How quotation marks what people do with words ☆

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ABSTRACT

Most existing theories of quotation are restricted, sometimes implicitly, to certain aspects of quotation mark usage. In this paper, we have the somewhat ambitious aim of outlining an all-encompassing theory of quotation in (written) natural language. We first provide a naïve but neutral definition of quotation – quotation is everything between a pair of quotation marks – followed by a brief typology. Then, we develop an account of quotation which relies mainly on pragmatic mechanisms in order to explain what role quotation marks play in achieving communicative ends of writers. Quotation marks, we argue, are best understood as minimal pragmatic markers that block the stereotypical interpretation of the expression they enclose. They thereby indicate that some alternative interpretation ought to be inferred. We then address some worries about our view in order to clarify the aim and scope of our proposal as well as some deep-rooted philosophical preconceptions about quotation. Finally, we present the results of a small corpus study which we consider a confirmation of the predictions our account makes.

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, quotation has been taken to be a semantic phenomenon in the sense that some part of a given quotational complex, i.e., either the quotation marks or the quoted expression (or both), was seen as a device for some very special kind of semantic reference. It is this fairly general assessment which seems to unite three of the dominant theories of quotation: the *identity theory,* which takes its inspiration from Frege's *Über Sinn und Bedeutung* (1892) and was put forward by Washington (1992) and Saka (1998, 2007), the *proper name theory* attributed to Tarski (1983) and Quine (1951), a variant of which is today defended by Gómez-Torrente (1998), and the *demonstrative theory* with Davidson (1984), Cappelen and Lepore (1997), and García Carpintero (2004) as its main proponents. It has only been recently noticed (Recanati, 2001, 2009, or, less well known, Klockow, 1980) that pragmatics deserves serious attention as potentially providing answers to some besetting problems of quotation.

In this paper we intend to contribute to the development of a pragmatic theory of quotation. We differ from François Recanati in not being willing to posit different kinds of quotation (such as his *closed quotation* and *open quotation*) and we depart from Reinhard Klockow in not restricting our proposal to what he called *modalizing quotes* [2] which, in today's

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terminology – with some deviations – are known as *scare quotes*. Rather, we pursue the admittedly ambitious aim of developing an account that enables us to explain all varieties of quotation sketched in (1) by means of one unified analysis:[3]

(1)   a.   "Boston" is disyllabic.

            pure quotation (PQ)

    b.   "We may need it for taxes since we have no idea what we're looking at next year," Ms. Felder said.

            direct quotation (DQ)

    c.   Harvey said an inquiry would not be ruled out, "should serious and systemic issues" emerge as a result of the MoD's own investigations.

            mixed quotation (MQ)

    d.   The "debate" resulted in three cracked heads and two broken noses.

            scare quotes (SQ)

    e.   We sell "fresh" pastry.

            emphatic quotes (EQ)[4]

Let us consider an ordinary English speaker and her interpretations of these examples. What influence does each quotation in (1) have on the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs? Here are some intuitive answers: In (1-a), the QM signal that the quoted word is mentioned rather than used. In (1-b) and (1-c), they suggest that the quoted words were uttered by some person other than the writer. More specifically by Ms. Felder and Mr. Harvey, respectively. The reader of (1-d) would infer that the alleged discussion was not a discussion at all, but a rather serious brawl. The type of quotation represented in (1-e) seems to put emphasis on the fact that the pastry is fresh.

Note, however, that these "intuitive" interpretations are less obvious than they might seem. In fact, as we will argue, the correct interpretation of a sentence containing quotation marks is highly context-dependent, and it might well be that the same quotational sentence can be interpreted as containing different varieties of quotation, depending on the context of utterance in question. It should also be noted that the distinction between these varieties of quotation might not be as clear-cut as it is presented here. For instance, a mixed quotation may be used to distance oneself from the quoted words or to emphasize their standard meaning, yielding an overlap between mixed quotation and scare quotes or emphatic quotes, respectively. However, if it is correct that quotation is essentially a pragmatic phenomenon then this is just what is to be expected. In order to keep things simple for the rest of this paper, we will use the labels introduced above to indicate that a specific reading of the quotation is to be considered.[5]

A high degree of context-dependency does not imply that there is nothing systematic about quotation. Consider (1-a)–(1-e): in each case we have (at least) a pair of *quotation marks* enclosing some material.[6] We analyze quotation by focusing on the role of quotation marks. Our proposal is, in rough outline, as follows: QM contribute the same meaning every time they are used. This "meaning", however, is not semantic meaning but rather a kind of procedural meaning (cf. e.g., Bezuidenhout, 2004). QM systematically *indicate* the need for further *pragmatic* inferences. In contrast to expressions which are usually said to have procedural meaning, the meaning of QM is *minimal*: All they do is block the stereotypical interpretation of an expression, and thereby indicate that some alternative meaning ought to be inferred. We call these kinds of expressions *minimal pragmatic indicators* (MPI). We take their blocking effect to be analogous to Horn's *division of pragmatic labour* (see sections 2 and 2.1 for details).

Evidently, by including each of the five varieties in (1), we assume a somewhat naïve conception of what quotation is, namely *everything between a pair of quotation marks.* Some theorists might object that examples like (1-e) are not an instance of quotation at all, but merely a misuse of QM.[7] Others might hold that scare quotes as seen in (1-d) are only incidentally connected with quotation because of superficially similar graphic devices, and in fact are a different phenomenon, i.e., that QM are homonymous.

In contrast, we think that there are no *a priori* reasons to exclude these instances of quotation mark usage from the phenomenon of quotation. The first objection, i.e., the claim of misuse concerning one or another kind of quotation, seems to be theoretically biased (and maybe even circular) because it implies that one already knows what quotation is. Moreover, empirical data does not support this preconception: Quotations similar to each of the examples given in (1) can be found on a

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[3] (1-a)–(1-e) are all real-life examples: (1-a) is taken from Quine (1951:23), (1-b) appeared on the website of *The New York Times* on 5th November 2010 http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/business/economy/06jobs.html?pagewanted=2&_r=1&hp, (1-c) was found on the website of *The Guardian* on the same day http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/nov/05/interrogation-techniques-iraq-inmates. (1-d) is from Predelli (2003:3) who found it in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, (1-e) is a loose translation of German *Hier wird "frisch" gebacken*, taken from our small corpus of collected real-life examples. In the remaining paper, we will sometimes use constructed examples in order to keep things simple.

