

degree (e.g., (15-16)). Lehrer becomes an instrument of Dole's voiced agency only in the sense that he re-directs the implications of Dole's remarks to Clinton in asking Clinton to respond. In doing so, Lehrer allows Dole to get around the 'official' rules of the debate, rules which he himself has explicitly described earlier (cf. (1)). Since the norms that are here implicitly violated are peculiar to the debate itself—they are not norms of ordinary discursive interaction—the fact that any norms have been violated at all is not transparent to native speakers of English. Showing that any norms have been violated at all requires attending to the lack of fit between local phases of the debate and the official rules which are supposed to be upheld globally throughout.

Moreover, there is nothing aggressive about Lehrer's own questions to Clinton. The very fact that Lehrer gives Clinton an opportunity to respond to Dole's allegations suggests that Lehrer is moved by considerations of fair play. Yet, whatever Lehrer's motivations may be, Lehrer *does* allow Dole to formulate the topics of questions which Clinton must answer. These cases are not transparently reportable as instances of aggression because no-one is transparently identifiable as an origo of aggression. Yet Clinton exhibits a degree of discomfort in his responses. He responds *as if* he were the focus of aggression. Finally, as I have noted in (21)ff. above, when the overall effects of these—multi-turn, textually global—discursive achievements are reported in newspaper accounts, these reports presuppose the pattern of voiced agency in formulating the report, without describing the pattern itself.

12. Conclusion

One implication of this study is that the notional vocabulary which we employ as native speakers of English in describing pragmatic acts—a vernacular terminology which includes words like 'aggression', 'coercion', 'harshness', 'politeness', etc.—is a vocabulary whose descriptive appropriateness for particular linguistic acts is *mediated* by rather general principles of the metapragmatic transparency of language form. In our most dominant folk-theories of action, we tend to think of these words as simple labels for acts. The folk-theory is motivated partly by the fact that we often *use* these words as labels. But such words serve most effectively as labels for acts when these acts have *already* occurred. *While* these acts are occurring, however, the question of 'what is happening' remains a much more open question, simply because it can only be answered by attending to multiple concurrently unfolding semiotic effects whose emergent alignment gives to every candidate answer such cumulative shape as it has.

Cases of 'tropic' aggression are interesting in this regard because they motivate more than one answer to this question. Within the debate, the way in which interlocutors respond implicitly to each other's acts reflects a sensitivity to a much wider range of semiotic variables than those reflected in explicit reports by commentators. Explicit reports focus more selectively on referential, segmental and presupposing features of utterance form. Dole's utterances are reported as 'aggressive' whereas Clinton's are not because Dole's utterances are consistently aggressive along semiotic dimensions which are most easily reportable. On the other hand, Dole implements a pattern of voiced agency throughout the debate which is certainly coercive in its effects, but which is not reported as aggression. Clinton shapes audience and interlocutors responses through politeness, wide

smiles, and jokes, e.g. (31). There are many more instances of this kind in the debate, though I have not discussed them here, partly for limitations of space, but mainly because these instances are neither reportable nor reported as ‘aggression’.

These issues are of some general interest in the study of political language, particularly in our society where political language is experienced as the re-circulation of messages on a large social scale. They are relevant to our understanding of how political ‘issues’, as well as the personas of political candidates, are formulated, reported, and discussed by the public. The national media plays a role at every stage of this chain of speech-events, re-circulating public opinion in further reportage. I close with an example of a report which explicitly describes the ironic relationship of the debate to one occasion of its reception. The report calls attention to several implicit ironies as well—involving debating, voting, and the formulation of opinion—in a political life shaped by such reports:

- (32) ‘The Washington Post invited eight debaters from Georgetown [University], Clinton’s alma mater, to watch the debate and offer their opinions, both as student debaters and as young people preparing to cast their first vote for president. The students, as members of Georgetown’s Philodemic Debate Society, gather to debate every week as one of their passions in life. Four of the eight came into the debate undecided about how to vote. Two of those left still undecided, and two others left leaning toward Dole. From a debate standpoint, the students said, Clinton undoubtedly did better. By the standards of a debate society, “there’s no doubt that Clinton wins every single time,” said junior Cain Pence Jr., who plans to vote for Dole’. (WP, X/7: A6)

Appendix

Symbols used in the transcription:

Superscripted symbols are used to bound off material differing in pitch or tempo from surrounding material. These differences are marked as follows: Overhigh pitch (ˆˆ- ˆˆ), overfast tempo (»- »), overslow tempo (°°- °°). Gestures accompanying the interlocutors’ speech are contained within angular brackets, < >; these are intercalated with utterances, showing approximate relative position. Audience laughter and applause are shown within curly brackets, in a column separate from interlocutor speech, with rough indication of duration relative to speech, e.g., {laughter-----}; see note 12 for more details. Quotation marks (‘ ’) and colons (:) are used to represent reported speech. Double parentheses, (()), indicate barely audible material.

At the beginning or end of utterances, ellipsis (...) marks material omitted from the same turn; medially, it marks silence, with duration indicated in parentheses, e.g., ...(1 sec.)...; short pauses or prosodic breaks are marked with commas (,); accent (ˈ) on a syllable marks emphatic or contrastive stress; arrows (—>) are used to highlight turns, underlining to highlight utterance segments within turns. Equal signs (=) indicate latching across turns.

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