Three puzzles about negation in non-canonical speech reports

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1 Non-canonical speech reports

The canonical forms of reported speech are direct (1) and indirect (2) speech.

(1)   Mary said "I'm running late, so don't wait up."

(2)   Mary said that she was running late so we shouldn't wait up.

Both of these are ways to report what Mary said. The difference is that in direct speech we report her words (by quoting them verbatim, or by giving a demonstration of the original utterance, depending on your quotation theory of choice), while in indirect speech we report the content of the original words.

Beyond the two well-established report types in (1) and (2) there are various forms of reported speech in which the aspect of reporting is somehow backgrounded and the content of the report itself, i.e., the complement or quoted phrase, serves as the main point. This backgrounding may be achieved syntactically, as in parenthetically framed direct (3) and indirect speech (4).

(3)   "I'll be late again," she said, "so don't wait up."

(4)   She would be late again, she said, so we shouldn't wait up.

Alternatively, the backgrounding effect may be achieved morphologically, as in reportative evidential marking in Cuzco Quechua (5), the reportative subjunctive in German (6) and Dutch (7), or reportative modals (7b).[1]

(5)   Para-sha-n-si.
       rain-prog-3-REP
       'It is raining, I am told'   (Cuzco Quechua, Faller 2002)

(6)   (Er sagte, sie sei   schön.) Sie habe   grüne Augen.
       (He said   she be-REP pretty.) She have-REP green eyes
       (He said she's pretty.) She has green eyes, he said.'   (German, Jäger 1971)

(7)   a.   Anne zou thuis zijn.   b.   Anne schijnt thuis te zijn
             Anne would.REP at-home be   Anne seems.REP at-home to be
             'Anne is at home, reportedly'   (Dutch)

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[1]Cf. also Schenner (2009) on the reportative modals *sollen* and *wollen* in German.

Finally, the backgrounding of the reporting may also be entirely unmarked and left to pragmatics. This happens in so-called semantically parenthetical indirect reports (Simons 2007; Hunter et al. 2006; Hunter 2015). In (8), for instance, B's answer takes the form of a canonical indirect report of something Mary said. But the fact that Mary said something does not address the question under discussion, so the main contribution of the report seems to be just the complement, that John is ill.

(8)   A: Why was John not at the meeting?
        B: Well, Mary said that he's ill.

We identify in this paper three puzzles concerning the peculiar interaction between these non-canonical types of reporting and negation. We then propose an analysis to solve all three.

2   Three Puzzles

2.1   Puzzle 1: De Cornulier's observation.

De Cornulier (1978) observes that parenthetically framed direct discourse does not allow negation in the saying-frame (9a), in contrast to canonical direct or indirect discourse, (9b-c) (cf. Recanati 2001:646–647):

(9)   a.   *"I'll be late", she didn't say.
        b.   She didn't say, "I'll be late."   c.   She didn't say that she'd be late.

Recanati explains this syntactic negation-blocking in terms of the mimetic character of quotation in parenthetical direct discourse. Following Clark and Gerrig's (1990) demonstration theory of quotation, Recanati argues that in a parenthetical direct speech construction the quoted phrase is itself a demonstration/depiction of an original speech act, so that it doesn't make sense to explicitly deny that such a speech act took place. To explain the felicity of (9b), he stipulates that this canonical form can be re-analyzed as a form of pure mention rather than genuine direct speech.

However, we find similar negation-blocking effects in parenthetical indirect discourse:

(10)   *She would be late again, she didn't say, so we shouldn't wait up.

Moreover, for unembedded reportative subjunctives and evidentials, wherever we add a negation, it never manages to take scope over just the saying. For reportative evidentials this is illustrated in (11):

(11)   Mana=s   phalay-ta ati-n=chu.
        not=REP fly-acc   can-3=neg
        'It cannot fly, I was told.'   (Cuzco Quechua, Faller 2014)

The negation in (11) does not affect the information that the speaker reports what someone told her – we will refer to this as the *reporting component* of the semantic content of a non-canonical report – but only the content of that report, the *reported component*. (12) shows the same point for the German unembedded subjunctive in the second sentence. If we add a negation to the unembedded subjunctive clause and/or to the preceding overtly embedded report construction, the inference that the content of the clause was said by someone survives:

(12)   Rau hatte ihm (nicht) geraten, im Amt zu bleiben. Doch müsse er (nicht) selbst die Entscheidung treffen.
        'Rau had (not) advised him to stay in office. But he himself would-REP (not) have to make the decision ($\rightsquigarrow$, he said).'   (adapted from Fabricius-Hansen and Sæbø 2004:214)

Finally, for semantically parenthetical reports like (8) above it is syntactically possible to add a negation and even have it take scope over the saying. However, if we do this the parenthetical reading is no longer available and B's answer becomes infelicitous.