[4] This type of quotation is often labeled "greengrocer's quotes" (cf., e.g., Abbott, 2005), but we would like to propose a more functional and less elitist term.

[5] We will not always explicitly describe a specific context yielding that reading. Please consider this only a matter of economy in description.

[6] We are deliberately vague on the question of how (or whether) *material* is to be restricted. In some cases, it seems perfectly alright to quote even non-linguistic entities or nonsense. Usually, however, *material* is to be understood as *linguistic* expression(s).

[7] This is a very common objection. However, Reinhard Klockow (p.c.) pointed out that, historically, the first role of QM was that of an *emphasis* marker. We should point out, though, that he does not accept our claim but rather leans towards the *misuse thesis* with respect to EQ.

daily basis in newspapers, magazines, emails, websites, etc.[8] The second objection concerning homonomy seems to be harder to reject. In contrast to misuse (which is a prescriptive concept anyway) homonomy is a widespread phenomenon in natural languages. However, some arguments, both empirical and conceptual, can be made in order to reject this objection as well. The empirical support for rejecting homonomy includes the following observations:[9]

(2) a. If QM were homonymous, they would happen to be similarly ambiguous in almost every language, which is highly improbable.

  b. There are no *schmotation marks* that mean that the schmoted expression is interpreted as it usually is.

  c. QM are not ambiguous between one of the readings in (1) and other punctuational functions like, say, commas or brackets.

  d. The same allegedly ambiguous effects sometimes arise when italics or other typographical means are used instead QM.

From a conceptual perspective, the postulation of ambiguity is costly and should therefore be avoided, at least if one follows Grice's *Modified Ockham's Razor,* according to which senses are not to be multiplied beyond necessity (cf. Grice, 1989a:47).

  For these reasons, a theory that explains the whole range of quotational constructions without postulating ambiguity ought to be preferred over accounts that either multiply senses or exclude certain varieties of quotation without further explanation. For the same reasons, we take both the homonomy and the misuse theses to be premature. Furthermore, although they are often held to be true, there does not seem to be any explicit argument in favor of these theses, which would be required to distinguish them from mere bias. Finally, the motivation for postulating ambiguity or misuse would collapse, if it were possible to formulate a theory that explains all varieties of quotation sketched in (1). As pointed out already, it is just such a theory we propose in this paper.

  By treating everything between quotation marks as quotation we take the phenomenon at face value. This may raise the worry that we analyze quotation as a phenomenon of written language exclusively. After all, there are no quotation marks in spoken language.[10] We do not want to claim, however, that there is no quotation in spoken language. Compared to written language, spoken language might even provide more means to *mark* an expression in order to achieve the same effects as quotation. Since it is this marking effect that is essential to the MPI-account, we could easily extend our approach to spoken language.

  This is, in fact, an advantage over other accounts that assign conventional meaning to QM.[11] If Kasimir (2008) is correct and there are no conventional phonological correlates of QM in spoken language, then no approach that assumes a conventional contribution of QM can be transferred to spoken language without modification. However, in order to focus on the current debate on the semantics and pragmatics of quotation which almost exclusively deals with written discourse (cf., e.g., the contributions in De Brabanter, 2005; Brendel et al., 2011), we will consider only written instances of quotation.

2. Minimal pragmatic indicators

  The core idea of the proposed pragmatic account of quotation is to view quotation marks as minimal pragmatic indicators. Here is a rough definition:

(MPI) *Minimal pragmatic indicator*
  Consider expressions or elements as minimal pragmatic indicators iff:
  (M) *minimal*: They do not have a proper semantic meaning.
  (I) *indicators*: They indicate something regarding the utterance or the context of utterance,
  (P) *pragmatic*: Which has to be worked out by means of further pragmatic inferences.

We defend the view that quotation marks fulfill these conditions. We argue for the minimality claim elsewhere (Gutzmann and Stei, 2011). In this paper, we want to outline how pragmatic indication by means of QM ought to be understood.

  Although pragmatic indicators are not a device explicitly considered by Grice, we hope to plausibly demonstrate that it is in accordance with a Gricean theory of speaker meaning. It allows parallels to be drawn between the application of QM and the use of intonation in spoken language, which in many cases serves the same marking function as quotation marks, even if there is no systematic intonational correlate for them (Kasimir, 2008). This strategy is not ad hoc, as it may also be expanded to both (i) other implicature indicating expressions and (ii) devices that trigger pragmatic processes other than conversational implicatures.

  Intuitively, the *indication*-aspect of QM is to be understood as follows: From a reader's perspective, QM indicate that further pragmatic inferences are necessary to grasp the interpretation intended by the writer. From a writer's perspective, they are

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[8] Anyone postulating misuse should, at least, explain not only why QM are misused in the same way across languages, but also *why* they are misused in this way in the first place.

[9] These arguments are directly inspired by Horn's arguments against a lexical ambiguity of *and* (Horn, 2005:19).

[10] Thanks to an anonymous referee of this journal for pressing this point.

[11] This also holds for Recanati's (2001) pragmatic approach, since he assumes that QM conventionally indicate a demonstration.

used to convey that a non-standard interpretation of the quoted expression is required. But how can QM yield such an effect? Our proposal is that an expression within QM is more marked than the same expression without QM. Therefore, putting an expression within QM increases its markedness. This way, an expression inside QM can be analyzed perfectly along the lines of Horn's *division of pragmatic labor*, according to which "unmarked forms tend to be used for unmarked situations and marked forms for marked situations" (Horn, 1984:26). The MPI account together with Horn's division gives us a powerful tool for the analysis of all dimensions of QM employment. This is our initial understanding of the view. Now let us specify some details.

2.1. The basic pragmatic apparatus

The proposed analysis will be Gricean in spirit and it will thus rely on the assumption of a standard *cooperative principle* and some conversational maxims. For our purposes, a Q-principle and an I-principle will be sufficient, although one might use some M-principle as well, if one prefers a less minimalist model. We will briefly recall the relevant principles:

(CP)   *Cooperative principle*
          "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice, 1989b:26)

(Q)   Q-*principle*
          "Say as much as you can (given I)." (Horn, 1984:13)

(I)   I-*principle*
          "Say no more than you must (given Q)." (Horn, 1984:13)

For illustrative purposes, take McCawley's (1978) paradigmatic and well-known example:

(3)   a.   Black Bart killed the sheriff.
         b.   Black Bart caused the sheriff to die.

