Uh

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– December 2007 –

Abstract. Spoken language is full of disfluencies. A frequent sound expressing hesitation is *uh* (or any variant thereof), but its linguistic status is debated. This article offers a new perspective on hesitation particles. First, the position is defended that they are linguistic signals, hence words, and it is shown that they belong to the larger class of interjections on the basis of a number of qualitative criteria. Second, it is argued that the analysis of quotation as linguistic demonstration can be naturally extended to the possibility of quoting non-linguistic matters such as sounds, other aspects of events, and even subjective attitudes and emotions. It is then shown that interjections, including the hesitation particle *uh*, can be analyzed as parenthetically constructed, non-canonical quotations.

1. Introduction

Uh (or *um*, *uhm*, *eh*, *er*, ...) is a sound indicating hesitation on the part of the speaker. Although spoken language is full of disfluencies, we should not hastily conclude that all hesitation phenomena are mere symptoms of problems in speaking. *Uh* is not just a sound, it is conventionalized. Therefore, it can be considered a word. It may function as a perlocutionary speech act: "Wait a moment, I'm thinking, but I'm not finished yet, so do not take turn!" At first sight, however, it is not clear what the word itself refers to, or what concept it represents. In this paper, I will advance the view that *uh* is a particular kind of quotation. I will make use of Clark & Gerrig's (1990) analysis of quotations as demonstrations, and argue that it has surprising consequences. Quotations do not necessarily refer to tokens of actual speech; furthermore, there need not be a spatio-temporal distance between the quote and what is being quoted. *Uh*, then, is a conventionalized linguistic demonstration of hesitation, which is a psychological state of mind occurring simultaneously with the corresponding utterance. If this approach is on the right track, it will shed light on a larger class of interjections expressing the speaker's emotion.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 shows that *uh* is not just a sound but is actually used as a word, and that it behaves on a par with interjections. Section 3 reviews the idea that quotations are demonstrations, and discusses the wide-ranging applicability of quotation. Section 4 argues that interjections are quotations. Section 5 is the conclusion.

2. The word *uh*

The methodological distinction between linguistic competence and performance (Chomsky 1965) has proven to be very useful for grammar research. It is also clear that in addition to core grammar, the effects of performance and language use can and should be studied. One of such effects is delay in speaking. I will not discuss the possible causes of delay, but only the result. Particularly interesting in this respect is the hesitation particle *uh*. Following Clark & Fox Tree (2002), I will show that *uh* behaves as a word (or quasi-word, if one likes). Therefore, it must be syntactically and semantically integrated within the grammatical context. To be sure, it would be odd to assume that *uh* is part of the primary sentence structure. It can, however, be considered to be parenthetically constructed with respect to the syntactic context. As is the case with other interjections, the meaning of *uh* is not straightforward; this will be discussed in the next sections.

Uh is often called a filled pause. It is very frequent. For spoken English, Bortfeld et al. (2001) measure a rate of about 2.5% for fillers. According to De Jong (1979), *eh* (=*uh*) is within the top five of most frequent words in spoken Dutch, both in formal and informal speech, and for all types of speakers (in terms of age, gender, and education; but there is much individual variation). This is confirmed by the much larger Spoken Dutch Corpus (2004; for a description, see the website http://lands.let.ru.nl/cgn/ehome.htm, and Oostdijk 2000), from which we calculated that *uh(m)* is ranked fourth; the rate is 2.86% on a total of eight million words. (Here, we excluded texts read aloud, since they lack many characteristics of spontaneous speech. Furthermore, notice that only instances of *uh* between other words could be counted; they do, however, also occur within words, which increases the frequency even more. Thanks to Herman Heringa for his help.) This percentage is comparable to what Bortfeld et al. found for English.

