THE FUNCTION OF SCARE QUOTES IN HARD NEWS: METADISCOURSAL AND GENERIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the issue of scare quoting in British hard news reports. It examines two types of scare quotes distinguished by voice origin – scare quotes originating with the internal voice and scare quotes attributed to an external voice (Dillon 1988, Schneider 2002, Predelli 2003, Bednarek 2006, Meibauer 2015, Nacey 2012). Scare quotes originating with the internal voice are comparable to code glosses (Hyland 2005, 2007) and they reflect the writer's assumptions about the reader's expectations regarding various aspects of the enclosed words, including meaning, register and style. Such scare quotes tend to co-occur with explicit verbal metadiscourse, partial quotes and contextualising authorial discourse with which they create functionally homogenous sections. Scare quotes attributed to an external voice overlap with partial direct quotes but the former are overlayed with an authorial attitude towards the enclosed words or the reported speaker; attitude is induced by the interaction between scare quotes and context, especially generic/discourse patterns such as contrast and repetition. The authorial comment signalled by code glossing and attitudinal quotation marks is implicit and thus in line with hard news generic conventions. The functions of scare quotes bear relevance to the novelty and negativity of reported events and are also reflected in the distribution across the generic structure (Urbanová 2013).

Keywords

scare quotes, hard news, implicitness, reader-writer engagement, metadiscourse

1 Introduction

This paper is a small-scale qualitative study dealing with the phenomenon of scare quoting in British hard news reports. The functions of scare quotes are manifold, ranging from a non-verbal commentary on unexpected, unconventional use of an expression to an implicit signal of authorial attitude; scare quotes are employed with the reader in mind and in line with the accepted generic norms and expectations (Thompson 1994, Schneider 2002, Bednarek 2006, Nacey 2012, Meibauer 2015). This brief description suggests that the examination of scare quotes may benefit from a multi-perspective approach; the present paper aims to address the said phenomenon from two different yet interrelated points of view, delving into the areas of metadiscourse and genre.

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From the metadiscoursal point of view, the paper aims to examine scare quotes as interpersonal resources which signal "interactions between text-producers and their texts and between text producers and users" (Hyland 2010: 125). It adopts the broad interactive perspective introduced in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005). As markers of metadiscourse, quotation marks in scare quotes are explicit but non-verbal and, consequently, the metadiscoursal comment remains implicit and is to be supplied by the reader or emerges as a joint enterprise involving both the writer and the reader. Thus, the analysis of a metadiscoursal function of scare quotes requires a context- and genre-sensitive approach, advocated, for instance, in Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001), Ädel (2018: 778) and Kuhi (2017: 46-47). The present paper tries to comply with this requirement. Moreover, the paper discusses the potential of scare quotes for multifunctionality, especially with regard to the fact that most classifications of metadiscourse functions are based on explicit verbal markers (cf. Kumpf 2000, Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, Herrando-Rodrigo 2010, De Groot et al. 2016).

As mentioned above, a metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes is complemented by a generic perspective. Thus, the aim of the paper is not only to examine scare quotes as resources for reader-writer engagement but as resources which also respect and simultaneously contribute to the generic distinctiveness of hard news. The aim of hard news is to report on events of extra-linguistic reality in a manner that is supposedly objective and impersonal and that backgrounds the voice of both the journalist and the reader (Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008, Turow 2009: 54-57, White 2012). As non-verbal resources evoking implicit authorial comment, quotation marks in scare quotes represent a convenient form of writer intrusion and their employment is completely in line with hard news generic conventions and expectations. The generic analysis adopted in this paper is grounded in *Systemic Functional Linguistics* and follows White (1997, 2012) and Feez et al. (2008); it examines the metadiscoursal role of scare quotes as a manifestation of the following generic variables: the communicative aim, the writer and reader and the nature of their interaction, and, finally, the generic structure.

2 Scare quotes

The definitions of scare quotes (SQ)[1] revolve around the notions of discourse participants and discourse community, social engagement, context, genre and accepted norms and conventions. Schneider (2002: 190) considers SQ a means of "frighten[ing] the reader" and "jolting" them to attend to the way the enclosed words are being employed; they are a tactic writers adopt to achieve a variety of rhetorical goals (ibid.: 204).

SQ can imply a range of attitudes, including criticism, sarcasm, irony, distance and disapproval, and invite the reader to evaluate from their own point of view (Fairclough 1992, Schneider 2002, Predelli 2003, Bednarek 2006, Meibauer 2015). SQ may indicate novelty, tentativeness, the reader's unfamiliarity with the expression or its inappropriateness and inapplicability in the context in which it is employed (Fairclough 1992, Thompson 1994, Bednarek 2006, Predelli 2003, Nacey 2012); SQ can indicate that a non-stereotypical and non-standard interpretation is required (Gutzmann & Stei 2011). Finally, SQ are a means of broadening one's audience and bridging the gap between audiences and respective communities (Schneider 2002).

From the above definitions it follows that the nature of SQ is highly dialogic. Drawing on Dillon (1988), Schneider (2002: 202) suggests that SQ appear in places wherein "a writer struggles to decide from which community she speaks and to whom she is speaking". SQ appear in places which have lost their "monologic innocence" and which function as "boundaries or gates where the words of the other enter, stand, and exit from the discourse" and "where the word merges, recoils, and intersects with the words of others" (Dillon 1988: 68-69).

Examples 1 and 2 illustrate some of the above-mentioned uses of SQ. In all examples the SQ which are relevant to the discussion are marked in bold.