(3-a) seems to be in perfect accordance with the two principles. In contrast, the expression used in (3-b) is somehow marked as a competent writer,[12] committed to the I-principle, would not utter this sentence if she wanted to convey that Black Bart shot the sheriff (or killed him in any other stereotypical way, e.g., by stabbing him with a knife). Rather, (3-b) seems to convey that the sheriff was killed in a non-standard way: maybe Black Bart caused the sheriff's gun to backfire by stuffing it with cotton. If this is correct, then a reading of (3-b) according to which Black Bart shot the sheriff is *pragmatically blocked,* as a reader would expect a competent writer to obey the I-principle and the writer knows that. Now, if a writer in fact utters (3-b) the reader will expect her to have reasons to use the marked expression. This, in turn, indicates the need for further pragmatic reasoning: the intended speaker meaning has to be fleshed out according to the context of the utterance.

Quotation marks seem to produce a similar blocking effect: An expression enclosed in QM is more marked than its QM-free counterpart. Given CP, I, and Q, a competent writer would not write "*x*" in case she wanted to convey only the standard interpretation of *x*. Analogously, a competent reader would not expect "*x*" to convey only the standard interpretation of *x*. Rather, presupposing the writer is cooperative, some contextually specified additional (or other) meaning is to be expected. Otherwise it would not be clear why QM were used in the first place.[13] We think that, along these lines, Horn's division is a promising way of analyzing the application of QM in natural languages. We will now show how the MPI-account can be applied to SQ, MQ, and EQ, before extending it to direct and pure quotation.

2.2. A two-staged derivation process

In order to get an impression of how the meaning of quotational constructions might be derived consider the following example:

(4)   Peter's new "theory" is difficult to understand.

The expression *theory* is marked by the application of QM. Thus, it has to receive a marked interpretation that deviates from the standard interpretation, which is blocked by the standard expression without QM. Here is a suggestion of how the blocking effect in (4) might be inferred in a Gricean framework:

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[12] Due to the subject matter of this paper, we will have to speak of competent writers and readers. Nonetheless, we continue to speak of *contexts of utterance* and *utterances* and sometimes even of *speaker meaning* as these are common expressions. We are aware that this is stylistically poor, but we do not want to introduce further distractive terminology.

[13] We thank an anonymous referee of this journal for pressing this point. We will reconsider the nature of this blocking effect in connection with a proposal with *use conditions for* QM in the following section 2.2.

(5) a. The writer *W* wrote *Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand.*   (*assumption*)

b. By (a) *W* said (in the sense of *what is said*) that Peter's new theory is difficult to understand.

(*minimality claim*)

c. *W* marked the term *theory* by enclosing it in quotation marks.   (5-a)

d. If *W* only meant that Peter's new theory is difficult to understand, *W* would have violated (I) as she used a marked expression to convey an unmarked interpretation.   (I + Q)

e. Given *W* is cooperative, she will not violate (I).   (CP)

f. *W* wanted to convey something more/other than that Peter's theory is difficult to understand.

(5-d) + (5-e)

So far, the inference that *"theory"* is to be interpreted in a non-standard way (in contrast to *theory*) is pretty much independent of the particular context of utterance. To flesh out the *target of quotation* (*Zielrichtung des Zitats*, Klockow, 1980:231) or the *quotational point*, as (Recanati, 2001:665) calls it, i.e., in order to derive the intended interpretation, we need a second part of the inferential process. This is where the specific context of utterance comes into play. Let us continue our inference sketched in (5) against the background of a specific context:

(6) a. I know that *W* is a very critical scientist: she has a very strict understanding of the term *theory* in scientific contexts.   (*assumption*)

b. *W* wrote (4) in a scientific context.   (*assumption*)

c. Peter's proposal is not worked out very well, given ordinary scientific standards.   (*assumption*)

d. I can infer from this utterance that *W* does not take the proposal in question to be a theory at all.

(5-f) + (6-a) + (6-b) + (6-c)

e. *W* knows that I can infer this from her use of QM and she has not stopped me from inferring that.

(CP + I + Q)

f. Therefore, by uttering (4), *W* implicates that Peter's new proposal is only an *ersatz* theory.   (6-d) + (6-e)

Of course, this is only one possible interpretation of (4). In a different context the QM might indicate another implicature. For example, *W* might be referring to another scientist's diction, which would render a MQ-reading instead of the SQ-reading processed in (6).[14] Yet, the blocking effect outlined in (5) arguably remains constant.

We think that these derivations generalize and suggest that one can divide the interpretation process of a sentence containing any kind of quotation into two steps. First, the blocking effect is derived by means of an inference analogous to (5). Note, that we are not committed to claiming that this inference does in fact take place every time a reader is confronted with quotation marks. For a process to be plausibly labeled Gricean, it is commonly taken to be sufficient that it is, in principle, possible to describe the inference by means of CP, the conversational maxims and assumptions about the contextual settings. A possibly contentious consequence of this step is that the blocking effect does not have to be encoded semantically, neither in the quotation marks, nor the quoted expression, nor both. If this is correct, then (4) expresses the same semantic content as its quotation mark-free counterpart. At this point, we cannot give a positive argument for this claim.[15] But there does not seem to be a non-circular argument for the view that QM do have an effect on semantics, either. Apparently, it is (mostly philosophical) custom to treat the latter position as more natural. However, allow us to assume the minimality claim for the sake of the argument. We hope to show that the explanatory power of this move can make an initially surprising assumption feasible.

The second part of the inference is, we claim, best described by means of *conversational implicature*. In the case described above, the proposition *that Peter's theory is difficult to understand*, expressed by (4), conveys, amongst other things, the proposition *that Peter's proposal is not a theory*. (6) illustrates how the implicature might be calculated. But – as it is an important feature of conversational implicature that the conveyed meaning ought to be cancelable – this claim seems to be problematic as well:

(7) a. Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand.

b. +> Peter's proposal is not a theory.

c. ? Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand, but I do not want to say that it is not a theory.

