"Say"-ing without a Voice*

Travis Major · UCLA   tjmajor@ucla.edu
Richard Stockwell · Christ Church, University of Oxford   richard.stockwell@chch.ox.ac.uk

1   Introduction

This talk analyses the argument structure of the verb "say", with special reference to its locative uses.

The prototypical use of "say" (1) involves an agentive, animate subject and an internal argument related to speech:

(1)   Mom says "Slow down!"

But "say" can also have an inanimate subject (2) (cf. Grimshaw 2015; Anand et al. 2017):

(2)   The sign says "Slow down!"

Further to (2), we introduce discussion of locative uses of "say" involving a PP.

A full DP can be in subject position, with a pronominal object of P (3); or the other way round (4):

(3)   The sign says "Slow down!" on it.

(4)   It says "Slow down!" on the sign.

We argue that "say"-constructions have a common VP-internal structure, introducing 'linguistic material' as an internal argument; with VP-external structure responsible for differences in agentivity and event structure:[1]

- while (1) is eventive, involving an Agent introduced by Voice, "say" does not inherently require either an Agent or a Voice projection

- (2) can be eventive with *the sign* as an Agent; or stative with *the sign* as a "Holder" (Kratzer 1996)

    - cf. Grimshaw's (2015) "Location" and Anand et al.'s (2017) "Repository-of-Information"

- (3) is stative, with *the sign* as a Holder

- (4) is stative, and *it* is expletive

Following Grimshaw (2015), "say" is an overt realization of the abstract light verb SAY. We provide a detailed description and analysis of "say", which informs us about SAY.

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[1]This morphologically unmarked alternation is reminiscent of e.g. causative/inchoative — "Mary melted the ice" vs. "The ice melted"; or *fill* predicates — "Mary filled the cup with pebbles" vs. "Pebbles fill the cup".

2 The argument and event structure of "say"

2.1 Linguistic material

"Say" introduces linguistic material (LM) (Grimshaw 2015) across all its uses.

LM can take the form of direct quotation (a), indirect quotation (b), or a DP (c);[2] regardless whether the subject is animate (5) or inanimate (6), and the presence of a PP (7), (8):[3]

(5) a. John said, "I like chocolate."
     b. John said that he likes chocolate.
     c. John said something about chocolate.

(6) a. The sign said "Quiet please!"
     b. The sign said to shut up.
     c. The sign said something polite.

(7) a. The label says on it: "Do not reheat!"
     b. The label says on it not to reheat after cooking.
     c. The label says three things on it.

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[2]Though see Grimshaw (2015: 89ff.) for some reservations about the generality of LM realised as a DP.

[3]There is a relationship between heaviness and the preferred order of LM and PP that we do not analyse; viz. (7), (a,b) vs. (c). We assume the PP-LM order is derived from underlying LM-PP by extraposition, as commonly assumed for "Heavy NP shift" (Overfelt 2015) . We present examples in what we judge to be the 'preferred' order throughout.

(8)   a. It says "Wash with like colours" on the label.

b. It says on the label that you should wash it with like colours.

c. It says only one thing on the label.

The internal argument of "say" cannot refer to non-linguistic material (9)-(11) (a); cf. (b):[4]

(9)   a.   * John said a picture of a deer.

b.   John described a picture of deer.

(10) a.   * The sign says a picture of deer (on it).

b.   The sign says to watch out for deer (on it).

(11) a.   * It says a picture of deer on the sign.

b.   It says to watch out for deer on the sign.

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[4]For (10) and (11) respectively, ccf.:

(i)   The sign has a picture of a deer on it.

(ii)   There is a picture of a deer on the sign.

The LM argument of "say" is obligatory (cf. Grimshaw 2015: 80, ex. 3):[5]

(12)   a.   * John said.

         b.   * The sign says.

         c.   * It says on the sign.

2.2   Agentivity and eventhood

We adopt Kratzer's (1996) distinction between external arguments, illustrated in (13):

(13)   a. Mittie fed a dog.   Agent

         b. Mittie owns a dog.   Holder

- dynamic events have Agents as subjects (a)

- states have Holders as subjects (b)

We assume a role for e.g. "teleological capability" (Higginbotham 1997; Folli and Harley 2008) — the inherent qualities and abilities of an entity to participate in the eventuality denoted by a predicate:

- kettles can serve as agents of unergatives like *whistle*, while rocks cannot

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[5]Setting aside contexts that license Null Complement Anaphora (Hankamer and Sag 1976; Grimshaw 1979; Depiante 2000).