(1) *The "**work capability assessment**" was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme.* (Hope 2010)

(2) *Mr Hayward, who enraged Americans by declaring that he "**wanted his life back**" during the accident and then went yachting around the Isle of Wight while oil was still spewing from the broken Macondo well, will receive a pension valued at £600,000 a year plus a £1 million one-off pay-off.* (Pagnamenta 2010)

In Example 1, the quotation marks (QM) enclose a term from the topical domain of social benefits. They function as a warning or call to attention that the expression may be novel and pertain to a special register.[2] However, the voice of the relevant professional community remains backgrounded and the expression in QM is not interpreted as a direct quote attributable to a specific voice external to the text (EV), e.g. a reported speaker, but as a SQ originating with the internal voice (IV) of the author, i.e. the hard news writer. In Example 2 the words in QM are attributed to a specific EV (*Mr Hayward*) via a reporting verb (*declaring*) and the QM signal that the IV is not responsible for the choice of the quoted words. Due to the presence of the reporting verb, attribution to an EV, QM and the incompleteness of the quoted material, the structure is identical to a partial direct quote (PQ). The PQ is explicitly evaluated and the evaluation is attributed to

another EV (*who enraged Americans*). However, despite the author's abdication of responsibility, when the PQ is interpreted in the context of the entire sentence, there seems to be a layer of authorial attitude concerning the quoted words and possibly also the EV (*Mr Hayward*). Authorial attitude is not overtly expressed and stems from the contrast between the content of the quote and the context in which it is embedded. Even though the attitude is not verbalised, it seems decidedly negative, corresponding to disapproval and rejection. The QM thus serve a double purpose: first, they signal that the quoted words belong to the EV; second, they emphasise the quoted words, bring them to the reader's attention and, together with the embedding context, invite the reader to assess for themselves and potentially agree with the author. In this case, the author appropriates the words of others, makes them their own, populates them with their own intention and adapts them to their own purpose (Bakhtin 1981: 293-294). The PQ is not only recycled but allows the writer to take a stance towards the quote (Bublitz 2015: 9).

Papers discussing SQ from various perspectives (semantic, pragmatic, discoursal) are not uniform in their definitions of SQ, especially in connection to a PQ; some find the concepts sufficiently different to maintain a distinction between them while others admit a formal and functional overlap (Thompson 1994, Bednarek 2006, Brendel et al. 2011, Nacey 2012, Landert 2014, Arendholz et al. 2015, Saka & Johnson 2017). The present paper adopts a broader perspective on SQ and takes into account the following cases. First, the words in QM originate with the internal, authorial voice to the exclusion of any specific expressly identified or identifiable EV (Example 1). Second, the words in QM are attributable or explicitly attributed to a specific EV and formally overlapping with reported language; simultaneously, however, the quote is overlayed by attitude originating with the IV (Example 2).

Given the many perspectives on and conceptualisations of SQ, there is also a variety of terms employed to refer to the above-described uses of QM. The most widely applied term, and the one adopted in this paper, is *scare quotes* (Fairclough 1992, Thompson 1994, McDonald 2008, Brendel et al. 2011, Gutzmann & Stei 2011, Nacey 2012, Landert 2014, Meibauer 2015, Saka & Johnson 2017); others include *strategic quotation* (Richardson 2007), *apologetic quotes* (Predelli 2003), *inverted commas* (Dillon 1988) and *non-standard quotes* (Schneider 2002); for a brief terminological overview, see Bednarek (2006) and Dillon (1988).

2.1 Scare quotes in newspaper discourse

The research on SQ in newspaper reporting is not numerous and deals with SQ from different perspectives. Examining SQ from the perspective of

evaluation, Bednarek (2006: 182-183) subsumes them within the category of hearsay hedges expressing a range of evaluative values; an important aspect of SQ is that their evaluative strength is highly variable, varying with different contexts and readers. Examining mainland Chinese press, McDonald (2008) adopts an ideological perspective and views SQ as graphic warning signs and means of reiterating symbolic control. Dealing with SQ from the perspective of personalisation in mass communication, Landert (2014: 175, 188-189) sees them as impersonal anonymous quotes enabling the writer to distance themselves from the content and style of the quote (cf. Garretson & Ädel 2008). Nádraská (2015) discusses ambiguities between SQ and PQ in the discourse of hard news from the perspective of blurring the distinction between the internal (SQ) and external voice (PQ); she attributes the potential for ambiguity to generic conventions, and similar formal and pragmatic properties of SQ and PQ. (See Thompson (1994: 161-163), Fairclough (1992: 119-120), Semino and Short (2004: 216-217), Richardson (2007: 102-103) and Musolff (2015) on brief comments on singular examples of SQ.)

The present paper approaches SQ in hard news from two points of view – the point of view of metadiscourse and the point of view of genre, described more fully in Section 2.2.

2.2 Metadiscoursal and generic perspectives on scare quotes

In the discussion of the function of SQ in hard news this paper aims at a fusion of metadiscoursal and generic perspective. The following sections outline the basic concepts related to these analytical frameworks.

2.2.1 Metadiscourse

This paper adopts the broad perspective on metadiscourse described in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005) (cf. Mauranen 1993, Ädel 2006, Ädel & Mauranen 2010). Metadiscourse is a form of engagement between the writer and the reader revealing the former's assumptions regarding the latter's knowledge, believes, values, experience and their subsequent expectations and needs, for instance, for elaboration or clarification. Writers use metadiscourse to negotiate meanings and guide their readers to understand and assess texts in a preferred way and in line with the norms and values accepted within a given discourse community. Writers draw on metadiscoursal resources to express stance towards the content or the reader of the text (Hyland 2005, 2017). Metadiscourse is thus essentially dialogic (Hyland 2005: 13-14).

