CHAPTER EIGHT

SPEECH REPORTS: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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1. Speech Report Constructions: An Overview

A speech report situation involves at least two speakers—the ‘author’ of the original speech, and the ‘reporter’. A speech report construction contains: (i) the speech report content, (ii) the reporting marker, or ‘quote framer’, and (iii) a linker between these. In a direct speech construction, the speech report content corresponds exactly (or more or less so), to what the original author of the speech report content had said. In the English sentence (1)

(1) He said: ‘I needed more money yesterday’

the direct speech report—marked with quotes in the written language—is postposed to the reporting verb ‘say’. There is no overt link between the two.

Alternatively, the report may be made without ‘using his or her exact words’ (Trask 1993: 140), as ‘indirect speech’. Then the author’s speech is ‘adapted’ to the ‘perspective’ of the reporter. In (2),

(2) He said (that) he had needed more money the previous day

the person who made the pronouncement was someone other than the author. Hence, the original ‘I’ is changed to ‘he’. And since the pronouncement was prior to the report, needed is ‘back-shifted’ to the ‘past perfect’, or past with respect to the past, had needed. The time adverb yesterday is changed to the previous day. The optional complementiser that is a marker of syntactic link between the reporting clause and the speech report content.

A reporting marker is often a verb of speech, or an expression ‘be like’ or ‘do like’, or a combination of both. An intonation break, or a complementiser, typically mark the link between the reporting
marker and the speech report. Speech report constructions may consist of more than one clause—as in (1) and (2); see §2. Or they can be monoclausal—see §3.

A ‘verbatim’ report and ‘indirect’ speech differ in a variety of ways: in the marking of person, tense, intonation patterns, and many more. ‘Verbatim’ quotation option also opens up a potential for mimetic, or ‘theatrical effect’ (Wierzbicka 1974): one can try and reproduce or imitate the intonation, expression and so on of what had been originally said. A quote can be of more than one clause; or it can consist of just one word, or one morpheme, or not contain any speech as such—just a gesture (Partee 1973). In multiclausal speech reports, the reporting clause is a full clause.

Monoclausal speech reports can be of three kinds:

- (a) construction with a reported or a quotative evidential (see an overview in Aikhenvald 2004: 68–85, and Aikhenvald 2008b);
- (b) construction with double person marking (as in Kwaza: van der Voort 2000: 291–6);
- (c) free indirect discourse (see Quirk et al. 1985; Landeweerd and Vet 1996, for French).

Monoclausal speech reports often originate from reanalysis of multiclausal reports (see Aikhenvald 2004: 68–85, 2008b, and Travis 2006). A major difference between monoclausal speech reports with reported and with quotative evidentials lies in the possibility of an overt statement of the author of the report. A purely reported evidential does not allow for the author of the speech report to be specified. This is in contrast to a quotative evidentials where the source of speech report is to be present. The distinction between direct and indirect speech reports does not apply to monoclausal speech reports. We turn to their further properties in §3.

A list of points to be addressed in an analysis of speech reports in any language is given in §8.

2. Multiclausal Speech Report Constructions

Direct and indirect speech are the most straightforward and cross-linguistically frequent speech reports. We first discuss the formal differences between the two (§2.1), and show that neither is uniform cross-linguistically. Some categories but not others are shifted to the