

Introduction

The impetus for this volume was the NSF-sponsored project "The Comparative Grammar of Intensional Transitive Verbs" (NSF BCS-0236952, R.K. Larson, PI), a comparative study of intensional transitive verbs (ITVs). This construction type raises significant questions about the relation between semantics and grammar. Semantic intensionality phenomena are known to arise with clausal complements embedded under verbs of propositional attitude like *believe*, *know*, *think* or *say*. By contrast, direct objects of transitive verbs are typically extensional in their semantics. The apparent correlation is therefore the following:

clausal complement ↔ intensional
direct object ↔ extensional

This correlation seems to be violated, however, with predicates like *want*, *need*, *seek*, or *imagine*, which show apparent transitive syntax coupled with an intensional semantics.

An attractive conjecture (due essentially to the philosopher W.V.O. Quine) is that that the correlation stated above is absolute, and that intensional transitive verbs (ITVs) merely appear to be transitive. On this view, examples like *Mary wants a griffin* or *Max seeks a wife* contain a clausal complement in underlyingly structure (cf. *Mary wants to have a griffin* and *Max seeks to find a wife*), accounting for the intensionality of their "objects".

Evidence for Quine's conjecture has been presented from English, but at present the hypothesis is widely viewed as unproven. This project has investigated the covert clause hypothesis comparatively, looking at a range of languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Slovenian. The working proposal is that clausal complementation is "concealed" in ITVs as the effect of two known grammatical phenomena: phonetically null elements and clause reduction. If this is correct, careful comparison of languages in which the principles governing null elements and restructuring are known to vary should bring the clausal nature of ITVs into relief, or else provide evidence that Quine's hypothesis is incorrect.

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