Without further qualifications (7-c) certainly seems odd, but we think this impression can be resisted on further reflection. Considering the two-staged process just given, we have three possibilities of where to locate the reason for this oddity: either

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[14] As was pointed out by an anonymous referee, not everybody would call (4) an instance of mixed quotation, because, unlike (1-c), it lacks an explicit speech report predicate and a source. However, we follow Potts (2007) in considering this an instance of what could be described as *anaphoric mixed quotation*. We think it is the allusion to what some other speaker said that is important to mixed quotation – not the fact that it is embedded under a reporting verb. The latter only helps to establish the source of the mixed quotation. See also Geurts and Maier (2005), who analyze such examples in the same way as explicit mixed quotation.

[15] In Gutzmann and Stei (2011), we argue that analyzing quotation by means of levels of meaning commonly filed under semantics (i.e., literal meaning and, more controversially, conventional implicature or certain kinds of presupposition) is highly problematic.

both inferences cannot be comfortably canceled, or canceling just one of them, respectively, is odd. Here is an explanation why cancelling the first inference is problematic, followed by an example illustrating that canceling the second inference is unproblematic.

According to the first step of our inference, the application of QM indicates that a marked interpretation of the quoted expression is to be derived. Yet, indicating the need to process a marked interpretation and then trying to cancel just that indication is certainly odd, as the following example suggests.

(8) a. Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand.
     b. +> W wanted to convey something more/other than that Peter's theory is difficult to understand.
     c. ??Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand, but I do not want to convey anything more or other than that Peters theory is difficult to understand.

Apparently, the oddity of (8-c) is due to a disorder of the writer's intentions: using QM without intending to convey anything more or other than the ordinary stereotypical meaning of the quoted expression would violate the I-principle without cause, and hence it would give rise to the suspicion that the writer has stopped being cooperative. It is this suspicion, we claim, that is responsible for the apparent oddity of (7).

Interestingly, however, in case this suspicion can be ruled out by the writer, the oddity vanishes. To see this, consider the second part of the inference: from (5) we concluded that the writer wanted to convey something more or other than the stereotypical interpretation and by means of (6) we inferred that the writer intended to communicate *that Peter's proposal is not a theory*. Now suppose the writer realizes that we are about to draw an unintended conclusion, and, in anticipation, adds (9) to (7-c), yielding (10):

(9) I just wanted you to know what Barbara called it.

(10) a. Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand.
      b. +> Peter's proposal is not a theory.
      c. Peter's "theory" is difficult to understand, but I do not want to say that it is not a theory. I just wanted you to know what Barbara called it.

Of course, according to this sequel the QM in (10-a) still indicate the need to process an implicature, but (10-c) suggests that it is a different one, rather conveying an MQ-reading. (10-c) does not appear to be odd because, in contrast to (8-c), there is no doubt about the writer being cooperative. This shows that it is possible to cancel a specific implicature, but not without giving rise to another one.

If this is correct then we are in the position to formulate something like *use conditions for quotation marks*: One should only use QM in case something more (or other) than the standard interpretation of an expression without QM is to be communicated. Even though the procedural meaning of QM – indicating that a non-standard interpretation has to be derived – cannot be canceled without giving rise to the suspicion that CP is not met anymore, the implicature itself can be overwritten by another one, given that more information about the intentions of applying QM is provided. This process is flexible but not completely arbitrary: it is constrained by the non-standard interpretations of an expression that are rationally admissible in a certain context of utterance keeping CP, I and Q in mind.

In the following section we show how the two-staged analysis can be extended to other kinds of quotation as well. But before we do that, we would like to mention another important aspect that has to be accounted for: In principle, the interpretations that can be indicated by QM are entirely independent of the QM employed. For example, in a context in which it is clear that Peter's proposal is never anything like a theory anyway, the respective implicatures will arise even without the use of QM. Quotation marks solely *indicate* the need of further pragmatic inferences. Naturally, an indication like that is superfluous if there are already enough contextual hints that indicate that the literal meaning cannot be the intended meaning, given the writer is cooperative. In these cases QM are often omitted, which makes the first step of our inference, sketched in (5), superfluous as well. Note, however, that this feature of our MPI-account does not render the application of QM arbitrary. Usually, omission of QM is only acceptable in very rich contexts, otherwise it might yield highly infelicitous utterances or even violate CP. This consequence is supported by the observation that the blocking effect induced by QM might also be produced not only by italics or other graphical devices, but also by utterance modifiers like *roughly speaking* or *so to speak* or the infamous finger dancing sometimes used together with spoken language.

To sum up: According to the view proposed, QM increase the markedness of an expression. Thus, they pragmatically block the stereotypical interpretation of that expression, i.e., for any expression they block the generalized I-implicature to the stereotypical interpretation. Secondly, in the particular context of utterance, the specific interpretation of the expression enclosed in QM has to be fleshed out by means of a conversational implicature. Although the marking function of QM cannot be canceled without oddity, this does not apply to the implicature itself.

To be sure, the view that QM can be understood as pragmatic indicators is not new. Applying the notion of MPIs to quotation is an extension of Reinhard Klockow's characterization of QM as *implicature signals* (his *Implikatursignal*) (cf. Klockow, 1980:220). Furthermore, the core idea of our proposal is very close in spirit to the approach developed by Recanati (2001) as both accounts

rely on pragmatic calculations to infer the intended meaning of a quotation. In many ways, the arguments in defense of the MPI-account we present in the following section can therefore also be understood as a defense of pragmatic approaches in general.

Nevertheless, our proposal differs in some crucial aspects from Recanati's (2001) account. First of all, Recanati distinguishes two major kinds of quotation: closed quotation and open quotation. He argues that these two kinds are to be analyzed quite differently, because closed quotation undoubtedly is a *semantic* phenomenon. In contrast, open quotation is *pragmatic*: It is a matter of what people do with words rather than a matter of content and truth-conditions. (Recanati, 2001:667, emphasis added)

Whether a quotation has to be considered as open or closed is, as far as Recanati is concerned, a purely syntactic question. A quotation is closed if the linguistic material is "linguistically recruited" and fills the slot of a singular term in a sentence (Recanati, 2001:649).[16] Otherwise, a quotation is open (Recanati, 2001:649). With reference to the typology of quotations introduced in (1), closed quotation encompasses mainly pure and direct quotations, while all the other varieties would count as open.[17] In contrast, we treat all varieties of quotation in (1) alike. What distinguishes them is the inference triggered by the marking function of the QM. If we are correct, then the distinction between closed and open quotation boils down to differences in what the writer wants to do with the words she quoted. Thus, as we will argue in the next sections, these differences are not due to different kinds of quotation, but depend on what is being quoted. Beyond that, in many cases there are other, independent mechanisms, like *context shifts* or *mentioning,* at work as well. Interestingly, Recanati (2001, section 5) resorts to similar mechanism in order to defend his pragmatic approach of open quotation. We just go one step further and extend this strategy to pure and direct quotations as well.