A priori, it is open for discussion whether *uh* is a mere symptom of a problem in speaking (Levelt 1989), or a signal. It can be argued, though, that *uh* is not only a signal, but a linguistic signal – and hence a word. For what it is worth, *uh* is listed in most dictionaries, and usually classified as an interjection. There are several reasons for considering *uh* a word. Firstly, *uh* has a supra-individual character, that is, it is conventionalized. In principle, any sound or gesture may be used to indicate hesitation by an individual speaker on an individual occasion, but *uh* is used and recognized by everyone. In this respect it behaves similar to normal words; as, for instance, the arbitrary syllable /eɪp/ is used to indicate an ape in English.

Secondly, *uh* and its variants are not just sounds, but they are adapted to the phonological inventory of a particular language. In English (and many other languages), it is always pronounced with a schwa; and clearly, variants such as [ə:], [ə:m] are acceptable phonemic combinations. Moreover, *uh* behaves prosidically as expected: it can get a parenthetical intonation, and it can cliticize onto a previous word, depending on its position.

Thirdly, if *uh* is a word, we expect cross-linguistic variation. Although the schwa is common, we also find, for example, [ɛ:], [ɛ:m], [m:], and even [ɛstɛ:] lit. 'this' (in Spanish), or [ano:] (in Japanese).

Fourthly, *uh* cannot be considered a speech error because speakers have control over its use (which is not to say that they are always consciously aware of all minor choices in speaking).

Fifthly, *uh* serves communicative purposes. It can be used as a floor-holding device, but this is certainly not the only possibility. Expressing the fact that one is hesitating is informative, sometimes even important. Consider the following example. If John asks Mary if he can borrow her car, the direct response *No!* is quite blunt. The answer *uh...no* sounds differently. Here, the hesitation particle indicates that she is at least considering his request for a moment.

To conclude, there is strong evidence that *uh* is a linguistic signal.

A comparison with interjections

If *uh* is a word, does it classify as an interjection? This question has been answered positively by e.g. James (1972), Clark & Fox Tree (2002), and myself. However, O'Connell & Kowal (2005) criticize this view (notice that they do not contest the word status of *uh*; neither do they provide an alternative). Let me review some arguments for considering *uh* an interjection, and briefly address the objections made.

Interjections have zero valency: they do not select and are not selected by other lexical items. Furthermore, they do not restrict the meaning of other constituents in the sentence, and vice versa. Related to this is that they do not show any inflection. (See also Van den Toorn 1960, Droste 1961, De Groot 1963, Brummel 1978.) *Uh* is no different in these respects. Finally, it is worth mentioning that interjections are usually monosyllabic (apart from instances of reduplication). *Uh* fits this pattern.

As far as I can see, prototypical interjections such as *oh* and *ouch* relate to the utterance time. (More generally, Wilkins 1992 argues that interjections are complex deictics. See also O'Connell,

Kowal & Ageneau 2005, who state that an interjection expresses emotion at the moment it is experienced.) For instance, if someone says *Ouch!*, he or she is most probably feeling pain at that very moment. Similarly, *uh* is a real-time expression of hesitation.

Generally, interjections are attitudinal, not referential. The meaning can be described in terms of their usage, unlike what is the case for regular words. For instance, *ouch* can be defined as "interjection used to express pain"; it does not mean "pain" or "to feel pain". Similarly, *uh* can be described as "used to express hesitation", but not as "hesitation" or "to hesitate".

Interjections, like other instances of true parenthesis, are speaker-oriented, not subject-oriented. Thus, even if they surface in a subordinate clause, they relate to the speaker and not to the subject of the main clause. Consider (1), for instance:

(1) Mary claimed that John, our neighbor, is, uh, – damn, what was the word again – an ornithologist.

For all we know, Mary once claimed that John is an ornithologist. The secondary proposition implied by the apposition *our neighbor*, namely "John is our neighbor", must be attributed to the speaker. Also, the curse and the expressed word-finding problem (*damn, what was the word again*) are the speaker's, not Mary's. And similarly, the hesitation expressed by *uh* is hesitation by the speaker, not by the subject Mary (in her original utterance).

Thus, there are clear qualitative arguments for classifying *uh* as an interjection. Now let me briefly dissect O'Connell & Kowal's (2005) counter-arguments, which are directed specifically against Clark & Fox Tree's (2002) proposal.

