An LFG-account of the grammar of reported speech in Kafire (Senufo, Côte d’Ivoire)

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Introduction

1. Context
   - Not much attention has been paid to the grammar of reported speech in LFG.
   - In some cases, the reported segment patterns with complement clauses (category = CP/IP; GF = COMP and or OBJ) [Dalrymple & Lødtrup 2009].
   - This is found in the indirect speech of many well-studied languages like English.
   - However, in the reported speech of Kafire, an underdescribed Senufo language, the reported segment is neither a complement clause, nor an argument or an adjunct.
   - Therefore, how to account for the grammar of reported speech in Kafire?
   - I propose to treat the reported segment as bearing a discourse-like function that is functionally or cataphorically linked to the manner oblique function that the predicate governs.

2. The language and the data
   Kafire (Northern Côte d’Ivoire : Sirasso, Hafoun, Kanoroba):
   - Niger-congo=Suru=Senufo=Central Senari.
   - Word order = [SUBJ-AUX-OBJ=1-ORB, ADJ, COMP]
   - Data = 2 hours of annotated narratives; 1,128 reported speech constructions (Silue 2022) (sometimes complemented with narrative-based elicitation data).

Facts

1. The reported segment is not a complement clause in Kafire
   - Clausal complement = ‘clause’ or ‘sentence’.
     - (1) a. wò fue nj ci tjegi à wu dà à wu
       CPIRT 355.07 say 'we know/ believe that she [pejorative] will die.' [sentence]
       (Kaf_Narr_Animals-Mothers-Funeral_01_SN_031) [modified]
     - b. à dà ngwô jë fêw cô CPIRT driver_ant=DEF1.GS want python=DEF1.GS catch 'The driver ant wanted to catch the python.' [clause]
       (Kaf_Narr-Orig-Cult-Of-Water_01_SN_002)
   - *but: Reported segment = anything that can be uttered, namely interjections, onomatopoeias, vocative phrases, discourse markers, sentences.

2. The actual argument of the speech predicate is a demonstrative adverb
   - A demonstrative manner adverb can occur along with the reported segment, but cannot stand alone without it. It has the properties of oblique arguments, i.e., it is post-verbal, focalisable, non passivizable like obliques.
     - (5) a. à wàà jô pámè ɲúŋ 3jw CPIRT indP1.GS say like that INTI bad_behaviour=DEF1.GS 1PL njûjw=nà guest=DEF1.GS on EXCL
       ‘Someone said like this: hum! Our guest really behaves badly.’
       (Kaf_Narr_Old-Witch_01-SN_041)
     - b. *à wàà jô pámè CPIRT indP1.GS say like that
       ‘Someone said like this.’
       (Kaf_Narr_Old-Witch_01-SN_043) [modified]
     - c. à wàà jô ɲúŋ 3jw CPIRT indP1.GS say like that bad_behaviour=DEF1.GS 1PL njûjw=nà guest=DEF1.GS on
       ‘Someone said: hum! Our guest really behaves badly.’
       (Kaf_Narr_Old-Witch_01_SN_050)
   - Manner related words are used to target the ‘reported segment’ even if it is not by nature related to manner.
     - (6) a. mè wàà jô é howindexed=DEF1.GS say ‘What [lit. How] did someone say?’
       (Kaf_Narr_Old-Witch_01-SN_050) [modified]
     - b. pà wàà jô like_that indexed=DEF1.GS say ‘It is that [lit. like that] someone said.’
       (Kaf_Narr_Old-Witch_01-SN_050) [modified].

Formal analysis

1. When the manner demonstrative is not expressed in the c-structure.
   - pámè ADV (↑PRED) = ‘PRO’ µ V (↑PRED) = ‘say’ SUBJ=OBL(subj)
   - (↑DEM) = ‘OBL(subj)’
   - (↑TOP): demonstrATION)
   - [Nikitina & Bugueva 2021] QUOTP: Quotative Phrase

2. When the manner demonstrative is expressed in the c-structure.
   - ‘The driver ant wanted to catch the python.’

Conclusion

I treat the reported segment in Kafire as a category bearing a discourse-like function whose integration follows the Extended Coherence Condition.

Upcoming puzzle: Other reported speech constructions in Kafire do not involve a reporting segment. How to analyze them within LFG?

References