The metadiscoursal function of non-verbal resources is taken into account, for instance, in Crismore et al. (1993: 48), who "go beyond the 'word'" and

include punctuation and typography into metadiscourse because they "can signal text glosses and clarifications as well as uncertainty, certainty, and attitude"; they (ibid.: 54) admit that the inclusion of punctuation into metadiscourse may be a "complication" that is, however, "unavoidable" and provide examples of QM in the function of interpretative markers (a subtype of textual metadiscourse), which serve to caution the reader about the interpretation of the enclosed words (ibid.: 49-50). Herrando-Rodrigo (2010: 260) takes into account non-verbal metadiscourse signals (italics, font, size) since they "represent the writer's or speaker's overt attempt to create a discoursal effect by graphically leading the reader's attention towards certain parts of the discourse". Dafouz-Milne (2003, 2008) notes parentheses and punctuation (dash, colon) in the function of code glosses. On punctuation and typographic devices serving the purpose of clarification, emphasis and attitude marking see also Hyland (1998: 443, 1999: 6, 2005: 52, 53, 2007: 267-276). Kumpf (2000) and De Groot et al. (2015) examine visual metadiscourse and Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001: 1296, 1303-1304) explore non-verbalised picture-text relationships and intertextual or interdiscursive relations.[3]

It will be noticed that the definitions of SQ and metadiscourse both refer to discourse participants, writer-reader engagement and the norms and values accepted within a discourse community. Thus, both concepts are closely related and a metadiscoursal perspective represents a useful analytical framework for the description of the functions of SQ.

Metadiscourse in newspapers has been studied largely from cross-cultural, cross-language or cross-generic perspectives and focus has been placed especially on persuasive writing and writing with a recognised authorial voice such as editorials and opinion articles. The majority of studies examine interpersonal (interactional) and textual (interactive) function of verbal metadiscourse and, if they take into account non-verbal resources, they examine other genres than news reports and do not relate specifically to SQ (e.g. Dafouz-Milne 2003, 2008, Le 2004, Makkonen-Craig 2011, Boshrabadi et al. 2014, Fu & Hyland 2014, Wang & Zhang 2016 Farnia & Mohammadi 2018, Nugroho 2020). Simultaneously, as shown in Section 2.1, the research on SQ in news reports seems fragmentary or has been carried out from different than metadiscoursal perspectives. The main objective of this paper is to fill in this gap and explore the metadiscoursal potential of SQ in hard news.

2.2.2 Genre

In addition to the above-mentioned conceptual overlap between SQ and metadiscourse regarding discourse participants and interaction, the notions of SQ

and metadiscourse both refer to aspects of genre. This section aims to describe the genre of hard news in terms of the key variables such as the communicative aim, hard news writer, audience and generic structure. All these aspects manifest themselves in the employment of SQ. The present analysis draws on White (1997, 2012), Feez et al. (2008), and White and Thomson (2008). Alternative approaches to the analysis of hard news include, among others, a narrative approach in Bell (1991), a cognitive approach in van Dijk (1988) and Ungerer (2000, 2002), and the perspective of news values in Bednarek (2016, 2019), and Bednarek and Caple (2014, 2017).

Hard news is a genre whose aim is to identify an event in the extralinguistic reality that is recent, newsworthy and in the majority of cases negative (accidents, criminal acts, natural disasters, war, problems in the sphere of politics, economy etc.) (White 1997: 101-106). Hard news is concerned with socially and otherwise disruptive events that may not have been publicly addressed yet. The aspects of novelty and negativity go hand in hand with hard news discourse being "dialogically 'hot'… contentious and disputatious" (Dillon 1988: 69).

Other issues that are relevant are the author, audience and the interaction between them. Generally, hard news is said to aim at anonymous mass audience that approach hard news texts from heterogenous reading positions. Hard news is characterised by the so-called 'reporter voice', i.e. a kind of authorial key in which the writer is typically backgrounded, subdued or even absent and does not normally participate in certain kinds of explicit appraisal, namely judgement, appreciation and authorial affect. Explicit interaction between the writer and reader is kept to a minimum or avoided altogether (Feez et al. 2008, White 2012, Martin & White 2005: 164-184).

The generic structure of hard news has been described as based on the relation between the nuclear section (i.e. headline(s) and lead) and the body of the text containing a number of functional-generic units, so-called satellites. The headline and lead identify the reported event and provide the angle from which it is portrayed, while the body of the text specifies the nucleus by way of elaboration, contextualisation, evaluation and various cause-effect relations (Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008). Not all nucleus-satellite relations are relevant to the present discussion; let us describe those characterised by the occurrence of SQ. Elaborating satellites repeat, restate in other words, provide more detail or exemplify the information in the nucleus; contextualising satellites provide spatial-temporal and social context, specify events which precede, follow or take place simultaneously with the event in the nucleus or are presented for comparison; appraisals evaluate the nucleus in moral, aesthetic or affective terms; concession, one of the cause-effect relations, provides information that

runs contrary to or frustrates the conclusions and expectations following from the nucleus. On further detail on the generic structure see Urbanová (2013) and Nádraská (2016). It will be shown below that the functions of the individual sections in the generic structure bear direct relevance to the occurrence of SQ.

2.2.3 Research objectives

The paper aims to contribute to the following research areas: the presence of authorial voice in hard news and the writer-reader engagement (e.g. White 2012); the function of quotes and SQ in hard news (e.g. Semino & Short 2004, Garretson & Ädel 2008, McDonald 2008, Urbanová 2013, Landert 2014, Nádraská 2015); and the employment of (non-verbal) metadiscourse in news reports (e.g. Boshrabadi et al. 2014, Fu and Hyland 2014, Wang & Zhang 2016, Zhang 2016, Nugroho 2020). The paper has the following research objectives: to determine the discourse functions of SQ in hard news reports; to discuss the possible metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ; and to show the connection between (metadiscoursal) SQ and genre.

3 Data and method

The data were excerpted from a collection of 175 hard news reports (79,945 words) published in four British broadsheet newspapers in 2010 and 2011 (*The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*). Table 1 summarizes the frequency of occurrence of the two types of SQ, namely those that originate with the internal voice of the journalist (IV, Example 1) and those that are attributed to an external voice and are simultaneously evaluated by the internal voice (EV + IV, Example 2). It also shows the frequency of ambiguities (A, 70) and, for the purpose of comparison, PQ (336). Ambiguous forms include cases in which the context does not provide sufficient cues to determine whether the words in QM belong to the IV or to an EV, or the presence of attitude towards the quoted words is not substantiated discoursally (e.g. by the presence of contrast or repetition) and its postulation would thus be entirely dependent on the reader's position (cf. Nádraská 2015). (See Urbanová (2013) for more information on the corpus.)

