

Manner of Speaking Constructions in English

Tetsuya Kogusuri

Manner of speaking verbs (e.g. *scream*, *whisper*, *yell*, etc.) (henceforth, MSVs) can take clausal complements:

- (1) Mary {screamed/whispered/yelled} that it was a mistake.

In (1), the matrix verbs describe speech acts with certain physical characteristics, and the subsequent complement expresses a propositional content conveyed by the speech. Let us term this kind of constructions as manner of speaking constructions (henceforth, MSCs). The purpose of this study is to elucidate the semantic relationship between MSVs and the MSCs in which they occur.

Intuitively, one might suppose that each of the MSVs in (1) takes the clausal complement as its syntactic object. In the literature, clausal complements of MSVs have been alleged to be adjuncts, however. Consider the following:

- (2) a. Bill {muttered/shrieked/sighed/whispered}.
 b.* What_i did Martin shriek that there were *t_i* in the caviar?

(Kuwabara and Matsuyama (2001:29))

Example (2a) illustrates that the complement in (1) may not be realized; in (2b), the *wh*-extraction out of the complement is ungrammatical, which is regarded as evidence for the adjuncthood of the clausal complement (cf. Stowell (1981)). This fact seems to be counterintuitive in that clausal complements of MSVs are syntactically optional although they are apparently selected by the verbs with respect to the meanings.

A closer look, however, reveals that there is a semantic mismatch between MSVs themselves and MSCs: MSVs designate non-linguistic communication acts (e.g. sound emission), whereas MSCs denote linguistic communication acts (e.g. reports of assertions). Firstly, inanimate subject NPs can appear with MSVs, while they are incompatible with MSCs, as illustrated in (3):

- (3) a. The rod bent double, the reel shrieked and rached ... (COBUILD³)
 b.* The car shrieked that it approached.

Secondly, simple sentences with MSVs can be conjoined with clauses which negate their communicative interpretations. In the case of MSCs, on the other hand, the conjunction with the clauses results in contradiction. Observe the following contrast:

- (4) a. George howled something at me, but he wasn't saying anything to me.
(Dor (2005:354))

- b.* Mary {whispered/shouted} at me that I should have attended the party,
 but she wasn't saying anything.

The example in (4b) shows that MSCs cannot denote non-linguistic communication

acts. Thirdly, according to Stowell (1981), MSVs cannot take abstract NPs which denote propositional contents, as in (5):

- (5) a. Phil screamed that his boss was unfair.
 b.* Phil screamed his boss's unfairness.

In these examples, it is indicated that MSVs do not allow NP complements as substitutes for propositional clausal complement. Messages conveyed by communication acts are often propositional. Given the fact that the MSV in (5b) cannot take the propositional NP as its object, MSVs without clausal complements express non-linguistic communication acts. Thus, MSVs, which denote non-linguistic communication acts, do not semantically select the clausal complements, which convey propositional contents. This result parallels with the syntactic relation between MSVs and their clausal complements. Two questions can be raised here: how can we account for this semantic mismatch between MSVs and MSCs, and what licenses the communicative interpretations of MSCs?

According to Goldberg (1995), this kind of semantic mismatches can be accounted for by positing a process of coercion by particular constructions themselves. The process is defined, informally, as a process in which constructions coerce the occurring lexical items into having different but related interpretations for the relevant construction. On this view, it can be assumed that MSVs are coerced by the MSCs into having the related meanings, i.e. describing linguistic communication acts. The assumption is confirmed by the following sentences integrating the typical intransitives such as *laugh* and *wail* into the MSC:

- (6) a. Curley laughed that he'd been "just kidding with the reporters."
 b. I wailed that I couldn't keep them.

These matrix verbs express emissions of inarticulate voice with certain physical characteristics. In the sentences in (6), however, they are supplemented with the meaning of 'say,' as in the following paraphrases (cf. Mufwene (1978)):

- (7) a. While laughing, Curley said that he'd been "just kidding with the reporters."
 b. While wailing, I said that I couldn't keep them.

As these paraphrases show, (6) describe linguistic communication acts. Moreover, the original meanings of the verbs are backgrounded as represented by the adverbials *while laughing/wailing*. Thus, MSCs are constructions where verbs of non-linguistic communication are reinterpreted as describing linguistic communication acts.

To summarize, MSVs do not have the predicate-argument relation with the clausal complements semantically as well as syntactically. Rather, their original meanings are coerced into expressing linguistic communication acts by the MSCs.