Firstly, O'Connell & Kowal note that Clark & Fox Tree cite James (1972) in that "interjections are used for commenting on a speaker's on-going performance". Since O'Connell & Kowal argue that *uh* does not reliably signal delay (see also below), it is unclear which comment *uh* would make on a speaker's performance, and hence there is no foundation for considering *uh* an interjection. However, O'Connell & Kowal do not adhere to James's characterization of interjections themselves. Prototypical interjections such as *oh!* are used to express emotions. Furthermore, *uh* is described as being part of several hesitation phenomena. And hesitation, I would say, is an emotion (see further below). Thus, this objection is no longer valid. Furthermore, O'Connell & Kowal's (2005:568) statement that *uh* does not reflect emotion is simply unwarranted.

Secondly, O'Connell & Kowal note that *uh* and *um* are generally in accord with the phonological-phonotactic rules of the language in which they occur, whereas interjections are not necessarily. But this does not prove anything. Obviously, many interjections *are* regular syllables, so not being a regular syllable cannot be a condition for interjectionhood. Therefore, the phonological shape of *uh* is no objection whatsoever to its classification as an interjection.

Thirdly, O'Connell, Kowal & Ageneau (2005) found that 21% of the interjections in their small corpus served to introduce citations, whereas none of the hesitation markers did. Again, I do not see what can possibly be concluded from this. If *all* other interjections can directly precede citations but *uh* cannot, then there might be an argument. This is clearly not the case.

Fourthly, O'Connell & Kowal report frequency differences between the occurrences of interjections and *uh* with respect to possible surrounding pauses. There are four possibilities: i) no pauses, ii) only a pause before, iii) only a pause after, iv) pauses before and after. For interjections and *uh* respectively, the following rates are obtained: i) 45% – 31%, ii) 22% – 45%, iii) 14% – 13%, iv) 19% – 11% (see O'Connell, Kowal & Ageneau 2005:161 and O'Connell & Kowal 2005:567). According to O'Connell & Kowal, these data suggest that *uh* is not an interjection. But this is an incorrect inference. The percentages show that *uh* behaves a bit different from the *mean* of all interjections in the corpus. They do not show that *uh* behaves unlike any individual interjection. The only valid conclusion that can be drawn from these data is that interjections in general can be pronounced with and without pauses before and after, and so can hesitation particles.

All in all, the best that can be concluded from O'Connell & Kowal's (2002) argument is that *uh* does not statistically behave as a prototypical interjection in all respects. From this it does not logically follow that *uh* is not an interjection; and the arguments in favor of classifying *uh* as an interjection still stand.

Why do we use uh*?*

Clark & Fox Tree (2002:79) distinguish between *uh* and *um*, and define the basic meaning of these interjections as "Used to announce the initiation, at *t*('uh/um'), of what is expected to be a minor/major delay in speaking". However, according to their own data only roughly 30% of *uh* and 60% of *um* is followed by a (short) pause. So it seems that the announcement of delay cannot be a defining property of *uh*/*um*, contrary to what Clark & Fox Tree claim. The same critique has been expressed by O'Connell & Kowal (2005), who measure even lower percentages in their own corpus, namely about 20% and 40% for pauses after *uh* and *um*, respectively. Furthermore, they show that even though the *mean* delay measured for *uh* and *um* differs significantly, the *range* overlaps at least 85%, which implies that the choice between *uh* and *um* is not a reliable predictor of the duration of a delay (minor or major). What is also strange is that about half of the fillers are preceded by a (short) pause. If so, it seems odd to define *uh* as an item *announcing the initiation* of a delay. Rather, then, one would like to say that *uh* expresses the *occurrence* of a delay. Of course, the hesitation particle itself can also be understood to be part of the delay; in that case, the presence of delay is true by definition. Still, this does not prove that announcing delay is why *uh* is there, since delay may be an epiphenomenon. Let me make an absurd comparison. Suppose we do not know what the meaning of the word *therefore* is. We hypothesize that it indicates a short pause in meaningful speech. We then measure instances of *therefore*, and find out that its pronunciation, including possible short silences before and after, takes about 0.5 seconds on average, which is a significant interval. Quod erat demonstrandum – only, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. In short, even apart from the question if the statistics presented is convincing, it seems to me that the meaning and function of *uh* can only be determined qualitatively.