We use standard tests for agentivity and eventivity (e.g. Rothmayr 2009; Alexiadou and Iordăchioaia 2014):[6]

   a) volitional adverbs (e.g. *deliberately*) go with agents

   b) manner modification (e.g. *with enthusiasm*) targets events

   c) anaphoric follow-ups (e.g. *this*) refer to events

   d) states are odd in the progressive

   e) *for*-modification targets states

1. With an animate subject, "say" is agentive and eventive (14) (cf. (1) *Mom says "Slow down!"*):

(14)	a.	Mary deliberately said/says "Do not go out!"	Agentive? ✓
	b.	Mary said/says "Do not go out!" with enthusiasm.	Eventive? ✓
	c.	Mary said "Do not go out!" This happened yesterday.	Eventive? ✓
	d.	Mary was saying "Do not go out!"	Eventive? ✓
	e.	# Mary said "Do not go out!" for over an hour.	Stative? ✖

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[6]We vary inanimate subjects, tense, and LM in an effort to make the judgments clearer.

2. With inanimate subjects, both agentive/eventive and stative readings are in principle available, modulo the inherent qualities of the nouns; viz. (15) vs. (16):

(15)　a.　The radio deliberately said/says "Do not go out!"　　　　　　　　　　　　Agentive? ✓
　　　　b.　The radio said/says "Do not go out!" with enthusiasm.　　　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　c.　The radio said "Do not go out!" This happened yesterday.　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　d.　The radio was saying "Do not go out!"　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　e.　The radio said "SNY" for 5 minutes (until someone cleaned off the 'O').　　Stative? ✓

- for the stative reading (e), the external argument must be interpreted as the physical object rather than its communicative component

(16)　a.　The newspaper/sign deliberately said/says "Do not go out!"　　　　　　　　Agentive? ✓
　　　　b.　? The newspaper/sign said "Do not go out!" with enthusiasm.　　　　　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　c.　? The newspaper/sign said "Do not go out!" This happened yesterday.　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　d.　? The newspaper/sign was saying "Do not go out!"　　　　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✓
　　　　e.　The newspaper/sign said "Do not go out" for 10 days (until it was reprinted/replaced).　Stative? ✓

3. With a locative PP (17), an agentive/eventive reading is unavailable:[7]

(17)　a.　 * The shirt/book/sign deliberately says/said "Watford" on it　　　　　　Agentive? ✖

　　　b.　 * The shirt/book/sign says/said "Watford" on it with enthusiasm.　　　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　c.　 * The shirt/book/sign said "Watford" on it. This happened yesterday.　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　d.　 * The shirt/book/sign was saying "Watford" on it.　　　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　e.　 The shirt/book/sign said "Watford" on it for 5 days (then the writing faded).　　Stative? ✓

4. An agentive/eventive reading remains unavailable with *it* and the full DP reversed (18):

(18)　a.　 * It deliberately says/said "Watford" on the shirt/book/sign.　　　　　　Agentive? ✖

　　　b.　 * It says/said "Watford" on the shirt/book/sign with enthusiasm.　　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　c.　 * It said "Watford" on the shirt/book/sign. This happened yesterday.　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　d.　 * It was saying "Watford" on the shirt/book/sign.　　　　　　　　　Eventive? ✖

　　　e.　 It said "Watford" on the shirt/book/sign for 5 days (then the writing faded).　Stative? ✓

In sum: "say" with animate subjects is agentive/eventive (1); with inanimate subjects can be either agentive/eventive or stative (2); and with locative PPs is stative (3), (4).

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[7]Some speakers marginally accept (17b) and (18b) with manner modification targeting e.g. the boldness of the font. See also note 16.

2.3   *It* is expletive

The *it* subject in the locative use of "say" in (4) is expletive:

(4)   It says "Slow down!" on the sign.

The referential possibilities indicated in (19) — (i) the DP complement of P; (j) the linguistic material; (k) something else in the discourse — are exhausted across (20)-(22):

(19)   It$_{expl/*i/*j/*k}$ says "Slow down!"$_j$ on the sign$_i$.