Scare quotes		Partial quotes	A (SQ or PQ)
IV	EV + IV	EV	EV or IV
36	56	336	70
92		336	70

Table 1: Frequency of occurrence of scare quotes

Given the overall size of the corpus, the phenomenon of SQ (92) is not very frequent, especially in comparison with PQ (336). However, it deserves attention as it is one of the means contributing to the interpersonality of hard news and the reader-writer interaction.

Each occurrence of QM with the exception of fully direct reported speech was assessed with respect to voice origin – the IV or an EV. In the former case, the quote was interpreted as a SQ and evaluated in terms of discourse function. In the latter case, the potential for implicit authorial attitude, largely negative, was a decisive factor and the primary reason for SQ reading and inclusion in the analysis. In order to postulate attitudinal SQ, there had to be co-textual indicators on the basis of which (implicit) attitudinal interpretation would possibly arise such as contrast between the quote and the embedding context, and/or emphasis effected by the repetition of the quote;[4] PQ without the potential for attitudinal overlay were not considered SQ and were excluded from the analysis. In the case of uncertainty as to voice origin or the presence of attitude, ambiguity was postulated.

Since this is a small-scale study, a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach was adopted. The function of SQ was assessed taking into account close context; the presence of explicit (non-)verbal metadiscourse, PQ and contextualising authorial discourse was noted in the case of SQ originating with the IV and the presence of more extensive discourse/generic patterns such as contrast and repetition was noted in the case of SQ originating with an EV and evaluated implicitly by the IV. In addition, the analysis raises a possibility of a metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ, especially in connection with the non-verbal nature of QM and the implicitness of the authorial comment; for this purpose, the broader interactive approach to metadiscourse presented in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005, 2007) was adopted. Furthermore, in the interpretation of the (meta-)discoursal functions of SQ, the generic variables such as the communicative aim of hard news, the voice of discourse participants and the interaction between them were taken into account. Moreover, SQ were assessed with respect to their distribution across the generic structure; a distinction was made between their occurrence in the headline/lead (nucleus) and in the body

of the text, including the satellite type (White 2000, 2012, Feez et al. 2008, Urbanová 2013).

4 Results of the analysis

This section aims to present the results of the analysis. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 deal with instances of SQ originating with the IV and EV, respectively.

4.1 Functions of scare quotes: The quote originates with the internal voice

This section deals with SQ in which the words are, despite the presence of QM, attributed to the authorial voice (36 instances).

The use of SQ in the examples below seems to be motivated by the writer's assumptions about the reader's expectations regarding the following aspects: terminology and register-specific meaning (military and scientific register in Examples 3 and 4, respectively), a lower level of formality than would be expected in hard news (Example 5), figurative language (Example 6), foreign provenance (Example 7) and a context-specific interpretation (Example 8).

(3) *Staff Sergeant Brett Linley, a "**high-threat operator**", was killed while carrying out a bomb disposal operation.* (Coghlan 2010)

(4) *In the North Atlantic phytoplankton "**blooms**" naturally in spring and autumn when ocean storms bring nutrients to the surface.* (Connor 2010)

(5) *In what appeared yesterday to be a "**tit for tat**" alert, the French government warned its citizens that it was "very likely" public transport and tourist sites in the UK would be hit and that they should be "extremely vigilant".*
On Sunday the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its terror alert level from "general" to "high" for travellers to France and Germany. (Norton-Taylor 2010)

(6) *The British delegation has "**fanned out**" across India, with representatives of leading financial companies accompanying George Osborne, the Chancellor, to Mumbai.* (Prince 2010)

(7) *In a tense, historic vote, Catalonia's regional parliament yesterday banned Spain's "**national fiesta**" – bullfighting, handing a victory to animal rights activist, who predicted the start of a bloodless era across the country.* (Brooks 2010)

(8) *The Rodney case was one reason the last government tried to change the law to allow "**secret**" inquests to be held. The police belief that Ripa [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act] meant they could not share material from intercepts with unauthorised persons also meant that officers were told by their bosses to give incomplete statements to an investigation into the death conducted by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.* (Dodd 2010)

The motivations for the use of QM in some of the examples are reflected in the near context, which specifies and elaborates on the enclosed words (*bullfighting* in Example 7) and by providing additional background information also explains the words' (local) meaning and use (Examples 3, 5 and 8). In Example 3, the meaning of "*high-threat operator*" is suggested *by carrying out a bomb disposal operation*; in Example 8, the local meaning is to be derived from the co-text ("*secret*" means *not sharing evidence* and *giving incomplete statements*); in Example 5, the expression in QM ("*tit for tat*") does not only summarize and encapsulate the following passage but, in addition to it, also evaluates it (note also the epistemic evaluation expressed by the verb *appeared*). Moreover, the expressions in Examples 7 and 8 are accompanied by non-verbal (a dash) and verbal (*meant*) markers of metadiscourse (underlined), namely code glosses; code glosses paraphrase, explain or elaborate on potentially problematic words and thus expand the reader's understanding of the expressions (Vande Kopple 1985, Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 2005, 2007).

The motivations for the use of SQ fall into two major categories, namely meaning (77%) and style (16%). The former includes instances with register specific meaning (Examples 1, 3 and 4), figurative meaning (Example 6) or meaning restricted to the local context (Example 8); the latter includes especially expressions associated with informal style (Example 5); the remaining occurrences (7%) seem to be motivated by mostly singular reasons such as foreign provenance (Example 7), emphasis and/or implicit authorial attitude ("*quality*" in Example 11 below) or new coinage ("*fit to work test*" in Example 9 below). In addition, it must be emphasised that the ratios are only approximate since, rather than being mutually exclusive, the individual motivations for the use of SQ are inter-related and operating simultaneously.