Another way in which our approach is an extension of Recanati's is that we give an account of *how* the quotational point is calculated and *why* QM can trigger such an inference in the first place, using the same general pragmatic machinery for both. Recanati, on the other hand, is not interested in the principles at work here, although he accepts that the quotational point is calculated by means of some pragmatic processes. Following Herbert Clark's and Richard Gerrig's central claim according to which quotations are, essentially, demonstrations (Clark and Gerrig, 1990:769–770), he assumes that QM are governed by the use-condition that they should only be used in case the quoted words are used demonstratively (Recanati, 2001:664). Recanati's use-condition is conventional. We derive our use-condition from general pragmatic principles and the marking function of quotation marks.[18]

We already pointed out that a conventional approach cannot be extended to spoken language directly. Furthermore, the predictions of Recanati's approach differ from the ones of our MPI-account. A demonstration can be used without wanting to convey anything more or other than just guiding the reader's attention towards the intended referent of the demonstration.

This requirement, however, does not seem to be strong enough: Just guiding the reader's attention towards an expression does not guarantee that QM are used felicitously. If the writer does not want to convey anything more or other besides drawing attention to the quoted material, the use of QM is not licensed. For instance, it seems infelicitous to use QM for highlighting certain words in a text, an effect that is usually achieved by means of other typographical means (e.g., bold face) which are not as likely to trigger rich pragmatic inferences. Consider, for instance, the following passage taken from Horn (2005:20), where bold face is used to guide the reader's attention to the contrast between *said* and *uttered.*

(11)   what is **said** in an utterance is systematically underdetermined by the linguistic content of what is **uttered**.

Now compare this with a variant in which QM are used instead of bold face.

(12)   what is "said" in an utterance is systematically underdetermined by the linguistic content of what is "uttered".

In contrast to (11) and because of the QM, we think it plausible that a reader of (12) will try to infer something more or other than just a highlighting effect of the words in question. She might conclude, e.g., that the expressions enclosed in QM are someone else's words or that the writer wants to distance herself from that terminology. If this is correct, then mere demonstration is not sufficient for felicitous use of QM.

In contrast, the use-conditions of QM derived by the MPI-account are stronger in the sense that they do require some change in the interpretation of the quoted expressions, which is just what the intuitive interpretation of the difference between (11) and (12) suggests.

A further problem for the demonstration account is that it is unclear why a demonstration should automatically trigger additional pragmatic inferences. Given that ordinary demonstratives do not behave this way, this claim seems rather *ad hoc.* Thus, even if our approach does share many of the core ideas of Recanati's pragmatic theory, we consider it an extension and improvement of his approach with respect to the aspects just addressed.[19]

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[16] For arguments against this widespread "dogma" on closed quotation, cf. Pafel (2007, 2011).
[17] Recanati (2001) does not mention emphatic quotes.
[18] For a more thoroughgoing comparison between Recanati's (2001) theory and an approach based on marking and conversational implicatures, cf. Gutzmann (2007).
[19] Thanks to the anonymous referees of this journal for pressing this point.

3. In defense of the MPI-account

The MPI-account of quotation sketched so far raises some worries. While it may seem plausible for the hybrid kinds of quotation like mixed quotation, scare quotes, and emphatic quotes, one might wonder how the account can accommodate direct quotation and pure quotation. In the following two subsections, we address the two worries that we have heard the most. The first one aims at the truth-conditional effect of direct and pure quotation while the second concerns the status of pure quotation as a grammatical phenomenon. If these arguments were correct, the MPI-account would lose a lot of its plausibility as a *general* thesis on quotation marks. Even if one accepted it for some varieties of quotation, e.g., MQ, SQ and EQ, one could reasonably reject it for DQ and PQ, thus embracing some kind of homonymy view on QM.[20] However, we argue in the following that these arguments are not direct arguments against an account of quotation marks as implicature triggering markers in general, since they both target phenomena which we think of as being independent of quotation marks, namely *context shifts* and *mentioning*.

3.1. The argument from truth-conditions

The first worry can be formulated, roughly, as follows: "How can the contribution QM make to the overall meaning of the sentence in which they occur be akin to conversational implicatures, given that in direct and pure quotation QM seem to have an impact on truth-conditions? After all, it is a central property of implicatures that they are *not* subject to truth-conditional evaluation." Here are some examples typically brought forward in order to substantiate that worry:

(13) *Context shifts in direct quotation*
    a.   [Mary$_i$:] Peter$_k$ said my$_i$ bagels are fresh.
    b.   [Mary$_i$:] Peter$_k$ said, "My$_k$ bagels are fresh".

(14) *Mentioning in pure quotation*
    a.   Boston is populous.
    b.   "Boston" is disyllabic.
    c.   Peter loves Boston.
    d.   Peter loves "Boston".

It is obvious that in the two instances of (13) there is a reference shift of the personal pronoun *my*. The most natural readings of (13-a) and (13-b) are the ones indicated by the indices: in (13-a) *my* refers to Mary, whereas in (13-b) it refers to Peter. Obviously, this shift corresponds to a change in truth-conditions. The sentence in (13-a) is a speech report about Mary's bagels being fresh, while (13-b) is about Peter's bagels being fresh. It is fairly common to attribute this shift to the QM used in (13-b).

In (14-a) and (14-c) *Boston* refers to the capital of Massachusetts. In contrast, it is said, in (14-b) *Boston* refers to the word *Boston*. Referring to a city or a word of course makes a crucial difference in truth-conditions. For instance, Peter may love the city but at the same time dislike its name. In such a situation (14-c) would be true but (14-d) false. According to a classical view on quotation – based on Quine's (1951) and Tarski's (1983) seminal texts – this effect is due to the presence of QM. An argument against the MPI-account of quotation based on these truth-conditional differences can be formulated as follows:

(ATC) *Argument from truth-conditions*
    a.   If QM indicate the need to derive conversational implicatures, then they should not have any influence on truth conditions.
    b.   However, as examples like (13) show, the occurrence of QM does have an influence on the truth-conditions of a sentence.
    c.   Therefore, it is false that they indicate the need to derive conversational implicatures.