(13)   A: Why was John not at the meeting?
        B: #Well, Mary didn't say that he's ill.

Since most of these non-canonical report types fall on the indirect discourse, non-quotational side of the reporting spectrum, Recanati's explanation in terms of the mimetic character of quotation cannot capture the more general pattern.

2.2   Puzzle 2: Non-deniability of the reporting.

In canonical direct and indirect discourse the reporting itself is easily denied by another discourse participant.

(14)   A: She said {"I'm innocent"/ that she was innocent}
        B: No, she didn't (= she didn't say that)

More precisely, depending on the context, we can in principle deny either the reporting or the reported component of a canonical report, as illustrated in (15).

(15)   B':   Nonsense, she may be innocent, but she would never say that.
        B":   Nonsense, she's guilty, regardless of what she told you.

By contrast, for our non-canonical varieties a denial targeting the reporting content is impossible, or at least much more difficult.

Let's start with evidentials. Faller (2014:6) observes that in Cuzco Quechua one cannot challenge (11) ("It cannot fly, reportedly") with "That's not true, nobody told you this" (cf. Murray (2011) for a similar observation about Cheyenne).

The same seems to hold for the Dutch and German reportative moods and modals. For instance, with a Dutch reportative *zou* a denial may target the reported content, as in B's answer in (16), but not the just the reporting content, as in B':

(16)   A: Anne zou thuis zijn. ('Anne would.REP be at home')
        B: Onzin. Ik weet niet wat je gehoord hebt, maar ze is niet thuis
              'Nonsense. I don't know what you heard, but she's not at home'
        B': #Onzin. Niemand heeft dat beweerd, ook al is ze misschien wel thuis
              'Nonsense, nobody said that, though she may be at home'

For semantically parenthetical reports, the situation is more subtle. A third speaker may well interrupt our dialogue to object that Mary didn't say that. Note however that explicitly targeting only the reporting, as in (17), sounds slightly off, as if C is deliberately and uncooperatively misinterpreting B's answer to hijack the conversation and start talking about Mary instead of John.

(17)   A: Why was John not at the meeting?   B: Well, Mary said he's ill.   C: No she didn't.

Parenthetical direct and indirect speech reports introduce another complication. These forms typically occur only in narrative text and seem awkward in a spontaneous dialogue setting where speakers are arguing about what's true and/or who said what. For this reason it's hard to see which component is more readily deniable. We'll return to this genre dependence of parenthetical direct/indirect speech below.

Let's assume that an assertion may express various layers of contents (Bach, 1999; Potts, 2005; Geurts and Maier, 2013), of which one (or more) can serve as the main point and other are backgrounded. Then the fact that denials typically target one such content layer is evidence that that is the main point. In our case we've been distinguishing a reporting meaning component (x said p) and a reported component (p) associated with non-canonical reports. The denial facts collected above then indicate that the main point of a parenthetical report is the reported meaning component, while the reporting component is backgrounded. This general diagnosis is in line with the literature on these subjects, including the cases for which our denial tests were somewhat inconclusive, cf. e.g. De Vries (2006) on backgrounding in parenthetical direct discourse, and Simons (2007) on the main point of a semantically parenthetical indirect report. In sum then, our second puzzle can be paraphrased without denial: How is it that in non-canonical reports the reported component constitutes the main point of the utterance, with the reporting component pushed into the background?

2.3 Puzzle 3: Reportative commitment.

In puzzle 2 we observed that only the reported component is readily available for denial in a dialogue. We concluded that the reporting component is backgrounded while the reported component contributes the at-issue information. However, it has been noted, primarily in the evidentiality literature, that despite this apparent foregrounding of the reported component, the speaker herself still need not be fully committed to its truth. We see this in examples like (18) where the reporter herself explicitly denies the reported content:

(18) Pay-kuna=s qulqi-ta   saqiy-wa-n. Mana=ma, ni un sol-ta saqi-sha-wa-n=chu
      they=REP   money-acc leave-1o-3 no=impr   not one Sol-acc leave-prog-1O-3=neg
      'They left me money, I was told. But no, they didn't leave me one Sol.' (Cuzco Quechua, Faller 2002)

This apparent lack of commitment in reportative evidential constructions is dubbed 'reportative exceptionality' in the evidentiality literature (cf. AnderBois 2014 for a detailed overview), referring to the fact that this pattern is not found in any other types of evidentiality marking.