4.1.1 Interaction between scare quotes and context

This section aims to explore more deeply the interaction between SQ and context, in particular authorial discourse, non-verbal and verbal metadiscourse and PQ. It will be shown that these aspects pattern in order to create coherent, functionally homogenous passages. For the description of the examples the following conventions are used: SQ are marked in bold and explicit verbal metadiscourse markers are underlined.

Example 9 illustrates a combination of explanatory authorial discourse, explicit verbal metadiscourse and SQ employed in different parts of the report.

(9) *Fit to work test blocks 76pc of benefit claims* (headline)
*More than three out of four applicants for sickness benefits are being turned away or have stopped claiming altogether because of a new "**fit to work**" test.* (lead)
*The "**work capability assessment**" was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme.*
....
*A further 14 per cent were transferred to a "**work related group**", which meant that, while they were too ill to work at present, they could return to work in the future.* (body of text: elaboration) (Hope 2010)

The SQ expressions in Example 9 come from the domain of unemployment and social benefits. The Lead introduces a concept referred to by an interpretative popularising expression coined by the IV and enclosed in QM ("*fit to work test*"); the same expression also appears in the headline but without the accompanying QM, probably due to a greater tolerance in headlines for more expressive, vivid and informal language than would be acceptable in other parts of the text. The novelty of both the concept and the form expressing it is reflected in the pre-modification (new). In the body of the text, the concept is referred to by an official term enclosed in QM ("*work capability assessment*"). The reasons for the use of SQ in the lead and in the body of the text are thus not identical – the popularising and unofficial expression in the former case and a terminological expression with a register-specific meaning in the latter. The SQ is contextualised by a section of authorial discourse (*was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme*), which provides background information and enhances the reader's understanding of the reported event. The body of the text contains another SQ term from the same topical domain ("*work related group*") accompanied by contextualising, meaning-descriptive comments (*while they were too ill to work at present, they could return to work in the future*) to which the term is linked by an instance of verbal metadiscourse (*which meant that*); it is a case of consequential mean, a type of impersonal code gloss guiding the reader to proper interpretation and taking part in the overall contextualising function of the passage; its meaning can be paraphrased as "the consequences of X are Y" (Ädel 2006: 114).[5]

Example 10 is a complex passage featuring SQ, PQ, non-verbal metadiscourse (dash), verbal metadiscourse, explanatory authorial discourse and a passage that is ambiguous (A) between the PQ and SQ interpretation (A: EV or IV).

(10) *Briton killed by US drone 'had wanted to attack UK'* (headline)
*On Sunday the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its terror alert level from "general" to "high" for travellers to France and Germany. However, the official British terror threat level remained at "**severe**" meaning an attack was "**highly likely**"* (A: EV or IV). *This is the second highest level. "**Critical**" – suggesting an attack may be imminent – is the highest.* (body of text: contextualisation) (Norton-Taylor 2010)

The PQ (*the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its…*) serves to introduce two terms from the topical domain of national security ("*general*", "*high*") and attributes responsibility to the EV via the reporting verb and QM. The ambiguous passage displays a verb referring to the past (*remained*) but contains no explicit reporting expression; it is located between the preceding unambiguous PQ and the following authorial discourse and seems to represent a fuzzy middle ground in which one mode of presentation seeps into another and which is characterised by the mixing and blurring of voices. In contrast to the verb *mean* in Example 9, *mean* in Example 10 facilitates the definition of the term ("*severe*") and is thus "more explicitly metalinguistic" than the *consequential* type in example 9 (Ädel 2006: 114). It illustrates the *definitional* type of the code glossing *mean*, whose function can be paraphrased as "the definition/linguistic meaning of X is Y" (ibid.). The ensuing authorial discourse offers background information regarding the expression (*This is the second highest level.*). The final section of authorial discourse features a related SQ term ("*critical*") accompanied by non-verbal (dash) and verbal (*suggesting*) metadiscourse markers which facilitate the definition of the term and provide comparison with the term introduced previously ("*severe*").

Example 11 demonstrates a SQ co-occurring with an explicit marker of metadiscourse (so-called), possibly indicating that the IV and/or the reader would not use the expression in the same way, especially in the context of defending the use of subterfuge in journalistic practice; the SQ can thus be the source of implicit attitude.

(11) *Subterfuge can be in public interest, Guardian reporter tells press inquiry* (headline)
*Referring to the so-called "**quality**" press, Leigh said: "Most of the time we are extremely well-behaved."* (body of text: elaboration) (Robinson 2011)

In Examples 9-11 above SQ work in tandem with means which complement and build upon each other and contribute to the functionality of the whole section of discourse. Out of the total of 36 SQ attributed to the IV, ten are accompanied by verbal and two by non-verbal metadiscourse markers with a code glossing

function (33.3%), 23 (63.9%) are embedded in authorial discourse providing background information or explanation, and six (16.7%) appear in the context of PQ.[6] While QM in both SQ and PQ highlight the expressions and draw the reader's attention to them, PQ, in contrast to SQ, shift primary responsibility to an EV. The occurrence of SQ in the near context of non-verbal and verbal metadiscourse with a similar function shows that SQ themselves may be, to some extent, viewed as metadiscoursal in nature, an issue discussed in Section 4.1.2 below. The importance of semantic and lexical patterning involving metadiscourse is discussed, for instance, in Bondi (2010).

4.1.2 A metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes originating with the internal voice

As shown above, SQ accompany metadiscourse markers or function metadiscoursally on their own (Examples 1, 3-6). Due to the non-verbal nature of QM, any (metadiscoursal) comment is necessarily implicit. Possible attempts at the verbalisation of the implicit comments in Examples 3-11 could run as follows:

- *I'm using a word from a specific field, sphere of life or profession.*
- *This word has a figurative meaning.*
- *This expression is less formal than could be expected.*
- *This expression has a non-standard, context-specific meaning.*

As follows from Examples 3-11 and the hypothetical comments above, the use of QM in these contexts seems close to code glosses. Code glosses contribute to "the creation of coherent, reader-friendly prose while conveying the writer's audience-sensitivity and relationship to the message" (Hyland 2007: 266). Code glosses paraphrase, explain, define or elaborate on the words the writer believes the reader may find problematic and guide the reader in the comprehension and correct interpretation of the writer's intended meaning (Vande Kopple 1985: 84, Crismore et al. 1993: 46, 49, Hyland 2005: 52). Code glosses increase the communicative effectiveness of the text and display the writer's perception of the reader as a member of a discourse community characterised by certain knowledge, understandings and intertextual experience (Hyland 2007: 284).