Although there is some dispute about the truth of the first premise of this argument (most famously Levinson, 2000), we focus on (ATC b): We neither want to deny that there is a context-shift in (13) nor that it has an influence on the truth-conditions of the sentence. What we want to deny is that the context-shift is due to the application of QM. Quotations and context shifts are frequently cooccurring but different phenomena. There are quotations without context shifts and context shifts without quotation. For instance, (15) suggests that punctuation marks and capital letters can indicate the context-shift just as well as QM can:

(15)   a.   [Mary$_i$:] Peter$_k$ said my$_i$ bagels are fresh.
       b.   [Mary$_i$:] Peter$_k$ said: My$_k$ bagels are fresh.
       c.   [Mary$_i$:] Peter$_k$ said – my$_k$ bagels are fresh.

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[20] For the reasons given in section 1 we take this to be problematic.

As in (13), we think that the indices in (15-b) and (15-c) indicate the most natural reading: *my* refers to Peter. As far as we know, no one defends the thesis that colons, dashes or capitals have a direct influence on the truth-conditions of a sentence. We propose to take the same stance towards QM.

The same disconnection between context-shifts and quotation marks holds the other way round: There are quotational constructions without any context-shift. This is obvious in the case of scare quotes (16-a) and emphatic quotes (16-b). However, there are also instances of mixed quotation in which indexicals are interpreted with respect to the context of the reporting utterance and not with respect to the reported one. This can be illustrated by the examples (16-c) and (16-d) which are taken from Johnson (2011).

(16)   a.   *C*: Bill has mistaken Jane as Peter's sister. Some days later, Bill and Peter are waiting for Jane. When she finally approaches, Peter utters to Bill:

Look, "my sister" is coming. (SQ)

    b.   This could be "your new car!" (EQ)

    c.   In the words of Gandhi, "if I had no sense of humor, I would long ago have committed suicide." (MQ)

    d.   As Abraham Lincoln said to the people of his time, "always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other." (MQ)

These examples, combined with the argument presented above, suggest that quotation marks are neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for a shifted context. If this is correct, then ATC collapses, as the strong connection between QM and context-shifts underlying its second premise does not hold.

We argue that a parallel reasoning applies to the examples in (14). Here, the truth-conditional difference is not due to a shifted context, but to the process of *mentioning* that shifts the reference of an expression from its ordinary referent to the word itself instead. Mentioning is equally independent from QM as context shifts are. There are cases of quotation without mentioning. For instance, take SQ or EQ:

(17)   a.   John is "smart". (SQ)

    b.   We sell "fresh" pastry. (EQ)

In both cases, the quotational constructions do *not* refer to words. Neither is John said to be the word *smart* in (17-a), nor is the pastry in (17-b) supposed to be related to the word *fresh*.

Furthermore, there are also instances of mentioning without QM. The most common cases are of the structure *x's name is y*. Examples like (18-a) are so natural that it would even be odd to use QM to indicate that the name of the speaker of (18-a) is not a person but a word. But also instances of mentioning other words without QM as in (18-b) can be found, even in semantic literature.

(18)   a.   My name is Peter Lasersohn.   (Lasersohn, 2005:644)

    b.   Scientists study the if.   (Weinreich, 1970:94, after Klockow, 1980:53)

Hence, analogously to context shifts, we do *not* deny that there are mentioning effects in cases like (14) which lead to crucial differences in truth-conditions. What we *do* deny is that this difference is contributed by the quotation marks themselves. The truth-conditional effect is due to the independent mechanism of mentioning while the QM (if present) help to draw the readers attention to the presence of this (otherwise mostly invisible) linguistic process. Here is an example of *meta-linguistic ambiguity*, as we would like to call it, to strengthen that point:

(19)   "Bill" is short.

The most natural reading is, of course, that the name *Bill* is short. The QM indicate that the name, rather than the person Bill, is at issue. However, we might also think of a context in which Mary uses *"Bill"* to refer to Peter in order to make fun of Joan who has confused Peter and Bill. That is, we could generate a reading according to which *a person mistakenly called Bill by Joan* is short. In the terminology adopted here this would then be a *scare quotes*-reading. It is important to note that the question of which interpretation is finally conveyed by (19) strongly depends on contextual information. It is not the QM by themselves that generate the first reading rather than the second, but independent conversational mechanisms. This toy example suggests that there are no clear cases in which QM and mentioning go hand in hand necessarily. We can almost always construct contexts in which a different interpretation of the example is salient.

Let us briefly sum up our answer to (ATC). At first sight, there seem to be truth-conditional effects in DQ and PQ, in contrast to the three more pragmatic kinds of quotation. However, we suggest that the differences in truth-conditions are not contributed by the QM, but by the independent mechanism of context shift or mentioning.[21] For instance, in most cases of SQ, there are no context shifts or mentioning effects, but only the marking effect of the QM leading, possibly, to an ironic

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[21] In this respect, our approach is akin to the one championed by Saka (1998).

interpretation. In contrast, we have both the marking effect of QM and mentioning in pure quotation, where the former draws the reader's attention to the latter. In direct quotation on the other hand, there is the marking effect and a context shift.

(20)   a.   The "debate" resulted in three cracked heads and two broken noses. (SQ)
              marking effect

        b.   "Boston" is disyllabic. (PQ)
              mentioning + marking effect

        c.   John Lennon said, "Life is what happens while you're making other plans." (DQ)
              context shift + marking effect

Thus, the distinction between semantic and rather pragmatic varieties of quotation is not a distinction of kinds of quotation but a *distinction in what is quoted.* In the former, mentioned or context shifted expressions are quoted, which is, of course, truth-conditionally different from quoting non-mentioned or non-context shifted expressions.

3.2. The argument from grammaticality

In the previous section, we used examples of mentioning without QM to demonstrate that the former is a mechanism independent of the latter and that the truth-conditional effect in pure quotation can be traced back to the phenomenon of mentioning. With respect to examples like (18-a) this seems to be quite reasonable. In cases like (21), however, this distinction has been called into question based on the claim that these utterances, unlike the ones in (22), are outright ungrammatical.