Let's investigate the speaker's commitment to the reported component in some of our other non-canonical report types. We'll start with parenthetical direct and indirect speech. In a typical narrative setting, where these constructions are most at home, the narrator doesn't usually disagree with what a protagonist says, but sometimes she does:

(19) {"I'm innocent," she said, "so let me go". / She was innocent, she said, so we should let her go.}
      But I didn't believe her. And it turned out she was guilty and letting her go was a big mistake.

The lack of commitment to the reported component is also clear with Germanic reportative modals and mood:[2]

(20) Anneloes schijnt   thuis   te zijn, maar ik geloof er   niets   van.
      Anneloes seems.REP at-home to be,   but   I   believe there nothing of
      'Anneloes is at home, I am told, but I don't believe it.'   (Dutch, Koring 2013)

(21) Er sagte, sie sei schön. Sie habe grüne Augen. In Wirklichkeit hat sie aber blaue Augen.
      'He said she is beautiful. She has green eyes, he said. But in reality she has blue eyes.' (German)

For semantically parenthetical indirect speech, Hunter (2015) likewise observes a "hedged commitment", which we could bring out as follows:

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[2]Cf. also Schenner 2009:184 on "shifted responsibility" with reportative *sollen* in German.

(22)   A: Where is Mary?   B: Bill said she's still at work, but I don't believe it.

All in all, with respect to commitment, non-canonical reports pattern with canonical direct and indirect speech, i.e. the speaker is not committed to the truth of the content of the report:

(23)   John said {"I didn't do it"/that he didn't do it}, but he clearly did.

The third puzzle then consists in reconciling this behavior with the apparent backgrounding brought out with denials in puzzle 2 above: If the main point of a report is the reported content, how come the speaker is not committed to that?

3   Two dimensions of meaning

As pointed out above, our non-canonical report types seem to emphasize the content of the reported clause over that of the saying-frame. In formal semantics, evidential and parenthetical content in general are analyzed as somehow secondary or supplementary to the main point. For instance, Potts (2005) analyzes appositives and expressives generally as conventional implicatures, which contribute their content to a separate meaning dimension. Likewise, the "Baseline Conception" (AnderBois, 2014) in the evidentiality literature is that an evidential contributes it's evidential content as a special, not-at-issue meaning component, with an ongoing controversy over what type of meaning that is, i.e. a presupposition, conventional implicature, or speech act modifier. In discussing puzzle 2 above we've confirmed such a special, not-at-issue status of the reporting meaning component in all our non-canonical report forms. Below we propose to apply the semantic tools previously developed to deal with not-at-issue meaning components to give a uniform analysis of non-canonical reports that explains our three negation-related puzzles.

   The first step towards this unified analysis is to represent the two meaning components in a simple two-dimensional logical framework. Roughly, the first dimension represents the main point, while the second dimension represents the not-at-issue content. Applied to our non-canonical report constructions, the first dimension contains the reported component, the second the reporting component. Formally, our logical forms consist of pairs of expressions of dynamic predicate logic with intensional variables (p is a variable over propositions, type st). The 2D logical forms for some of our key examples are below:

(24)   a.   She would be late again, she said [= (4)]   b.   Anne zou thuis zijn. [= (7)]

$$\left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \exists p[say(x,p) \wedge p =^\wedge late(x)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle \qquad\qquad \left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \exists p[say(x,p) \wedge p =^\wedge home(a)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle$$

Before we go into the compositional generation, and the dynamic/pragmatic interpretation of these 2D logical forms, let's discuss the logical forms themselves.

   Note first of all the free variable x which represents the reported speaker as an anaphoric element to be resolved in context. We'll assume an existential closure operation to interpret such a free variable when the context provides no salient speaker to serve as the source of the reporting.

   Second, note that regular indirect reports are now ambiguous between a one-dimensional canonical logical form, (25a), and a two-dimensional semantically parenthetical logical form, (25b).