However, due to the non-verbal nature of QM and the absence of explicit metadiscoursal comment, a question arises whether implicitness could leave room for a different functional interpretation or polyfunctionality, a feature of (explicit, verbal) metadiscourse noted by various authors (Crismore et al. 1993: 41, Dafouz-Milne 2003: 35-36, Ädel 2006: 24, 2008: 100, Hyland 2017: 18). For instance, if QM were interpreted as an appeal to the reader to approach

and understand the enclosed words in a particular way, they could be seen as implicit engagement markers, defined as devices which address readers and engage them as discourse participants (Hyland 2005: 53-54) (cf. Herrando-Rodrigo 2010).

- *Be careful about the expression in QM.*
- *Please pay attention to the special/novel/context-specific use of the word in QM.*

In addition, QM may be interpreted as indicating the author's assessment of the enclosed words, which makes the implicit comment similar to attitude markers, defined as conveyers of attitude towards the propositional content, reader or style of the text (Crismore et al. 1993: 53, Hyland 2005: 53). In the function of attitude markers QM may express doubt or uncertainty regarding the use of the quoted words; according to Predelli (2003), SQ are a form of apology on the part of the IV.

The implicitness of the metadiscoursal comment and the consequent potential for multifunctionality go hand in hand with the resources that accompany SQ. First, metadiscourse markers co-occurring with SQ are either non-verbal and thus equally implicit (dash) or impersonal, avoiding explicit reference to either the IV or the reader (*which means*/*meant*, *meaning*, *suggesting*, *so-called*, *known as*) (Ädel 2006). Moreover, different instances of impersonal metadiscourse manifest different degrees of metalinguistic element such as the *consequential mean* (Example 9) that is less explicitly metalinguistic than the *definitional mean* (Example 10) (Ädel 2006: 113-114). Second, even though the explanatory contextualising passages originate with the IV, they do not put the IV into the foreground (cf. contextualising personal metadiscourse such as *I have chosen this subject because* …. in Ädel 2006: 60, 64-66). Similarly, the words in PQ are attributed to an EV to the exclusion of the IV.

In summary, SQ pattern with means which are functionally compatible and/or complementary and the function of the individual elements in the pattern crystalises when they are interpreted together. None of the means brings either the IV or the reader to the foreground and implicitness creates the potential for polyfunctionality, which can be exploited by the reader to interpret SQ in a manner that is in agreement with their own reading position and that they find appropriate and acceptable. The non-verbal nature of QM leads to functional implicitness and is tightly linked to the implicitness of hard news discourse participants. The co-occurrence of SQ with non-verbal or impersonal verbal metadiscourse, PQ and especially the incorporation of SQ into non-metadiscoursal authorial discourse disguise the interactional as the ideational and conceal to some extent the engagement between the writer and the reader.[7]

4.2 Functions of scare quotes: the quote originates with an external voice

In the broader conception of SQ and the one adopted in this paper, SQ serve to express attitude on the part of the writer. As noted by Meibauer (2015: 196), there has to be a motive for the reporting speaker to select from an original more extensive quote only a short string of words, and this motive tends to be the expression of attitude and the invitation to the reader to share it. This section examines the use of SQ in structures which are formally identical with reported language, namely PQ, but which simultaneously create potential for the expression of authorial attitude, which is predominantly negative such as sneer, irony or disagreement (Example 2). Let us discuss the examples first.

(12) *US files contain names and locations of secret sources* (headline)
Hundreds of Afghan lives have been put at risk by the leaking of 90,000 intelligence documents because the files identify informants working with Nato forces. (lead)
*He [Julian Assange] claimed that WikiLeaks had implemented a "**harm-minimisation policy**" to weed out documents that could endanger the lives of Afghans.* (body of text: concession) (Coghlan & Whittell 2010)

(13) *Taliban condemns murder of Shia worshippers* (headline)

*In an emailed statement, the movement [the Taliban] described the attacks as "un-Islamic" and blamed the "**invading enemy**", one of the terms they use to describe US-led Nato forces.* (body of text: elaboration) (Boone & Shah 2010)

(14) *How pencil lead and sticky tape led to Nobel Prize* (headline)
*THE discovery of a wonder material while "**mucking about in the lab**" has won two British-based scientists the Nobel Prize in Physics.* (lead) (Alleyene 2010)

The plausible motivations for direct quotation (and explicit attribution in Examples 12 and 13) are a register-specific meaning (intelligence security) in Example 12, an ideologically laden expression in Example 13 and an informal expression suggesting familiarity with the described situation in Example 14. Direct quotation enables the IV to abdicate responsibility and shift it to the EV, which is especially important when the expressed stance is incompatible with the expected neutral stance of the IV.

Although the IV evades responsibility for the quoted words, they seem to take a stance, though implicit, towards the words in QM and/or the reported speaker. In Example 12, the SQ provides information that frustrates the conclusions and expectations following from the headline/lead (*Files identify informants so WikiLeaks has not implemented a "harm-minimisation policy".*). The concessive meaning is likely to produce disagreement, doubt or disbelief on the part of the IV (or the reader) regarding the content of the SQ utterance.[8] In Example 13, the contrast resides in the two referring expressions ("*invading enemy*" and *US-led*

Nato forces) and the ideological standing they express, the negative evaluation being based on the division between *them* and *us*. In Example 14, the contrast obtains between the extraordinary achievement and recognition on the one hand (*Nobel Prize*), and the simplifying, modest perspective and the informal, personal stance of the EV on the other (*pencil lead*, *sticky tape*, "*mucking about in the lab*"), resulting in a positive and humorous attitude; both points of view are presented in the headline and the contrast between them recurs also in the body of the text.

