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Narratives are unique data for exploring reported speech as a cross-linguistic category

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Narratives are unique data for exploring reported speech as a cross-linguistic category

Katya Aplonova
LACITO, CNRS



Narration and reported speech

- Narrative texts have a number of grammatical characteristics that differ them from other text genres;
- “Narratological differentiation between narrator and character can be seen as a projection of the grammatical differentiation between speaker vs. observer, which is reflected on the different linguistic levels in a recursive manner” (Zeman 2018);
- In this talk, I will discuss a range of phenomena that are observed in reported speech constructions in non-European traditional narratives;
- I will show preliminary results of their quantitative analysis based on Multilingual SpeechReporting database.

**Reported speech in linguistics and
character's speech in narratology**


Reported speech: from binary opposition to scale

- Direct speech vs. Indirect speech: Direct speech corresponds to the words of the reported speaker (character), while indirect speech corresponds to the words of the current speaker (narrator) (Grenough et al. 1903 inter alia)

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- Free indirect discourse: in the [discourse report](#), pronouns and tenses are read from the narrator's perspective (indirect speech), while all other elements are read from the character's perspective (direct speech) (Schlenker 2004 inter alia)

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- Discovery of logophoric pronouns (Hagege 1974)

Wan (Niger-Congo, Mande; Ivory Coast)

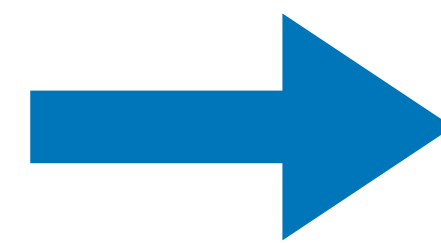
ké lā zò-á bā biàgà nè zē zānā dī
if 2SG come-STAT.PERF LOG.SG wake PURP word true say

[He said] “If you’ve come to wake me up, tell the truth.” (Nikitina 2012b: 289)

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- Discovery of logophoric pronouns (Hagege 1974)



- Mixed perspective: distinction between direct and indirect speech is not binary but represents a scale (Evans 2013 inter alia)

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SpeechReporting Database and its annotation

SpeechReporting database

- Corpora of traditional folk stories from different regions, annotated in the same way for a number of discourse phenomena using ELAN-CorpA software and tools (Chanard 2015; Nikitina et al. 2019);



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Annotation in Elan

ELAN 6.2 - bash1264_190719_KoniTelega.eaf

File Edit Annotation Tier Type Search View Options Window Help

Grid **Text** Subtitles Lexicon Comments Recognizers

tx@SP1

at menän arba · ber julse kitep barya ike julse asəwlanəšəp toralar ikän · talašalar ikän · **bəl tuqtayan da horayan** · berehe äjtä ikän mənə ošonda qolon bar · berehe äjtä ikän mineŋ atəm qolonlayan tip · ikensehe äjtä ikän mineŋ arba arbanəqəmə ikän belmäjbeð šunəŋ ösön talašabəð tip äjtä ikän · šunan huŋ bəl keše bəlarğa aqəl öjratkän · heð qol tigän · qolondo ebärhälär qolon attə barəp imä bašlayan · šunan huŋ anlayandar · qolon arbanəqə tügel attəqə ikän dawam itkändär ·

00:00:21.545 Selection: 00:00:21.545 – 00:00:22.955 1410

190719... 00:00:22.000 00:00:23.000 00:00:24.000 00:00:25.000 00:00:26.000

	00:00:22.000	00:00:23.000	00:00:24.000	00:00:25.000	00:00:26.000
ref@SP1 [16]	190719_YNK_KoniTelega_04	190719_YNK_KoniTelega_05	190719_YNK_KoniTelega_06		
ft@SP1 [16]	the first (traveler) stopped and asked	why are you arguing?	what is going on? he said		
tx@SP1 [16]	bəl tuqtayan da horayan	nej ösön talašahəyəð	nämä buldə heðgä tigän		
rp@SP1 [24]	DR_Event	Discourse_Report	Discourse_Report	Quotati	
typ@SP1 [12]		Question	Question		
qt@SP1 [11]	DR_Event_Discourse_Report		Quotative_Discourse_Report		

Corpora

Language	Family/Group	Where it is spoken	N of words
Chuvash	Turkic	Russia	25.000
Bashkir	Turkic	Russia	10.500
Ben Tey	Dogon	Mali	8.000
Joola (Bandial)	Atlantic	Senegal	12.000
Udihe	Tungusic	Russia	9.500
Wan	Mande	Côte d'Ivoire	19.000

Template in Elan

Bashkir (Turkic)

bəl tuqta-yan=da hora-yan

this stop-PC.PST=and ask-PC.PST

nej ösön talaş-a-həyəð?

what for quarrel-IPFV-2PL

nämä bul-də heð-gä? ti-gän

what be-PST 2PL-DAT say-PC.PST

‘One (man) stopped and asked: “ Why are you arguing? What happened to you?”’

