Abstract.

Complement clauses in a language without complement clauses - the case of Hoocąk (Siouan) and its implications for typology.

Hoocąk is a severely endangered North American Indian language of the Siouan family still spoken by a number of L1 speakers in Wisconsin. Hoocąk is a head-marking language (clause level), which belongs to the active/inactive marking type. The verb is morphologically quite complex, but Hoocąk has no infinite verb forms. Actor and Undergoer argument slots are filled by combinations of forms of the two different series of pronominal affixes (A/U) on the verb. On the other hand, there is no noun specific morphology - no case marking, no number marking, no gender.

Complement clauses are defined as a type of subordinate clauses that fill the argument slot (mostly the direct object argument slot) of a matrix verb often verbs of perception, communication, and cognition (see, for instance, Foley/ Van Valin 1984:251; Noonan 1985:42-141; Givón 2001:39ff; Dixon and Aikhenvald (eds.) 2006; Dixon 2010:370-421, and others). However, languages that fill the core arguments by means of pronominal affixes very likely do not have complement clauses and probably have to employ alternative strategies to express a sort of "complementation". Hoocąk is a language of this type. The goal of this talk is to present an overview of clause linkage in Hoocąk with a special focus on the "sort of complement clauses". It will be shown that subordinate clauses of verbs of communication, perception, and cognition are rather appositions to the matrix clause and that the "sort of complement clauses" with other matrix verbs are not really distinct from adverbial clauses. Furthermore, it seems that head-marking languages like Hoocąk without "real" complement clauses also lack a distinction between direct and reported speech.

The data for this talk come from the DOBES corpus of Hoocąk texts digitally archived at The Language Archive of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen; the Netherlands1. The corpus of glossed and transcribed audio and video recordings was compiled during a five years project "Documentation of the Hoocąk language" financed by the Volkswagen Foundation (2003-2008).

References


---

1 See the website of the DOBES funding initiative of the Volkswagen Foundation (http://dobes.mpi.nl/). The glossed texts, audio and video files of the Hoocąk documentation project are stored in the digital archive of the Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics called "The Language Archive": the corresponding URL is: http://dobes.mpi.nl/projects/hocank/. The website of this DOBES project can be found under the following URL: http://www2.uni-erfurt.de/sprachwissenschaft/Vgl_SW/Hocank/index_frames.html.