(21)   a.   Cats is a noun.   (Saka, 1998, 118)

        b.   Peter loves the never surrender that is written in bold red letter on his wall.

(22)   a.   <Cats> is a noun.

        b.   "Cats" is a noun.

        c.   Peter loves the *never surrender* that is written in bold red letter on his wall.

Quotation marks or other graphical means like italics or brackets, it is argued, are necessary for simple kinds of metalinguistic predication.[22] In case they are "missing", the sentence is said to be ungrammatical. If sentences like the ones in (21) were indeed ungrammatical, then an argument against an account based on such data could be rendered as follows:

(AG)   *Argument from grammaticality*

        a.   If QM indicate the need to derive conversational implicatures, then they should not have any influence on the grammaticality of a sentence.

        b.   However, as examples like (21) show, the occurrence of QM does have an influence on the grammaticality of a sentence.

        c.   Therefore, it is false that they indicate the need to derive conversational implicatures.

Again, we reject the second premise, although this time with slightly more determination. We are not convinced by the claim that the examples in (21) are ungrammatical sentences. Although they are, of course, not well formed expressions in formal languages – for which Quine and Tarski's theories were originally developed – it seems that the connection between QM and mentioning postulated by (AG b) is too strong for natural languages. Mentioning very often occurs without QM, not only in examples like (18-a), repeated here as (23-a), but also in many other constructions that indicate mentioning by means of other devices like italics or certain predicates suggesting metalinguistic usage.

(23)   a.   My name is Peter Lasersohn.   (Lasersohn, 2005:644)

        b.   *Cats* is a noun.

        c.   The expression cats is a noun.

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[22] The qualification of this thesis is due to an anonymous referee who pointed out cases of metalinguistic predication involving demonstratives: *Those words are disyllabic.* Here, neither QM nor any other graphical means are present in the sentence containing the metalinguistic predicate. Instead, the linguistic expression is referred to by an ordinary demonstrative. This, however, is orthogonal to the problem of AG, since the linguistic expression is not part of the sentence.

(24)   Er wurde mit vielen Ahs und Ohs begrüßt.

         he was with many ahs and ohs greeted

         'He was greeted with many ahs and ohs.'   (Klockow, 1980:56)

(25)   Terebi bedeutet "television" […]   (Klockow, 1980:62)

         'Terebi means "television"'[…]

Proponents of AG are committed to the claim that all these utterances are ungrammatical. We, on the other hand, do not think that the presence or absence of QM alters the grammaticality of sentences containing mentioned expressions. Rather, it might alter their felicity. In cases like (23-b) and (23-c), using QM is clearly more felicitous than omitting them. Thus, we suggest that the question of whether to use QM or not is not a question of grammar, but a question of style. If this is correct, then (AG) rests on a confusion of genuine rules of natural language and *stylistic norms* (of written language). Whereas mentioning is part of the former, the prescription to use QM to mark mentioned expressions is part of the latter.

A stylistic view on the role of QM can also explain why, in certain constructions, QM not only appear to lack any positive influence on grammaticality, but even lead to infelicitous utterances. The most obvious case are *y's name is x* constructions again.

(26)   a.   #My name is "Peter Lasersohn".

Utterances like (26) are odd because, from a point of view oriented at conversational efficiency, the QM are simply superfluous. It is as clear as it can be that *Peter Lasersohn* in (26) is mentioned anyway, since no reasonable speaker would assert that a name is a person. Using QM nonetheless in this case results in pedantic stylistic overkill.[23] Consequently, in these contexts the application of QM almost always suggests quite different interpretations, e.g., that *Peter Lasersohn* is not really the name of the speaker in (26) but only a pseudonym, or that the speaker is making fun of someone who has mistaken him for Peter Lasersohn. This is, of course, the line of argument the MPI-account suggests and, as we will show in the following section, it can be supported by empirical data. But let us first clarify the predictions the argument from grammaticality and the argument from style make respectively.

The prediction of the argument from grammaticality should be something along the lines of the following hypothesis: The more obviously a rule of grammar applies, the less frequent its violations. Thus, we should find a considerable percentage of QM occurrences in contexts in which it is obvious that, for instance, a meta-linguistic reading is intended.

The argument from style, on the other hand, allows for a more liberal position: In case it is obvious that a marked interpretation is intended, the use of QM is not compulsory. Thus, we should find frequent occurrences of, for instance, mentioning without quotation marks. Given these interpretations of the arguments are correct, the predictions are sufficiently distinct to be tested empirically.

3.3. Quotation marks in meta-linguistic context

In order to bolster our claims we conducted a small corpus research. Of course, what we present cannot count as a full fledged empirical investigation of the interaction between mentioning and pure quotation, not to speak of all other kinds of quotation and their subtleties. However, it gives a good first impression of empirical evidence against the view that non-quoted but, nonetheless, mentioned expressions are ungrammatical.

Our corpus is taken from the *Archiv der geschriebenen Sprache* (called "W") of the COSMAS II corpus hosted by the *Institut für deutsche Sprache*.[24] W consists of a large collection of written German text, mostly taken from newspapers and literature. From this corpus, we chose the most recent volume (2008) of the supraregional newspaper *Mannheimer Morgen*. To extract our own corpus of mentioned expressions we searched for two key words that often indicate metalinguistic usage of the subsequent expression, namely the expressions *Wort* 'word' and *Begriff* 'expression'. These two words systematically give rise to meta-linguistic appositives like the following.

(27)   a.   das Wort "Feindbild"   (M08/JAN.03350)

                 the word enemy-concept

         b.   Der Begriff "Online Communitys"   (M08/JAN.05664)

                 the expression online communities

For *Wort*, we got 1,553 hits, and for *Begriff* we got 525 hits. From this we extracted all the instances in which *Wort* and *Begriff* are used to refer to an expression. Out of the 1553 occurrences of *Wort*, 271 are used with mentioned expressions

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[23] Klockow (1978) observes similar effects for excessive use of scare quotes.

[24] After a simple registration, this corpus can be searched easily by a webbased interface. http://www.ids-mannheim.de/cosmas2/web-app/.

Table 1
Occurrences of *Wort* 'word' and *Begriff* 'expression'.