(25)   B: Well, Mary said he's ill. [=(8)]

     a. $say(m,^\wedge ill(x))$ b. $\left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \exists p[say(m,p) \wedge p =^\wedge ill(x)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle$

   Third, note that in our non-canonical logical forms we use the intensional variable p as main point, instead of just copying the scope material. In this way we avoid 'binding problems' with anaphora and

existential quantifiers, as in:

(26)   Iemand zou Jan verleid hebben.
        'Someone seduced John, reportedly'   (Dutch)

On our two-dimensional approach to non-canonical reports both dimensions contain a representation of the reported component (somebody seduced John), but a representation like (27) that involves two independent existential quantifiers is too weak, as it allows the cheater in the at-issue component to be chosen completely independently from the alleged cheater in the backgrounded component (cf. Geurts and Maier 2013 for discussion of similar multi-dimensional binding problems).

(27) $\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \exists x[seduce(x,j)] \\ say(z, {}^{\wedge}\exists x[seduce(x,j)]) \end{array} \right\rangle$

One reason that we choose a propositional variable p of type st rather than one of the standard sentence type t (i.e. the type of both dimensions in (27)) is that that this allows us to account for the vacuous use of the reportative subjunctive when embedded in a canonical indirect discourse (without any additional morphosyntactic assumptions about "concord"): *Er sagte sie sei schön* 'he said that she was-REP beautiful' means the same as *Sie sei schön* 'she was-REP beautiful' (Bary and Maier, 2014). When discussing puzzle 2 below we'll incorporate an extensionalizer ${}^{\vee}$ in the definition of the dialogue move of acceptance (and rejection).

We'll give the dynamic semantic/pragmatic interpretation of our 2D logical forms in the course of solving puzzles 2 and 3 below. In the remainder of this section, let's focus on the compositional derivation in the syntax/semantics interface. Following Bary and Maier (2014) (who in turn build on Fabricius-Hansen and Sæbø 2004) we analyze the reportative evidential morpheme, modal, or mood as introducing a sentential operator REP in the syntax at LF:

(28)   Iemand zou Jan verleid hebben $\rightsquigarrow$ [REP [someone [seduced John]]

The REP operator is interpreted with the following rule:

(29) $[\![\text{REP } \varphi]\!] = \left\langle \begin{array}{c} p \\ \exists p[say(x,p) \wedge p = {}^{\wedge} [\![\varphi]\!]] \end{array} \right\rangle$

For overtly parenthetical direct and indirect reports we introduce PAR, which abstracts away the saying from the REP operator, and an additional movement of the complement of a report, leading to the following LF:

(30)   She would be late, she said. $\rightsquigarrow$ [PAR [she be late]] [λp. she said p]

(31) $[\![\text{PAR } \varphi]\!] = \lambda Q \left\langle \begin{array}{c} p \\ \exists p[Q(p) \wedge p = {}^{\wedge} [\![\varphi]\!]] \end{array} \right\rangle$

For semantically parenthetical reports one option would be to say that the ambiguity observed above is indeed essentially syntactic, i.e. a canonical indirect discourse surface form may hide a syntactic LF like (30). Ultimately, perhaps a semantic/pragmatic derivation of the ambiguity may be preferable here, but we leave this for future research.

4   Re: puzzle 1. Evidentiality

In many of the examples above the intuitive interpretation of the second component is merely to indicate the source from which the speaker learned the main point. For evidentials this is part of the

aforementioned Baseline Conception. A direct evidential indicates that the speaker's evidence for the scope proposition (the at-issue component) is of a direct perceptual nature, while a reportative evidential indicates hearsay evidence. So the second dimension in our 2D logical forms of reportative evidentials intuitively indicates the evidence that supports the information in the first component. This evidential interpretation naturally extends to the Germanic reportative modals and moods, e.g. in *Anne zou thuis zijn*, (7), the proposition that someone said she's at home is presented as evidence for the proposition that she is.

To capture the puzzling negation-blocking effects with these evidential reports, we just need to assume that there are natural restrictions on what counts as evidence: seeing that p, or someone telling you that p are acceptable sources of evidence for p, while not seeing that p or someone not saying that p are not. It follows that 'not saying that p' is blocked from occurring on the second dimension of our logical forms. This evidential interpretation of our 2D logical forms thus correctly rules out certain readings in evidential reports:

(32)   Anne zou niet thuis zijn. (Anne would.REP not be at home)

$$* \left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \neg \exists p[say(x,p) \wedge p =^{\wedge} home(a)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle \quad \text{ok:} \left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \exists p[say(x,p) \wedge p =^{\wedge} \neg home(a)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle$$

In this way, general restrictions on admissable evidence effectively explain why negation never takes scope over the hearsay component in a reportative evidential construction. But how far can we extend the evidential interpretation of the reporting dimension to our other non-canonical reports, i.e. semantically and syntactically parenthetical reports?