In Example 15, the attitude is potentially triggered by the repetition of the SQ and the contrast between the SQ and the information in the headline/lead.

(15) *Observers kept away from the worst of violence, say activists* (headline)
The role and effectiveness of Arab League observers in Syria was cast into doubt yesterday amid reports that members of the mission have not had unfettered access to cities in rebellion. (lead)
*Comments by General Mohammed Ahmad Mustafa Dabi, the head of the delegation, that the initial assessment of the situation in the restive city of Homs was "**reassuring**" added to the sense of unease.* (body of text: contextualisation)
….
*Their concerns were heightened by comments from General Dabi, ..., who said that the situation in Homs seemed "**reassuring so far**".* (body of text: contextualisation) (Blanford 2011)

In Example 15, dealing with the role of Arab League observers in Syria, the expressions in QM occur in two separate satellites in the body of the text which contextualise the speech events in the headline/lead by providing statements made by a different EV (*Comments by General Dabi that the situation was "reassuring" added to the sense of unease.*). The words flanked by QM receive emphasis on account of their brevity, recurrence across the text in an almost identical form (*reassuring*) and contrast with what has been selected as the central issue and described in the headline/lead (*Arab League observers have not had full access to violence.*). The combination of these factors may give rise to an implicit negative attitude (disbelief, reservation, scepticism, incredulity) to the words in QM and/or the reported speaker on the part of the IV and possibly also the reader.

As mentioned, the attitude in Examples 12-15 is implicit and merely a potential that materialises on the basis of the interaction (clash) between the quoted words and context. The main contribution of QM to the implication of attitude is that they draw attention to the selected words and endow them with special salience, conspicuousness and newsworthiness, the relevance and prominence of the quote being further underlined by its brevity and conciseness.

SQ/QM function as markers of dialogicity and facilitate the dialogic battle between divergent voices.

4.2.1 A metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes originating with an external voice

This section raises the possibility of a metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ originating with an EV that would be parallel to the metadiscoursal perspective on SQ originating with the IV. In Examples 12-15, together with the verbal reporting expressions (*claimed* in 12, *blamed* in 13 and *comments* in 15), the QM function as evidential markers serving to attribute content to another source (Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 2005: 51-52). They instruct the reader where to find the boundary between the IV and the EV and indicate that the enclosed words express the deictic and speech-functional perspective of the reported situation and that they represent faithful reports with regard to the expected degree of faithfulness determined by the generic conventions (Short et al. 2002). Thus the QM are used with explicit verbal evidentials to narrow down the evidential meaning.

However, as noted above, the presence of implicit attitudinal comment was the reason for distinguishing attitudinal SQ from regular PQ. Even though implicitness precludes an exact specification of authorial attitude, in the majority of cases it is decidedly negative (but see Example 14). Attempts at verbalisation can possibly result in the following:

- *In the context of what has been said, I find the words of the EV humorous/unbelievable/immoral etc.*
- *I don't agree with the EV.*
- *"This is what he said, but I do not know whether he was right or not."* (Thompson 1994: 52).

With the above attitudinal comments in mind, QM in attitudinal SQ can be compared to attitude markers, serving to express the writer's stance towards the propositional content, the reader or the style of the text (Crismore et al. 1993: 53, Hyland 2005: 53). Simultaneously, however, implicitness allows for the possibility of an alternative interpretation: similarly to code glossing SQ, attitude signalling SQ can be seen as engagement markers, serving as an appeal to the reader to form their own opinion (Hyland 2005: 53-54, cf. Herrando-Rodrigo 2010).

- *I don't agree with the EV – please judge for yourself.*
- *Pay attention to the words I have highlighted – do you agree?*

As has been emphasised before, implicitness is of great significance since it renders the presence of authorial comment a mere potentiality and grants the reader the freedom to decide whether or not they will interpret SQ as an appeal to engage in evaluation. Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that the presence of attitude does not reside in QM inherently but arises out of the combination of factors and is fundamentally dependent on the interplay between QM, quoted words and aspects of context. In other words, the primary evidential function of QM is only potentially exploited for the secondary role of an attitude or engagement marker.

5 Scare quotes from the point of view of the generic characteristics of hard news

The examination of SQ has shown that their use is tightly bound to genre and generic conventions. As mentioned, hard news deals with recent, primarily negative and contentious events (White 1997). This requires the evocation of different EVs and the presentation of different points of view. Even though verbal and non-verbal markers of evidentiality normally serve this function, SQ occur in contexts in which novelty requires explanation or background information or in which novelty concerns the aspects of register and style (Examples 3-10); additionally, SQ highlight evaluations or concepts that are deemed likely to cause controversy, disagreement and opposition (Examples 11-13, 15).

Regarding the hard news reader, code glossing SQ cater to the presumption of lay, non-expert audience lacking in a unified background which knits together more specialised and professional communities. Attitude signalling SQ cater to the ideological diversity of the audience. The mass character and anonymity of hard news readership is not compatible with explicit and functionally determinate appeal reflecting more concrete and specific assumptions about the reader. According to Meibauer (2015: 202), an important aspect of SQ is that they are not inherently evaluative but, given a suitable context, they allow the reader to evaluate from their own point of view. Consequently, the final text is co-produced by the author and members of the audience (Hyland 2005: 13); the text is not merely "constructed with the reader's needs in mind, but … jointly constructed, with communicative space being left for the readers to contribute to the achievement of the texts' goals" (Thompson 2001: 62).

Concerning the subdued and backgrounded reporter voice (White 2012), the author draws on attitudinal SQ as inexplicit resources of evaluation in order to create room for the expression of authorial stance. Implicit evaluation on the part of the author and/or reader results from the interaction between QM that serve to

focus attention on the enclosed words, the brevity and content of the quote, and the discourse and generic patterns such as repetition and contrast.