Template in Elan

Function of the Reported
Speech construction's
elements

Discourse
Reporting Event

Discourse report

Quotative

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Quotative

Reported Speech
construction's syntactic type

Discourse + Discourse report + Quotative
Reporting Event

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Semantic type of Discourse
report

Question

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Participant

Reported listener

'One (man) stopped and asked: "Why are you arguing? What happened to you?"'

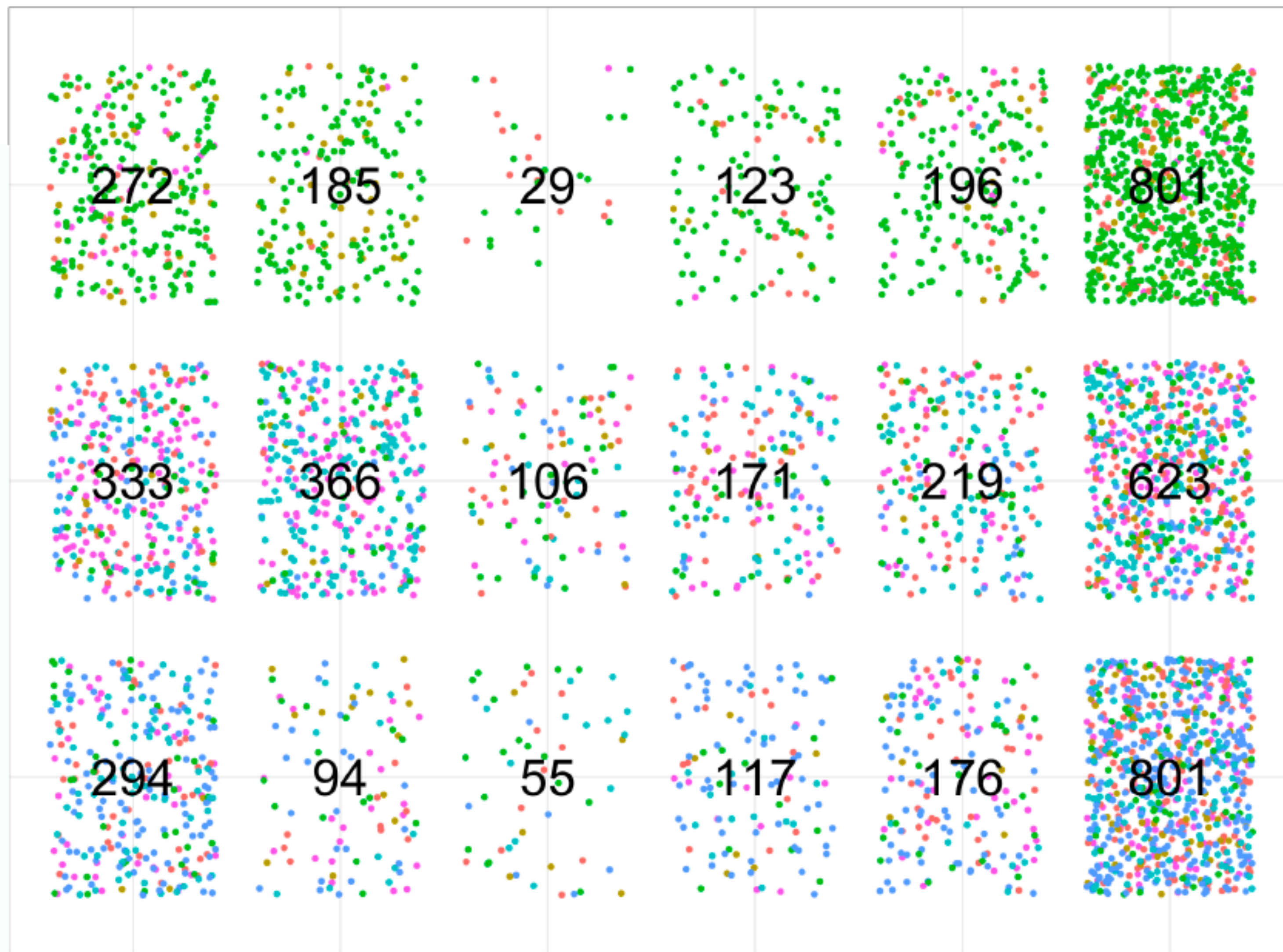
**What can we do with the template:
quantitative analysis of reported
speech**

