Towards a Typology of Non-Locutionary Meanings of Reported Speech

Category: Oral/Poster

The present study aims to propose a typological analysis of non-locutionary meanings of reported speech constructions (henceforth RSCs) in the languages of the world. The analysis is based on a crosslinguistic variety sample (cf. Miestamo et al. 2016) of 100 languages. For the purpose of the study, RSCs are defined as complex clauses that consist of a matrix clause (M) and reported clause (R). Matrix verbs in the RSCs matrix clauses are commonly verbs of utterance e.g. 'say' or 'talk'. The term non-locutionary meanings refers to constructions that morphosyntactically resemble speech reports, but do not represent utterances semantically. Non-locutionary meanings of RSCs include e.g. thoughts, necessity, or intention i.a. (cf. Author Reference 2021). Consider examples (1) for a RSC with the function of representing an utterance, (2) for a non-locutionary RSC for expressing a desire, and (3) for a purposive:

(1) Cental Alaskan Yupik (Eskimo, USA)

"Tai-ciq-ua   unuaqu",   qaner-tuq.
[come-FUT-IND.1sg   tomorrow]_R   [say-IND.3sg]_M
'[He said]_M, ["I will come tomorrow"]_R'. (Miyaoka 2012: 177)

Examples (1) and (2 a) show that the matrix clauses can either precede or follow the reported clause. The verbs in the reported clauses for both (1) and (2 a) occur in the realis mood.

(2) Yeri (Torricelli, Papua New Guinea)

a) nua   w-ø=de-n   w-nobia,   "d-ania-ki   mal?"
   [mother REL-sg=3-sg.M   3sg.f-talk.R]_M [MDL-call.R-APPL   what]_R
'His mom said, "What are you (sg) calling for?"' (Wilson 2017: 104)

When the embedded verb in the reported clause of *nobia* 'talk' occurs in the irrealis mood, the meaning shifts from reported speech to 'want someone to X' (cf. Wilson 2017: 380) as in (2 b):

b) hem m-nobia   m-ie   nogil   w-ø=lope-ø.
   [1sg 1sg-talk.R]_M   [1sg-stay.IRR   village rel-sg=big-sg.F]_R
'I want to stay in town.' (Wilson 2017: 380)

In Gumer the meaning of a purposive is expressed through a complement clause of *bar* 'say' in which the embedded verb occurs in the jussive mood (cf. Völlmin 2017: 170) as in (3):

(3) Gumer (Semitic. Ethiopia)

ni-ʒ-in   bar-ə-m   wɨyə-m.
[1sS-see.JUS-3smO]_R   [say.PFV-3smS-CV.M   go.down.PFV[.3smS]-M]_M
'He went down to see him (lit. he went down saying: "Let me see him").' (Völlmin 2017: 170)

Several non-locutionary meanings of RSCs have been described independently for different areas of the world: Larson (1977) for Aguaruna (Peru), Güldemann (2008) for the languages of Africa, Matić & Pakendorf (2013) for Siberia, Saxena (1988) for the Himalayas, Chappell (2012) for greater China, McGregor (2014) for Australia, and Reesink (1993) for Papua New Guinea. The present study aims to integrate and expand on previous research including languages from North America, to propose a first broad scale crosslinguistic typological analysis.

The crosslinguistic comparison of RSCs and their different non-locutionary meanings needs to take language-specific grammatical properties of speech reports into account. Therefore, this study adopts the comparison

strategy of semantic parsing of RSCs based on the matrix clauses (M) and reported clauses (R) (cf. Spronck & Nikitina). Semantic parsing of RSCs into M and R clauses allows for a broad crosslinguistic comparison of RSCs, as it does not imply a subordinating or coordinating relation between M and R.

The data for the present analysis is collected from descriptive grammars for each of the sampled languages and resembles examples as in (1) – (3) above. The data is analyzed using the R software extension package RQDA for qualitative data analysis Huang (2016). First, all M and R clauses from all examples of all languages sampled are coded. Second, all non-locutionary meanings are coded following the meaning of the interlinear glosses and the idiomatic translation. The qualitative coding in RQDA allows to find correlations between codes through commands on the R console on the syntactic, morphological, and semantic level throughout the data set.

The qualitative analysis allows to show the correlation between morphosyntactic structure and semantic meaning of non-locutionary meanings of RSCs. Examples as (2 b) and (3) show that the semantic meaning of an RSC does not emerge from one morpheme alone, but depends on the different morphosyntactic elements in RSCs as a whole. The present study reveals that languages of the world use RSCs to express several crosslinguistically similar meanings that include, but are not limited to, expressions of fear, results, purpose, intention, or doubt.

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