

Mirativity across constructions and theories
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This paper discusses the phenomenon of mirativity across a variety of constructions. Mirativity is the expression of exceeded expectation. While the term was introduced to describe a secondary meaning of some evidentials (DeLancey 1997; (1)), it is also canonically associated with exclamations (Rett 2011, (2)) and morphemes like conjunctions (Malchukov 2004, (3)).

1. Mary e-wé' ghálayeda lõ.
M its-hide work.IMPF EVID
'Mary is working on hides (I saw, to my surprise).' *Hare*
2. How very many shoes he owns!
3. On zabolet da i umer.
he fell.ill CONJ PTCL died.
'He fell ill and died (I did not expect it).'

Russian

I will survey theories of these varied constructions and propose a unified description of the discourse effect of mirativity based on (as above) the notion of the expression of exceeded expectation. I will argue that the semantic contribution of mirativity is not-at-issue: it is backgrounded, unembeddable, invariably speaker oriented. And I will argue that a number of theories of related constructions (like evidentials and exclamatives) can do equally well in accounting for these properties. In particular, I argue that speech-act oriented theories like those proposed for evidentials in Faller (2002) and for exclamatives in Rett (2011) are compatible with dynamic accounts proposed for exclamatives in (Murray 2010, Koev 2011).

References

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