Syntactic structure of the RS construction

grammatica-
lised
quotative
marker (1)

speech-
introducing
phrase (2)

no additional
marking (3)



language

- bashkir
- ben tey
- chuvash
- joola
- udihe
- wan

Command Expression of Attitude (2) Feeling or Thought (3) Greeting or Address Question (1) Statement

Semantics of the quote

Interjections tend to have a **Discourse Reporting Event**

- **Discourse reports** with **interjections** tend to have a **Discourse Reporting Event** but not a **Grammaticalized quotative**

Wan (Mande)

è gé Nátó-dè éé lāā klòlō á bálè ā
3SG.SUBJ say Nato-father **INTJ** 2SG+POSS evil COP big with

‘She says: “Oh Nato, great is your sorrow!”’

Interjections tend to have a **Discourse Reporting Event**

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Wan (Mande)

bāā pē **dóō** lā glò-ṅ kōlē gē ē

LOG+3SG tell:PST QUOT 2SG marry-FUT man here Q

‘I said: ‘Can you marry a man like that?’”

Counts from our two biggest corpora

(Nikitina et al. To appear)

Wan (Mande,
Côte d'Ivoire)

	Interjection present	No interjection	Total
Quotative present	13 (9%)	133 (91%)	146 (100%)
No quotative	140 (19%)	594 (81%)	734 (100%)

Chuvash (Turkic,
Russia)

	Interjection present	No interjection	Total
Quotative present	90 (4%)	2064 (96%)	2154 (100%)
No quotative	30 (18%)	141 (82%)	171 (100%)

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If there is no interjection, **quotatives** are more frequent

Chuvash (Turkic)

patşa	kal-atʲ:	atʲa	t-et	ëçkë
tsar	speak-PRS.3SG	come.on	QV-PRS.3SG.	feast
töv-as	t-et			
do-PC.FUT	QV-PRS.3SG			

‘The tsar says: Let us make a feast.’

Speech introducing function of interjections

- There is a correlation between the presence of an interjection and an absence of the grammaticalised quotative;
- This interaction would assume a degree of complementarity between lexical and specialized grammatical means serving the same function;
- Therefore, **discourse reports** with interjections have more often non-grammaticalized **discourse reporting events**;

**Discussion: why does it matter to
narratology?**

- Interjections are associated with direct speech;
- The high frequency of interjections in the character's speech in our datasets corresponds to the prediction of FID, where *everything* except pronouns and tenses should be read from the character's perspective (=direct strategy);
- Based on two biggest corpora from our dataset (Wan and Chuvash), I have checked whether pronouns correspond to the prediction of FID, i.e. whether they are read from the narrator's perspective (=indirect strategy: reported speakers and listeners should be expressed by third person pronouns)

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Participant

Reported listener

'One (man) stopped and asked: "Why are you arguing? What happened to you?"'

Coding of participants in our datasets challenges FID pattern

Chuvash (Turkic)

mën xötlan-an

what make.effort.at-**2SG**.PRS

‘What are **you** doing, son-in-law? – he says’

es köry?

2SG son-in-law

tet

QUOT

	First person	Second person	Third person
Reported speaker	406	0	0
Reported listener	0	310	0

Coding of participants in our datasets challenges FID pattern

Wan (Mande)

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if 2SG come-STAT.PERF LOG.SG wake PURP word true say

[He said] “If you’ve come to wake me up, tell the truth.” (Nikitina 2012b: 289)

	First person	Second person	Third person	Logophoric pronoun
Reported speaker	45	0	2	335
Reported listener	0	295	6	0

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Corpora: non-Europeans languages?

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Oral corpora

Mimesis in oral language would then be of the same quality as in fiction – not *imitation*, but invention and projection. (Fludernik 1993: 426)

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Conclusions

- In this talk, I would like to show how an understanding of a particular phenomena in narratology and linguistics can be insightful for both disciplines;
- Narrative texts are grammatically different from other genra;
- Oral narrative data from less-studied languages can shed new light on the use of referential strategies;
- In particular a closer look on the use of pronouns and interjection contributes to the theory of FID and offers new challenges;
- Studies using quantitative corpus methods have a potential to uncover underling properties of human narration across different cultures.

Thank you for your attention!

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