality; Spanish; Prosody; Direct reported speech; Conversation

1. Introduction

The prosodic configuration of direct reported discourse has been attributed several expressive meanings (such as expression of stance, emotion, mimicking). Conveying these expressive meanings might be one of the speaker's aims; however, the present paper attempts to show that, at the same time, the particular prosodic configuration found in direct reported discourse signals precisely the 'reported' or 'quoted' nature of the discourse and, therefore, the presence of evidentiality.

The existence of marked prosody in direct reported discourse has, so far, been regarded as a redundant trait that is always concomitant to the presence of (lexical) introductory marks (like *verba dicendi*). In the following lines, on the basis of a corpus of informal spontaneous conversations in Spanish, we will show that a marked prosodic configuration appears in the majority of instances of direct reported discourse. Moreover, in those fragments where no lexical introductory mark is present, prosody becomes prominent and non-optional. In these latter fragments, consequently, prosodic markedness could be regarded as the sole evidential mark.

* Tel.: +34 963864862x51072; fax: +34 963864492.
E-mail address: maria.estelles@uv.es.



Fig. 1. Pitch contour of example (1).

Consider example (1):

- (1)
- 0088 C: lloraba→ y vomitaba→ (...)
- 0090 A: y decía→ [¡AYY!]=] (...) *¿dónde me he metido yo ↓ que me van a suspender todas ↓ y me van a tirar de la facultad→? yo-// y la pobre se lo pasaba más mal// hasta que luego ↑ mira ↓ menos mal que se habituó un poco→/*
 [C: she used to weep, and to vomit
 A: and she said *Oh! What have I put myself into? I'm gonna fail all my exams, I'm gonna be expelled from the faculty, I-...* And the poor girl was having such a hard time... until later, you see, luckily she kind of got used to it...]

Example (1) shows a very common situation in colloquial Spanish (and in the colloquial variety of any language, in general), namely the presence of a discourse fragment that has been reported directly: Speaker A recovers someone else's words *verbatim*. This mechanism has some linguistic marks, such as the presence of a *verbum dicendi* (here, *decía* – 'she said') introducing a following sequence that is reproduced word for word by A, but which was originally uttered by someone other than A. Together with the *verbum dicendi*, another mark points to the existence of a direct reported discourse (henceforth DRD), namely the presence of a particular prosodic configuration, which can be seen in Fig. 1. The figure shows the pitch contour of part of A's utterance in (1). The shaded fragments, which correspond to the DRD, are prosodically different from the rest; here, the pitch is significantly higher (the pitch in non-DRD fragments remains relatively unaltered and visibly lower than in the DRD, as the dotted line shows).

This particular prosody is absent (at least, prototypically¹) in indirect reported discourse and consists of a marked intonation that singles out the affected fragment and maximally differentiates it from the rest of A's intervention, as well as from other interventions by A alongside the whole conversation (see Tannen, 1989 [2007]:40). This special prosodic configuration has led scholars studying Spanish to state that DRD has its own differential prosody, one that is expected 'by default' in any instance of DRD (Maldonado, 1999:3567) (marked in our transcription by the use of italics), or at least that DRD is usually accompanied by *some kind of* distinctive prosody (Reyes, 1993). The presence of prosody has thus been considered a redundant trait, always co-occurring with lexical introductory verbs or marks. However, a more thorough approach to real data will reveal that marked prosody can occasionally appear without any lexical/verbal introductory mark, thus becoming the only perceivable (i.e. non-contextual) indicator of the need to process the affected fragment as a DRD. Therefore, the special prosodic configuration of DRD can be regarded as an evidential strategy, which is non-linguistic or paralinguistic.

However, real conversational data depict a much more complex panorama than the one offered in (1). A large number of examples of colloquial Spanish (in fact, according to our corpus, the majority of them, as will be shown in Section 4) correspond to *dialogical DRD*: Speakers often reproduce DRDs coming from *several* conversationalists involved in a previous dialogue, and do not only reproduce the words of a single participant, as in (1). Thus, a frequent situation in naturally occurring conversation is (2):

¹ See, for instance, Hassler (2002), on the need to rethink the old distinction between direct/indirect speech in Romance languages. In real speech data, there are a significant number of borderline or transitional cases where the features formerly ascribed to direct or indirect reported discourse appear to be mixed.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/932594>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/932594>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)