Uh is usually defined as expressing hesitation (in the broad sense of the word), which seems correct to me. Hesitation obviously implies delay, but it is more than that. Hesitation is basically an emotion, albeit not a very spectacular one. Verbally expressing this emotion may serve a range of purposes, which can be constructed as pragmatic implicatures. Descriptions of these are, for example, "Bear with me", "Note that I am thinking", "Pay attention to what comes next", "Help me out", "Ignore what I just said – correction follows", and so on. It is worth noting that *uh* can be used both to hold and to cede the floor. Therefore, I agree with Clark & Fox Tree (2002) that these apparently contradictory functions must be implicatures and cannot constitute the basic meaning.

In the end, the change from defining *uh* as expressing delay to expressing hesitation, both leading to the implications just mentioned, is only a subtle one. The advantage is that we turn from what is essentially an objective notion to one that is clearly subjective. This view is more in line with O'Connell & Kowal's (2005) general argument that hesitation phenomena are deliberately employed rhetorically.

In what follows, I will ignore the cognitive-psychological questions *why* speakers hesitate and for which reasons they may decide to express it (one straightforward possibility is that a speech production problem occurs, which is then expressed by saying *uh* to buy time). Instead, I will focus on the issue *how* they do it. In other words, what does it mean to verbally express hesitation from a linguistic point of view? I will argue that this involves quotation. In order to be able to do so, I first have to discuss some characteristics of quotation. This is the subject of the next section.

3. Quotations as demonstrations

Direct and indirect speech are two ways of referring to an earlier occasion involving language. This is illustrated in (2), pronounced by an unidentified speaker X. Supposing there are two speech events (one by John and one by X) that are one day and some distance apart, the two utterances in (2a) and (2b) could be semantically equivalent.

(2) a. John said, "I will meet Noam Chomsky here this afternoon." (direct speech)
b. John said that he would meet Noam Chomsky there yesterday afternoon. (indirect speech)

The perspective of the speaker X with respect to the reported clause is different in (2a) and (2b). This affects all elements that have a deictic component (spatial, temporal, or directional). In (2a/b), the pronoun *I* corresponds to *he*, the tensed verb *will* to *would*, the location *here* to *there*, and the temporal phrase *this afternoon* to *yesterday afternoon*.

In quoting, the speaker assumes the point of view of the subject of the reporting verb at the time and place of the original utterance, which might suggest that a quote is a verbatim rendering of an earlier formulation. Indeed, this is a major claim of semantic approaches to quotation (see for instance Davidson 1984 and Cappelen & Lepore 1997/1999/2003). However, it is contested by more pragmatically oriented theories (Clark & Gerrig 1990, Saka 1998/1999, Recanati 2001). For an overview of the literature, I refer to De Brabanter (2003) and Cappelen (2005). Below, I will indicate why I think a version of the pragmatic approach is on the right track. It should be noted, however, that what is not directly explained by a pragmatic theory are the syntactic and semantic opacity effects of quotations. For instance, *wh*-movement from a quotation is impossible, embedded quoted clauses are main clauses, etc. These effects, I claim, are the result of a layered syntactic derivation; see De Vries (2006, to appear). Here, I will concentrate on the function of quotation.

Clark & Gerrig (1990) analyze quotations as demonstrations. In citing, it is demonstrated what was said or written, and, crucially, how. If only the contents were of interest, indirect speech would suffice. But this is not the case. The decision to quote is made for rhetorical purposes. It follows that the form is important. Thus, a demonstration is a 'selective depiction' that does not simply inform the listener about the original event, but also enables him or her to experience relevant aspects of it.