	Wort	Begriff	Total
Occurrences	1553	525	2078
Metalinguistic appositives	271	205	476

Table 2
Quotation marks in metalinguistic appositives after *Wort* 'word' and '*Begriff*' *expression*.

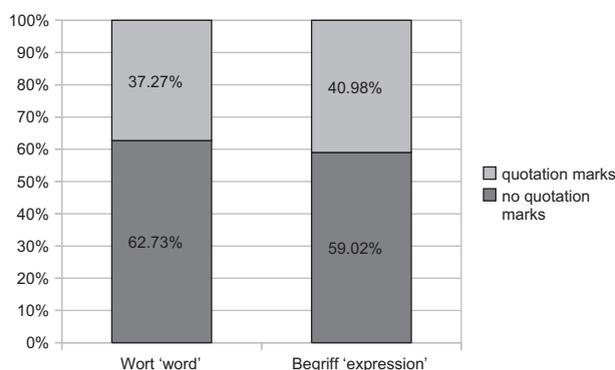|	Wort	Begriff	Total
Quotation marks	170	121	291
No quotation marks	121	84	185

Fig. 1. The use of quotation marks in metalinguistic appositives after *Wort* 'word' and *Begriff* 'expression'.

(17.5%), while a total of 205 (39.0%) of all occurrences of *Begriff* induce metalinguistic contexts. This leaves us with a corpus of 476 metalinguistic appositives (Table 1).

Out of the total of 476 metalinguistic appositives, 291 (61.1%) are marked with QM, while 185 (38.9%) are not. In detail, there are 170 mentioned expression after *Wort* that are marked with QM, and 121 after *Begriff* (Fig. 1 and Table 2).

Although the number of mentioned expressions that are marked with quotation marks is significantly higher than an evenly random distribution would produce ($\chi^2 = 23.6$; $p < 0.0001$), the result is far from the number any genuine rule of grammar should yield.[25] Taking into account that, due to metalinguistic appositives, the mentioning effect is quite obvious, this result becomes even more striking. A good candidate for a rule of grammar should certainly be followed in more than 61.1%, especially in obvious cases. Let us stipulate, that a genuine grammatical rule should be followed in about 90% of cases in which it is obvious that the rule applies. This is a fairly weak condition, as it still allows for every tenth instance to be incorrect. Then, it should be expected that about 428 of the 476 mentioned expressions are enclosed in QM. The attested number of 291 is significantly lower than this ($\chi^2 = 434.9$; $p > 0.0001$). Even if we soften our requirement by lowering the threshold to 75% the attest rate is still significantly lower ($\chi^2 = 48.8$; $p > 0.0001$).

To add some flesh to this theoretical argument, we did another corpus research. In contrast to the use of QM, which we argue is governed by mere stylistic norms, using commas to indicate subordinated sentences is a genuine rule of the grammar of written German. This should be reflected in a lower percentage of instances in which the rule is violated, especially in the obvious cases. To check this prediction, we consulted the 2008 volume of the *Mannheimer Morgen* again, searching for the complementizer *dass* 'that', which introduces subordinated verb-final clauses. Since *dass* is the most frequent complementizer in German, we took the first 1000 hits. From this, we subtracted all instances in which *dass* is part of a complex complementizer like for instance, *so dass* 'such that'. This has been the case in 54 examples. We therefore end up with a total of 946 instances of subordinated sentences introduced by *dass*. Only in one of these examples, the comma indicating the subordination is missing. Even in this case, it is easy to see why it is missing:

(28)   Wichtig ist laut Mittenbach – und das ist in allen Gemeinden des Rhein-Neckar- und des Rhein-Pfalz-Kreises
         so – **dass** die Bäume frei von Christbaumschmuck und Lametta sind.   (M08/JAN.00722)

         *According to Mittenbach it is important – and this is the case in all communities of the Rhein-Neckar- and
         Rhein-Pfalz region – that the trees are free from Christmas tree decoration and tinsel.*

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[25] All significances are calculated using the web based tool provided by Preacher (2001).

Between the main sentence and the subordinated one, there is an intervening parenthetical sentence marked by two dashes. These dashes may conflict with the comma that should introduce the subordinated clause following the parenthetical. However, even if there were no explanation available for this mistake, the ratio between examples in which the rule is followed and in which it is not, is extremely high (945:1 = 99.9%). This is in sharp contrast with the number we found in case of the use of QM in pure quotation (291:185 = 61.1%). If the use of QM were governed by a grammatical rule, we would expect results much closer to the one for the use of commas.

We conclude that this empirical data speaks against the assumption (AG b) according to which not using QM to mark mentioned expressions leads to ungrammaticality. It would be a very strong stipulation that all mentioned expressions not marked by means of QM (which is after all a percentage of 38.7%) are ungrammatical. Even more so since the mentioning use of the examined expressions is clearly indicated. Our corpus is drawn from newspaper texts, a text form that is not only professionally edited but that is also often taken to be the most characteristic reflection of the standards and norms of written language (cf. Eisenberg, 2007).

The arguments of section 3 are mostly defensive. If they are correct, two important standard assumptions about quotation, namely (ATC b) and (AG b), are implausible not only from a conceptual but also, in case of the latter, from an empirical point of view.

4. Conclusion

We hope to have shown that it is worth reconsidering the traditional approaches to the phenomenon of quotation. Taking up on the general diagnoses of pragmatically oriented theorists, we presented an alternative explanation of the effects of quotation marks in natural language. The only real work QM do, we argued, is to mark the expression they enclose and, thereby, indicate that the standard interpretation of the quotatum is pragmatically blocked. The derivation of the point of quotation then proceeds by means of general pragmatic processes like conversational implicature.

This view allows us to include all varieties of quotation mark usage found in natural language without being forced to postulate misuse or ambiguity. We then tackled the two most serious worries about our proposals, namely the argument from truth-conditions and the argument from grammaticality. The strategy we applied in resisting these worries is to disentangle general phenomena of natural language, e.g., mentioning or context-shifts, from the completely independent phenomenon of quotation. This is, to some extent, an inference to the best explanation, which, as we showed in section 3.3, is supported by empirical evidence. So, given that our arguments and our responses to the criticisms raised against them are correct, focussing on the pragmatic mechanisms is the most promising route to take in analyzing quotation.

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