Let's start with the semantically parenthetical report type. In line with observations from Simons (2007) and Hunter et al. (2006), who explicitly compare semantically parenthetical readings with hearsay evidentials, an evidential interpretation of the secondary dimension fits these examples rather well. Intuitively, in (8) B answers A's question by saying why John isn't at the meeting, using the report construction to indicate that she has it on hearsay evidence.

However, for syntactically parenthetical direct and indirect speech an evidential interpretation often seems rather far-fetched. In a typical narrative setting, where these types of reporting are especially common, as we saw earlier, we have a more or less omniscient narrator, who surely doesn't need to base her assertions on hearsay evidence from a (fictional) character. Lacking a clear understanding of the meaning dimensions at play in these narrative reports we suggest that Recanati's (2001) mimetic explanation applies to this restricted subset set of parenthetical reports. That is, first of all, parenthetical direct reports involve an act of quotational demonstration, which itself already presupposes the existence of the speech act so demonstrated which rules out explicit negation. Second, we'll assume that parenthetical indirect reports come in two varieties. The ones we find in narratives are actually cases of free indirect discourse and as such are arguably just as quotational and hence demonstrational as direct reports Maier (2015), so Recanati's explanation applies. The second variety are genuine indirect reports, with a parenthetical reporting clause. We submit that these truly indirect forms of overtly parenthetical reporting have the same distribution and evidential interpretation as the semantically parenthetical reports we already discussed above, as illustrated in (33).

(33)   Why is John not at the meeting?
        Well, he's ill, {Mary said/I hear/I'm told/he says}, so he's probably in bed.

5   Re: puzzle 2. Backgrounding

To capture the non-deniability/backgrounding observation we follow a recently popular idea about the interpretation of appositives and (some) other conventional implicatures, viz. that they impose a non-

negotiable, forced "pre-update" of the common ground (Murray, 2011; Koev, 2013; AnderBois et al., 2015; Griffiths, 2015). By contrast, following ideas from Farkas and Bruce (2010), and Inquisitive Semantics (Groenendijk and Roelofsen, 2009), at-issue content is then analyzed as an "update proposal", that can be accepted or rejected by other discourse participants.

The interpretation of a sentence with an appositive is thus analyzed as a three-step process: first the appositive content directly updates the common ground. Then an additional update is proposed. Only this proposed update is at-issue and on the table for discussion by the interlocutors. If the proposal is not challenged at the next turn in the dialogue, it is effectively accepted ("grounded") and we proceed to perform the second update.

As Murray (2011) points out, this special dynamic interpretation of appositives is in line with Faller's (2002) speech act modifier view of evidentials as comprising a "presentation" of the reported component, along with an assertion of the reporting component. In this paper we extend it to all our non-canonical reports. Concretely, in this section we propose a three-step dynamic, semantic/pragmatic interpretation of the compositionally generated 2D logical forms from section 3. The resulting system predicts the behavior in puzzle 2, i.e., the non-deniability/backgrounding of the reporting content in non-canonical reports as opposed to canonical direct and indirect speech.

Rather than adopting one of the cited proposals for dealing with appositives, we'll provide here our own stripped down, toy model, containing just the key features relevant to our puzzles. As a first approximation we propose the following dynamic interpretation rule for 2D logical forms:

(34) $c + \left\langle \begin{matrix} \varphi \\ \psi \end{matrix} \right\rangle = (c +_1 \psi) +_2 \varphi$

In this formula, c is the context set (i.e., a set of world–assignment pairs), representing the common ground; $+_1$ is the standard dynamic semantic update; and $+_2$ denotes a proposed update. Let's illustrate what this means with a concrete example, our German reportative subjunctive discourse.

(35)   Er sagte sie sei schön. Sie habe grüne Augen. [=(6)]

Consider the point after we just interpreted the first sentence, i.e. c contains the information that there is a man, associated with discourse referent x, and a woman, y, and x said that y is pretty. The second sentence contains a reportative subjunctive, syntactically analyzed with the sentential operator REP at LF:

(36)   [REP [she have green eyes]]

By (29) REP compositionally triggers the generation of a 2D logical form. Let's further assume that the overt pronoun *sie* picks out y, and the covert subject of the speech report is identified as x, the speaker of the overt speech report from the previous sentence:

(37) $\left\langle \begin{matrix} p \\ \exists p[say(x,p) \land p =^\wedge green.eyes(y)] \end{matrix} \right\rangle$

By (34), the dynamic interpretation of (37) in context proceeds by updating c with the evidential information in the second dimension. The existential quantifier extends the domain of the assignments in c by mapping p to the proposition that y has green eyes. Note that this allows us to subsequently interpret the apparently free variable p in the top dimension of (37). The condition $say(x,p)$ throws out possibilities from c where x didn't say that y has green eyes. In sum, the effect of this first step, $+_1$, is that we've now updated the context with the information that x said that y has green eyes and made the proposition that y has green eyes available for future anaphora.