This analysis implies that the form of a quotation approximates the form of a previous utterance, but does not necessarily equal it. After all, it may depend on the situation which aspects of the previous utterance are relevant for the present communicative purposes. Let us dwell on this for a moment. With the possible exception of scientific and juridical quoting, quotations are almost never exactly the same as the original utterance in natural language data. This may be regarded irrelevant for linguistic theorizing if it is only a performance effect (that is, the consequence of a limited memory capacity or simply sloppiness). However, there are clear indications that it is not. The crucial question is what *the same* means in this respect. It is more than just the same meaning. Is it the same words? The same intonation? The same accent, phonetic characteristics, speech rate, hesitations, speech defects, timbre, emotions, nonverbal communication, background noise? Or, for written texts, the same notation, spelling, letters, symbols, handwriting, font, font size, color, contrast, layout, markings, or even coffee stains? This list – however exaggerated it may seem – shows that it is not a priori clear how similarity should be defined in this context. In fact, it can be argued that it must not be fixed. The reason is that the situation determines which formal aspects of an utterance are relevant; that is, in each particular case it is pragmatically decided which form features are of interest. For instance, if a written poem is quoted, it is essential that end-of-line markings are included. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that in oral quotation the diction and/or accent of the original speaker are often imitated. These characteristics can be essential parts of direct speech. Put differently, why else if it was not for these formal traits would one cite rather than paraphrase?

The compelling presence of form features (of whatever nature) that can neither be traced back to the propositional meaning composition nor to the abstract word string is clear-cut evidence for the demonstration theory of quotation. It should also be noted that a quote may be enriched with (subjective) information by the speaker. A demonstration is not a play in the narrow sense of the word, and the speaker is not a temporary ventriloquist of the quotee, just taking over the essentials of the relevant utterance. Although the deictic perspective is prescribed, there is room for evaluative elements and annotations. For instance, there is the possibility of ironizing by piling on the quotee's accent or particular choice of words (again, this may be one of the *raisons d'être* of quotation). Furthermore, additions, substitutions, and hesitations turn out to be quite frequent in natural language data (see Redeker 1991 and Wade & Clark 1993).

Quoting non-linguistic matters

So far, I have described a quotation as a demonstration of a previous utterance. Interestingly, the existence of an actual previous utterance is not a requirement. In what follows, I will show that a quotation can be a linguistic or quasi-linguistic demonstration of *anything*, be it a potential utterance, a thought, a sound, an event, or even an emotion.

A common type of quotation that is slightly different from the canonical type illustrated in (2b) is translation. The English quote in (3) does relate to a previous utterance, but of course Caesar's original wording was in Latin.

(3) Caesar said, "I came, I saw, I conquered."

The quotations in (4) relate to sounds, which are not even linguistic utterances:

(4) a. "Cock-a-doodle-doo," said the rooster to the crow.
b. "Swish swash swish," said the wind.

Another possibility is illustrated by the quotes in (5), which are formulations of previously unspoken thoughts:

(5) a. And then I thought, "John, pull yourself together."
b. When she asked me to come, I thought "Hell, no!" but I didn't say a thing.

A variant of this is anthropomorphism, where a quotation is attributed to a non-human entity:

(6) a. The telephone was whining, "Pick me up. Now! Now! Now!"
b. "Open me!" it seemed that the purple envelope shouted.

The quotations in (4) through (6), although they do not relate to a previous linguistic utterance, are still concrete in the sense that they relate to an actual situation. However, even this is not a prerequisite. Quotation of a type instead of a token is also possible. The examples in (7) show that *potential* or generic utterances can be quoted:

(7) a. If you dare to say "I quit," I will never talk to you again.
b. It is considered impolite to say "I and you" or "me and him".
c. "Go to hell!" means that someone is angry with you.
d. The play is called "Let's kill the bosses!"

In conclusion, I reviewed and supported the idea that quotations are demonstrations, and I showed that a quotation does not necessarily relate to a previous linguistic utterance. In the next section, I will argue that the combination of a number of non-canonical properties leads to surprising possibilities; this will shed new light on interjections, and in particular on the hesitation particle *uh*.

