Cognitive Semantics Goes Multimodal

Looking at Quot(ativ)es in Face-to-Face Settings
The research agenda

- quotatives: introducers to quotations in interactive settings
  - *say*
  - *be like*
  - *quote (unquote)*
  - *air-quotes*
- Len TALMY’s (forthcoming) *The Attention System of Language*
- modality-sensitive attentional profiles
  - highlight a modality-specific attribute of the original speech event
  - motivate the selectional preference of one quotative over its competitors
Dedicated Causal Triggers

- Attentional effects of one entity on another
- Targeting a concomitant of a referent
- Quotatives as selectionally dedicated meta-linguistic forms differentially direct hearer attention to
  - the selected-out concomitant increasing its attention
  - attenuating the direct (default) referring function
  - invoking a meta-linguistic awareness of modality-specific nonverbal attributes of a previous speech event
  - typically conveying an attitudinal stance toward the quote(e)
highlighting properties inherent in the linguistic event reported by concomitance activation

options and constraints of verbal, vocal, and visual production and reception circumstances

‘inducing’ a specific vocal and gestural ‘overlay’ on the quote, differentially (?) recruiting facial, manual, and bodily gestures

apparently varying along a continuum of perceptual distinctness

accommodating the air-quotes, a manual gesture visualizing quotation marks in writing
- the high-frequency, referential-default, affectively and modality-neutral case
- the most versatile variant of (say)
- serving as a kind of ‘reference frame’
  - He said that vs. *He told that, ?He was like that, *He quoted that
  - The Times’ article says the A.M.A. [American Medical Association] opposes the Democrats’ public plan option, but then says the A.M.A. “does not speak for all doctors” and characterizes the Physicians for a National Health Program as some kind of fringe group with a minority opinion.
  - “I realized I just wasn’t ready to retire,” he says in an unemotional, matter of fact tone.
Serena Williams: be like
(1) Cuz I think she said I w’d kill you,
(2) bu’ I w’s like, What?
(3) I w’s like, Wait a minute.
(4) But th-then I had misheard.
(5) She’d never said that.
(6) So that was just something --
(7) I w’s like -- [y’know]
(8) I w’s like, Who-oa.
(9) Cuz I w’s like, Wait a minute.
I w’s like, What?

198 Hz
508 Hz
Serena’s baseline on average not exceeding 190 Hz
I w's like, Who-oa.

Serena's baseline on average not exceeding 190 Hz.
He said that they must not be demobilized, and I quote, “to a place on a bread line” -- demobilized “to a place on a bread line or on a corner selling apples.” Instead, Roosevelt said, “The American people will insist on fulfilling this American obligation to the men and women in the Armed Forces who are winning this war for us.”
It was second nature to [Bush] -- the continuation of a proud family tradition that he and Mrs. Bush clearly passed on to their children and grandchildren. And one which he’s carried on throughout his *quote, unquote* “retirement.”
Just again, the example of the eloquence of Senator Obama. He’s health for the mother. You know, that’s been stretched by the pro-abortion movement in America to mean almost anything. That’s the extreme pro-abortion position, quote, “health.”
Where to go from here

- non-random relations -- or: correlations?
  - gestural and vocal: beat gestures concur with pitch changes
  - gestural and verbal: iconic gestures in consonance with meanings
- interactive quotatives indicate their characteristic ‘situatedness’ as modality-sensitive conceptual alternatives, motivated by the principle of iconicity
- Linguistic Attention -- an effective, systematic, and cognitively motivated analytical tool
References


Lampert, M. Submitted. Say, be like, quote (unquote), and the air-quotes: Attention to quotatives’ multimodality in interactive settings’ [*English Today*]


Thank you for your attention