

The Forms and Functions of ‘Reminders’ in Plato’s Early Dialogues

The main purpose of reported speech is not to reproduce someone’s prior words more or less accurately for the benefit of informing one’s addressee; instead, speakers use representations of others’ or their own words to further their own communicative purposes. Studies in discourse and conversation analysis in particular have shown that reported speech plays an important role in managing information, establishing and maintaining agreement between interlocutors and stance-taking in discourse (e.g. Labov 1972, Baynham 1996, Holt & Clift 2007, Holt 2009). A further strand of research has been concerned with casting grammatically distinct forms of reported speech as so many ‘reporting strategies’, as formally distinct strategies cue addressees that reports have different functions and meanings in discourse (e.g. Voloshinov 1986[1929], Thompson 1996, Collins 2001).

In my paper, which builds on proposals made in Huitink (2012), I will combine these two strands of research further by investigating the functions and forms of what I should like to term ‘reminders’ in Plato’s early Socratic dialogues (notably *Euthyphro*, *Euthydemus*, *Protagoras* and *Gorgias*), reports—usually made by Socrates—of what one of the interlocutors said earlier on in the same conversation (‘I said’/‘you said’); the majority of such reminders appear in indirect speech (although a few interesting exceptions in direct speech occur) and usually take one of the following forms: 1) ἔλεγον/εἶπον or ἔλεγε/εἶπε ὅτι + indicative (see [1]); 2) ἔλεγον/εἶπον or ἔλεγε/εἶπε ὅτι + optative (see [2]); 3) ἔλεγον/ἔφη or ἔλεγε/ἔφησθα + infinitive (see [3]). I will show that reminders play a crucial and varied role in shaping the structure and dynamics of the Socratic *elenchus* (for which see e.g. Stokes 1986, Irwin 1995), and through a close analysis of the examples I will attempt to match their specific functions to the different forms in which they are expressed. I will argue that 1) is used to make potentially controversial assertions (performative use) and in requests for further information; 2) in narrative(-like) contexts and in cases in which the truth of the reported proposition has already been sufficiently established; and 3) in contexts in which the interlocutors do not yet agree and in which there is (as yet) insufficient reason to assert the proposition as true.

Current functional analyses of the differences between the three modes of expressing indirect statements, such as those of Cristofaro (1996) and Wakker (1997), only partially succeed in capturing the semantic and pragmatic properties of each form. What is needed especially is a different view of the indicative in Greek indirect speech, and of the infinitive as an ‘ungrounded’ complement (Langacker 2008). In providing such a different view, my paper aims at making a contribution to the grammar of Greek indirect statements. At the same time, it aims to make a contribution of our understanding of the workings of the Socratic *elenchus* by focusing on a frequently repeated discourse pattern, which has hitherto not been sufficiently used in discussions of Socrates’ purposes in questioning his interlocutors.

[1] ἔλεγές τοι νυνδὴ ὅτι καὶ περὶ τοῦ ὑγιεινοῦ τοῦ ἱατροῦ πιθανώτερος ἔσται ὁ ῥήτωρ (Pl. *Grg.* 459a)

You were just saying, mind you, that the orator will be more persuasive even about health than the doctor is.

[2] ἔλεγον γὰρ αὖ, εἰ μνημονεύεις, ὅτι εἶεν παρασκευαί αἱ μὲν μέχρι ἡδονῆς, αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον παρασκευάζουσαι, ἀγνοοῦσαι δὲ τὸ βέλτιον καὶ τὸ χεῖρον, αἱ δὲ γινώσκουσαι ὅτι τε ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὅτι κακόν· (Pl. *Grg.* 500a-b)

I was saying, if you remember, that there were some practices that concerned themselves with nothing further than pleasure and procured only pleasure, practices that were ignorant about what was better and worse, while there were others which did know what was good and what was bad.

[3] ἔφησθα γάρ που μιᾷ ιδέα τά τε ἀνόσια ἀνόσια εἶναι καὶ τὰ ὅσια ὅσια· (Pl. *Euthphr.* 6d)

For you said, I think, that all impious actions are impious and all pious actions pious through one form.

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