

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Applicant

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Habilitation thesis

Evolution of Direct Discourse Marking from Classical to Late Latin

Reviewer

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The book, entitled *Evolution of Direct Discourse Marking from Classical to Late Latin*, that Jana Mikulová presented by for her habilitation procedure, faces the syntactic and pragmatic strategies for marking the direct discourse in both synchronic and diachronic perspective. Generally, this topic is almost neglected within the Latin linguistics, whose interests have been repeatedly excited by the indirect discourse, due to the complexity of grammatical aspects which are involved, such as switching moods, tenses, pronouns.

For this reason, the book by J.Mikulová is highly original and represents a novelty, if not a desideratum, in the field of the Latin linguistics. At first sight a direct discourse could seems to be of higher interest from a synchronic point of view than from a diachronic one. However, J.Mikulová clearly demonstrated that the strategies for marking a direct discourse undergo remarkable changes in the course of Latin history, that have considerable importance for the evolutionary perspective of both narrative patterns and of the language structures.

Her analysis is based on a largest and representative data set ranging from authors of the Classical period, such as Cicero and Titus Livius, to the latest ones, such as Gregorius Turonensis, Fredegarius and 8th century anonymous hagiographers. Chronologically four main periods are distinguished, namely the Classical one (90 BCE-14 CE), the Post-Classical one (14 - 200 CE), Late Latin 1 (200 - 600 CE) and Late Latin 2 (600-800 CE), taking into account the differences between those stages of Late Latin. Sets of texts, selected for each period, are compared and classified combining use of lexical units, syntactic order and morpho-semantic strategies, that convergently or divergently serve to single out a direct quotation.

As to the literary genres, prose texts are essentially focused, due to the highest frequency of direct discourse according to narrative or argumentative patterns. Even if theatrical plays and poetry exhibit numberless examples of the topic at issue, they are excluded because their contexts require a separated investigation. The corpus of the selected prose pieces is adequately balanced and appropriately differentiated as to genres, styles, contents, and purposes, such as novels by Petronius and Apuleius, philosophical and rhetorical treatises by Cicero, not to mention the diverse sorts of the Christian works, like translation of the Biblical texts (the Vulgata), (auto)biography (e.g. the St. Augustin *Confessiones*), anonymous tales (e.g. the *Peregrinatio Aethiae*), late hagiographical texts.

The corpus of occurrences, searched through Brepols' databases *Library of Latin Texts* (Series A and B) and *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, consists of 2364 instances of direct

discourse, which are listed and measured by length according to the number of words and quotation per 1,000 words.

The scrutiny of data is firmly grounded on theoretical bases, that occupy the chapter 2. Two main methodical approaches are combined, namely the cognitive and syntactic ones: the former pays attention to the deictic centres and deictic expressions (e.g. pronouns, adverbials) distinguishing the current speaker from the quoted speaker and the addressee; the latter takes into account the surface strategies signalling the direct discourse inside of a speech act, given that neither punctuation nor page layout did exist in antiquity. Probably the ancient habit of reading aloud required strategies different from the silent reading, that spread in the Christian period. An important repercussion of reading or listening practices is the syntactic placement of quotation markers almost exclusively at the beginning of a direct discourse. In contrast, they are frequently absent at its end. The Author relates this fact to the most important role of the beginning for marking the boundary of a quotation, whereas its end is expected and more easily recognizable. But it deserves to keep in mind that in the epic poetry, unlike the prosaic style, the verb of saying is often placed or repeated at the end of a quotation.

Pragmatically varieties of speech situations are adequately considered in analysing the direct discourse, that needs a preliminary distinction between pure and mixed quotation. Differently from the pure quotation, where the discourse markers are much more easily recognizable and almost universally widespread, such as the verbs for saying, the mixed quotation is often hidden behind manifold strategies, featuring each language, depending on both stylistic reasons and on strengthening of illocutionary force. The Mikulová's research essentially concentrates on the pure quotation, revealing awareness of complexity of the aspects involved by the mixed quotations, that would deserve to be separately and more closely scrutinised.