4. Interjections as quotations

Section 2 showed that *uh* behaves as a word, and also that it functions as an interjection. Now let us see what interjections have to do with quotation. First, consider the example in (8), where *crack!* is an onomatopoeic interjection:

(8) John fell – crack! – trough the ice.

Syntactically, an interjection is short form of parenthesis. For our purposes, we do not need to go into the syntactic properties of this construction type (see De Vries 2007 for a recent overview). What is interesting is that *crack* in (8) is linguistic demonstration of how it sounded when John cracked trough the ice. As in (4) above, the sound is represented by a quasi-word. Therefore, the interjection is a quotation. In general, it seems that the only way of incorporating extra-linguistic elements in a sentence is by quoting them. Interjections par excellence fit this pattern.

Not only sounds can be used as interjections. *Zoofff* in (9) is a demonstration of fast motion and how it sounds. In (10), *whoops* and *ups-a-daisy* suggest sudden motion and assisted motion, respectively; there is no relevant sound involved.

(9) Zidane shot the ball – zoofff – past the goalkeeper.

(10) a. The cat jumped – whoops – onto the counter.
b. And ups-a-daisy, there you go.

It can be concluded that not only sounds but more generally certain aspects of events can be quoted, hence demonstrated by a (quasi-)linguistic, usually conventionalized expression. Such expressions are often onomatopoeic or suggestive, but notice that there are large differences between languages; for instance, the sound of a barking dog is rendered as *bow-wow* in English, *meong meong* in Korean, and *waf waf* in Dutch.

The demonstrations discussed so far concerned affairs that are spatio-temporally dissociated from the speaker (that is, which originate outside of the speaker, and which occur prior to the speech time). Let us now consider if this it is indeed a prerequisite for quotation. The answer is clearly negative if we look at the spatial and temporal components separately. First, one may quote oneself, as is shown in (11):

(11) Yesterday I said, “I will quote this sentence tomorrow.”

Second, one may linguistically demonstrate something which is occurring simultaneously (or practically simultaneously). It is easy to imagine real-time reporting of some event, enlivened by interjections of the type in (9) and (10). For instance, a radio reporter is covering a football match in the following way:

(12) ... Zidane shoots ... and bang! the ball hits the post...

Here, *bang!* is a relevant live demonstration. Thus, there need not be a temporal dissociation between the quote and what is being demonstrated.

Quoting emotions

Let us take stock. A canonical quotation is a linguistic demonstration of a previous utterance by someone else, introduced by a reporting verb. However, we have established that a quotation can be non-canonical in a number of ways:

- A linguistic demonstration may concern non-linguistic matters.
- A demonstration can be simultaneous with the original event.
- Speakers may quote themselves.
- A quotation can be syntactically constructed as an interjection.

It would be interesting to see if all these non-canonical characteristics can be combined. In particular, is it possible to quote oneself simultaneously? Indeed it is – however counterintuitive it may seem at first sight. For obvious reasons, it can only be the case if what is being demonstrated linguistically is itself of a non-linguistic nature. Humans have only one speech organ. Consider (13):

(13) Today, we are celebrating the, uh, fifteenth anniversary of the volleyball club.

What is happening at the point where the particle *uh* is inserted? The speaker is hesitating; hence, the stream of words temporarily stops. There could have been just a silence, but that might have the disadvantage that the audience gives up listening. Therefore, the speaker decides to make the hesitation public. Hesitation is a state of mind, an emotion. Of course it can be described by saying "I am hesitating", but normally that puts too much weight on it. There is, however, another possibility, namely to demonstrate it by means of the word *uh*. As we have seen, *uh* is a conventionalized particle expressing hesitation. Thus, it functions as a quotation combining several non-canonical properties described above: *uh* is constructed as an interjection; it is a demonstration of a non-linguistic matter, namely an emotion; this emotion is a state of affairs occurring simultaneously with the linguistic demonstration of it; and finally, the emotion is the speaker's – hence, he or she is in fact quoting himself or herself.

