

Deny Teptiuk (University of Tartu): Discursive functions of reported speech and thought in Uralic: towards a typology

Recent studies in linguistic typology have paid attention to the functional extensions that reported speech and thought (RST) acquire cross-linguistically (see e.g. Güldemann 2008, Spronck & Casartelli 2021, i.a.). In such cases, the construction is not interpreted as representing a speech (or mental) act and expands into domains where its locutionary function is no longer relevant. Among noticeable extended uses of RST, found in languages from different continents, is the extension from SAY to REASON or PURPOSE, e.g. He went away saying he was tired / he was going to sleep. → He went away because he was tired / in order to go to sleep. Among Uralic languages, such extensions are found among the non-finite elements with the original meaning ‘saying’ in Mari (manən) and Udmurt (šuyša), which also function as complementizers and conjunctions of reason and purpose in contemporary languages (see e.g. Serdobol’skaya & Toldova 2014; Klumpp 2016). Even though it is commonly assumed that this functional extension leads to the development of a new construction from RST without its primary function, the condition of losing the locutionary function is apparently not necessary. For instance, such functional extensions are found in contexts where both meanings are preserved, e.g. locutionary and causal (1). The locutionary functions remain primary, and the causal meaning arises through contextual implicature (see Teptiuk, forthcoming). In (1a), the speaker uses report to justify the suggestion to use summer savory instead of pepper ([‘because’] it’s healthier (according to some source)). In (1b), the speaker’s reported intention implies a purpose of going to the northern capital ([‘in order to’] meet with friends’).

(1) a. Hungarian, reason

...tetszés szerint de ajánlatos bors

like:AN according.to but advisable pepper

helyett borsikafüvet használni (egészségesebb állítólag).

instead summer_savory:ACC use:INF healthy:CMPR allegedly

‘It’s a matter of taste, but it’s advisable to use summer savoury instead of pepper (it’s healthier, allegedly).’ (MNSz)

b. Komi-Zyrian, purpose

Služba böryn tövži vojvyv jurkarö,

service after rush:PST.1SG north capital:ILL

miša, stud’entalan jortjasköd ad’d’žýšla.

QUOT.SELF be.student:NMLZ friend:PL:COM meet:PRS.1SG

‘After the (military) service, I rushed to the northern capital, thinking I would meet with my university friends.’ (KoZSmC).

The discursive functions of RST have received relatively little attention in the linguistic literature. Previous studies focus on (a) different genre(s) and therefore the existing typologies differ in the list of functions they provide. In this talk, I first present a short summary of such typologies. I show how the generic characteristics may influence the linguist’s choice in organising such typologies and point out some weaknesses in previous attempts. Second, I present two case studies, using two opposing types of material: nonstandard written communications online and traditional storytelling. The first study uses data from three Uralic languages Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian; the second study focuses on data from Nganasan folklore. I illustrate the functions that RST acquires in these genres and pay attention to how differences in the source of original utterance and thought may influence the functional capacities of RST, and how some of the uses may

stylistically conventionalize in a particular genre. I also briefly outline a cross-generic similarity in reports of self-talk found in both genres and show how cultural differences may influence what we communicate to ourselves.

References

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