

Forms of Character Text in Latin Narrative

This paper presents an overview of the forms of character texts in Latin narrative, using a combined narratological and text linguistic approach. Specific attention is given to those linguistic elements that indicate a mixed point of view in character text. The overview is based on the analysis of a corpus of texts by Caesar, Vergil and Sallust.

Following narratological and cognitive-linguistic research on the representation of speech and thought in modern languages (e.g. Fludernik 1993, Ariel 2001, De Jong 2004, Marnette 2005, Vandelanotte 2009) and Sznajder's inventory of hybrid speech types in Latin (Sznajder 2002, 2005), I propose to approach forms of character text in Latin narrative by means of three (sets of) parameters:

1. the medium used by the character (spoken, thought or written text)
2. the syntactic embedding (direct, indirect, reported or free indirect discourse)
3. linguistic elements revealing a mixed point of view in non-direct presentations of character text (mood, tense, referential expressions, adverbial adjuncts, expressive or summarizing elements)

The first two parameters bring about a workable set of twelve categories that can be used for a quantitative comparison between texts.

The third parameter is a set of six types of linguistic elements in which a narrator can choose to use his own perspective or that of the character. The corpus shows so many varieties on this parameter that a feasible categorization is impossible. The third parameter is, however, particularly useful for a detailed analysis of a specific instance of character text, because it demonstrates to what extent a narrator combines his own perspective with that of his character within one speech. Thus, it provides a linguistic foundation for observations found in literary and narratological studies of character text, in which distinctions are made between 'normal' or 'standard' indirect speech and 'vivid' indirect speech (e.g. Laird 1995:95).

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