

From Discourse to Grammar: Viewpoint Shift in Languages With and Without Writing

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This paper stems from the assumption that narratives are intimately related to interaction, and consequently that language is to some extent modeled by interaction (Voloshinov 1929; Verhagen 2005; Zlatev et al. 2008). The focus is on the use of direct speech –which involves the management of (mixed) viewpoints– for non-quotations. Examples are the English, American Sign Language and Kwaza below:

- (1) a. ...there's some guy [...] giving you that *"I'm so handsome, you can't resist me"* look. (Marilyn Monroe in 'The Seven Year Itch', 1955, in Pascual et al. in press)

b.



Lit. 'He_i gave her_j a ring that says: *"Will you_j marry me_i?"* "Yes"' (Stec p.c.)

- c. Eromũtsa-da-xa'te-xa-ta 'nāi-xa-re (van der Voort 2002)
Lit. 'Is it (a watch) for you_i to (say): *"I_i wear it on the wrist?"*'

We will present a cross-linguistic study of Indo- and non-Indo-European languages, including signed and indigenous languages without writing. Our hypothesis is that intersubjective constructions are most grammaticalized in languages used in situated interaction only. This hypothesis is grounded in the assumption that literacy affects cognition and language use, and ultimately also linguistic structure. The paper is based on a bibliographic and corpus/database studies, and a qualitative analysis of Catalan Sign Language narratives. Critically, in many languages without (well-established) writing, a viewpoint shift – introduced or not by a quotative– serves to express a variety of non-quotative meanings, such as thoughts, intentions and/or events. This goes both for indigenous languages (Güldemann & von Roncador 2002; Pascual forth) as well as for signed languages, even though for the latter only thoughts have been recognized in the literature (Liddell & Metzger 1998; Herrmann & Steinbach 2012). Indeed, in signed languages so-called *role shift* (Lillo-Martin 1995), typically marked by body and gaze shift, may introduce *constructed actions* representing mental states (Metzger 1994) as well as emotions or states of affairs. More spectacularly, in some Amazonian languages a viewpoint shift may mark future tense (Uche 1996/7; Van der Voort 2009). Consider Wari' (Everett 2009):

- (2) Cao' xi'_i carawa nana hwijima'_i
eat IPINCL:RF animal 3P:RP/P children]
Lit. *"We will eat food"*, the children (say).'
'The children will eat food.'

All these meanings greatly correspond to the functions of the 'be like' and related direct speech constructions in English and other languages with a well-established writing system (Foolen 2008; Pascual 2006, forth). Our hypothesis is that intersubjective constructions generally involving viewpoint shifting –and thus mixed viewpoints– are more common in spoken than written language use (Tannen 1982), and are also more grammaticalized in languages that are solely (or mostly) used in situated interaction only.

This research is based on a large bibliographic study of Indo- and non-Indo-European languages, including signed and indigenous languages without writing. This is enriched with a qualitative database analysis of Germanic and Romance language texts –spoken, written, and multimodal– as well as naturalistic Catalan Sign Language data from various genres.