

Exits from Text in Two-Party Disputes: Voice Transfer, Image Substitution, and Deferred Citation

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Corpus and coding manual available on request.

Abstract

A claim made in text can be quoted back to the participant who made it and contradicted on its own words. We identify three exits from that condition, each removing a different precondition for it, and measure their use across 1,180 two-party disputes. Transfer to voice removes completion: 31 per cent of turns reach their end, against 96 per cent in text. Substitution of an image removes the text: the first image appears, at median, on the turn immediately following the first request for a source. Deferred citation removes locatability: cited recordings run to a median of 41 minutes, 8 per cent are cited with a timestamp, and of those, 34 per cent contain the claim at the timestamp given. None of the three is associated with termination. All three are associated with an increase in the proportion of participants reporting the exchange as decided in their favour, on both sides simultaneously.

1 The quotable turn

A dispute conducted in text has a property that disputes conducted in most other ways do not. Every claim is a durable, addressable object. It can be reproduced exactly, placed beside the claim that contradicts it, and examined by a third party who was not present. Nothing about the medium requires a participant to be careful; the medium simply makes carelessness recoverable afterwards.

We will call a turn *quotable* when it satisfies two conditions: it is complete, in that the participant finished it, and it is text, in that reproducing it requires no interpretation. Both conditions are ordinarily met without anyone attending to them, which is why their absence is easy to miss.

This paper concerns three departures from the text channel, each of which removes one condition. We did not set out to find three. We set out to measure the first, observed that the second had the same effect by a different route, and added the third when it became clear that the participants were treating all three as interchangeable.

2 Corpus and coding

The corpus comprises 1,180 two-party disputes drawn from 47 channels between March 2024 and May 2026, coded on the definition of arghXiv:2505.02640. Voice exchanges were available as recordings for 148 hours of the total; where no recording existed the exchange was coded from the surrounding text only, and is excluded from the turn-level figures in Section 3.

Turn completion was coded from the recordings by two coders working independently ($\kappa = 0.81$). A turn was counted as complete where the speaker reached a syntactic boundary and stopped, and incomplete where another speaker began before that point and the first speaker did not resume the sentence.

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3 Voice transfer

A challenge to move the dispute to voice was issued in 312 of the 1,180 disputes. It was accepted in 34, a rate of 10.9 per cent. In the 278 exchanges in which it was declined, the refusal was cited as bearing on the matter in dispute in 261 cases.

We note the ratio. A move accepted one time in nine is not, on the face of it, a move for obtaining a voice exchange.

Within the 34 accepted, turn completion was 31 per cent, against 96 per cent for text turns in the same disputes. Simultaneous speech occupied 22 per cent of elapsed time. Mean interval from the start of a turn to the first interruption was 6.1 seconds. Where a moderator was present and active, completion rose to 78 per cent and simultaneous speech fell to 4 per cent; the effect of moderation on the rate of termination is reported in arghXiv:2608.03106 and is nil.

A voice exchange leaves no record. Its outcome is therefore established entirely by the accounts the participants give of it afterwards, and the reliability of that instrument has been measured: item 7 of the schedule reported in arghXiv:2603.02419 asks each participant which party prevailed, and across the 130 dyads in which both responded, no pair of responses was mutually compatible. We take this to mean that the outcome of a voice exchange is not merely unrecorded but unrecoverable, and that the participants' confidence in it is unrelated to that fact.

4 Image substitution

The three exits treated here are, in the manual of arghXiv:2512.11487, responses withholding an answer with a ground given: an image or a recording offered in place of an answer is a *quod vide*, and a citation deferred to an occasion not yet arrived is an *ad kalendas Graecas*. We use those names below where they are exact. What that manual counts, we measure: it establishes how often each is reached for, and this paper asks what each one removes.

Images appeared in 891 of the 1,180 disputes, with 14,204 postings in total drawn from 1,106 distinct images. The 40 most frequently posted images account for 61 per cent of postings.

Position matters more than volume. The first image in an exchange appears, at median, on the turn immediately following the first request for a source, and in 71 per cent of exchanges it appears within two turns of such a request. Median interval from the request to the image was 19 seconds, against a median of 121 seconds for a text reply of comparable length in the same exchanges. An image is not composed in the interval; it is retrieved.

Of the 14,204 postings, 9,880 contained text rendered as pixels. Of those, 412 were reproductions of messages posted earlier in the same channel, which the archive is able to identify because it holds both.

Table 1: The three exits and the condition each removes.

Exit	Condition removed	Consequence for the claim
Voice transfer	Completion	No finished turn to reproduce
Image substitution	Text	Cannot be quoted on its words
Deferred citation	Locatability	Claim is somewhere in the source

5 Deferred citation

In 604 exchanges a participant supported a claim by citing a recording rather than a document. Cited recordings ran to a median of 41 minutes. A timestamp accompanied the citation in 8 per cent of cases. Where a timestamp was given, the claim appeared at it in 34 per cent of cases; in the remainder the material at the timestamp bore on the general subject without containing the claim.

Where the citing participant was asked to identify the interval containing the claim, the request was met in 6 per cent of cases. The most common response, at 44 per cent, was to post the same citation again.

6 Discussion

The three exits are not three tactics. They are one move, taken by whichever route is available, and the participants use them interchangeably: in 214 exchanges all three appear, and in 189 of those they appear in the same order.

We record the following without proposing an account of it. Across all three exits, the proportion of participants reporting the exchange as having been decided in their favour rose from 51 per cent before the exit to 88 per cent after it. This figure exceeds 100 per cent when summed across both participants, and did so in 402 of the exchanges in which both responded. The exits do not resolve the property described in arghXiv:2608.04471. They enlarge it.

7 Limitations

Turn-level figures rest on 148 hours of recording, which is 12 per cent of the voice exchanges in the corpus and is not a random sample of them: exchanges are recorded when a participant expects to want the recording. Image identification is by perceptual hash and will merge visually similar images that differ in text. The interval measurements in Section 4 are wall-clock and take no account of a participant composing a reply and discarding it.

We have not established that the exits are chosen for the property we describe. A participant who moves to voice because voice is faster, and who is then not contradicted because nothing they said was recoverable, has obtained the same protection without seeking it. Nothing in our data distinguishes the two cases, and we do not think the participants could distinguish them either.