As for $+_2$ the most important point for now is that it should make the reported content, that she

has green eyes, at issue, i.e., open for discussion. To model this type of issue-proposing we have to say something about acceptance and denial as moves in a dialogue. The idea is that once proposed, a proposition will either be accepted as true (by default), or rejected by the interlocutors. Formalizing this properly requires formulating a dialogue model that includes operations like proposing ($+_2$), accepting, and denying. (38) gives some key definitions: proposing a proposition means just pairing it with the current context set, and accepting (denying) such a pair means updating with the information that the proposal is true (not true).

(38) a. $c +_2 \varphi = \langle c, \varphi \rangle$
      b. $accept(\langle c, \varphi \rangle) = c +_1 {}^{\vee}\varphi$
      c. $deny(\langle c, \varphi \rangle) = c +_1 \neg^{\vee}\varphi$

In addition, the dialogue system should include a rule to the effect that each proposal is automatically accepted at the start of the next turn, unless that next turn is a denial. Finally, for regular, one-dimensional logical forms, of type t, we simply update the context with $+_2$ (but note that we have to adjust (38b-c) so that $^{\vee}$ is only applied if φ is of type st).

6   Re: puzzle 3. Commitment

In section 4 we have seen that the first dimension of our logical forms contains a proposition, representing the reported content. Crucially this information is presented as an issue rather then claimed to be true. In section 5 we have modeled this idea in a little dialogue system. Essentially, the presented issue is only added to the common ground if none of the interlocutors objects. In section 2.3 however we established that not only is the truth of φ negotiable in dialogue, even the speaker herself is not necessarily committed to it.

In the evidentiality literature, accounts differ on whether speaker commitment to the reported content is a default, built into the semantics, or a pragmatic affair. On the one side, AnderBois (2014) argues that this commitment is part of the semantics of evidentials, analyzing exceptions in terms of a pragmatic perspective shift of the sort proposed by Harris and Potts (2010) to explain non-speaker orientation of expressives and appositives. On the opposite side, Murray (2011) claims that the reported content is not proposed to be added to the common ground at all.

On our account the speaker herself initially only proposes (or *presents*, as Faller puts it) the reported content as an issue, represented as a propositional variable on the first dimension of the logical form. At the end of her turn, if unchallenged, the issue effectively turns into an assertion ($^{\vee}\varphi$), by implicit acceptance as defined in (38). But before the end of her turn the speaker herself may still modify her proposal and weaken her eventual commitments. This is, we suggest, precisely what happens in the typical examples of reportative exceptionality discussed in section 2.3. By saying *reportedly φ, but I don't believe it*, the speaker effectively cancels the issue, whether φ, the truth of which she would otherwise become pragmatically committed to by the end of her turn. A precise logical description of this idea of issue-cancelation (for instance, in terms of inquisitive semantics) is left for future research.

7   Conclusion.

Drawing on recent insights from research on evidentiality and appositives, we have proposed a unified solution to three puzzles involving negation, denial and commitment in 'non-canonical reports'. At the very least, we have shown that this is a natural class of reported speech constructions that shares some interesting properties and deserves further attention.

Particularly interesting for future research is the point where the behaviors of the different subtypes diverge. We encountered one instance of this when discussing puzzle 1, viz. what we might call the split between narrative and evidential reports. Although overtly parenthetical direct and indirect speech reports seem to share the basic backgrounding (puzzle 2) and commitment (puzzle 3) properties with the other non-canonical varieties, they do not share the evidentiality aspect (puzzle 1). That is, while a German subjunctive or semantically parenthetical construction is used to indicate that the at issue (but non-committed) proposition is based on hearsay evidence, the reporting content in a direct or free indirect report in a narrative setting serves a very different discourse function. Further research is required to figure out exactly what this discourse function is and how it can be derived from features of their narrative environment. This will shed new light on the status of free indirect discourse and its relation to direct and indirect discourse.

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