

This paper examines Homeric speech representation using both linguistics and narratological theory. The prevailing opinion on Homeric speech representation is that indirect speech is infrequent and is used mainly for representing orders (de Jong 1987: 114-18; Richardson 1990: 71-73). While these statements are true as far as they go, they lack a broader context that would make them useful in explaining and understanding 1) the range of different techniques for representing speech in Homeric poetry at the level of the primary narrator, and 2) the functions and effects of these various techniques in shaping the narrative. For instance, we need to know that well over half of the direct speeches in the Homeric epics are directives, and that direct and indirect speech have complementary functions within a speech representational spectrum, in order to understand not simply that most indirect speech is for orders, but why this is so and what effect it has on the narrative overall.

By combining linguistic and literary critical perspectives to look at Homeric speech representation, we learn two things. Within one poem, direct and indirect speech tend to feature a particular type of speech act in similar proportions, so that if orders are common in direct speech, they are also common in indirect speech. This tells us that direct and indirect speech are part of a unified system of speech representation and a consistent outlook on speech acts in general. Within this system, direct and indirect speech play complementary roles. Indirect speech affirmatively de-emphasizes a speech; it does not passively reflect an obvious or inherent lack of importance in the speeches that are represented this way. Indirect speech has specific qualities distinct from those of direct speech that contribute positively to the narrative, even though the main narrator chooses the qualities belonging to direct speech the vast majority of the time.

Second, when we look at the type of speech acts that are featured in each poem across the speech representational spectrum, we see that the *Iliad* contains more directives than the *Odyssey* does, while the *Odyssey* has many more assertives and questions than the *Iliad*. This is partly because characters in the *Iliad* are more likely to answer an order by giving another order of their own. Characters in the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, not only originate fewer orders, but tend to simply assent to an order they have received or to refuse it without giving a counter-order. They also ask a lot more questions that require statements rather than orders as replies. To put it another way, the speech acts in each poem show that in the *Iliad*, success consists of telling others what to do, while in the *Odyssey*, it lies more in getting others to tell you what you want to know.