

The syntax of reported discourse in Kafire (Senufo, Côte d’Ivoire): A preliminary Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) account

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Abstract

Reported discourse is famously defined by Vološinov (1973: 115) as “speech within speech, utterance within utterance and, at the same time, speech about speech and utterance about utterance.” Since this characterization makes the integration of one structure into another an important feature of reported discourse, the relation between the two structures is relevant to syntax. Hence, syntacticians of different syntactic frameworks have long time been interested in accounting for that relation in the appropriate way. However, that issue has received little attention in the Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG) framework where no difference is made between the syntax of reported discourse and the one of complement clauses (Dalrymple, Lowe & Mycock 2019).

In this study, I show that the LFG analysis of reported discourse the same way as complement clauses shows some limits, especially in Kafire, an underdescribed Senufo language. The reported segment of that languages shows properties different from those of complement clauses and its occurrence with a manner adverb hints that it is not an argument of the speech verb. To account for that, I propose to treat the reported segment as bearing a non-argument function comparable to the grammatical discourse functions. That non-argument function is integrated in the structure by being functionally or cataphorically coreferential to an argument function.

References

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