Uh is not the only interjection that functions as a demonstration. Consider the example in (14). Notice, by the way, that interjections – despite the name – are often sentence-initial or sentence-final, like other parentheses.

(14) Shh, the movie has already started.

The sound *shh* is a conventionalized expression, and therefore a (quasi-)word. (In fact, the derivative *hush* can even be used as a regular verb in English.) It a demonstration of the speaker's wish that others be quiet. Consequently, it functions as a performative speech act. Other examples are listed in (15), where the relevant interjections are italicized:

(15)	a.	*Phew*, that was close.	[relief]
	b.	*Wow*, that's what I call an adventure.	[surprise]
	c.	*Damn*, I forgot my purse.	[irritation, anger]
	d.	Belgian waffels are *oh* so tasty.	[ecstasy]
	e.	That's a good one, *ha ha*.	[joy, irony]

f.	*Yes*, I know.	[agreement, affirmation]
g.	*No*, I don't like cake.	[denial]
h.	*Ouch*, my toe.	[pain]
i.	*Ugh*, what a filthy habit.	[disgust]
j.	*Aha*, now I get it.	[jubilant recognition]
k.	It's freezing in here, *brr*.	[cold]

In each case the speaker demonstrates a feeling, emotion, or mental attitude by means of a conventionalized parenthetical expression.

Thus, I analyze interjections as parenthetically constructed, quasi-linguistic demonstrations of sounds, emotions, etc. Therefore, they can be regarded as quotations of a non-canonical type.

5. Conclusion

The nature of the hesitation particle *uh*, a very frequent 'filler', has been subject to debate. In this article, I proposed a novel view on the matter, thereby integrating and extending ideas put forward in the literature, whilst critically discussing other aspects of some previous work. In doing so, two generalizations were made, and it was shown how they interact. First, it was argued that the behavior of *uh* can be subsumed under that of a larger class of interjections. Second, if quotation can be analyzed as linguistic demonstration (Clark & Gerrig 1990), it can be naturally extended to the possibility of quoting non-linguistic matters such as sounds, other aspects of events, and even emotions. I then showed that interjections, including the hesitation particle *uh*, can be analyzed as non-canonical quotations. *Uh* does not simply indicate delay, but it expresses hesitation (in the broad sense of the word), which is a more subjective notion. From this, all sorts of pragmatic implicatures can be inferred that bear on the reason why it is used. Thus, it is not only a floor-holding device, but it can also indicate that the hearer is requested for help, that a correction is to follow, that it is to be noted that the speaker is thinking, and so on.

In establishing the first generalization, it was first argued that *uh* is not merely a symptom of a problem in speaking, but must be considered a linguistic signal – hence a word. *Uh* is conventionalized (it has a supra-individual character); *uh* and its variants are adapted to the phonological inventory of particular languages; there is cross-linguistic variation concerning fillers; speakers have control over the use of fillers; and finally, *uh* clearly serves communicative purposes. Furthermore, it was argued that *uh* behaves like interjections. Interjections have zero valency, do not restrict the meaning of other constituents in the sentence, and do not show any inflection; prototypical interjections relate to the utterance time; interjections are attitudinal, not referential; and interjections are speaker-oriented. The same is true for *uh*; thus, there are clear qualitative arguments for considering *uh* an interjections. A number of supposed statistical counter-arguments from the literature were rejected.

The second generalization builds on the idea that quotation involves linguistic demonstration, which is supported by the fact that form features are crucial in direct speech. It was then shown that quotation can be non-canonical in several ways: a linguistic demonstration may concern non-linguistic matters (sounds, for instance), a demonstration can be simultaneous with the original event, speakers may quote themselves, and a quotation can be syntactically constructed as an interjection. If these traits may be combined, it follows that a spatio-temporal dissociation from the speaker of what is quoted is not required, and that what is quoted may constitute a state of mind. Thus, the class of interjections including *uh* can be analyzed as parenthetically constructed, real-time linguistic demonstrations of emotions, feelings or mental attitudes of the speaker himself or herself.

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