In (20), *it* does not track the plural complement of P (i) in number (a). Doing so with *they* results in ungrammaticality (b), attributable to Condition C. Expletive *it* avoids Condition C:[8]

(20)   a.   It says "Slow down!" on the signs$_i$.
       b.   * They$_i$ say "Slow down!" on the signs$_i$.

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[8]Reassuringly, the pronoun does track the full DP in number from inside the PP:

(i)   a.   * The signs$_i$ say "Slow down!" on it$_i$.
      b.   The signs$_i$ say "Slow down!" on them$_i$.

Similarly in (21), *it* does not track plural LM (j) in number (a,c). Doing so with *they* is ungrammatical (b,d):[9]

(21)   a.   It says ["Slow down!" and "Stay safe!"]$_j$ on the sign.

        b.   * They$_j$ say ["Slow down!" and "Stay safe!"]$_j$ on the sign.

        c.   It says our names$_j$ on the sign.

        d.   * They$_j$ say our names$_j$ on the sign.

Finally in (22), the failure of substituting a full DP (a) or demonstrative *that* (b) shows that there is no plausible discourse reference for *it* (c):

(22)   a.   * The message/advert/writing/sign$_k$ says "Slow down!" on the sign.

        b.   * That$_k$ says "Slow down!" on the sign.

        c.   * It$_k$ says "Slow down!" on the sign.

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[9] The ungrammaticality in (21) is more clearly attributable to Condition C with the DPs in (d) than the quotations in (b).

Further evidence for the expletivity of *it* comes from Postal and Pullum's (1988: 636, ex. 1) emphatic reflexive test (23). In contrast to a clausal subject (a), an expletive subject (b) does not support an emphatic reflexive:

(23) a.   For him to smoke is itself illegal.
      b.   * It is itself illegal for him to smoke.

Applied to "say" (24), emphatic reflexives are allowed with animate (a) and inanimate (b) subjects, but not in the crucial case of an *it* subject combined with a PP (c):[10]

(24) a.   John (himself) said "Slow down".
      b.   The sign (itself) said "Slow down" (on it).
      c.   It (*itself) said "Slow down" on the sign.

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[10] Another of Postal and Pullum's (1988: 636, ex. 3a, c) tests yields the same results in (i). While pronominal subjects can coordinate (a), expletive subjects cannot (b), including with SAY (c), (d):

(i)   a.   He and it were respectively proved to be a person and claimed to be a robot.
      b.   * It and there were/was respectively proved to be raining and claimed to be floods in the valley.
      c.   * It and there respectively said "Slow down!" on the sign and arrived a police car.
      d.   * He and it respectively remained silent and said "Slow down!" on the sign.

In conclusion, the *it* subject in the locative use of "say" in (4) is expletive:[11]

(4)　It$_{expl}$ says "Slow down!" on the sign.

That said, the arguments in this subsection have all relied on (the full DP in) PP to check for number agreement and Condition C effects.

Without PP, *it* could refer to something in the discourse:[12]

(25)　It$_k$ (itself) said "Slow down!"

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[11]Similar seems true of Spanish, though not French — see appendix 2.

[12]Our best effort at seeing whether "say" can have an expletive *it* subject without a locative PP is (i). An adjunct manner PP *in the magazine's customary style* houses the location *the magazine*, and the sentence is acceptable; but *it* cannot corefer with *the magazine*, due to Condition C (a). For sure, discourse referents are possible for *it*, per the substitution(s) in (b). But the awkwardness of adding the emphatic reflexive *itself* in (c) suggests that such discourse referents are difficult to recover out of the blue, with *it* in the baseline sentence most naturally parsed as expletive:

(i)　It said "Read on!" in the magazine's customary style.
　　a.　It$_{*i}$ said "Read on!" in the magazine$_i$'s customary style.
　　b.　The ((last two words of) the sentence in the) article said "Read on!" in the magazine$_i$'s customary style.
　　c.　?? It itself said "Read on!" in the magazine$_i$'s customary style.