At the core of investigation lie the nature and development of the direct discourse markers, that are distinguished as follows: verbal markers, comprising both specific and non-specific verbs of saying, non-verbal markers, mostly connective particles (e.g. *et*, *at*) or adverbial ones (e.g. *sic*), and, finally the zero markers, that usually contrast opponent voices in a dialogical interplay simply signalled by switching 1st and 2nd person pronouns. Instead, the interrogative pronouns could fall into an intermediate category between non-verbal and zero-markers, even if, as the Author recognizes, they are alternatively used referring either to current speaker or to the reported speaker.

Chapter 3., whose length occupies almost a half of the book, lies at heart of the research. Materials are collected and classified according to their lexical and morphological forms, syntactic orders, and pragmatic uses, in intersection with their frequency and distribution among authors and literary genres of different works. The results, which are adequately exemplified, are displayed by several statistical tables crossing types of quotation in contexts and overt mention of an addressee in both synchronic and diachronic sense provided with percentages of the respective occurrences. Details of the data are thoroughly analysed and accurately discussed in the chapter 4., whose conclusions are summarised in the chapter 5. Among the factors responsible for evolution of direct discourse markers a basic distinction is made between diachronic trends relevant to language structures and subjective choices of individual authors.

Grammaticalization is considered a key point of the diachronic development of the direct discourse markers. This phenomenon, which is generally listed among the most prominent criteria for defining a grammatical change, generally encompasses manifold processes of different nature and effects. Therefore, it is very frequently used in an extensive sense, that would require a more detailed definition when applied to a specific field of grammar. More precisely with respect to direct discourse markers the concept of grammaticalization is referred to particular pragmatic and textual functions acquired by verbal and non-verbal units, which are involved at different extent and with different outcomes: the former essentially

concern the verbs of saying, among which *ait*, *inquit*, *dicat* are the most common in the entire course of Latin; the latter include some connective and adverbial particles and interjections. In both cases, however, the final stage of grammaticalization is not completely achieved, because the tools at issue neither undergo a complete desemantization nor acquire a grammatical status properly said. In fact, their function as direct discourse markers does not result from development of new morpho-semantic features, but it is pragmatically signalled by each specific context. Consequently, a more appropriate definition would be tendencies towards grammaticalization that alternate in the history of the Latin language.

Firstly, in this respect verbal markers should be more sharply separated from the non-verbal ones from both synchronic and diachronic points of views. Process of grammaticalization of verbal markers took place already in Classical Latin, where the verbs *inquit* and *ait* are essentially specialized for reported speech, even if differently distributed: the former is typical of direct discourse, the latter of the indirect one. Such a distinction disappears in Late Latin, where both verbs frequently interchange in competition with *dicere*. In contrast, the tendency of grammaticalization of non-verbal markers is increasingly shown in Late Latin, when the particles *et*, *at*, *tum*, *sic* developed new pragmatic functions and became interchangeable.

Formally *inquit* and *ait* differentiate from other verbs of saying as to both defective morphology and syntactic placement, that, in turn, distinguish each other. These morpho-syntactic properties, however, were insufficient for achieving a complete stage of grammaticalization. Such a hybrid status prevented their complete evolution in Late Latin, given that their use alternates with other verbs of saying (e.g. *dicere*, *loqui*) without any distinction between direct and indirect discourse. In other words, *inquit* and *ait* underwent a sort of partial ‘degrammaticalization’, as markers of reported speech, that accompanies their disappearance in the spoken language. The occurrences of *inquit* and *ait* among the late authors are mostly reminiscent of the Classical prose, but, significantly, their redundant use together with other verbs of saying remarkably increases. Redundancy of multiple verbs of saying for introducing direct discourse is rightly related by J. Mikulová to four reasons, that could also be combined, i.e. emphatic function, formulaic repetition, influence of biblical language, strengthening of atypical markers. These reasons, however, are a consequence of weakening of the original role of the markers typical of the Classical language, so that they need to be functionally strengthened.

