Against classifications of complement-taking predicates: the case of mental verbs

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While describing complementation, many grammars and special studies use semantic classifications of complement-taking predicates (CTPs) as a descriptive tool. The claim of my paper is that such an approach is not effective due to polysemy of CTPs, which influence the range of complement clause types the CTPs take. In support of my claim I consider the data of several non-related languages.

I focus on the verbs with the meaning 'think, believe, seem', which have been classified as verbs of cognition in Givón (1980), propositional attitude in Noonan (1985), propositional attitude (positive) in Hengeveld (2008–2009), thinking in Dixon, Aikhenvald (2006). I describe the polysemy patterns of CTPs meaning 'think, believe, seem' and the complement types they can take. The described meaning shows is polysemous with the meanings of CTPs belonging to different classes, including mental ('dream', 'remember'), emotive ('hope', 'fear'), perception ('feel'), wishing ('want'), intention CTPs ('to be going to').

I show that an adequate view on CTPs and the distribution of complement types in a given language may be obtained through an analysis of basic meanings of CTPs and cannot rely on a priori classifications of CTPs or semantic types of complements. This entails the necessity of a lexical typological research even in works on complementation that strive to limit themselves to syntax.

References: • Dixon, R.M,W. & A. Aikhenvald (eds.) (2006): *Complementation. A cross-linguistic typology*. Oxford University Press. • Givón, T. (1980): The binding hierarchy and the typology of complements. *Studies in language* 4(4), 333–377. • Hengeveld, K. (2008–2009): The typological questionnary on complement clauses. [https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/tools-at-lingboard/questionnaire/complement-clauses_description.php] • Noonan, M. (1985): Complementation. In T. Shopen (ed.). *Language typology and syntactic description 2: Complex constructions*. Cambridge University Press, 42–140.