The above outlined functions also manifest themselves in the distribution of SQ across the hard news generic structure (White 2000, Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008). SQ appear in sections whose overall generic functions correspond to the individual functions of SQ. The distribution shows the following tendencies: out of the total of 92 code glossing and attitudinal SQ, eleven (12%) have been found in the nuclear headline/lead, i.e. sections which serve to identify the newsworthy event and display a high degree of novelty; 38 instances (41.3%) have been found in satellites that elaborate (i.e. repeat, restate or provide more detail) on the nucleus; and 34 SQ (36.9%) have been found in satellites that contextualise the event reported in the headline/lead. While attitudinal SQ show a slightly stronger preference for elaborating (22) than for contextualising (18) satellites, the distribution of code glossing SQ in elaborations (16) and contextualisations (16) is even. In addition, attitudinal SQ (9 instances, 9.8%) appear in satellites which express appraisal, concession and other types of contrast. Consequently, the distribution of SQ corroborates the connection between code glossing SQ, recency, novelty and the need to explain and provide background information in order to secure the reader's understanding on the one hand, and the connection between attitude signalling SQ, negativity, recency and the need to indicate a possible controversial nature of the expressions. The above examples illustrate the following distribution of SQ: the lead (Examples 9 and 14), elaboration (Examples 9 and 13), contextualisation (Examples 10 and 15), and a concessive satellite (Example 12).

Regarding the discussed discourse/generic patterns, repetition, which contributes to the salience of SQ and is a potential source of implied attitude, represents the fundamental relation between the nuclear headline/lead and elaborating satellites, or between satellites with other functions with respect to the nucleus that, however, recur across the text (e.g. recurrent contextualisations in Example 15). Contrast, another salient relation and the source of potential attitude, is found mainly between the headline/lead, and concessive or contextualising satellites (Examples 12 and 15, respectively); the contrast obtaining between the statements in the headline/lead and in the body of the text is of vital importance since it produces opposition against the voices, points of view or interpretations selected as the central, nuclear issue.

6 Conclusion

The present paper attempts to show how SQ are employed in hard news reports in order to create the potential for implicit authorial comment. The paper distinguishes between SQ originating with the IV and SQ originating with an EV, the latter being simultaneously evaluated by the IV.

The paper raises the question of interpreting QM in SQ as non-verbal markers of metadiscourse: QM which flank authorial discourse work as code glosses, while QM enclosing external discourse work as attitude markers. However, since the sole presence of QM is not sufficient to indicate attitude but its stipulation depends heavily on the interaction between SQ and context, the metadiscoursal interpretation of attitude signalling QM seems more tenuous. While attitude signalling SQ are often embedded in the context characterised by contrast and repetition, code glossing SQ may but do not have to co-occur with other means that help evoke an implicit authorial comment, including contextualising authorial discourse, explicit verbal metadiscourse or PQ. In addition, the implicitness of the metadiscoursal comment may allow for multiple functionality; for instance, QM can also be interpreted as engagement markers.

The functions of SQ reflect the novelty and negativity of reported events and respect the backgrounded nature of discourse participants, and the subtleness and indirectness of writer-reader engagement. Implicitness is of vital importance as it helps achieve a seemingly objective and impersonal discourse which presents authorial comment as a mere potentiality, leaves room for multi-functionality and invites the reader to make their own opinion. The functions of SQ are also reflected in the distribution across the generic structure; the functions of SQ match those of the nucleus and corresponding satellites.

This research has implications for the study of ideology and implicit authorial stance in hard news and in general. It shows that in the absence of explicit evaluation hard news writers can still indicate attitude and bias by effective voice management and careful orchestration of discourse. Moreover, the study carries theoretical implications for the delimitation of metadiscourse and the repertoire of potential, especially non-verbal, metadiscoursal resources; it demonstrates the need to consider genre in the identification and assessment of means with a metadiscoursal function.

Due to the limited amount of data, the results need to be corroborated by further research. More attention could also be paid to the interaction between QM and other signals of authorial intrusion in addition to verbal and non-verbal metadiscourse. Furthermore, contrastive approach to the study of SQ could emphasise functional differences between the use of SQ in different genres and languages and shed more light on their employment.

Notes

[1] The abbreviation *SQ* is used to refer to *scare quote(s), scare quoting and scare quoted*.

[2] See Biber and Conrad (2009) on the distinction between register, style and genre. *Topic*, or *topical domai*n, is one of the aspects of the situational characteristics of registers influencing especially the choice of vocabulary (Biber & Conrad 2009: 40, 46-47).

[3] There are a number of studies which provide examples of SQ accompanying verbal or non-verbal metadiscourse but without any comment on their occurrence (Ädel 2006: 110, 114, 117, 2010: 84, Hyland 2007: 267-276, Bondi 2010: 104, Molino 2010: 91-97, Guziurová 2020: 46). This, in some cases, stems from the fact that the authors apply the narrow text-reflexive model of metadiscourse, which is confined to explicit verbal metadiscourse (Mauranen 1993, Ädel 2006).

[4] In the case of repetition, each occurrence of SQ was counted separately. See Example 15.

[5] In a different newspaper report on the same topic the same strategy is adopted and the new concept is referred to by a popularising SQ expression ("back to work" test). However, in contrast to Example 9, other terms are not SQ but attributed to an EV in a PQ, absolving the IV from responsibility (*The report says this "automatic entitlement" has encouraged dependency on benefits …*).

[6] The context examined for the co-occurrence of SQ with metadiscourse markers, contextualising authorial passages and PQ was delimited by satellite boundary (White 2000, Feez et al. 2008, White &Thompson 2008).

[7] The tentative observations presented here are consistent with more extensive studies, including Zhang (2016), who shows that metadiscourse markers in the press are infrequent and seldom reveal the writer's presence.

[8] In Example 12 the author's reservation about the reported content is expressed more explicitly by the reporting verb (*claimed*).

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