2.4   Summary

With this section, we have offered a detailed description of the range of constructions in (1)-(4), whose properties are summarized below:

|		Subject	Eventive	Stative
(1)	Mom says "Slow down!"	Agent	✓	✖
(2)	The sign says "Slow down!"	Agent/Holder	✓	✓
(3)	The sign says "Slow down!" on it.	Holder	✖	✓
(4)	It says "Slow down!" on the sign.	Expletive	✖	✓

3   Analysis

The data support an analysis whereby the VP-internal structure of "say" remains consistent, with higher functional and aspectual structure further specifying the meaning (Borer 1994; Kratzer 1996; Travis 2000; Pylkkänen 2002, 2008; Ramchand 2008, a.o).

3.1 VP-internal syntax

Since linguistic material is obligatory, the VP-internal structure in (26) is common to all instances of SAY:

(26)
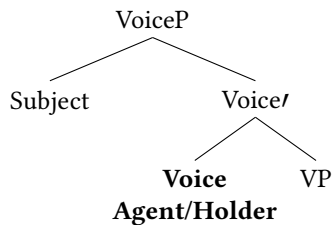
```
            VP
           /  \
          V    LM
         say   / \
            the earth is flat
```
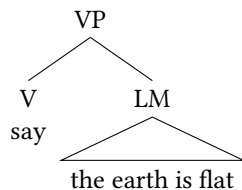
3.2 External arguments

A VP-external Voice head introduces the external argument (Kratzer 1996, et seq.).

Voice can be Agent or Holder, as bolded in (27). Agents correlate with dynamic events, Holders with states:

(27)

```
              VoiceP
             /      \
        Subject     Voiceʹ
                   /     \
                Voice     VP
             Agent/Holder
```
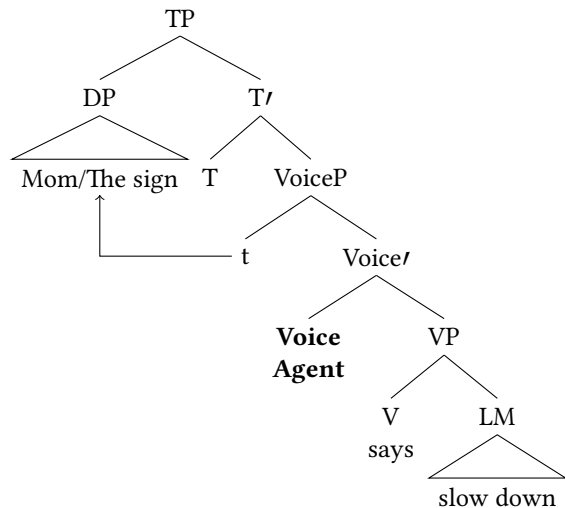
3.3   Agent Voice

Across animacy lines — both animate *Mom* (1) and inanimate *the sign* (2) — Agent subjects are introduced by Agent Voice, as in (28):
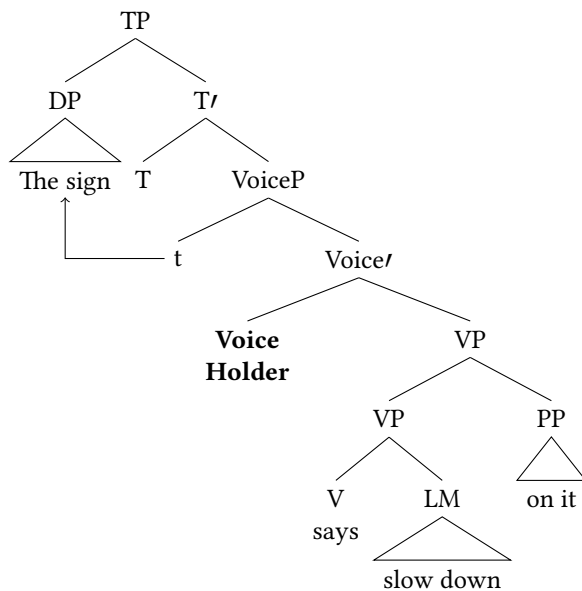
(28)

3.4   Holder Voice

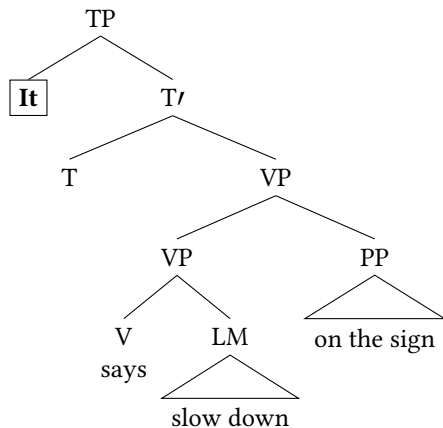Holders of states, as unambiguously in (3) with a PP, are introduced by Holder Voice, as in (29):

(29)

3.5   No Voice — expletive insertion

In the absence of Voice (30), expletive *it* is inserted in subject position to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) (Chomsky 1982):

(30)

4   Discussion

4.1   Against raising

Our analysis does not involve any transformational relationships among "say" structures.

