

# **Evidentiality in reporting speech in news media: a corpus-based study of British newspapers**

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It is common knowledge that reported speech is intensely used in the press to convey the words or thoughts expressed by politicians, famous people or athletes, for instance, as has been underlined by Mitchell (2014: 534): “Discourse representation, the portrayal of others’ speech, thought or writing, occupies a pivotal position in the daily processes of conventional journalism”. Among the various forms of reported speech, direct speech, which “purports to give a verbatim rendition of the words that were spoken” (Coulmas 1986) is widely used either in the headline or in the body of a news article.

This research focuses on the way some utterances adopt the syntax of direct speech without actually reporting any actual words uttered by an identifiable speaker. Even though the boundaries between utterances of authentic direct speech and utterances of simili-direct speech are rather unclear, this study shows it is nonetheless possible to classify utterances according to semantic and syntactic criteria.

The research corpus based on British daily newspapers gathers several thousand news articles from 2004 onwards and includes print and online publications.

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