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Quotatives, parentheticals and evidentiality/epistemic modality in Nakh-Daghestanian languages

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In Nakh-Daghestanian languages (Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), reported speech is usually marked through grammaticalized forms of verbs of speech that occurs as quotative enclitics or frozen nonfinite verb forms (converbs). Quotatives are pervasive, especially in oral speech and may appear several times within one reported clause. Quotatives are also used as complementizers with some propositional attitude verbs (e.g. 'think', 'believe', 'hope', 'fear', 'regret', 'suppose') and other verbs such as 'seem', 'remember' or 'hear'. In a number of languages, they mark purpose clauses, usually in combination with the infinitive. Furthermore, quotatives frequently developed into markers of hearsay, i.e. they indicate that the speaker acquired her/his knowledge about the narrated situation through report from others. From a syntactic point of view, reported speech differs from other types of complement clauses: the verbs used in the quote are finite, including, for instance, imperatives or special interrogative forms and there is normally no deictic change apart from the optional use of reflexive/ logophoric pronouns.

Similarly, complement-taking verbs that express knowledge, perception, doubt, inference, and assumption can appear as parentheticals, not syntactically related to the rest of the utterance. Some of these verbs (e.g. 'find') have been grammaticalized as part of epistemic probability constructions that denote that the speaker has only partial knowledge of the situation and or that the speaker is not committed to the truth of the utterance.

In this paper, I will analyze the syntactic and semantic parallels between quotatives and parentheticals, i.e. the fact that their use goes along with a complex clause that does not exhibit the typical properties of subordination in Nakh-Daghestanian, in which it is clearly possible to differentiate between a main independent clause and a subordinate dependent clause. Secondly, I will discuss their semantic extensions into markers of evidentiality, epistemic modality or stance.