Elsewhere, expletive *it* is involved in raising alternations (31) (Postal 1974). The subject raises out of a non-finite clause (a) where expletive *it* is inserted with a finite clause (b):

(31)   a.   Mary seems to be happy.
       b.   It seems that Mary is happy.

Since *it* is expletive in (4), it might be tempting to relate (4) to (2) and/or (3) by raising; i.e.:

- *the sign* is generated where we see it in (4), inside PP

- *the sign* then raises to subject position in (2) and/or (3)

(2)   The sign says "Slow down!"
(3)   The sign says "Slow down!" on it.
(4)   It says "Slow down!" on the sign.

We make three points against a raising analysis.

First, if raising is analysed as movement for Case:

- the proposed base-position of *the sign* is a Case position, the complement of P

Second, (32) is ungrammatical:

(32)   * The sign says "Slow down!" on.

- *on* would have to disappear for (2)
- *it* would have to appear in the base position in (3), when English lacks resumptive pronouns

Third, A-movement reconstructs for variable binding:

- in (33), the bound variable reading of (a) persists after raising in (b):

(33)   a.   It seems to every author$_i$ that their$_i$ book is wonderful.
        b.   Their$_i$ book seems to every author$_i$ to be wonderful.

- in (34) with "say", however, the bound variable reading of (a) does not persist in (b):

(34)   a.   It says every author$_i$'s name on their$_i$ book.
        b.   * Their$_i$ book says every author$_i$'s name on it.

In conclusion, it does not seem tenable to relate (4) to (2) or (3) via raising.

4.2   Goals require Agents

A Goal argument is only possible with agentive "say". The result of adding *to us* to (1)-(4) in (35) is good with an animate subject (a) and an agentive inanimate (b); but bad with a locative PP (c,d):[13]

(35)   a.   Mom said "Slow down" to us.
        b. (?) The sign said "Slow down!" to us.
        c.   * The sign said "Slow down!" to us on it.
        d.   * It said "Slow down!" to us on the sign.

There is thus a connection between a particular realization of Voice (Agent) and the licensing of a Goal, for which there are multiple syntactic analyses on the market:[14]

- a high applicative structure where Voice selects an ApplP as its complement (e.g. Pylkkänen, 2002, 2008)

- Voice selects a small clause whose subject is a Goal (e.g. Harley, 1995, 2002)

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[13]For Grimshaw (2015: 87, ex. 31), an inanimate subject renders the clause stative, making it incompatible with a Goal (i). We find (i), like (35b), reasonably natural, with an agentive interpretation possible. However, we find (ii) and (35d) with the addition of a locative PP distinctly bad:

(i)   ?? The {sign, poster, book, article} said to the tourists that the park was closed.

(ii)   * The {sign, poster, book, article} said to the tourists that the park was closed on it.

[14]Some consequences are explored from a typological perspective in Major (in preparation).

4.3   Locative humans

Consider (36) in a context where Mary has a tattoo that reads "Kayla":

(36) a.   * Mary says "Kayla" (on her (arm)).
      b.   ? Mary's arm says "Kayla".
      c.   Mary's arm says "Kayla" on it.
      d.   It says "Kayla" on Mary('s arm).

- it is (near) impossible to interpret an animate subject as a Holder with "say" (a)

- the inanimate subject is good as a Holder in (b) and (c)

- an animate can be good as a Location (d)

4.4   Implications for SAY

The abstract light verb SAY (Grimshaw 2015; cf. Kratzer 2016): a universal semantic primitive, the shared component of all SAY verbs.[15]

The verb "say" is one realization of SAY, which is a silent component of communicative predicates more broadly (e.g. SAY + *ask* = [æsk], SAY + *scream* = [sk̥ɹim]).