More generally the evolution of direct discourse markers cannot be separated from the change of the set of verbs of saying, observable in the history of Latin and reperculated in the lexical heritage of the Romance languages. An only one verb for saying is preserved by the totality of the Romance languages, that is *dicere*, whereas the most part of similar verbs of Classical Latin got thoroughly or partially lost and were almost completely replaced. Late Latin shows a massive expansion of *dicere* at detriment of the variety of Classical verbs for saying, that is reflected by its frequency for introducing a direct discourse. The influence of biblical translations, featured by numberless occurrences of formulaic expressions, such as *dicens* and *et dixit*, as direct discourse markers is correctly emphasised among the facts of diachronic evolution. It deserves to remind, however, that the wide spread of *dicere* in Late Latin has its roots in the colloquial language, as shown by Cicero’s and Seneca’s epistles, featured by frequency of *dicere*, notably higher than the philosophical or rhetorical works. That means that a sociolinguistically marked variant diachronically gave rise to an unmarked standard use of the term at issue.

This phenomenon was probably triggered by a semantic property of *dicere*: this verb is declarative in that it implies the content of an utterance, independently from direct or indirect discourse and from current or reported speaker. In one word, *dicere* became an unmarked term, suitable for any type of speech. The increase of *dicere*, related to the decrease of *inquit* and *ait*, had a repercussion on its syntactic placement, prior to the beginning of both type of

reported speech, that is a feature common to Late Latin and Romance languages. Moreover, the syntactic position distinguishes Late from Classical Latin as to the distribution of atypical verbal markers of reported speech, such as *negare*, *salutare*, *clamare*, *iubere*, *suscipere*. Markers of this sort generally precede a direct discourse in the Classical language, whereas proper markers like *inquit* and *ait* are inserted into the quotation. Inversely in Late Latin the frozen anteposition of *dicere*, as standard quotative marker, is counterbalanced by a tendency to the interposition of atypical verbs, that will be enormously developed by the narrative strategies of the Romance languages.

In conclusion, the research made by J. Mikulová fills a gap in Latin linguistics concerning an important aspect common to the almost totality of literary genres. The work significantly contributes, from a synchronic point of view, to increase the competence of the strategies of the direct discourse in any Latin text and, from a diachronic point of view, to broaden the knowledge of the history of Latin language from a hitherto neglected perspective.

Methodically, data relevant to the direct discourse markers are consistently selected, systematically organized and in depth analysed. All that, solidly grounded on methodical bases of both philology and theoretical linguistics, assures firm and reliable results. Such a picture of both synchronic and diachronic variation of direct discourse markers provides with a valuable help to grasping key points of evolutionary paths of Latin toward the Romance languages.

For those reasons the book by J. Mikulová completely fills all requirements expected for a habilitation thesis in Classical Philology

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Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

- 1) You correctly highlighted the role of the deictic and non-deictic items as markers of the direct discourse. However, the system of the deictic and non-deictic items, especially the pronouns, underwent significant variation in the course of the Latin languages.

The question is: Did you find any changes in the use of these markers over time, also with respect to the evolution of the quotation markers?

- 2) You stressed the importance of connectors such as *et*, *tum*, *at* for signalling change of speaker. But they generally work as coordinating particles in any speech.

The question is: Did you detect any variation of those particles in both form and function following the evolutionary path of the direct discourse?

- 3) As you know, direct and indirect discourse are often combined in any descriptive or narrative text, on one hand, for merely stylistic reasons, and, on the other hand, for expressing different attitudes of the current speakers towards a reported speech.

The question is: Why did not you take into account the interplay of indirect and direct discourse, when occurring in certain contexts? It could have been helpful to shed light on both pragmatic and communicative differences also in diachronic perspective.

- 4) You rightly signalled the different functions of the verbs of saying (e.g. *inquit*, *dixit*, etc.) as quotation markers in the course of the Latin language.

The question is: to what extent the evolution of their syntactic collocation is related, on the one hand, to the syntactic changes that occurred over time and, on the other hand, to the communicative purposes and other sociolinguistic variations?

- 5) You thoroughly investigated the increasing use of *dicere* and the decline of *inquit*, *ait* as markers of direct discourse.

The question is: do you think that a more in-depth scrutiny of the change of the verbs of saying in the history of Latin might contribute to shed light on this phenomenon ?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled Evolution of Direct Discourse Marking from Classical to Late Latin by Mgr. Jana Mikulová, Ph.D., **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Classical Philology.

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