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[15]Cf. HAVE, BE, etc. (Dowty 1979; Talmy 1985; Jackendoff 1992; Hale and Keyser 1993).

Grimshaw (2015: 87, ex. 35) on agentivity, with respect to (37): "All SAY verbs should occur with non-agentive subjects in principle. Whether they do or not will depend upon the demands of their discourse role or mode. Certain discourse roles are clearly compatible with non-agentive subjects:"

(37) a. The survey asks whether people work more than 40 hours a week.
b. The article comments that most people lie about their work habits.

On our analysis, the examples in (37) are agentive.

Accordingly in (38), a volitional adverb and Goal can be added, but not a locative PP:

(38) a. The survey (deliberately) asks (readers) whether people work more than 40 hours a week (*on/in it).
b. The article (deliberately) comments (to readers) that most people lie about their work habits (*in it).

Further to the verb "say", Grimshaw (2015) offers the following taxonomy of SAY-predicates:

- **Discourse role**: verbs that encode aspects of the discourse role of the events they report, asserting, ordering, questioning, etc.; e.g. *ask, announce, assert, maintain, note, order, remark, report, tell, and wonder*

- **Mode verbs**: encode other parts of the "saying" event, and further decompose into:

  - **SAY-by-means**: e.g. *whisper, mutter, grunt, scream*

  - **SAY-with-attitude**: e.g. *gripe, bitch, dispute*

Sampling from Grimshaw's taxonomy in (39) and (40), there appears to be a strong preference — if not requirement — that the external argument is an Agent, with "say" and possibly a subset of SAY-by-means predicates as exceptions:[16]

(39) a. The sign says not to feed the animals (on it)   "say"
        b. The sign asks/tells tourists not to feed the animals (*on it).   Discourse role
        c. ?? The sign mutters/screams not to feed the animals (*on it).   SAY-by-means
        d. * The sign bitches (at tourists) not to feed the animals (on it).   SAY-with-attitude

(40) a. It says not to feed the animals on the sign(s).   "say"
        b. * It asks/tells tourists not to feed the animals on the sign(s).   Discourse role
        c. * It mutters/screams not to feed the animals on the sign(s).   SAY-by-means
        d. * It bitches (at tourists) not to feed the animals on the sign(s).   SAY-with-attitude

• the verb "say" is unique in showing a Voice alternation

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[16](39c) and (40c) are marginally acceptable for some speakers on a coerced manner reading. The availability of such readings varies across the SAY-by-means class; "scream", for instance, is easier to accommodate than "mutter". Cf. Grimshaw (2015: 88, exx. 36, 37), and recall note 7.

5 Conclusion

This talk has analysed the argument structure of "say" (1)-(4), with special reference to (3) and (4) with PPs:

		Voice	Eventive	Goal	Stative
(1)	Mom says "Slow down!"	Agent	✓	✓	✗
(2)	The sign says "Slow down!"	Agent/Holder	✓	✓	✓
(3)	The sign says "Slow down!" on it.	Holder	✗	✗	✓
(4)	It says "Slow down!" on the sign.	None	✗	✗	✓

In sum:

- "say" always takes LM as an internal argument[17]

- VP-external structure determines agentivity, eventivity, availability of goals, and expletivity

- contributes novel insights to the literature on SAY-predicates (Grimshaw 2015, Anand et al. 2017)

- implications for the complex cross-linguistic distribution and behavior of "say"/SAY are a matter of ongoing research (Major in prep., resubmitted)

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[17]Our analysis is compatible with treating "say" as SAY across all its uses. Cf. Grimshaw (2015), for whom non-agentive "say" is not an instantiation of SAY, as discussed in appendix 3.

6   Appendices

6.1   Passive

Passivisation is odd with "say" (cf. Grimshaw 2015: 91), but the judgements pattern in the predicted direction:

(41)   a.   Mary said "Get out!".
       b.   ? "Get out!" was said by Mary.

(42)   a.   The note said "Get out!".
       b.   ?? "Get out!" was said by the note.

(43)   a.   The note said "Get out!" on it.
       b.   * "Get out!" was said by the note on it.

(44)   a.   It said "Get out!" on the note.
       b.   * "Get out!" was said by it on the note.

6.2 "Say" and expletivity in Spanish and French

Section 2.3 argued that *it* is expletive in (4):

(4) It says "Slow down!" on the sign.

Similar seems true of Spanish (45). An overt pronoun is not allowed with a locative PP (a), since Spanish lacks expletive subjects (b):

(45) a. (*Eso) Dice "disminuya la   velocidad" en el   cartel.
          it   says slow   the speed   on the sign
      b. *Eso/*el llueve.
          it   rains

In French (46), however, a demonstrative pronoun *ça* must appear in subject position with a locative PP (a), not expletive *il* (b):

(46) a. Ça/*il dit "ralentir" sur le   panneau.
          it/EXPL says slow.down on the sign
      b. Il/*ça pleut.
          it   rains

6.3   The light verb SAY

Grimshaw (2015) offers two subcategorization frames for what she treats as different variants of SAY.

The frame in (47) (Grimshaw 2015: 90, ex. 1) suffices for the prototypical agentive use of SAY from (1); the Goal is optional:

(47)   SAY $\left\{\begin{array}{c} \text{Agent} \\ \text{Linguistic Material} \\ \text{Goal} \end{array}\right\}$ for (1) Mom says "Slow down!" (to us).

Separately, Grimshaw (2015: 87, ex. 34) offers the frame in (48) for examples like (2), characterising the inanimate subject as a location:

(48)   SAY $\left\{\begin{array}{c} \text{Location} \\ \text{Linguistic Material} \end{array}\right\}$ for (2) The sign says "Slow down!"

Our analysis situates the common part of (47) and (48), namely LM, inside VP; while factoring out the differences to above VP, with Agent (and Goal) vs. Holder (cf. Location) modulated by Voice.

Neither (47) nor (48) admit the locative uses of "say" with PPs from (3) and (4):

(3)   The sign says "Slow down!" on it.

(4)   It says "Slow down!" on the sign.

6.4   Repositories of Information

'Repositories of Information' (R-of-Is) (Anand and Hacquard 2009; Anand et al. 2017) — entities that are associated with propositional content.

Agentive R-of-Is — possible discourse agents; entities that are capable of making a move in a discourse, as opposed to merely being associated with information content:

- Agentive R-of-Is: *book, review, article*

- Non-agentive R-of-Is: *notepad, transcript, data, archive, corpus*

- Inanimates: *plate, glove, time of death*

Communicative predicates (e.g. *claim, say*) (49) are compatible only with Sentient beings (a) and Agentive R-of-Is (b); not Non-agentive R-of-Is (c) nor Inanimates (d) (Anand et al. 2017: 2, exx. 2, 5):

(49) a.   The critic claims that the food is good here.   *Sentient being*
      b.   The (critic's) review claims that the food is good here.   *Agentive R-of-I*
      c.   # The (critic's) notepad claims that the food is good here.   *Non-agentive R-of-I*
      d.   # The (critic's) empty plate claims that the food is good here.   *Inanimate*

Insofar as (50) is good, *the sign* is an Agentive R-of-I:

(50)   The sign claims that the food is good here.

Yet the whole paradigm from (49) is good with *say* in (51):

(51)   a.   The critic says that the food is good here.   *Sentient being*
        b.   The (critic's) review says that the food is good here.   *Agentive R-of-I*
        c.   The (critic's) notepad says that the food is good here.   *Non-agentive R-of-I*
        d.   The (critic's) empty plate says that the food is good here.   *Inanimate*

Anand et al. (2017: 11 ex. 22; 12 ex. 23): "say" can be inferential (cf. *demonstrate, imply, show*) (52), (53):

(52)   The {transcript, corpus, archive, data} says that Bill is the murderer.

(53)   a.   {The bloody glove, (The fact) that he is sweating, Him sweating} says that Bill is the murderer.
        b.   # {The bloody glove, (The fact) that he is sweating, Him sweating} claims that Bill is the murderer.

- the subjects are functioning not as Agents, but as the grounding for a conclusion
- "say" in (51)-(53) is not an instantiation of the SAY schema

On the contrary, we note that (51c) with a Non-agentive R-of-I does not seem to be inferential; nor does (54) with an inanimate subject:

(54)   a.   The plate says "Enjoy!" (on it).
        b.   The plate says to enjoy your meal (on it).
        c.   The plate says something silly (on it).

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